

A large flock of ducks is captured in a dynamic scene. Many ducks are in flight, their wings spread wide, showing a mix of black, white, and brown feathers. They are flying over a body of water where a large number of other ducks are gathered. The background consists of a dense thicket of green trees and bushes, suggesting a natural, possibly wetland, environment. The overall atmosphere is one of active movement and natural abundance.

**Djelk Healthy Country Plan 2015–2025**







## The Djelk Logo

'Djelk' is a Gurrgoni word for 'land' and 'caring for the land'. The Djelk logo embodies the land management approach of the Rangers and their supporting community.

The fish trap represents the group's role in bringing Landowners together to make decisions about the land.

The waterlily links the earth, water, air and people—it is a plant of both beauty and a source of food.

The two stems represent the dual laws Djelk recognise—Bininj (traditional Aboriginal) and Balanda (non-Indigenous).

The lily bulbs and roots represent the many land-owning clans in the area.

The dilly bag holds important messages for the people, alluding to the contemporary land management knowledge Djelk can offer Landowners.







## **Djelk Healthy Country Plan 2015–2025**

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The Djelk Healthy Country Plan was prepared by the Djelk Rangers and Bininj Landowners throughout the Djelk operational region. It was written from their information by Jennifer Ansell.

Graphic Design by Therese Ritchie.

Printing by On Demand.

Aboriginal people are advised that this Healthy Country Plan contains images of deceased people.

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## Definitions Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>Bininj</b>	an Aboriginal person
<b>Balanda</b>	a non-Aboriginal person
<b>Landowner</b>	an Aboriginal person who has inherited country from their father
<b>Djungkay</b>	an Aboriginal person who has inherited management responsibilities to their mother's country
<b>HCP</b>	Healthy Country Planning
<b>BAC</b>	Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation
<b>IPA</b>	Indigenous Protected Area
<b>WALFA</b>	West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement
<b>NAILSMA</b>	North Australia Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance
<b>LoC</b>	Learning on Country
<b>CAP</b>	Conservation Action Planning
<b>NAFI</b>	North Australian Fire Information
<b>WoNS</b>	Weed of National Significance
<b>NT</b>	Northern Territory of Australia
<b>EMF</b>	Emissions Reduction Fund







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# The Djelk Healthy Country Plan

“We are dealing with both Balanda and Bininj problems—loss of knowledge, culture and environmental problems. This plan will give everyone a clear story so we can move forward together.”

Together with Landowners, we are very pleased to present the Djelk Healthy Country Plan 2015–2025. This plan is the result of extensive planning by Djelk and the Landowners whose country makes up the Djelk Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) and its surrounds. The Djelk Healthy Country Plan represents our collective vision for the land and sea country in which we live and work. Covering a culturally significant landscape of more than 14,000 km<sup>2</sup>, this includes spectacular coastlines and rivers, floodplains, rainforest and savanna to the rocky escarpments of the Arnhem Land Plateau.

We have written the Djelk Healthy Country Plan to guide the operations of the Djelk Rangers for the ten year period between 2015 and 2025. The Djelk Healthy Country Plan covers the whole area of Djelk operation including the Djelk IPA and surrounding land and sea. What we present in this plan builds on the work that we have been doing in collaboration with our Landowners and our partner organisations for over 20 years. A particular aim of this Healthy Country Plan is to focus our work on priority strategies that will make the most difference to the health of our land and sea country as directed by our Landowners.

In the following pages the Djelk Healthy Country Plan outlines:

- Our vision—the guide for our plan and what we want to work to achieve
- The scope of our project—who we are, where we work, and how we made the plan
- Our targets—the things on country that we need to look after in order to achieve our vision
- The threats to our targets—the things that are making our targets unhealthy
- Our goals and strategies for looking after our targets and minimising the threats
- Our action plan—to tell us what jobs we need to do and when
- Our monitoring plan—to tell us whether we are doing our job and whether our targets are getting healthier and we are minimising the threats.



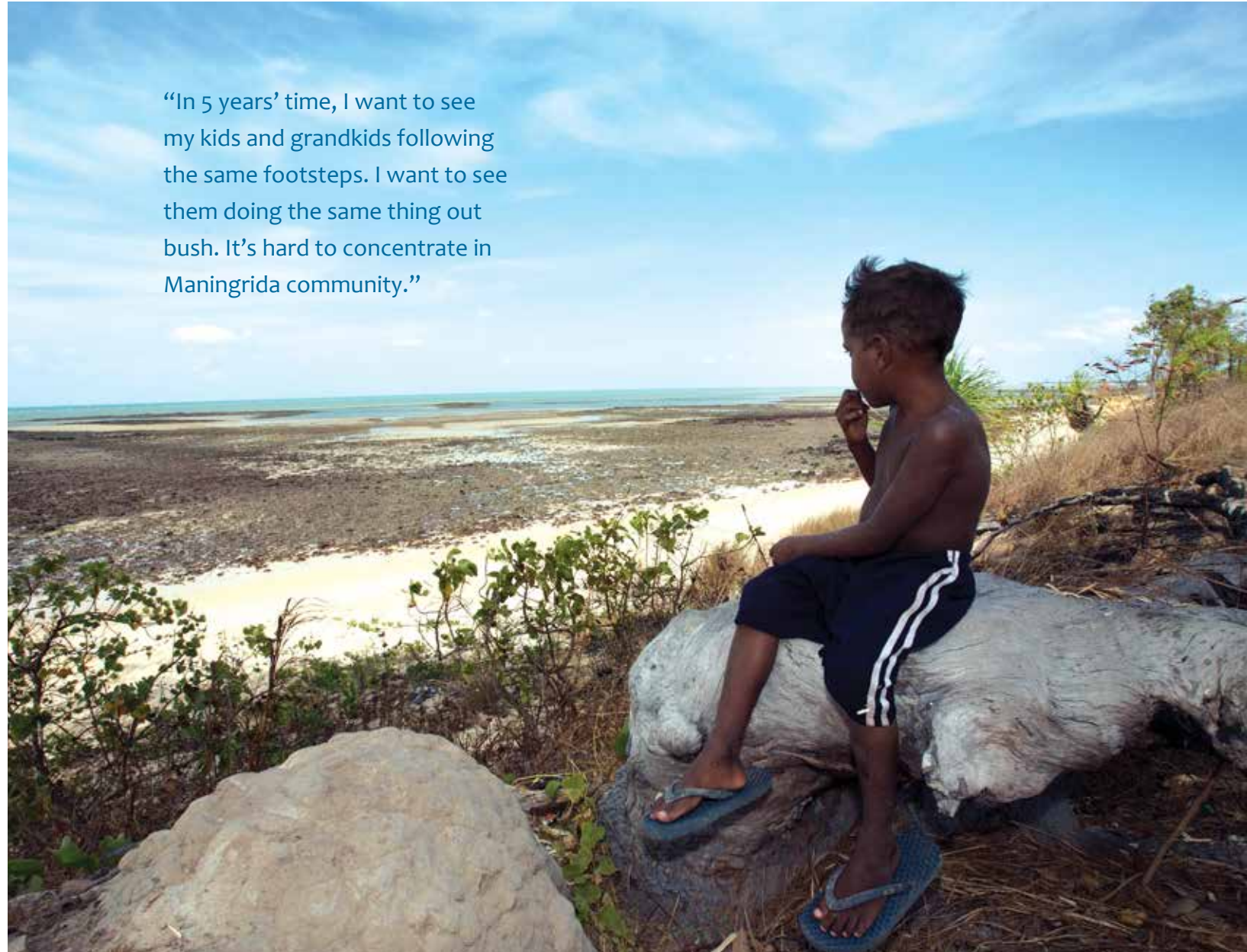
# Our Vision

The Djelk Rangers aim to keep the land, the sea, culture and languages strong through appropriate use and management.

Djelk want to have proper employment and sustainable enterprise development opportunities.

Djelk will maintain, develop and foster strong partnerships with external stakeholders to the benefit of all.

“In 5 years’ time, I want to see my kids and grandkids following the same footsteps. I want to see them doing the same thing out bush. It’s hard to concentrate in Maningrida community.”



# Looking after our land and sea country



Our land and sea country in central Arnhem Land has an unbroken history of Indigenous use and management, a stewardship that today includes the Djelk Rangers. Formed in the 1990s, we were one of the pioneering Indigenous land management programs established in Australia. Our ranger program began as a strategic community-based initiative, led by Landowners, in response to growing contemporary environmental issues. Whilst the Aboriginal Lands in central Arnhem Land are some of the most bio-diverse and structurally intact landscapes in the country, they faced a similar suite of environmental threats as the rest of northern Australia. These included changing fire regimes, the decline of native animal species and the spread of weeds and feral animals.

For more than 20 years, we have worked with Landowners to keep our land and sea country healthy and our culture and community strong and have had great success in delivering positive land and sea management outcomes. Particular highlights over the years include the successful control of *Mimosa pigra* (a Weed of National Significance) on the Tomkinson, Mann-Liverpool and Blyth River floodplains, our involvement in the West Arnhem Land Fire

Abatement (WALFA) project which has returned healthy fire regimes to the Arnhem Land Plateau, the collaboration with partners in the Australian Government to develop our innovative fee-for service coastal surveillance contracts and our role in the development of NAILSMA's I-Tracker project. Along with these and many other successes, Djelk have also gained widespread recognition for their application of Indigenous knowledge in the understanding of contemporary land and sea management issues.

Based out of Maningrida in central Arnhem Land, we work along the coast from Cuthbert Point to Cape Stewart and inland following the Mann/Liverpool River system in the west and the Blyth River in the east—an area of more than 14,000 km<sup>2</sup>. This area is home to more than 2,500 people living either in the central township of Maningrida or at one of the outstations which are scattered throughout the region. The land tenure throughout our area of operation is Inalienable Aboriginal Freehold which is held by the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust on behalf of the Traditional Aboriginal Owners to whom the land was granted under the Commonwealth *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976*.



