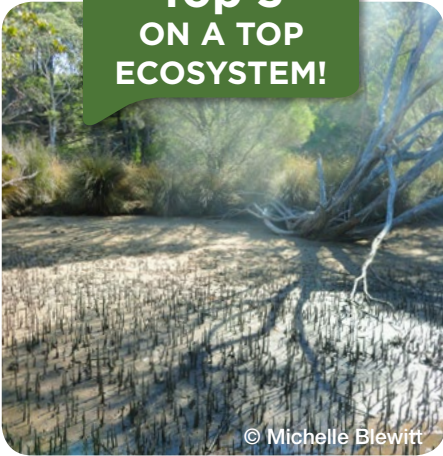


Mangroves

Fact Sheet



Top 5 ON A TOP ECOSYSTEM!



© Michelle Blewitt

1 Mangroves grow on intertidal mud flats and along foreshores between mean sea level and the highest tide levels – the higher tidal range.

2 Mangroves are unique because they grow in seawater (high salinity/levels of salt) and fresh water (low salinity), but you can have too much of a good thing, and excessive salinity can endanger them.

3 Unlike most plants which produce seeds, a large number of mangroves have seeds that sprout (or germinate) while still attached to the parent tree – these floating propagules are seedlings, not fruits or seeds.

4 Queensland has 43 mangroves species and hybrids, with nine species found nowhere else in the country. There are 15 types around Gladstone. Can you name them? **Here** is a helpful guide to get you started!

5 Mangroves' special above-ground roots are called 'pneumatophores', or breathing roots.

Explore the mangroves of the Gladstone region

Mangrove forests consist of amazing trees and shrubs that have adapted to grow in the inter-tidal zone between the land and the sea (called the littoral zone) which is exposed at low tide, and below water at high tide.

They have flaky bark and unique above-ground aerial roots that allow them to breathe, and help them grow in soft, salty, oxygen-poor soils – something that most plants cannot do!

Groups of mangroves form dense forests and thickets, which provide a safe home for birds, fish, crabs, snakes, lizards, spiders, native mice, and even flying foxes.

Mangroves have a symbiotic (or cooperative) relationship with the Great Barrier Reef – the reef protects the coast (and its mangroves) from being eroded by the sea, and the mangroves trap sediment (dirt and rocks) washed from the land that would otherwise smother the corals!

Because of their importance to the environment, all mangrove plants and their parts, including stumps, seeds and leaves, are protected in Queensland under the *Queensland Fisheries Act 1994*. In fact, any activity involving mangroves requires a permit from the Queensland Government.



Mangrove forest on the coast
© Norm Duke, James Cook University

Mangroves matter

Mangroves are environmental superheroes! They:

- provide breeding and nursery areas for baby fish, prawns, and crabs, and food and shelter for sea turtles
- are important feeding areas for many birds and animals – including the very cute (and very rare) water mouse



Water Mouse
© Queensland Museum

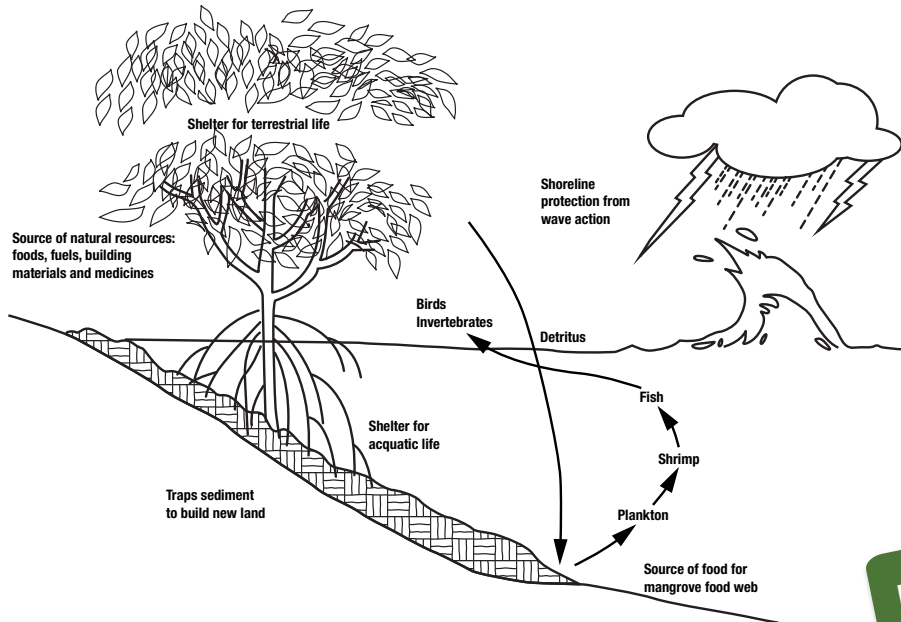
- protect shorelines and estuarine river banks from being eroded by waves and flooding
- improve water quality by trapping sediment (mud and sand) and nutrients (substances used by plants and other animals as food)
- shed large numbers of nutrient-rich leaves which are broken down by fungi and bacteria to become food for other plants and animals
- are indicators of change, so watching and monitoring them with environmental scientists is a high priority. Check out your local [MangroveWatch](#) to find out how you can help.

