

Wildlife Awareness – The Amazons Australia

Cassowary Coast

Cassowary's

Be Cass-o-wary!!

Southern cassowary behaviour is unpredictable. Cassowaries can inflict serious injuries to people and pets by kicking with their large, clawed feet.

Never approach cassowaries.

Never approach chicks – male cassowaries will defend them.

Never feed cassowaries – it is illegal, dangerous and has caused southern cassowary deaths.

Always discard food scraps in closed bins and ensure compost bins have secure lids.

Always slow down when driving in southern cassowary territory.

Never stop your vehicle to look at southern cassowaries on the road.

Keep dogs behind fences or on a leash.

If you come face-to-face with an aggressive bird, it's important to have some simple strategies to protect yourself. If you encounter a southern cassowary, back away slowly and put something like a tree or a backpack between yourself and the bird, and let it go on its way.

To report a southern cassowary incident or sighting call 1300 130 372.

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/animals/living-with/southern-cassowary>

https://www.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0021/534414/be-cassowary-flyer.pdf.pdf



Crocodiles

Be Crockwise in Croc Country - Top Tips

Choose Crockwise behaviours to reduce your risk of crocodile attack:

1. Stay at least 5m from the water's edge— crocodiles can attack people and animals at the water's edge.
2. Keep a sturdy object like an esky, a tree stump or large rock between yourself and the water.



3. Be extra cautious at night, dusk and dawn. Crocodiles are more likely to hunt at these times and are more difficult to see.
4. Be aware that crocodile attacks can occur at any time of the year.
5. Stay away from crocodile traps, crocodile nests and places with crocodile tracks and slide marks. Crocodiles may be close by.

Swimming in Croc Country

However, if you choose to risk swimming in Croc Country:

1. Swim in full daylight—never at dawn, dusk or at night.

Crocodiles prefer to hunt in low light.

2. Only swim in clear water where you can see the bottom.

Crocodiles can still be found in clear water, but it's easier to spot them approaching.

3. Swim between the flags at patrolled beaches.

There are always people watching the water for crocodiles.

4. Do not swim after heavy rain and floods.

Crocodiles move around in high waters and can turn up in unexpected places.

5. Do not swim in murky water.

Crocodiles become invisible in shallow, murky water.

https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/animals/living-with/crocodiles/becrocwise?utm_source=shortURL&utm_medium=shortURL&utm_campaign=becrocwise

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/animals/living-with/crocodiles/becrocwise/be-crocwise-top-tips>

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/animals/living-with/crocodiles/becrocwise/tips-for-recreational-activities/swimming>

Crocodile sightings dashboard

<https://spatial.information.qld.gov.au/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=7d00337034a144819de891e53c65fd4a>

Kangaroos

Be aware that Kangaroos come in many shapes, colours and sizes and can move at high speeds and change directions very quickly and cross your path. The biggest risk is when cycling along roads / paths where there is plenty of grass.



Leeches

In Australia's tropical rainforests the most common leech is the land-dwelling jawed leech (*Gnatbobdellida libbata*). In wet weather the leech waits in foliage or on the forest floor to attach itself to a passing warm-blooded animal. The leech releases an anaesthetic in its saliva which numbs the skin and keeps the host from knowing it is sucking their blood. Leeches also release an anti-coagulant called hirudin which stops blood from clotting and keeps it flowing for as long as the leech is feeding. When they are full of blood they drop off.



To avoid leeches cover apply insect repellent to your socks and shoes and reapply, gaiters and over shoe gaiters are helpful.

To remove a leech, slide a fingernail / pocket knife under the biting end. (The hirudin might cause the bite to bleed for some time, and the bites are often itchy.)

Avoid pulling leeches off. This can tear the skin which may then become infected.

FIRST AID After the leech is removed, aftercare helps to reduce the risk of infection:

Clean the wound thoroughly with soap and warm water; Apply antiseptic to disinfect the area; Cover the wound with a sterile dressing; Monitor the bite site over the next few days for any signs of infection such as redness, swelling, discharge, or increased pain; If symptoms persist or worsen, seek medical advice immediately.

<https://www.wettropics.gov.au/site/user-assets/docs/leeches.pdf>

Snakes

Never approach snakes and never assume that they are non-venomous, assume they are venomous!



Snakes usually prefer to retreat when disturbed but if they feel threatened, they can become defensive. Most snake bites occur when people try to capture or kill the animals.

If you see a snake, don't panic. Back away to a safe distance and allow the snake to move away. Snakes often want to escape when disturbed. When left alone, snakes pose little or no danger to people.

Always wear protective footwear and protective clothing in wildlife areas.

<https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with/snakes/near-you/cairns-region>

FIRST AID – DRSABC (call 000 and apply snake bite bandage /pressure immobilisation bandage) DO NOT MOVE THE CASUALTY (keep them still) and DO NOT REMOVE THE VENOM

https://stjohnwa.com.au/online-resources/first-aid-information-and-resources/snake-bite?srsId=AfmBOorZq-SRCkYaBmZjCTThQ7bnnmR_zD5pfZikqONd7oaZQiTlrcYQ

Stinging Tree

Stinging plants have tiny hairs on them that can sting you if you touch them.

These plants can cause significant pain in many people and a severe allergic reaction in some people.

Avoid being stung by wearing long sleeves, long pants and gloves.



