The Channel Country is also known for its ‘rains of fishes’ – the sudden and mysterious appearance of fish, including spangled perch, desert rainbowfish and gudgeons, without any apparent source. The phenomenon is thought to be caused by fish, otherwise confined to waterholes for long periods of time, being flushed out and swept in many different directions, often into small, temporary tributaries. Nevertheless, some groups of fish have been found on high open ground. These fish are thought to have been picked up and then dumped by strong summer willy willies (dust whirlwinds), or forced up through dry ground by rare water spouts.

Quirky fact:
Did you know fish mysteriously appear in the Channel Country without apparent explanation?

Background Information
Diamantina National Park is considered to be amongst the top 20 most important national parks within Australia and lies in the heart of western Queensland’s Channel Country. In the east, the terrain takes in long weather-beaten sandstone ridges that fall away to the flood plains and tributaries of the Diamantina River. Beyond the flood plains, Mitchell grass covers wide open gibber plains of cracked clay that stretch beyond the horizon to meet sand dunes in the west. Vast and abundant with rare flora and fauna, this diverse landscape was previously used as pastoral land, with its former European owners including the legendary Sir Sidney Kidman.

In 1992, the Queensland Government resumed Diamantina Lakes as a high priority acquisition for national park protection, based on:

- land and plant diversity;
- highly distinctive bioregions of the Channel Country and Mitchell Grass Downs;
- eight rare species – golden perch, a skink (Ctenotus schevii), freckled duck, peregrine falcon, plains wanderer, bilby, kowari and the shrub eremophila tetraptera;
- the gorge where the Diamantina River (Mundaweera) cuts through limestone hills was listed as a site of national significance by the Australian Geographical Society;
- several sites of cultural significance including Aboriginal rock paintings and the remnants of early European settlement including Mayne Hotel and 22 graves dated from 1884 to 1944; and
- the many waterholes that were scenically diverse and provided excellent camp sites.

The acquisition was merged with the Diamantina Gates National Park to create Diamantina National Park, a protected area of 500,000 hectares.
Inquiry Questions

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<td>Geography</td>
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<td>How do plants, animals and people that live here cope with fire and floods?</td>
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<td>What do different groups value about these landscapes?</td>
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<td>How can they be protected and managed?</td>
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<td>Science</td>
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<td>What are the links between this environment and the features of things that live here?</td>
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<td>How does scientific understanding help people to manage the Diamantina’s environment and resources?</td>
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Points of Interest

- **Diamantina National Park, via Bedourie or Boulia**
  From abundant waterholes, wetlands and river channels to sand dunes, grass plains, and weathered sandstone ranges, this impressive park is a haven for waterbirds in an arid region.
  
  The park boundary is located 143 kms south-east of Boulia and 260 kms south-west of Winton.
  
  **Cost:** Entry to the park is free, however fees apply for camping
  
  **Hours:** Open 24 hours per day
  
  **Contact:** Information, access and maps available at www.derm.qld.gov.au/parks/diamantina

- Big Red – Munga-Thirri (Simpson Desert) National Park, via Birdsville
- Burke and Wills Dig Tree, Cameron Corner, via Thargomindah

Important Information

- Roads are impassable in wet weather
- Four wheel drive (4WD) only
- Best time to visit is between April and October
- Due to the remote location no facilities are available