

Mount Conner and surrounds

Location and Description

Located 285 km south-west of Alice Springs and 100 km east of Uluru, Mount Conner is a distinctive flat-topped sandstone-capped monolith, which rises 300m above surrounding sandplains. This monolith is dissected by rocky gorges and the summit is ringed by high cliffs. The surrounding area includes two ridges of Inindia sandstone, sandplains, dunefields, alluvial fans and ephemeral wetlands. Vegetation communities within the site include spinifex grassland with an overstorey of open desert oak woodland, and acacia shrubland with a sparse grassland understorey.

Tenure and Land Use

Mount Conner is pastoral leasehold land and lies within one pastoral property (Curtin Springs). Land use within the site is predominantly pastoral operations, with some tourism.



Significance Rating

National Significance

Ecological Values

Mount Conner and the surrounding area provide important habitat for three threatened species: the rocky gorges support a population of Black-footed Rock Wallaby; sand dunes south of Mount Conner support Southern Marsupial Moles; and small and scattered ephemeral swamps in the vicinity of Mount Conner support populations of the Northern Territory endemic plant dwarf desert spike-rush. Two other plant species (*Maireana pentatropis* and *Acacia ammobia*) occurring here have a restricted range within the Northern Territory.

Management Issues

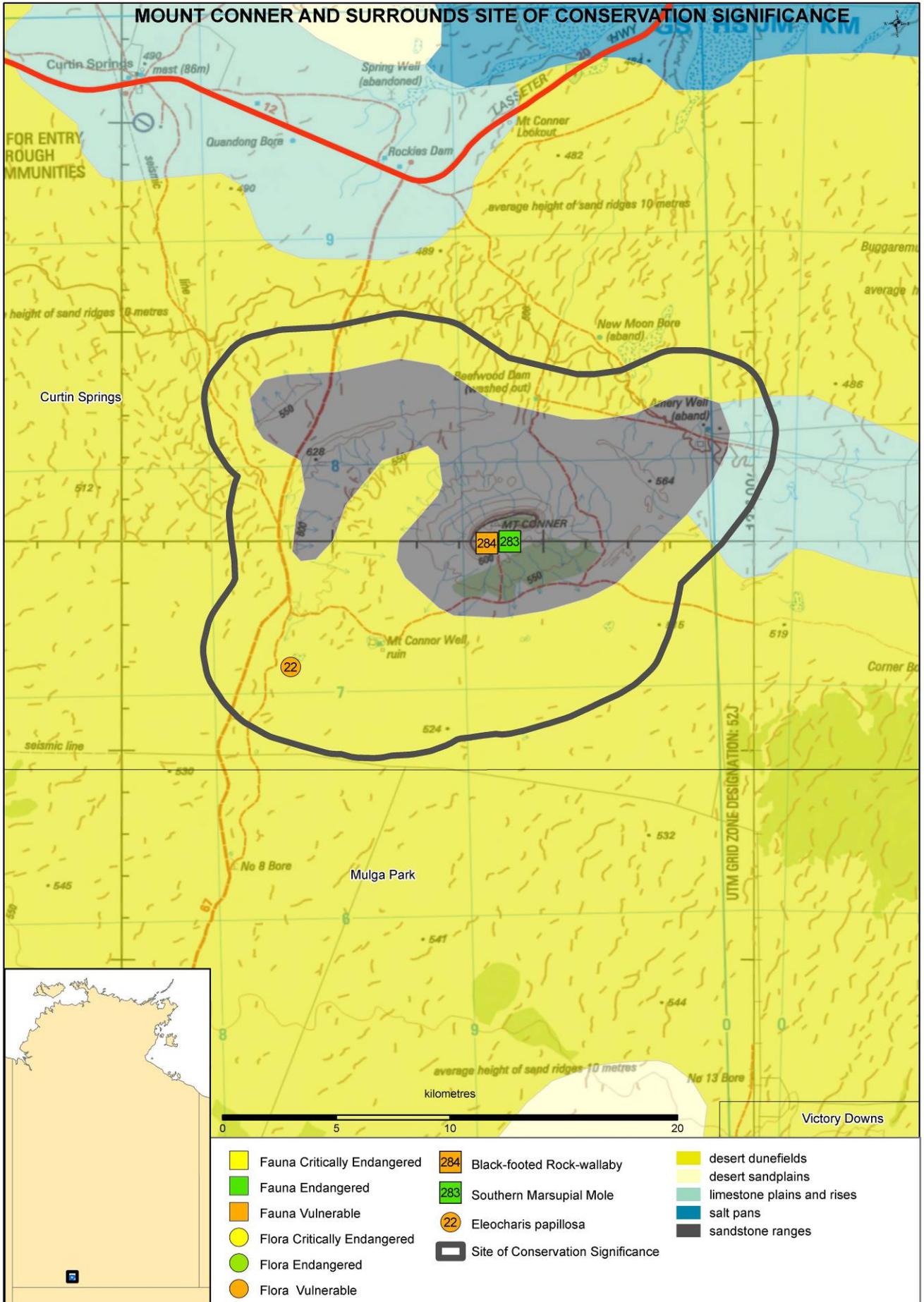
Buffel grass and couch grass occur in the broader area and could potentially invade this site, producing destructive fire regimes. Large and uncontrolled fires have the potential to affect plant and vertebrate populations in the area.

Condition

No information located.

Current Conservation Initiatives

No information located.



