



Baselining the natural diversity *Avon* of the Avon region

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 Avon Natural Resource Management (NRM) region to collate existing data and knowledge about terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity within the region. This will identify important species and ecological communities, including wetlands, and where knowledge gaps exist. Projects have been divided into aquatic, terrestrial and information management.

Terrestrial

Terrestrial baselining aims to collate existing knowledge about biodiversity assets and threats to:

- produce a biodiversity assessment of the Avon NRM region;
- interpret these data in formats useful for other projects within the region;
- integrate these data into a community-accessible online database; and
- run a series of 'gap' analyses and use this information to develop a field work program to fill these gaps.

Most of the available data on assets and threats has been collated and is being interpreted for a biodiversity assessment. This stage will be finished by March 2007.



Photos (clockwise from top): Gimlet, photo – Jeff Richardson. Nicholls Melaleuca Swamp, photo – Adrian Pinder and Jane McRae. Banksia sp, photo – Jeff Richardson. Numbat, photo – Bert and Babs Wells/DEC.

Aquatic

A wetland evaluation system will be developed to assist with aquatic baselining by:

- identifying high, intermediate and low conservation value wetlands in the Avon NRM region;
- using information about high-value wetlands for conservation planning;
- improving understanding about the likely impacts of drainage on Avon region wetlands; and
- populating a 'table of assessment' for drainage.

A draft evaluation system will be completed by mid 2007. Data on Avon region wetlands is currently being collated, analysed and interpreted and the system will be tested on selected sites. New data will then be collected to test the accuracy of the evaluation.

Information management

Information about terrestrial diversity and wetland values, as well as progress reports and updates, will available on a publicly accessible online database by mid 2008. Baselining is expected to run until July 2008.

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Range Road Yate Swamp, photo – Adrian Pinder and Jane McRae.

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