



# kakadu™

NATIONAL PARK

ART  
SITE

WALKS



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## Bardedjilidji

Bardedjilidji is the local Aboriginal word for walking track or pathway. The name also refers to the roots of waterlilies growing in freshwater swamps and billabongs.

This walk provides a close up look at the habitats in the East Alligator area. This walk meanders amongst sandstone outliers, through small pockets of monsoon vine forest and paperbark woodland and past wetland areas.



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You may see Marrawuddi (white-bellied sea-eagle) near the East Alligator River

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Bardedjilidji is the name given to the roots of waterlilies

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Bardedjilidji meanders amongst sandstone outliers

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### BARDEDJILIDJI SANDSTONE WALK

This walk is open in the dry season. Part of it is open for most of the wet season but sometimes it is completely inaccessible during the wet.

**Distance:** 2.5 km loop

**Time:** 1 ½ hours

**Grade:** easy

**Start:** East Alligator upstream picnic area car park



Australian Government



## PARK NOTE

# Bardedjilidji sandstone walk

## 1. SANDSTONE HABITAT

These sandstone rocks were formed as sandy sediments under an ancient lake about 1500 million years ago (before life on earth).

The rock outliers were islands in a sea at the time of the dinosaurs, 140 to 65 million years ago. The sea eroded the sandstone as far as a shoreline of sea cliffs, now the Arnhem Land escarpment.

Over time, wind and water erosion has created cracks and overhangs amongst the rocks that now shelter a variety of plants and animals.

## 2. PANDANUS (*Pandanus spiralis*)

Gonggirr is the most common of the three species of pandanus found in Kakadu. It is easily recognised by its 'cork-screw' leaf arrangement.

