

# Welcome to Country

## Traditional owners

Cattana Wetlands is within the traditional land of the Yirrganydji people that includes the area from Trinity Inlet to the south through to what is now known as Port Douglas to the north. These sea-faring and rainforest people are one of 18 Aboriginal groups of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

The Yirrganydji people regularly moved along walking tracks that criss-crossed their traditional lands. The changes between major seasons, the wet season (gurrabana), the dry season (gurraminya), meant that food resources also changed, so families would subsequently move from one area to another. At certain times of the year Cattana Wetlands was an important area for freshwater and food such as fish and kangaroos.

## Fishing and hunting

Fish within the Cattana Wetlands area were an important part of the Yirrganydji people's diet. Both saltwater and freshwater species of fish were caught depending on the time of year. Black Bream, Red Bream and Barramundi were highly desired, as was the delicious Mud Crab. Turtle and shellfish were a prized food all year round. Yirrganydji people still use the empty shell of the saltwater mussel for scraping the inner parts of a coconut and as a cutting tool.

Throughout their traditional lands the Yirrganydji people would hunt Agile Wallabies. These common mid-sized wallabies were a vital source of protein for these people for thousands of years.

## Bush tucker

The vegetation at Cattana Wetlands was also important to the Yirrganydji people. For instance, the bark of the large paperbark trees was used both for housing and for ceremonies, where the remains of deceased people were wrapped with the bark.

The fruit of many plants such as Burdekin Plums, Blue Quandongs and wild tomatoes and figs, were eaten when in season by the Yirrganydji people. The heart of small Alexandra Palms and most parts of water lilies were also eaten and still are today.

During the dry season the bark of the soap tree was crushed up, put into a dilly bag (usually made of string from Native Hibiscus trees), and then put into ponds. The poison would cut off oxygen to the fish and they would come to the surface where they could be caught by hand. Furthermore, stone tools would have been frequently used for grinding poisonous seeds.

## Respect for Country

Visitors to Cattana Wetlands are urged to show respect for these traditional lands of the Yirrganydji people. These wetlands are unique to the area and support a variety of life which can be appreciated by all.

