

Published: 23 July 2012

Totally wild: postcards from the Gulf

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Four CSIRO researchers recently took part in a field trip to a unique, private nature reserve abutting the Gulf of Carpentaria. The 305,000-hectare Pungalina–Seven Emu reserve is the result of a partnership between the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) and indigenous landowner, Frank Shadforth, a Garawa man.



Credit: Justin Perry

The Townsville-based researchers – Gen Perkins, Justin Perry, Eric Vanderduys and Anders Zimny – packed up their wildlife traps, swags, quad-bikes and pushbikes in late June and headed north-west to participate in the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland's (RGSQ) 2012 scientific study at Pungalina–Seven Emu.

The purpose of the RGSQ studies is to get researchers from a range of disciplines together to gather as much data about a (remote) area as possible. RGSQ looks after the logistics; the researchers look after their area of expertise. The data collected will add to AWC's understanding of biodiversity on Pungalina–Seven Emu and help contribute to the conservation and management of the property.

The Gulf of Carpentaria reserve has an incredibly diverse range of habitats, including coastal mangroves and salt flats, dune rainforests, paperbark swamps, tall eucalypt woodlands and low Spinifex-covered sandstone escarpments.

The team spent two weeks exploring these habitats and documenting terrestrial vertebrate species: birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

Despite the tropical location, the weather was cold (down to 4°C on some nights) during the field trip, which reduced animal activity. Nevertheless, the team found at least 147 vertebrate species, including the very restricted, poorly known and vulnerable Carpentarian pseudantechinus (*Pseudantechinus mimulus*), the vulnerable ghost bat (Australia's largest predatory bat), and one or two new species of lizard.

Here's a sample of what they found...



Credit: Eric Vanderduys



Credit: Anders Zimny



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Credit: Anders Zimny



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Source: [News @CSIRO](#)

From **ECOS** online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC12358>