

Our Year - Key Achievements

Southern Rangelands

Key facts

- Threatened species habitat is better understood and managed.
- Knowledge of the presence/absence of species such as malleefowl, the greater bilby and cave dwelling species such as the Cape Range remipede has increased.
- Habitat for these species as well as the green, loggerhead and hawksbill turtles have been improved as part of this project through activities such as fire management, feral monitoring, mapping and control, and weed monitoring, mapping and control.
- The Regional Landcare Facilitator engaged with 14 groups and capacity building activities were promoted.
- **140** community members participating in events.
- **23** community participation and engagement events held with 200 people attending events for the first time with a total of 58 Indigenous participants at project events.
- **235** volunteers participated in project activities.
- **93** people participated in training courses.
- **262,050** ha were managed to advance sustainable practices.
- **4** ESRM plans were completed.
- A number of factsheets were produced.



Rosalynd (Year 4) - Coondle Paddock



Improving Pastoral Practices

Support for community groups

The Regional Landcare Facilitator (RLF) has supported and built the capacity of Landcare groups in the Southern Rangelands, helping pastoralists to implement sustainable land management suited to their individual businesses and their area of interest and/or expertise. The RLF participated in group meetings and other field days to make face-to-face introductions and bolster opportunities for local projects. This enabled the beginning of many great relationships and development of group project ideas with Land Conservation District Committees (LCDCs), producer groups and biosecurity associations.

Building capacity, skills and knowledge

The establishment of demonstration sites and field days, workshops and conferences enabled good engagement with land managers, increased community participation, and support for community leaders to improve leadership capacity, skills and knowledge.

Land management activities

Land management treatments aimed to improve pastures in the mid- to long-term by increasing productive capacity as viable livestock enterprises.

- Liaising with Goldfields-Nullarbor RBA offering support and advice on treatment of cactus.
- Contact with Cue Producer Group to revisit 'run-off and water on the roads' project idea.
- Assisted the Isolated Children and Parents Association (Gascoyne) conference 19 March 2015, and providing support for keynote speaker Catherine Marriot. Catherine spoke and presented a workshop on 'SPIRIT' (Sparkle, Passion, Imagination, Resilience, Integrity, Tenacity) which integrated the topic of healthy landscapes, healthy people and how this ties into production and sustainability of the land
- Project management support and project ideas for Upper Gascoyne LCDC. Discussed feral cat ideas, leaky weir project and updates for erosion control project and forage project.
- Attended Gundawa Regional Conservation Association AGM, met project partners and discussed rangelands linkages with North Central Malleefowl Preservation Group.



Identifying grass species



Controlling erosion

Land management trials

A number of trials were funded through the sustainable pastoralism program in the southern rangelands. Pastoral stations that undertake trials are encouraged to share their results and outcomes with their peers, thus providing an effective mechanism of learning 'best practice' from each other. The following trials are underway and near completion: Southern Gascoyne TGP camera trial, Gascoyne Catchments forage resource evaluation, Telemetry water trials on Carey Downs and Challa Station, Country Downs crocodile plough trial, and Perennial pasture management.

Training and skills development

Training and skills development were offered, relating to camel pitting on eroded land, nutritional shepherding, stress-free stock handling, exclusion fencing to manage dogs, grader workshops, and weed and erosion control workshops. There is an increased willingness of the pastoral community to be engaged with NRM projects and a noticeable increase of the community to work in groups and share learnings. This has increased local capacity, with local champions demonstrating active participation and encouraging others by demonstrating positive outcome and working relationships.

The 18th Biennial Australian Rangeland Society (ARS Conference in Alice Springs in April 2015 saw a number of Rangelands NRM staff and representatives from projects attend, giving two oral and two poster presentations. Timed to take place at the same time was a meeting of the Ten Deserts Network as well as the launch of the Desert Science Network, a new initiative that aims to facilitate collective science learning, skills development and inspiration through connecting innovation and science communication across the arid lands. Rangelands NRM assisted a number of pastoralists from across the Pilbara and Southern Rangelands to attend the ARS Conference. Following the conference, the pastoralists embarked on a two-day tour of Woodgreen and Old Man Plains Research stations near Alice Springs to learn about success stories in rangeland rehabilitation, soil conservation, rangeland rehydration and grazing systems in the context of an arid land system. Attendees shared their learnings from the conference and tours with their local groups, giving others some ideas for their properties.

