

# Wild Australia



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The Pew Environment Group and The Nature Conservancy are working together to protect millions of acres of Australia's most spectacular wildlands and tens of thousands of square miles of its oceans.

## PRESERVING WILD AUSTRALIA

Australia contains some of the world's last great wilderness areas, where nearly a billion acres remain largely unaltered by the expansion of industrial civilization. It harbors some of the world's most intact ocean habitats, including the largest coral reef. Encompassed within Australia's terrestrial and marine environment is an astonishing and exotic array of species found nowhere else on Earth. Indeed, Australia ranks first among all nations in total number of endemic mammal and reptile species, and among the top five countries in total numbers of endemic plants, birds and amphibians.

In many ways Australia is a microcosm

of the global biodiversity crisis. For the last 200 years, as the frontier has been logged, plowed, grazed and mined, Australia has ranked among the countries with the highest extinction rates. Independent estimates by conservationists calculate that close to 50 percent of Australia's species are threatened with extinction due to the loss of critical habitat, competition from invasive species, altered wildfire patterns and overfishing.

Although there are several biodiversity and wilderness conservation efforts underway in Australia, more can be done. The Pew Environment Group and The Nature Conservancy have established Wild Australia, an ambitious effort to protect

millions of acres of Australia's most important wildlands and tens of thousands of square miles of its oceans that hold globally significant biodiversity.

Australia also ranks among the top five countries on Earth with large remaining wilderness areas. Its people possess a strong conservation ethic, and the environmental sector has a history of solid accomplishments. Wild Australia builds upon and further strengthens these assets in ways that will secure the long-term protection of some of the world's most spectacular natural areas.