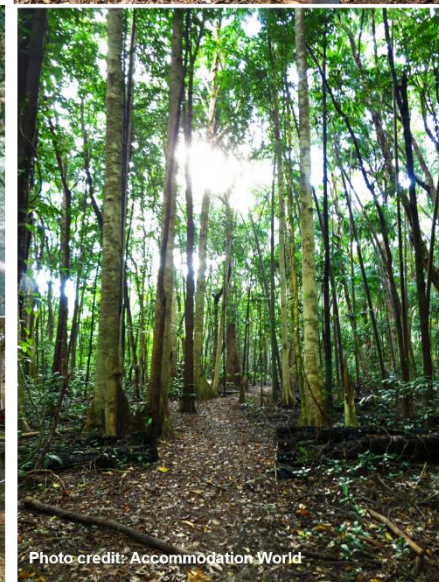


Urban Rainforest Restoration Field Trip



Recommended for field trip: long-sleeved shirts, covered shoes, hat, sunscreen, drinking water

High level summary

This trip will highlight ongoing efforts to restore three rainforest areas near Darwin that have been substantially cleared and disturbed by impacts caused by World War 2 defensive constructions, cyclones, and urban expansion. Participants will have the opportunity to visit three rainforest restoration sites near Darwin—East Point Reserve, Casuarina Coastal Reserve and Holmes Jungle and interact with Landcare and other volunteer groups involved in the restoration of these sites.

Detailed description

The trip begins 7:30 am on September 26 from the Darwin Esplanade where we will head a short distance (~8 km) north to the East Point Reserve – a 135-hectare remnant of coastal monsoon forest projecting into the Beagle Gulf and partly abutted by mangroves. Almost half the forest loss occurred prior to 1945 owing to the use of the peninsula by the Australian military during World War 2. The other

half was cleared for a golf course and other purposes between 1945 and 1963. The monsoon rainforests at East Point were also severely disturbed by Cyclone Tracy in 1974. Long term restoration activities have occurred at the site since 1974 including planting of new patches of trees, management of water and plantings to support the Atlas moth. Since taking over management of the area in 1984, Darwin City Council has revegetated about 20% of the peninsula. Agile Wallabies '*Macropus agilis*' present in the Reserve proliferated during the 1980s, damaging remnant forest and replantings, but the population returned to much lower densities during the 1990s following closure of most watering points. Significant on-going management issues for the forest include the cost of further revegetation and weed control. Invasion of remnant forest by Poinciana '*Delonix regia*', an attractive non-native tree, may prove to be a controversial management issue in the future.

After spending about an hour at East Point, we will head to our next urban restoration spot – Casuarina Coastal Reserve (CCR). Located 15 km from Darwin City, CCR is Darwin's premier and much loved urban reserve covering approximately 1361 ha between Rapid Creek and Lee Point featuring 13km of sandy beaches, dramatic cliffs, and shady casuarina trees. It hosts important monsoonal rainforest, mangrove, paperback swamp, woodland, and coastal dune habitat. The beaches of the reserve are significant feeding grounds for a variety of migratory shorebirds, which can be observed through binoculars from October to May. There is also a short board walk through the rainforest across a creek with mangroves into savanna woodland. The reserve is surrounded by urban development, making it a critical habitat corridor. The Reserve lies within the area traditionally occupied by the Larrakia people and has one registered sacred site and five recorded sites within it. We will hear from members of the Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group (CCRLG) about their ongoing restoration efforts at this site and the challenges that they have faced over the year including weed infestations, fire and storms. Formed in 1997 to protect and restore this vital habitat corridor, the CCRLG has managed plantings over many years and have worked on restoring the habitat for an endangered species, the Atlas Moth (*Attacus wardi*) at the site.

After spending an about an hour at the Casuarina Coastal Reserve, we will have a delightful picnic morning tea at Casuarina Coastal Reserve itself, after which we head to our last urban restoration site– Holmes Jungle Nature Park. Holmes Jungle is a 250 hectare park managed by the Northern Territory Government's Parks and Wildlife division. Holmes Jungle protects an isolated pocket of monsoon forest and serves as a refuge to a large number of birds, mammals, and reptiles. It is a permanent spring fed location and so the vegetation is much taller and evergreen. It is surrounded by Eucalyptus woodland and is impacted by fire and invasive weeds.

After spending about 45 minutes to an hour at Holmes Jungle, we head to the café at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory – Saltwater @Bundilla for lunch. After lunch, we head back to our hotel, which we expect to get to about 1:40 pm. Alternatively, after lunch, participants have the option of exploring the Museum and Art Gallery and then heading back to the hotel on their own.

