9 May 2014

One of the Northern Territory’s pristine parks has just celebrated 40 years of protection under the Ramsar Convention.

Minister for Parks and Wildlife, Bess Price, said the Ramsar listing has assisted in keeping the area in immaculate condition.

“In 1974 the Territory’s Cobourg Peninsula was designated the world’s first Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention, which has ensured the wildlife and flora in the region are well preserved,” Mrs Price said.

“It is a credit to this beautiful area that it was the first site in the world to be signed to the treaty.

“The park has an abundance of amazing wildlife, and is the place on the Australian mainland that Leatherback Turtle’s nest.”

The Ramsar Convention is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and use of wetlands and their resources.

The Cobourg Peninsula, also known as Garig Gunak Barlu National Park, is jointly managed by the Arrarrkbi people and NT Parks and Wildlife.

The protected area includes the entire Cobourg Peninsula, the surrounding waters of the Arafura Sea and Van Diemen Gulf, and some of the neighbouring islands and covers about 4,500 square kilometres.

The signing of the international Convention on Wetlands of International Importance took place at the small Iranian town of Ramsar. Since then, the Convention on Wetlands has been known as the Ramsar Convention and sites listed under it are referred to as Ramsar sites.

Australia now has 65 Ramsar Sites, covering an area of 8.3 million hectares and including coral reefs, coastal lagoons, mangroves, inland rivers, mountain peat bogs and underground caves.

Conserved within the park area is an assortment of sandy beaches, dunes and associated coastal grasslands, mangroves, rainforest patches, swamps, lagoons, coral reefs, sea grass meadows and rich marine life.

The southern coast of the peninsula is dominated by important and extensive mangrove and mudflat areas, supporting large numbers of migratory shorebirds (waders).

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