



TREKOORA

YOUR JOURNEY GUIDE



NORTH OF BRISBANE

Sunshine Coast & Australia Zoo

Ancient volcanic peaks, a family's wildlife dream, and a coastline made for whale-watching.

Trekkoora acknowledges the Jinibara and Kabi Kabi peoples, Traditional Custodians of the Glass House Mountains and the Sunshine Coast, and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

At a glance

- The Glass House Mountains are volcanic plugs that formed about 27 to 26 million years ago.
- James Cook named them on 17 May 1770, because their shapes reminded him of glass houses.
- They lie on the traditional lands of the Jinibara and Kabi Kabi peoples, and have been on Australia's National Heritage List since 2006.
- Australia Zoo began in 1970 as the two-acre Beerwah Reptile Park, opened by Steve Irwin's parents.
- Whale-watching season on the Sunshine Coast runs from June to about the end of October.

The land and its first people

The National Heritage listing records that the peaks are "central to the creation myths of the region" and were important gathering places, with continuing cultural importance. Queensland Parks describes the area as a special meeting place where many First Nations peoples came together for ceremonies and trade.

Queensland State Archives shares one part of that story: in Jinibara custom, Mount Beerwah is the ancestral mother and Mount Tibrogargan the father, and other peaks are their children. Further north, the lands and waters of Noosa are Kabi Kabi Country.

The nature story

The mountains are intrusive plugs. Molten rock rose inside ancient volcanoes and cooled into hard cores. Over millions of years the softer land around them weathered away, and today the cores rise sharply from the surrounding plains. Beerwah is the tallest at 556 metres, followed by Coonowrin (377 m) and Tibrogargan (364 m).

What you will see

- **Glass House Mountains Lookout.** A wide view of the peaks rising from the lowlands. A plaque placed here in 2016 marks ten years on the National Heritage List.

- **Australia Zoo, Beerwah.** Today it covers more than 700 acres, with over 500 staff. This is the home of the Irwin family and of *The Crocodile Hunter*.
- **Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital.** It opened in 2004, grew from an old avocado packing shed, and honours Lyn Irwin, a pioneer of wildlife care. Today it rescues, treats and releases more than 7,000 native animals every year.
- **Mooloolaba.** A beach patrolled all year round and sheltered by the Point Cartwright headland. It is also one of the busiest fishing ports on Australia's east coast, landing prawns, swordfish and tuna.
- **Noosa National Park.** First declared in 1939, the park is known for its headland views, including Hell's Gates. Koalas are often seen along the Noosa Hill walk.

Wildlife and plants to look for

- Humpback whales from Point Cartwright, Alexandra Headland or Dolphin Point in Noosa.
- Koalas in Noosa National Park.
- Crocodiles and other native wildlife at the zoo.
- Rainbow lorikeets and yellow-tailed black-cockatoos in Noosa.
- Hoop and kauri pines, swamp orchids and Christmas bells.

A little history

Sailing north on 17 May 1770, Cook wrote that the peaks' "singular form of elevation" very much resembled glass houses. The Sunshine Coast Council explains that he was thinking of the glass-making furnaces of Yorkshire.

Steve Irwin was born in Victoria in 1962. His parents, Bob and Lyn Irwin, moved the family to Beerwah and opened the Beerwah Reptile Park in 1970. Lyn nursed

orphaned kangaroos in homemade pouches. By the 1980s the park had grown to four acres and been renamed the Queensland Reptile and Fauna Park. Steve took over in 1991, married Terri on 4 June 1992, and together they renamed it Australia Zoo. Steve died in an accident while snorkelling on the Great Barrier Reef on 4 September 2006. The family story continues with Terri, Bindi (born 1998) and Robert (born 2003).



Did you know?

- The road past Australia Zoo was renamed Steve Irwin Way in 2006.
- Steve and Terri filmed more than 300 television episodes, including *The Crocodile Hunter*.
- Explorer Matthew Flinders climbed Mount Beerburrum in July 1799.
- Noosa became a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve on 20 September 2007.
- The Glass House Mountains were the 32nd place added to the National Heritage List.

Travel with care

- Queensland Parks warns that the Glass House Mountains "are not easy climbs". Prepare well, check park alerts and stay on marked tracks.
- The peaks hold deep cultural meaning for their Custodians. Enjoy them quietly and respectfully.
- At Australia Zoo, follow the keepers' guidance. Wildlife Hospital tours take small groups only.
- Swim between the red-and-yellow flags at patrolled beaches.
- Watch koalas and whales from a respectful distance, and never feed wildlife.



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Sources: <https://parks.qld.gov.au/parks/glass-house-mountains/about> · <https://parks.qld.gov.au/parks/glass-house-mountains> · <https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/78470> · <https://blogs.archives.qld.gov.au/2018/08/28/silhouettes-in-the-sky-glass-house-mountains/> · <https://heritage.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/stories/environment/glasshouse-mountains> · <https://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/news/backward-glance-and-the-history-of-the-name-glass-house-mountains-300816> · <https://queenslandplaces.com.au/beerwah> · <https://www.australiazoo.com.au/about-us/history/> · <https://australiazoo.com.au/about-us/the-irwins/> · <https://www.australiazoo.com.au/conservation/wildlife-hospital/> · https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob_Irwin (used only to confirm Bob Irwin's first name; the zoo's own pages say "his parents" and name Lyn) · <https://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/experience-sunshine-coast/sports-and-leisure/beaches/patrolled-beaches/mooloolaba-main-beach> · <https://www.visitsunshinecoast.com/place/mooloolaba> · <https://www.visitsunshinecoast.com/guide/whale-watching-on-the-sunshine-coast> · <https://parks.qld.gov.au/parks/noosa> · <https://parks.qld.gov.au/parks/noosa/about> · <https://www.noosa.qld.gov.au/Site-Footer/Footer-Widgets/Acknowledgement-of-Country> · <https://www.noosa.qld.gov.au/Environment-and-Waste/Environment/Noosa-biosphere>