

## OZoo2 Quintessential Queensland 16 Days

### Your “Taste of Volunteering” Project:



#### Turtle conservation with Aboriginal rangers

You will assist at the Cape York Turtle Rescue camp in the Aboriginal community of Mapoon on Cape York Peninsula, in Far North Queensland.

Specific activities include:

Quantifying the size and structure of turtle nesting populations

- Monitoring trends in the nesting environment
- Quantifying nesting turtle success rates
- Protecting nesting sites
- Identifying and recording drift nets on beach
- Assisting rangers with the removal and disposal of drift nets

#### Trip Highlights:

- Mapoon and volunteering with Aboriginal rangers
- Haggerstone Island
- Tree-house living in the tablelands
- World Heritage Rainforest
- Aurukun Wetland Charter - superb Aboriginal interaction
- Superb accommodation in luxury nature lodges

#### Trip Description:

##### Day 1 (Tuesday) – Arrive Cairns, Thala Beach Lodge (L,D)

Upon arrival, you are transferred from Cairns Airport to Thala Beach Lodge.

Thala Beach Lodge is located on the spectacular coastal road between Cairns and Port Douglas. Set in 145 acres of lush vegetation, very much like the Daintree Rainforest itself and yet bordering the Coral Sea, Thala beach is perhaps the epitome of the region – where the Reef meets the Rainforest!



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Thala's bungalow accommodation blends with the surrounds beautifully, providing a luxurious sense of privacy.

Thala's facilities include a Wellness Spa, two swimming pools and a cocktail bar. Osprey's Restaurant enjoys magnificent views along the coast and you are bound to enjoy the chef's tropically inspired cuisine.

Today, you can borrow sea-kayaks for some coastal exploring, join an escorted nature walk, attend a cooking demonstration or an evening talk by a local naturalist and when you feel like stepping out there are transfers to/from Port Douglas.

Your lodge is located near Port Douglas and is the perfect base from which to explore the Great Barrier Reef and the Daintree Rainforest. Port Douglas is a very pleasant small town boasting wonderful restaurants, adventure activities (from jungle surfing to helicopter picnics), a vibrant weekend market and a low-key yet sophisticated lifestyle.

Your stay includes a la carte dinners with fine Australian wines, in room bar, star gazing at Thala's observatory and evening presentations by local specialists, nature walks, transfer service to/from Port Douglas.

Overnight at Thala Beach Lodge

### **Day 2 (Wednesday) – Full day to the Great Barrier Reef (B,L,D)**

You are collected from your lodge for transfer to the Marina and depart aboard Sailaway IV, a luxury sailing catamaran. Your boat is moored in a sheltered lagoon and during the day you may spend your time snorkeling, perhaps on a guided snorkel tour with a marine biologist; island exploring; on glass bottom boat tours and enjoying a delicious lunch, morning and afternoon tea. We sail back to Port Douglas, soaking up the incredible views.

Overnight at Thala Beach Lodge

### **Day 3 (Thursday) – Rose Gums, Atherton Tablelands (B,L,D)**

You are picked up from your lodge for a full day experience beginning with Tjapukai. Situated on 25 acres, the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park presents a stunning interpretation of Aboriginal culture from the beginning of time and into the future. Seven separate arenas allow visitors to experience every facet of the



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rainforest people's life – from didgeridoo playing to camp life and much of it through dance.

After lunch your guide will show you to the Skyrail - "the world's most beautiful rainforest experience." Your gondola trip takes you above the canopy of this world heritage national park with stops along the way to visit Red Peak. A walk down to the forest floor is recommended, boardwalks enable you to view the fern coverings. Your guide meets you in Kuranda, a village which has a market, boutique stores and arts and crafts galleries.

Re-joining the vehicle, you continue on to Rose Gum's for your two night stay.

Set amongst 230 acres Rose Gums provides a sanctuary amongst the sights and sounds of the tropical rainforest. With the care of true conservationists, the owners have restored the native vegetation on the property and with it has come a profusion of wildlife.

You are accommodated in one of nine timber chalets, each with a private living area and balcony with views to the ranges as well as a kitchen, spa bathroom (with separate shower) and a small laundry. Provisions are provided so that you may prepare breakfast at your leisure and in the evening you have the choice of a do-it-yourself BBQ hamper or dinner in "Mr Lee's Kitchen" – a set menu of fresh Laotian cuisine combined with views of the Wooroonooran National Park.