Mangroves

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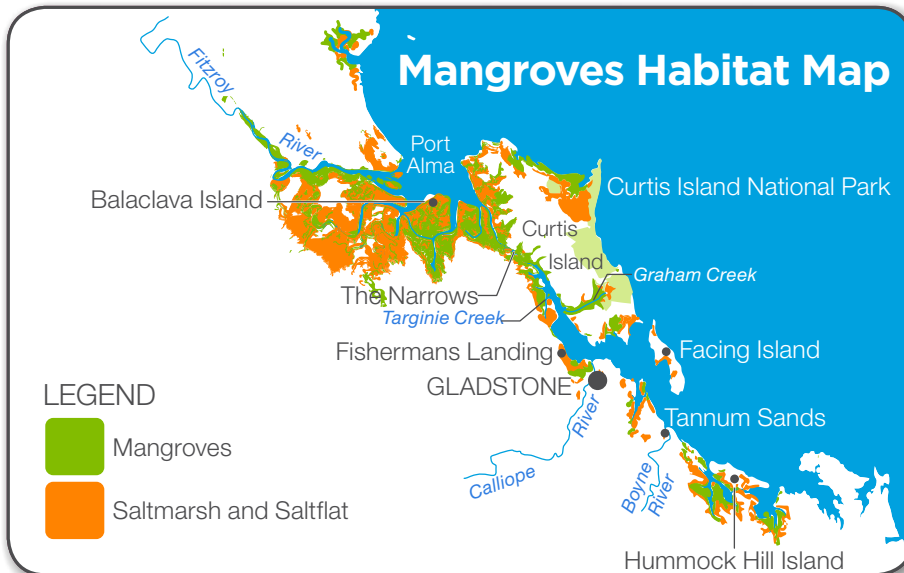


The life cycle of mangroves



A mangrove mud map

Mangroves grow in almost all of Port Curtis' intertidal areas, but the biggest local mangrove forests can be found at Targinie Creek, Graham Creek and between Fisherman's Landing and the Calliope River. There are 14 mangrove species recorded in the Fitzroy River area alone!

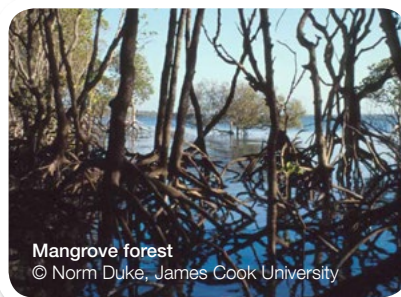


Find out more

The Australian Institute of Marine Science
www.aims.gov.au

Mangrove Watch
www.mangrovetwatch.org.au

Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
www.daff.qld.gov.au



Mangrove menaces

- Changes to land use around wetlands and mangroves (like new industrial or farming activity) can affect the natural processes of mangrove forests.
- Restrictions to tidal flow, and redirection or loss of freshwater inflow, reduces mangrove health.
- Although mangroves are protected by Queensland law, new landfills, canal estates and boat activity can affect their health and survival.
- Pollution from oil, fuel or chemical run-off can damage mangrove forests. Oil is particularly dangerous as it can suffocate and poison mangroves.

MANaging the GROVES

What you can do to help

- The best thing you can do is to take an interest. Get to know your local mangroves and the different species.
- Look out for damaged trees or littering, and report it.
- Be careful to leave only footprints whenever you visit the coast, and thoughtfully dispose of rubbish on land when you go out on the water.
- The James Cook University mangrove specialists are working with Gidarjil Rangers and volunteers to assist in gathering much needed information for assessing the health and well-being of our valuable tidal wetlands around Port Curtis and up to Port Alma. If you can use a camera or drive a boat you can join in, visit MangroveWatch to find out how!



Gladstone Ports Corporation
 Growth. Prosperity. Community.