



Celebrating 50 years of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands



Christmas Island red crab

Australia was one of the first countries to sign the Ramsar Convention, which aims to halt the worldwide loss of wetlands and conserve those that remain. Australia designated the world's first wetland of international importance (Ramsar site) under the Convention – Cobourg Peninsula in the Northern Territory – in 1974.

Wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites) in our external territories

Australia has an amazing diversity of wetlands. They include marshes, billabongs, rivers, lakes, coasts, mangroves and coral reefs.



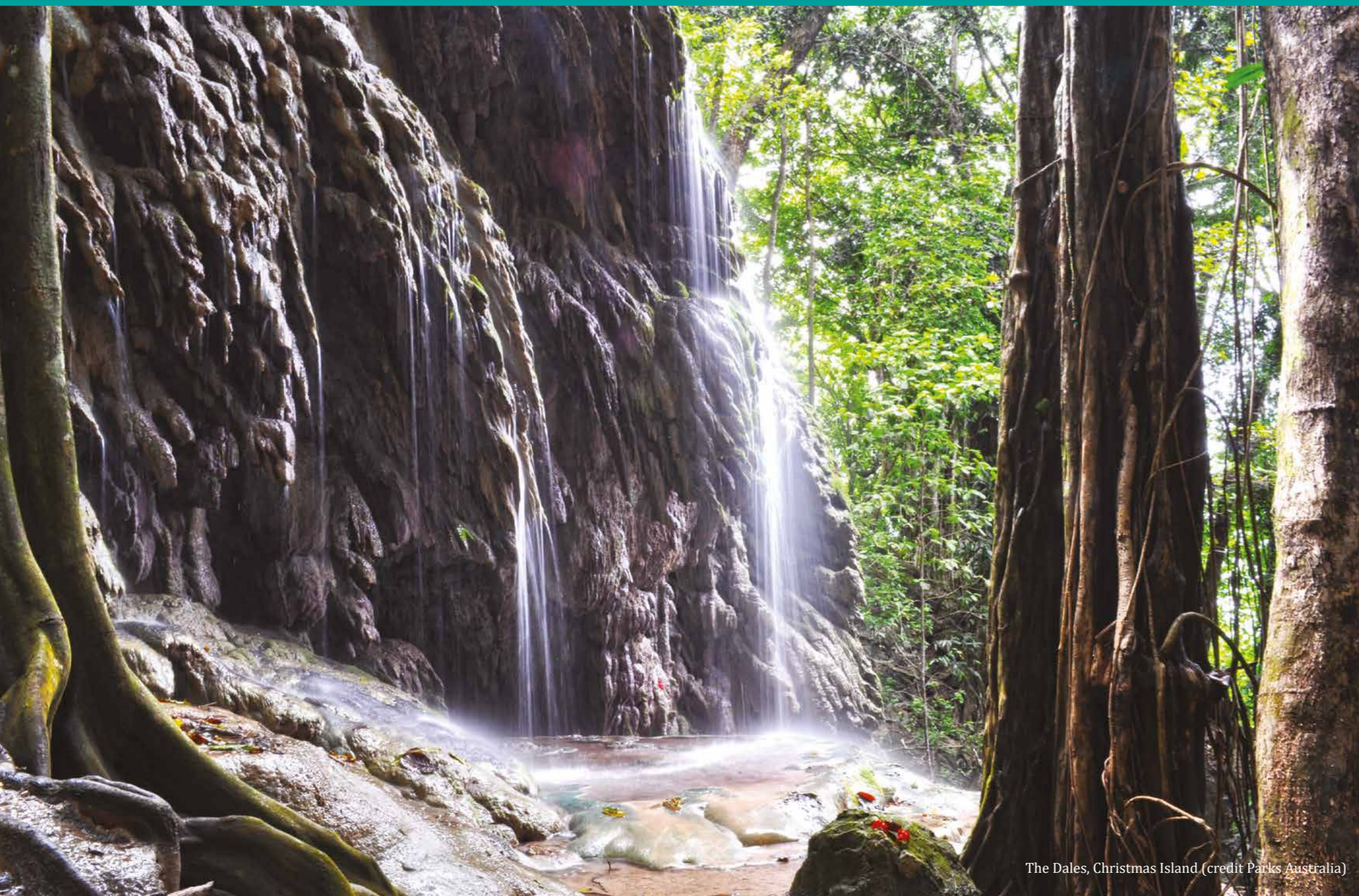
Red-footed booby, Pulu Keeling National Park (credit Parks Australia)



Coringa-Herald Cay, Coral Sea (credit Graham Hemson, Parks Australia)

Wetland ecosystems provide many benefits. They are important habitats for plants and animals, including frogs, fish, turtles and migratory birds. For Indigenous Australians, healthy wetlands are important for culture and wellbeing.

Australia has 66 Ramsar sites, which are protected under national legislation.



The Dales, Christmas Island (credit Parks Australia)



Green turtle (credit David Hafasi)



Ashmore Reef (credit Michelle Glover)

Wetlands improve water quality, provide nurseries for fish and reduce the impacts of floods and storms. Wetlands also support recreation and tourism.



Elizabeth and Middleton Reefs (credit Antonia Cooper, Reef Life Survey)

For more information visit www.environment.gov.au/wetlands