

Managing floodplains in northern Australia

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The Mary River floodplain in the Northern Territory is part of a large network of over 10 000 km² of coastal freshwater wetlands. The geomorphology of the Mary River floodplain system has resulted in the formation of a vast and comparatively long-lasting shallow wetland. This special habitat results in a biodiverse and ecologically valuable environment. The Mary River region supports tourism, recreational fishing and pastoral industries; the extended retention of fresh water throughout the driest part of the year is of particular value to grazing in the region.

'Melaleuca Station' is a 300 km² property (30 000 ha) situated 200 km east of Darwin owned and managed by the Paspaley Pearls Company. Sixty per cent of the station is made up of seasonally inundated floodplain which is influenced by both fresh and saltwater river systems. Much of the remaining country is tropical savannah woodland. The average annual rainfall is 1800 mm, usually spread over a four-month summer period.

MIMOSA PIGRA

Mimosa pigra is regarded as one of the worst weeds in Australia and was declared a weed of national significance by the Australian government in 1999 (Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council 2006). *Mimosa* aggressively outcompetes native plant species, rapidly forming impenetrable and unpalatable thickets, and can spread quickly and colonise wetland areas. *Mimosa* can block access to stock watering points, hamper mustering and destroy productive native floodplain grasslands. It affects production, cultural and conservation values