



kakadu[®]
NATIONAL PARK

Garri-djarrkdurrkmirri
Working together

KAKADU NEWS

KUNUMELENG SEASON

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Park Manager's Message

Major Tourist Attraction – we won!

On behalf of the Bininj/Mungguy Traditional Owners of Kakadu, the Board of Management and park staff, it is a privilege to accept this award.

The award highlights that Kakadu is a hallmark destination. Tourists to Kakadu experience one of the world's most outstanding natural and cultural attractions.

This award recognises the commitment by Traditional Owners and Parks Australia to offering visitors experiences they will remember for the rest of their lives — stunning diverse landscapes and seasons, rich and abundant wildlife, and a chance to engage in the Indigenous culture of the region. Winning an award like this recognises the great effort that has been put into tourism in Kakadu.

It's a great achievement – and everyone who has been involved in tourism in the park should be proud.

Please Note

Gunlom and Maguk have
now closed for the wet
season due to flooding.

More On The Brolga Awards

Kakadu – the Territory's Major Attraction

Last Saturday at the Brolga Awards, Kakadu National Park took out the Major Tourist Attraction prize. Parks Australia ranger Christian (Tris) Diddams was also named SKAL Tourism Industry Employee award, recognising his dedication and commitment to his job.



We're very proud of these achievements. We've all been working very hard over the past 18 months to improve infrastructure and services in the park. We'll be continuing this work in 2017.

Congratulations to our industry partners at Kakadu too –Mercure Kakadu Crocodile Hotel, Trek Larapinta and Venture North, NT Bird Specialists, Outback Tour Services and AAT Kings. Together we're working to make Kakadu the key destination in the NT.

We'd also like to recognise Tony Clementson for receiving the George Dunne Award Outstanding Contribution by an Individual and John 'Foxy' Robinson for taking out the Tourism Minister's Perpetual Trophy.

Kakadu now goes on to compete in the prestigious National Australian Tourism Awards to be held in Darwin in February 2017. We hope you'll be barracking for us.



Rock Art Monitoring & Maintenance Program 2016

Every year a group of dedicated Indigenous Rangers, community groups and researchers spend 4 weeks going out on country to monitor and maintain rock art sites throughout Kakadu.

In 2014 a successful pilot program was set up to enable Indigenous rangers to help Bininj/Mugguy people to look after rock art sites on their country, this year there were 74 participants that visited 162 art sites.

Right (from left): Rock art specialist Melissa Marshall from the University of Notre Dame, Kadeem May, Duane Councillor, Jaylen Marshall, Jenny Wellings, Bobby Maralngurra, Jeffery Lee and Joe Nagawalli.



The aims of the program are:

- Monitoring and maintenance in each district containing rock art sites including:
 - Consultation with Bininj/Munguy who speak for those particular sites
 - Identification of recorded sites in the relevant areas and their histories
 - Equipment required for recording, monitoring and management
 - Review of previous issues, previous conservation and management works
 - Detailed condition assessments of sites and establishment of monitoring points
- Ongoing review of the Rock Art Monitoring and Maintenance Manual, associated field booklet and recording forms;
- Building ranger capacity and understanding of the Cultural Database and its practical applications for rock art monitoring; and
- Gathering all the information collected to put into the Cultural Database.

Common problems found at Rock Art sites

We had a chance to look at the problems that affect rock art sites across Kakadu. While many are caused by environmental processes, humans cause others. Of the 162 sites visited we found impact by:

- Water (105)
- Vegetation build up (65)
- Termites & wasp nests (99)
- Dust (40)
- Algae & lichen (85) and salt (83)
- Old silicon that needs repair or removal (52)
- Unauthorized access (21)

Feral animal impacts are also a big problem with many art sites affected and some will require fences to prevent further animal damage.

Plan for management of artificial drip lines

Over the past 40 years there have been a number of conservation trials to look after rock art and often artificial silicon drip lines were installed to help manage the flow of water near paintings. We are now seeing some problems associated with its use.

Due to the large numbers of drip lines in the Park we need to locate all drip lines and check their condition. Beginning with those that are perishing, we will review all drip lines to see if they are working or not, before either removing or reinstalling them as part of next year's program.

These efforts are part of a long-term plan to ensure that all silicon is reviewed at least once every 10 years.



