THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

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CHRISTMAS ISLAND NATIONAL PARK CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

With the shores of Christmas Island National Park carpeted by millions of miniature baby red crabs, today marks the 40th anniversary of an historic Australian Government commitment to one of the world’s most important bio-diversity havens.

On February 21, 1980, the Fraser Government established Christmas Island National Park and the ground breaking achievements that followed have ensured the Island is one of Australia’s and the world’s wildlife wonders.

Christmas Island boasts more than 250 species and sub-species of plants and animals that are found nowhere else on the planet. It is home to spectacular birdlife, internationally recognised wetlands and its fringing coral reefs support over 600 fish species.

The annual red crab migration is one of the world’s most recognised and celebrated natural events.

Known as the Kingdom of the Crabs, Christmas Island has more than 20 different species of land crabs including the largest in the world – the robber, or coconut crab. These can grow up to one metre across and live to be more than 80 years old.

Parks Australia staff have worked tirelessly over four decades to manage threats to the island such as invasive plants and animals. Their passion and commitment have led to some remarkable achievements that have left an indelible mark on the island’s biodiversity.

They’ve brought the Lister’s gecko and Christmas Island blue-tailed skink back from the brink of extinction, ensured the survival of the critically endangered Abbott’s booby, worked closely with the community to protect millions of red crabs on the island’s roads, and been at the forefront of research and implementation strategies to protect the island’s spectacular biodiversity.

The staggering diversity of wildlife on Christmas Island continues to make it one of the most precious and extraordinary wildlife destinations on the planet.
As part of 40th anniversary celebrations, a spectacular new boardwalk opens today at Christmas Island National Park’s famous Blowholes.

This amazing island continues to enthrall visitors from around the world. A place where you can dive with whale sharks, marvel at colossal crabs, mingle with the birdlife and experience beautiful forests, waterfalls and beaches.

Christmas Island was a treasure recognised 40 years ago, and one that we continue to celebrate today.

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Environment Minister’s office: John Brady 0427 867 638