

3 MALANDA FALLS TRAIL

1-2 HOURS RETURN



The Malanda Falls Trail comprises two family-friendly trails – the 1.5km Rainforest Walk and 1km Tulip Oak Walk. The trails wind through the rainforest along the North Johnstone River in the Malanda Falls Conservation Park.

Allow time to explore the displays about the Tablelands' volcanic creation, cultural heritage of the Ngadjon Aboriginal people, and the area's unique plants and animals in the Malanda Falls Visitor Information Centre.

THE LANDSCAPE

The Malanda Falls Trail sits on Atherton basalt rock and soils in this area are the result of weathering of volcanic outflows that commenced about seven million years ago. For millions of years extensive volcanic activity occurred across the Tablelands. Numerous volcanoes erupted and lava flows spread out across the landscape. Today conical hills, flooded craters and rich red soils, like those at Malanda Falls, bear witness to these geological events. The soils are nutrient rich and hold moisture well. At the Malanda Falls Trail they support dense rainforest.

THE VEGETATION

The rich soils and high rainfall support dense rainforest that has a closed canopy. As a result, very few plants grow in the understorey and others climb upwards towards the light.

Many of the trees along the trail are labelled. Look for Red Tulip Oaks *Argyrodendron peralatum*, one of the three Tulip Oak species found along the trail. These trees grow to 50m, have wide buttresses and are only found (endemic) in north-eastern Queensland, between Tully and Cooktown.

Black Beans *Castanospermum australe* are easy to distinguish during the wet season when their large pods litter the forest floor. Each thick pod contains large poisonous beans. These large trees can grow to 40m tall and there are some good examples labelled on the Rainforest Walk.

THE FAUNA

The conservation park is alive with birdlife. Listen for the distinctive, cat-like cry of Spotted Catbirds *Ailuroedus melanotis*.

Although easy to hear, their colouring and patterns make them difficult to see in the canopy.

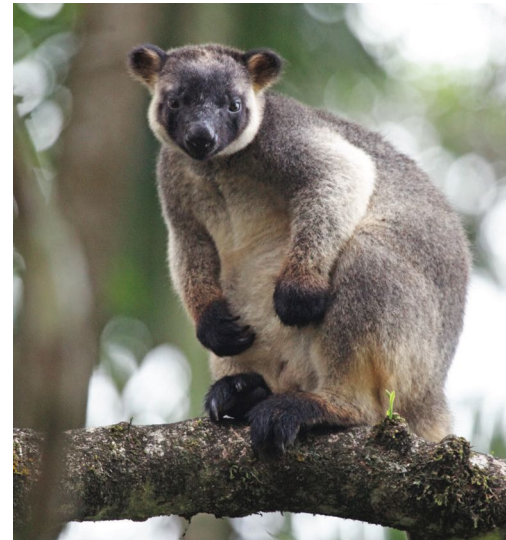
Along the river look for Sawshelled Turtles *Eseya latisternum* and Johnstone River Snapping Turtles *Eseya irwini*. The river outlooks are a good place to see Platypus *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*, especially early in the morning and late afternoon.

The Red-legged Pademelon *Thylogale stigmatica*, a small species of wallaby, can also often be seen in the rainforest. During the day, they will often be resting, sitting quietly on the forest floor. They move out to the areas adjacent the rainforest to graze at night, eating fallen leaves, fruit and some grass.

If you're lucky, you may even spot a Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo *Dendrolagus lumholtzi*. These amazing kangaroos are adapted to a life in the trees, with strong forearms for climbing, spongy hind feet for gripping and a long tail for balance.

While your eyes are in the canopy, look for Green Ringtail Possums *Pseudocheirops archeri*. These grey-green possum are only found in the Wet Tropics of North Queensland and spend their days curled in a ball on a branch.

Stop in at the Malanda Falls Visitors Centre for details of the latest sightings.



Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo



Sawshelled Turtle

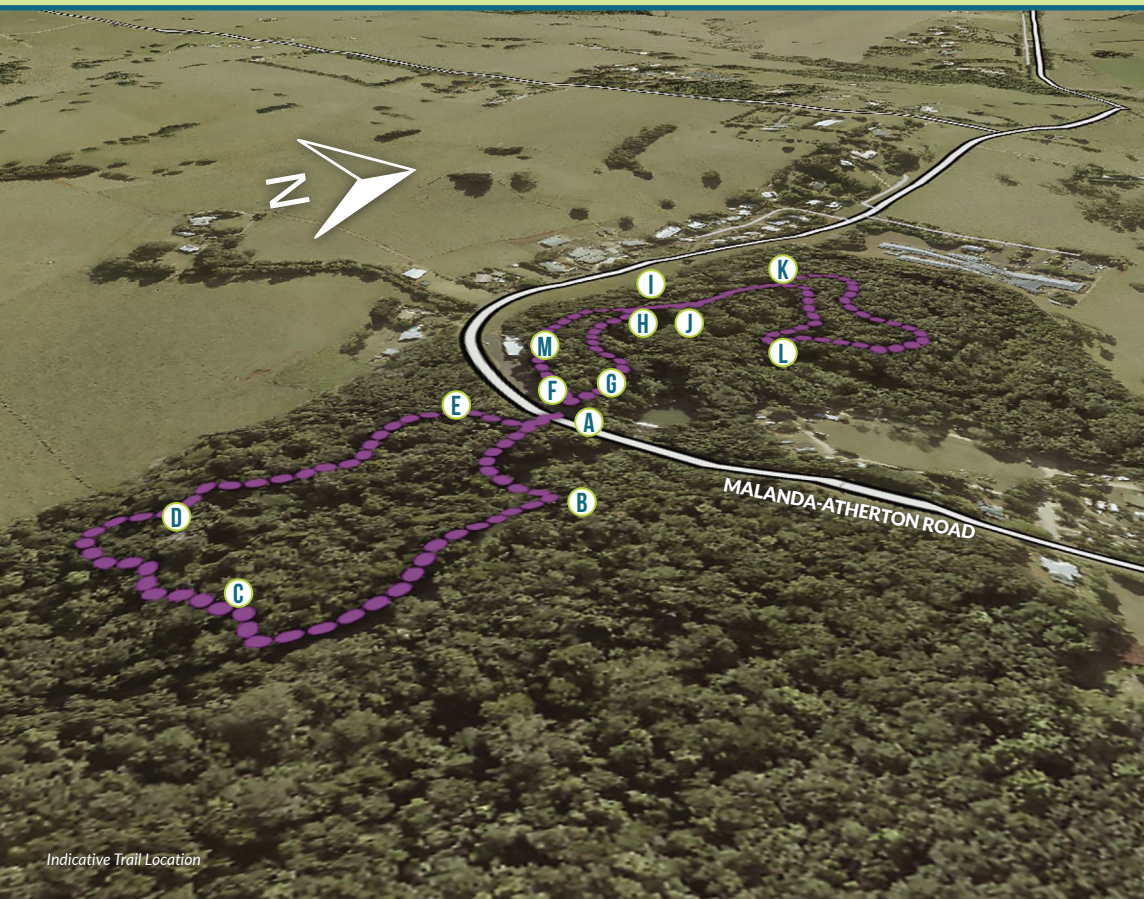


Lookout over North Johnstone River



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Indicative Trail Location

TIPS & SAFETY

- ▼ Check the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service webpage (parks.des.qld.gov.au) for park alerts, and management and safety information.
- ▼ Reduce the spread of weeds and fungal diseases by cleaning mud and seeds from your equipment (shoes and backpacks) before you head off.
- ▼ Take your time and be prepared to wait quietly to see the fauna. Also allow some time to visit the Malanda Falls Visitors Centre and enjoy the interactive displays.
- ▼ Take care and walk to the conditions and your ability.

TRAIL INFORMATION

The Malanda Falls Trail is two trails, the Rainforest Walk and Tulip Oak Walk. To do the full trail:

- A. Rainforest Walk trailhead – the first section of the track is sealed.
- B. 120m – river lookout. This is a good place to look for the Sawshell and the Johnstone River Snapping Turtles.
- C. 370m – large Black Bean Tree on the left.
- D. 500m – in the forest on the left here is often a good place to see Red-legged Pademelons.
- E. 710m – Bumpy Satinash *Syzygium cormiflorum* on the left. These trees are unusual in that they flower directly from the trunk (called Cauliflory), producing large number of white flowers late in the wet season (March-May).

- F. 780m – rejoin main trail. Turn left and head back to the car park.
- G. 800m – Tulip Oak Walk Trailhead left of the picnic shelter.
- H. 1.0km – Junction. Continue up the stairs.
- I. 1.1km – Start of loop. Turn right.
- J. 1.2km – Lookout. Good place to look for Platypus in the river or Ulysses Butterflies *Papilio ulysses* which often use the river corridor to move through the rainforest.
- K. 1.1km – Junction. Turn right.
- L. 1.3km – Lookout.
- M. 1.6km – End of loop. Continue straight.
- N. 1.7km – stairs at left. Continue straight.
- O. 1.9km – Malanda Falls Visitor Centre.
- G. 2.0km – car park.



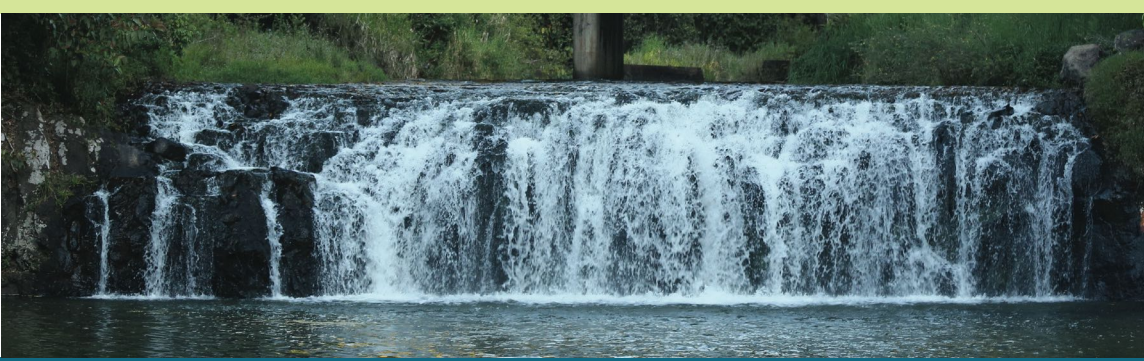
Red-legged Pademelon

GETTING THERE

From the township of Malanda, take the Malanda-Atherton Road towards Atherton. Turn right into the car park just after crossing the North Johnstone River. The Red Tulip Oak Walk starts near the picnic shelter. The Rainforest Walk is across the road.

If you liked this trail, you might also like these other 10 Top Tableland Trails:

- #1. **Peterson Creek.** A family-friendly walk near Yungaburra and a great place to see Platypus.
- #2 **Lake Barrine Circuit Track.** This moderate 5km circuit winds through rainforest surrounding Lake Barrine.



BEST TIME TO GO

Enjoy the Malanda Falls Trail any time of the year.