

FerrAus Pilbara Project

FerrAus



CLIENT:

FerrAus Limited

LOCATION:

Eastern Pilbara and Gascoyne

SERVICES:

- Level 1, Level 2 and targeted vertebrate fauna surveys
- SRE surveys
- Subterranean fauna surveys
- Impact assessment
- Development of management and survey strategies
- Assistance with approvals documentation

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Several new terrestrial and subterranean species recorded
- Comprehensive information collected on the local vertebrate fauna
- Extensive fauna habitat assessment along a 160 km rail corridor
- Subterranean fauna survey strategy developed to facilitate project approvals to the satisfaction of the EPA
- Effective assimilation of data from multiple surveys and reports for project approvals

The FerrAus Pilbara Project started as a relatively small-scale single pit iron ore project and grew in scope to a large-scale 'multi-pit plus rail' proposal. Phoenix maintained flexibility to respond to frequently changing survey scopes and requirements, delivering a final comprehensive set of technical reports to support project approvals.

Between 2009 and 2011, Phoenix was contracted to undertake terrestrial vertebrate, short-range endemic (SRE) invertebrate and subterranean fauna surveys for the project. The project area was situated at the junction of the Pilbara, Gascoyne and Little Sandy Desert bioregions 80 km east of Newman, which made for potentially interesting species assemblages.

The surveys covered up to six proposed pits and proposed haul road, airstrip and 160 km of railway to the central Pilbara. A number of additions to the project area led to additional survey requirements and multiple technical reports. Vertebrate and subterranean fauna data from multiple surveys by Phoenix and other consultants were consolidated into comprehensive reports for the environmental impact assessment.

The presence of some sand dune habitats within the known range of the Marsupial Mole necessitated trenching surveys for this species but it was not recorded. Mulgara were recorded in Level 2 and targeted surveys and therefore subsequent management measures were developed to manage impacts to this species.

A number of new and apparently restricted subterranean and SRE species were recorded, including isopods, amphipods, annelids and a scorpion.

Phoenix collaborated closely with the lead consultant during the development of the proposal document (API assessment), providing technical input and participating in impact assessment workshops.

The restricted distribution of the subterranean fauna presented a challenge to gaining project approval, especially given the expansion of the project and timelines required. Recognising the limited information with which to make a complete assessment, Phoenix developed a survey strategy that would ensure subterranean fauna would be given due consideration following approval.



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