



Research is currently being undertaken on:

Training and Wildlife Surveys

Australia Zoo has been conducting ongoing wildlife and ecosystem surveys, and working in partnership with Mapoon and Kuuku I'yu northern Kaanju Rangers, who have also participated in crocodile research and training.



Archaeology

Curator of Archaeology at the Queensland Museum, Michael Westaway, undertook an initial archaeological survey documenting aspects of the European and Indigenous cultural landscape. This early assessment has revealed a distinctive food processing technology utilizing ironstone grinding implements. In addition, a largely undisturbed site, of state significance, was recorded documenting the earliest stages of Cape York's controversial pastoral history.



Hydrology of Springs and Bauxite Plateau

Environmental consultant Max Winders and geologist Dr John Jell have been researching the hydrology of the bauxite plateau and Wenlock River.



Fish

Members of Australian and New Guinea Native Fish Association have documented 41 freshwater fish species across the river systems of the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve.



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Research is currently being undertaken on:

Crocodiles

Professor Craig Franklin, from The University of Queensland and in collaboration with Australia Zoo's Croc Team, is conducting world-first research on Estuarine Crocodiles in the Wenlock River. Using cutting-edge, remote-sensing technology, acoustic transmitters are implanted into crocodiles, allowing their movements, diving behaviours and body temperatures to be monitored for the next ten years. The information gathered will help to clarify the ecological role of crocodiles in river systems and aid in their management and conservation.



File Snakes

Professor Craig Franklin, along with students from The University of Queensland is investigating the movement patterns of file snakes in waterholes on the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve. The Arafura file snake is a fully aquatic freshwater snake. They are non-venomous and can grow up to 2m long. File snakes don't lay eggs but instead give birth to live young underwater. The research is examining the effect of environmental conditions and water quality on their diving behaviour.



Sawfish, Spear-toothed Shark, Freshwater Stingray

Stirling Peverell, Fisheries Biologist MSc BSc from Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries is currently conducting research on the above three species. Large mature sawfish are known to inhabit inshore coastal waters to a depth of less than one metre. Although once reasonably abundant, sawfish are now considered rare and their population status is unknown. Sawfish worldwide are considered to be critically endangered but instead give birth to live young underwater. The research is examining the effect of environmental conditions and water quality on their diving behaviour.



Orchids

Biologist Jeanette Covacevich and Naturalist Lewis Roberts visited the Reserve to document orchid populations and assist with other ecological work.





Research is currently being undertaken on:

Bull Sharks

The University of Queensland and Australia Zoo are undertaking studies on the movements of Bull Sharks that inhabit the Wenlock River. Juvenile sharks have been implanted with miniature electronic transmitters, which will enable their movements to be tracked over the next 7 years. This study will provide valuable data to assist with the management of top predators (crocodiles and sharks) in the river and may also shine light on the interactions between these species.



Flora

A group of botanists have assessed the floral component of the reserve and have found it to contain a diverse range of rare and threatened plant species. These include the threatened insectivorous pitcher plant and threatened tiger stripe tree.



Frogs and Reptiles

Patrick Couper and Andrew Arney from the Queensland Museum and Zoologists Dr Ed Meyer, Dr Conrad Hoskyn and Dr Megan Higgle have visited the reserve to assess its herpetological richness. Their work focused on the rainforest areas surrounding the freshwater springs.



Snails

Dr John Stanic (BAAM Pty Ltd), a noted expert on Australian land snails, has assessed snail diversity in and around 8 of the reserve's freshwater spring systems. The accompanying photo shows one of the many species found. This is the camaenid, *Hadra Barneyi* which is usually found beneath logs on the forest floor. The moist forest habitats surrounding the springs provide important refuges for land snails and other invertebrate species. The spring systems are largely protected from the impacts of fires which regularly burn in the surrounding open woodlands.



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