



**Australian Government**

**Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts**

# **Assessment of Australia's Terrestrial Biodiversity 2008**

## **Appendix**

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<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/terrestrial-assessment/index.html>

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Perth sunset, aquatic ecologists Bendora Reservoir ACT, kangaroo paw: Andrew Tatnell.  
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# Appendix

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# Glossary

Term	Definition	Origin
abiotic	Non-living components of the environment.	<a href="http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au">www.macquariedictionary.com.au</a>
adaptation (human)	Change in behaviour, institutions etc that confers advantage relative to an external factor such as the environment or a threat.	<a href="#">Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment</a>
agricultural land	Any land on which crops or pastures are cultivated or domestic stock are grazed.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
aquaculture	Commercial growing of marine (mariculture) or freshwater animals and plants in water.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
aquatic ecosystem	All living and non-living elements, and the relationship between them, of a water-based environment.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary Inland Waters</a>
arid zone	Areas receiving less than 250 mm of annual rainfall in the south of Australia and 350 mm (or sometimes higher) in the north.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>
benchmark	A standard or point of reference.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
best practice	An agreed standard of practice that conforms with an internationally agreed set of standards. Professional bodies, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and other agreed standards institutions have sets of standards covering a wide range of practices. ISO 14000 series cover environmental management of processed goods.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
biodiversity	Variability among living organisms from all sources (including terrestrial, marine and other ecosystems and ecological complexes of which they are part), which includes diversity within species and between species and diversity of ecosystems.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
biogeographic region	A region of like geology, landform, vegetation, fauna and climate.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>

biomass	The quantity of organic matter within an ecosystem (usually expressed as dry weight for unit area or volume).	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
biomes	A major regional ecological community of plants and animals extending over large natural areas, as coral reef, tropical rainforest, etc..	<a href="http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au">http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au</a>
bioregion	An area defined by a combination of biological, social and geographical criteria rather than by geopolitical considerations; generally, a system of related, interconnected ecosystems.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
biota	All of the organisms at a particular locality.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
biotic	Relating to life, especially to the animal and plant life of a region or period	
broadacre farms	Commercial farms producing relatively low value crops such as wool, sheep meat, beef, cereals, on large areas.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
bushfire	A term used to describe almost any form of fire burning out of control whether the fire was planned or unplanned.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>
catchment	An area determined by topographic features within which rainfall will contribute to runoff at a particular point under consideration.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
Catchment Management Committees	Committees set up to develop and implement plans related to water and land management, made up of community and Government representatives.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001</a>
climate	The average weather conditions of a place or region throughout the seasons.	<a href="#">2006 Themed commentary—Atmosphere</a>
climate change	Under the terms of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the term means a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable periods.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Human Settlements</a>

Comprehensiveness	The degree to which the full range of ecological communities and their biological diversity are incorporated within reserves.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001</a>
conservation	The protection, maintenance, management, sustainable use, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
dryland salinity	A condition wherein soil salinity levels in an area are high enough to affect plant growth.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
ecological community	The definition of an ecological community in the EPBC Act is as follows: 'an assemblage of native species that: (a) inhabits a particular area in nature; and (b) meets the additional criteria specified in the regulations (if any) made for the purposes of this definition'.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
ecology	The scientific study of living organisms and their relationships to one another and their environment.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
ecosystem	A dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.	<a href="#">2006 Themed commentary—Coasts &amp; Oceans</a>
ecosystem health	The ability of an ecosystem to support and maintain key ecological processes and a community of organisms with a species composition, diversity, and functional organisation as comparable as possible to that of undisturbed habitats within the region.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Inland Waters</a>
endangered species	A species which is in danger of extinction and whose survival is unlikely if the causal factors continue; included are species whose numbers have been reduced to a critical level or whose habitats have been drastically reduced so that the species are deemed to be in danger of extinction.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>
endemic	Native to a particular area and found nowhere else.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>

environment	Includes ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities; natural and physical resources; the qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas; and the social, economic and cultural aspects of a thing mentioned in the previous three categories.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
ephemeral	Organisms that have a short life-span, or a watercourse that does not flow all the time.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>
estuary	Area of an inlet or river mouth that is influenced by the tides and also by fresh water from the land; area where fresh and salt waters mix.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>
exotic species	An animal or plant that has been introduced to a region (compare with native or indigenous species).	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 1996</a>
extant	In existence; still existing; not destroyed or lost.	
extinct	A species without a living representative.	
fauna	The entire animal life of a region.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
feral animals	Animals that have reverted to a wild state from domestication (for example, feral cats, pigs, donkeys etc).	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001</a>
Flora	The entire plant life of a site or region see fauna.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001</a>
forest (Kyoto Protocol definition)	The Kyoto Protocol definition is that forest is native and non-native vegetation that has at least 20 per cent canopy cover and could grow to at least two metres tall. Only patches of more than 0.2 hectares are included. The second definition is used in the 2008 State of the Forests report.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>

