



Brooklyn Nature Refuge

A jewel in the conservation crown

Vital statistics: Brooklyn Nature Refuge

Area:	60,000 hectares
No. of vegetation types:	71
No. of threatened vegetation types:	40
No. of mammals:	more than 90
No. of birds:	297
No. of reptiles/amphibians:	114
No. of plant species	700+ plants (over 8% of all Qld plant species are represented)
No. of threatened plant and animals species:	more than 90

Brooklyn is a truly remarkable property, being home to possibly the greatest diversity of wildlife of any private property in Australia. Its formal protection under a conservation agreement with the Queensland government is a vitally important step in providing a secure future for many of Australia's most endangered species.

The non-profit Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) acquired Brooklyn Station, located less than 100 kilometres north-west of Cairns, in 2004.

It was purchased with financial assistance (\$4.5 million) from the Australian Government.

Brooklyn would have been lost forever except for the assistance of the Australian Government, which enabled AWC to buy and protect the land.

AWC has now entered into a conservation agreement with the Queensland Government, declaring a nature refuge over the property and securing its protection in perpetuity.

Brooklyn Nature Refuge *will protect more ecosystems and more species of mammals and birds than any other nature refuge in Australia.* In total, over 500 species of native mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians have been recorded on Brooklyn, or are expected to occur on the property. This

represents a greater diversity of wildlife than even Kakadu National Park (which has 482 species).

Remarkably, this single property of 60,000 hectares is home to:

- 40 percent of all Australian bird species; and
- 30 percent of all Australian mammal species.

Brooklyn is, in particular, a 'hotspot' for threatened species, with at least 45 threatened animals and approximately 50 threatened plant species finding refuge on the property. AWC's acquisition of Brooklyn has therefore helped to protect nearly 100 threatened species, an incredible statistic highlighting the essential contribution to conservation being made by the nature refuge network in Queensland.

The list of threatened species on Brooklyn reads like a modern day Noah's ark: the endangered southern cassowary *Casuarius casuarius johnsonii* roams the rainforest areas and their margins, the spotted-tailed quoll *Dasyurus maculatus gracilis* and the northern quoll *Dasyurus hallucatus* both occur on the property. The dense canopy of rainforest and wet sclerophyll trees is home to other threatened mammals including; yellow-bellied gliders (northern subspecies) *Petaurus australis*, the rare lemuroid ringtail possum *Hemibelideus lemuroids*, the Daintree River ringtail possum *Pseudochirulus cinereus*, green ringtail possum *Pseudochirops archeri* and Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo *Dendrolagus lumholtzi*. The elusive red goshawk, the enigmatic buff-breasted button-quail *Turnix olivii* and the exquisite blue-faced parrot finch *Erythrura trichroica* are among the rare and threatened birds known on Brooklyn Nature Reserve. The endangered northern bettong *bettongia tropica* has also been recently confirmed on Brooklyn.

The extraordinary level of biodiversity on Brooklyn reflects its strategic position straddling two bioregions—the Wet Tropics Bioregion and the Einasleigh Uplands Bioregion. It also reflects the range of topography and the steep rainfall gradient across the property. The property extends from some of the highest and most rugged mountains in the Wet Tropics (rising to 1200 metres) to the expansive plains of the Mitchell River as it begins its journey west to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Rainfall within the property varies from more than 4000mm to less than 900mm.

This diversity of topography, landform and climate gives rise to a stunning array of ecosystems—at least 71 vegetation types are mapped on Brooklyn. The rainforest-clad mountains, which dominate the eastern section of Brooklyn, overlook a vast plain of grassy woodlands through which the mighty Mitchell River meanders toward the Gulf of Carpentaria. Freshwater lakes and lagoons decorate the Mitchell floodplain, supporting rich birdlife and good populations of the Australian freshwater crocodile *Crocodylus johnstoni*. When AWC first explored Brooklyn, field staff were amazed to discover a property of such immense conservation value. However, they were also struck by the imminent threats to Brooklyn, including plans to develop the property for sugar cane, the impact of unsustainable grazing levels, uncontrolled recreational access and the effect of feral animals and weeds. Following

acquisition, AWC has acted quickly to implement practical, on-ground management strategies to address these threats. AWC's management programs include removing weeds and feral animals, implementing effective fire management and providing additional protection for nearly 100 threatened species.

The management of Brooklyn is funded by donations from AWC supporters around Australia and even overseas. In this way, tax deductible donations from people who care about the future of Australia's wildlife are making a difference where it really counts – *in the field*.

AWC thanks all of its supporters, and partner organisations such as The Nature Conservancy, for their contributions toward the protection of Brooklyn and its wildlife.

The establishment of Brooklyn Nature Refuge is an example of how the private (non-profit) and public sectors can work together to protect Australia's threatened wildlife and ecosystems. At Brooklyn, AWC and its supporters and Governments at State and Federal levels are working together to help define a new model for conservation, one that promises a more secure future for Australia's wildlife.

AWC is an independent, non-profit organisation dedicated to conservation of Australia's threatened wildlife. For more information, visit www.australianwildlife.org