

Introduced fish and crustaceans both occur in natural wetlands of the district (see invertebrates section above) and may have adverse effects on native aquatic fauna but there is no data that measures effects.

Introduced plant species are known to grow prolifically in some wetland habitats. Although the displacement of native species has rarely been quantified, comparisons with less-infested wetlands indicate that some native species are being displaced and have declining populations. The consequences of this for long-term population viability of plant species and dependent fauna are unknown. Examples of introduced plants include the thorny bush *Parkinsonia aculeata* that can form dense thickets that are a nuisance for stock management and may displace native plants. Rubberbush (*Calotropis procera*) is likewise regarded as noxious and is known from floodplain areas in the district. Introduced grass species such as buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) and couch grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) probably have more impacts on native species but are also valued as stock feed and for stabilizing soil. These species can out-compete native groundcover plants and also influence fire regimes by increasing fuel loads.

3.5 Conservation Significance of Wetlands

There are some wetlands and wetland aggregates (groups of wetlands) that may be more important for conservation than others. This is based on combinations of:

- relatively large areas of water and/or long lasting water with an associated benefit for wetland dependent plants and animals, including water birds;
- presence of plant species that are rare (or appear to be rare) in central Australia;
- presence of plant species that appear to be rare in the water control district and surrounding areas (e.g. 50- 100 km);
- high diversity of wetland plant species

Some of the river floodout wetland aggregates have a notable diversity of plant species due to the diversity of habitats.

The following wetlands/aggregates have been identified as relatively significant. There are descriptions for each in Appendix 3.

1. Wycliffe Creek Floodout system (aggregate) including 'lily swamp' (Singleton Station).

2. Alcoolgoora Swamp (aggregate of several swamps within floodprone flats) (Mungkarta Land Trust). Only location in water control district for the wetland plant *Coleocoma centaurea*. Also includes several waterholes on channels of Bonney Creek, shown on topographic map, which presumably add to species diversity of the aggregation. Various swamp areas are noted in Appendix 3.

3. Chain of claypans (Mungkarta Land Trust) Area of significantly extensive and long lasting water, adjacent to low rocky country at the north-west end of the Younghusband Range. May be the only location in the control district of the wetland plant *Nesaea repens* (IUCN code Data Deficient), although one record may be from part of the Alcoolgoora Swamp aggregation.

4. Piggery Swamp and the broader Murray Creek – Warrabri Swamp floodout (Warrabri Land Trust & Murray Downs Station). An area with several large swamps and extensive areas of flood-prone flats. Piggery Swamp is probably the area of deepest and longest lasting water but not necessarily the highest plant diversity.

7. Claypan Bore Claypan (Neutral Junction Station) A large stony claypan, most notable as the type location of *Marsilea cryptocarpha* and one of only 2 known locations of the species in the NT.

6. Swamps, pans and terminal floodout of the Hanson River floodplain (Stirling Station & Karlantijpa South Aboriginal Land Trust). Relatively poorly known but with some significant plant records and mapping of water from TM imagery indicates some moderately large swamps, possibly comparable to those of Wycliffe Creek, Bonney Creek and Murray Creek. The only record of *Dysphania sphaerosperma* from the district and general area is from a swamp on the Hanson floodplain.

Areas of bluebush swamp are uncommon in the control district but are common in other parts of central Australia. In the absence of records of rare/significant species they are not currently regarded as particularly significant.