forest	The <i>State of the Forests 2008</i> definition is a land area, dominated by trees usually having a single stem and a mature or potentially mature stand height exceeding 2 metres, and with existing or potential crown cover of overstorey strata about equal to or greater than 20%. This definition includes native forests and plantations and areas of trees that are sometimes described as woodlands.	
geographic information system (GIS)	A package of computer programs specifically designed to deal with data that are spatially related; a set of tools for collecting, storing, retrieving, manipulating, analysing and displaying mapped data from the real world.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001</a>
geomorphology	The branch of geology dealing with the characteristics, origin, and development of land forms.	<a href="http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au">www.macquariedictionary.com.au</a>
granivorous	Feeding on grain and seeds.	<a href="http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au/">http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au/</a>
Grassland	Areas dominated by grasses and with few or no trees.	State of the Environment Report 2001
groundwater	Water occurring below the ground surface.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
habitat	The place where an animal or a plant normally lives and reproduces.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
heathland	Vegetation dominated by small shrubs with small hard leaves.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>
hectare (ha)	10 000 square metres. There are 100 hectares in 1 sq km.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
herbarium	A systematically arranged collection of specimens of plants, algae, lichens and fungi, forming the fundamental record of a region's flora.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Human Settlements</a>
herbivore	An animal that consumes plants.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
hydrology	The science dealing with water on the land, or under the earth's surface, its properties, laws, geographical distribution.	<a href="http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au">www.macquariedictionary.com.au</a>
Hypersalinity	Salt content greater than that of typical seawater.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001</a>
indicator species	A species whose presence or absence is indicative of a particular habitat, community or set of environmental conditions.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>

Indicators	Parameters that represent key aspects of complex systems (eg. physical, chemical, biological, social, cultural, heritage or economic variables).	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001</a>
intact	Undamaged, complete.	
invasive species	a species spreading beyond its accepted normal distribution as a result of human activities and which threatens valued environmental, agricultural or personal resources by the damage it causes	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
invertebrates	Animals without internal skeletal structure.	<a href="#">2006 Themed commentary—Coasts &amp; Oceans</a>
jurisdiction	A territory or region	<a href="http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au">www.macquariedictionary.com.au</a>
Kyoto Protocol	A protocol adopted by the UNFCCC in Kyoto, Japan, in 1997, committing Annex B countries (most OECD and some others) to limit or reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions relative to 1990 levels.	<a href="#">2006 Themed commentary—Atmosphere</a>
land cover	The physical state of the land surface, including vegetation, soil, rock and human made structures.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 1996</a>
Landsat TM	A type of satellite imagery used to highlight land use or land type information.	<a href="http://www.agrecon.canberra.edu.au/products/Satellite_Imagery/Landsat_TM/Landsat_TM.htm">www.agrecon.canberra.edu.au/products/Satellite_Imagery/Landsat_TM/Landsat_TM.htm</a>
macroinvertebrates	Animals that have no backbone, are visible with the naked eye and spend all or part of their life in water. They are a very diverse group of animals that include worms, molluscs, arachnids, crustaceans and insects.	<a href="http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au">www.macquariedictionary.com.au</a>
mallee	Small multi-stemmed eucalypts that often dominate semi-arid and arid areas.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>
Monitoring	Routine counting, testing or measuring of heritage factors to determine their status or condition.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Natural and Cultural Heritage</a>
native forest	Any local indigenous forest community containing the full complement of native species and habitats normally associated with that community, or having the potential to develop these characteristics.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>

