



Australian Government
Parks Australia



Australian
Marine Parks



Aerial view of North East Herald Cay. Credit: Australian Customs Service and Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

BE PEST-FREE in the Coral Sea

The remote Coral Sea Marine Park is home to an incredible array of animals and habitats including islands. The Coral Sea islands are mostly undisturbed and require a high level of vigilance to ensure pests are not introduced. Any species introduced into an area outside their normal range may become a pest that can impact the island ecosystem.

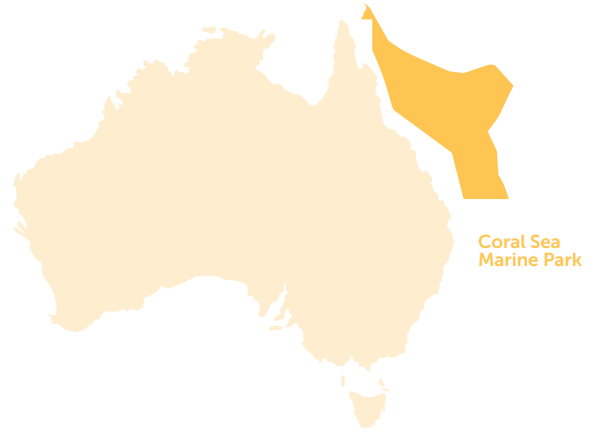
Islands in the Coral Sea are exposed to significant levels of disturbance from weather extremes such as cyclones. These natural events place pressure on island ecosystem health and are likely to increase with the impacts of climate

change. This means additional pressure from pests can easily upset the natural balance.

Islands in the Coral Sea Marine Park have historically been less exposed to pests due to their isolation. However, increasing numbers of visitors, who may be carrying pests, are now travelling to these remote places. Pests can easily establish on these islands, so visitors must remain vigilant and on the lookout for animals, plants, seeds or soil that may have hitched a ride. Pests are a significant biosecurity risk, please ensure they are not transferred onto an island.

Parks Australia takes biosecurity seriously. It is **your responsibility** when preparing to go ashore on a Coral Sea Marine Park island to follow these important steps:

- Stay below the high water mark and do not access areas of vegetation.
- Wear freshly washed clothes before accessing each island.
- Clean and check clothes and footwear for pests – check socks, pockets and Velcro strips for soil, seeds and spores.
- Clean backpacks, raincoats and hats – check for plant material, soil, insects or other animals. Whilst still on your vessel, use insecticide to spray day-use gear that is going ashore.
- Ensure tender vessels are free of pests – all vessels should have annual pest treatments, and the application of long-term pest treatments (e.g. ant gels).
- Only day-use gear to be taken ashore, no extra equipment – pests can hide in small crevices such as in the hollow legs of beach chairs.
- No fresh food to be taken ashore, only pre-packaged snacks (e.g. muesli bars) – bring back all waste to the vessel for appropriate disposal.
- Use toilet facilities on board your vessel, do not go to the toilet on an island – domestic waste is a risk to island biosecurity, and it is an offence to discharge, dispose or release waste on Coral Sea Marine Park islands.
- Leave pets on your vessel or at home – pets can harbour fleas, ticks and other pests and it is an offence to take them on to Coral Sea Marine Park islands.



Examples of pest species



1. African big-headed ant (*Pheidole megacephala*). Top: major worker. Bottom: minor worker. Photo: © Queensland Museum. Image by Geoff Thomson



2. Scale insects (*Pulvinaria urbicola*) can cause significant damage to Pisonia trees (*Pisonia grandis*). Photo: John Olds © Queensland Government



5. The spiky seeds of Mossman River grass (*Cenchrus echinatus*) easily attach themselves to unwary visitors. Photo: © Joel Plumb



3. Black rats (*Rattus rattus*) are well-known stowaways, hiding in unlikely places. Photo: © Paul Hocksenaar CC BY-NC-SA



4. Bicolored pennant ant (*Tetramorium bicarinatum*) can easily hide in gear and equipment. Photo: © Amber King CC BY-NC

Biosecurity is your responsibility

If you see anything that is a biosecurity risk in the marine park, please contact Parks Australia:
email: marineparks@dcceew.gov.au
phone: 1800 920 528



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