

1 PETERSON CREEK

1-2 HOURS LOOP



Enjoy this 3.8km return stroll along the banks of Peterson Creek and through the heart of historic Yungaburra. The Peterson Creek Walking Trail is a wonderful example of community spirit. The Yungaburra Landcare Group began rehabilitating the area in 1998 and the resultant trail is a great example of a healthy ecosystem supporting some of the Tablelands' native fauna. This family-friendly trail is one of the best and most accessible spots on the Tablelands to see Platypus and the shy Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo.

LANDSCAPE

Peterson Creek flows along the boundary of the volcanic soils to the west, and the much older (around 360 million-year-old) folded sediments of the Hodgkinson formation to the east. The volcanic soils, the result of recent volcanic activity, have weathered into rich red soils that hold moisture and nutrients; while the Hodgkinson formation has weathered more slowly to form lighter, sandy soils.

VEGETATION

Geology plays a major part in influencing the vegetation on this trail. In this area of moderate rainfall (~1,400mm/yr), the weathered red basalt soils support Mabi Forest. This rich diversity of rainforest species typically includes large emergent trees, trailing vines and a thick shrub layer. It once covered much of the now productive agricultural lands on the Tablelands. The lighter granite soils support the grassy Eucalypt woodland with scattered cycads. Many of the trees along the trail are labeled so you can become familiar with some of the species of the area.

FAUNA

Platypus *Ornithorhynchus anatinus* are reasonably common in Peterson Creek, with dawn and dusk being the best times to see them. Scan the water's surface for rings, ripples and trails of bubbles – all tell-tale signs that a platypus is feeding below and may pop up any minute.

When looking for platypus, don't be fooled by the Sawshelled Turtles *Elseya latisternum*, which are also common in the creek. They can be seen foraging in the creek, or sunning themselves on rocks and logs.

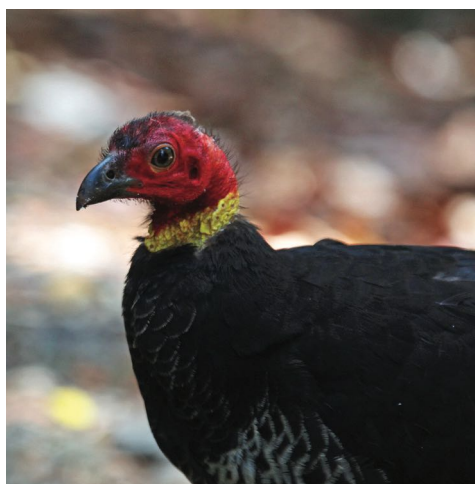
Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroos *Dendrolagus lumholtzi* are sometimes seen in the trees along the creek, especially downstream of the suspension bridge. These amazing kangaroos

are adapted to a life in the trees, with strong forearms for climbing, spongy hind feet for gripping and a long tail for balance.

Birds are abundant along the trail and you're bound to come across an Australian Brush-turkey *Alectura lathami*. These black, chicken-sized birds have a bare red head and yellow wattle, which becomes pronounced in males during the breeding season. Male Brush-turkeys build a large mound of leaf litter to incubate eggs using the heat generated by the decomposing vegetation. The male tends to the mound and adds or removes debris to maintain the temperature of the eggs. After 49 days, the fully feathered chicks dig their way out of the mound and immediately fend for themselves as the adults give no parental care.



Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo



Female Australian Brush-turkey



Sawshelled Turtle



Platypus

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Indicative Trail Location

TRAIL INFORMATION

The best place to start the trail is from the Platypus Viewing Area. The full trail will bring you back here.

- A. Platypus viewing area. Cross the road bridge and follow the trail on the left under the bridge.
- B. 150m – continue along the banks of Peterson Creek. This section of the creek, including the bends, is a good place to look for platypus especially at dawn and dusk. Look for Sawshell turtles on the rocks and logs in the creek.
- C. 650m – Lloyds Suspension Bridge. Cross the bridge and take the short sidetrack to the historic boiler before returning the way you came and continuing along the main trail.
- D. 670m – picnic table and junction. Take a break at the picnic table and look for tree-kangaroos near the suspension bridge and the Mabi Forest on the opposite bank. For a shorter walk, take the trail on the right to the exit onto Penda Street. Walk up the hill, turn right onto Cedar Street, another right onto the Gillies Highway and back to the Platypus viewing area. Otherwise, continue along the main trail.
- E. 900m – picnic table. Look for platypus in the creek, or tree-kangaroos on the opposite bank.

- F. 1.1km – junction. Take the sidetrack along the creek to Williams Weir and water wheel turbine. Return the way you came and continue along the main trail.
- G. 1.3km – Fawleys Pool and information shelter. Continue up the stone steps.
- H. 1.75km – historic railway bridge.
- I. 2km – junction with Mulgrave Road. Turn right and continue up the hill along the road verge.
- J. 2.6km – roundabout. Follow the footpath through the park and continue down the hill and turn right into Kehoe Place.
- K. 3.0km – Lake Eacham Hotel. This is one of the 18 heritage listed buildings in Yungaburra, the largest Heritage Listed Village in Queensland. Continue down the hill as Kehoe Place meets Gillies Range Road.
- L. 3.5km – cross Gillies Range Road and continue down the hill towards the Platypus viewing area.
- A. 3.8km – Platypus viewing area.

TIPS & SAFETY

- ▼ 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.
- ▼ Take care and walk to the conditions and your ability.

GETTING THERE

From Yungaburra, follow the Gillies Range Road towards Atherton. Before crossing Peterson Creek on the edge of Yungaburra, turn left into the platypus viewing area car park.

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

#2. Lake Barrine Curcuit Trail. This moderate 5km circuit winds through rainforest surrounding Lake Barrine.

#3. Malanda Falls Trail. Two trails wind through rainforest along the North Johnstone River on the outskirts of Malanda.

BEST TIME TO GO

Enjoy the Peterson Creek Walking Track at any time of the year. Dawn and dusk are the best times for viewing wildlife.