

CONSERVING CORRIDORS OF BRIGALOW


NDR TROPICS

 INFORMATION
SHEET

A GUIDE TO BRIGALOW COMMUNITIES

BRIGALOW is an ecological community that is dominated by *Acacia harpophylla*, commonly known as brigalow.

In Queensland, the brigalow ecological community (brigalow) is typically found on cracking clay soils in lowlands, plains, or riparian areas.

Brigalow communities generally have tall brigalow and eucalypt trees (9-25m), a moderately-dense shrub layer, and a sparse ground layer.

Woody debris provides key habitat for the many reptiles and insects that call brigalow home.

ECOLOGICAL VALUE OF BRIGALOW

On a landscape scale, brigalow country plays a role in sequestering carbon and improving soil health.

As a legume, brigalow trees make nitrogen biologically available to other species in the soil through nitrogen fixation in their roots (Tunstall, 2005).

As riparian ecosystems, brigalow communities can slow down water to facilitate soil saturation and reduce the risk of erosion.

Brigalow communities also facilitate deep drainage, which can prevent chloride leaching and salt mobilisation in at-risk soils (Bradley, 2006).

Brigalow communities provide habitat for 17 species that are threatened in Queensland, or nationally, many of them rare reptiles.

Some species found in Queensland brigalow include: the ornamental snake, brigalow scaly-foot, glossy-black cockatoo, painted honeyeater, spotted bowerbird, and the rare pale imperial hairstreak butterfly (pictured).

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THREATS TO BRIGALOW

The greatest historical threat to brigalow is clearing, which occurred extensively across Queensland and New South Wales until the 1999 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act was implemented.

The greatest threats to brigalow today are fire, weed incursion, and pest incursion.

Brigalow is vulnerable to intense fires because its naturally sparse ground layer would typically only carry low intensity fires.

Incursion by introduced grasses, leads to high-intensity fires that can vastly alter the community.

Risk of fire can be reduced using techniques such as cool-burn and grazing to reduce the fuel load.

Pests and weeds can also have an adverse impact on the abundance of native flora and the quality of habitat available to native fauna.

BRIGALOW PROTECTION

Some communities of brigalow are listed as "endangered" under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC).

The following regional ecosystems are offered protection under the EPBC act: 6.4.2, 11.3.1, 11.4.3, 11.4.7, 11.4.8, 11.4.9, 11.4.10, 11.5.16, 11.9.1, 11.9.5, 11.9.6, 11.11.14, 11.12.21, 12.8.23, 12.9-10.6 and 12.12.26.

Areas considered "remnant vegetation" with these regional ecosystem codes are protected under the EPBC Act and are unable to be cleared (Queensland Vegetation Management Act "Category B").

Under current vegetation management laws, mature brigalow regrowth greater than 15 years old is also considered protected (Queensland Vegetation Management Act "Category C").

Any vegetation considered Queensland Vegetation Management Act "Category X" has no vegetation management restrictions, regardless of the ecosystem present.

Ecosystems that are considered protected under the EPBC Act and the Vegetation Management Act (Category "B" and "C") may be grazed and managed for weeds, although a self-assessable weed control document may need to be completed.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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