Know Your Kakadu: Researchers shed light on Variegated Fairy-Wrens

Behind the scenes in Kakadu there are often a number of researchers from universities across Australia and abroad discovering new and exciting facts about all kinds of things. This report was provided by Michelle Hall from the University of Melbourne after recent surveys of variegated fairy-wrens at Gunlom. Hall's research goal is to understand the evolution of diversity in female song and plumage as well as learning the behaviour and breeding biology of these wrens. Like all of our research permits, this contributes to our understanding of our natural and cultural heritage and helps us make more informed management decisions.

If you like feeding your tourists statistics, the following report is just for you. It just goes to show how much there is to learn about species in Kakadu.



Field trip report 2016: We captured, banded and measured 25 variegated fairy-wrens, dulcis subspecies (including 7 re-traps of birds banded in 2015). In total, we found 49 birds in 15 groups, including 5 groups on the escarpment near Gunlom Pool and 10 groups on the escarpment near the Yurmikmik carpark. The population near Gunlom may have been negatively impacted by the 2015 fire.

Population density: Dulcis fairy-wrens have large territories and live at low densities compared to other fairy-wren species. Colour-banded individuals were seen ranging over 200 to 250m, and more observations could expand estimates of territory sizes further.

Breeding : No nests were found, but approximately 40% of groups appear to have bred successfully since the October 2015 field trip, suggesting they breed during the wet season. Of the 15 groups, 1 group at Gunlom and 5 groups at Yurmikmik had new young group members. The possibly lower breeding success at Gunlom than Yurmikmik (20% vs 50% of groups) may have been related to impacts of the 2015 fire.

Survival: We were able to resight 12 of the 27 birds banded in 2015 (44%). Among breeders (dominant pairs), where disappearance is more likely to reflect mortality than dispersal out of the study area, we resighted 3 of 6 dominant females (50%) and 7 of 9 dominant males (78%). The 2015 fire at Gunlom may have contributed to mortality in that area: 2 of the 3 surviving females had lost their groups and dispersed to join neighbouring groups. In one case, she was the only bird remaining from a group of 6 whose night-time roosting area was burned. Among non-breeders, 2 of 9 banded subordinate group members (22%) were still present – in this age-group dispersal from the natal area to find a breeding vacancy is a likely cause of disappearance, in addition to mortality. At the population level, disappeared subordinates had largely been replaced: subordinates numbered 23 in total in 2015 (including unbanded birds), and 18 in 2016.

We now have a sample of 30 colour-banded birds for survival estimates in 2017.

Female colour, song, and aggression: We obtained spectral measurements of plumage colour, morphometric measurements, and quantified aggression levels for all the birds we captured. We will use these data to test whether plumage colour is an indicator of condition or other measures of individual quality.

Images show banded female, male, and young male moulting into adult plumage (all re-trapped birds first banded in 2015).

Be Croc Wise in Jabiru

Kakadu and West Arnhem Regional Council ask everyone to Be Croc wise and keep your family safe around all waterways, including Jabiru Lake.

Kakadu crocodile manager Garry Lindner said District Rangers had removed six saltwater crocodiles so far this year from the lake, including a 3.68 metre male, captured within 24 hours of moving into the lake.

"Saltwater crocs can move into the lake undetected at any time and do. The majority of people, especially locals, do the right thing. But people's safety in the park and the community is our number one priority and we all need a reminder to Be Croc wise – especially at this time of year when crocodiles are on the move," Garry said.

"Being Croc wise is not hard, it's simple but potentially life-saving. For example, if your vehicle gets stuck on Cahills Crossing, call for help and avoid wading into the water. No matter how hot it is, don't enter Jabiru Lake. We've had recent reports of kids swimming in the lake and an incident where a croc lunged at a dog," he said.

"We regularly monitor the traps installed in the lake. But please don't enter the water. The safest place for people to swim is at Jabiru pool or if you're a visitor, at your hotel. Crocs will always see you before you see them. If out on a boat fishing stay vigilant – don't clean fish near the water's edge or from your boat, don't reach into the water for your fish, be careful when launching or retrieving boats. Crocs love hanging around boat ramps. Remember in any body of water in the NT – crocs are probably present. And that includes our lake. We're working with council staff to make sure that warning signs are in place."

Garry said we all have a duty of care to look after each other, our community and our visitors.