Field Guides

A Field Guide to Common Grasses in the Southern Rangelands was produced, and provided to pastoralists so they are better able to identify native perennial grasses on their lease and have a better understanding of how they respond to grazing pressure.

Additionally, Rangelands NRM supported the production of the 2nd Edition of the Native Plant Guide of species found in the Karlkurla Bushland Park and Goldfields of WA, produced by the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Urban Landcare Group (KBULG).

Wild dog management

The Meekatharra Rangelands Biosecurity Association (RBA) has been working on a 'dog lure' project idea and the RLF has supported the group via monthly emails, project ideas and attending four baiting days held across four regional groups (Mt Magnet, Meekatharra, Cue and Yalgoo). More than 80 people, representing 30 pastoral stations attended four baiting days to work collectively as a community to help combat the problem of wild dogs.

Collaboration between the Wiluna pastoral leases

In the Wiluna project, the design and implementation of a landscape-scale monitoring protocol across three leases and three land uses (mining held pastoral lease, pastoral lease and conservation reserve) gave key occupancy data for threatened species as well as determining threat levels due to predation and grazing. Over time, the monitoring data will enable the collaboration of landholders to make key decisions regarding the management of threatened species and their threatening factors such as stock, feral herbivores and predators. The improvement of fire regimes will increase pyro-heterogeneity and reduce the impact of large hot wildfires as a result increasing habitat availability and quality. The women rangers of Wiluna have provided a vital service in collecting information on populations of threatened species in three areas that are being managed using varying predator control methods.



Jundee Women Rangers © CDNTS



Preserving biodiversity

Subterranean fauna of Cameron's Cave

Scientists have increased their knowledge of the aquatic and terrestrial subterranean species found in Camerons Cave, south of the Exmouth townsite on the Cape Range peninsula. The Cave is home to a number of threatened species, including the blind cave gudgeon (*Milyeringa veritas*), the Camerons Cave pseudoscorpion (*Indohya damocles*), the Camerons Cave millipede (*Stygiochiropus peculiaris*) and the Northern Cape Range draculoides (*Draculoides brooksi*) as well as a suite of species not formally listed as threatened. Aquatic troglobionts were widely sampled for the first time around Cameron's Cave and it was established that a range of stygobionts occurs in this part of the coastal plain. This work will enable better planning for management in the future.

Feral animal control at Gnaraloo

The Gnaraloo Feral Animal Control Program has resulted in complete protection of loggerhead (an endangered species, *Caretta caretta*) sea turtle nests from introduced predators throughout the season 2014/15, from 100 per cent occurrence in certain locations in the Gnaraloo Bay Rookery in 2008 to zero today. The pest species targeted include foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), feral cats and wild dogs, with a total of around 91,000 hectares treated using 1080 baits, traps, and shooting by a specialized contractor. The success of this program has resulted in nearby and adjoining stations increasing their control efforts on foxes and wild dogs and by the WA Department of Parks and Wildlife changing their baiting practices to include those used successfully at Gnaraloo.

Ngadju conservation

Members of Norseman's Ngadju community are working with support from Rangelands NRM to protect and conserve the vulnerable malleefowl and care for key sites in the Great Western Woodlands of WA. Managed by Gondawna Link, the project aims is building capacity of the Ngadju community to manage their traditional lands, including the protection and conservation of threatened species. The Conservation Action Plan (CAP) process has been instrumental in assisting Ngadju to share and document their traditional knowledge. A methodology identifying survey and monitoring protocols has been developed in partnership with the National Malleefowl Recovery Program for GWW vegetation system as a direct result of the Ngadju project. These protocols are now also being employed by Ngadju for other malleefowl survey work undertaken on behalf of the mining industry and government agencies. Over 30 Ngadju have been directly involved in the Indigenous Land Management Cert III training and Conservation Action Plan workshops involving knowledge transfer and merging the tradition and western sciences to benefit future land management and 12 attended a bush fire training workshop to assist them to manage and prevent fires when on country.

Engaging communities

Shark Bay Land Sea and Country Management Plan

A Land and Sea Country Management Plan for the Traditional Owners of Shark Bay, the Malgana People is in development. Big Island Research P/L was engaged to coordinate the planning activities, run workshops and field days and produce a plan for the Malgana people. A strong management plan will enable future generations of Malgana to continue their long tradition of land and sea management and it is anticipated that opportunities for young Malgana will arise.



Ngadju planning day © P. Price