

Gubulla Munda Dreaming



Wadda Moolie - greetings, hello & welcome -from the Birri Gubba People - Traditional Owners of this land. Gubulla Munda is the carpet snake and creator of traditional lands and waters during Dreamtime.

Gubulla Munda travelled from the South into the Whitsundays where on dry land she created the mountains, rivers, streams and trees. When she came to rest in the Whitsunday waters her droppings created the islands. As Gubulla Munda shed her rainbow skin the blues, greens, yellows and browns dispersed through the water and formed our reef.

The brolga was her native companion and they passed down the stories, song & dance to our people young and old.

Gubulla Munda Dreaming has been passed through the generations and forms a connection with mother nature and the people of this country.

The coastal areas of the Burdekin and Bowen regions are alive with rich natural experiences.

- Wonder at the thousands of native birds at the wetlands of the Burdekin region.
- Marvel at the millions of soldier crabs and shoreline dwellers of Alva Beach and the Bowen foreshore.
- Discover the beauty of coral and tropical fish at Bowen's fringing reef beaches.
- Explore the shallows of Dalrymple Point to find a 'galaxy' of giant Choc-chip Starfish!

When exploring our natural wonders we ask that you adopt a 'look, don't touch' approach. Touching, lifting or removing our sea creatures from their habitat can cause severe stress for animals and may be dangerous to you as well! We invite you to 'Leave no footprints' to help ensure the inhabitants of our reef & coastal environments remain safe and abundant into the future. To find out more about where to discover nature in our regions, visit one of our accredited information centres.

The 'Leave No Footprints' project is funded by the partnership between the Australian Government's Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation. The project is delivered by the Bowen Burdekin Local Marine Advisory Committee and Bowen Tourism and Business, with support from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.



Australian Government

Great Barrier
Reef Foundation



Bowen
Tourism & Business



Leave No Footprints



A guide to Reef explorations in the Bowen & Burdekin Regions



Green sea turtle

Chelonia mydas

Size: 110cm Lifespan: 100 years.
Green sea turtles eat jelly fish, seagrass and algae. They migrate 100s of kilometres between nesting and feeding. Look for their heads poking out of the deeper water, they're watching you!

Humpback whale

Megaptera novaeangliae

Size: 18m Lifespan: 45 - 50 years.
Watch the horizon for a glimpse of this hungry giant! A humpback whale will eat 2000-2500 kg of plankton, krill and small, schooling fish each day.



Dugong

Dugong dugon

Size: 3m Lifespan: 70 years.
These large marine animals have evolved over 60 million years. They eat seagrass and have been mistaken for mermaids with their unique tail shape.



Stone fish

Synanceia

Size: 50cm Lifespan: 10 years.
These masters of disguise have 13 large spines on their back filled with poison. Their colour can vary to match their environment. Watch out! If you stand on one you can receive a painful sting requiring immediate hospitalisation.



Coral

Anthozoa

You'll see hard and soft corals here but please don't stand on them! Corals are animals, not plants, and their colours are formed by the algae that live within them and provide them with food. See how many types you can count!

Striped grunter

Haemulon sciurus

Size: 30cm.

These fish can be found in mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs. They get the name 'grunter' because when they are removed from the water they croak!



Sand dollar

Clypeasteroidea

Size: 7cm Lifespan: up to 8 years.
Also known as mermaid coins, these creatures have rows of tube feet and eat plankton. Please don't take these home, they are living creatures! Watch where you step and you'll see many.

Horned sea star

Protoreaster nodos

Size: 30cm Lifespan: 3 - 27 years.
Their mouth is located on the underside of the star. Their prey is absorbed outside their mouth by forcing out the stomach. Please just look - holding sea stars can cause the animals severe stress



Brittle star

Ophiuroidea

Size: 20cm Lifespan: 10 years.

Brittle stars come in many colours and have small spines all over their body, giving them a hairy appearance. They can detach their arms and grow new ones if attacked.



Sea cucumber

Holothuroidea

Size: 60cm Lifespan: 5 - 10 years.
A member of the echinoderm family, sea cucumbers cleanse the sand by removing nutrients from animal and plant remains. Please do not handle, as this can cause animals to expel organs and toxic substances.



Sea urchin

Echinoidea

Size: 10cm Lifespan: up to 100 years.
Sea urchins have a round shape and are covered in sharp spikes that can be venomous. They eat algae with a scraping feeding structure called Aristotle's lanterns.



Night heron

Nycticorax

Size: 60cm Lifespan: 20 years.

Night herons are nocturnal, but you may spot a nest in a tree near water. Breeding takes place in colonies. They feed on crustaceans, frogs, fish and insects.



Soldier crab

Mictyris longicarpus

Size: 2.5cm.

Soldier crabs bury into the sand during high tide and emerge in large groups on low tide. They are one of the few crabs that have evolved to walk forwards.

All information and graphics relating to traditional owners was approved by Birri Gubba elders Ms Renarta 'Gootha' Prior & Mr Mervyn 'Goolgul' Prior (Snr).
Cover image by Norma Jackson
Photos supplied by: Bowen State High School, Norma Jackson & Anne Suse Smith.

Our researchers!

Homo sapiens

The 2019 Year 9 Science students at Bowen State High school proudly researched each of the animals on this information sign. To see their full presentations, drop into the Big Mango Information Centre!