FIRST AID - If you are stung by a stinging tree, you should try to remove the hairs from your skin. Do not rub the area — this can break off the hairs and make them very difficult to remove

- remove visible hairs with tweezers
- use adhesive tape or hair-removal wax strip to remove the finer hairs
- do not scratch or rub the area since this may cause the hairs to sink deeper into your skin

If possible, use wax strips to remove any remaining hairs of the stinging tree.

*In the case of a severe allergic reaction – DRSABCD and Call 000 immediately.

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/stinging-plants#trees>

<https://www.poisonsinfo.health.qld.gov.au/plants-and-mushrooms/stinging-tree-dendrocnide>

Stingers

There are several species of **marine stingers** found in the waters at Queensland beaches. These include the ‘**box jellyfish**’ and the **irukandji**, which are classed as dangerous tropical marine stingers. Bluebottle and other jellyfish may also be present in tropical waters.



While marine stingers may be present throughout the entire year in tropical Queensland, the risk associated with these two types of potentially dangerous jellyfish are higher during the 'marine stinger season' that typically runs from November through to May.

FIRST AID – DRSABCD – Call 000 be prepared to do CPR, pour vinegar over affected area 30seconds, (remove tentacles if box jellyfish). Monitor

<https://lifesaving.com.au/safety-info/marine-stingers>



Stonefish

Stone fish are found in shallow sandy and rocky areas or coral reefs. They are not aggressive fish. They raise their spines in defence when a potential predator comes close. Stone fish stings most often occur on the feet when humans accidentally step on their spines.



When contact with a spine occurs, venom is delivered from a gland at the base of the spine, along the spine, and into the contact site. Contact with more than one spine means more venom is delivered.

The venom causes an extremely painful reaction. Though the reaction can lead to severe injury and death, the introduction of an anti-venom in the 1950s has reduced documented lethality to zero in recent years.

Those who experience a sting will endure significant pain that can last for days.

Reduce the risk and **always wear footwear when in or near the water.**

FIRST AID – DRSABCD – Call 000 – Apply Hot Water to puncture site, keep casualty still, NO pressure bandage is to be applied, manage bleeding.

<https://www.aims.gov.au/docs/projectnet/stone-fish.html>

Stingrays

Stingrays, vary in size (40cm to 2m or more) and colour (sandy to darker brown), the common characteristics are that of being flat and disk-like with fins that look and act like wings. Stingrays tend to dwell on the floor of the ocean's shallow waters, burying themselves in the sand. they blend in with their environment and are not always visible.



If threatened the stingray will thrust its tail up and forwards in defence, lash out and cause lacerations or punctures while releasing a potent venom. The spine may be

forced into the skin of the victim and stay embedded in the skin. Some barbs may contain numerous backwards-directed barbs along the edges which makes removal extremely painful and difficult.

FIRST AID - If the wound is bleeding, apply pressure.

Immerse the wound in hot water. The water should be as hot as you can handle, but not so hot that it burns. As the water cools, keep changing it for more hot water, aiming for an immersion duration of 30 – 90 minutes. The stingray toxin is sensitive to heat which acts to deactivate it.

Be sure to seek medical advice as part of the barb may have broken off in the wound.

<https://www.barrierreefaustralia.com/info/reef-dangers/stingrays/>

https://stjohn.org.au/assets/uploads/fact%20sheets/english/Fact%20sheets_bites%20and%20stings.pdf

Sharks

It is important to note sharks will not attack humans in the water by mere presence and do not recognise humans as a food source. Attacks are very rare and generally only occur when safe swimming practice recommendations are ignored, particularly relevant when sea conditions have either low light or low visibility.



Everyone can be ‘Shark Smart’ by following these safe swimming practices:

- Don’t swim at dawn or dusk
- Always swim in clear water (not in murky water, busy anchorages, estuary mouths or canals)
- Don’t swim where fish are being cleaned
- Swim, surf, snorkel or dive with a buddy
- Follow local signage and swim between the flags at patrolled beaches.

<https://tropicalnorthqueensland.org.au/plan-your-trip/wildlife-safety/shark-safety/>

Wait-A-While (Lawyer Vine)

This vine grows in tropical and subtropical rainforests. Clumps are formed from a gathering of a few stems which develop in chaotic tangles of twenty to one hundred metre long canes. The stems have compound leaves which also have prickles that protrude vertically on the leaf edges and stalk. Opposite each leaf there is a stiff leafless stem of one to two metres in length with backward facing hooks which allow the plant to be a successful canopy climber. Sometimes these are not easy to see.



These hooked stems are known to catch on to people's clothing, giving it the common names - Wait-a-While, or Lawyer Vine.

WARNING – These can stop you in your tracks when walking, running and riding and can cause trips and falls as well. If caught up, you should retreat slowly backwards and the vine should be released.

FIRST AID – The barbs can become embedded in your skin, causing bleeding and also infections. Use tweezers to remove barbs – but you need to

Wild Boar / Feral Pigs

Be aware that Wild Boar / Feral pigs can be found in some of the wilderness areas in the Tropical North. Most of the time they will be in the bush and you won't see them, but you will see evidence of where they have been – as they dig up the soil and try to eat the roots from underground.

If you come across these animals, they will probably get out of your way, but best to not approach them directly. Be aware that sometimes they can be moving through the bush at high speeds and run in front of you or behind you. So be alert and aware at all times that they are out there.