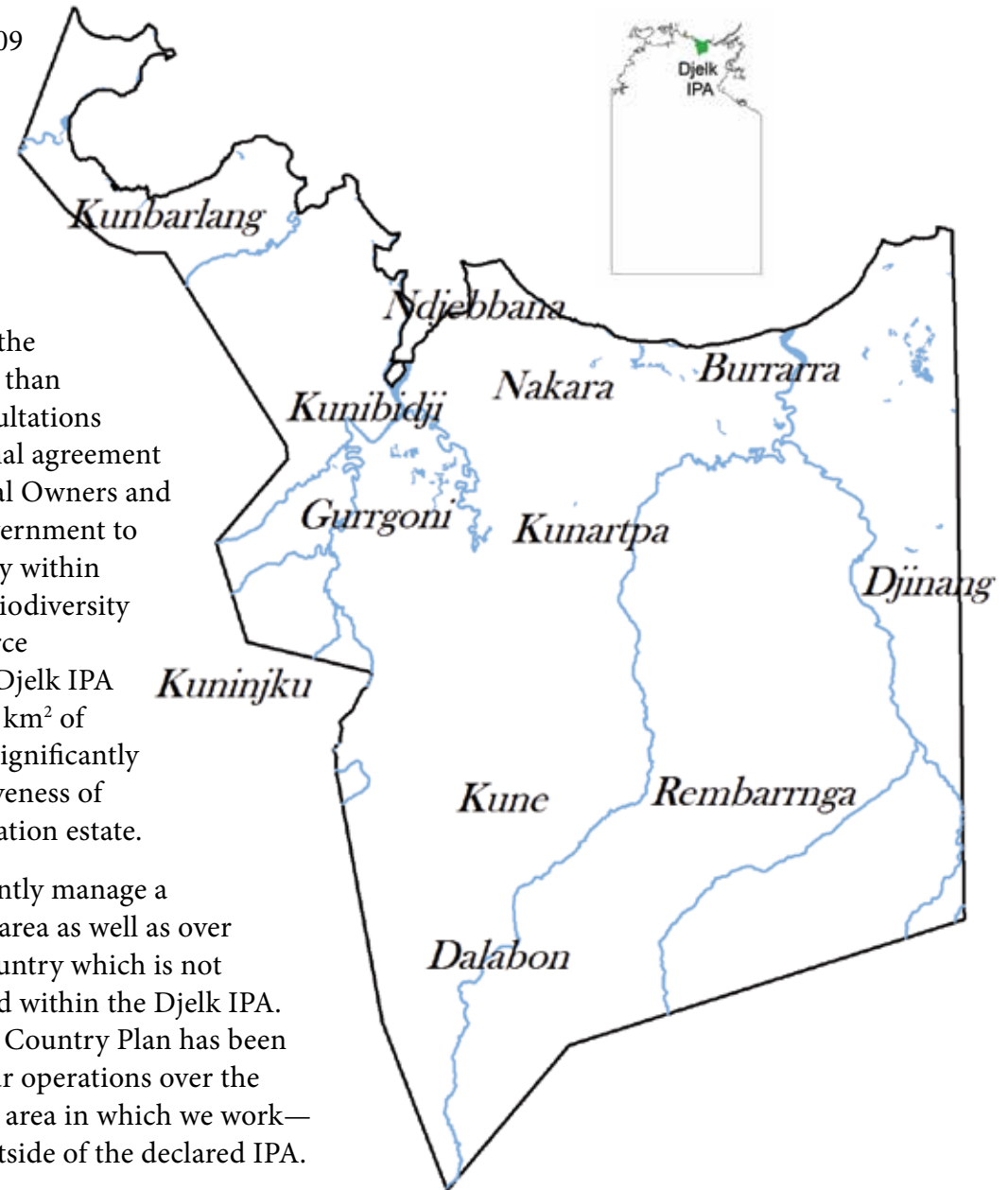


In our region of central Arnhem Land people speak many different languages. Along the coast from east to west there are four principal languages, Burrarra, Nakara, Ndjébbana and Kunbarlang. In the central part on the headwaters of the Cadell River, Kunartpa and Gurrgoni are the two main languages while in the lower Mann-Liverpool Rivers area Kuninjku predominates. In the far south and south-east of our region, Kune, Dalabon and Rembarrnga are the main languages spoken.

Throughout this area the land and sea country is divided into more than 100 clan estates. The ownership and management of the land and its resources remain governed by customary rights which are passed down from both parents. Land ownership is primarily inherited from one's father (patrilineal) but responsibilities for land and resource management can also come from one's mother's traditional estate (matrilineal). Managers of the land through their mother's country are called *Djungkay*. Each clan estate is associated with numerous sites of cultural significance, sometimes referred to as sacred sites or dreaming places. Landowners as well as *Djungkay* hold important management responsibilities for these sites; to physically and spiritually protect and maintain them.

Together with Landowners, in 2009 we declared the Djelk Indigenous Protected Area over a large portion of the area of our land-based operations. The declaration of the IPA followed more than eight years of consultations and marked a formal agreement between Traditional Owners and the Australian Government to manage the country within the Djelk IPA for biodiversity and cultural resource conservation. The Djelk IPA takes in over 6,700 km<sup>2</sup> of country and adds significantly to the representativeness of Australia's conservation estate.

However, we currently manage a much greater land area as well as over 2000 km<sup>2</sup> of sea country which is not formally recognised within the Djelk IPA. This Djelk Healthy Country Plan has been written to guide our operations over the entire land and sea area in which we work—both inside and outside of the declared IPA.



















# Djelk Rangers



Over the last 20 years, Djelk have employed more than 60 Indigenous rangers. Our current Djelk Ranger team is made up of both male and female rangers from a range of age and language groups. Between us we speak more than ten languages and represent many different clans from across our region.

Our ranger program is broken into three main streams: land rangers, sea rangers and women rangers. Our land ranger activities are focused on maintaining biodiversity and cultural resources as well as the productivity of the country by addressing issues of fire, feral animals and weeds. Our sea ranger team undertakes active management and surveillance of the coast protecting local and natural resources and contributing to frontline security at a national level. Our women rangers work across both land and sea management. In recent years they have also developed a focus on monitoring the condition of the Djelk IPA as well as the wider land and sea area over which Djelk operate. In particular, they work with scientists to undertake biodiversity and landscape health monitoring.

At Djelk we focus on using, maintaining and transferring traditional knowledge and skills as well as training and capacity development in western land management techniques and

community education. An important focus is our involvement with Junior Rangers through the Learning on Country (LoC) program. This innovative program aims to improve school attendance and completion, improve the opportunities for students to create a satisfying and rewarding career as a Djelk Ranger and prepare the next generation of Landowners to care for their estates.

We gratefully acknowledge that the ongoing success of the Djelk Rangers has been in no small part due to the assistance of our many partners and stakeholders who have supported, funded and contributed to the Djelk program. Our aim is for this Healthy Country Plan to strengthen and focus our existing relationships as well as highlight opportunities for new partnerships and collaborations.







# The Planning Process



Following a review of our Djelk IPA Management Plan 2009–2014, we could see that we needed to be more strategic and focus on activities that will make the most difference to the health of our land and sea country. We wanted our next plan to keep building upon the work that we have already done and we also wanted Landowners to help us decide where we need to focus our work for the next 10 years. For these reasons, we chose to use the Healthy Country Planning (HCP) framework (also known as Conservation Action Planning—CAP) for developing this plan.

Healthy Country Planning is an internationally recognised method to guide conservation groups to develop focused strategies and measures of success. A particular focus of HCP is the involvement of important stakeholders (in our case Landowners) in many aspects of the planning. HCP uses five simple iterative steps to help plan, implement and measure the success of conservation projects. Importantly, it has a strong focus on a complete project cycle where you evaluate how well your project is working and continue to adapt the plan over time. The idea is to keep going around the circle and keep getting better by building on your previous work and knowledge.

We undertook two Healthy Country Planning workshops in Maningrida in May and October 2014 which covered all elements in the first two steps of the HCP cycle. At the first workshop, we focused on what we wanted the new plan to be about. In particular, we thought very carefully about the things we want to look after on country—our Targets—and what is making the targets unhealthy—the Threats.

The second workshop focused on developing strategies and goals for dealing with the threats as well as indicators to measure whether our target health is improving.





We developed a consultation story to help us talk about the new plan with our Landowners. Throughout 2014 and early 2015 we conducted 16 outstation planning meetings with more than 100 Landowners and *Djungkay*. Meetings were conducted in smaller, clan-affiliated groups as people had identified they felt more comfortable talking about their country in this way. Wesley Campion was employed as the translator and meeting coordinator.

The information we received from Landowners was used to develop important parts of the plan such as identifying where targets are healthy or unhealthy, important nested targets, threat ranking, creating the work plan and identifying indicators for target health.

We also received a strong story from key Landowners on Djelk's future direction and the involvement of Landowners and *Djungkay* in the Djelk program. As has always been a focus for Djelk, we will continue to work closely with Landowners and *Djungkay* so that we are representing their aspirations for the management of land and sea country.















# Targets

Targets are the things that we want to be healthy on our land and sea country. They are the things that we will focus on looking after during the ten years of this plan. In this section of our plan we tell the story of our targets—what they are, why they are important, where they are found on country and what the targets look like when they are healthy.

We have chosen five conservation targets for our Djelk Healthy Country Plan:

- Sea and Coast
- Rivers and Wetlands
- Culturally important places
- Culturally important plants and animals
- Healthy Fire

These targets were chosen to directly follow on from the work we had done in our previous Djelk IPA Plan. These five targets are very broad in their overall scope. However, this broad scale helps us to think about managing such diverse country across our whole operational area. The broad targets also help us to manage for a wide range of smaller (or nested) targets that have been identified by our Landowners as important to look after and occur within the five large

targets. Many of these nested targets are quite localised and it would be hard to manage them all individually. However, by looking after the broad target means you are also looking after the nested target. For example, long-necked turtles have been identified as an important species that needs managing. However, by managing for healthy rivers and wetlands we will also be looking after the long-necked turtle habitat.

For each target we outline:

- Our goals for improving the health of that target
- The current health status of the target
- A small list of indicators that we think will tell us if the health of our targets is changing
- The threats that effect the target

# Target 1

## Sea and Coast



For the saltwater people within the Djelk area, the sea and the coastline is their country. This sea country is some of the most pristine in northern Australia with beautiful sandy beaches, rocky shores and reefs, offshore islands and vast mangrove lined river systems flowing into the sea. The sea country here is rich in marine resources such as fish, sea turtles, dugong, mud crabs, oysters, cockles and a variety of turtle and seabirds. The Landowners of the sea country have a strong tradition of managing and harvesting these resources and in doing so they maintain their knowledge of the sea country and its plants and animals. As on the land, the sea country also contains sacred sites that have a special cultural significance to our Landowners. Some of these special places have been registered as sacred sites under the *NT Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*.

