

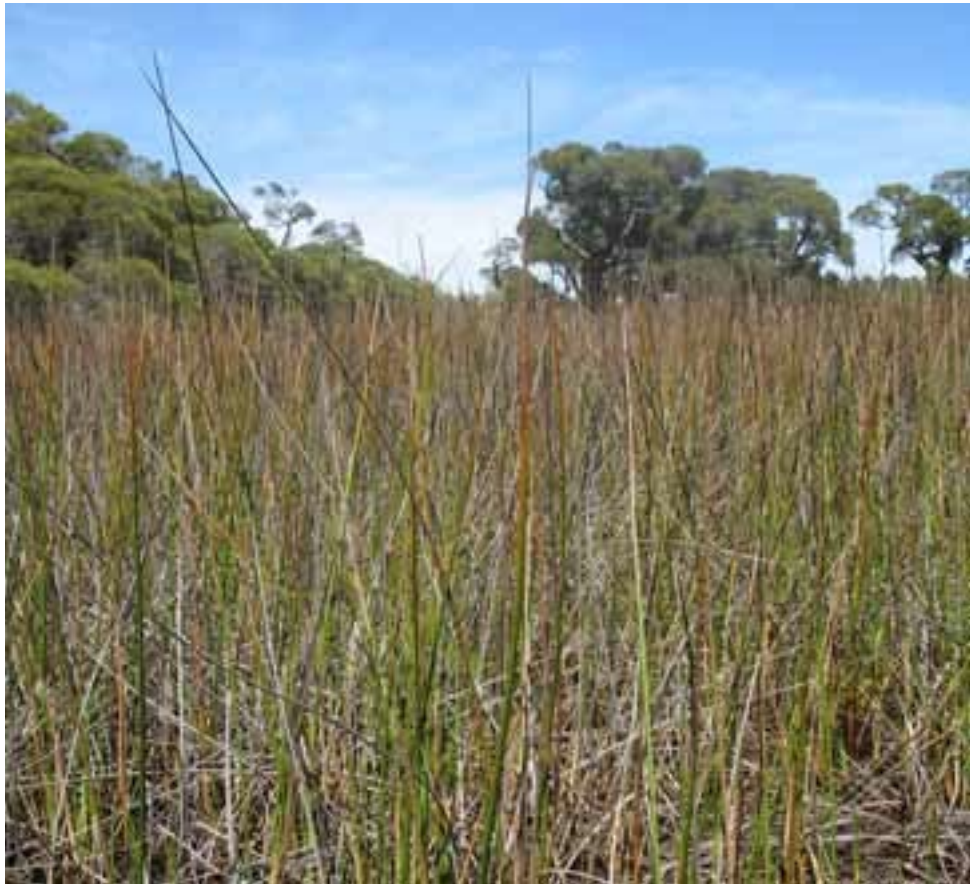
Wetland monitoring and mapping in the South West

by Mia Morley

DEC is undertaking a project entitled 'Mapping, Classification and Evaluation of Wetlands, South West Western Australia'. The project is funded under the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP). These are joint initiatives of the State and Australian governments, and this particular project is administered by the South West Catchments Council (SWCC). This project is a continuation of activities undertaken in a previous SWCC project in 2006 and 2007.

The first of the two major aims of this project is to provide mapping, classification and evaluation of wetlands within 200,000 hectares of high priority areas for which there is little or no digitised data currently available. Study areas were chosen after consultation with regional staff and include the Leeuwin Naturaliste Ridge. The ridge was chosen due to increasing pressure from residential development and visitation and the presence of wetland associated tufa (structures that are built by microbes), threatened ecological communities in caves and critically endangered snail species. An area south of Boyanup and east of Nannup was also selected as Swan Coastal Plain wetlands at the northern end of this area have the potential to be affected by current water extraction, and wetland mapping for this area will complete coverage of the Blackwood Plateau.

The project also involves the monitoring an initial 13 sites on the Swan Coastal Plain that were developed under the previous project, and the completion of monitoring an additional 17 wetland sites in an area east of Margaret River



that were mapped in the previous project. The sites have been selected according to how well the of habitat, function, processes, biodiversity, scientific and cultural values are represented. Sites will be monitored in early spring and late spring in 2007 and autumn 2008. Parameters to be monitored include depth, pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, salinity, temperature, colour, nutrients, transparency, phytoplankton, macroinvertebrates, vertebrate fauna, vegetation, physical form and process, catchment disturbance and hydrological disturbance. The overall

purpose of the monitoring program is to determine baseline condition for wetlands throughout the region. It will provide additional data for the already established monitoring sites and initiate data collection for the new sites. The program will eventually allow for detection of changes in condition.

By providing better resources this project will assist with regional decision making and priority setting for activities affecting wetlands and will lead to better wetland management and protection.

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Above Sumpland at Riverdale Nature Reserve.

Far left A tortoise at Lake McLarty.

Left A frog at Riverdale Nature Reserve.

Photos – DEC