MOUNT CONNER AND SURROUNDS - SITE OF CONSERVATION SIGNIFICANCE

LOCATION	SOCS Number	62 (NT Parks and Conservation Masterplan Map Number 110)
	Latitude/Longitude	25 ° 30' South, 131 ° 53 East (at centre)
	Bioregion	Finke
	Description	<p>This site includes Mt Conner, the two curved ridges of Inindia Sandstone that partially encircle Mt Conner, and an area of dunefields to the south of Mt Conner. The site also includes numerous seasonal swamps.</p> <p>The boundary of this site follows that delineated by White <i>et al.</i> (2000) in defining the Mt Connor Site of Botanical Significance, with an extension to include the entire outlier of Mt Conner (based on land systems mapping), and the addition of a 2 km buffer. The site has an area of 338 km².</p> <p>Major vegetation communities within the site include: hard spinifex <i>Triodia basedowii</i> hummock grassland with desert oak <i>Alocasuarina decaisneana</i> open woodland overstorey between dunes; the rare <i>Acacia ammobia</i> tall open-shrubland with sparse grassland understorey; hard spinifex <i>T. basedowii</i> hummock grassland with mulga <i>Acacia aneura</i> tall sparse-shrubland overstorey between dunes; and mulga <i>A. aneura</i> tall open-shrubland with <i>Senna</i> sp. and fuchsia <i>Eremophila</i> sp. open-shrubland understorey (White <i>et al.</i> 2000).</p> <p>The Karinga Creek Paleodrainage system, located 10 km north of the Mt Conner site, is also identified as a site of high conservation significance in the NT.</p>
THREATENED SPECIES	Significance Rating	National Significance
	Threatened plants and animals (Listings at National/NT level CR - Critically Endangered, EN - Endangered, VU - Vulnerable, NT - Near Threatened, LC - Least Concern, DD - Data Deficient)	Three threatened species are recently reported from this site. Plants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dwarf desert spike-rush <i>Eleocharis papillosa</i> (VU/VU) Vertebrates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Black-footed Rock-wallaby <i>Petrogale lateralis</i> (VU/NT) ▪ Southern Marsupial Mole <i>Notoryctes typhlops</i> (EN/VU) <p>One threatened species recorded from the site is believed to now be locally extinct (Bilby <i>Macrotis lagotis</i>).</p>
ENDEMIC SPECIES	Significance Rating	Not Significant
	Notes	<p>Endemic to the NT: One plant species recorded from this site is endemic to the NT (<i>Eleocharis papillosa</i>).</p> <p>Other: One plant species recorded from the site is only found in the Finke bioregion within the NT but also occurs in other states (<i>Malacocera biflora</i>).</p>
WETLANDS	Significance Rating	Not Significant
	Ramsar criteria met	Not assessed
	DIWA criteria met	Not assessed
	Notes	The site includes numerous seasonal swamps which support a diversity of ephemeral wetland plants, such as dwarf desert spike-rush <i>Eleocharis papillosa</i> . No other major wetland values are reported for the site.
	Rivers	None known
FLORA	Significance Rating	Not Significant
	Notes	<p>Restricted range species: One plant, <i>Maireana pentatropis</i>, has a restricted range within the NT.</p> <p>Other: Mt Conner wattle <i>Acacia ammobia</i> (Near Threatened in the NT) is restricted to the southern NT and South Australia. The population at Mt Conner is the largest in the NT, and the wattle forms an occasional structural dominant over an area of 25 000 ha (Neave <i>et al.</i> 2004).</p>

MOUNT CONNER AND SURROUNDS - SITE OF CONSERVATION SIGNIFICANCE

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES		Mt Conner is identified as a Site of Botanical Significance in White <i>et al.</i> (2000).
MANAGEMENT ISSUES		<p>Fire: No parts of the site were burnt more than twice in the period 1997-2005. Some plant species such as <i>Acacia ammobia</i> are sensitive to fire and thus fire needs to be managed carefully.</p> <p>Feral animals: No information located</p> <p>Weeds and invasive exotic plants: No declared or high priority weeds species are presently known from this site but buffel grass <i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i> and couch grass <i>Cynodon dactylon</i> occur in the broader area and could potentially invade this site, which would also influence fire regimes.</p> <p>Other: No information located</p>
MANAGEMENT INFORMATION	NRM groups	No information located.
	Protected areas	The site is not within the formal network of protected areas within the NT.
	Current management plans	<p>Site-specific management plans: No information located.</p> <p>National recovery plans for threatened species: Black-footed Rock Wallaby (WA Department of Environment and Conservation in prep.); Southern Marsupial Mole (Benshemesh 2004).</p> <p>Other management plans: Australian Weeds Strategy (NRMMC 2007) http://www.weeds.gov.au/publications/strategies/weed-strategy.html</p>
	Monitoring programs and research projects	There is one Tier 1 rangeland monitoring point within this site (Karfs and Bastin 2001). Across the NT, fire is mapped continuously under the North Australia Fire Information Project http://www.firenorth.org.au/nafi/app/init.jsp
KEY REFERENCES	Management recommendations	Investigate the conservation management options for the site, including acquisition as a park (NRETA 2005). Develop off-reserve conservation options.
	Papers and reports	White, M., Albrecht, D., Duguid, A., Latz, P. and Hamilton, M. (2000). <i>Plant species and sites of botanical significance in the southern bioregions of the Northern Territory; volume 2: significant sites</i> . A report to the Australian Heritage Commission from the Arid Lands Environment Centre. Alice Springs, NT.
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