

Sunda and Sahul



Sunda and Sahul shown with the Wallace and other lines. Image by Altaileopard.

“Sunda” is the name given to the **land** in Malaysia and Indonesia that was connected to Asia during the **Last Ice Age**. The area includes **land** that was exposed when the **sea** level fell as a result of the **sea** water being frozen into **ice** in other parts of the world. Today parts of Sunda are covered by relatively shallow **sea** water (less than 100m deep), which is called the “Sunda Shelf”. The eastern boundary of Sunda is the Wallace Line, which runs past Bali and Borneo.

When Sunda flooded at the end of the **Ice Age**, some **animals** that had shared the same habitat were separated. For example, a type of fish that had lived in a Sunda river, called the “North Sunda River” or “Molengraaff River”, became separated and ended up living on what are today the islands of Borneo and Sumatra, separated by the **sea**. As the **seas** rose, so the **ice** melted in mainland Asia and people, forced away from areas where they had lived that were now flooding, moved into new areas in mainland Asia.

“Sahul” is the name given to the **land** that was formed during the **Last Ice Age** when lower **sea** levels joined Australia and Papua New Guinea. The Torres Strait islands were also part of Sahul, as was Tasmania. Many of the **animals** of these areas are related as they once shared the same **land** area. New Guinea has possums, kangaroos, quoll and



echidnas. There are also cassowaries and bower birds.



Tree kangaroo.

The area between New Guinea and Australia flooded at the end of the [Ice Age](#), about 10,000 years ago. The Gulf of Carpentaria formed where there had only been a [lake](#) ([Lake Carpentaria](#)). Bass Strait also flooded, cutting off Tasmania from the rest of Australia. Many of the coastal areas flooded too, forcing people further inland. Moreton and Stradbroke Islands were cut off as Moreton Bay flooded. Many of the [Ice Age](#) sites in Australia were probably flooded when the [ice](#) melted and the [sea](#) levels rose at the end of the [Ice Age](#).