"Sadly, no matter how many warning signs we put up there are still people who apparently choose to ignore the dangers. We're still seeing some people entering the water around Cahill's Crossing despite recent media reports which is really disappointing. Cahill's Crossing is an area known for its crocodiles. Simply being in or on the edge of water is asking for trouble," he said.

"We also need the community's eagle eyes to report crocs to us and keep a look out for tracks and slide marks – this way we can try and reduce the risk of large crocodiles being present in populated areas like near the lake." Senior traditional owner Jonathan Nadji said Bininj were deeply disturbed by recent incidents.

"We have sadly experienced deaths on our country before and it is always a tragedy. When you come to Kakadu please respect traditional owners, rangers and the NT Police. Please take note of what NT Police and rangers say to you so you can keep yourselves and your family safe. Especially around this time of year with Christmas approaching and families gathering together," Mr Nadji said.

"I want all families to stay safe on our country and in our community. When I go to someone else's country I have respect for their country and customary law. I expect people to do the same when they visit my country. The last thing we want is for somebody else to be injured or killed by a crocodile, so please be aware of the risks they pose and keep your kids safe. Teach them to Be Croc wise."

To report a croc simply call the park on 08 8938 1100. For more on how to Be Croc wise visit

www.nt.gov.au/becrocwise or visit <http://www.parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu/plan-your-trip/staying-safe.html>



Stay Safe in Kakadu This Wet

- Obey all signs and drive to the conditions.
- Look out for wildlife seeking higher ground on roads and bridges.
- If heavy downpours reduce visibility, slow down or pull over to the side of the road.
- Check depth indicators and the speed of the water before crossing creeks.
- Remain cautious near waterways. With rising water levels, crocodiles are on the move.
- Be wary of flash flooding after heavy rain, particularly around Gubara and Yurmikmik.
- Please slow down when approaching culverts and bridges along the highways due to increased presence of fishermen.

Magela Creek



Kakadu Highway



Bowali Creek



Tourism Industry Workshop

You've asked and we've listened: The Tourism and Visitor Services Team is planning to re-invigorate tourism industry workshops to get your guides on the front foot in all things Kakadu.

To help us plan ahead we need to know the following:

When would you like us to hold the workshop?

Where would you like us to hold the workshop?

Ideally, we would like to host forums both in Darwin and in Jabiru.

Subjects will include:

- Crocodile Management
- Wildlife Management
- Cultural heritage management and awareness
- Compliance
- Threatened Species and management of threats (weeds and ferals)
- Role of the Kakadu Board of Management and the Kakadu Tourism Consultative Committee
- Rock art site talking points
- Visitor safety
- All tour guides will be encouraged to attend,

Please contact: Tracey.Diddams@environment.gov.au to express your interest in attending share and to share your thoughts and ideas on what you'd like to see covered.

Million Dollar Fish

You never, never know... if you don't register and have a crack at catching a tagged barra in Kakadu's rivers and billabongs!

Register for your chance to catch the Million Dollar Fish:
www.milliondollarfish.com.au/register/

If you've already registered in Season 1, please register again below to confirm your chance to win this year's prizes.

Make sure you're familiar with Kakadu's new fishing rules:

<http://www.parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu/do/fishing-and-boating.html>



Ubirr Wet Season Access Key

That time of year again, come 1 December, Ubirr will be open to the public from 2pm until sunset – except for those operators who applied for a wet season access permit and key(s) in time.

For those companies that have a permit, your guides can pick up an assigned key from Bowali Visitor Centre after you receive your permit.

When collecting a key your guide(s) will need to:

- Have read and understood the permit conditions
- Carry a copy of the permit and conditions with them
- Go through the guideline booklet with our staff.
- Complete and sign the tour guide agreement form.

This key and its number will be registered to the guide's name and is not transferable to another guide, the company is responsible for keys return after 31 May 2017 and failure to return keys will result in a \$50 per key replacement charge against the company.

Our Compliance team will be out and about and conduct checks at Ubirr during the wet season to make sure everyone is doing the right thing.

If you haven't yet applied for your permit, get your application in soon.

Contact the Permits Officer by email to Kakadu.Permits@environment.gov.au or download your application form from www.environment.gov.au/resource/tourism-operators

Marawuddi Gallery Christmas Closure

Please note that the Marawuddi Gallery and the Anmak An-me Cafe will be closed during the festive season.

Closure dates are:

22 December 2016 until 11 January 2017



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