Wildlife Tourism in the Scenic Rim

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WTA workshop, Kooralbyn
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Wildlife Tourism Australia

“Why don’t we hear about this?”

Comment by German tourist (similar comments by others) regarding Scenic Rim in contrast with FNQ and Fraser Island

Points to consider:

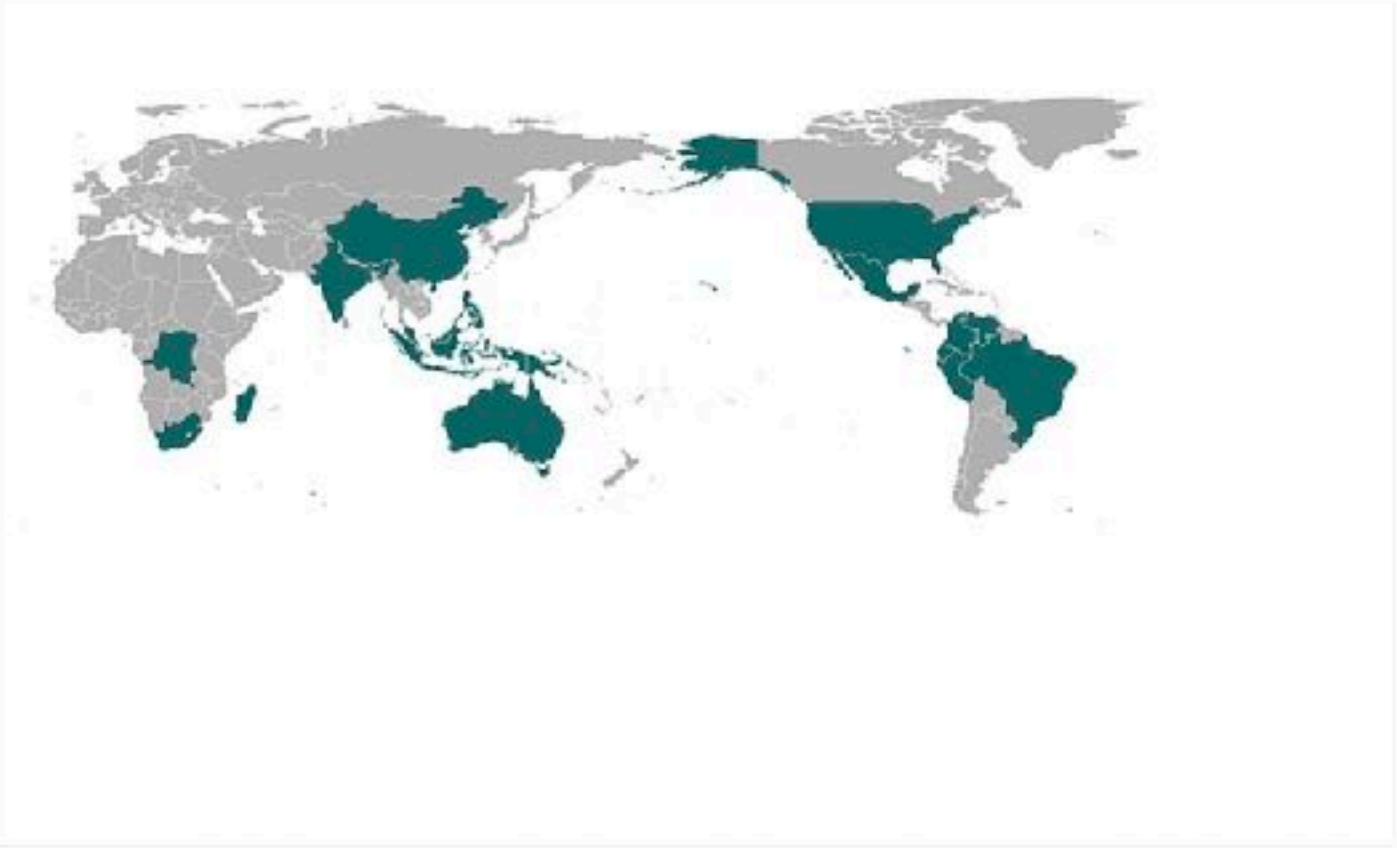
- Our biodiversity
- What tourists want (wildlife)
- What tourists want (other)
- Benefits of wildlife tourism
- Keeping it “eco”

