

Cape Tribulation Littoral Rainforest

What is littoral rainforest?

Littoral rainforest grows along the coastline and is listed as a Threatened Ecological Community under the EPBC Act. Cape Tribulation is one of Australia's most important sites for its conservation.

Community Values

Cape Tribulation is on Kuku Yalanji Country, an iconic landscape "where the rainforest meets the reef". The rainforest closest to the fringing reef is littoral rainforest. Local residents and tourism operators value its natural character and support weed and pest management.

Flora

Cape Tribulation's littoral rainforest is in good condition, featuring a healthy canopy, midstorey, understory, and abundant seedlings—key for recovery after cyclones and storm surges. Typical native species include pandanus, calophyllum, beach hibiscus, beach almond, and brown pine, with red beech and weeping paperbark in wetter areas. The rainforest also supports unique and rare species.

Wildlife

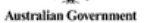
This rainforest supports many iconic species:

- Cassowaries, attracted by abundant rainforest fruits
- Pied imperial pigeons, key seed dispersers
- Orange-footed scrubfowl, building communal leaf-litter mounds
- Peppermint stick insects, feeding on local pandanus
- A spectacled flying-fox camp near Dubuji

Weeds

Weed diversity is relatively low due to the rainforest's intact condition. Most weeds occur on the foreshore or roadsides. Council and Queensland Park and Wildlife Service (QPWS) undertake ongoing weed management and monitor for new incursions. The main weed species impacting on littoral rainforest in Cape Tribulation are:

- Singapore daisy,
- Non-native grasses (e.g. Guinea grass),
- Coconut palms,
- Pond apple, lantana.
- Emerging weeds include mango, costus, African tulip, giant strelitzia/traveller's palm, heliconia.



This project is funded by the Australian Government through the Saving Native Species Program and delivered by Terrain NRM a member of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners panel.

- **Singapore Daisy**

Often washed in by floods and tides, establishing quickly on the beachfront. It is actively managed for eradication in high-value sites.

- **Coconuts**

Valued by some residents and visitors but historically rare or absent. Often planted and now widespread, their falling fronds and nuts can outcompete rainforest seedlings. Coconut management occurs in some priority areas. See coconut-free rainforest at Noah Beach.

- **Pond Apple**

Shade-tolerant and spread by pigs, cassowaries and tides. Increasingly found on the foreshore.

- **High-biomass Grasses**

Exotic grasses spread via tyres, footwear and tides. Species like Gamba and Guinea grass increase fire risk.

- **Fire**

Rainforest is highly fire-sensitive. Managing grassy edges is critical to keeping fire out of littoral rainforest.

- **Pigs**

Pigs disturb soil, eat native fruits, damage native seedlings and spread weeds and pathogens. Council and QPWS undertake coordinated trapping programs.

- **Litter**

Minimal litter is present, apart from the occasional lightweight marine debris washed in during high tides or storm surges.

Sea level rise

Most of Cape Tribulation's littoral rainforest is on sandy, low-lying land and vulnerable to sea-level rise and storm-tide inundation.

Condition

Cape Tribulation's littoral rainforest is more intact than in many developed areas on the east coast because much of the foreshore is public land (Council esplanade or National Park) and development sits back from the coast. This provides long-term security and maintains natural condition.

Land Management

Cape Tribulation is jointly managed by Jabalbina, QPWS, Douglas Shire Council and the local community.

- Jabalbina and QPWS jointly manage National Park areas.
- Council manages esplanades and roadsides.
- Managers aim to maintain littoral rainforest in a natural, resilient condition and protect its role in coastal stability.



Experiencing Littoral Rainforest

- Boardwalks at Kulki/Myall Beach and Dubuji/Cape Tribulation Beach
- Camping within littoral rainforest at Noah Beach
- Beach walking (safer at low tide)

High-Value Areas

A near-continuous strip of littoral rainforest runs from Rocky Point to Cedar Bay, with Cape Tribulation featuring in the middle. High-value areas include Cape Tribulation Beach, Noah Beach and Cowie Beach. Keeping these areas in good condition—especially through targeted weed management—helps protect this nationally significant ecosystem.