

1600, Room T4, MCC

Inventorizing the animals and plants of the Great Victoria Desert, WA

Karl Brennan¹, Neville Hague¹

¹Department of Environment and Conservation

The Great Victoria Desert (GVD) contains some of Western Australia's largest conservation reserves with many threatened species. While the plants and animals inhabiting the GVD are well known to traditional owners, within the scientific literature there is a lack of hard data on the occurrences of individual taxa. That is, which species are present in individual reserves and other areas where there is an interest in developing more intensive on-ground conservation actions. Since 2008, the Western Australian Department of Environment and Conservation, in partnership with the Spinifex People (Pila Nguru) and other agencies, has been undertaking systematic surveys to better document the spatial patterning of animals and plants within the GVD. It has allowed the collection of ethno-zoological and botanical information. For fauna, survey methods have included day and night observations, remote cameras, trapping (pitfalls, funnels and Elliotts), searching for tracks, hair analysis from scats of dingos, foxes and cats, plus trenching for the backfilled tunnels of marsupial moles. Plant collections have been made via quadrat-based surveys. Survey highlights have included threatened species such as marsupial moles, brushtailed mulgaras, Margaret's blind-snake, malleefowl, and striated grasswren, and the first record of an adult desert taipan.

These cooperative surveys have led to more intensive on-ground management actions.

Karl Brennan has been Regional Ecologist for the Goldfields Region with the Dept Environment and Conservation since 2006.

1615, Room T4, MCC

Working together to manage a threatened ecological community in the Kimberley: Dampier Peninsula monsoon vine thickets, Western Australia

Louise Beames¹, Jason Roe¹, Judith Fisher²

¹EnviroNS Kimberley, ²University of Western Australia/Fisher Research

Dampier Peninsula monsoon vine thickets are an older, dryer rainforest-type ecosystem found in scattered patches behind coastal dunes, often near groundwater. Vine thickets are culturally significant containing traditional sites, food and medicine plants. Ecologically, patches remain connected by mobile frugivores.

The West Kimberley Nature Project, managed by EnviroNS Kimberley and funded through Rangelands NRM WA, works with Indigenous Ranger groups—Bardi Jawi, Djarindjin Bardi Oorany, Nyul Nyul, Wuungurr and Karajarri Rangers—to manage wildfires and weeds threatening monsoon vine thickets and wetlands, control WoNS and other weeds in the Dampierland bioregion. The project has partnerships with the Kimberley Land Council, which facilitates ranger groups, Kimberley TAFE, SKIPA, Shires, pastoralists, Departments and communities.

The WKNP is collaborating with Fisher Research, with support from Kings Park, UWA and DEC, to identify biological indicators and design monitoring protocols to assess vine thicket health. The protocols are simple to use, allow cost-effective statistical analysis, and produce data to inform management planning. They will be useful to groups managing vine thickets beyond the WKNP. This project component is funded by the WA State NRM office and includes research into the impacts of fire on monsoon vine thickets on the Dampier Peninsula.