

Volunteer to help conserve Queensland's natural wonders

If you are interested in working in some of the world's most remarkable natural environments and helping conserve rare Australian wildlife look no further than Queensland. It is home to World Heritage-listed wilderness and presents amazing opportunities for enthusiasts to volunteer on projects as diverse as protecting endangered sea turtles, monitoring the underwater environments of dugongs and studying our famous koalas. Here's a taste of how you can get involved.

Help save our sea turtles

Marine turtles are a truly majestic reptile which first appeared on earth more than 100 million years ago. Even in the 19th century their numbers were well in the millions but in the last several hundred years humans have severely depleted their population. These amazing marine animals spend their lives at sea but return to land to nest.

Mackay and District Turtle Watch



There are seven species of sea turtles found throughout the world, and six of these live and nest on the coast of Queensland. As a volunteer with the Mackay and District Turtle Watch, you can help monitor and protect these sea turtles which are all considered to be endangered or vulnerable.

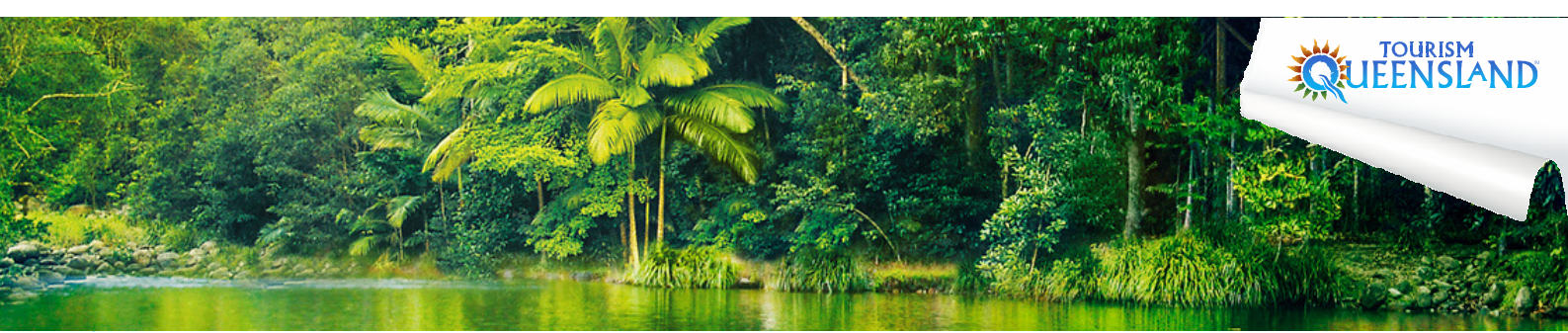
Monitoring nesting and hatchling activity requires a lot of patience, stamina and a sense of humour. The Mackay district has over 30 beaches where between 30-100 nesting female flatback turtles lay eggs around three times each in the three month season.

The organisation monitors the beaches in the Mackay region from Repulse Bay in the north to Stanage Bay in the south. Operating under the guidelines of the Queensland Sea Turtle Project, volunteers collect data on nesting sea turtles, hatchlings and stranded marine animals. The group also educates the public through community awareness activities, school and community group events. For more information, visit www.mackayturtles.org.au/

Green Turtles at Cape York

A life changing week awaits guests at the Cape York Turtle Rescue camp in Tropical North Queensland where you will have the opportunity to have hands-on involvement in helping protect the fragile habitat of green sea turtles.

Spend six days working with camp staff from Cape York's remote Aboriginal community of Mapoon. At Camp Chivaree you'll stay in comfortable tent cabins on raised platforms, complete with modern bush camping facilities. Camp Chivaree is 14km from Mapoon, 80km north of Weipa on the Gulf of Carpentaria.



Help local Aboriginal rangers and wildlife officers as they tag and measure nesting turtles, protect freshly laid eggs, remove fishing nets from the beach and collect valuable data.

But it's not all about work, while you are in this special part of the world you may have the opportunity to meet with Aboriginal Elders from the community of Mapoon who are happy to share stories of their modern life in a traditional land.