native species (indigenous species)	Species that are native to (i.e. occur naturally) in a region (see exotic species).	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
native vegetation	Any local indigenous plant community containing throughout its growth the complement of native species and habitats normally associated with that vegetation type or having the potential to develop these characteristics. It includes vegetation with these characteristics that has been regenerated with human assistance following disturbance. It excludes plantations and vegetation that has been established for commercial purposes.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001</a>
Natural Heritage Trust	A body established by the <i>Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Act 1997</i> to stimulate conservation, sustainable use and repair of Australia's natural environment.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
Natural significance	The importance of ecosystems, biodiversity and geodiversity for their existence or intrinsic value, or for present and future generations in terms of their scientific/research, social, aesthetic and life support value.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Heritage</a>
naturalised	An exotic species that, once introduced into an area, has the capacity to adapt to the new environment, survive in competition with the endemic floral and faunal populations, reproduce itself and establish itself as a persistent part of a community in one or more habitats.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001</a>
open woodland	An area with scattered trees in which the tree crowns cover less than about 30 per cent of land surface (see woodland).	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
organism	Any living plant or animal.	1997 Glossary Education Kit
pastoralism	Areas used predominantly for grazing livestock with little or no cultivation or improved pastures.	1997 Glossary Education Kit
pathogen	A disease-causing agent.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>

phenology	The systematic study that deals with the influence of climate on the recurrence of such annual phenomena of animal and plant life as bird migrations, budding, etc.	<a href="http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au">www.macquariedictionary.com.au</a>
Ramsar Convention	The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, providing the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Coasts</a>
rangelands	Native grasslands, shrublands and woodlands that cover a large proportion of the arid and semi-arid zones, and also include tropical savanna woodlands; regular cropping is not practised and the predominant agricultural use, if any, is grazing by sheep and cattle on native vegetation.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
representativeness	The extent to which areas selected are capable of reflecting the known biodiversity and ecological patterns and processes of the ecological community or ecosystem concerned (in the context of the National Reserves System).	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>
riparian vegetation	Plant communities on the fringes of and adjacent to water bodies.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
salinisation	The process by which land becomes salt-affected.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
salinity	The concentration of salts in water and/or soil.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
savanna	A vegetation type with scattered trees over a grassland, usually found in subtropical areas.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
semi-arid lands	Lands where rainfall is so low and erratic that crops cannot be grown with any reliability, (see arid zone).	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>
shrubland	An area dominated by short, multi-stemmed plants; a typical example is the chenopod shrublands but sometimes the 'mallee' is classified as a shrubland.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>

species	A group of plants, animals or micro-organisms that have a high degree of similarity and generally can interbreed only amongst themselves to produce fertile offspring, so that they maintain their 'separateness' from other such groups.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
SPOT5	A type of satellite imagery used to highlight land use or land type information.	<a href="http://www.bdnrm.org.au/mapsandimages/aboutspot5imagery.html">www.bdnrm.org.au/mapsandimages/aboutspot5imagery.html</a>
surrogate	Substitute.	<a href="http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au">www.macquariedictionary.com.au</a>
sustainable	With respect to an activity, able to be carried out without damaging the long-term health and integrity of natural and cultural environments.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
symbiotic	A close association between the individuals of pairs of species often leading to mutual gains.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
Target	Values (or ranges) of measurable parameters that decision-makers have agreed they will try to achieve.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001</a>
taxa	The named classification unit to which individuals or sets of species are assigned, such as species, genus and order.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Coasts</a>
Taxonomy	The categorisation and naming of animals and plants, animal and plant groups and the relationships between them; a group of organisms so named (for example, a species, a family, etc.) is called a taxon (plural taxa).	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Natural and Cultural Heritage</a>
Terrestrial ecosystem	An ecosystem of or relating to the land as distinct from the water	<a href="http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au">www.macquariedictionary.com.au</a>
Threatened	Of or relating to a species or community that is vulnerable, endangered or presumed extinct (as defined in the relevant legislation).	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001</a>
threatening process	A process that threatens, or may threaten, the survival, abundance or evolutionary development of a native species or ecological community.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2006</a>
trend	A general direction or tendency; an indication of change (or its absence) in a property or condition.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>

vascular plants	A grouping of plants that includes ferns, the gymnosperms (e.g. pines) and flowering plants.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>
vector	A disease carrier.	State of the Environment Report 1996
vertebrate	An animal with a backbone composed of vertebrae (e.g. mammals, fishes, frogs, amphibians, reptiles and birds), see invertebrate.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Biodiversity</a>
watertable	A surface defined by the level to which water rises in an open well or in the soil profile.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 1996</a>
weed	A plant species growing where it is not wanted by humans.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Human Settlements</a>
wetland	The land area alongside fresh and salt waters, that is flooded all or part of the time; marine and estuarine wetlands include tidal basins, saltmarshes and mangroves.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001 Themed commentary—Land</a>
World Heritage	A term applied to sites of outstanding universal natural or cultural significance which are included on the World Heritage List.	<a href="#">State of the Environment Report 2001</a>

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## Chapter 6

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