



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH A CROCODILE ON WALLAROO'S PRIVATE ADELAIDE RIVER CRUISE



PAT, THE BIRD WHISPER CALLS THE KITES FOR FEEDING

PRESERVE, PROMOTE AND PROTECT

BY NANNETTE HOLLIDAY

Covid-19 tested human resilience, but nature has flourished without massive tourism interference, highlighting that the protection of our environment, living creatures and their ecosystems is vital.

“Prohibiting tourists isn’t the answer. Education and understanding the creatures and their environment is,” says barefooted Pat “Croc Dundee” Chappell.

For the past seven years, Pat has been educating people about how to preserve, promote and protect crocodiles and other creatures that inhabit the Adelaide River ecosystem, and what he does for Wallaroo Tours on their private jumping crocodile adventure cruises.

“I try to bring an understanding about who crocodiles really are – not the bloodthirsty killers most people think. Education can protect people. Crocodiles are perceptive creatures. They don’t see a human – they see movement, a food source and react. If people don’t do silly things, they won’t get eaten.”

A small (maximum 20 people) private cruise with 58-year-old Pat is a real eye-opener. There’s very little he doesn’t know about crocodiles, having grown-up around them in this region all his life.

Pat’s parents were the curators at Adelaide River War Cemetery.

“My first crocodile encounter was at three and a half years old.”

At age four, he took off bush for a few days.

“I loved all the creatures. They’re my friends. I choose to work with crocodiles because they’re the most misunderstood.”

While Pat has had several close encounters with snakes and even crocodiles he hasn’t lost any body parts.

“The closest I ever came to dying was from a foot-long centipede that bit me. I nearly lost my leg.”

There are only four permits in the world for interaction with saltwater crocodiles in the wild, and they’re all on the Adelaide River.

While a crocodile can jump high for food if required, you won’t see them performing like dolphins at SeaWorld on any Wallaroo private crocodile cruise with Pat. Their cruises are the only ones that provide a fully rounded educational, close-up and personal encounter with the crocodiles, plus kites and jabirus when they’re around.

“Conservation and preservation are paramount,” he says. “The Northern Territory has the opportunity to preserve as much of the natural wilderness as possible now. Our birds, animals and crocodiles are



‘CROC DUNDEE’ FAREWELLING TOURISTS ON A WALLAROO PRIVATE CROCODILE CRUISE

our future. It’s not only beneficial for them but also the tourism economy.”

Wallaroo Tours operate all year round and have two half-day private cruises with Pat on the Adelaide River; one includes a Fogg Dam tour and lunch at the iconic Humpty Doo Pub. Their full-day Litchfield Tour also includes the crocodile cruise in the morning and a Darwin Fannie Bay sunset with bubbly and prawns to finish the day.

One thing you can be sure of – every crocodile cruise is unique. No two are the same, says Pat. **TQ**

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Quote TQ30 for 15% discount on Jumping Crocodile Adventure with Lunch, phone bookings only. (Min numbers apply. Valid to 31/03/2021)