



Newsletter

Edition 2 - April 2004



Green Tree Frog
(*Litoria careulea*)

NT Parks & Conservation Masterplan: Consultation Progress

The Northern Territory Parks and Conservation Masterplan was officially launched on 27 November 2003.

Since the commencement of the Masterplan project, the focus has been on preliminary consultation with key interest/industry groups and the general public.

The objective of the consultation period is to allow the opportunity for any group or person who may wish to assist in shaping the Masterplan, at this early stage, and to have their particular concerns raised. With this in mind:

- 150 Information Packs have been distributed to identified stakeholders in various industry or interest groups.
- Advertisements/articles/editorials providing information and inviting submissions have appeared in the following newsletters/publications:
 - Northern Territory News
 - Centralian Advocate
 - The Litchfield Times
 - Katherine Times
 - Tennant & District Times

- The Wagaitear
- Savanna Links
- CRC Australia
- The Greening Australian
- NT Tourist Commission
- Tourism Top End
- Katherine Tourism
- Tennant Creek Tourism
- Central Australian Tourism Industry Association Newsletter
- NT Minerals Council
- NT Cattlemen's Association
- NT Horticultural Association
- Tourism Council Australia
- Habitat Newsletter

- Parks and Wildlife have met with the following stakeholder groups and have scheduled a number of meetings with other groups in the future:

- Arid Lands Environment Centre
- Land for Wildlife Advisory Committee
- Field Naturalists & Greening Australia
- South Barkly Aboriginal Corporation
- The Environment Centre NT
- NT Cattlemen's Association
- Anindilyakwa Land Council
- Darwin Bushwalking Club

Public Meetings

Opportunities for community involvement will continue throughout the development of the Masterplan. The input from the public and key stakeholder groups will play a vital role in the planning process.

Regional public meetings will be held when the first draft of the Masterplan is released. It is anticipated that the first draft of the Masterplan will be available in August.

Issues raised at meetings will be posted to the NT Parks and Conservation Masterplan website at www.parksmasterplan.com.au.

Views and comments made at each meeting will also be taken into consideration when drafting the

Masterplan. Once the draft plan is prepared it will be made available to all key stakeholders and the public for further comment prior to finalisation.

Bioregional planning workshops are being held in Alice Springs and Darwin between the Land Councils and Parks and Wildlife staff. The purpose of these workshops is to identify areas of high conservation significance from a bioregional perspective.



Bilby
(*Macrotis lagotis*)



Northern
Territory
Government

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NT Parks and Conservation
Masterplan Newsletter

The Current State of the Territory's Biodiversity

Author: Dr John Woinarski, Principal Scientist Biodiversity



Gum Nuts

The Northern Territory is widely celebrated as "Nature Territory", and our wildlife and extensive natural environments are an important part of our quality of life, and a fundamental drawcard for most tourists.

While many Aboriginal Territorians have a remarkably comprehensive knowledge of their environments, scientific documentation of our wildlife remains very incomplete. At most recent count, the Northern Territory contains more than 4200 species of vascular plant, more than 700 species of fish, about 50 species of frogs, more than 300 species of reptiles, more than 420 species of birds and about 150 species of mammals.

For many of these groups, the tally increases substantially every year, as more "new" species are discovered. Some groups, such as most invertebrates, are so poorly known that it is impossible to estimate their total richness in the Territory. But this richness is likely to be very great for many of these groups. For example, a one-hectare patch of bushland in the Top End typically supports about 100 species of ant, a diversity without parallel anywhere else in the world.

A recent revision of the conservation status of

Northern Territory plants and animals concluded that about eighty species of plants were threatened (that is, endangered and vulnerable), as were about thirty five species of invertebrate, nine fish, one frog, eight reptiles, about fifteen birds and more than twenty mammals (excluding fourteen mammal species that

have already become extinct in the Territory). This assessment shows that there are worrying signs for the future of our wildlife.

Our national parks and conservation reserves provide a nucleus for the conservation of some of the NT's most outstanding natural landscapes and the species they contain. Biodiversity

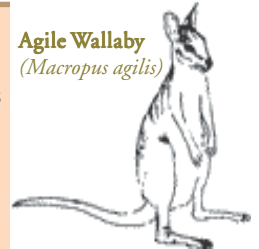
conservation, however, can not be solely reliant upon the national park system as a system of life support, as national parks currently comprise less than five percent of the NT's land mass. Some of the environments not included in the

Territory's reserve system are some the the Territory's most productive lands. The financial cost of acquiring these areas would be very high.

The maintenance and protection of biodiversity therefore requires an approach based on ecologically sustainable management across the entire landscape. We must look beyond park boundaries to ensure that the functionality, connectivity and integrity of the natural environment is managed on a

sustainable basis. The formal park system must be complemented with a biodiversity management system that encompasses a full range of land tenures and ensures that land management activities are sympathetic, not threatening, towards biodiversity conservation.

Agile Wallaby
(*Macropus agilis*)



Frillneck Lizard
(*Chlamydosaurus kingii*)

"Many Territory wildlife species are thriving, at least partly because the Territory remains far less developed and altered than most other places in Australia, or in the world."

Website Updates

The website will be updated fortnightly. To view the latest updates, please visit our website at www.parksmasterplan.nt.gov.au

Contact Us

Individuals or groups wishing to meet to discuss relevant issues can contact our regional planners or contact Ms Shirley Carne on 1800 813 337 or email ParksMasterPlan@nt.gov.au.



Green Sea Turtle
(*Chelodina mydas*)



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