

Garig Gunak Barlu National Park



What is the project about?

Best known for its fishing Cobourg Peninsula is also recognised as one of the oldest and most significant conservation reserves in the NT. The Peninsula was originally settled in the 1800's and although these first settlements were short-lived, they were visited by some of the leading naturalists and explorers of the day. Numerous new species were first described from this region from birds to marine invertebrates and plants. Many of the specimens from these early collections once described became the original type locality (the first place that the species was found and described). The legacy of collections from this region underpins the present day wildlife taxonomy of plants and animals that are now known to be widespread throughout Australia.

Cobourg holds populations of mammals species that are now sparse in most areas of the Top End. These include bandicoots, northern quolls, phascogales, black-footed tree rats, as well as numerous snakes and birds already affected by cane toads throughout the NT.

Research

Until recently only one comprehensive fauna survey had ever been conducted of the Peninsula in the 1960's by CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research.

Now 40 years later Biodiversity Conservation is nearing the end of a two year flora and fauna survey of the park that aims to re-assess the status of the wildlife and plants. It may also be the last opportunity to examine the structure of the fauna before the Park is invaded by cane toads that are expected to arrive in the area in about a year.

The aim of this study is to provide baseline data consistent with survey standards that have now been applied to many other regions across the Top End of the NT over the last 15 years.

The National Park now known as Garig Gunak Barlu recognises a new era of joint management arrangements between local indigenous people and the NT Parks and Wildlife Service.