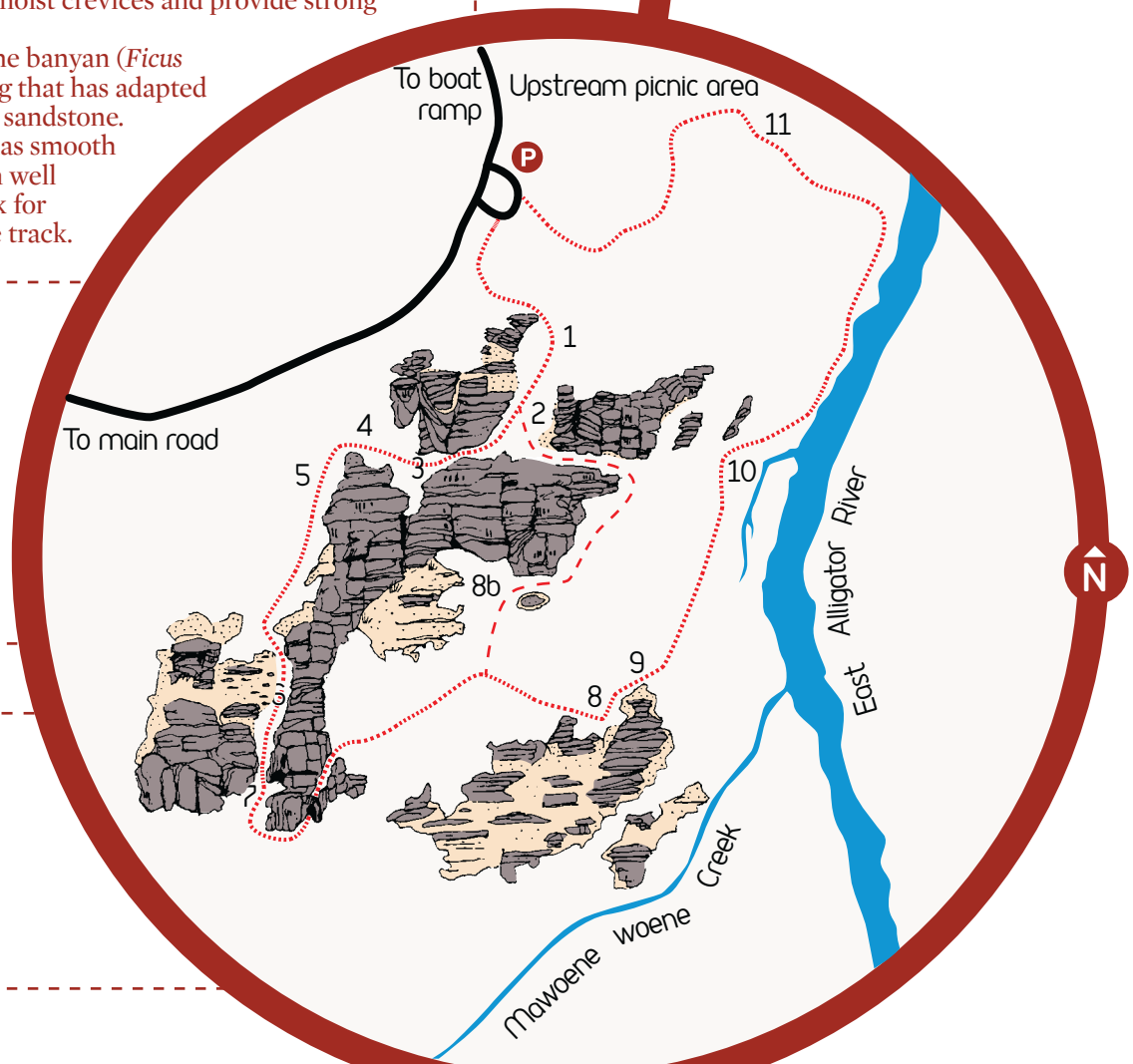
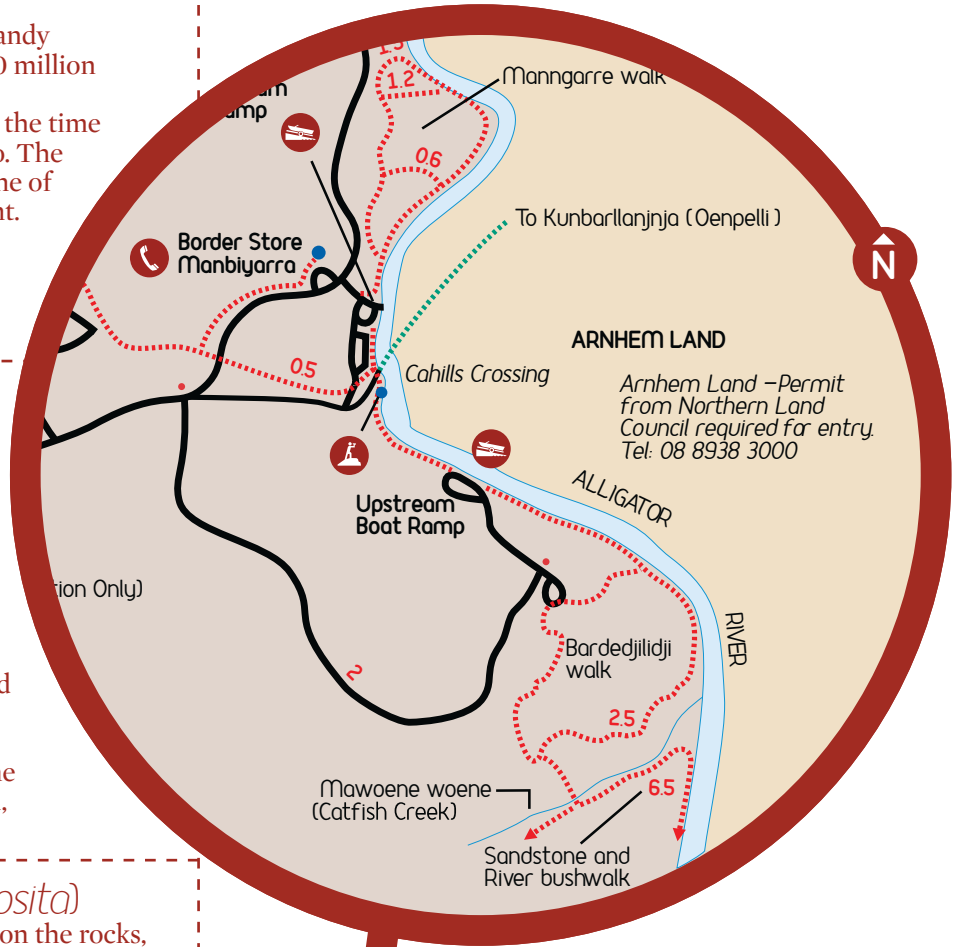
The dead leaves hang in skirts, providing a sanctuary for wrens, bats, mice, lizards and snakes. The ripe orange fruits are a favourite food of sulphur-crested cockatoos.

Aboriginal people use the leaves of this pandanus for weaving baskets and mats. The large clusters of woody nuts, madjamairerri, contain seeds that are eaten raw or roasted.

## 3. SANDSTONE FIG (*Ficus opposita*)

Feel the hairy leaves of this fig. Growing on the rocks, its roots seek cool moist crevices and provide strong support.

Maganaibobu, the banyan (*Ficus virens*) is another fig that has adapted to living on porous sandstone. This strangler fig has smooth hairless leaves with well marked veins. Look for more figs along the track.



