

NATIONAL PARKS



The film shows four of Australia's National Parks. National parks sample the country's best scenery and incredible natural diversity, provide homes for native wildlife and protect special historic sites and indigenous cultural places. Legislation protects national parks so they can be passed intact to future generations. Australia's natural treasures have been recognised by the declaration of 11 world heritage areas. All four of the national parks shown in the film are also world heritage areas.

1. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Queensland) The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, declared in 1975, is the world's largest marine protected area, covering some 345,000 sq.km. Threats to the reef include the crown-of-thorns starfish which destroy the coral on which they feed. Other dangers are pollution and over-fishing. In the film, you will see turtles, sharks, sea snakes, jellyfish, eels, manta rays and other marine life.

2. West Tasmania (Tasmania) You will learn a little about the convict and settlement history of Tasmania. Sadly, the Aboriginal hunter-gatherers of the area and some wildlife, such as the Tasmanian tiger, are now extinct. The proposal to dam the Franklin River for hydro electric power was an important conservation issue for Australia in the early 1980s. In 1981 the area was given protection as a National Park given World Heritage status in 1982. You will see the Tasmanian wilderness and some of its unique inhabitants, like the platypus and the possum.

3. Kakadu (Northern Territory) This is a tropical area with a monsoon climate. Imported Asian buffalos caused environmental damage in the past. The crocodiles that live here were once hunted for their skins but are now protected. The area also contains ancient Aboriginal rock paintings and sacred sites.

4. Uluru (Central Australia) This Aborigine-owned park of 1,326 sq. km, leased to the Australian government, contains Uluru, also known as Ayers Rock, the world's largest monolith and a major tourist attraction. Mt. Olga, part of a group of monoliths called the Olgas, is also located in the park. As well as kangaroos you will see dingos, wild dogs brought from Asia.