The rich sea country provides food resources and recreational activities to the people of Maningrida and also to the wider Australian population through commercial fishing and fishing tourism operators. Landowners are worried about the sustainability of their marine species and also the physical and cultural impact of visitors to their sea country. As the community of Maningrida grows, more people are looking to utilise the sea country and its resources. Landowners

are generally happy for visitors to come onto their country. However, visitors need to ask for permission and be informed by Landowners where it is safe for them to visit so that important cultural sites are not disturbed. Visitors must also be respectful to country and not leave their rubbish behind as this both shames Landowners and creates a hazard for marine species. Leaving fish carcasses by the shoreline attracts 'cheeky' (dangerous) crocodiles that are a threat to people.

### GOALS

In 2025, our sea and coastline will still be healthy with clean salt water and no changes to the plants or animals or their habitats that are here today.

By 2025, marine resources are managed sustainably and continue to provide important resources to Landowners.





## Target Health Indicators

Indicator Category	Size	Condition	Processes	Culture
<i>What we look at</i>	Healthy population size of key fish species	Clean Beaches	Migratory species present (sea birds & turtles)	Sea Country sacred sites healthy
<i>How we measure —Balanda</i>	Fish population surveys	Beach patrol marine debris	Population survey for migratory species	Sacred site assessment
<i>How we measure —Bininj</i>	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey for key fish species	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey for beach condition	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey for harvest of sea bird eggs and sea turtles	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey for condition of sacred sites

## Main Target Threats



# Target 2 Rivers and Wetlands

“There are too many kinga (crocodile) now in every billabong. The old people used to get rid of them but not now.”

The rivers and wetlands within our Djelk area are very productive ecosystems and have long provided abundant resources for Landowners including fresh water, fish, freshwater turtles, magpie geese and other water birds, mud mussels, mud crabs, mangrove worms as well as a variety of plants for food, medicine and cultural artefacts. Our ‘Rivers and Wetlands’ target includes the river estuaries lined with mangrove and riparian forests, the floodplains and flooded forests, intertidal marshes and saltpans as well as the permanent and seasonal billabongs that occur within the Djelk area.

The wetlands and river systems found in our region are exceptional both in their extent and their ecological integrity. The rivers and wetlands within the Djelk region are critical for many migratory birds, they support major commercial fisheries as well as provide rich and abundant resources for Landowners.

The Landowners whose country includes the rivers and wetlands have observed how easily these fragile ecosystems can be threatened by uncontrolled access, weeds and feral animals. They are particularly worried about the level of damage that pigs and buffalo are having and have concerns about the additional changes that will occur directly and indirectly by global warming. Already they have witnessed many changes including erosion and saltwater

intrusion, saltwater crocodiles are in places where they were previously absent, cane toads destroying goanna and other reptile populations, damage to long-necked turtle habitat by pigs and water buffalo and many important freshwater habitats are now unsafe for drinking and swimming due to large feral animals fouling the water and the presence of too many crocodiles.

## GOALS

In 2025, our rivers and wetlands will be healthier than they are today with clean fresh water and greater availability of key bush tucker species such as long-necked turtle and water lilies.

By 2020, key threatening processes will be actively managed at ten priority wetlands and springs.





## Target Health Indicators

Indicator Category	Size	Condition	Processes	Culture
<i>What we look at</i>	Healthy population size of key species	Clean freshwater	N/A	Key resources can be used by Landowners
<i>How we measure —Balanda</i>	Population survey of long-neck turtle and crocodile egg numbers	Water quality testing at key freshwater sites	N/A	N/A
<i>How we measure —Bininj</i>	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey of key species	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey of water quality	N/A	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey of key species

## Main Target Threats









# Target 3

## Culturally important places

“Elders are dying and there is a sad story about ceremony with no elders coming up behind them. Old people’s knowledge is fading fast and we need to record it. We will be losing lots of things but Djelk can help keep some of that knowledge and store it in the computer.”

All of our land and sea country is divided into clan estates which are owned and managed by Landowners (who have inherited the country from their father) and *Djungkay* (who have inherited management responsibilities for their mother’s country). Each clan estate is home to many culturally important places and there are more than 100 clan estates within the Djelk operational area. These culturally important places include burial sites, rock art galleries, important historical contact sites with Macassan traders, seasonal camps, trading routes and hunting and gathering sites. However, many of these culturally important places relate directly to cultural law and knowledge, including sacred sites, ceremony sites and totemic sites.

During the Dreamtime, our Ancestral Beings emerged from and travelled the country, creating everything in it and laying down laws and culture. Our Songlines map the journey of these ancestors through the landscape and we learn about law and culture through the stories of our ancestors. Each clan has its own different stories connected to the sacred sites on their country. Some stories are sacred and can only be known by the right people and some stories have an ‘outside story’ which is safe for others to hear.

Land and sea country is healthy when the right people are looking after the right country in the right way and at the right time. Landowners and *Djungkay* want us to assist them when appropriate and as directed to address specific concerns. Our Landowners and *Djungkay* are particularly concerned that knowledge about cultural sites is being lost and that cultural places are being damaged by feral animals, fire, people who should not be there and from the effects of climate change.

### GOALS

By 2025, we will be looking after at least 40 culturally important places as directed by Landowners.

Between 2015 and 2025, knowledge of culturally important places is recorded and transferred through Djelk’s ongoing participation in community cultural education such as the Learning on Country program and the local community archiving project.

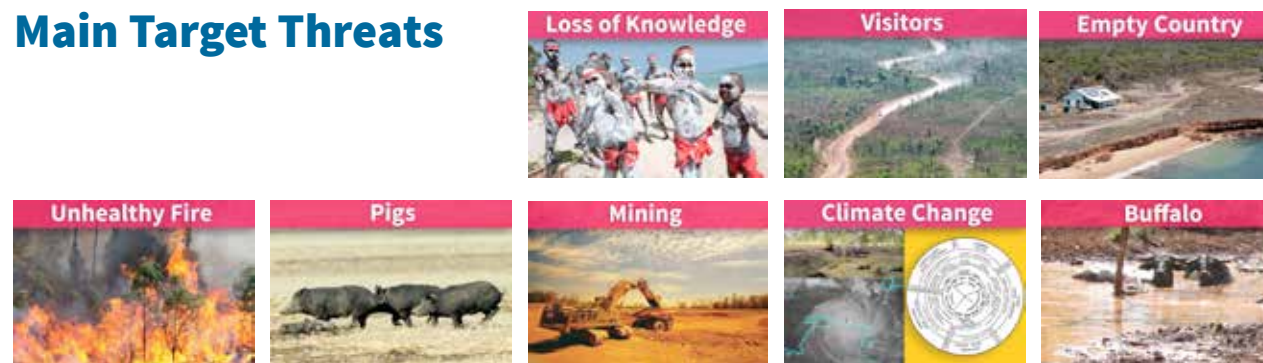


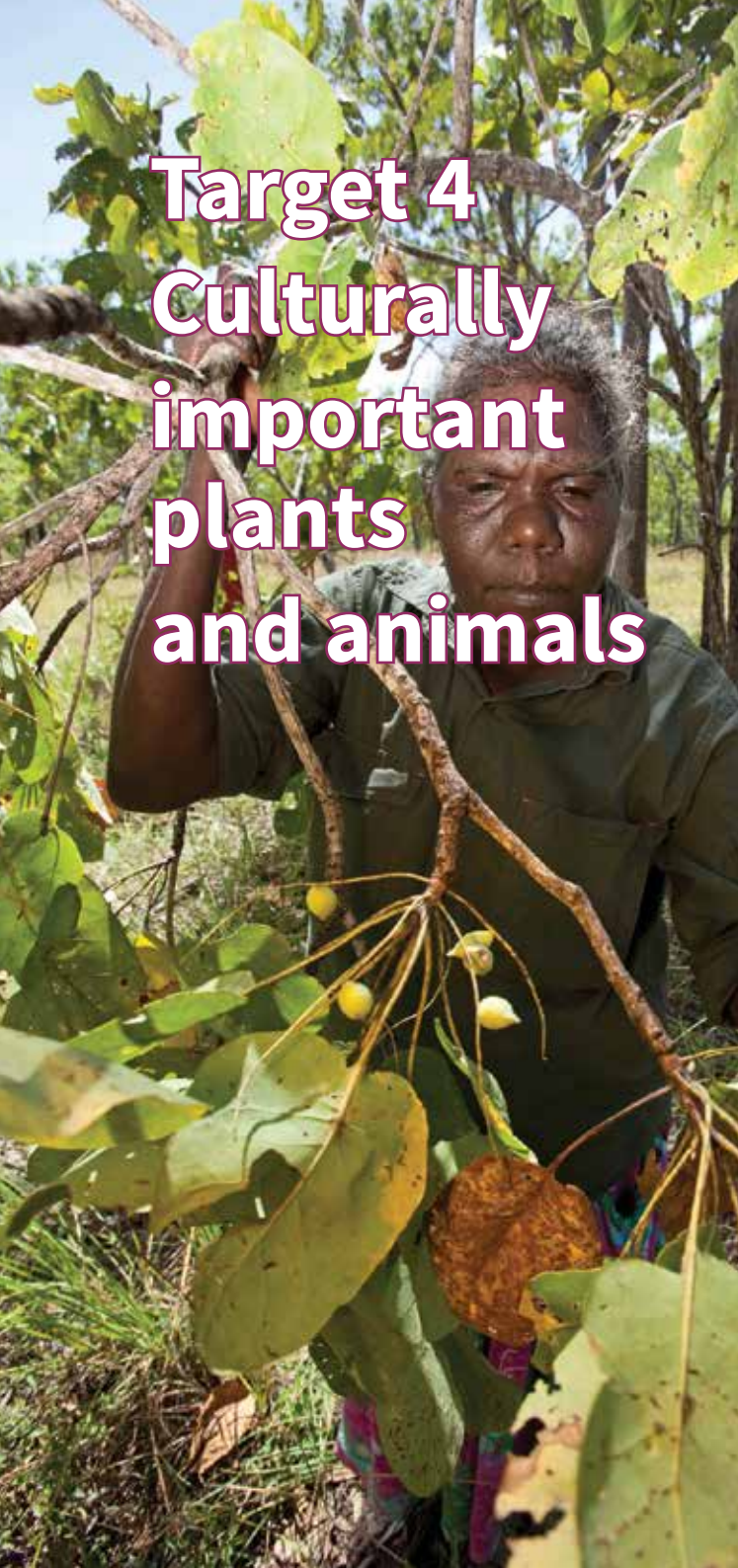


## Target Health Indicators

Indicator Category	Size	Condition	Processes	Culture
<i>What we look at</i>	Country has ownership	Rock art and sacred sites protected and healthy	Knowledge shared in the right way to the right people	Culture is being practiced and natural resources are being used
<i>How we measure —Balanda</i>	Number of clan estates in the IPA	Rock art surveys	N/A	N/A
<i>How we measure —Bininj</i>	Landowner and Djungkay health check survey	Landowner and Djungkay health check survey of site health	Landowner and Djungkay health check survey	Landowner and Djungkay health check survey

