



kakadu[®]
NATIONAL PARK

Garri-djarrkurrkmirri
Working together

TOURISM INDUSTRY UPDATE

GUDJEWG SEASON

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This issue

Ubirr wet season access

*2015/16 Land-based
permit applications*

Crocodile safety

*World Wetlands Day
2015*

*Bringing species back
from the brink*

*Your opportunity to
comment on Kakadu's
Draft Walking Strategy*

*Stay safe in Kakadu this
wet season*

*Know Your Kakadu –
Badbong*

Events calendar



South Alligator River – Afternoon storm

The rain finally returned over the last few days, after the Top End experienced a lengthy break in monsoonal weather. It's not unusual for January to be a bit drier, but we're very happy to see the storms return! The weather brought a fair amount of rain to the river catchments on the Arnhem Land Plateau. The big rain has so far eluded us and the floodplains have been filling up rather slowly.

Ubirr wet season access

The Oenpelli Road (road to Ubirr) is classed 'impassable' once water levels exceed 0.5m at the Magela Creek and the S-Bends. Ubirr is then only accessible through commercial operators with valid wet season access permits who may visit Ubirr at their own risk.

If you are yet to apply for an Ubirr Wet Season Permit, please follow the link to download an application package:

www.environment.gov.au/resource/tourism-operators#permit

Keep an eye on the weather and be prepared to amend your itinerary if conditions change. Severe storms can cause flash flooding and significant stream rises, sometimes with very little warning. Drivers should be aware of the risk of entering fast flowing water and the potential presence of crocodiles

Sign up to our road report to receive up-to-date information on site access and road conditions: <http://kakaduroadreport.wordpress.com/>

Thank you for over
3000 likes
on Facebook!

2015/2016 Standard Land-Based Permit Applications

It's that time of year again. Annual permit applications will soon need to be lodged. In the next few days we will send out an application package to all current permit holders. Alternatively head over to:

www.environment.gov.au/resource/tourism-operators and download the application form.

Don't forget to bookmark this page as you will find all the important information for tour operators right here!

A few permit applications from operators have come in already, and we will start processing applications shortly to make sure operators receive their 2015/16 permits prior to 31 March 2015, when current one-year permits expire.

Duration of permit

Are you looking for continuity and not keen on completing an application form every year? Operators who hold current TAAL accreditation and satisfy all the usual permit requirements can apply for a three-year permit as an alternative to the standard one-year permit. Please note that the three-year fee will need to be paid upfront (see page 2 of the application form for details) and you will still be required to submit your annual renewal notes for accreditation and public liability insurance.

Tips for applying

For speedy processing and to avoid phone tag from us, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Please take a few moments to re-familiarise yourself with the conditions linked to your standard land-based permit – and ask your guides to do the same! Note that conditions 18, 19 and 27 have been revised.
- Ensure all questions are completed – if more space is needed then attach a separate sheet.
- Make sure your attached public liability schedules prove you're covered beyond 31 March 2015.
- Attach your promotional material. If it's not ready we will accept a draft or alternatively your website address (please write this on the checklist on page 12).
- Ensure your tour leaders have completed the Kakadu Knowledge for Tour Guides course.
- Select your permit duration and provide payment details – sorry, Amex is not accepted.
- Complete the application checklist (page 12) – this is your toolkit to make sure we've got everything needed for a quick turnaround.
- Sign and witness the declaration and agreement pages.

Remember that it is a condition under the permit to carry a copy of the current permit conditions while conducting tours in Kakadu. If you were granted a three-year permit last year, don't forget to update the documentation you carry by including the revised permit conditions. Simply follow above link and print out the conditions that come as part of the application pack.

When will I get my permit?

Please allow a minimum of 14 days for application processing.

Need more information?

Please contact Kakadu.permits@environment.gov.au or phone Doug Wade on 08 8938 1140.

We're looking forward to seeing your application!



Crocodile safety

Gudjewg is the monsoon season. Estuarine or saltwater crocodiles are on the move at this time of year when squally showers and violent storms cause flooding and inundation of low-lying areas. There have been a number of sightings of estuarine crocodiles in culverts and along flooded causeways right across the park and visitors to Kakadu are urged to be careful when fishing, walking or driving near water.

During the wet season, saltwater crocodiles can move large distances in search of new territories. Smaller crocodiles are often forced out of their homes by dominant male crocodiles. Hungry and on edge, they may be seeking temporary respite from larger crocs or looking for a feed of fish that congregate in culverts. These animals are likely to be very aggressive, and an attack can lead to death.



The message is clear:

Expect the unexpected, keep away from the water's edge and don't become complacent. Remember that for most visitors to Kakadu, crocodiles are an unfamiliar hazard. Explain to your clients the standard safety information as it appears on crocodile warning signs and in the park's visitor guide (permit condition 27) and always lead by example.

As a tour guide you are in a position to educate and protect your clients better than a sign can!

