

Progress Report CF 2023-020

Wetlands conservation and Ramsar wetlands

BCS Species and Communities

Project Core Team

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Wetlands conservation and Ramsar wetlands

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Context

The wetlands conservation program coordinates the Department's responsibilities to implement the Ramsar Convention in Western Australia, in partnership with the Commonwealth Government, and where applicable coordinate nomination of new Ramsar sites. The wetlands conservation program provides strategic and technical advice to support the management and monitoring of wetlands of high conservation value on reserve, which includes contributing to regional conservation planning. The wetlands conservation program is responsible for coordinating the report to the Commonwealth on the ecological condition and status of Ramsar wetlands in Western Australia.

Aims

- To engage with the Commonwealth through the Wetlands and Aquatic Ecosystems Sub-Committee and contribute to national approaches to identifying vulnerability of Ramsar wetlands.
- Provide guidance to site managers to facilitate and coordinate our responsibilities for managing the Ramsar wetlands as per the Ramsar wise use principals.
- To advise on adaptive management practices and consider climate change mitigation measures to protect the conservation values of Ramsar wetlands.
- To identify and establish a framework to enable collaboration with key stakeholders, communication, monitoring, management and reporting of Ramsar wetlands, to deliver key responsibilities under the Ramsar Convention agreement in partnership with the Commonwealth.
- To provide input to policy development for wetlands of high conservation value to implement the wise use of wetlands principle.

Progress

- Site inspections with on-ground managers of all 12 WA Ramsar wetlands was undertaken. Information from site inspections and regular communication with on-ground managers is informing the development of an accessible framework to improve management, monitoring and reporting of ecological condition of Ramsar sites in WA.
- The six-monthly reports to the Commonwealth via the Wetlands and Aquatic Ecosystems Sub-committee (WAESC) were completed and discussions with other states continue to look at a strategic approach to managing and reporting on Ramsar wetlands. This assisted the Commonwealth to report at the 2022 Ramsar meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties (COP 14).
- Ramsar Information Sheet updates were prepared for Lake Gore and Becher Point Ramsar sites and entered into the on-line Ramsar System Information Sheet (RSIS).
- Participated in a national Ramsar workshop convened by the University of New South Wales to improve the Ramsar Information Sheets and ecological condition reporting of Ramsar sites nationally as a case study which once completed will be applied globally.
- Potential projects for Ramsar wetlands suitable for funding under the National Landcare Program were negotiated with Natural Resource Management groups and on-ground managers .
- A Climate change case study workshop was held in Mandurah at the Peel Yalgorup Ramsar System as part of CSIRO and Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water (DCCEEW) climate mitigation National Environmental Science Program (NESP) hub.
- In celebration of World Wetlands Day on 2nd February the Department works with Cockburn Wetlands Centre. This year the Centre hosted the 19th annual WA Wetlands Conference 2023.

Management implications

A strategic Ramsar framework aims to improve communication, will provide guidance and clarify roles and responsibilities for monitoring, managing and reporting on Ramsar wetlands in WA.

