

Claremont Isles National Park

Management Statement

2013



The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation acknowledges Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land. We recognise their connection to land, sea and community, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

The department is committed to respecting, protecting, and promoting human rights, and our obligations under the Human Rights Act 2019.

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All due diligence and care has been taken in the preparation of this document based on the information in the 2013 management statement. The department holds no responsibility for any errors or omissions within this document. Any decisions made by other parties based on this document are solely the responsibility of those parties.

The Claremont Isles National Park Management Statement 2013 has been extended in 2024, in line with the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (s120G). Minor amendments have been made. There has been no change to the statement's original management intent and direction.

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Park size:	63 ha
Bioregion:	East Cape York Marine
QPWS region:	Great Barrier Reef Marine
Local government estate/area:	Cook Shire Council
State electorate:	Cook

Legislative framework

✓	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
✓	<i>Aboriginal Land Act 1991</i>
✓	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007</i>
✓	<i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>

Plans and agreements

✓	Bonn Convention
✓	China—Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	Japan—Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	Republic of Korea—Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	Recovery plan for marine turtles in Australia

Thematic strategies

✓	Level 2 Fire Management Strategy
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Vision

Claremont Isles National Park is part of the Claremont Isles located in the north of Cape York Peninsula's Princess Charlotte Bay. It has a strong sense of remoteness and wilderness.

Claremont Isles National Park will be effectively managed to ensure the natural and cultural values and processes are protected and presented. The importance of the park to Traditional Owners will be recognised. The national park will be jointly managed by building strong collaborative relationships with Traditional Owners.

Visitors will fully enjoy and respect environmental and cultural values of the park.

Conservation purpose

Claremont Isles National Park and surrounding marine park waters are part of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. Natural and cultural values are collaboratively managed with Traditional Owners. The unusual formation of mangrove communities on Burkitt Island, Fife Island's diverse vegetation and Pelican Island's grassland together make Claremont Isles National Park a biodiverse group of islands, important for a large variety of mainland and marine wildlife, including turtles and 20 species of migratory sea birds.

Protecting and presenting the area's values

Landscape

The Claremont Isles are a living cultural landscape rich in traditional and contemporary significance for the Traditional Owners. There is strong connection with surrounding traditional land and sea estates.

The Claremont Isles consists of seven islands located approximately 55 kilometres (km) east of Coen. Four islands are unallocated State land (USL): Hay, Wilkie, Hannah and Stainer. Three islands make up Claremont Isles National Park:

- Burkitt Island, a mangrove cay formed of separate ridges of sand with deep hollows between the ridges enclosing lagoons and mangroves
- Pelican Island, a sand cay with three corners, each one of which is a sand-spit. A small central area forms the islands highest point
- Fife Island, a low lying sand cay with a short sand-spit at the north-western tip and a long inter-tidal sand-spit stretching out over the reef flat to the north-east.

Regional ecosystems

Although regional ecosystem mapping is not yet available for the park, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) information identifies:

- Burkitt Island is a low wooded mangrove island, the canopy reaches 17 metres (m) in height, there is a small area of *Premna serratifolia* closed shrubland and small areas of forbland and sparse grasses
- Pelican Island is vegetated with a mixed herb and grass flat, including of biodiversity concern sea shore stalky grass *Lepturus repens* grassland and vines including goatsfoot *Ipomoea pes-caprae*. The small high central area of the island features a closed dense shrubland stand of *Premna serratifolia* with a canopy height of 6m. Extensive inter-tidal reef flats offer feeding and roosting habitat significant for migratory shorebirds and a variety of other mainland and sea birds.
- Fife Island is vegetated with *Lepturus repens* grassland and a vegetated area with a canopy height of 6m.

Native Plants and animals

The islands retain a high level of natural integrity and provide important habitat for roosting and nesting sea birds, some terrestrial birds and some marine wildlife. Records indicate that 37 species of plants have been identified but none are listed as being of conservation significance under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

Records indicate that 50 species of animals have been identified of which five are listed as being of conservation significance under the Nature Conservation Act (Table 1) and 19 bird species are protected under international conventions for migratory birds, as summarised in Table 2. Pelican Island is of particular importance for migratory birds. It is a key site in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Coastal Bird Monitoring Strategy.

Aboriginal culture

The *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* provides the primary legislative framework across all tenures for the management and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage through mechanisms such as cultural heritage management plans and culturally appropriate registration of cultural places and items. Further research is required to determine what information can be shared.

Shared-history culture

Early contact history of the Princess Charlotte Bay area dates to the early 1800s, for example when Phillip Parker King on the HBM Cutter 'Mermaid' named the group in 1819 and then later pearling activities. The area features significantly in archaeological references and shared maritime history, for example the wreck of the sailing vessel 'Sea Foam' is located on Hannah Island. However, no places or items on Claremont Isles National Park are registered under the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

The Claremont Isles have scenic appeal, a sense of remoteness and provide a totally natural self-reliant visitor experience. They are popular for watching large numbers of birds migrate at dusk and dawn. Pelican Island and Fife Island are recommended by QPWS to be declared as all year restricted access areas.

No formal visitor nodes or access tracks are in place. Camping is not currently permitted in Claremont Isles National Park.

Commercial activities are permitted to Burkitt Island, year-round.

No visitor information has been produced for the islands. Public information about the islands is being developed.

The Claremont Isles lie in the designated shipping channel. There are no designated anchorages or public moorings in waters surrounding the Claremont Isles.

Partnerships

Claremont Isles National Park is managed by QPWS to protect cultural values, species of conservation significance and regional ecosystems representative of the East Cape York Marine Bioregion. A joint management framework is provided by the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, *Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007* and the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991*. Through this framework partnerships may also be developed with interested parties such as tourism operators and researchers.