Fly or drive to Weipa north of Cairns where you will be transferred via 4WD to the rescue project, and returned six days later. The camp costs \$AUD1,875 per person and the price includes five nights' accommodation, three meals per day, return transfers to Weipa and all linen. The camp operates in the dry season from July to October, for exact dates and bookings please visit www.capeyorkturtlerescue.com

Hawksbill Turtles on the Great Barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef is home to one of the world's largest hawksbill turtle populations which sadly are disappearing worldwide at an alarming rate of approximately four percent each year and have become critically endangered due to commercial demand in Asia for tortoiseshell products, the harvesting of their eggs and damage of their nesting and foraging habitats.

Head to Tropical North Queensland and help turtle researcher Ian Bell monitor the key nesting and foraging populations of these turtles on the Howick Group of Islands and Milman Island. Do your bit to help develop sustainable management plans for this critically endangered species.

The 2008 camps run in January and February over 11 and 13 days respectively and cost \$2949 per person including transfers between the islands and Cairns, accommodation in tents on or near the beach, and a well-set up camp kitchen for shared food preparation.

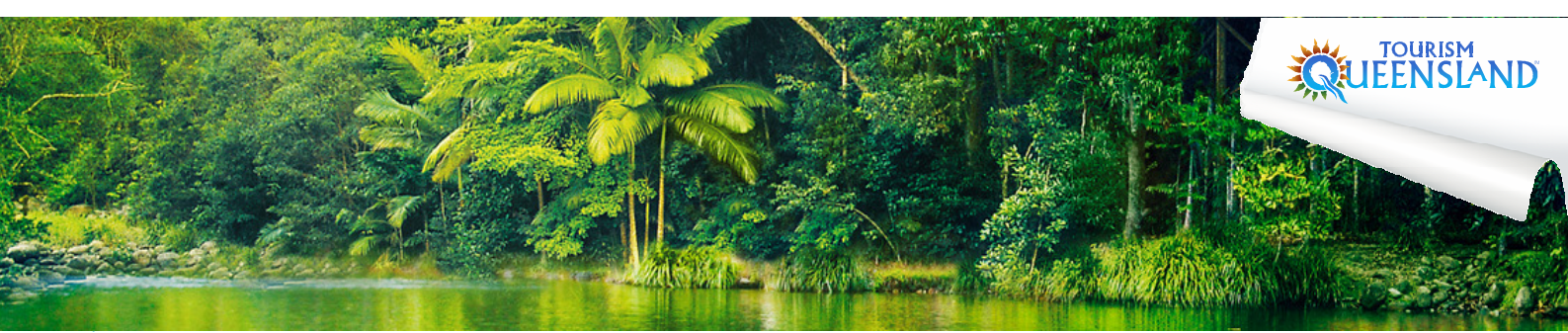
www.earthwatch.org

Be part of a Queensland research mission

Learn more about the lives of koalas or measure the impact of climate change on a World Heritage-listed rainforest. Earthwatch Institute and Australia Ventures offer the rare opportunity to assist qualified professionals with a variety of conservation project expeditions throughout Australia and the world. In Queensland, participants can discover the diversity of the State on a range of expeditions from the rainforest to the reef.



Study Australia's famous koala on St Bees Island off Mackay, a quiet volcanic island with rainforests, eucalypt woodlands, dense grasslands and fringed with reefs. Find the key to a healthy balance in the lives of koala populations, and spend your free time relaxing under palms on the beach or snorkelling in the lagoon.



Or perhaps study cockatoos, kangaroos and bettongs at Brooklyn Station in Tropical North Queensland, discover life in the rainforest canopy on Cape Tribulation, or research the effects of climate change in the rainforests of northern Australia on the Atherton Tableland.