Our biodiversity

Global biodiversity hotspots (Department of the Environment and Energy, Australian Government)

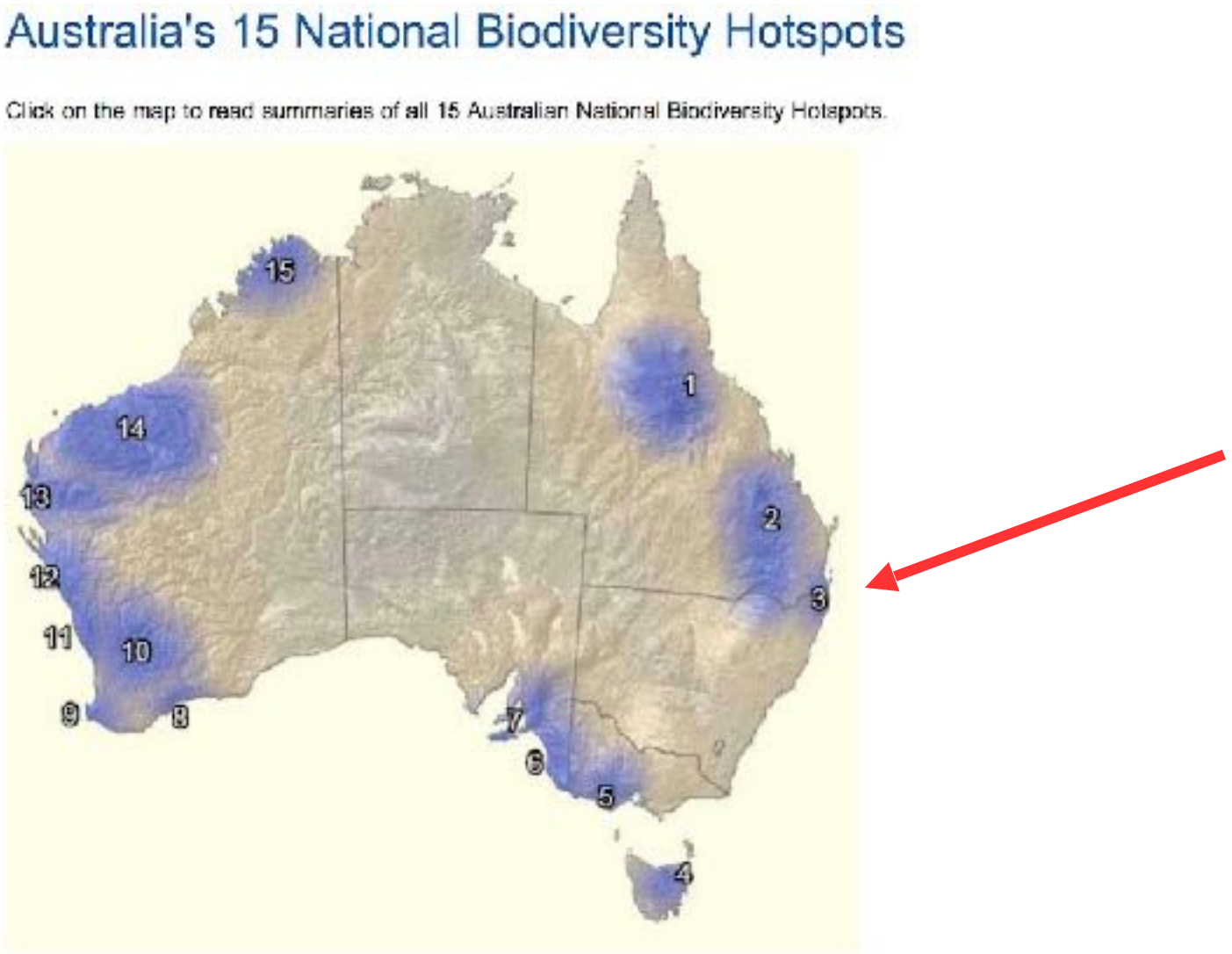
Megadiverse countries

- Australia
- The Congo
- Madagascar
- South Africa
- China
- India
- Indonesia
- Malaysia
- Papua New Guinea
- Philippines
- Brazil
- Colombia
- Ecuador
- Mexico
- Peru
- United States
- Venezuela



Australia is home to between 600,000 and 700,000 species, many of which are endemic, that is they are found nowhere else in the world. These include, for example, 84% of our plant species, 83% of mammals, and 45% of birds.

