



## **Undara Experience – 5 Stories about Australia.**

### **Story One – Nature**

*Article 1 of 5 highlighting the unique Australian experiences available at the Undara Lava Lodge.*

The overwhelming sensation of a vivacious Mother Nature is inescapable in the tropics. Clearly defined seasons of warm, uninterrupted winter sun that lasts for months, moisture laden air that still seems to have the smell of exotic spices from the equator and a wet season that bursts forth with electricity. And it's this last cycle that excites. For it's this time of year that nature undergoes renewal, the tropical dry savannah of the interior morphs into shades of green more at home on an English countryside postcard than outback Australia. We call this time the "Green Season".

Undara Experience is situated 275km south west of Cairns, high on the volcanic plateau deep in what's known as the Gulf Savannah Country. Lower rainfall and lower temperatures than the coastal areas it's a place of big cattle stations, miles of eucalypt grasslands and huge sunsets. The yearly dose of rain springs forth new grasses to fatten the livestock, regenerate vegetation blackened by bushfires and fills creeks and lagoons with the sounds of thousands of migrating water birds. Macropods of all shapes and sizes enjoy a time of plenty. Stocky Euros, Agile Wallabies, Eastern Greys and even the Musky Rat Kangaroos feast on the new shoots and find protection in the taller grasses. For the reptiles it's the time to find a mate and continue the cycle of life. Frillnecked Lizards become a common sight as do the harmless Black Headed and Childrens Pythons with the huge variety of Geckos hunting and barking their way unseen throughout the Lodge.

There amongst it all are the lava tubes, as timeless as they are inspiring. 190,000 years ago the earth spewed forth 24 cubic kilometres of lava and as this red hot river wound its way along the lie of the land, it formed natural tubes that still remain today. Slowly changing colour with each passing season as minerals leech through the roof of the tunnel they hold the key to diversity with the savannah region. For it's the very nature of the caves that provide shelter from the elements for pockets of rainforest and vast

numbers of the lesser known types of mammals, the micro bat. It's during this Green Season that these tiny creatures, some weighing only 4 grams, use the caves for breeding in their thousands. Each evening visitors to the tunnel entrance witness a sight so amazing its needs to be on Discovery Channel as lying in wait for these hungry bats are the Night Tigers or Brown Tree Snakes. Using reflexes that need to be quicker than the ultra sonic guidance systems of their prey these snakes strike out for their supper with a natural skill honed through evolution. All of this unfolds within arms length of the observer - if you dare that is!

There is no doubt that nature is king out at Undara and there is even less doubt that it is now, during the summer months of the "Green Season", that is the ideal time to enjoy Mother Nature are her animated best.



For more information or hi-res images on Undara please contact Mark Schmitt on:  
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**Two Night Tigers sharing a micro bat supper.**

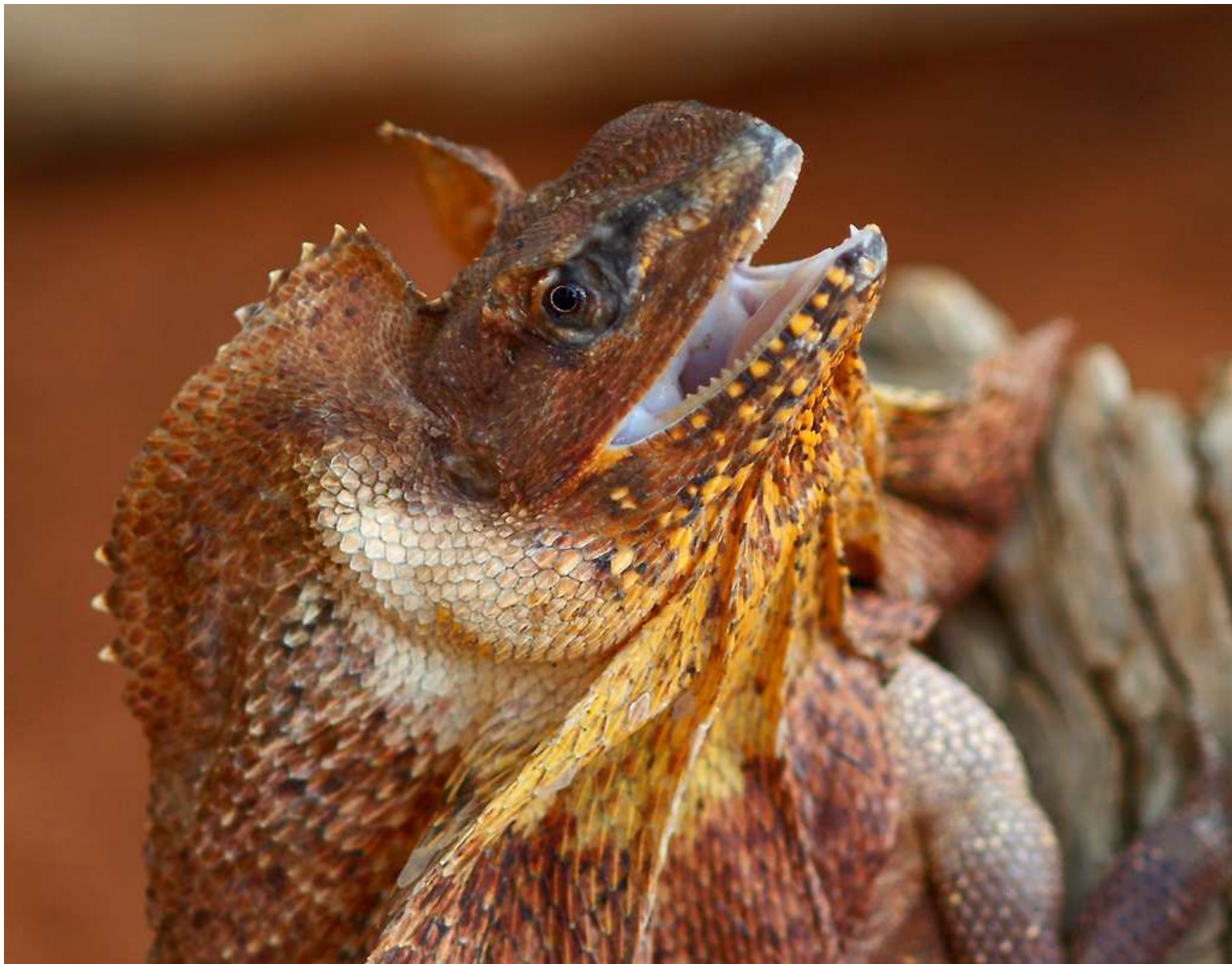
Image courtesy Kelvin and Judy Marshall

**Just another regular at Undara Experience**

*Image courtesy Kelvin and Judy Marshall*



**Australian Frill-Necked Lizard**



*Image courtesy Kelvin and Judy Marshall*