

The Daintree River is surrounded by mountains and deep valleys. Combined with the climatic conditions of the area, the river is prone to quickly developing floods with little warning due to the high rainfalls on the 1000-metre high mountain ranges around the catchment and the influence of the cyclonic forces in the adjacent Coral Sea.

Take some time to explore the Daintree River estuary. Here, the river is tidal, the water brackish and mangroves line the banks. Birds and butterflies abound.

MANGROVES AND MUDSKIPPERS

marine species.

Some 26 species of fish have been found in the Daintree River estuary. Local anglers catch trevally, mangrove jack and barramundi, while prawns and crabs breed here.

At low tide you'll see mudskippers skittering across the mangrove mud. The mudskipper's expanded gills hold reserves of oxygen – carrying water allowing survival out of water. These reserves are replenished every few minutes from pools or water in its burrow.

The Daintree River is 120km long. The sea is 7km east of the ferry crossing as the cockatoo flies – or 9.5km as the crocodile swims.



THE FERRY CROSSING

A 40-vehicle ferry operates from 6am to midnight everyday except Christmas Day.

The ferry takes about five minutes to cross the river and averages 140 crossings each day, travelling about 15,000km each year along its wire ropes.

Avoid delays by crossing outside the peak periods of 9am-noon and 2-5pm.

While waiting for the ferry stand well back from the water's edge – some large crocodiles live in this section of the Daintree River.





FLOODS AND CYCLONES

When flooded, the Daintree Coast can be isolated for days at a time. During the March 1996 flood, 2000mm of rain fell here in three days. The water came up to the gutters of a riverside café, only the roof was visible. When the flood receded, two of the café's freezers were found hanging in the mangroves.

Cyclones are a natural part of life in the tropics. Cyclone damage is part of the rainforest cycle of renewal, opening up the forest for new growth.

Cyclone Rona hit the Daintree Coast in February 1999 with winds of up to 200km/h, stripping vegetation and uprooting trees. Buildings are constructed to withstand these winds, with roofs literally bolted through to the foundations.

Tidal mangrove-lined estuaries are home to many freshwater and







CROC COUNTRY

crocodile habitat.

Crocodiles have survived since dinosaurs walked the Earth. Crocodiles are dangerous. Do not swim in or near estuaries. Don't go croc spotting on your own. Taking a tour is safer and you're more likely to see a crocodile.

This usually placid river floods after massive amounts of rainfall in the catchment or when cyclones bring rain in from the sea.

MESSAGE TO DRIVERS

handbrake.

The 40km scenic road north to Cape Tribulation will take about one hour without stops, and is suitable for conventional vehicles. Beware of creek causeways if water is flowing across them – check creek depth gauges before proceeding. The road north of Cape Tribulation has steep grades and rocky creek crossings and is recommended for experienced four-wheel-drivers without trailers. Check conditions before leaving Cape Tribulation - the road can be closed in bad weather.

Show common courtesy to other drivers, watch out for wildlife especially at night.

The Daintree River and other coastal creeks are

Listen for the cheerful, bubbly calls of yellow orioles echoing across the water as the birds feed on fruiting trees in the forest. Welcome swallows use the ferry's loading ramp as a hunting base, swooping over the water to catch insects as the ferry travels back and forth.

Yellow-tailed sunbirds feed on nectar and insects amongst the yellow flowers of the cottonwood trees growing along the banks. Ulysses butterflies are seen flitting along the sunny forest edges. Both spectacled and little red flying foxes roost in trees along the banks. It is not uncommon to spot up to 50 bird species on a morning cruise.

Some of the sought-after species include Great-billed Heron, Little Kingfisher, Black Bittern, Papuan Frogmouth, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Brahminy Kite, Nankeen Night Heron, Channel-billed Cuckoo and species endemic to the Daintree such as Lesser Sooty Owl, Macleay's Honeyeater, Pied Monarch and Victoria's Riflebird.





While queuing for the ferry and onboard, please stay in your car. The Traffic Controller will instruct you where to park onboard. Turn your motor off and engage the

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND THE DAINTREE COAST

When driving be on the alert for animals that fly, hop, walk or crawl onto the road without warning. If you find an injured animal contact the Daintree Wildlife Rescue volunteers on 4098 9079.

Don't be tempted to feed the wildlife. Feeding upsets the forest's natural balance and encourages animals to raid picnic areas.

Leave your dog at home. Dogs kill cassowaries and also chase and kill smaller animals. Support local businesses working to protect the rainforest or make a donation to Rainforest Rescue which purchases properties to become nature reserves.

Respect the privacy of local residents. Keep to the major roads and stay off privately owned land. Take out whatever you bring into the Daintree Coast. This includes drink containers, fruit peel, seeds and cigarette butts.

For further information call Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service on 4098 2188.