## Legend

- Carpark
- Lookout
- Boat Ramp
- Walking Track
- Wet season track
- Unsealed Road

#### 4. BLACK WALLAROO (*Macropus bernardus*)

In the early morning look among the shaded sandstone outcrops for the black wallaroo. Males are black with a stocky build. Females are more petite and grey with black paws, feet and nose. This wary animal is found only in the rugged stone country of the Arnhem Land plateau and its outliers.

Traditional owners have contributed most of what is known about what black wallaroos eat, which is mainly spinifex grasses, leaves, fruit and yams. When it eats bush tomatoes, it closes its eyes to protect them from the plant's spines.

#### 5. STRYCHNINE TREE (*Strychnos ludica*)

The attractive yellow-orange fruit of gubirda (strychnine tree) may look tempting, but the fruit and bark are poisonous to people and most animals. A few species of bird do eat the fruit.

Traditionally, Aboriginal people soaked gubirda branches in water overnight and used the heavy, water-laden sticks as throwing sticks for hunting magpie geese.

#### 6. MONSOON FOREST CORRIDOR

The plant species in this shady forest are found in the monsoon forests of Kakadu and eastern Queensland.

The shade keeps the soil relatively cool and evaporation low, helping plants survive the long dry months. Some species also drop their leaves to conserve water. The thick carpet of leaves hides many animals.

A lot of rainforest plants have fleshy fruits that are attractive to various birds. By eating fruit in one forest and flying to the next, birds carry seeds to new areas, dispersing the seeds and regenerating the rainforests.

Mornbil (Torres Strait pigeon) is a seasonal visitor to monsoon forests in Kakadu.

#### 7. COOL CAVE

This cave provides daytime shelter for insects, geckos and bats. Over the years water has funnelled down the cracks in the rock and gouged out the cave. Look at the root system of the sandstone fig that has made the most of this seasonal water supply.

This cave would have been a cool shelter for Aboriginal people hunting in this area. Look carefully to see some rock art here. Please do not touch or rub the paintings.

If you are walking in the wet season, the track from 8 to 11 will be closed. Follow the wet season track to 8b and 9b

#### 8. AND 8B. LAYERED SANDSTONE

Compression over millions of years transformed layers of sand at the bottom of a pre-historic lake into this rock. Uplifted and exposed to weathering, the softer layers have eroded to reveal the pattern of layers deposited under the lake.

#### 9. TERMITE MOUND

Marribanggag (rock termites) harvest spinifex at night during the dry season. They also store some of the spinifex for the wet season when the spinifex is green and inedible.

Ngalarrangailarra (short-beaked echidna) flourish in these areas. They feed by breaking into termite tunnels and using their long sticky tongues to gather termites.

5 Many creatures shelter amongst the prickly pandanus leaves



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Caves provide cool shelter for many animals

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Guilododo, the chestnut-quilled rock-pigeon, is found only in the sandstone habitats associated with the Arnhem Land Plateau and its outliers



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You may see sulphur-crested cockatoos along this walk

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Barrk (black wallaroo) is endemic to the Arnhem Land plateau and its outliers



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Ngalarrangailarra (short-beaked echidna) gather termites on their sticky tongues



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## 9B. OWENIA

This semi-deciduous tree has male and female flowers on separate trees. The leaves and fruit are clustered at the ends of branches. While the fruit is poisonous to people and many animals, it is a favourite food of bonjman (large rock rat), which hoards food in rock crevices.

## 10. BILLABONG AND RIVER

Small billabongs like this one are formed as fast rising floodwaters of the main river wash against the rock, sweeping out loose material. The water here is fresh throughout the dry.

Monsoon weather conditions can make dramatic changes during a big wet season. Notice holes and sand deposits near the waterways.

The large ranggin (weeping paperbarks) along the river banks help hold the sandy banks together. In flower, ranggin produce lots of nectar, a source of food for galarringengi (flying fox), honeyeaters, lorikeets and flycatchers.

## 11. SANDPAPER FIG (*Ficus scobina*)

Feel the leaves of the sandpaper fig. These abrasive leaves were used by Aboriginal people to smooth spears, didgeridoos and other wooden items. You will see more of these low spreading trees on your way back to the car park.

## CROCODILE SAFETY

Estuarine (saltwater) crocodiles inhabit the waters here. Do not enter the water under any circumstances.

## LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

Do not approach or interfere with any wildlife

Protect yourself from the sun - wear a hat and cover up with loose, light clothing

Protect yourself from biting insects - cover up with loose clothing

## WHEN WALKING

Keep to marked tracks

Wear sturdy footwear

Carry and drink plenty of water

Carry a First Aid Kit

Avoid walking in the heat of the day

## LOOK AFTER THE PARK

Carry out your rubbish, including cigarette butts, fruit peel and tissues

Observe and enjoy the wildlife, but do not disturb or feed them

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