



Assemblages of Dragon Tree Soak organic mound spring

TEC Description

The community occurs in the Great Sandy Desert bioregion and is a rare wetland landform supporting plants and animals that are absent or scarce elsewhere in the bioregion. It is known from a single occurrence that covers approximately 6 ha. At its centre, the community comprises a closed sedgeland of jointed twig-rush *Baumea articulata* to 2.5 m high and 95% canopy cover. *Sesbania formosa* (white dragon tree) occurs as a sparse emergent and some clumps of *Typha domingensis* (bullrush) are also present in the centre of the soak. At the southern and northern ends of the wetland is a low-closed forest or scrub of *Sesbania formosa*, averaging 10 m in height, with some *Typha domingensis* understorey. In wet areas on the periphery of the wetland, a grassland of *Paspalum vaginatum* (couch grass) occurs, with sparse emergent *Fimbristylis ferruginea*. The slightly higher and drier surrounding flats support *Sporobolus virginicus* (marine couch), *Acacia ampliceps* and *Melaleuca glomerata*. The priority 3 sedge species *Fimbristylis sieberiana* also occurs.



Distribution

DBCA Districts: West Kimberley

Local Government Authority: Shire of Broome

Tenure: Dragon Tree Soak, Kurriji Pa Yajula Nature Reserve

Habitat Requirements

The soak is an elliptical organic mound spring that comprises a permanent swamp and soak of black peaty mud, surrounded by an irregular dampland of grey loam flats and claypan. The permanent water source and vegetation provide a refuge to a variety of fauna from the surrounding Great Sandy Desert.

Indigenous Interests

The Traditional Owners are the Karajarri people who hold determined native title over part of Dragon Tree Soak. Joint management of the reserve is undertaken by Karajarri and the State Government through an Indigenous Land Use Agreement. The soak holds strong cultural significance to the Karajarri people who utilized the area as an important food and water source, with the area also playing a strong role in storytelling.

Conservation Status

Listed as endangered under WA Minister Environmentally Sensitive Areas list in policy.

Threatening Processes

In 1994 and 2014, evidence of considerable damage by camels was reported. Continued modification of vegetation and soils is likely to affect the hydrology of the peat mound, causing it to dry out. If this habitat becomes drier, regeneration of the original vegetation would be inhibited, and the peat substrate would be at risk from burning in bush fires.

Recovery Plan

A recovery plan is recommended to outline the recovery actions required to reduce the threats and to maintain or improve the overall condition of the community in the known location, and reduce the level of threat to ensure the community's long-term survival. Recommended actions include developing and implementing a monitoring plan and using results to guide management, and surveys for other occurrences. Consistent monitoring and management of fencing, camel impact and fires is recommended.

Citation

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. (2020). Recovery plans and interim recovery plans <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/threatened-species-and-communities/wa-s-threatened-ecological-communities>

Key References

- Australian Nature Conservation Agency (1996). *A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia*. Second Edition. Australian Nature Conservation Agency, Canberra.
- Burbidge, A. A., McKenzie, N. L. and Kenneally, K. F. (1991). *Nature Conservation Reserves in the Kimberley, Western Australia*. Department of Conservation and Land Management, Perth.
- McKenzie, N. L., Burbidge, A. A., George, A.S. and Mitchell, A. S. (1983). The Environment. In: *Wildlife of the Great Sandy Desert*. A. A. Burbidge and N. L. McKenzie (Eds), 7-37. Wildlife Research Bulletin of Western Australia No. 12, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Perth

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