



Lizard Island Research Station Tour
9- 14 October, 2015



The Australian Museum Tour to Lizard Island

Back by popular demand, the Australian Museum is pleased to offer an unforgettable expedition to the Australian Museum Research Station on Lizard Island from Friday, 9 October – Wednesday, 14 October 2015.

Lizard Island

Lizard Island is a granite continental island with an extensive fringing reef, numerous patch reefs and magnificent beaches. It is an excellent location for safe snorkeling and boating activities. The diversity of marine life is enormous with hundreds of species of corals and over a thousand species of fishes.

The Lizard Island Research Station is a world-leading supplier of on-reef facilities for coral reef research and education. The Research Station is owned and operated by the Australian Museum and is supported by the Lizard Island Reef Research Foundation. It enables cost-effective research and education about coral reefs by providing accommodation, boats, diving gear, laboratories and a seawater aquarium system to researchers and student groups. From research conducted at Lizard Island, about 100 scientific publications are produced each year. The information is used by reef managers to conserve coral reefs, which are proving to be an increasingly vulnerable resource.

Location

Lizard Island is situated in the northern portion of Australia's Great Barrier Reef, 270 km north of Cairns, Queensland. It is a high granite island about 7 square kilometres in size, with three smaller islands nearby (Palfrey, South and Bird). Together these islands form the Lizard Island Group and their well-developed fringing reef encircles the 10 metre deep Blue Lagoon. The only settlements on the Island are the Research Station, the Lizard Island Resort and a basic camping area operated by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

All islands in the Lizard Island Group are part of the Lizard Island National Park, administered by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. Lizard Island is situated in the waters of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, administered jointly by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency.

Lizard Island Group is a mid-shelf reef, situated 30 kilometres from the Australian mainland and 19 kilometres from the outer barrier reefs that line the edge of the continental shelf. Most reef and island types characteristic of the Great Barrier Reef are accessible from the Research Station.

Animal Highlights

The presence of reptiles and birds on the Island has been recorded since Captain Cook's visit in 1770. The large goanna for which Cook named the Island is one of 12 species of lizard on Lizard Island. There are also five species of snake and two species of tree frog. The only mammals on the Island (apart from humans) are two species of bat.

About 10 species of bush birds are resident on Lizard Island, as well as numerous seabirds. Many migratory birds pass through, and regular visits are made by others. Nesting colonies of seabirds are established on nearby Bird Islet, and Osprey Islet. These include terns, gulls, reef herons, osprey and sea eagles. Ample reference material is available in the Station's library for identification of the fauna of Lizard Island.

There are a number of fauna highlights on Lizard Island including:

- black flying fox colony
- extensive bird life, list will be provided
- goannas
- many varied reef fish
- spectacular corals

Dr Penny Berents

Dr Penny Berents is a Senior Fellow in the Australian Museum Research Institute.

Penny is an experienced field biologist with more than 40 years experience scuba diving and conducting biodiversity surveys from coral reefs to the deep sea. She has extensive boating experience, has owned and operated dive boats, and crews on ocean racing yachts at Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club. Her research interests include describing and documenting small crustaceans known as cerapodine amphipods.

Penny has a long involvement with Lizard Island Research Station and participated in the first Australian Museum expedition to Lizard Island led by Prof Frank Talbot in 1975. She has visited Lizard Island many times as a researcher and has led more than 10 trips for Australian Museum Members, where members enjoyed learning about the beautiful coral reefs of the Lizard Island area and the important research which is conducted at the research station. Penny, who is an Open Water Master Diving Instructor, has also led Australian Museum Members trips to coral reefs in Indonesia, Pohnpei and Papua New Guinea.

Penny is a Trustee of the Lizard Island Reef Research Foundation.

Tour Details

Tour Dates

Friday, 9 October to Wednesday, 14 October 2015, from Cairns.

(Participants are asked to arrive in Cairns no later than Thursday, 8 October to allow for a morning departure on Friday 9 October direct to Lizard Island)

Brief Outline

Day 1- Friday, 9 October 2015

Guests will board chartered flights in Cairns to Lizard Island in the morning. On arrival, guests will be greeted by Lizard Island Research Station staff and given an overview of the Island and facilities.