Whatever expedition you choose, your direct involvement in environmental research and conservation issues will make a difference. Prices vary depending on location and duration of expedition. www.earthwatch.org or www.responsibletravel.com/Trip/Trip101145.htm

Volunteer for conservation



Leave your mark on some of Queensland's most beautiful locations with Conservation Volunteers Australia. A "Conservation Experience" offers a fun and friendly opportunity to contribute in a practical way to help conserve Queensland's unique environment.

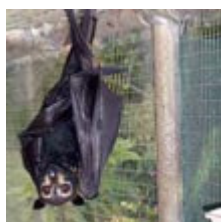
How does planting trees at Mount Tamborine in the lush Gold Coast Hinterland sound? Or perhaps removing exotic weeds from the Noosa Heads National Park on the Sunshine Coast against a backdrop of waves rolling into rugged headlands and sheltered bays.

Become involved in tree planting, erosion and salinity control, seed collection, construction and maintenance of walking tracks, endangered flora and fauna surveys and monitoring, weed control, habitat restoration and heritage protection.

Join a team of six to 10 other volunteers. All meals, accommodation and travel to and from the project are provided. Prices vary according to the duration of the project.

www.conservationvolunteers.com.au

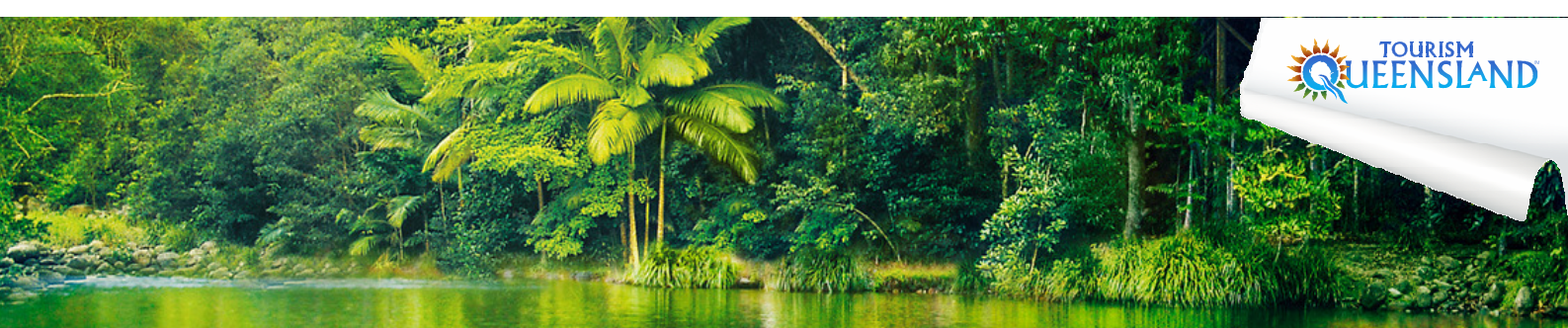
Going batty over a Queensland wildlife gem



Join in a rare opportunity to help preserve Australia's bat population at a rescue centre in the Tolga Scrub area near Atherton in northern Queensland. The centre primarily houses flying fox bats, but is also home to a number of small 'microbats.'

The aim of the Volunteers Abroad program is to rescue, rehabilitate and release all species of bats. In addition the program takes on the perennial problem of tick paralysis that kills hundreds of flying foxes in the region each year. Volunteers also provide care for injured and orphaned bats.

Applicants need to be 23 years old and over and be able to provide a resume. For more information and costs please visit www.tolgabathospital.org



Become a wildlife ranger

Conserving the State's native wildlife and managing national parks and other protected areas is the responsibility of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). Helping QPWS meet this challenge is a large team of unpaid volunteers.

Volunteers directly contribute to protecting and managing Queensland's natural environment. It also provides the opportunity to meet people and develop knowledge, skills and self-esteem.



As a QPWS volunteer, you might:

- care for and rehabilitate sick, injured or orphaned animals;
- survey frogs in our tropical rainforests;
- plant native trees along wildlife corridors;
- help tag nesting sea turtles;
- provide information to help visitors enjoy Queensland's protected areas such as national parks and World Heritage areas;
- take overseas visitors or school students on guided nature walks;
- join a NatureSearch team and survey the native plants and animals in your local area;
- record migratory wading birds along our coasts; or
- restore degraded land to a more natural state.

