

Progress Report CF 2023-020

Wetlands conservation and Ramsar wetlands

BCS Species and Communities

Project Core Team

X X Supervising Scientist Ruth Harvey
Data Custodian Heidi Bucktin

Project status as of Oct. 4, 2023, 9:17 a.m.

X X Update requested

Document endorsements and approvals as of Oct. 4, 2023, 9:17 a.m.

X X
Project Team granted
Program Leader granted
Directorate required

Wetlands conservation and Ramsar wetlands

H Bucktin, R Harvey, A Pinder, K Schell

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.

The Department is responsible for reporting on Ramsar wetlands in WA to the Commonwealth then on to the Ramsar Secretariate. This includes updating the Ramsar Information Sheets, condition reporting and facilitating their on-going management with site managers.

Participating in national workshops will help to streamline Ramsar reporting across Australia. Commonwealth initiatives such as the CSIRO climate mitigation NESP hub both facilitates and implements the Ramsar convention in Australia but also gives recognition to the innovative work being undertaken to manage the values of the Ramsar wetlands in WA.

Developing a working relationship with on-ground managers and Natural Resource Management groups compliments the work being done by the Department and will assist in building capacity to deliver collaborative management and restoration projects for Ramsar wetlands, often in remote regional areas with a broad range of stakeholders and traditional owners.

Recognising World Wetlands Day and supporting the Cockburn Wetlands Centre to deliver the annual wetland conference is highly valued by the community in delivering the latest information and is reported to the Commonwealth and Ramsar Secretariate as part of the Ramsar implementation strategy for Australia.

Future directions

Finalise and implement a strategic Ramsar framework for monitoring, managing and reporting on Ramsar wetlands in WA.

Continue to work with Natural Resource Management groups, the Commonwealth and stakeholders to provide leadership in collaborative adaptive management and climate change mitigation for high value conservation wetlands and Ramsar sites.

Work with on-ground managers to collate information on Ramsar wetlands and report to the Commonwealth on status of each Ramsar site including any management actions and potential changes in ecological character.