How will the survey be carried out?

About 800 sample sites will be chosen to represent a cross section of the region's soils, landforms, climate and vegetation types. The diversity of plant and animal life will be recorded at each of the sites.

Many of the sites will be on pastoral and Aboriginal lands. Staff will contact landholders before sites are set up to provide information about the survey and to ensure no disruption will occur to normal land management activities.

Plants, birds, mammals (including bats), reptiles, frogs, spiders and other invertebrates will be sampled at most sites. Waterbirds and aquatic invertebrates will be surveyed in rivers, wetlands and springs, and stygofauna will be collected from boreholes. Most sites will be sampled two times in different seasons of the year. A variety of trapping techniques including pitfall traps will be used to catch animals.

Timeline

Stygofauna sampling commenced in November 2002. After January 2003 landholders will be contacted by researchers about the location of other boreholes as sample sites for stygofauna.

Landholders will be contacted about the selection of land sites from March 2003. Installation of pit traps will begin between July and September 2003.

Fieldwork will continue from early 2003 until mid-2006 followed by 18 months to sort and analyse the data, and to publish the results.

Further information

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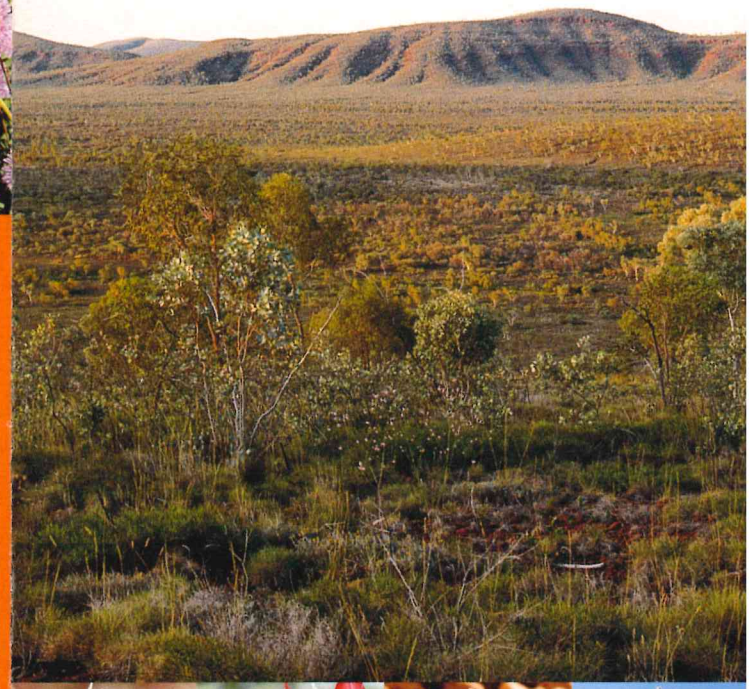
Pilbara Region **Biological Survey** 2002–2007



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An environmental silhouette for the future

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
DEPARTMENT OF Conservation AND LAND MANAGEMENT
Conserving the nature of WA

The Pilbara

Silhouetted against a backdrop of one of the world's most spectacular landforms is a history that will shape the future of the Pilbara.

That history is the biodiversity of about 180,000 square kilometres of the Pilbara's tidal flats, mangroves, grassland savannas, mountain ranges, gorges and tropical woodlands.

Bordered by the Indian Ocean to the west, the Ashburton region to the south, and sandy deserts to the east and north, the Pilbara natural region is renowned for its stark isolation and astonishing beauty.

It is also renowned for its wildlife, geology and minerals.

Pilbara Region Biological Survey

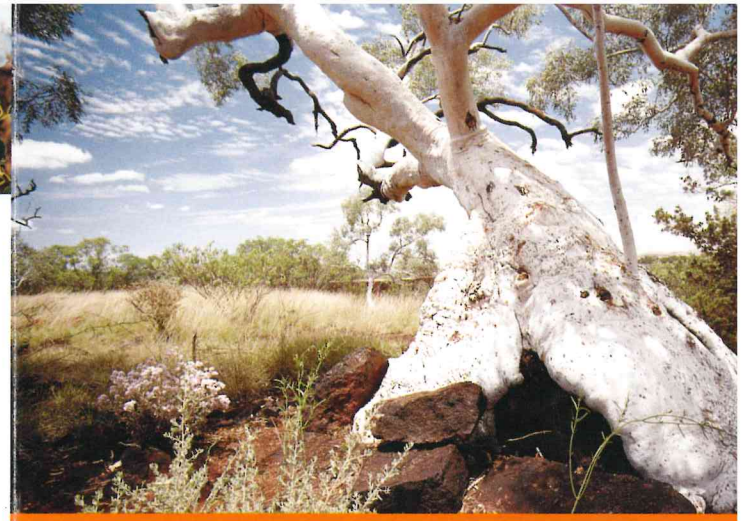
From 2002 to 2007, a $12.5 million biological survey to discover and document the nature of the Pilbara will be carried out across the region.

The survey is funded by the Western Australian Government primarily through the Department of Conservation and Land Management with the assistance from the WA Museum and industry.

More than 20 staff from the Department of Conservation and Land Management, assisted by staff from the WA Museum, will work at 800 study sites throughout the Pilbara for four of the five years – the equivalent of spending 70 years' research on the region's flora, fauna, aquatic life and ecosystems.

The knowledge will add to information about the State's biological diversity from surveys already completed in the southern Carnarvon Basin, eastern Goldfields, Nullarbor and Kimberley regions.

National parks including Karijini and Millstream-Chichester will be included in the survey, which will also cover pastoral leases, Aboriginal lands, conservation reserves and mining leases.



Why do we need a survey?

We need a survey to:

- develop a framework to guide sustainable land-use and conservation planning in the Pilbara;
- appraise the region's conservation reserve system;
- improve the environmental impact assessment of developments;
- verify distributional information for threatened species and ecological communities;
- provide detailed information on small underground water creatures (stygofauna); and
- document new information about plants, reptiles, frogs, mammals, bats, birds, spiders, scorpions and aquatic invertebrates.

The Pilbara's biodiversity is rich but poorly documented.

This survey is expected to discover new species of terrestrial plants and vertebrates, as well as large numbers of terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates.