



Tour Operator Information

Conducting Guided Sportfishing Tours in Kakadu National Park

1 April 2008 – 31 March 2013

LEGISLATION APPLICABLE IN KAKADU NATIONAL PARK

As a Commonwealth Reserve within the boundaries of the Northern Territory, Kakadu is subject to both Commonwealth and Territory law.

In addition to the range of NT legislation which is applicable, the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and Regulations 2000* (EPBC) prescribe the following for Kakadu National Park:

- Fishing is prohibited in all waters of West Alligator River, Moline Rockhole and all areas east of the Kakadu Highway (except Djarradjin and Sandy Billabongs on Nourlangie Creek and Jim Jim Billabong on Jim Jim Creek). *See below for specific areas which are authorised for the conduct of guided sportfishing tours.*
- A live animal (including fish) can not be used as bait.
- Crabs must not be taken.
- Anglers must only use a rod or handline with a single hook or lure attached.
- Landing nets are permitted but only for the landing of fish and not for other fishing or animal catching uses.
- It is not permissible to leave a fishing line unattended.
- As with the remainder of the NT, the tethering of fish is an offence.
- Cleaning of fish is not permitted within 50 metres of a water body, except where fish cleaning facilities are provided or if the person is in area of water within 1 kilometre of land.
- A person must not use or possess nets, firearms, spears, traps or any device designed for taking an animal or fish other than the fishing lines and landing net described above.
- All commercial fishing is banned, the only exception is sportfishing tour operations who have been allocated the right to hold a special permit to operate in Kakadu.

AUTHORISED FISHING AREAS FOR GUIDED SPORTFISHING TOUR OPERATORS

There is no limit on the number of days on which guided sportfishing tours may be conducted.

The following areas are permitted for the conduct of guided sportfishing tours:

- a) East Alligator River;
- b) Two Mile Hole;
- c) Four Mile Hole;
- d) Alligator Billabong (South Alligator)
- e) Home Billabong;
- f) Mardugal Billabong;
- g) Jim Jim Billabong;
- h) tidal reaches of the South Alligator River.

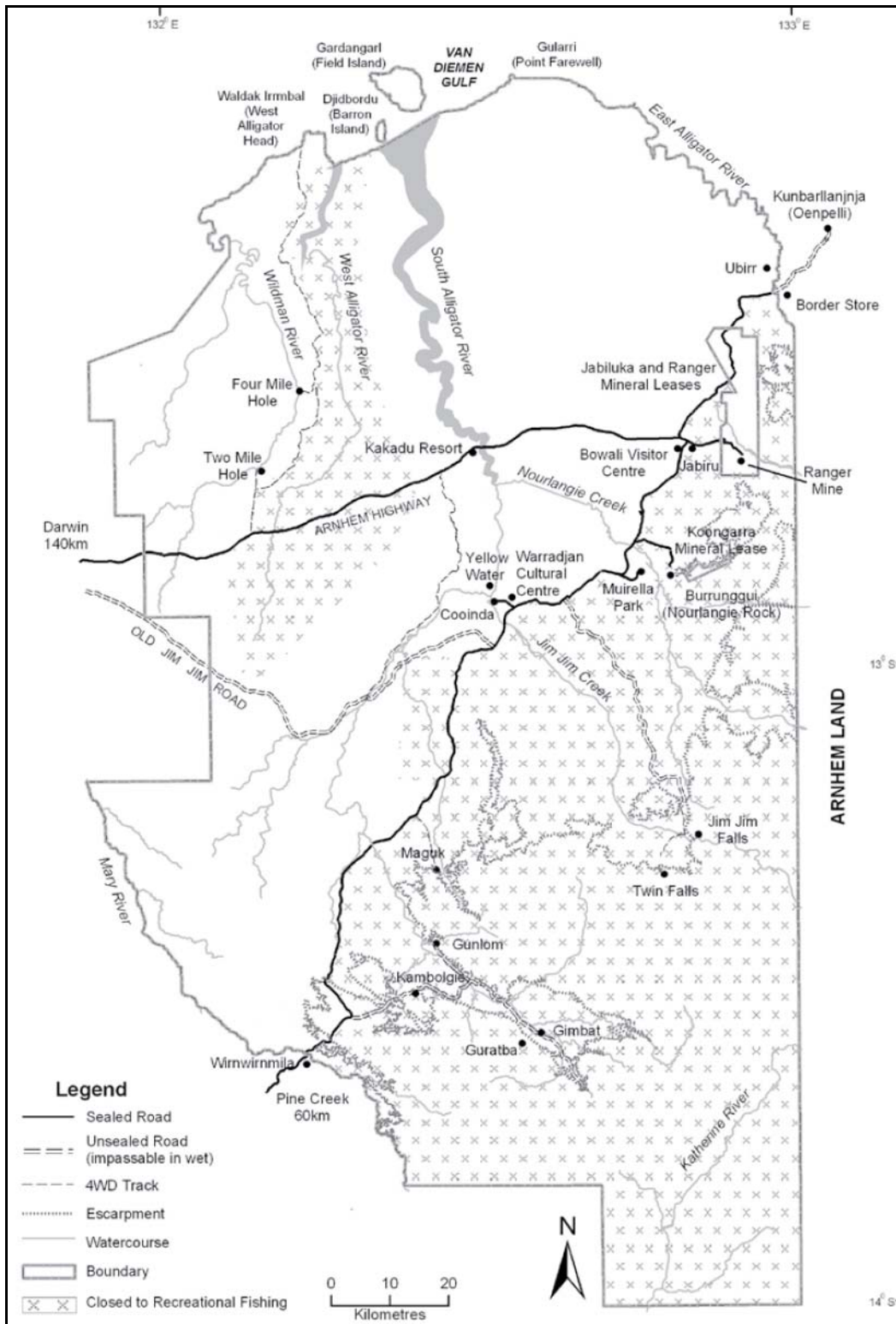
Note: the Wildman River, Field Island, Barron Island, Yellow Water Billabong, Red Lily Billabong, Bucket Billabong, Djarradjin Billabong and Sandy Billabong are all areas which are open to recreational fishing in Kakadu, but these are not authorised areas for the conduct of guided sportfishing tours.

