

Mangroves

Red mangrove

More than mud and mozzies!

Mangroves survive in one of the harshest places on earth — the coastal fringe. They help stabilise and protect coasts and support a range of wildlife, on land and sea.



Challenges of wet and dry

To live exposed to sun and wind, then flooded by salty water, mangroves need special features.

Stilt-like roots (above) of red mangroves provide support and absorb air.

Snorkel-like pneumatophores of grey mangroves (left) absorb air in waterlogged mud.

Yellow mangrove seedlings (below) develop attached to parent plants.

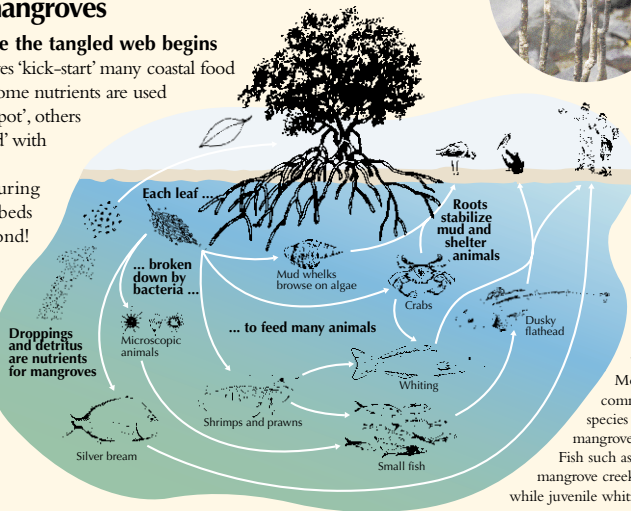
Mangroves also have intriguing ways of minimising salt.



Give me a home among the mangroves

... where the tangled web begins

Mangroves 'kick-start' many coastal food chains. Some nutrients are used 'on the spot', others 'exported' with tides to neighbouring seagrass beds and beyond!



... there's a living for the locals

... relying on nurseries for fisheries

More than 70% of the coast's commercial and recreational fisheries species depend directly or indirectly on mangroves at some time in their lives. Fish such as barramundi spawn in mangrove creeks, protected from predators — while juvenile whiting feed on midge larvae.



... where tenants come and go

Shorebirds migrating from the northern hemisphere rest and feed on Great Sandy's mangrove flats.

Many animals shelter in mangroves — mosquitos and midges also hang out nearby!

... residents build their towers

Large mud nests (above), with entrances above high water, belong to the false water rat, a threatened species. These small native rodents use their razor sharp teeth to get into crab shells.



Queensland Museum

The Great Sandy Strait

is one of Australia's few passage landscapes

— where a river's outflow is blocked by an off-shore island, creating sand banks, mud islands and calm waters, ideal for mangrove development.

Remember:
Mangroves are protected by law.



Photo: Peter Samson

... and others take advantage

Within the hollow branches of the grey mangrove, the Illidge's ant-blue butterfly, also a threatened species, tricks 'crematogaster' ants into feeding their own young — in their own nest — to the butterfly's caterpillar.



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