

COASTS AND ESTUARIES

As an island continent Australia's diverse shoreline covers a colossal 60,000 kilometres, when measured along the oceans' tentacles. These wind along the multiplicity of estuaries, bays and inlets, often for many kilometres.

Even with the popularity of four-wheel drive vehicles, the majority of Australia's northern scenic coastal area and its hinterland remains locked away and inaccessible from land. From the air nature's grandeur can be fully appreciated, revealing its sea and landscape shaped by giant tides and wind movements.

Australia has some of the world's largest tides – up to eleven metres between low and high tide in the north. At ground level the mudflats left by the Kimberley king tides can seem unappealing. Yet from the air breathtaking pictures materialise with an infinite variety of patterns, giant scribbles and patchworks. The tidal movements expose coastline and estuaries of intense colour variations, ranging from fern green to deep blue. In some parts of the northern coast, there are twenty-five different species of saltwater mangroves acting as nature's coastal guardian, protecting the land from erosion. In comparison, rainforests in parts of the east coast tumble into the ocean.

Straggling the coast and hinterland, rivers and creeks cut curling swathes through the landscape as they snake their way to the ocean. In the north's Dry season little water flows. But in the Wet season water rages through the gorges and floods the plains for many kilometres before spilling into the ocean.