Overnight at Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat

#### **Day 4 (Friday) – Rose Gums (B,D)**

Today there is time to enjoy the rainforest at your leisure, spend a quiet hour on the banks of Butcher's Creek amongst the buzz of rainforest sounds, the ultimate reward is to spot an elusive platypus, or follow the rainforest trails on the waterfall walk.

A half day tour with an expert local guide will be arranged that incorporates the interests of your group.

We return to Rose Gums in the evening for dinner at 'Mr Lee's Kitchen'.

Overnight at Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat

**Day 5 (Saturday) – Camp Chivaree, Volunteer Project (B,L,D)**

We transfer to Cairns Airport for the scheduled flight to Weipa.

On arrival, we transfer to the Western Cape Cultural Centre for lunch and an orientation briefing. The Western Cape is one of the most culturally strong Indigenous Areas in Australia. An understanding of how the Cape works, the politics, the history and the role that outside stakeholders have in the Cape, will enhance your overall experience over the next six days. We transfer to Mapoon, 90kms North of Weipa, and later we are driven to Camp Chivaree by 4WD.

Our accommodation at Camp Chivaree is in simple yet comfortable permanent tents, each with two camp beds. The camp has shared toilets (hybrid toilet) and bush showers, with hot water.

At Camp Chivaree, your Volunteer Project begins! You head across Flinders Beach (24 kms of magnificent coastline) by dinghy where the research work on the turtles takes place. You travel by 4WD up and down the beach, stopping frequently to spot turtles, watch them lay, and record research data. Once the research work is completed, the group heads back to Camp Chivaree.

Overnight in a permanent tented camp at Camp Chivaree

**Day 6 and Day 7 (Sunday and Monday) – Camp Chivaree, Volunteer Project (B,L,D)**

Breakfast is served, before making your way back to Flinders Beach for more research. In the mornings, you will be looking for eruptions of nests and recording data of hatchlings. Once this is completed, roll up your sleeves as you help the rangers clear the beach of any ghost nets, as well as helping them with Predator Exclusion Devices (PED's). You go back to Camp Chivaree for lunch and then have the afternoon at leisure. Optional activities include bush tucker walks, fishing in Janie Creek or just relaxing in this beautiful part of Australia. In the early evenings, you head back to Flinders Beach.

Overnight in a permanent tented camp at Camp Chivaree

**Day 8 (Tuesday) – Aurukun Wetlands (B,L,D)**

We bid farewell to Camp Chivaree and drive to Mapoon Airstrip, where your air charter to Aurukun is waiting. The flight takes approximately 25 minutes and is a



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stunning flight down the coast of the Western Cape. At Aurukun, you are met and then transported to the MV Pikkuw.

The MV Pikkuw is a 12 mtr catamaran built in 2005. It sleeps eight people in a 2 x 2 persons berth and 1 x 4 person berth in air conditioned comfort. After a briefing from the crew, you begin cruising into the river systems that make up the Aurukun Wetlands. Quite simply, it is one of the most pristine encounters you will ever encounter - abundant birdlife, stunning scenery, perhaps a crocodile on the banks... Dinner is served on board, before retiring for the night.

Overnight on board the MV Pikkuw (open plan boat cabin with single bunk beds and shared toilets/shower facilities)

#### **Day 9 (Wednesday) - Aurukun Wetlands (B,L,D)**

Awake to the dawn chorus of the Aurukun Wetlands. Breakfast is served on the top deck. You may decide to throw a line into the river as you wait for this morning's visitors from the Aurukun community to arrive.

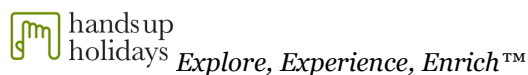
Your location on the river dictates the day's activities; it might be jumping into one of three tenders from the Pikkuw and going off to harvest native bush honey, or a swim in a stunning natural water hole complete with waterfall. Lunch may be served on the banks of the river or on board the boat. Back to the Pikkuw in the late afternoon, for a chat with the community before they depart and then dinner is served.

Overnight on board the MV Pikkuw

#### **Day 10 (Thursday) - Aurukun Wetlands (B,L,D)**

Again the day is planned depending on the weather, the wildlife, the local people. Each expedition is different and may include some of the following activities:

- Ancient story place interpretation with Elder(s). This includes hearing the ancient story of particular places which are visited, told by the custodial elder. These are often creation stories, or tales used to convey the importance of place or animals
- Art and carving demonstrations. The carvings used in dance ceremonies have a special place in Wik and Wik Way culture, and are highly sought after by art collectors around the world. A visit to the Aurukun Art Center can be arranged, and demonstration may be organised on board the MV Pikkuw.



