

Noosa National Park and Noosa Biosphere

The Noosa Biosphere Reserve is an internationally protected area that is formally recognised by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and Man and the Biosphere (MAB) program for its highly diverse ecosystem.

Established in 2008, it was the first Biosphere Reserve in Queensland and is home to:

- over 44% of all of Australia's bird species
- 35% protected lands such as national parks, conservation parks, state forests, vacant crown land, lakes and streams
- 1,365 species of plants
- 711 species of native fauna
- 60 distinct ecosystems.

Noosa National Park is found within the biosphere and encompasses an area of more than 4,000 hectares, including sections surrounding Lake Weyba, Peregian and Coolumb.

Birdlife

One of the key reasons why Noosa is recognised as having high diversity is due to its birdlife. More than 300 bird species are found in the area. Of these, 35 species are considered internationally important. Biosphere birds of local significance listed as uncommon, restricted or rare in coastal habitats include the Black Kite, Diamond Dove and the Black-Breasted Buzzard. The Glossy Black-Cockatoo is another vulnerable species.

Wildlife

Due to extensive areas of natural vegetation and protected habitats, the Noosa biosphere reserve boasts more than 700 species of native animals including marsupials such as the Eastern Grey Kangaroo, Possums, Sugar Gliders and marine mammals such as the Common Dolphin and Humpback Whale. There are also 75 species of reptiles in the region including the Eastern Blue-Tongued Lizard, Loggerhead Turtle, and a range of snakes such as the Eastern Brown Snake and Red-Bellied Black Snake.

One of the more prehistoric-looking reptiles that can be found in Noosa National Park is the Lace Monitor, commonly known as a goanna. They are the second largest lizard in Australia and can grow up to two-metres long. Their diet consists of insects, small mammals and Brush Turkey eggs.

About 11 per cent of the species found in the Biosphere are listed as being 'rare and threatened' including the vulnerable Wallum Sedgefrog and the Wallum Rocketfrog, as well as the Ground Parrot.

Flora

The Noosa Biosphere's natural vegetation defines its character. There are 10 vegetation types found in the region and they reflect the sub-tropical climate, diverse geological features, light levels, soil types, drainage and subtle variations in rainfall. The Biosphere contains 32 plant species that are listed as rare, vulnerable or endangered. These include the Swamp Stringy Bark, Swamp Orchid, Queensland Nut and Christmas Bells.

Activities

Whale watching

Noosa National Park is an ideal place to watch the whales migrate north and south at various times of the year. There's no need to hop on a whale watching boat when you can stand on top of the stunning headland at Hell's Gates and see these giant beasts flapping their tails and jumping out of the ocean right in front of you. Even better, go for a swim at Tea Tree Bay and stick your head under the water to hear the whale songs!

Walking

There are endless walking trails throughout the Noosa Biosphere – from tranquil bush tracks in the Noosa National Park, to beachside boardwalks at Sunshine Beach and Peregian. Tracks vary in length and difficulty and it's always good to let someone know when you are setting off for an adventure as certain parts of the National Park can be tricky to navigate.

On the water

Whether you want to throw in a line and catch a fish for dinner – or power along the river on a jet ski, the Noosa Biosphere has a range of water activities on offer. Not only are there beautiful stretches of ocean to enjoy – but also rivers and lakes to explore. For a truly inspiring experience, hire a kayak and head to Lake Weyba where you'll find hundreds of waterbirds, large tracts of mangrove forests, and sea grass beds where endangered fish species breed.

Peaceful pockets

Away from the busy beachfront, you'll find many peaceful pockets around Noosa where you can sit back and soak in the natural beauty. The Noosa river mouth is a wonderful place to put down a picnic rug, pour a glass of wine and watch the sun sink over the mountain ranges. Beaches south of Noosa, like Marcus and Peregian are less crowded and provide an ideal spot for the family to build sandcastles and go for a dip.

Did you know?

The Noosa Biosphere is adjacent to the Great Sandy Biosphere, which makes them the only two Biospheres in the world that are found side by side. The Great Sandy Biosphere is where you'll find the oldest and largest unconsolidated sand mass on earth, 7558 recorded species of fauna and flora, the world's highest perched dune lakes and protected dugong breeding grounds.

For more information go to: www.visitsunshinecoast.com.au