Our biodiversity



(Department of the Environment and Energy, Australian Government)

Our biodiversity

Border Ranges North and South (Queensland and New South Wales)

This sub-tropical and temperate hotspot is one of Australia's most diverse areas - and it is ***the* most biologically diverse area in New South Wales and southern Queensland**. It has a variety of significant habitats: subtropical rainforest, wet sclerophyll forest, mountain headlands, rocky outcrops and transition zones between forests

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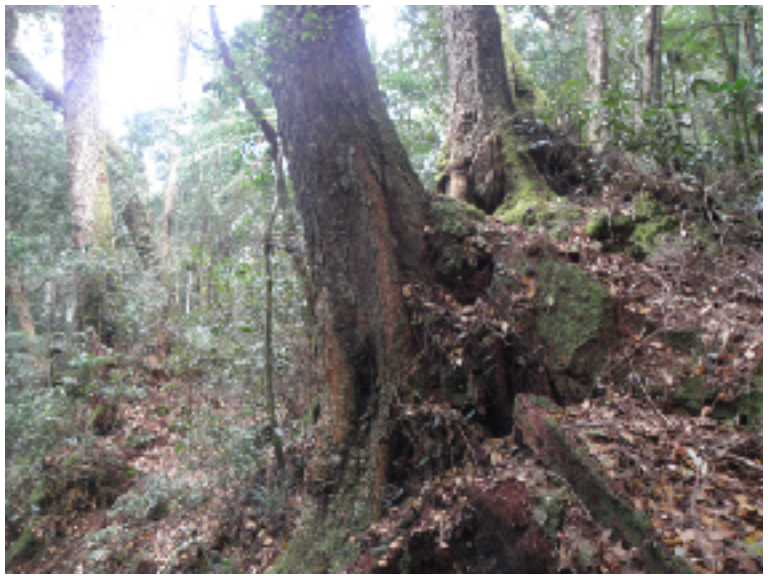

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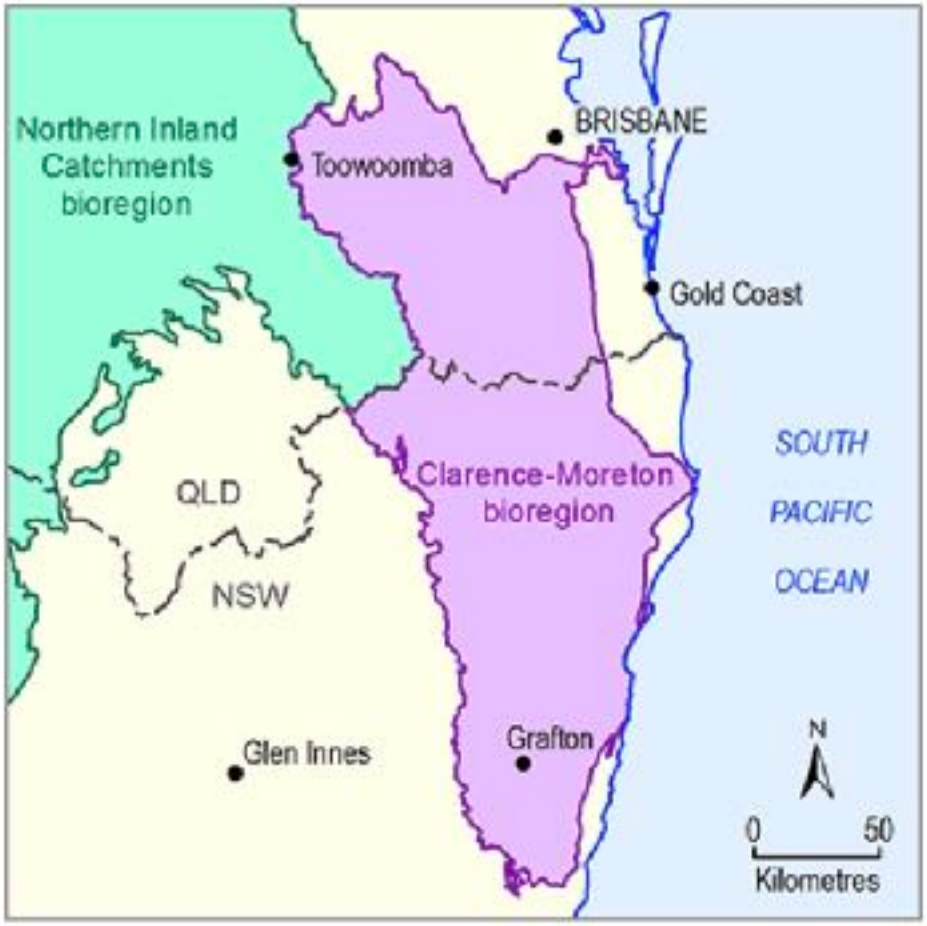
Clarence-Moreton Bioregion

