

## Conserving biodiversity on pastoral land



### What is the project about?

Approximately half the land area of the Northern Territory is pastoral land, generally used for breeding and growing beef cattle on native pastures. Good management of these pastoral areas is critical to conserving biodiversity to sustain the wealth of plant and animal species that occur there. Many species and their habitats occur only on pastoral lands, or rely on these areas for their survival. The key is to develop land management strategies that encourage conservation but do not place unrealistic demands and limitations on producers. In cases where pastoral land use maintains native pastures and avoids land clearing, it is also possible to maintain good quality habitat for many native species.

### Research

The “biodiversity on pastoral land” project is a multi-faceted program of the Tropical Savannas CRC that addresses the issue in the northern Australia rangelands. Activities in the program have included:

- basic biological surveys on pastoral properties to work out what species occur there;
- providing biodiversity information for the development of catchment and regional management plans
- detailed ecological studies of the effects on biodiversity of different grazing management strategies;
- investigating the effects on biodiversity of thickening and thinning of native vegetation;
- developing biodiversity modules for rangeland management training courses;
- developing methods for monitoring the “health” of biodiversity on pastoral lands.

Although many specific activities have been important, a significant general outcome is the higher “profile” of biodiversity issues in relation to sustainable pastoral management.

