

Wait-a-While

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DJUNBUNJI LAND & SEA PROGRAM



Survey uncovers rare and unknown species

Over just one week, and across a relatively small area, a biodiversity survey commissioned by Djunbunji has uncovered several rare and one unknown species of flora or fauna, principal landscape ecologist for the Wet Tropics Management Authority David Stanton says.

Mr Stanton coordinated the survey and said the Mandingalbay Yidinji Ranger Program played an important role in light of the results.

"The main thing is a lot of animals and plants and habitats are unprotected under legislation, and when I say legislation that includes the Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and the Nature Conservation Act," he said.

"We found a number a frogs endangered under state, federal and international legislation and the reason it's listed as endangered is the species nearly died out several years ago due to a fungal disease, and it's only just starting to recover.

"It seems like there's a daily healthy population on Country.

"There's also a couple of birds they picked up – a Big Stone Curlew which is a vulnerable species and it's habitat is under a lot of pressure from horses, pigs and dogs, so



basically managing those sort of feral animals will help control any further impacts to that species as well.

"And that's where the Rangers come in. "Not only can they do surveys for these animals, but they can bring in some sort of management action that can protect or enhance the population.

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our beaches
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“That’s where the Rangers will probably be heading down the track; it’s a very good thing,” Mr Stanton said.

“The more of these things you find on your Country the better it is in terms of future funding and recognition of the conservation value of your lands. We probably reckon there’s up to about 40 threatened flora species that occur on the MY Lands, and potentially between 30 and 40 threatened fauna species. So the Rangers have a pretty big role in monitoring and looking after some of these assets.”

Ranger Co-ordinator for the Djunbunji Land and Sea Program James (Jimmy) Richards said the biodiversity surveys were one of the best things they’d ever done.

“Certainly opened the eyes up of these guys of what’s out there,” he said.

“We’ve actually found plants that are critically endangered and need protecting.

“MY People found an area there that’s got rainforest on sand which is critically endangered.

“For us, we hope that will certainly open the eyes of the Government. We’re hoping with that mapping of Country we can get some more funds to do more extensive surveys all the way through MY Country.

“We knew things were there, but we didn’t know how critically endangered they were.

“But we also don’t know what’s out there, and if we can get some more funding to go out there and do extensive surveys itself we’re actually helping the Government in finding these endangered habitats and everything like that.

“It builds the Rangers’ capabilities and capacities up also.”



Members of the biodiversity survey team

From the Rangers' Corner

Ranger Co-ordinator James (Jimmy) Richards, or JR, coordinates 'on-ground' activities for Mandingalbay Yidinji Ranger Program.

“My job specifically, as I see it, is to get these guys trained up and then eventually if they go out in the big wide world and get a job on their own merit I’ve actually done my job,” he said.

“That’s how I see my position here – getting those guys trained up to go out there and secure a job, hold a full-time position.

“Eventually I’d like to see one

of the Rangers actually take my job because I don’t come from this area; I come from a totally different area but my passion is Indigenous Ranger Groups and helping them to better their knowledge and professionalism in looking after their country.

“That’s how I see my job.

“I’m from the Ewamian People; that’s up around the Georgetown area.

“The biodiversity surveys, East Trinity water monitoring for acid sulphate, pig trapping, those things are all for one outcome – a better environment itself.



“And, you know what better people to work on their country than the Traditional Owners themselves?

“It’s a passion for me, the environment and combining traditional knowledge and western science together for one good outcome.

“The environment we have is the only one we got so we have to look after it.”

Pig trap-building draws local interest

Boilermaker Kev Ganly says he is amazed at the progress his charges have made in the production of pig traps at his Deeral-based KML Welding company.

Mr Ganly said the two younger boys in particular had picked up the job very very quickly. "These two young fellows who have come through, what they've picked up in a matter of four days is quite unbelievable," he said. "They picked it up so quickly. "We've been building pig traps, mainly giving them a basic understanding of how to weld and how to put two pieces of steel together with quality and self confidence. "That's what the whole thing is, to give them self confidence, and to be able to do something for themselves." Ranger Trainee Djullja Mundraby said they expected to make at least five or six of the traps. "We started on them last week and this is the first time I've done any welding," he said. William Mundraby said he had only done home welding before. "I've done a little bit (welding) at home just in the back yard but nothing spectacular," he said.



Willy, Djiron, Victor & Djulja in the welding shed at Deeral

"I enjoy working with the family so since we've started the welding the pig traps it's been pretty good." Ranger Victor Bulmer said he had also done some welding before. "I just came down just to help the boys quickly build these pig traps, so we can go out and catch more pigs," he said. "They're a big pest in the area, so eradicating most we can or what we can would be a good thing because they really damage natural areas." Djunbunji Executive Director Dale Mundraby said the welding project was part of the Mandingalbay Yidinji Ranger Program.



