

Seasonal Fauna Surveys, Gulf of Carpentaria

Project: confidential

Location: Gulf of Carpentaria, Queensland

Project Goals

Undertake seasonal (dry and wet) fauna surveys within a remote and sensitive environment. The survey had to consider, integrate and involve local Traditional Owners.

Project Actions

The remote location of the surveys required the use of chartered fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters and six-wheeler buggies for transportation of people and equipment. The survey implementation had to also consider the highly seasonal and unpredictable nature of the weather in the region, with contingency plans in place for the event of rain.

Despite these complications, the team was required to undertake systematic baseline surveys of the highest standard. These surveys included targeted techniques for



priority species known within the region and local area. At times, the team had to establish a remote camp in order to achieve the project goals. Traditional Owner representatives accompanied the team at all times.

Project Outcomes

The studies located a range of fauna species, many with a limited distribution in Queensland, being more widespread in the Northern Territory. Bat diversity was noted to be high, with over 20 species detected including the Vulnerable Orange Leaf-nosed Bat (*Rhinioncteris aurantia*). The surveys also located the first recorded Sandstone False Antechinus (*Pseudantechinus bilarni*) for Queensland, contributed to resolving taxonomic uncertainties in selected frog groups and significantly improved Dragonfly knowledge of the region. It is hoped that these findings may be the subject of future scientific publications.

Using statistical methods, the studies showed that survey efforts had adequately document the fauna communities present. By comparing the primary area of interest to nearby similar locations, the studies were able to show that values within the area were typical of the region. It was noted that these values are restricted in extent within Queensland.