The Clarence-Moreton bioregion is one of the most biologically diverse regions in Australia. It includes the **'Macleay–McPherson Overlap',** an area where **a combination of climate and geography** have resulted in the **co-occurrence of both temperate and tropical species** and a substantial number of regionally endemic species (Burbidge, 1960).

(Bioregional assessments, Australian Government)



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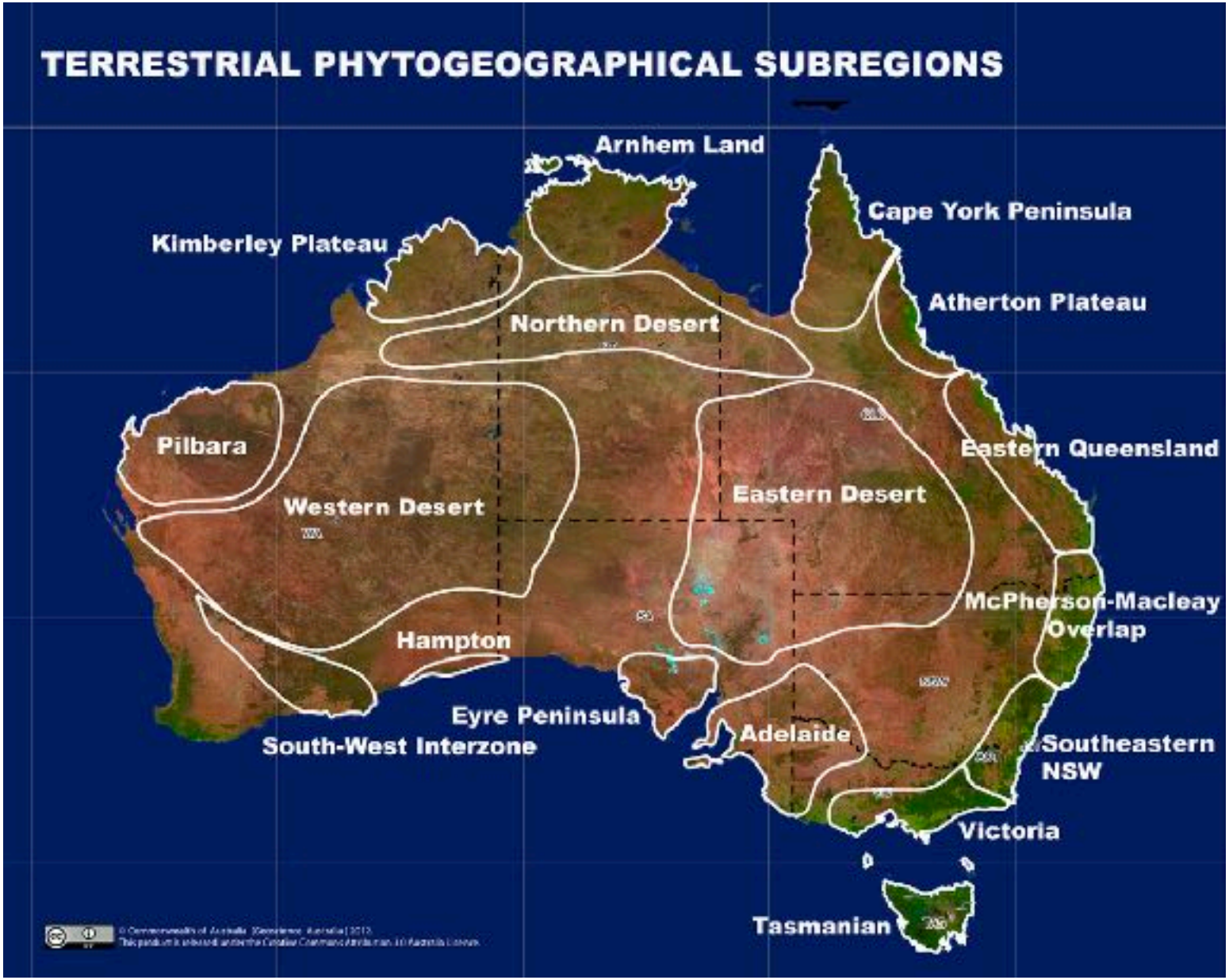

