

Lisa Bradley
Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security
GPO Box 3675
Darwin NT 0801

Dear Ms Bradley

Re: Referral - Jabiru Power Station

The Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security (DEPWS) has assessed the information contained in the above referral and provides the following comments:

Flora and Fauna Division

Based on a search of DEPWS flora and fauna databases within 5km of the project, expert knowledge of species' habitat requirements, and information about habitats occurring within the locality, the following threatened species may occur within or immediately adjacent to the application area.

Common Name	Scientific Name	TPWC Act	EPBC Act
Partridge Pigeon	<i>Geophaps smithii smithii</i>	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Black-footed Tree-rat	<i>Mesembriomys gouldii</i>	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Northern Quoll	<i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i>	Critically Endangered	Endangered
Pale Field-rat	<i>Rattus tunneyi</i>	Vulnerable	
Fawn Antechinus	<i>Antechinus bellus</i>	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Mertens' Water Monitor	<i>Varanus mertensi</i>	Vulnerable	
Mitchell's Water Monitor	<i>Varanus mitchelli</i>	Vulnerable	
Floodplain Monitor	<i>Varanus panoptes</i>	Vulnerable	
Red Goshawk	<i>Erythroriorchis radiatus</i>	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Masked Owl	<i>Tyto novaehollandiae</i> (kimberli)	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Bare-rumped Sheath-tail Bat	<i>Saccolaimus saccolaimus</i> (nudicluniatus)		Vulnerable

TPWC Act - Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976

EPBC Act - Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Black-footed Tree-rat:

Black-footed Tree-rat was detected in the project area during camera trapping. The subsequent trapping effort undertaken was suitable to assess the local occurrence of the species and the importance of the

location for a local subpopulation of the species. The variability in detection of the species in the area across the different trapping sessions (August-September 2020, November 2020 and March 2021), supports the conclusion of the proponent that the project area is used on a seasonal basis, rather than maintaining an important (or any) resident population.

Whilst the Flora and Fauna Division do not necessarily agree with all of the statements made against the significant impact assessment criteria (section 6.1.4), the Division agree with the conclusion that the project poses a low residual risk to the species. This risk is reduced further by the proposed voluntary compensation action to reduce fire frequency and weeds in the proposed 295ha area adjacent to the project site. To adequately compensate for the loss of Black-footed Tree-rat habitat, these actions should be implemented for the life of the Jabiru Power Station.

Partridge Pigeon:

Partridge Pigeon was detected in the project area. However, the relatively small area of habitat being removed for this highly mobile species is not likely to pose a significant risk. Habitat availability in the surrounding landscape is supported by the large number of records for this species within 5km of the site.

Northern Quoll, Pale Field-rat, Fawn Antechinus, Red Goshawk, Masked Owl (northern subspecies), Bare-rumped Sheath-tail Bat:

The Flora and Fauna Division agree with the assessment in the referral that it is possible that these threatened fauna species occur within the proposed development area. The Division also agree that the proposed development is not likely to result in a significant impact to any of these species in or near the project area as the project area is not likely to support important populations, the surrounding landscape contains large areas of relatively contiguous woodland and the area of habitat proposed for removal is comparatively small.

Floodplain Monitor, Mertens' Water Monitor, Mitchell's Water Monitor:

While there is potential for individuals to occupy the woodland in the proposal area, the proposal does not impact directly on the preferred floodplain habitat and therefore poses a low risk to regional populations of these species due to the relatively small area of woodland habitat being disturbed.

Significant and Sensitive Vegetation:

The primary native vegetation community on the site is *Eucalyptus miniata*/*E. tetradonta* woodland. This community is considered significant under the Land Clearing Guidelines if it contains large trees with suitable hollows for fauna. There was no formal assessment of whether the community is significant woodland by measuring the density of large trees or hollows, but the proposal provides anecdotal reports of tree hollows being present on site and the diameter at breast height of some trees being approximately 50cm. However, the habitat value of the woodland was assessed by the proponent in the context of habitat for individual threatened species. The Flora and Fauna Division agrees that suitable woodland habitat with similar values is known to occur in adjacent areas of woodland. This area will be retained and managed under the voluntary compensation proposed in the referral.

Recommendation

The Flora and Fauna Division considers that the proposal poses a low risk to threatened species likely to be in or near to the development area. Any potential risk to Black-footed Tree-rats using the area on a seasonal basis is likely to be reduced by the proposed voluntary compensation action, providing the action reduces fire frequency and weeds in the proposed 295ha area adjacent to the project site.

The potential for the site to contain significant woodland habitat, with large trees with suitable hollows for fauna has not been fully assessed. However, in the context of the threatened species that the significant habitat would support, the removal of 14ha is considered to pose a low risk.

Water Resources Division

The project area is not located within a Water Control District.

Appropriate risk management treatments are proposed during the site establishment, construction and operation phases to reduce the risk to waterways and groundwater. Diesel generators and fuel storage tanks are proposed to be bunded reducing the risk of contamination to surface water and groundwater.

The proponent has stated that water will be sourced from the town water supply provided by Power Water Corporation. There are no water extraction licences granted to Power Water Corporation for public water supply in this area. However, the department understands that Power Water Corporation source public water supply from groundwater in this area from low rate bores that are equipped to take water at a rate of less than 15 litres per second. This take is exempt from water licensing requirements under the *Water Act 1992* in accordance with Gazette G12, 24 March 2021 refer: [Northern Territory Government 2021 G12](#)

Rangelands Division

Land Management Unit

The Draft Soil & Water Management Plan (Appendix I) and the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet Environmental Approvals Jabiru Power Station 26 March 2021 documents identify that vegetation clearing, topsoil stripping, 'minimal earthworks' (undefined) and stockpiles are proposed. The draft Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) indicates some management practices that may be considered and identifies the intent to develop a final ESCP.

Due to the size and type of works, and as the SWMP/ESCP identifies 'there is a significant northwest/southeast drainage feature through the site' it is recommended that the proponent consider the Final ESCP to be developed by a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC) and to include (but not be limited to) the following.

The Final ESCP should define commencement/completion, dry/wet season controls, extent of clearing, retained vegetation, NO-GO areas and provide a works/ ESC implementation schedule, locations, detail and specifications for all construction phase erosion, drainage and sediment controls and methods, detail and specifications as to how all soil surfaces will be satisfactorily stabilised against erosion at completion of works. The ESCP should be graphically based with construction notes and be designed to be utilised on the ground by the contractors.

The Draft Soil & Water Management Plan also identifies the intent to utilise 'rock check dams' as permanent stormwater management controls. Generally, rock check dams (RCD's) are utilised as a temporary velocity (and lesser sediment) control during construction phase activities and are removed once the site is stabilised (erosion control). RCD's are known to have been utilised as permanent velocity and sediment controls. However, in many instances rock check dams have failed (due to design i.e. loose rock) and can then concentrate and exacerbate erosion. It is recommended permanent stormwater designs consider other more permanent solutions.

Should you have any further queries regarding these comments, please contact Maria Wauchope by email maria.wauchope@nt.gov.au or phone (08) 8999 3692.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'LDR'.

Luis Da Rocha
Executive Director, Rangelands

7 May 2021