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- Basket weaving demonstrations. Some of our guides are expert weavers, who can demonstrate and teach the techniques to turn pandanus leaves into intricate works of art.
- Bush tucker and bush medicine collection and tasting. Collecting "sugar bag honey", fruit, berries and leaves, and other items depending on the season, is part of every excursion with your Aurukun guides and hosts. A "kup muri" or "earth oven" is often prepared on the banks of a river.
- Spear making and throwing. Specific trees are used for making spears and woomearas. These are used for hunting fish in the shallows of the rivers.
- "Fire Stick" demonstrations. Special wood is used to create friction by rubbing two sticks together to making fire, with kindling. This is demonstrated by the guides when preparing for a camp fire.
- Swimming at croc free swimming hole.
- Bird watching. An extensive list of birds has been identified by spotters on previous trips.
- Croc spotting. After dark a short excursion in the tenders with some spotlights give you a glimpse of the wetland night-life. Up close – but not too close.
- Fishing for dinner. If you want to catch your own dinner or breakfast a line will be provided. It may be the best chance you have of catching a fish.

Overnight on board the MV Pikkuw

### **Day 11 (Friday) – To Haggerstone Island (B,L,D)**

Enjoy an early morning bird encounter or a morning croc and wildlife spotting, followed by breakfast. You then return to the Aurukun landing and transfer to the airstrip where your onward charter flight is ready for your departure.

The flight from Mapoon to Hick's Island takes 25 minutes and Roy Turner (who will host your stay on Haggerstone Island) collects you for the transfer by boat to the island.

Your accommodation is in a small lodge, owned and hosted by Roy & Anna Turner, which offers guests unparalleled remoteness, cast-away comfort and exclusivity. Roy and Anna have made Haggerstone their home since 1985 when Roy abandoned his days of crocodile hunting in Papua New Guinea.

Haggerstone has four quite different 'huts' – each is serviced daily, has hot & cold running water, fridge, shower and toilet, but there the similarities end. Each



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'hut' is unique! The Lagoon Hut is a timber round house with an expansive deck overlooking the big lagoon, the Kwila Hut is shaded by Coral trees, decks that look to the reef and contains an interesting collection of New Guinea artefacts, the Beach House is more secluded and rustic and is constructed mainly of driftwood and there is the Tree House.

Anna and Roy will plan your days and prepare meals to suit you. Seafood fresh from the surrounding waters and fresh herbs and fruit are served in the Main Pavilion around a communal table. The garden is a lovely place for a wander ...passion fruit compete with guado and snake beans. The vines of tropical butternut and squashes are coaxed away from beds of rocket salad and bok-choy. Basil, coriander and parsley compete for space with lemongrass and ginger. Kaffir lime, mango and curry trees grow randomly along the paths.

Overnight at Haggerstone Island Lodge

**Day 12 to Day 14 – Haggerstone Island (B,L,D)**

On Haggerstone, be as active or as relaxed as you wish ... you might get in the mood to –

- Snorkel amongst pristine coral reefs
- Fish for your lunch and picnic on freshly caught lobster on uninhabited sand cays. Regular catches include Spanish Mackerel, Tuna, Coral Trout and the occasional shark
- Boat across to the mainland to explore the coastal rivers and mangroves and to visit the silica dunes of Shelburne Bay
- Take a day trip to the outer reef for snorkelling or visit the 1840's shipwreck that is in such shallow water its giant anchors, keel bolts and winching blocks are all visible from the surface.
- Kayak around the island
- Bird watchers will love to see the many coloured pigeons, sunbirds, honeyeaters and the eagles that soar on high
- Helicopter adventures into the World Heritage Listed forests and over the Reef can be arranged

Overnight at Haggerstone Island Lodge

**Day 15 (Tuesday) – Shangri-La hotel, Cairns (B)**

After bidding farewell to Anna and Roy, you transfer by boat to Hick’s Island and then by air to Cairns. In Cairns, you are met by your hands up Holidays representative and transferred to the Shangri-La Hotel.

Overnight at Shangri-La Hotel

**Day 16 (Wednesday) – Departure (B)**

Today your Quintessential Queensland adventure comes to an end and you are transferred to Cairns Airport for your departure flight.

B= Breakfast, L= lunch, D= Dinner

**Comfort Level:** 5+/5

(8 nights in boutique luxury lodges, 1 night in a 5\* hotel, 3 nights on a launch in modest sleeping quarters, 3 nights in simple yet comfortable permanent tents during your Volunteer Project)

**Activity Level:** 3/5

**Min. Travellers per Group:** 2

**Max. Travellers per Group:** 8

**Police Check Required?** No