



Welcome to Cattana Wetlands

This 80 hectare site, once used for sugar cane farming and sand and gravel mining, has now been transformed into a natural wonderland which includes 30 hectares of regionally significant forest and several large freshwater and saltwater lakes.

As part of the 150th anniversary of Queensland celebrations, Cairns Regional Council and the Queensland State Government each

committed \$1.5 million to the rehabilitation of this site. This works program included the construction of boardwalks, walking tracks, bird hides and viewing platforms, picnic areas, interpretative signs, car park, access road and toilet facilities. A significant revegetation and weed removal project has also been undertaken, resulting in a recreation park that can be enjoyed by all.



Wonderful wildlife

In addition to the amazing wetland habitat, Cattana Wetlands also harbours an impressive range of North Queensland wildlife and significant plant communities.

While wandering around the wetland lakes look for some of the iconic birds of the site including Black-necked Storks (or Australian Jabiru) that breed in the area, Comb-crested Jacanas, that walk across the water lilies, and beautiful Rainbow Bee-eaters that glide over the water snapping at insects while on the wing.

Agile Wallabies can be seen on the edge of the wetlands when they come out in the cooler part of the day to graze. Others, such as large goannas and pythons, are only ever seen in the forested areas where they often hunt for food or just bask in the dappled sunlight. Venture into the important Feather Palm Forest on the raised boardwalk to spot some of these natural treasures.

During the wetter months numerous frogs become active around the wetlands. These frogs include the large White-lipped Treefrog, the long-legged Striped Rocket Frog and the tiny Dwarf Green Treefrog.



Background

In 1993 the former Mulgrave City Council purchased an 80 hectare freehold plot known as Cattana Farm. At the time the primary reason for the purchase was to protect the 30 hectares of remnant vegetation on the western side of the site. The vegetation in this remnant patch includes lowland rainforest and Feather Palm Forest, both of which were once common in the region but are now quite rare.

For several years the non-vegetated areas of the site were farmed for sugar cane and mined for sand and gravel. In 1998, Council developed a master plan to identify the future usage of the site once the sand and gravel extraction had ceased.

After a long community consultation process, it was decided to adapt the site for passive recreation. Today Cairns Regional Council is proud to provide the community with an important recreational opportunity.

Illustration: Tim Parker. Black-necked stork based on an illustration by Jeff Davies. Wild About the Tropics