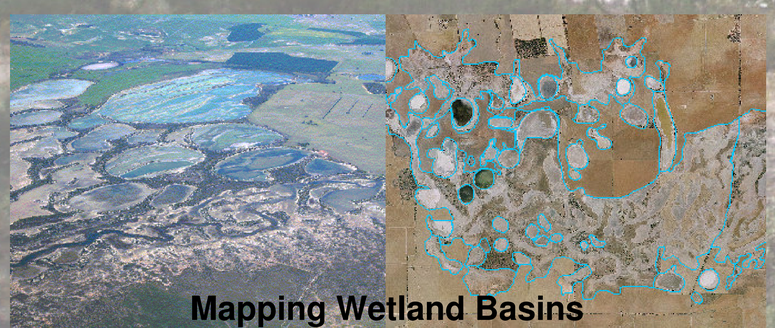
Baselining the natural diversity of the Avon region wetlands

On behalf on the Avon Catchment Council (ACC), and as part of the Avon Natural Diversity Alliance (ANDA), the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) is 'baselining' the natural diversity of the wetlands within the Avon Natural Resource Management (NRM) region. Throughout most of the Avon NRM region, dryland salinisation has resulted in a dramatic increase in the ground water level and the salinity of wetland surface waters. Salinisation has been, and will continue to be, a very serious threat to wetland-related biodiversity within the region. This project endeavours to improve knowledge of wetland systems in the Avon, such that wetlands with high conservation value are recognized and managed appropriately, while low conservation value wetlands may be incorporated into drainage schemes. This is achieved through:

RESEARCHING the flow-on effects of agricultural drainage on wetland ecology. In particular, the effect of altered salinity, pH, hydrology, sediment and nutrient loads on aquatic invertebrate, waterbird and macrophyte communities.

MAPPING every wetland basin (>1ha in size) within the Avon NRM region boundary. This will be accurate to a scale of 1:100,000. A combined total of 17,804 basins, reservoirs and granite outcrops have been mapped.



Mapping Wetland Basins

EVALUATING every mapped wetland within the Avon NRM region using a classification and evaluation framework developed for specifically for wheatbelt wetlands. Wetlands will be placed into high, intermediate and low conservation value categories.

Natural Wetlands

Degraded Wetlands

GROUND-TRUTHING the evaluations by validating them with real data on invertebrates, waterbirds and water quality.

Aquatic Invertebrate & Waterbird sampling

REPORTING on the results of the project to the Avon Catchment Council so that wetlands identified as high value can be targeted for conservation and those identified as low value, with further assessment, can be considered for incorporation into drainage schemes.

Authors: Susan Jones, Adrian Pinder, Lien Sim, Stuart Halse, Danielle Halliday and Anna Leung

For further information contact Susan Jones, Phone: (08) 9405 5183, Email: Susan.Jones@dec.wa.gov.au

AVON CATCHMENT COUNCIL · Australian Government · Landgate · Government of Western Australia · Department of Environment and Conservation