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- Monotremes
- Marsupials
- Placentals

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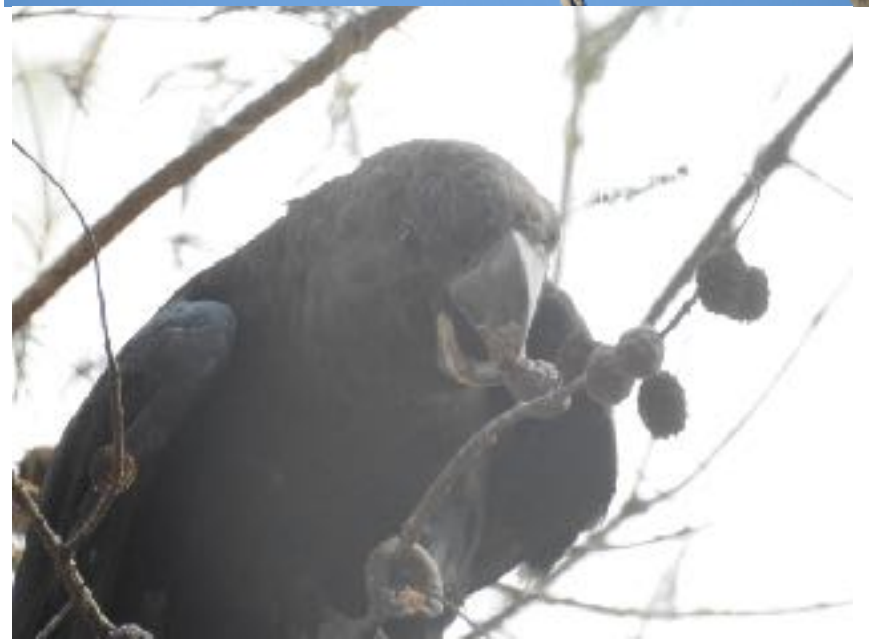
Our biodiversity

Birds:

- About half of Australia's bird species
- All Australian raptors including Australia's two biggest eagles
- Seven cockatoo species
- Bright parrots
- Lyrebirds – ONLY found in eastern Australia
- Bowerbirds, log-runners and a bird of Paradise - only in Australia and New Guinea
- Many endemic species
- Several threatened species



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Reptiles and frogs:

- Snakes – All Australian families, and including many harmless species such as carpet python, bandy-bandy and tree-snakes etc.
- Lizards - All Australian families and including large goannas, leaf0railed geckos, the world's heaviest skink, and several dragons etc.
- Turtles - freshwater(three species)
- Over 40 species of frog, including big ones, colourful ones and threatened species

Our biodiversity

Other:

- Molluscs – great diversity of Gondwana-related land snails
- Freshwater crayfish
- Glow worms (only in Australia and New Zealand)
- Australia's 2nd and 3rd largest butterflies
- Many colourful beetles and dragonflies

Our biodiversity

- **Other**:

- Many endemic plant species
- Gondwana relics
- Rainforest, eucalypt forest and mountain heathland species
- Fascinating fungi
- ……. etc.

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- Big animals
- Cute animals
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- Lots of animals
- Birds for life-list
- Unusual animals
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What tourists want (other)

- **Safety**
- Comfort
- Adventure
- Entertainment
- Relaxation
- Cultural experience
- Novelty
- Value for money
- Time-saving
- Easy access
- Family/Senior friendly

Photo New York Times

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Benefits of wildlife tourism

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If wildlife tourism can bring tourists a region, that region can benefit economically

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Benefits of wildlife tourism

From Tisdell and Wilson, in Wildlife Tourism Snapshot (Sustainable Tourism CRC)

Mon Repos

If there were no sea turtles at Mon Repos, income to the region (within a 60 km radius) would fall A$500,000 dollars a year despite short sea turtle season and the scarcity of turtles.

Sea turtle viewing at Mon Repos is, therefore, one of the most important economic activities in the region.

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Lamington National Park

• Most important attractions: 1.rainforest 2.birds (not just twitchers, also people who just enjoyed seeing and hearing birds).

• Tourist expenditure at least **AUS$35 million**. Virtually all of that can be **attributed to the presence of wildlife**

• Without birds it is estimated tha

revenue would fall by almost AUS$7 million.

Keeping it “eco”
Sustainability

- Environmental
- Economic

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- Protect the landscapes they want to see

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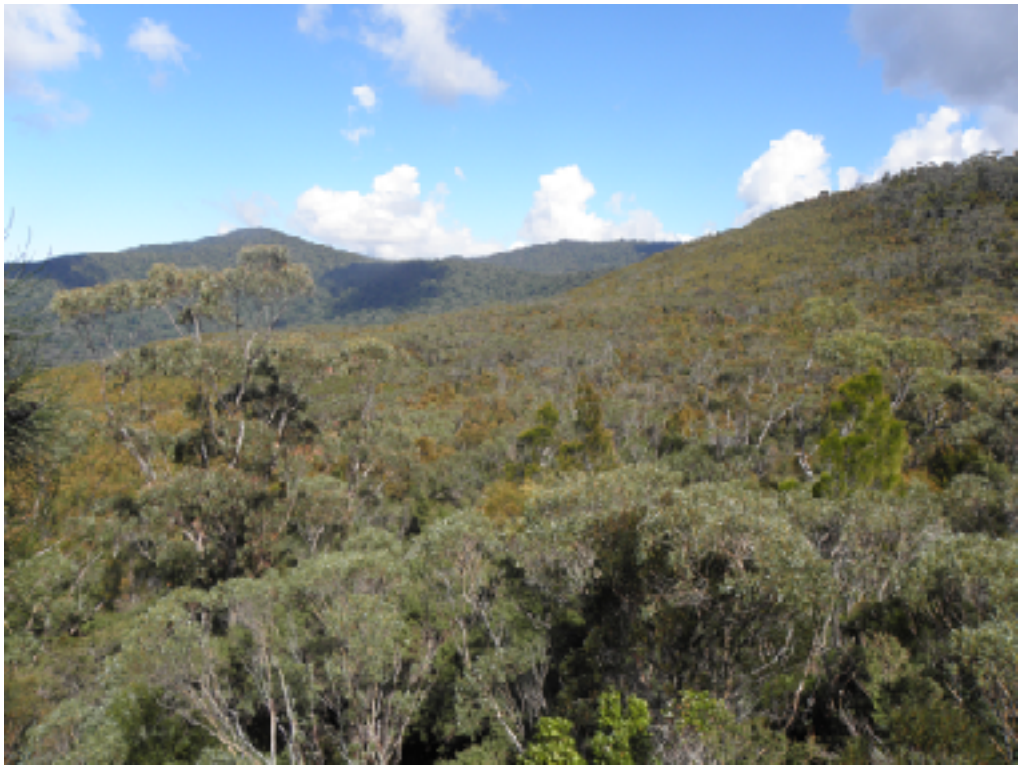
- Protect biodiversity generally – a responsibility locally and globally



Sustainability

Environmental

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Economic

- Need for individual business to be financially successful if it is to continue functioning
- Flow-on effects to community
- Ability to contribute to conservation

Visitors already have some great opportunities

- Long-running eco-lodges
- Glow worm caves
- Many miles of world class walking tracks
- Canopy walks
- Birding & other wildlife tours
- Variety of accessible national parks
- Camping, glamping
- Farmstays, horse-riding

So ….

- Where to from here?