



Our Year - Key Achievements

Desert

Key facts

- The habitat for threatened species is better understood and managed, and knowledge of the presence/absence of species such as the greater bilby, the black-flanked rock wallaby, the great desert skink, the crest-tailed mulgara, the malleefowl and southern marsupial mole has increased.
- Habitat for these species has been improved as part of this project through activities such as fire management, feral monitoring, mapping and control, and weed monitoring, mapping and control.
- Across Birriliburu and Kiwirrkurra Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs), robust fauna monitoring programs are in place to monitor the distribution and abundance of priority threatened fauna and pest animals.
- **45** people attended project events for the first time at **16** community participation and engagement events (Return to Country trips, including land management activities relating to fire, feral and threatened species management).
- **20,000** ha were changed to sustainable practices via ongoing feral pest management and **76,000** ha were changed to sustainable practices via improved fire regimes.
- **299** [Indigenous] volunteers participated in project activities (community project planning and decision-making meetings).
- **255** Indigenous participants at project events (Return to Country trips, including land management activities relating to fire, feral and threatened species management).
- **70** Indigenous people completed informal training courses.

Preserving biodiversity

Managing threatened species

Since 2012, the women's team in Punmu and Parnngurr have collected data on the greater bilby, brushed tailed mulgara, great desert skink and black-flanked rock wallaby, building up a stronger picture of what country supports threatened species around these communities. This work is also reinforcing the importance of particular ecological communities for the Ranger teams, such as the ecological communities further out from Punmu at Lake Auld and Lake Dora, as well as the paleo-drainage areas, which are important desert wetlands for migratory birds. North of Parnngurr, healthy populations of the black-flanked rock wallaby have been found to coexist with feral cats, with future investigations planned to understand the interactions around this peculiar coexistence.

Spinifex Healthy Country plan

The Spinifex Ranger team has used a series of return to country trips to produce a Healthy Country Plan (HCP) for Spinifex Country. This has allowed the rangers to build on the new skills obtained from previous training programs and from working with gold producer AngloGold Ashanti, and has been combined with the knowledge of the senior people while on country conducting track-based monitoring (for threatened species and feral animals) and trench surveys for the southern marsupial mole. These techniques form part of the monitoring plan that has been developed within the HCP, and are related in the plan to the major threats that people have identified: feral animals (herbivores and predators), 'wrong' fire, weeds and visitor behaviour. The track-based monitoring in particular has highlighted that cats (and in some places foxes) and camels are widespread and cat tracks were observed wherever evidence of threatened species was found. Malleefowl evidence has been found in several locations including camera trap evidence at a new site.



Fire management

Traditional fire management regimes are now in place (approximately 90,000 ha managed since 2008) to minimise the risk of large destructive wildfire, and to maintain and develop a mosaic of differing fire ages, especially in key threatened species habitats. Long-term collaborative strategies are being developed to further build the effectiveness of fire management in the region.

Engaging communities

Strengthening Indigenous ranger programs

Through investment into the desert project, there has been a significant increase and strengthening of capacity amongst four Traditional Owner ranger programs (KJ Martu Rangers, Kiwirrkurra IPA Rangers, Birriliburu IPA Rangers and Spinifex Land Management Unit Rangers), who, through their return to country programs and inter-generational Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) transfer, have steadily built an increased understanding of the threatened species living in these desert regions.

Transfer of Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Rangelands NRM supported on-ground management by Traditional Owners on native title lands in parts of the Great Sandy Desert, Little Sandy Desert, the Gibson Desert and the Great Victoria Desert. From this work, the broader Martu communities (north and south), the Pintupi community and the Spinifex community have a raised awareness of the importance of endangered species. This work has provided opportunities for senior Elders to engage with the Ranger Teams and other young members of the community and spend time on country sharing traditional knowledge.



Monitoring waterholes © KJ

