Concept Plan SP 2019-071

Structured Decision Making to support Painted Button Quail conservation in the Houtman-Abrolhos Islands National Park

Ecoinformatics

Project Core Team

Supervising Scientist	Megan Barnes
Data Custodian	Megan Barnes
Site Custodian	

Project status as of June 15, 2020, 12:28 p.m.

New project, pending concept plan approval

Document endorsements and approvals as of June 15, 2020, 12:28 p.m.

Project Team	required
Program Leader	required
Directorate	required

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Biodiversity and Conservation Science Program

Ecoinformatics

Departmental Service

Service 6: Conserving Habitats, Species and Communities

Background

The Houtman-Abrolhos Islands National Park (HAINP) was declared on July 25th 2019. HAINP was declared for 'the islands' biodiversity, heritage and landscape values and to create opportunities for visitors to enjoy their unrivalled beauty'. The Abrolhos islands are an extremely popular recreation site, are free of introduced predators, and host the only WA population of Painted Button Quail, several important seabird breeding areas, and Sea Lion breeding areas that may be negatively impacted by disturbance, among other biodiversity values. Managing HAINP requires a base of operations, and ~$10million dollars has been assigned to implement tourism infrastructure. The Mid-West region must decide before October 2019 where to locate its base of operations, and where and how to manage infrastructure development on the island. Some natural values have already experienced declines and siting a base risks invasion by feral species such as rats, and increased fire risk. This project will initially aim to identify risks and benefits of a range of sites for developing a base of operations and other management and tourism infrastructure in the islands using structured decision making to support collaborative planning and avoid the risk of park establishment resulting in worse biodiversity outcomes after declaration.

Aims

Conduct a rapid prototyping exercise with the Mid-West Management team, district and parks staff, and parks and visitor services representatives. Rapid Prototyping is one-two day process that (rapidly) runs through the full SDM cycle with decision makers. Subsequently i will conduct a consequence analysis of risks for Abrolhos Paimntyed Button Quail using structured decision making.

Expected outcome

Risk Assessment using structured elicitation to evaluate potential risks to Abrolhos Painted Button Quail in the Mid-West Region, providing high accountability. The work will directly inform regional decision making by providing a better understanding of the potential risks to Abrolhos Painted Button Quails of planned. The project will be conducted is in collaboration with representatives of the region, and Parks and Visitor services, supporting multiple departmental goals. The findings will be published findings in a management relevant international journal.

Strategic context

Contributes to the following BCS strategic goals and key deliverables including:

- Biodiversity, conservation and recovery programs are based on scientific knowledge – Recommendations regarding conservation actions necessary to maintain sustainable populations, or recovery of, targeted species including the management of threatening processes; recommendations regarding the conservation status of targeted species; purpose-specific optimal monitoring strategies
- Understanding of the effects and opportunities for mitigation of pressures and threats to terrestrial ecosystems – recommended strategies to enhance the resilience of native fauna to habitat disturbance.
- Scientific knowledge is available to inform adaptive management and decision making – development of decision support tools to improve capacity to make timely and effective management decisions.
- Conservation advice is based on scientific information – translation of research outputs in formats appropriate to the target audience to encourage adoption.

- Effective science partnerships enhance conservation outcomes - identification of external collaborative conservation research opportunities to deliver on shared goals.

Expected collaborations

Stephen Garnett - CDU

Proposed period of the project

Sept. 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Staff time allocation

Role	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Scientist Technical Volunteer Collaborator	0.3		

Indicative operating budget

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Consolidated Funds (DBCA) External Funding	2000		