Information in the next section details areas in Kakadu which are restricted to all boating and fishing – recreational or otherwise.

BOATING & FISHING RESTRICTIONS IN KAKADU

For environmental reasons, a number of waterways within Kakadu have been closed to recreational boating and fishing under the *Environment, Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000*. These closures apply to both recreational fishing and guided sportfishing tours in Kakadu.

The map below shows areas in Kakadu that are closed to motorised boating and fishing.

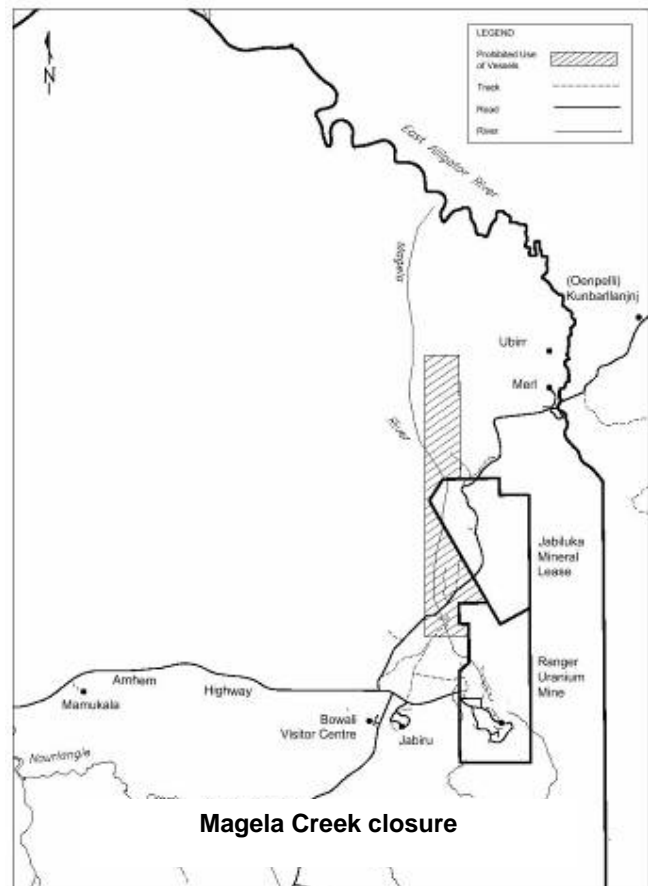
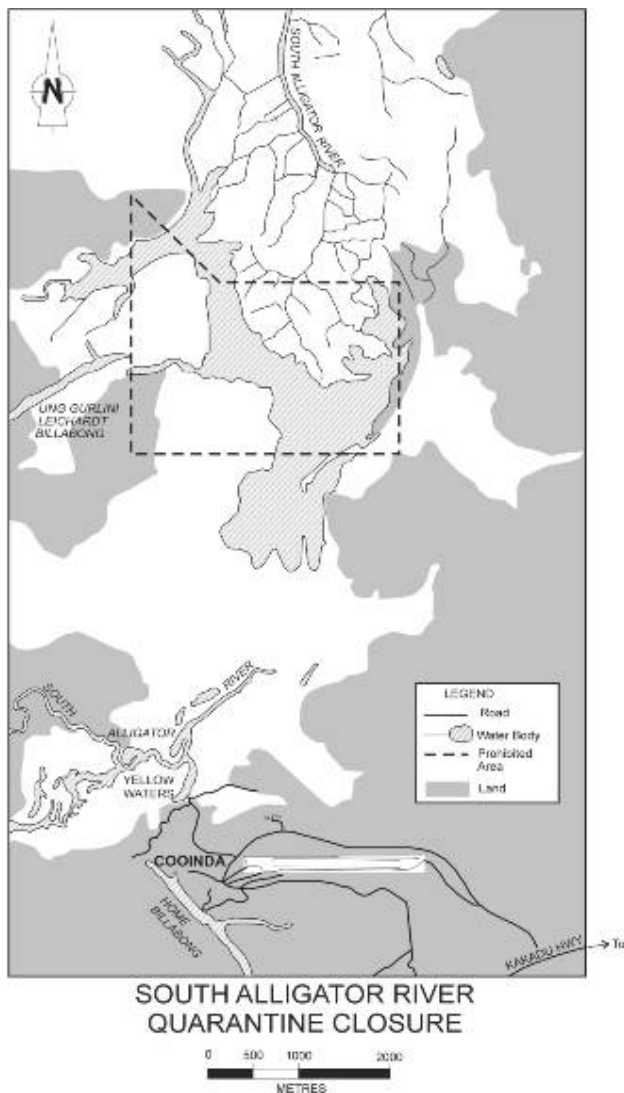