"The pig traps is linked to our Works Program and part of the Works Program is Pest and Weed Management," he said. "That's anything from spraying, fire, whipper snip, cane knife, hand pulling of all different weeds and pest, and part of those pests are pigs."



Junior rangers step up for beaches

More than 50 children and 20 adults were at the launch of the MY Djunbunji Junior Ranger Program in October, which was held in conjunction with an overnight camp and a clean-up of Jilji beach under the Tangaroa Blue Marine Debris initiative.

The event was kicked off by Ranger Laurissa and Coordinator/volunteer Stacey Mundraby-King from Tangaroa Blue Foundation, Zoey Gillam, who is also a Marine Biologist.

Cultural Heritage Ranger Laurissa Mundraby spoke about the marine environment and the reason why we need to look after our salt waters as traditional owners.

Zoey explained what marine debris was and the problems it caused in our salt water and the marine life.

Then heading down to Jilji beach where the real fun began with groups of five collecting as much sea debris as they could find from aluminium cans, plastic drink bottles and even found a few of the KKK bleach containers used to kill fish as well kill the marine environment.

After several hours of cleaning all teams were gathered to sort rubbish collected, so it could be entered in an Itracker device.

In total more than 60kg of rubbish was removed off Jilji with a majority of the debris coming in with the tides.

After a barbecue lunch the kids were treated to an exclusive Wild life show with Zoologist Mark and Gus using our Native animals in our own country.

Horse Shoe Bat, Skink and the most frightening - a spotted python - were all handled by our very own Mandingalbay bama Jahvid Kyle.

The day finished with a refreshing swimming at the beach.

Ranger Laurissa said when the kids were asked at the end of it 'who wants to be a ranger when they grow up?' the answer was a unanimous 'we do!'

"It's really awesome to see that these kids are interested in what we do, especially for us to promote what we do, looking after country," she said.

"All up we had about 50 cuddi-cuddis



and roughly about 20 adults, so it was a really good turnout to have aunts, uncles, grandparents all there looking after the kids and getting involved as well.

"And they feel special because it's their country that they're looking after, they're the future generation and that's what drives me everyday."

She said the rubbish collection was an added bonus.

"Basically what happens is we collect rubbish that's come in off the ocean

currents," she said.

"Some of the rubbish is rubbish, but other rubbish is a long way south."

"So we collect data to see where it comes from and what the effects are well and the effects of it."

Djunbunji Executive Director Stacey Mundraby said there are camps in their site.

"Tangaroa Blue indicates there's no beach clean-up



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place, so it's unique to find not only the 60+ kilos of weight of rubbish the kids were able to clean up, but analysing and digesting the type of rubbish," he said. "Other proposed sites in which to conduct the beach clean-up are Badabadoo, Back Beach, Gunjarra Island beach. "Following the beach clean-up was a fantastic barbecue lunch, and following the lunch was a presentation from the Flora and Fauna survey scientists

(David Stanton and Mark) who gave a presentation on some of the local animals, including the black scorpion, which quieted everyone out respect, even the kids themselves. "We'll continue to have our Junior Ranger Program and that will involve giving talks in and out of schools, and we really want to organise some Junior Ranger uniforms, hats, water bottles – it's just a fantastic opportunity to keep this all going well into the future."

Working on country foundation for future

MY Traditional Owner and Djunbunji board member Dewayne Mundraby, also a board member for the Gunggandji Mandingalbay Yidinji Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) and on the National PBC Advisory Committee, advocates for sustainable, intergenerational socio-economic enhancement.

“My main focus is to continue with implementing the MY Working on Country and IPA programs as the basis for establishing an environmental management portfolio we hope will attract infrastructure and economic development,” he said.

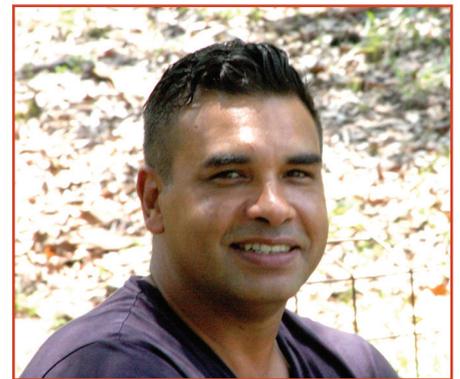
“This is achievable through engagement with partners and stakeholders who want to work collaboratively with MY people to achieve the best possible outcomes for all of us.

“Through that process there will be employment and training opportunities which put us in a good position to engage with stakeholders and partners.

“We can then work with those partners on forging a relationship that not only engages with environmental management and cultural protection of our identity, but can also assist us with our economic aspirations in terms of developing eco-tourism and other sustainable ventures.

“Through that process the MY collaborative framework produces synergies which will connect with informed decision making – and we hope will lead into a greater investment into opportunities on MY Country.

“Our policy framework delivers that process and guides us within those initiatives.



“So when we engage with our partners, or even interact internally with our own mobs, we are able to establish a communication protocol consistent with informed decision-making and the authority to go forward with our activities on Country.”

