



FRIDAY ENVIRONMENT FORUM NPA Environment Centre

Christmas Island, an Indian Ocean Jewel

This week at Friday Environment Forum - 24th February: The guest speaker is **Cecily Fearnley** who visited **Christmas Island** last December to explore this unique environment.

Christmas Island is a peak of a basalt volcanic seamount which rose steeply 5,000 metres from the ocean floor about 60 million years ago, and is often referred to as the Galapagos of the Indian Ocean.



Lily is one of Christmas Island's beautiful beaches

Most people only know Christmas Island as a place for people seeking asylum, but with over two thirds of the island protected as national park, it is a place of natural beauty where a unique ecosystem of plants and animals has developed over millions of years.

Despite 100 years of occupation, Christmas Island has remained an almost intact ecosystem.

It has more endemic species and sub-species than any other protected area in Australia, and about half of Christmas Island's unique plant life is not found anywhere else in this country. Owing to the isolation, native animals and plants have developed characteristics or behaviours specific to the island.

The island is one of the world's truly spectacular tropical seabird rookeries, with around 80,000 seabirds nesting each year.

Come along to Noosa Parks Association Environment Centre, 5 Wallace Drive Noosaville to hear about Cecily's adventures and enjoy Celia Baker's stunning wildlife photography.

Arrive early on Friday February 24 to enjoy coffee and be seated by 10.30am as the morning will start with a video from the Noosa Biosphere Community Association. For those interested in an interpretive birding walk before the forum, meet Valda in the Environment Centre car park at 8.30am.

All welcome.



Christmas Island red crabs, the island's most famous inhabitants, are well known for their annual mass migration to the sea to lay their eggs in the ocean.