

Developing an Indigenous wetland monitoring and management toolkit

Project information



Resilient
Landscapes

National Environmental Science Program



Marlgu billabong, Kimberley

This project will create a toolkit to support Indigenous rangers to develop wetland monitoring and management work. Co-designed with Kimberley Indigenous rangers, the toolkit will be guided by Indigenous aspirations for wetlands, incorporate processes that draw upon both Aboriginal and scientific knowledge, and align with healthy country plans.

Project details

Wetlands within the Kimberley region are critical ecosystems from a conservation perspective, with their health closely tied to Traditional Owner ways of knowing, being and doing. However, Kimberley wetlands face widespread threats from increased water-development, climate change, and invasive and feral species.

Indigenous ranger teams throughout Northern Australia protect wetlands from threats using various management actions (e.g. fencing, weeding, protective burning, monitoring, and knowledge sharing). Rangers are also challenged with measuring if these efforts are achieving their desired outcomes, that is, enhancing values or mitigating threats.

Focusing on the Kimberley region as a case study, the project is consolidating research and collaborations that the project team (UWA and Environs Kimberley) and Kimberley rangers have been engaged in for over a decade. The research will provide learnings for the broader community, government agencies and natural resource management groups.

Key research goals

To develop an Indigenous wetland monitoring and management toolkit, this project is:

- reviewing Indigenous people's wetland monitoring work nationally and internationally
- conducting pilot studies to assist Kimberley Indigenous ranger teams to refine monitoring methods
- developing a monitoring toolkit informed by ranger team needs using surveys and a wetland-focused knowledge-exchange workshop



Nyamba Buru Yawuru Country Manager, Gaydar Lawford
Photo by Rebecca Dobbs

What is the NESP Resilient Landscapes Hub?

The Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program (NESP) funds environment and climate research. NESP currently supports 4 multi-disciplinary research hubs, each hosted by an Australian research institution. The program:

- provides evidence for the design, delivery and on-ground outcomes for environmental programs
- helps decision-makers, including those from Indigenous communities, build resilience
- supports positive environmental, social and economic outcomes.

This project is funded by the NESP Resilient Landscapes Hub, which is hosted by the University of Western Australia. The Resilient Landscapes Hub's research supports the management of Australia's terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems and makes them more resilient to extreme events and pervasive pressures.



Further information

The project is being co-led by Rebecca Dobbs (University of Western Australia) and Michelle Pyke (UWA, Environs Kimberley).

This document and further information are available from the project website at nesplandscapes.edu.au/projects/nesp-rlh/indigenous-wetland-monitoring/

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