

SEPTEMBER 2011

Monitoring the impacts of feral camels in the Western Desert

As many readers would be aware feral camels are having a significant impact on natural, cultural and economic resources throughout arid Australia. The Australian Feral Camel Management Project is a co-operative effort from a range of partners to attempt to address this issue¹. This project has identified Karlamilyi (formerly Rudall River) National Park as a key environmental asset to be protected from camel impacts and significant culling activity has been undertaken in the park, and on surrounding Martu Native Title lands since 2009.

As part of this national project, funding has been provided to the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa (KJ) to undertake monitoring in the Western Desert to assess the impacts of feral camels on vegetation and water quality. DEC and KJ have been utilizing the monitoring methodology developed by scientists from the Northern Territory Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) which is now being used throughout the national project. The aim of the project in WA is to

establish a number of permanent monitoring sites across the Western Desert to identify the impacts of feral camels and compare differences between sites where camel control has occurred and sites where no control has occurred.



Members of the Parnngurr Ranger team and Parnngurr CfoC land management teams identifying macroinvertebrates at Parnngurr Rockhole

(Photo by: Terry Wooltortan KJ CfoC team leader)

The monitoring project is in its early stages in WA; to date DEC has established permanent vegetation monitoring sites in Karlamilyi NP. These sites showed significant evidence of historical grazing by camels, but promising vegetation recovery and limited current grazing following intensive culling efforts and good rainfall. The next step will be to establish additional vegetation monitoring sites in areas in the Martu lands which have not yet been culled.

A joint KJ/DEC trip is planned for September with KJ and Martu Rangers being trained by DEC staff and contractors in the vegetation

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Feral Camels Cont'd...



Amber Clarke and consultant Chris Brock measuring the impact of camel grazing on desert poplar

(Photo by DEC)

monitoring methodology.

DEC and KJ staff (including Martu Rangers) have also received training in the water quality monitoring methodology by NRETAS scientists and Australian Feral Camel Management Project staff. Over the coming months KJ will be working with Martu to identify sites suitable for undertaking this monitoring.

Information gained from this monitoring will be fed back into the Australian Feral Camel Management Project to provide guidance and increase support for the continued management of feral camels.

1) The Australian Feral Camel Management Project is funded through the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative. Ninti One Ltd is the national project manager with the Department for Agriculture and Food managing WA's contribution to the project. For more information on the Australian Feral Camel Management Project see www.feralcamel.com.au

Show Time - 39th Annual Kununurra Agricultural Show 2011

On the 9-10th July, Rangelands NRM WA showcased local and regional projects from across the Kimberley at the 39th Kununurra Agricultural Show.

Mel McDonald (Landcare Facilitator, Northern Rangelands, Broome) and Fiona Tingle (Project Officer, Kununurra) were on hand to provide information on a wide range of Natural Resource Management projects and activities happening across the region.

A particular topic of concern for all sectors of the community is weeds, especially those classed as Weeds of National Significance (WoNS). Unfortunately, quite a few of the worst nationally recognised weeds have made the Kimberley home and include Rubber Vine, Prickly Acacia, Parkinsonia, Mesquite and Mimosa.

Mel and Fiona were keen to test the knowledge of those brave enough to enquire; "What plant is that in the picture". Overall there were some savvy identifiers, and it was surprising to a few that weeds don't always look like weeds!

Ord Land and Water's Dick Pasfield is working in conjunction with small community landholders to protect the Lower Ord Ramsar site. Through Community education, support in weed identification and management actions for the control of feral pigs, the unique values of the Lower Ord Ramsar site will be protected from areas of upstream weed infestation. Rangelands NRM support a number of projects targeting WoNS and declared weeds.



Native or Weed??



Fiona (l) and Mel (r) ready to tackle questions

Kununurra Show continued....

The Department of Environment and Conservation's Luke Bentley and Yoorrooyang Dawang Regional Park Rangers are currently undertaking weed planning and control activities on the Lower Ord Ramsar site in Kununurra. The project runs for the next 2 years and targets: Parkinsonia, Bellyache Bush, Noogoora Burr as well as promoting the protection of native vegetation and habitat through access management and community education.

For further information on NRM activities across the Kimberley, contact:

Mel McDonald (08) 9192 5212
melaniem@rangelandswa.com.au and

Fiona Tingle (08) 9169 3053
fionat@rangelandswa.com.au



Wayne Winton, Yoorrooyang Dawang Regional Park Ranger undertaking treatment on infestation of Bellyache Bush, (Photo courtesy of DEC)

Welcome to Jimmy Dobson, Coastcare Facilitator, Broome

Rangelands would like to introduce our newest member of the team - Jimmy Dobson - who is taking on the role of Coastcare Facilitator.

