
STUDENT PROJECT 2012-224 REGIONAL VARIABILITY IN SALMON GUM COMMUNITIES IN THE GREAT WESTERN WOODLANDS

STUDENT REPORT

title and summary

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Progress Report

This project aims to determine if there is regional variation in the understorey of *Eucalyptus salmonophloia* woodlands across the Great Western Woodlands (GWW) and, if so, what is driving it. It will integrate relevant existing survey data from across the Wheatbelt to assess the variation across the two bioregions in which *Eucalyptus salmonophloia* woodlands occur. This project fills large gaps in the floristic surveys of the GWW, which have focused on the banded ironstone and greenstone ranges. One hundred sites have been sampled in Spring 2011 and 2012, in old growth woodlands or woodlands where the known timber cutting and/or grazing history has been estimated. Data was collected on species composition, cover and height, tree dimensions, site-based variables, and soil physical and chemical characteristics. Detailed classification and ordination of the data revealed two main groups and four small groups that corresponding with geographical outliers and grazed sites. The two main groups consist of one to the north and east of the GWW with an understorey of mainly chenopod species, and the other to the south and west with non-chenopod species (*Eremophila* spp., *Acacia* spp., *Scaevola spinescens* and *Alyxia buxifolia*). Comparisons with the Wheatbelt and investigations into methods to model the distribution of salmon gum communities are still underway. This project will contribute to knowledge about these woodlands relevant to land management decisions regarding fire, timber harvesting and pastoral activities.