

# 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.

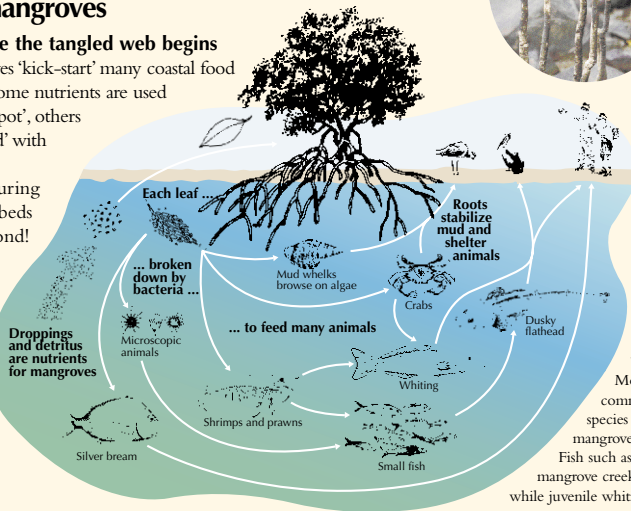
Mangroves also have intriguing ways of minimising salt.



## 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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