

Progress Report CF 2018-067

Wetland conservation

BCS Species and Communities

Project Core Team

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X X
Project Team granted
Program Leader granted
Directorate granted

Wetland conservation

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Context

Wetland conservation activities are conducted to improve the identification, protection, knowledge and management of wetlands on the conservation estate and off-reserve across Western Australia. The department partners with the Australian Government in implementing responsibilities under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands to coordinate the protection and management of the listed sites in Western Australia and assist in delivery of the Ramsar goal of the 'wise use of all wetlands' in the State. Maintaining wetland inventory across the State allows the department to provide accurate technical and scientific advice on values and impacts to high ecological value wetlands to decision makers in land use planning and environmental impact assessment processes.

Aims

- Coordinate partnership responsibilities with the Australian Government for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Western Australia.
- Assist in the development of strategic policy for the conservation of high ecological value wetlands.
- Provide strategic technical advice in environmental impact assessment and land use planning processes for protection of wetlands within the State's conservation reserve network and other high ecological value wetlands.
- Implement the off-reserve program for conservation of high ecological value wetlands on privately owned land on the Swan Coastal Plain.
- Maintain the wetland mapping data sets for which the department is the custodian.

Progress

- New wetland mapping data sets have been developed for the Swan Coastal Plain (SCP), Moora-West, Dandaragan and parts of the South-West in collaboration with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. The SCP data set has undergone extensive internal review across collaborating agencies and external review from research institutions and non-government scientists.
- Climate change response strategies are being considered in the development of adaptation plans for the Muir-Byenup and Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar sites.
- Review of the ecological character description and limits of acceptable change was progressed for the Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar site.
- Revisions of Ramsar Information Sheets have commenced for six Ramsar sites and finalised for three other sites in WA.
- Four requests to modify the 'Geomorphic Wetlands Swan Coastal Plain' dataset were processed.
- Technical advice was provided to departmental staff, other State and Commonwealth agencies, landowners and their consultants, for 42 land use planning issues.
- The 'Healthy Wetland Habitats' to assist landholders with Voluntary Management Agreements to manage their wetlands with conservation values.

Management implications

- The production of information sheets, mapping and condition reports for Ramsar wetlands facilitates their ongoing management, and is required by the Australian Government and the Ramsar Secretariat.
- The development of climate change adaptation plans for the Muir-Byenup System and the Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar sites will facilitate a strategy to respond to major impacts of climate change.
- Management and land use planning advice assists in the greater protection and management of wetlands.
- Ongoing involvement of private land managers in the Healthy Wetland Habitats program increases awareness of wetlands values, threatening process and best practice management of wetlands.
- Updated wetland mapping is a basis for informed decisions on conservation and management

Future directions

- Review and maintain wetland mapping for Western Australia in order to identify high ecological value wetlands and to inform impact assessment and conservation decisions. Pursue option to convert current geomorphic wetland mapping datasets to Australian National Aquatic Ecosystem (ANAE) Classification Framework to align with national framework.
- Review documentation for the 12 sites listed under the International Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Report to the Commonwealth Government on the status of each Ramsar site, any management actions and potential changes in ecological character.
- Technical advice on wetland values will continue to be provided using current wetland mapping information for impact assessment of clearing, mining, and other development applications.