Days 2 – 5 - Saturday, 10 October – Tuesday, 13 October 2015

The daily schedule will depend on the weather, marine and other conditions. It will include a mix of snorkeling, coastal explorations, Island walks, presentations by Dr Penny Berents, relaxation time and on one day, a charter to the outer reef.

Day 6 - Wednesday, 14 October 2014

Enjoy breakfast on Lizard Island, before taking a chartered flight to Cairns. End of tour

Tour Inclusions

The tour to Lizard Island is a specialised tour and includes the following:

- tour Leader on Lizard Island, Dr Penny Berents
- 5 nights accommodation on Lizard Island at the Research Station
- chartered airfares from Cairns to Lizard Island and from Lizard Island to Cairns
- daily breakfasts, lunches, dinners and non-alcoholic beverages while on Lizard Island
- guided snorkeling trips (snorkeling gear included)
- specialist talks on Lizard Island
- charter boat tour to the outer reef (weather permitting)
- boat trips and boat transport around the Island

Items Not Included in the Tour

- return flights from Sydney to Cairns
- travel insurance
- personal expenses
- alcoholic beverages
- pre and post tour accommodation in Cairns
- transfers to/from hotel and Cairns airport
- transfers to/from hotel and Hinterland Terminal (Charter flight)
- pre and post tour meals

Prices and Payment

The Australian Museum Lizard Island Research Station exclusive tour costs follow:

Description	\$ per person	\$ per person (AM Member 10% discount)
Twin share room	\$4,500	\$4,050

Note: all share bathrooms (no ensuites)

In order to secure a place on this tour, a formal booking must be made. Bookings require a non-refundable deposit of \$500 per person. To book, please call Adventure World on 1300 369 751. Final payment is required by Wednesday, 9 September 2015.

The tour group is strictly limited a maximum of 10 people. Unfortunately there is no discount for children (although they are very welcome).

Flights To and From Cairns

Flights from Sydney to Cairns and return are not included in this tour. Many flights and airlines service this route such as Qantas, Jetstar and Virgin Australia.

Chartered Flights and Meeting Details

A chartered small plane will take the group from Cairns to Lizard Island and return. Final details including where to meet and times will be announced upon final payment.

Luggage Restrictions

On the chartered flights between Cairns and Lizard Island, luggage restrictions will be enforced. Details of the maximum luggage quota will be advised upon final payment.

Accommodation

Accommodation provided at the Research Station is very basic. The majority of rooms contain bunk beds with only 2 private rooms, none with ensuites.

Getting Around on the Island

Tinnie boats will take guests around the Island. There will be a driver specifically designated to take the group around the Island for activities as required.

Physical Endurance

Guests are able to do as much or as little as they want. To get the most out of the trip, participants must be in reasonable health and able to walk, swim and be able to snorkel (or willing to learn).

What to Bring

A full list of items required on the tour will be supplied at a later date, along with other documentation on full payment of tour. An indication of the type of items that will be required include:

- walking shoes
- day pack
- swimming gear and light weight skin suit
- sunscreen
- hat
- bath and beach towel
- binoculars
- camera (and an underwater camera if you have one)
- non-slip shoes for boat trips
- wind sheeter or light jacket for night and boat trips
- mosquito repellent
- water bottle

Island Weather

October is the best month to go to Lizard Island. The days can be as hot as 35 degrees and the nights can be as cool as 14 degrees. It is unlikely to rain much, but could, so do bring a parka or such for inclement weather and boat trips.

Medical Facilities

There is no hospital or pharmacy on the Island. Please ensure that you have all of your medication with you. The Island makes use of the Royal Flying Doctors Service in the case of an emergency.

Meals

All meals on the Island will be prepared by a chef. Guests may be required to assist from time to time. Please advise of any dietary requirements at the time of booking.

Alcohol

Guests are able to pre-order alcohol to be delivered to the Island. It is suggested that alcohol is not brought on the flight due to luggage restrictions. Further information will be provided upon final payment.

Communications Options

There is a payphone on the Island and phone cards are available for purchase. There is also the same option for internet access. There is no mobile reception on the Island.

More Information

Final details will be sent prior to departure, but please contact Australian Museum Members on 9320 6225 should you have any specific questions prior to that time.