

Butcherbird Manganese Project

Montezuma Mining Company Ltd



CLIENT:

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LOCATION:

Augustus, eastern Gascoyne

SERVICES:

- Level 1 SRE survey
- Level 2 and Level 1 vertebrate fauna survey
- Impact assessment

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Comprehensive local information collected on the vertebrate fauna in poorly surveyed area
- 100 species of bird recorded
- Cost-effective, multidisciplinary survey (SRE and vertebrate fauna)
- Efficient and consistent reporting for two project areas
- Rare record of a Brush-tailed Mulgara in rocky ridge habitat

Conducting surveys in remote areas, where little data exists and few facilities are available, is always stimulating but also logistically challenging. With large-scale, multi-disciplinary surveys planned - vertebrate fauna and short-range endemic (SREs) invertebrates - the unexpected adverse weather conditions provided an additional challenge to overcome.

A preliminary literature review and database searches conducted for the project indicated that this part of the Gascoyne Region was poorly surveyed. The project therefore had to be designed to accommodate the paucity of information by increasing the size and longevity of the survey, using a range of sampling techniques, and targeting as many habitat types as possible.

The wet season was not yet finished and heavy thunderstorms in the days leading up to mobilisation almost undid all the planning. However, thanks to extensive communication with local landholders and our rigorous 4WD training requirements for field staff, the survey was successfully completed.

The planning and training paid off, as the weather conditions gave rise to a significant fauna response. For example, a number of wetlands and creeks were in flood and so a high diversity of birds, especially waterbirds, were recorded (100 in total). Most interestingly, a male Brush-tailed Mulgara (confirmed through genetic analysis) was recorded in a habitat type (rocky ridges) in which this species is rarely found in Western Australia.