



# experience fraser island

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## Where The Wild Things Are

**FRASER COAST:** Whales aren't the only wildlife smart enough to hang out around on Queensland's Fraser Coast - there are many others that call this year-round sanctuary home.

### **The Great Sandy Strait / The Great Sandy Marine Park**

This body of water between the mainland and World Heritage-listed Fraser Island is home to one of the largest concentrations of bird species in Australia. More than 300 species have been identified and approximately 30,000 migratory trans-equatorial shorebirds use it as a roosting area.

The Strait was declared a RAMSAR site back in 1999 in recognition of the importance of its wetlands area and is a dedicated Dugong sanctuary and home to many dolphins and turtles. All six marine species of turtles are found here - the Green, Hawksbill, Flatback, Pacific Ridley, Loggerhead and Leatherback.

These are also the waters to which thousands of Humpback Whales and their calves come each year for some time before their long swim back to the Antarctic.

Explore the Sandy Straits by houseboat or yacht or enjoy a whale watching tour during the season from August to 31 October with one of the many operators. ([www.whalewatch.com.au](http://www.whalewatch.com.au))

### **Fraser Island**

Birds are the most common form of wildlife seen on the island, many of which are migratory species who use it as a resting place as they fly from Australia to their breeding grounds in Siberia.

In terms of mammals, the Dingo is the apex predator and the most prevalent on the island and these are regarded as the purest strain remaining in eastern Australia. Bats, Flying Foxes, possums, Sugar Gliders, lizards, skinks and turtles are also found in small numbers.

The local frogs are called 'Acid Frogs' as they have adapted to tolerate the acidic conditions of the lakes and swamps.

Access to Fraser Island is by air, barge and passenger ferries. Guided off-road tours - like Fraser Explorer Tours - depart daily from Hervey Bay and Rainbow Beach. A four-wheel-drive is essential and can be hired from Hervey Bay, Kingfisher Bay Resort and Rainbow Beach. A selection of accommodation options are also available ranging from resort-style (Kingfisher Bay Resort or Eurong Beach Resort) to camping.



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## **Hervey Bay**

A short drive from the centre of Fraser's Coast commercial hub is Arkarra Lagoons, a natural paradise with hectares of subtropical rainforest lagoons and meandering walking trails. Goannas, echidnas, wallabies, kangaroos, possums and over 140 species of birds all live happily here and it is a favourite spot for families and nature lovers.

The Botanic Gardens at Urangan is another popular bird-watching area. Around 80 species have been identified in the area and the lagoons are homes to many types of water birds.

## **Dolphins of Tin Can Bay**

Locals in this little town to the south of Hervey Bay have enjoyed regular visits from a small number of Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphins for around 30 years.

Most mornings between 7am and 10am the dolphins swim into the boat ramp and allow people to hand feed them. This wonderful experience is free, but the fish you feed them must be purchased to ensure their feeding is monitored.

Ends.

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