## Main Target Threats





## Target 4 Culturally important plants and animals

There are lots of different plants and animal species within the area that we work in central Arnhem Land. Many of these species have special cultural significance as totems or dreaming species and many other species we use for bush tucker, medicine, tools and for art and craft. Each clan has detailed knowledge of the 'seasonal calendar' within their estate which indicates when species can and cannot be harvested. Harvesting wild species helps to keep our culture and knowledge of country strong. If people are regularly on country, hunting and gathering, this helps maintain healthy fire regimes, assists with the control of feral animals and also helps to maintain and transfer Indigenous knowledge to the next generation.

Harvesting plants and animals also contributes to our livelihoods. Bush foods provide a healthy alternative to the food that can be bought in the shops in Maningrida. There is also a vibrant and strong arts tradition within our region, supported by our community-based art centre. Artists harvest a variety of plants to make their art such as bark for paintings, wood for carvings, plant fibres for weaving and roots and bulbs for colour pigment.

Our Landowners have recently observed many changes in the types of plants and

animals present on country and their distribution and abundance. Recent biodiversity surveys undertaken within the Djelk region have shown a worrying and widespread decline in small mammals and other native animals—a similar pattern to that being described in many parts of northern Australia. Our Landowners are very worried that important species will continue to disappear and that they will become too hard to find or unhealthy for people to eat.

### GOALS

In ten years' time we want our children to be able to see, have knowledge of, and use culturally important plant and animal species.





## Target Health Indicators

Indicator Category	Size	Condition	Processes	Culture
<i>What we look at</i>	Healthy population size of key species	Healthy number of species in the landscapes	Healthy fire regime	People can gather the plants and animals that they need
<i>How we measure —Balanda</i>	Maintain biodiversity surveys	Maintain biodiversity surveys	Monitor fire scars through North Australian Fire Information (NAFI) website	N/A
<i>How we measure —Bininj</i>	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey for availability of key bush-tucker species	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey for abundance of key bushtucker species	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey of fire throughout clan estates	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey for availability of key bush tucker species

## Main Target Threats







# Target 5 Healthy Fire

Fire is one of the most important tools we have for looking after country. In the past, as people moved throughout their clan estates they would burn the grass early in the dry season as they walked. These small-scale, cool fires created a pattern of burnt and unburnt country across the landscape. In some places, people would keep patches of grass until later in the year so that groups could come together and use fire for hunting and gathering—a fire drive. In other areas, cool fires would be lit around important places like rock art and burial sites or rainforest patches to protect them from hot fire. Sometimes, fire would also be used to ‘clean up’, so that country was easier to walk through and new grass would grow for animals like wallabies to eat.

When people started to move off their country and into Maningrida the fire story got much worse. There was little burning done in the early dry season and big hot fires started to spread across the landscape. It is not traditionally in our culture to fight fire and these big fires were really hard to contain. Lots of recent research has shown that these hot fires have been a key factor in the decline of lots of plant and animal species across northern Australia. Landowners in our region have seen changes in Emu and Kangaroo numbers as well as fire sensitive plants like the timber tree, *Callitris intratropica*.

We have been working really hard to reinstate healthy fire in our Djelk region over the last 10 years. We work closely with Landowners and *Djungkay* to plan and conduct broad-scale burning in the early dry season. Since 2006, we have been a key partner in the innovative West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement project (WALFA). By doing good early dry season burning we are able to create a carbon abatement and then sell this through the Australian Government’s Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) to further support our land management activities.

## GOALS

Between 2015 and 2025 we will continue our annual early dry season burning regime with Landowners and our WALFA Ltd partnership to produce both healthy country outcomes and carbon credits for trading in the Emissions Reduction Fund.



“Fire takes you to country.  
You see something different.”







## Target Health Indicators

Indicator Category	Size	Condition	Processes	Culture
<i>What we look at</i>	Area of early and late dry season fire	Good patchiness of fire. Key bushtucker present	Fire overseen and managed by the right people at the right time of year	Healthy knowledge of right fire stories and practice
<i>How we measure —Balanda</i>	Calculate using remote sensing on NAFI website	Examine fire scars on NAFI	Djelk records of fire planning consultations	N/A
<i>How we measure —Bininj</i>	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey for amount of late season fire	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey for abundance of bush fruit	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey for burning on clan estates	Landowner and <i>Djungkay</i> health check survey on fire knowledge sharing

## Main Target Threats



**Buffalo**



**Visitors**



**Empty Country**



**Weeds**



**Unhealthy Fire**



**Climate Change**



**Loss of Knowledge**





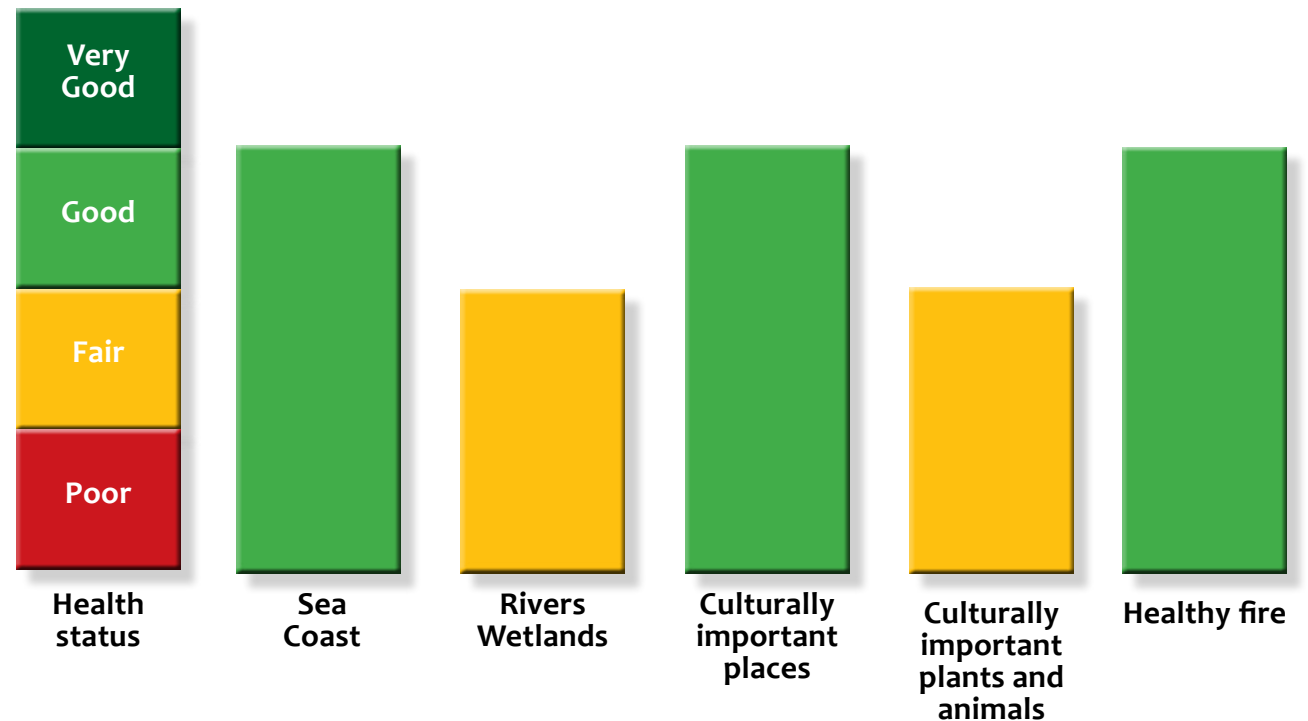


# Target Health Summary



<b>Very Good</b>	The target is healthy and does not need much work to keep it very healthy.
<b>Good</b>	The target is healthy and may need some work to keep it very healthy.
<b>Fair</b>	The target is not healthy and needs work to be done to make it healthy again. If no work is done, the target will deteriorate.
<b>Poor</b>	The target is unhealthy and if no work is done it may never be healthy again.

Below is a summary of the current health status of our five targets based on information from Landowners and initial rapid assessment of our Target Health Indicators. Over the next 10 years we want to see the health of our targets improve and our yellow bars turn to light green and our light green bars to dark green.









# Threats



Threats are the things that are making our targets unhealthy. We have identified 12 threats to looking after the targets in our Djelk Healthy Country Plan.

In this section of the plan we describe the threats and then rank them by looking at their impact across all the targets and throughout the landscape. We have used information from our Landowner consultations to map areas of high, medium and low priorities for each of the threats. This information from Landowners and these maps will help us prioritise where to focus our goals and strategies to minimise the effect of the threats and make our targets healthier.



## Threat Ranking—how badly do the threats effect each target?

Threat	Sea & Coast	Rivers & Wetlands	Cultural places	Plants & Animals	Healthy Fire	Overall Rank
Empty Country	High	High	Very High	Low	Very High	Very High
Loss of Knowledge	High	High	Very High	High	High	High
Pigs	High	High	Very High	High	N/A	Very High
Buffalo	Medium	High	High	Medium	Low	High
Weeds	Medium	High	Low	High	Medium	High
Unhealthy Fire	Low	Low	Very High	High	High	High
Mining	High	High	Very High	Unknown	Unknown	High
Problem Animals	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	N/A	Medium
Visitors	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
Climate change	High	High	High	Medium	Medium	High
Commercial & Illegal Fishing	Low	N/A	Medium	Low	N/A	Low
Coastal Pollution	Medium	N/A	Low	Low	N/A	Low

*Each threat was ranked against each target with respect to their scope (size), severity (how bad the damage is) and the irreversibility of the damage caused by the threat.*

# Threat 1 Empty Country

“If old people want to stay on their country then their family stays out there with them but when those old people pass away many families are moving back into Maningrida.”