West Alligator River and upstream of Kakadu Hwy – These waterways have been closed to vessels and fishing for the purpose of maintaining one river system within Kakadu which is free of fishing impacts (West Alligator River) and to protect headwater fish populations. These closures include:

- all waters in the West Alligator River catchment
- all waters upstream of the Kakadu Highway, except Djarradjin and Sandy Billabongs on the Nourlangie Creek system and Jim Jim Billabong on the Jim Jim Creek system,

South Alligator River – For weed control quarantine purposes boating is not permitted between the part of the South Alligator known as 'the forks' or 'the rapids' (approximately 24 km upstream of the bridge on the Arnhem Highway) and two kilometres north of Fisherman's Gully on Yellow Water (see map). Signs with detailed information are in place at the Jim Jim Creek and South Alligator River boat ramps.

Magela Creek - For weed control quarantine and safety purposes boating is restricted on Magela Creek in the area from Mudginberri to Nankeen Billabongs including the Oenpelli Road crossing. Boating in this area is authorised by permit only. The restriction does not apply to the tidal area of Magela Creek accessed by boat from the East Alligator River.



POSSESSION LIMITS

Northern Territory General Fish Possession Limits

All fish possession limits which apply in the Northern Territory also apply in Kakadu. Possession limits for managed species are:

- 5 Barramundi (minimum overall length 55cm, fillet 27cm)
- 2 Black jewfish
- 2 Spanish mackerel
- 5 Golden snapper

A general possession limit of 30 fish also applies to each person and this includes the possession limits for the managed species shown above.

The following regulations also apply to assist with identification and effective enforcement:

- The entire skin must be left on fillets or trunks of all fish species.
- If a fillet is dissected in any way, it will be deemed that each portion is a whole fillet and therefore equal to half a fish.
- Fillets of managed species must be kept separate from fillets of other species.

Species that are exempt from the possession limits are: Prawns, Baitfish (mullet, whiting, garfish, pilchards, sardines and herrings, Marine bream, Echinoderms (sea urchins and starfish).

FISH IN KAKADU

Sixty four species of freshwater fish have been recorded in Kakadu's waterways; with several of these being found in a marine or estuarine environment. 314 fish species have been recorded in tidal and freshwater areas in Kakadu. In the Magela Creek system alone, 32 species have been found. In comparison, the Murray–Darling river system, the most extensive in Australia, now supports only 27 native fish species. Although introduced fish have been found in most Australian waterways, none have been recorded in the Park.

Some species, such as the primitive archer fish, the sooty grunter, or black bream, and the toothless catfish, live mainly in clear water near the escarpment. In the billabongs and creeks, some of the more common fish are barramundi, freshwater long-toms, salmon-tailed catfish, chequered rainbow fish, and the saratoga. The last two also appear in waters near the escarpment.

There are a number of threatened fish species that occur in Kakadu. They are:

| Common name | Scientific name | EPBC Act | NT status | Habitat |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Freshwater tongue sole | <i>Cynoglossus heterolepis</i> | Not listed | Endangered | Freshwater river |
| Speartooth shark | <i>Glyphis</i> sp.A. | Critically endangered | Endangered | Estuarine; freshwater river |
| Northern river shark | <i>Glyphis</i> sp. C. | Endangered | Endangered | Estuarine; freshwater river |
| Dwarf sawfish | <i>Pristis clavata</i> | Not listed | Vulnerable | Marine; estuarine; freshwater river |
| Freshwater sawfish | <i>Pristis microdon</i> | Vulnerable | Data deficient | Estuarine; freshwater river |