Gunggandji land and sea plan launched



“I’d like to congratulate the Gunggandji People for the launching of their Community Land and Sea Management plan,” MY Elder Vince Mundraby says.

“There is the opportunity for the joint Gunggandji Mandingalbay Yidinji Prescribed Body Corporate to actually engage in a complementary manner.

“This is also an opportunity for the Djunbunji Land and Sea Program to complement activities or the outcomes identified within their Sea Country Plan.

“One of the things we’ve had talks with the Gunggandji Mandingalbay Yidinji peoples’ corporation about is a joint Sea Management claim stretching from Russell River and around to Trinity Inlet.

“This is still work in progress, and we’ll be able to update a little bit more once we consult with the Gunggandji Prescribed Body Corporate and also the Gunggandji Mandingalbay Yidinji and the Mandingalbay Yidinji people through Djunbunji Limited.”

MY Elder Vince Mundraby travelled to Stradbroke Island last month to take part in a statewide conference on sea issues.

"The Conference was dealing with sea issues, sea management issues of Traditional Owners from the Torres Strait to Quandamooka Country, which is Stradbroke Island," he said.

"The main issues we were looking at were legal and how we can engage with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority for better management, particularly around the areas of turtle and dugong.

"So it was about policing and enforcement powers as well as recognition of Traditional Owners in terms of overall management of the Great Barrier Marine Park Authority region.

"There was a committee selected to take things further and negotiate with the relevant Government departments.

"There will be a meeting in the early new year with Mark Hunter, the Federal Environment Minister,

to have a look at a framework of engagement and also particular outcomes identified by the broader group. One of those outcomes would be the establishment of a Great Barrier Park Indigenous Marine Park Authority, so it's equivalent to Indigenous structure, similar to GBR Management Authority.

"With that, there would need to be the framework identified so this could be achieved collectively over the region and also individually within each Traditional Owner groups' management area.

"Management plans driven by the Traditional Owners would be compatible with their neighbours in terms of traversing and possibly identification of areas that would actually be protected from hunting."



Conference Round – Up

Ranger Jahved Kyle recently attended a Weed & Pest convention in Ingham and was impressed by the work he saw being done to eradicate feral pigs.

"What they're doing down there is working," he said.

"They're working with a lot of farmers to build up a program where the farmers are going out baiting because they've been losing up



to 15,000 tonne of their crop a year. The baiting is placing 1080 into these bananas, squashing them on the inside and pigs have been eating them.

"But the levels of the 1080 go out of the animals, so it won't harm any other native animals. "Other poison they were

using in the past, like strychnine stays in the animal so if other animals come along and eat it, it still going to pass it down through five to six animals.

"I'd like to sort of use that plan in some areas around here with working with these cane and banana farmers here to try and utilise the program they're using down in Ingham.

"The farmers down there reckon it's going in leaps and bounds.

Jahved is a mechanic by trade.

"I've been here only for a little while, but I've mainly worked in the building industry," he said.

"I'm a mechanic by trade.

"It's the first time for me doing something like this, and I hope to bring more to the table, to take the mob towards getting stronger in the future. We've got an awesome crew here now, so it's good, and I hope to be here for a long time and try to do everything to strive to achieve, even something small for us and the people. That's what I'm about."

Four years back, five years ahead



*The first rangers to be employed by Djunbunji on MY Country 2008.
They were Andrea, Terry, Kenny, Giles, Darryl and Isaac.*

Djunbunji chairperson Dawn Kyle (*below*) says she will run again at the next AGM.

"I have been asked to go forward, to stay on as Chairperson," she said.



"I'll admit to having second thoughts about letting someone else take over the reins and get the experience as well, but I can also see in the future it would be better if I'm there to help organise and move forward with what we've already started - more or less to see it through.

"I've had a bit of time to think about it and if they want me to, by all means, I'll put my hand up again."

Ms Kyle has held the position for the past 12 months and is proud of what has been achieved.

"Seeing how far the Ranger Program has progressed, starting courses to get our people back into the work force, bringing them up to date and just for them to get those skillsets and understanding of the meaning of working on country," she said.

"You still need qualifications and the skills to keep us going apart from our cultural knowledge.

"The main thing is getting our people back on country and carrying out our Elders' dreams to bring the place back to how it used to be – liveable, back to the pristine state it was in and just having the input of our people put back in there where they feel at home and welcome, and knowing they're doing the right thing looking after our country and keeping our traditions, understanding and knowledge going.

"From what I've seen in the last year where we're going and where we can go in the future is just outstanding.

"When I look at what we've achieved so far and see what we're going to start within the next five years I'm absolutely gobsmacked and I'm so proud of what my nieces and nephews carrying on for what our elders have started.

"To see how far we've come forward is just unbelievable.

"And to get our people to be back on country working in these positions, being trained and qualified for that, it's even better because then our children and our country will have a better future and be able to keep taking us forward."

Don't forget to log on!
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