All of the land and sea country within the 14,000 km<sup>2</sup> region in which we work is owned by Landowners under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976*. For country to be healthy, it needs to have people actively managing it, maintaining and using the knowledge about country that has been passed on for many, many generations. We call country ‘empty’ when the Landowners for an estate no longer visit and walk on their country. When this occurs, the right people are not there to use, maintain and transfer knowledge about their country, to look after their culturally important places, to manage fire in the right way or to harvest resources.

Since the establishment of Maningrida township in 1957, Landowners live either in Maningrida or at one of more than 30 smaller outstation settlements that are scattered throughout the landscape. Whilst some outstations are still going really strong, some are now empty of people for all of or part of the year.

Recently, we have seen that not only are there less people living on outstations but that fewer Landowners who now live in Maningrida are able to get out to access their country. Nowadays people rely on cars and roads to move around. However, general road access is much harder as many dirt tracks are not well

maintained, much of the country becomes cut off from Maningrida in the wet season and many people do not have the means to be able to buy and maintain a suitable 4WD. We have also seen the decline of many outstation support services like the tucker run (mobile supermarket), as well as education and medical support for outstation residents.







## GOALS

### 1 year

Empty outstations are visited and managed by Djelk with Landowner/*Djungkay* permission and assistance.

### 5 years

Outstations have more Landowners/*Djungkay* than in 2015 present on country doing management activities for healthy country, with assistance from Rangers.

### 10 years

Outstations have more Landowners/*Djungkay* than in 2020 present on country doing management activities for healthy country, with assistance from Rangers.

## Strategies

- Each year, Djelk has (and maintains) the capacity to manage healthy country.
- By 2020, Djelk Ranger work will have made the country healthier and this will encourage people to be there.
- By 2018, where people are living at outstations, provide support, training and resources for land management.
- By 2018, where people are no longer living at outstations Djelk will undertake work on behalf of and in consultation with Landowners. Djelk will also take Landowners and *Djungkay* out to country when they travel there to do work.
- Annually provide advice to BAC and external agencies on necessary support for outstations, based on Landowner views and professional experience of working in the bush.
- Conduct at least one annual Learning on Country trip with young and old people on country together.

## Threat 2 Loss of knowledge

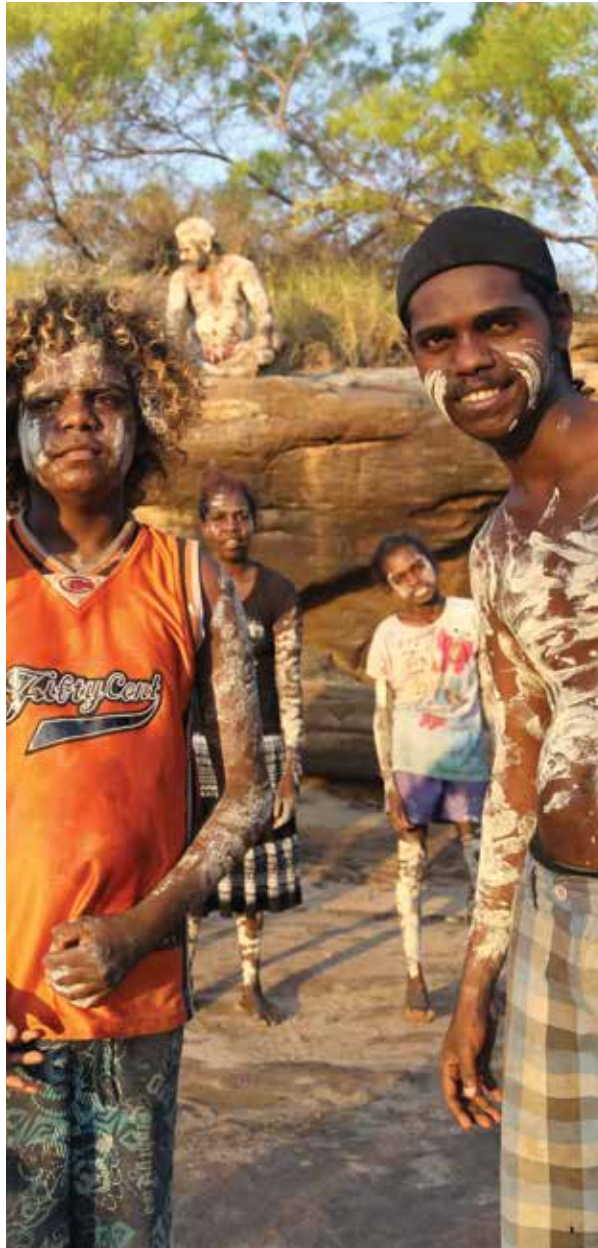


One of the biggest threats to the health of our land and sea country is the loss of traditional knowledge. Our land and sea country is home to a very large number of clan groups, each with their own detailed cultural knowledge. This knowledge has been carefully passed down to the right people from generation to generation over many thousands of years. This knowledge links the country to its people and vice versa. We need our knowledge to keep us healthy and our country healthy.

Some Landowners and *Djungkay* are very worried that we are losing traditional knowledge. The reasons for this are complex and vary greatly from clan to clan. We lose traditional knowledge when our old people, our elders, pass away and the knowledge has not been shared with the next generation. We lose traditional knowledge if the younger generations lose interest in culture and country, lose respect for their old people or have no leaders to guide them. We lose traditional knowledge when people turn towards Western religions, rely on royalty or other money to provide their food and other resources, or move away and forget about country and culture. We also lose traditional knowledge when knowledge has been recorded but there is nowhere to store it safely for the future.







## GOALS

### 1 year

Senior Landowners and *Djungkay* are regularly engaged in management and knowledge transfer activities with Djelk.

### 5 years

Senior Landowners and *Djungkay* are regularly engaged in management and knowledge transfer activities with Djelk.

### 10 years

Senior Landowners and *Djungkay* are regularly engaged in management and knowledge transfer activities with Djelk.

“People no longer have knowledge of how to be out bush and the added problems of fire and feral animals makes it seem even harder. People get lost when they do not know their country.”

## Strategies

- Each year, the Djelk Rangers remain strong and keep providing opportunity for people to work on country and use their cultural knowledge every day.
- By 2018, Djelk will create and support new ways to gather, record, celebrate and share knowledge such as through the local community archiving project.
- Provide opportunities for knowledge exchange on country because using knowledge helps you remember it. Do this through day-to-day ranger work and programs such as Learning on Country.
- Show the Government the benefits of ranger work, and provide useful advice on how they can help to strengthen the movement.



# Threat 3

## Pigs

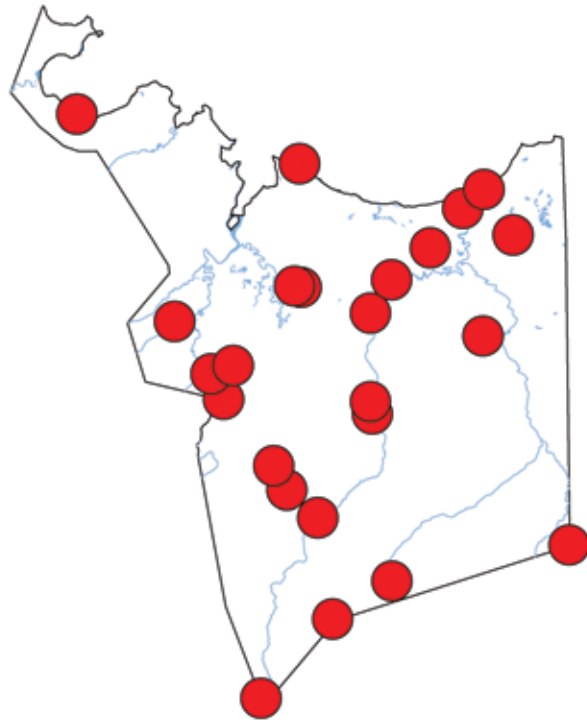
The feral pig, *Sus scrofa*, has been on country for a much shorter time than buffalo. However, their numbers have grown really quickly and people can see very clearly the impact that they are having on the health of their country. Like buffalo, pigs cause lots of cultural and environmental damage to country. They also compete for food with us, eating many of our traditional food resources such as yams, green plums, marine turtle eggs and freshwater turtles. Landowners have observed that pigs are causing other changes to the country such as a decrease in water birds like magpie goose, ibis and brolga.

We have very little information on the actual number of pigs that might be on country. They are smart and cheeky animals and this makes it hard to use broad-scale aerial survey population count methods. It also makes them hard to control using aerial and ground culling. The combination of no strategic pig control to date, and the pig's high reproductive rate means that the population of pigs and the damage they cause within the Djelk region is continuing to grow very rapidly.





## Threat Map



Based on Landowner consultations, the outstations are marked with a coloured dot to denote the severity of the threat in that region. Red dots are considered high pig threat areas.

## GOALS

### 1 year

Cleaner billabongs and less pig damage in three trial areas.

### 5 years

Maintain clean status of original areas plus add three more areas.

### 10 years

Rangers have effective tools and methods for managing pigs and there is a good story from Landowners that billabongs are much healthier.

## Strategies

- By 2016, Djelk have researched and understand methods for pig control.
- By 2016, Djelk will develop and implement a feral animal management strategy in collaboration with Landowners, *Djungkay* and neighbours with an emphasis on creating opportunities for Landowners to participate in feral animal management.
- By 2018, develop research partnerships to understand pig dynamics, numbers, pig behaviour and movements and the relationship between pig and buffalo densities.
- Annually provide information to Landowners and *Djungkay* about the effects of pigs on their country.