SAFETY INFORMATION

Boating on Kakadu's waterways can be dangerous due to strong currents, sand bars, submerged logs and crocodiles. Make sure you:

- Check your safety equipment (such as life jackets, drinking water, oars, flares, torch, tool kit, extra fuel and a satellite phone) and carry enough equipment for every person on board the boat.
- Tell someone where you are going and what time you expect to be back.
- Check the weather – if in doubt, don't go out.
- Check your boat and motor(s) to ensure they are in sound working order and drain plugs are tightly inserted.
- Check your fuel – make sure you have enough for the trip, with adequate left over in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure you have the appropriate experience. Tidal areas are very dangerous – they have shallow, murky water, uncharted reefs, mudbars which change throughout the year, floating debris, rockbars in rivers, large tides, and change seasonally.
- Be prepared for an emergency. Sometimes help may be awhile!
- Refer to the Northern Territory Marine Act signs and the NT Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Mines website for more detailed safety information.

Remember, it is a permit condition that your vessel(s) must be equipped with the safety equipment required by relevant legislation, and communications equipment, including a satellite phone must be in good working order while being used to conduct guided sportfishing tours.

Crocodiles

Both species of Australian crocodile, the estuarine crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) and the freshwater crocodile (*Crocodylus johnstoni*), occur in Kakadu National Park. The estuarine crocodile is most common in tidal wetlands and freshwater bodies associated with sub-coastal plains. Both species occur in the upper freshwater regions of tidal rivers, creeks and billabongs. Estuarine crocodiles are dangerous to humans. Freshwater crocodiles, although generally harmless to humans, can be dangerous, particularly if they are annoyed or interfered with.

Crocodile numbers were reduced in the 1960s by both legal and illegal hunting. Legal hunting was stopped in 1972. The crocodile population grew rapidly in the 1980s then levelled out in the 1990s, however the number of estuarine crocodiles found in upstream areas of Kakadu is still increasing each year.

Estuarine crocodiles present a risk to people who are boating or fishing in Kakadu.

Some activities attract the interest of crocodiles, including:

- cleaning fish,
- leaving offal or food scraps near the water's edge,
- camping close to the water's edge,
- fishing while standing in the water,
- getting captured fish by hand from the water,
- holding fish in the water for some time before releasing them,
- going very close to crocodiles in boats,
- feeding crocodiles,
- annoying crocodiles,
- boating in unsafe or small craft,
- adults or children wading and splashing at the water's edge,
- swimming in areas where crocodiles may be present.

For the safety of you and your clients, please ensure you remain aware at all times of the potential presence of crocodiles.

- Keep away from the water's edge and do not enter the water.
- Take extreme care when launching and retrieving boats.
- Do not clean fish or bleed fish in or near the water's edge. Remove all fish and food waste.
- Report any crocodile related incidents to a Ranger or Kakadu National Park Headquarters.

Salvinia – We need your help!

Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) is a free-floating aquatic fern native to South America. It was first seen in Australia in 1953 – probably arriving as an aquarium or pond plant - and is now declared 'a weed of national significance' throughout the country. It has invaded wetlands throughout the world.



Where is it found in Kakadu?

Salvinia was first discovered in Kakadu downstream of the Magela crossing in September 1983. A major infestation developed on the Magela Creek system, spreading to other tributaries of the East Alligator River. Despite public support and cooperation with the quarantining of this area, in 1990 a new infestation was found on Nourlangie Creek, a tributary of the South Alligator River. The weed was found in the Wildman River system in 1999 and the iconic Yellow Water wetland in August 2005.

Why is it a problem?

Salvinia threatens not only Kakadu's World Heritage values, but fishing and recreation opportunities and economic development. It grows rapidly and thick mats of Salvinia can block access to waterways – bad news for recreational fishing and tour operations.

Salvinia has impacts on the diversity of fish, their number and visibility. It is an extremely aggressive, invasive weed which competes directly with other plants for light, nutrients and space. It can act as a barrier to wildlife such as waterbirds that need open water to land on or feed in. The water under a salvinia mat has lower oxygen concentrations, higher carbon dioxide and hydrogen sulphide concentrations, and is more acidic than open water nearby. As a result, it can dramatically alter aquatic ecosystems, affecting the distribution of native plants and animals in severely infested waterways.



You can help stop the spread

Fishing and recreational boating are very important for Kakadu National Park, but they're threatened by the spread of salvinia. The park needs the active help of anglers, recreational boaters and tour operators to limit the spread if it is to overcome these problems and have sustainable fishing and boating in the future.

It is extremely important for anglers, boat drivers and tour operators to:

- Report any salvinia infestations you see.
- Check your boats, vehicles and fishing gear for plant material and remove it before leaving the boat ramp.
- Pay attention to signs indicating restricted areas.

