



Port research project produces conservation guidelines for critically endangered Eastern Curlew

Darwin Port research optimises habitat conditions for shorebirds

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Darwin Port precinct is home to a nationally significant site for the critically endangered Eastern Curlew



Australia's ports take a proactive approach to protecting the environment, including conservation of species found in and around ports.

Research and monitoring programs are essential to understanding and managing the environments in which they operate.

In 2009, staff at Darwin Port observed a number of birds using the ponds at East Arm Wharf in the port precinct.

The port engaged a bird expert via a local conservation organisation to study the birds, which were identified as Eastern Curlew, the largest migratory shorebird in the world.

The Eastern Curlew is listed as critically endangered in Australia, largely due to loss of habitat.

Darwin Port is now home to a high tide roost habitat for a large number of Eastern Curlew and several other migratory bird species.

The birds are protected from disturbance at the port and as a result, there has been an increase in the population of the endangered Eastern Curlew.

There are up to 237 individual birds in the area, well above the threshold for a nationally important habitat (35).

Recent research has highlighted the importance of quality non-breeding habitats for the migratory Eastern Curlew, however very little is known about the exact habitat requirements.

Although coastal development has a significant impact on Eastern Curlew populations across northern Australia, research has shown that some development of artificial habitats for roosting can be consistent with the birds' needs and can influence successful migration.



Solution

In 2012, Darwin Port and Charles Darwin University commenced a research project to monitor Eastern Curlew and other migratory birds.

The project involves monthly surveys at East Arm Wharf until February 2019.

Researchers are analysing migratory bird feeding and roosting habitats with a view to developing guidelines for conservation of the Eastern Curlew and other threatened migratory shorebird species.



Outcome

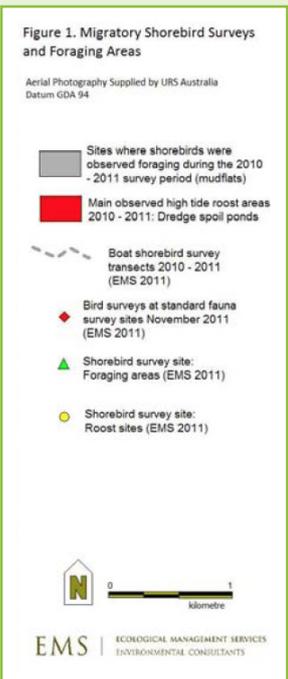
This research is an example of ports taking a proactive approach to safeguarding the environment and leading conservation.

The research will optimise habitat conditions and assist the Eastern Curlew to migrate and breed successfully, giving them a greater chance of recovering from their critically endangered status.

The conservation guidelines the researchers are developing are an example of environmental best practice and sustainable port development working hand in hand.

Developed in consultation with industry and government planners and non-government organisations, these guidelines will assist policy makers, developers, planners and regulators with decisions that may affect migratory bird habitats.

This research will ensure port and other development across northern Australia strikes a balance between economic, social and environmental factors and does not negatively impact the quality of habitats available to endangered and threatened migratory birds.



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For more information visit: www.darwinport.com.au/environment-and-safety