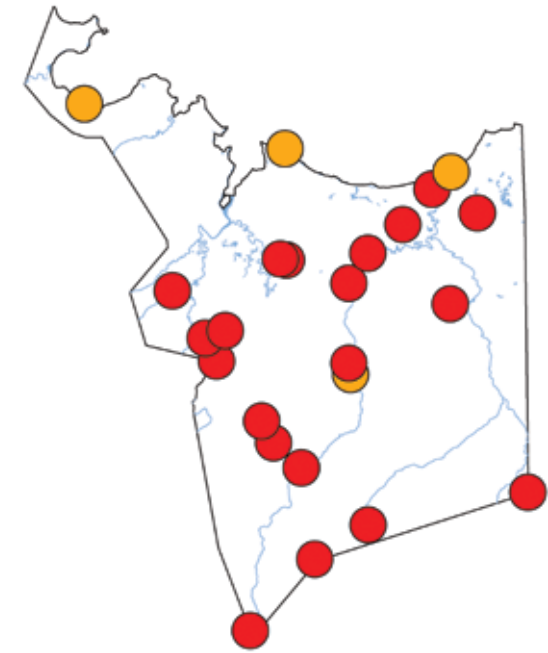
# Threat 4 Buffalo

“Can’t camp on the floodplains because there’s no clean water left because of the buffalo. People are driving to get water from the tap.”

The Asian Water Buffalo, *Bubalus bubalis*, is a large feral animal that has been living on our country since the late 1800s. Buffalo cause great damage to country particularly when they are in very high numbers. Buffalo damage important cultural sites and sensitive vegetation, compete with native animals for food, cause erosion and saltwater intrusion, pollute freshwater as well as spread weeds.

In the past, Landowners have been conflicted over the management of buffalo on their country. Whilst causing damage, buffalo also provide a very important source of meat for people living on country and in Maningrida. Historically, many Landowners were also involved in the buffalo industry and have voiced concern that culling might be wasting valuable animals. During consultations for this Healthy Country Plan, all Landowners voiced concern about current levels of buffalo damage and want to see some control of buffalo numbers on their country. Recent aerial surveys suggest that the buffalo population has at least doubled over the last 15 years to around 20,000 head, confirming Landowner concerns there are now too many buffalo.

## Threat Map



Based on Landowner consultations, the outstations are marked with a coloured dot to denote the severity of the threat in that region. Red dots are considered high buffalo threat areas. Orange dots mark areas with a medium current threat from buffalo.



## GOALS

### 1 year

No increase in buffalo numbers from 2014 population estimates.

### 5 years

Reduce buffalo population numbers to 10,000 head within the Djelk region.

### 10 years

Reduce buffalo population numbers to 5,000 head within the Djelk region.

## Strategies

- By 2016, Djelk will develop and undertake a feral animal management strategy with Landowners, *Djungkay* and neighbouring groups with an emphasis on creating opportunities for Landowners to participate in feral animal management.
- By 2018, work with research partners to understand buffalo population size and structure.
- By 2018, engage an independent expert organisation to provide objective and realistic advice and cost-benefit analysis of commercial opportunities.
- Annually provide information to Landowners and *Djungkay* about the effects of buffalo on their country.





# Threat 5 Weeds



Weeds are plant species which do not belong on country and have come in from somewhere else. Weeds are a big problem as they can compete with native plants for habitat, reduce food and habitats for native animals, change grassy fuel loads and fire regimes and make it very hard for people to move about country. Weed species tend to be able to spread rapidly particularly when country has already been damaged from other factors like feral animals, fire or land clearing. Our weed threat relates both to weed species that are already present on country and also to those weed species which could invade in the future from nearby areas or other parts of Northern Australia.

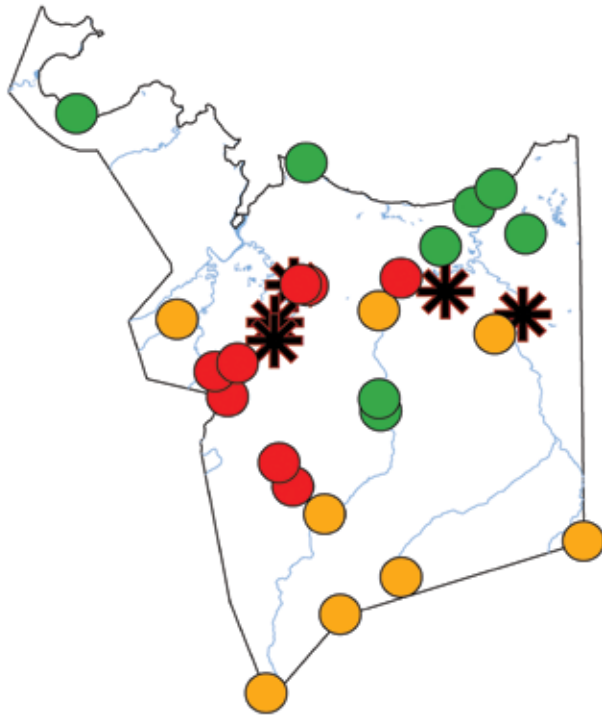
The overall number of weed species in central Arnhem Land is actually quite low compared to many other parts of northern Australia and is a good indicator of the overall health of our country. Currently our main weed threat relates to grassy weeds particularly the ones that are highly invasive such as gamba grass, *Andropogon gayanus*, perennial mission grass, *Pennisetum polystachion*, annual mission grass, *Pennisetum pedicellatum* and grader grass, *Themeda quadrivalvis*. Many of these grasses occur in Maningrida and along roadsides where the vegetation cover is disturbed. These grasses are easily spread by passing vehicles and machinery. We also

face an ongoing threat from *Mimosa pigra* (a Weed of National Significance). We have had major successes in controlling Mimosa to date although it has the potential to destroy the highly productive floodplain habitats if it ever becomes well established.





## Threat Map



Based on Landowner consultations, the outstations are marked with a coloured dot to denote the severity of the weed threat in that region. Red dots are considered high weed threat areas. Orange dots mark medium and green dots mark areas with a low current threat from weeds. The black stars denote infestations of *Mimosa pigra*.

## GOALS

### 1 year

Priority weeds are no greater in extent than in 2014.

### 5 years

Priority weeds mostly at 2014 levels but two key areas are much less.

### 10 years

Priority weeds mostly at 2014 levels but 10 key areas much less.

## Strategies

- By 2016, develop and implement an annual weed control strategy in collaboration with Landowners, *Djungkay* and partners to focus on meeting 5 and 10 year goals for priority weed species.
- Continue annual weed education within Maningrida, especially through the Learning on Country Program.
- By 2016, engage appropriate partners such as NTG Weeds Branch, West Arnhem Shire and Kakadu National Park to prevent further incursion of weed species within the Djelk IPA.





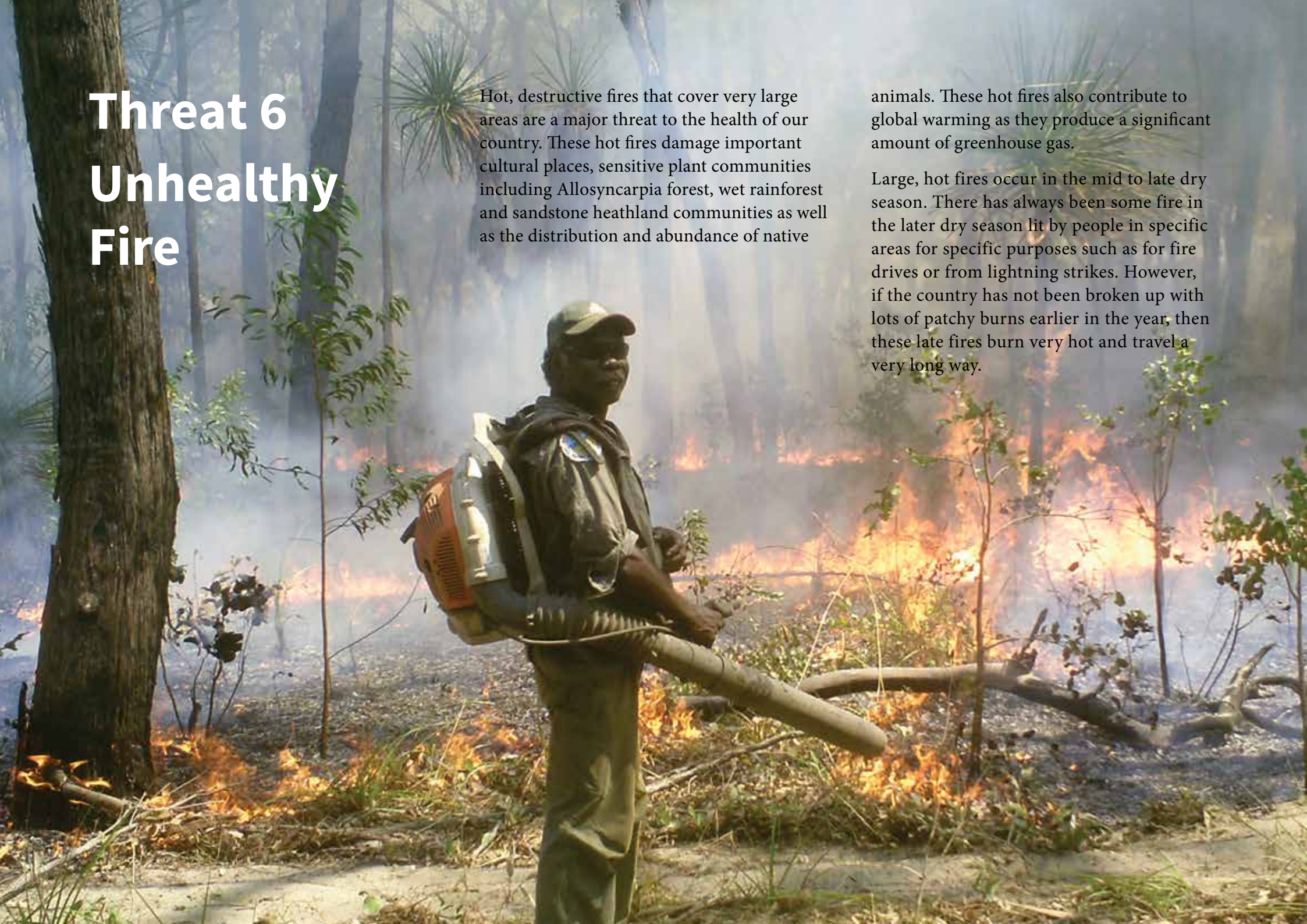
# Threat 6

## Unhealthy Fire

Hot, destructive fires that cover very large areas are a major threat to the health of our country. These hot fires damage important cultural places, sensitive plant communities including *Allosyncarpia* forest, wet rainforest and sandstone heathland communities as well as the distribution and abundance of native

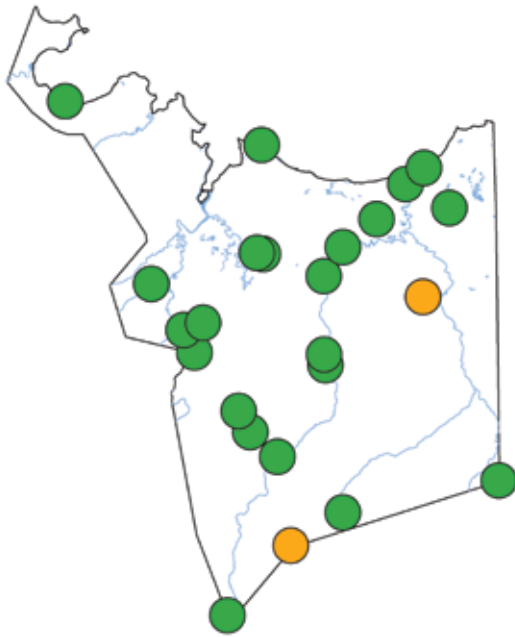
animals. These hot fires also contribute to global warming as they produce a significant amount of greenhouse gas.