I am from Country Victoria where I completed a Bachelor of Arts, Nature Tourism, which is essentially Environmental Education through tourism programs. After completing my studies I moved to Central Australia spending 5 years working in the tourism industry with National Parks (Uluru) and Indigenous communities in many roles including tour guide, language interpreter (Pitjantjatjarra) and operations manager.



Jimmy Dobson, Coastcare Facilitator

I moved to Broome four years ago and have spent the majority of that time working with the Kimberley Land Council as a project/field officer, focusing on the Fitzroy River Valley and working with community

groups along the coast from La Grange Bay to the top of the Dampier Peninsular. My main role was to facilitate meetings between Traditional Owners, pastoralists, private business operators and multiple government agencies concerning Native Title processes and outcomes in relation to land management.

I have recently taken up the position of Coastcare Facilitator with Rangelands NRM, based in Broome. This position has been created to provide on ground assistance to coastal groups and individuals with an interest in managing coastal natural resources.

I will be able to assist individuals and groups who are currently involved in coastal resource management and will encourage new participants and volunteers to get involved along the coast of Northern WA. This will be done in consultation with already existing coastal user groups such as fishing clubs, Surf Life Saving clubs, corporate volunteers as well as new or existing coastal care groups.

I am looking forward to getting out and meeting people all along the Northern WA coast and working together to manage our extremely valuable natural resources.

If you would like more information on the Coastcare Program, please contact Jimmy on 9192 5507 or email: jamesd@rangelandswa.com.au



Fitzroy River Catchment Erosion Control Workshops

During the second week of August, 20 station owners, managers, staff and contractors, representing nearly 2.5 million hectares attended a series of Erosion Control Workshops across the Fitzroy River Catchment.

As most new erosion on pastoral land is caused by access tracks and fence lines, DAFWA (Department of Agriculture & Food WA) and Rangelands NRM were pleased to bring Darryl Hill from Soil Save across from the Northern Territory to share his experience in reducing erosion along graded roads and fence lines. Darryl's methods increase soil conservation as well as save time and money.

At the workshop there was a short theory session, however most of the day was spent out on site looking at erosion issues and developing solutions. It was evident that a washout is the result, not the cause and work needs to be done further up the hill to address the problem.

Everyone learned how to use a dumpy level and a laser level to peg out a diversion bank. The diversion bank was constructed on the contour to reinstate the natural flow direction and prevent problems caused by channeling water. After Darryl demonstrated the construction of one bank, the grader was handed over to one of the attendees to try their hand and learn how easy it is to use his methods; providing you are a competent grader operator!

Feedback received by those who attended the workshops was overwhelmingly positive and we hope to run further workshops within the WA Rangelands next year.

Everyone who attended the workshop received a copy of the "Erosion in The Savannah Rangelands" three part DVD series which covers the techniques used at the workshop and much more.

Erosion in the Savannah Rangelands:
Part 1: Rehabilitation Techniques
Part 2: Drain and Bank Installation
Part 3: Erosion on Formed Roads

If you are interested in attending an erosion workshop in the future or receiving a copy of the DVD please contact Mel McDonald, Northern Rangelands Landcare Facilitator on 9192 5212 or melaniem@rangelandswa.com.au.

"Very well presented, easy to understand"

"will save future problems"

"informative and helpful!"



Pegging out a diversion bank at Larrowa Station



Constructing a diversion bank at Jubilee Downs



Examining a completed diversion bank at Liveringa Station

Gubinge in the Gascoyne



Rangelands NRM's Indigenous Projects Facilitator has been working closely with the Carnarvon Community Mens Group (CCMG) in delivering a project to relocate the Kimberley plant traditionally and commonly known as *Gubinge* into the Gascoyne. Other varieties are known to be the *Australian Bush Plum* or *Kakadu Plum*. Gubinge has the highest content of **Vitamin C** of any fruit in the world and we have it on good advice that Neil Armstrong had Gubinge in his blood when he stepped on the moon (not a bad sales pitch). The outcome CCMG were seeking was for this to grow and fruit in a trial plot established at DAFWA's Research Station in Carnarvon. A successful outcome would be one that the entire community could share and benefit from.

The group work as mentors for youth who are vulnerable towards or already engaged in the criminal justice system. This was seen as an opportunity to engage with a core group of young men for up to 10 days "on country" and encourage them to consider better life options. It was also seen as an example of "thinking outside the square" with the added benefit of trying something that was totally unknown to the wider community.

The project is the brainchild of 2 members of CCMG. Mr Jalba Dann is a traditional owner from the Beagle Bay region of the Dampier Peninsula where wild Gubinge crops exist. Mr John Oxenham is a former plantation owner, with 30 years experience in the industry, whose traditional country includes Shark Bay. These men, with the support of CCMG, decided to gather enough information to take to potential funding



Stop-over for refueling at Pardoo Roadhouse

partners to support this exciting and courageous venture.