Volunteers can choose from being part of a group or alternatively, taking on a more independent role. Either way, you will be guided and assisted by a QPWS officer. This officer will give you an introduction to the QPWS, explain your role as a volunteer and provide training.

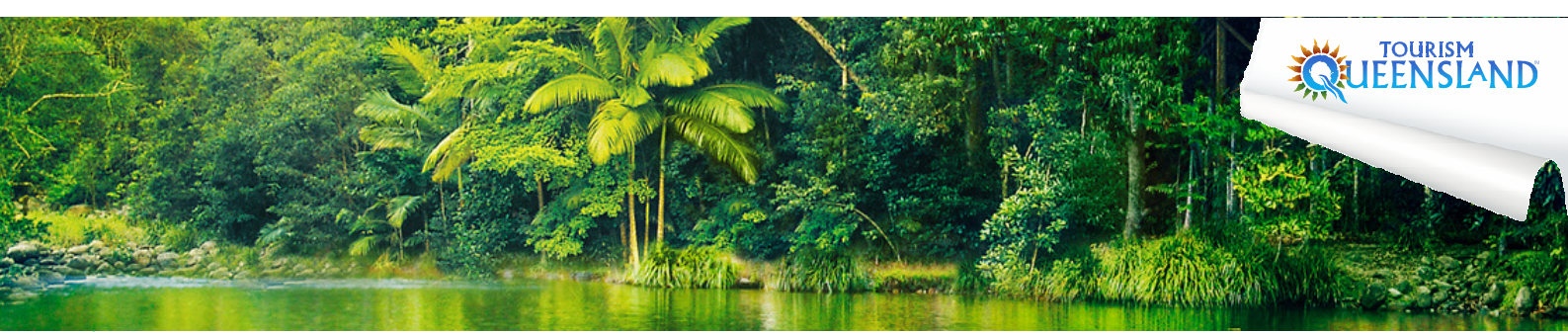
To find out more information and to nominate as a QPWS volunteer visit:
http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/about_the_epa/volunteers/where_to_start/

OUCH's passion is to protect the reef



Protecting the World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef is the passion and driving force behind the volunteers of the Order of Coral Heroes (OUCH). OUCH Volunteers are dedicated to protecting the coral reef environment, with much of their time spent in, under, or above the waters off the Queensland coast.

OUCH Volunteers are invited to participate in numerous education programs which will enhance their skills and knowledge of working in the coral reef environment. Depending on the volunteer's skills, they could be in the water, on a boat or behind a computer.



Four of the main projects Volunteers at OUCH are involved with include:

1. *Reef Protection Marker Buoys*
Help OUCH survey and mark fringing reefs in the Whitsunday region. To date, the project has helped reduce anchor damage by an estimated 80 percent.
2. *Coral Reef Monitoring*
Volunteers are part of a vital monitoring program recording the general health of the fragile coral reef. The data collected is used by researchers and managers to better look after the reef.
3. *Seagrass Surveys*
Dugongs and turtles, both endangered species, depend on seagrass as a source of food. Help OUCH volunteers and marine scientists to monitor changes in the growth, distribution and composition of this most important marine plant.
4. *Community Education*
One of OUCH's most important goals is community education so more people understand about the fragility of the coral reef and how to protect this important natural resource.