Large, hot fires occur in the mid to late dry season. There has always been some fire in the later dry season lit by people in specific areas for specific purposes such as for fire drives or from lightning strikes. However, if the country has not been broken up with lots of patchy burns earlier in the year, then these late fires burn very hot and travel a very long way.





## Threat Map



Based on Traditional consultations the outstation areas marked with a green dot are considered low fire threat areas. We are proud to see the success of the WALFA project reflected here in the eyes of the Landowners. Orange dots mark areas with a medium current threat from unhealthy fires.

The southern orange dot is related to the spread of wildfire from neighbouring areas and the northern orange dot relates to the high densities of buffalo on the Blythe River floodplain and a lack of grass to burn.

## GOALS

### 1 year

Early burning regime is maintained with an increased proportion of ground burning.

### 5 years

Early burning regime is maintained. There are fewer wildfires and healthier native plants and animals than in 2015.

### 10 years

Early burning regime is maintained. There is either the same amount or fewer wildfires and healthier native plants and animals than in 2015.

## Strategies

- Continue annual early burning regime with Landowners, *Djungkay* and neighbours to reduce late season wildfires, protect infrastructure and for healthy country.
- By 2018, increase ground burning by vehicle and foot by camping on country and involving Landowners and *Djungkay*.
- Annually, continue the cultural education of young people about fire including running a fire drive with Learning on Country students.
- By 2020, outstation roads and fire access tracks are improved.
- By 2016, as per Landowner and *Djungkay* direction, erect educational signs and provide materials about proper fire practice, late fire and the carbon abatement story.
- Annually reduce the intensity and extent of uncontrolled fire in the landscape by continuing to fight late wildfires when necessary.

A large saltwater crocodile is shown resting on a sandy bank. The crocodile's head is in the foreground, facing the viewer, with its mouth slightly open, revealing sharp teeth. Its body extends into the background, partially submerged in dark water. The crocodile's skin is a mix of grey and brown, with prominent scutes along its back and head.

## Threat 7 Problem Animals

Our Landowner consultations have revealed that native saltwater crocodiles are now perceived as a major threat to being on country safely and restrict access to customary resources. In particular, senior Landowners and *Djungkay* reported saltwater crocodiles in places and numbers that they have never before experienced in their lifetimes. Landowners have noted that crocodile numbers have increased at the same time as feral animals. Feral animals are not only a food source for crocodiles but also cause erosion and saltwater intrusion which may be aiding the inland spread of saltwater crocodiles. However, it is also important to note that saltwater crocodiles are important cultural and totemic species for some clans and people and any future management will need to be culturally appropriate and highly consultative.

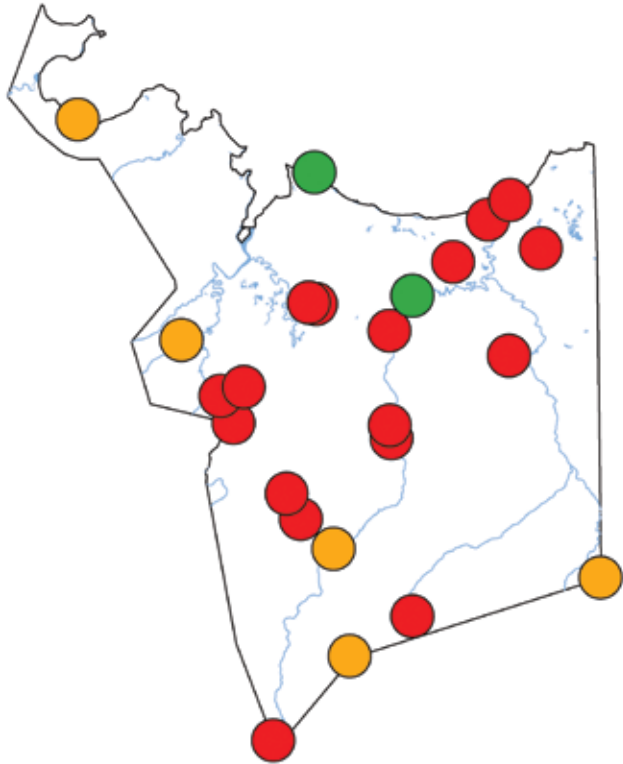
A number of smaller feral animals have become widely established and threaten the health of our country. In particular, feral cats and cane toads are having a large impact on culturally important plant and animal species. Cane toads have been responsible for the loss of the northern quoll, *Dasyurus hallucatus*, as well as many reptile species. Whilst feral cats are putting small mammal, reptile and bird species under pressure. There is currently no

effective landscape-scale method of control for cats or cane toads.

A number of other introduced animals like ants, mussels or barnacles could also become a serious threat if they were to become established in central Arnhem Land. These small feral animals can be easily transported from other parts of Australia or even from overseas on foreign boats or marine debris.



## Threat Map



Based on Landowner consultations, the outstations are marked with a coloured dot to denote the severity of the threat in that region. Red dots are considered high threat areas for problem animals. Orange dots mark medium and yellow dots mark areas with a low current threat from problem animals.

## GOALS

By 2025, build the resilience of land and sea country to problem animals by addressing other key threats such as pigs, buffalo, unhealthy fire and weeds.

By 2020, Landowners and *Djungkay* are reporting no further spread of saltwater crocodiles beyond 2015 levels.

By 2025, there are no new feral animal species in the land or sea country of the Djelk region.

## Strategies

- Maintain monthly marine survey activities to continue to protect the coastline from marine pests by identifying and removing potential threats.
- By 2020, Djelk Rangers have increased their capacity to assist Landowners to manage saltwater crocodiles in culturally appropriate ways.
- The rangers maintain a watching brief on landscape scale options for feral cat and cane toad management and are ready to act appropriately.



## Threat 8 Visitors



“Happy for visitors to come onto country but always leaving a lot of rubbish. Shames Landowners because it makes them look like they’re messing up country.”

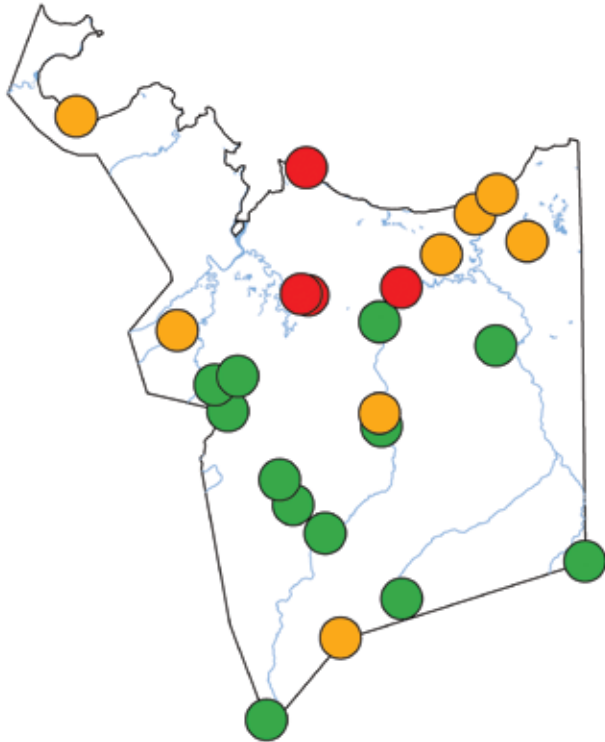
People who are not Landowners are considered visitors to country. Visitors to country include Indigenous and non-indigenous people who live in Maningrida, tourists and recreational and commercial fishermen. In particular, many visitors utilise the beautiful sea country around Maningrida as it is rich in food resources and it is easy for people to access by boat or by car from Maningrida.

Landowners are generally happy for people to visit some parts of their country as long as it is done in the right way. However, when anyone visits country they need to have permission from the Landowners of that country. Visitors can pose a serious threat when they are not showing respect for the country they visit. This includes not asking permission, taking too many resources, leaving rubbish behind, cleaning fish carcasses too close to the water and attracting ‘cheeky’ (dangerous) crocodiles, visiting places where they should not be and causing damage to country by not driving on existing tracks.

Djelk and Landowners recognise that people generally don’t mean to do the wrong thing, they just have never been told the right information.



## Threat Map



Based on Landowner consultations the outstation areas marked with a red dot are considered high threat areas for visitors. Orange dots mark medium and green dots mark areas with a low current threat from visitors.

## GOALS

By 2018, visitors have greater awareness of their responsibilities on country and by 2020, Landowners are reporting satisfactory visitor behaviour.



## Strategies

- By 2018, Djelk have implemented a visitor management plan in collaboration with Landowners and *Djungkay*. This will include educational material, signage and advice to visitors on who the appropriate Landowners are to speak to about accessing particular country.
- By 2018, through Learning on Country, create educational information about visiting country (dos and don'ts).
- Investigate site hardening (one area to visit and nowhere else) if other visitor controls are not working by 2020.
- Through Learning on Country and other community events, increase the awareness of conservation issues associated with migratory birds, marine turtles and other endangered marine species.
- By 2020, Djelk has improved oversight of recreational anglers and a reduction of trespass at restricted coastal sites.