The result was an overwhelming success with CCMG presenting to various government and local agencies and corporations including the DAFWA, Forestry Products Commission (FPC), Shire of Carnarvon, Gascoyne Development Commission, WA Police Service, Corrective Services, Dept. of Youth and

CCMG's Mission Statement is:

Carnarvon men making a real difference through social action.

Justice, Rio Tinto and others. CCMG received a suite of monies from these partners to develop the project and a trip to the Kimberley. DAFWA and FPC allocated a trial plot for the project. The CCMG are extremely thankful to all partners whose kind contributions made this trip possible.

Communications links were then established with traditional owner Mr Bruno Dann and Kimberley TAFE's Kim Courtenay to organise to travel to Broome and the nearby communities along the Peninsula to obtain formal permission to collect seedlings to bring back to the Gascoyne. The trip was completed during late July/early August where the participants based themselves at Loongabid Community. The youth had daily tasks to keep themselves busy and add value to the trip. Some were so impressed that they personally wish to return to Loongabid in the future. These youngsters were given the task of offering thanks, during our farewells, to all those who welcomed us into their communities and offices along the way. One commented that he "never did that before" only to be told he would not be saying that at dinner time. The initial rejection of the idea was followed by a real keenness to be the one who spoke on the groups behalf. All senior members were very happy to see a dramatic change in the conduct of those boys.



Meeting Bruno & Ali at Twin Lake

Gubinge in the Gascoyne cont'd.....

Each day was full of travel and visits to communities and the stunning natural environment along the way. There were bush tucker/medicine walk tours, traditional hunting/fishing, and a chance meeting with the Nyul Nyul Rangers (very influential on the youth) while in training, as well as Nyul Nyul's office base. We missed the Bardi Jawi rangers when we stopped at Lombardina for lunch. CCMG are most thankful to Georgina, Rosie and Nyul Nyul rangers at Beagle Bay, Bruno and Ali at Twin Lake, Albert and Veronica at Loongabid for the kindness and warm hospitality given to the CCMG.

Upon our return arrangements were made with Kimberley TAFE to transport 60 seedlings to Carnarvon.



CCMG with Nyul Nyul Rangers in Beagle Bay

They are currently hardening at the DAFWA nursery to be ready for planting on Tuesday 6th September when all partners and guest will join the CCMG in celebrat-



Kimberley TAFE nursery team with Gubinge seedlings

ing a great venture with a very good cause. We anticipate a large attendance including special guests. Each of the 15 allotted Gubinge will be planted by dignitaries and members in conjunction with Carnarvon youth which we believe will prove symbolic into the future. Its fingers crossed from here on and an update will be provided in due course.

If you wish to enquire about this project please do not hesitate to contact Rangelands NRM Indigenous Projects Facilitator - Bevan Gray on (08)9941 9748, mobile 0419 126 437 or email bevang@rangelandswa.com.au.

For more information on Gubinge:

<http://purewellbeing.com/contents/en-uk/d180.html>

FESA Volunteer Employer Recognition Program (VERP) 2011

FESA (Fire & Emergency Services Authority) developed a Volunteer Employer Recognition Program (VERP), to recognise employers who support emergency services volunteers by allowing staff members to attend a range of incidents during working hours.



Rangelands NRM was nominated by Beth Hales, Kununurra SES volunteer for "its ongoing commitment and support of emergency services volunteering allowing staff to attend to incidents, training and unit activities during work hours when necessary".

An awards ceremony was held on 2 August, 2011 which was attended by Gaye Mackenzie and Karen Mayberry on behalf of Rangelands to receive the Silver Award.



Gaye Mackenzie receiving award from Hon Rob Johnson, Minister for Emergency Services (r), with Rob Cox, Regional Director Kimberley.

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INSPIRING AND FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS TO SUSTAINABLY MANAGE OUR REGION'S NATURAL ASSETS

www.rangelandswa.com.au

Rangelands NRM WA is the largest NRM region within Australia and encompasses over 86% of Western Australia's landmass and more than 75% of its coastline.

Rangelands NRM WA is a non-government organisation which represents community needs and encourages the sustainable use of land, flora and fauna, fresh water and coastal marine environments.

Rangelands is responsible for the establishment, management, evaluation and communication of many natural resource management activities and projects.

With the rangelands area producing more than 88 percent of Western Australian's mining activities and contributing significantly to the Western Australia's gross domestic product, Rangelands WA strives to balance the needs of the environment with the needs of those who use the land and water resources.



Environmental scientists say mangrove forests have a rich bank of carbon that could offer a new income stream in a carbon economy - Charles Darwin University in the Northern Territory, is developing a model to measure "blue carbon" - it is found in sediment under mangrove trees - per hectare, there is a lot more carbon under mangroves than there is under tropical rainforests.

*Grassroots volunteering is on the rise with 34% of adult Australians contributing their time each year
Conservation Volunteers enews*