Based in Airlie Beach in the beautiful Whitsundays, OUCH offers a variety of worthwhile projects for volunteers to discover the spectacular Great Barrier Reef. For more information, visit www.ouchvolunteers.org/

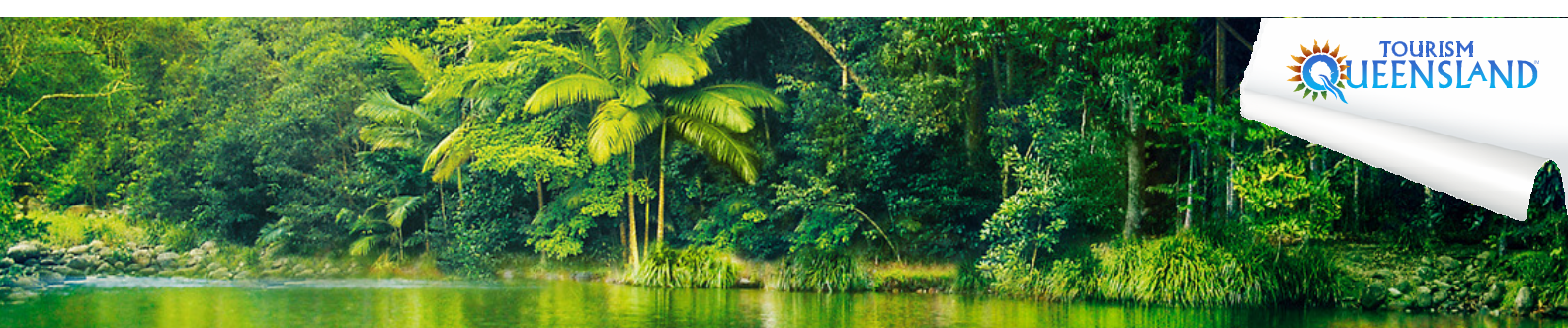
Sea Grass Watch

Discovering dugong trails in underwater meadows or recording the smothering effects of mud are all part of the task of monitoring seagrass in Queensland's Whitsunday region. Seagrass meadows are a vital sign of local marine environmental health, acting as nurseries for fish, prawns and other marine life and are essential to the survival of the dugong (also known as sea cows). They also help keep coastal waters clear by stabilising sediments.



Volunteers can spend their time in the beautiful Queensland waters collecting specimens, or working with scientists to collect data. Between one third to one half of the seagrass in Pioneer Bay has been lost in recent years, but there are still healthy seagrass beds with clear evidence of recent dugong grazing.

Volunteer seagrass watchers in the Whitsunday region operate as Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) Volunteer Rangers. The Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (QDPI&F) provides training on Seagrass-Watch protocols and retains the data collected by the volunteers. For more information visit www.seagrasswatch.org/about.html or www.nrm.gov.au/projects/qld/mwhs/2006-02.html



Green Guardians help ancient rainforests



Walking through the World Heritage-listed Daintree Rainforest in Tropical North Queensland is, quite literally, like walking back through time. Many of the plants can be traced back more than 120 million years making it the oldest continuously surviving rainforest in the world. Guests to the rainforest are invited to become 'Green Guardians' by taking part in a 1.5 hour daily tour from Coconut Beach Resort at Cape Tribulation. Participants learn about the key

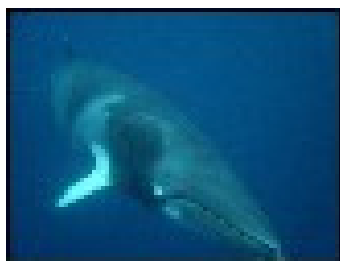
stages of rainforest growth and then become initiated as a 'Green Guardian' by planting a seedling. Leave your holiday in Queensland knowing you have helped regenerate a rainforest. \$10 from each participation fee is donated to organisations such as the Daintree Rainforest Foundation, who co-ordinate the buy-back and forest regeneration throughout the World Heritage-listed area. www.coconutbeachresort.com.au/green-guardian/index.html

Work among the wetlands

An hour's drive from Cairns in the Tropical North, the Mareeba Wetlands are a series of 12 interconnecting lagoons, creeks and channels. With 204 species of bird, more than 20 mammal species, freshwater crocodiles and a myriad of lower vertebrates and arthropods, the wetland is a haven for bird watchers and animal lovers. There are various opportunities at Mareeba for volunteers to experience life in the Australian bush, and contribute valuable hands on work through the wetland's conservation initiatives. Help build walking tracks and bird hides, or assist in species monitoring and wildlife care, while living in on-site safari tents for a minimum stay of two weeks. If you need a day off, take the short drive to Cairns or Port Douglas to spend a day discovering the natural beauty of the Great Barrier Reef. www.mareebawetlands.com.