# Threat 9 Mining



“If people say “Yes” to mining they need to maintain control. Economic development does not need to cost country or culture.”

Landowners are very concerned that mining will threaten their land and sea country. In particular, they are worried that mining will have major impacts on the availability of important food resources and on cultural sites within their clan estates. The extent to which the physical and cultural environment is impacted by mining depends on the type of mine, the minerals being extracted, the size of the mine and the actions of individual mining companies. The types of mining proposed for the Arnhem Land region include highly destructive hydraulic fracturing (fracking) methods for accessing oil and gas reserves.

Whilst there are currently no mines in our region, several sea and land based mining exploration leases are currently being sought over much of the Djelk region as well as over Arnhem Land in general. Landowners can reject mining exploration proposals on Aboriginal Land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976*. However, approval for exploration automatically gives approval for mining production if the companies decide that it is viable for them to go ahead with operations. There is great concern from Landowners and *Djungkay* that they are not being given sufficient information on all aspects of this process to be able to make an informed decision.

## GOALS

The Djelk IPA is protected from the negative impacts of mining through Landowners and *Djungkay* making fully informed choices regarding mining in their country.

## Strategies

- At least once per year, provide Landowners and *Djungkay* with up to date and locally specific advice on the potential environmental impacts of mining.
- By 2016, provide opportunities for interested rangers and Landowners to exchange information with other country men in northern Australia who do have mining on their country.





Landowners have detailed knowledge of the plants and animals within their clan estates and the seasonal calendar which indicates the right time to harvest resources as well as when not to eat certain foods. Already Landowners are seeing that some of the seasons are getting mixed up and some bush foods are not ready when they used to be. We do not yet know if these observations can be related to climate change but we are concerned about the ongoing effects that climate change will have on our land and sea country and particularly on the availability of food resources.

Scientists say that climate change will cause sea levels to rise, carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will increase, cyclones will be more frequent and more severe and there will be changes to rainfall patterns. Whilst these factors will directly threaten the targets in our Healthy Country Plan, they will also make many of the other threats such as fire, weeds and erosion from feral animals more severe. Based on Landowner consultations, the threat from climate change was currently ranked as low throughout the region. This is likely to change once the threat is more fully understood.

## GOALS

By 2020, Landowners and *Djungkay* understand the potential impacts of climate change on sacred sites in their land and sea country.

By 2025, build the resilience of land and sea country to climate change by addressing other key threats such as pigs, buffalo, unhealthy fire and weeds.

## Strategies

- By 2016, work with Landowners and *Djungkay* has commenced to identify and protect 10 high risk sacred sites from climate change impacts.

# Threat 11 Commercial and Illegal Fishing

The water of our sea and rivers is rich in marine life. Landowners have long harvested marine resources such as fish, oysters, turtle, dugong, mud crabs and many more species to feed their families. However, today many other people also like to be able to access these resources including commercial and illegal foreign fishermen. Under Northern Territory Fisheries legislation, a number of commercial fishers operate fish and crab licenses along the coastline. Our coastline and its marine life also faces an ongoing threat from illegal foreign fishing vessels such as fishing boats that travel from Indonesia to catch shark fin and sea cucumbers. Some of the problems that can be caused by commercial fishermen and illegal foreign fishing include taking too many fish or mud crabs, the by-catch of species like turtles, marine mammals, seabirds and undersized fish that have been netted or otherwise illegally killed and leaving rubbish in the sea. Landowners are also very concerned about fishing operators working outside of their license areas and disturbing sacred sites that are scattered throughout the sea and rivers.

Based on Landowner consultations the threat from commercial and illegal fishing was currently ranked as low throughout our sea and coast areas. This reflects the work and progress that the Djelk Rangers have made to date in dealing with this threat.

## GOALS

By 2020, commercial fishers are behaving within the law and illegal fishing remains at or below 2015 levels.

## Strategies

- Maintain monthly sea country patrol work and partnerships with Australian Customs, NT Fisheries and the Water Police.
- By 2020, increase enforcement powers of sea rangers through training and qualifications.
- By 2018, Investigate opportunities for local people to be paid to accompany commercial fishers to educate them about the Bininj history of the area and where they can and can't go.





# Threat 12 Coastal Pollution

A number of types of pollution pose a threat to our sea country. These include general rubbish, sewage from the treatment plant at Maningrida, oil and fuel spills in the sea and marine debris. Ghost nets are a particular form of marine debris that pose a serious threat to the sea country in our region of Arnhem Land. Ghost nets are discarded fishing nets that continue to drift along the coastline catching and killing fish and other marine species. Abandoned nets and long-lines readily entangle turtles, marine mammals as well as larger fish. The Arnhem Land coast sees a high number of ghost nets due to the prevailing sea currents, our proximity to Indonesia and the prevalence of Australian and foreign fishing fleets in our northern waters.

Based on Landowner consultations the threat from pollution was currently ranked as low throughout the region. This reflects the general good health of the country and the current low pressure from the population of Maningrida on the landscape. This also reflects the work and progress that the Djelk Rangers have made to date in dealing with the threat from marine debris.

## GOALS

By 2025, the Djelk IPA coastal zone remains healthy with low levels of pollution from sewerage, rubbish and marine debris.

## Strategies

- Maintain monthly marine debris control activities including ghost net removal.
- Annually provide advice and support to authorities such as Power and Water and West Arnhem Shire on Maningrida based coastal pollution issues.
- Through Learning on Country, educate young people on the impacts of pollution to the coast and sea creatures.
- By 2020, work with stakeholders and Landowners in Maningrida to provide a culturally suitable solution to the rubbish at Djomi Dreaming site.

# Using this Plan

## Turning strategies into action



The most important part of the Djelk Healthy Country Plan will involve putting the strategies we have listed above into management actions that we undertake as part of our daily ranger work. For each strategy there will be a number of jobs that need to be done.

We have prepared a separate document, the Djelk Operational Plan that sits under this strategic Healthy Country Plan. The Operational Plan is for our staff to use and outlines each of the actions needed to undertake our threat mitigation strategies. For each action we list the job that needs to be done, who is going to do it, where it needs to happen, when it needs to get done and a description of how we will measure whether the job was completed successfully. Our Operational Plan is also guided by input from Landowners.





# Monitoring our progress



It is very important for us to be able to check whether the jobs we are doing are actually making a difference to the health of our land and sea country. We need to be able to monitor whether we are doing the work, whether that work is helping to fix the threats, and the impact that work is having on the health of our targets.

Our Djelk Monitoring Plan sets out each of the monitoring tasks that will need to be performed and outlines who will be responsible for gathering and analysing the data. Our monitoring plan will also link in with many of our partner organisations where appropriate.

As part of our monitoring plan, we will record data on our land and sea management activities—our implementation of the plan, whether our jobs are working to minimise our threats—the effectiveness of our strategies, and whether our targets are getting healthier as a result.

We are currently partners in NAILSMA's I-Tracker project and will continue to record much of this information using CyberTracker.



# Reviewing and improving the Plan



Our Djelk Healthy Country Plan provides a framework for adaptive management where we can use information to inform and adapt the plan over time.

Every year we will undertake a small review to look at what we said we would do in the plan during that time and to see what we actually did, what we did not do and why. We will incorporate this review as part of our published Djelk Annual Report. At this point we can use the review information to refine the next year's work plan and adapt the Healthy Country Plan if required.

After three years and six years we will do a health check on our targets using data from our monitoring to see if the health of our targets is improving. At these points we will review whether our current strategies are working and whether they need to be refined.

At the end of the ten years covered by this plan, we will undertake a comprehensive review so that we can fine tune the next iteration of our Djelk Healthy Country Plan.





# Telling the story

Our Djelk Healthy Country Plan is an important tool for us to be able to tell the story of what is happening to the health of our land and sea country in central Arnhem Land. We will use this plan and the reviews of our progress to keep Landowners, partner organisations, funding bodies and other interested stakeholders involved in and informed of our work.

It is also really important that we use this plan to keep telling ourselves what we are doing and why we are doing it. We need to use this plan to keep us focused and strategic so that we can work together to achieve our vision.

We look forward to our continued land and sea management journey over the next ten years.

Ma, Bo Bo.





## Acknowledgements

We thank the Djelk Planning Team for working together to produce this Healthy Country Plan and in particular:

- Victor Rostron for his vision for Djelk and instigating the need for a new plan
- Alys Stevens for coordinating all stages of the planning process, facilitating workshops and producing all the maps within our Healthy Country Plan
- Jennifer Ansell for documenting the planning process, facilitating workshops, producing workshop reports and consultation material and writing our Djelk Healthy Country Plan
- Stuart Cowell for facilitating Djelk HCP workshops and mentoring the planning team
- Dominic Nicholls, Tess Heseltine, Alys Stevens and the Djelk Rangers for undertaking extensive Landowner consultations
- Djelk Land, Sea and Women Rangers for their input into all aspects of this plan

We thank the Landowners throughout the Djelk Region who have generously hosted us on country and given their valuable knowledge to this plan.

Thanks to Victor Rostron, Wesley Campion, Alys Stevens, Dominic Nicholls, Stuart Cowell and Jon Altman for their comments on draft material.

We are also very grateful for the assistance of our many friends who support, fund and contribute to our work. We are proud at what we have been able to achieve together over the last 25 years and we look forward to working together over the period of this Healthy Country Plan.

In particular, we thank:

- Australian Government—Working on Country, Indigenous Protected Areas, Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, Department of Agriculture (AQIS), Aboriginals Benefit Account.
- Northern Territory Government—Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries (NT Fisheries), Department of Land Resource Management (Flora and Fauna Division, Joint Management Unit, Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Unit, Bushfires NT, Weed Management Branch, Parks and Wildlife Commission of the NT), Northern Territory Police, West Arnhem Shire Council.
- (In no particular order) Territory NRM, Charles Darwin University, Darwin Centre for Bushfires Research, Karrkad-Kanjdi Trust, The Nature Conservancy, PEW Charitable Trusts, North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance, Australian National University—Regulatory Institutions Network and Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Northern Land Council, Warddeken Land Management Limited, Macquarie University, our neighbouring Indigenous land management groups, WALFA Ltd, Ghost Nets Australia, Maningrida Community Education Centre, The University of Melbourne, Learning on Country Program.















Djelk Rangers  
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