Bringing Kakadu's threatened species back from the brink

In November 2014, the Australian Government launched a rescue plan for Kakadu's threatened plants and wildlife. The Kakadu *Threatened Species Strategy 2014-2024* was developed primarily by leading wildlife expert Professor John Woinarski, through the Northern Australia Hub of the Australian Government's National Environmental Research Program.

Earlier this month scientists, traditional owners, representatives of Indigenous ranger groups and Kakadu park staff met for a two-day workshop to discuss how to implement the strategy on four specific projects. Feedback has been positive all round and the workshop has given us a good platform to start work on the projects:

- Intensive work to target threats from fire, weeds and feral animals in crucial habitat, extending from the Stone Country to the lowland woodlands.
- Creating a wildlife refuge on Gardangarl (Field Island) for species struggling on the mainland including small mammals and goannas.
- Expanding of the 'toad smart' quolls project, building on research conducted in Kakadu since 2010.
- Seedbanking and propagating threatened plant species, many of which occur nowhere else in the world.

More information is available on our website: www.environment.gov.au/topics/national-parks/kakadu-national-park/management-and-conservation/threatened-species-strategy-0



World Wetlands Day 2015

World Wetlands Day was celebrated in style on 2 February at Kakadu National Park's Bowali Visitor Centre. Locals and visitors, including this year's Junior Rangers class from Jabiru Area School, enjoyed learning about the importance of Kakadu's wetlands of international significance – and the work we're doing to learn about and preserve our wetlands.

ERISS fascinated visitors with the busy world of wetland water bugs seen under their microscope. The National Environmental Research Program staff flaunted their impressive barramundi tracker. Kakadu rangers helped kids onto the airboat they use to fight noxious weeds – they even started it up!



Two local students, Laurie Dann and Christopher Gurruwiwi, won prizes in the art competition for their beautiful lino prints of wetland life and three participants in the Wetland Quiz won accommodation at Coinda Lodge and tickets on the Yellow Water Cruise.

Thanks to everyone who helped us celebrate this special day in Kakadu!

Your opportunity to comment on Kakadu's draft Walking Strategy

We're really excited about the potential for this draft walking strategy. It arose from our desire to create even better walking experiences for visitors to Kakadu and support new businesses enterprises, particularly for Indigenous people providing guided walks on their own country.

The strategy has been developed through consultation with traditional owners, the tourism industry and bush walking enthusiasts over the past three years. It provides the basis for a consistent and sustainable approach to the planning, development, management and promotion of walking opportunities within the park.

We would like your comments on the draft – get in touch by **COB Friday 20 March 2015**.

All comments on the draft strategy will be carefully considered in the preparation of a final Walking Strategy for Kakadu.

To provide your feedback on the draft Walking Strategy visit:

www.environment.gov.au/resource/walking-strategy

Stay safe in Kakadu this wet season

To avoid mosquito-borne diseases like Ross River virus and minimise the chance of being bitten by mozzies protect yourself and advise your clients to:

- wear light coloured clothing with long sleeves, long trousers and socks between dusk and dawn in areas where mosquito bites are likely.
- avoid being outdoors around dusk and dawn, especially near wetlands and densely vegetated areas.
- use a protective repellent containing 20 per cent DEET or Picaridin when outdoors after dark.
- ensure children are adequately protected against mosquito bites.
- use mosquito-proof accommodation and camping facilities at night.
- apply repellents ahead of time.



Know your Kakadu – Badbong

Next time you visit Ubirr keep an eye out for rock-wallabies and impress your clients with a few interesting facts on these delightful little macropods!

Bininj call this rock-wallaby *badbong* [[listen to pronunciation](#)] – not to be mixed up with their smaller relative, *nabarlek*. *Badbong* was previously thought to be the short-eared rock-wallaby (*Petrogale brachyotis*), a species assumed to occur, in low rocky cliffs, hills, and gorges within savanna grassland and monsoon rainforest right across the Top End, from the Kimberley to Arnhem Land.



It turns out that Kakadu's most commonly found rock-wallaby is genetically very different from the rock-wallabies found in the Kimberley and has therefore just been recognized as a new species: Wilkins' rock-wallaby or the eastern short-eared rock-wallaby (*Petrogale wilkinsi*).

Read the whole story here:

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/blogpost/science/amri-hiding-in-plain-sight>

Events calendar – March 2015

Parks Week 9 – 15 March 2015

Parks Week is an annual celebration of the important role that our parks play in contributing to the health of our communities. A range of formal and informal events take place across Australia and New Zealand during parks week - there is something for everyone.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for things to do in Kakadu during parks Week!

We would like to know what you are interested in learning about regarding Kakadu.

If you have any suggestions as to what you would like included in a future edition of the Industry Update, please forward your suggestion to Kakadu.permits@environment.gov.au

For more information about Kakadu National Park contact Bowali Visitor Centre on (08) 8938 1120 or visit our websites.

Visitor Information

www.parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu

Useful forms and information

www.environment.gov.au/resource/tourism-operators