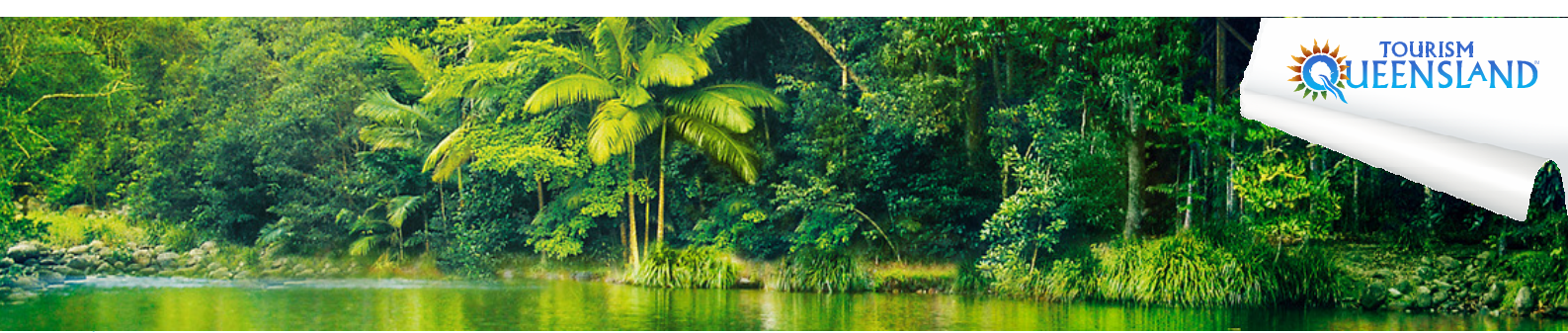
Dive into a Great Barrier Reef expedition



Here's your chance to join a research expedition to learn more about marine creatures including minke whales, sharks, octopus and fluorescent corals. Join Undersea Explorer on a six or nine day expedition to the Great Barrier Reef where you will enjoy fantastic adventure diving, as well as assisting the onboard scientist and research team with vital marine projects. You will be contributing to the hands on knowledge and conservation of marine eco systems. Enjoy biology presentations, slide shows and hands-on learning in

the water with plenty of time left for diving at spectacular and isolated reefs.

www.undersea.com.au



Be a Fraser Island Eco Ranger



Experience the spectacular natural sights of the world's largest sand island and World Heritage listed wonderland, Fraser Island. Join the Kingfisher Bay Resort, Fraser Island research project during your stay with Australia's largest private team of eco rangers. Volunteer field researchers are needed to monitor the water quality in the lakes around the resort and determine the environmental and human activities affecting the swamp banksias - a native plant which grows around the lakes. www.kingfisherbay.com

Adopt a Wildlife Child

Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary at the southern end of Queensland's Gold Coast offers visitors fascinating wildlife shows, displays, night Wildlife Adventure tours and a new Wild Island. The non-profit Sanctuary is dedicated to wildlife conservation and welfare and is currently building a Community Wildlife Hospital which is due to open in 2007/08. The "Adopt a Wildlife Child program" allows people from all over the world to adopt a kangaroo or wombat. All contributions will help the Sanctuary assist with food, veterinary care and habitat upgrades. www.currumbin-sanctuary.org.au



Dive for research on the Great Barrier Reef



Get involved in conserving Queensland's beautiful Great Barrier Reef. Operating out of Townsville, on the north Queensland coast, Reef Check Australia offers recreational scuba divers the chance to monitor the health of the Great Barrier Reef. Teams of volunteer divers are led by scientists to regularly monitor and report on the health of the reef. By providing the volunteer divers with the tools and knowledge to gather high quality data, Reef Check aims to educate the public on the value of the reef system.

www.reefcheckaustralia.org

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