There is a cooperative focus between the State and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority for complementary management of national park islands and surrounding marine parks.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

The islands are thought to retain a high level of natural integrity, with minimal to no pest animals or pest plants on record. Regular assessments and inspections of national park islands are undertaken.

Fire management

QPWS does not actively burn the islands. Seabird nesting could be adversely impacted by inappropriate fire management. Sand cays could be susceptible to erosion after burning. If QPWS or Traditional Owners felt there was a need for planned burning a thorough assessment of the natural and cultural values and processes would be jointly undertaken to assist decision making. The long term history of fire management is not fully documented and no recent history of fire has been recorded on the national park.

References

GBRMPA 2008, *Coastal Bird Monitoring Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area*. Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Townsville.

King BR, Limpus CJ and Walker TA 1989, Seabird Islands No. 210: Fife Island, Great Barrier Reef, Queensland. *Corella* 15, 59-61.

King BR, Buckley RC and Limpus CJ 1985, Seabird Islands No. 152: Pelican Island, Great Barrier Reef, Queensland *Corella* 9, 78-80.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Landscape</p> <p>Scenic amenity values of the park are protected consistent with the overall character of the park and landscape settings.</p>	<p>A1. Infrastructure is minimal and consistent with the character of the park and landscape setting.</p>
<p>Regional ecosystems</p> <p>The diversity and distribution of natural plant and animal communities (particularly significant species) representative of the East Cape York Marine Bioregion is conserved.</p>	<p>A2. Explore declaration of restricted access areas for Pelican Island and Fife Island in relation to their habitat values for migratory species and species of conservation significance.</p> <p>A3. Review monitoring objectives for species of conservation significance on the park and support monitoring programs that achieve these objectives. Particular focus will be on monitoring objectives for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little tern <i>Sternula albifrons</i> • beach stone-curlew <i>Esacus magnirostris</i> • hawksbill turtle <i>Eretmochelys imbricate</i> • flatback turtle <i>Natator depressus</i> • pelicans <i>Pelecanus conspicillatus</i> on Pelican Island.
<p>Tourism and visitor opportunities</p> <p>A low-key self reliant visitor experience is provided without damaging natural and cultural values.</p> <p>Tourism activities enhance visitor opportunities and occur sustainably.</p>	<p>A4. Maintain commercial access to Burkitt Island.</p> <p>A5. Tourism and visitor opportunities are informed, where practicable, by culturally appropriate cross-cultural information from the Traditional Owners.</p>
<p>Pest and fire management</p> <p>Natural and cultural values are maintained through a strategic cross-cultural fire and pest management regimes.</p>	<p>A6. Utilise QPWS Pest and Fire Management System for the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring and control (containment/eradication) of pests • fire management, including prevention where not required. <p>A7. Manage fire on park with a goal of exclusion or prevention, except for authorised management and/or where practicable Traditional Owner purposes.</p>
<p>Joint management</p> <p>Claremont Isles National Park is jointly managed between the Traditional Owners and QPWS by building strong collaborative working relationships.</p> <p>The importance of the park to Traditional Owners will be recognised.</p>	<p>A8. Work closely with Traditional Owners and consult regularly over management direction and issues.</p> <p>A9. Use best endeavours to facilitate site visits to discuss management of islands.</p> <p>A10. Fulfil actions identified in Indigenous Land Use Agreements and Indigenous Management Agreements once they are developed.</p>

Tables – Conservation values management

Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem mapping is not yet available for many islands in the East Cape York Marine Bioregion, including Claremont Isles National Park.

Table 1: Species of conservation significance

Scientific name	Common name	Nature Conservation Act 1992 status	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 status	Back on Track status
Plants - none classified as being of conservation significance				
Animals				
<i>Crocodylus porosus</i>	estuarine crocodile	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	hawksbill turtle	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Critical
<i>Esacus magnirostris</i>	beach stone-curlew	Vulnerable	-	High
<i>Natator depressus</i>	flatback turtle	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Critical
<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	little tern	Endangered	-	High

Table 2: Species listed in international agreements

Scientific name	Common name	CMS	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Ardenna pacifica</i>	wedge-tailed shearwater	✓	-	✓	-
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	ruddy turnstone	✓	✓	-	-
<i>Caidris ruficollis</i>	red-necked stint	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	Mongolian plover	✓	✓	-	-
<i>Crocodylus porosus</i>	estuarine crocodile	✓	-	-	-
<i>Egretta alba</i>	great egret	✓	✓	-	-
<i>Egretta sacra</i>	eastern reef egret	✓	-	-	-
<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	hawksbill turtle	✓	-	-	-
<i>Fregata minor</i>	great frigatebird	✓	✓	-	-
<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	white-bellied sea-eagle	✓	✓	-	-
<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	Caspian tern	✓	✓	-	-
<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	bar-tailed godwit	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Natator depressus</i>	flatback turtle	✓	-	-	-
<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>	bridled tern	✓	✓	✓	-
<i>Pluvialis cominica</i>	lesser golden plover	✓	✓	-	-
<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	little tern	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>	black-naped tern	✓	✓	✓	-
<i>Sula leucogaster</i>	brown booby	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>	lesser crested tern	✓	✓	-	-
<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	crested tern	✓	-	✓	-
<i>Tringa brevipes</i>	grey-tailed tattler	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Tringa hypoleucos</i>	common sandpiper	✓	✓	✓	✓

BONN (CMS) – Bonn Convention

CAMBA – China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA – Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement