



Themeda grasslands on cracking clays (Hamersley Station, Pilbara)

TEC Description

The community is known from Hamersley Station in the Pilbara. It comprises an open to closed tussock grassland on cracking clays and is dominated by the perennial *Themeda* sp. Hamersley Station (M.E. Trudgen 11431) (priority 3) growing to approximately 1.8 m high. A suite of other grasses and herbs occur. In some areas there is a scattered open overstorey of low trees present including *Hakea lorea* subsp. *lorea* (witinti) and *Eucalyptus victrix*.



Distribution

The community occurs around Duck Creek and on Hamersley Station.

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) Region: Pilbara
Local Government Authority: Shire of Ashburton

Habitat Requirements

The *Themeda* grasslands community mostly occurs on alluvial plains (soils deposited by flowing water) on cracking clay soils, often referred to as crab holes or self-mulching clay flats. These 'run on' clay flats rely on inundation with fresh water from sporadic rainfall and run-on rainfall from surface flows. Maintenance of hydrological processes in terms of both quality and quantity of water is therefore essential to sustain the community.

Indigenous Interests

An Aboriginal Sites Register is kept by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and lists six sites of Aboriginal significance in the vicinity of the occurrences. Input and involvement has been sought through the Karajarri and Nyangumarta Traditional Owners to determine if there are any issues or interests with respect to management of the community.

Conservation Status

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

Threatening Processes

The main threats to the community are cattle and feral animals (grazing, trampling and nutrient enrichment), hydrological changes caused by alteration of overland water flows and extraction of groundwater, land clearing, weed invasion, particularly the tall thorny shrub *Vachellia farnesiana* (mimosa bush) and altered fire regimes.

Recovery Plan

A recovery plan is recommended for the community. Priority recovery actions include increased protection of occurrences through acquiring areas of pastoral leases for conservation as opportunities arise, excluding grazing and infrastructure development, linked monitoring of hydrology and vegetation, managing hydrological processes, and weed control.

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

Biota Environmental Sciences (2012). Themeda grasslands threatened ecological mapping Phase 1 Botanical Survey 2012 Prepared for Rio Tinto. Perth, Western Australia.

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