

# Dukaladjarrandj Camp 2013

A report by the Djelk Rangers



# Njaleken -The purpose of the camp

Every year, the Djelk rangers would like to run a camp at Dukaladjarrandj, south from Kolorbidadah Outstation on the Cadell River in the Djelk Indigenous Protected Area, Arnhem Land.

During these camps, Dukaladjarrandj is the 'bush office' from which Djelk does scientific and land management work including;

- Looking for, tracking and trapping animals and recording plant information to build up the story of what is living in this important area. This includes recording both English and language names and scientific information. This is a big part of the work during the camp. 
- Managing fire and feral animals 
- Taking care of and learning from bim (rock art) and other important sites 
- Giving Traditional Owners an opportunity to join the camp and share their skills and experience 



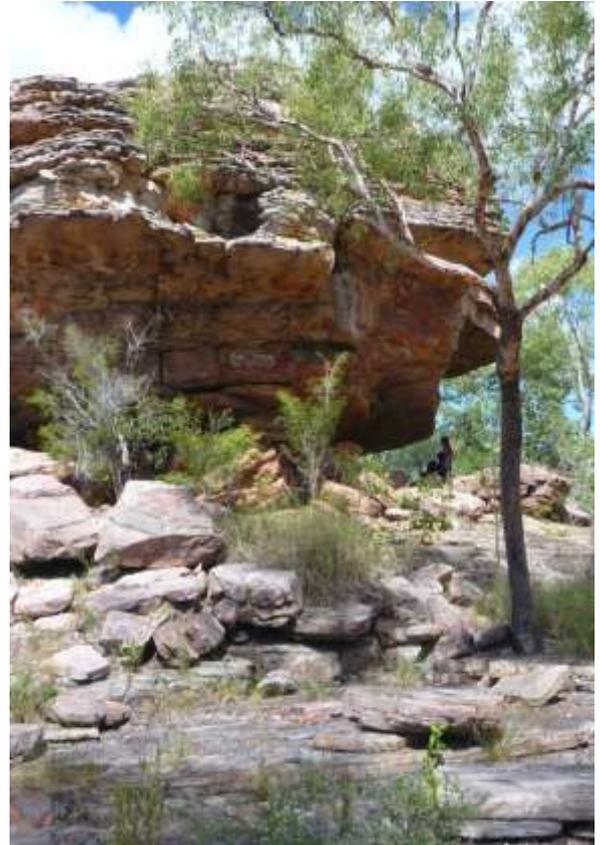


# Ngad-ngarri wokdi – We talked

Djelk rangers have a Plan of Management which landowners were consulted over and committed to as part of the IPA. This Plan outlines the work program for the rangers. But it is still necessary to always seek permission for on country activities under that Plan.

Djelk rangers and their NTG scientist Alys Stevens put much time into consulting with Traditional Owners to achieve permission for the camp.

Meetings with TOs were held at the Djelk ranger shed in Maningrida and on country at Kolorbidadah. The meetings were overseen by the Senior Ranger Victor Rostron (all meetings), the Djelk Ranger Manager Brendan Bainbridge (Maningrida), with translation assistance provided by senior TO for Dukaladjarrandj Wesley Champion (all meetings), as well as the rangers themselves (all meetings).



# Information

Landowners were taken through a clear process for communication, planning, running the actual camp and the way to raise any problems and address any grievances.

Landowners were provided with large laminated and mounted maps and letters of agreement (non-binding) which were again translated by Wesley Campion. Landowners were given the opportunity (food and supplies) to camp with Djelk onsite, and senior people were paid to attend and provide cultural oversight.

Every place where traps were put was checked by multiple senior consultants and rangers, and activities were undertaken with and by rangers.

Animal and plant recordings are shared with the Northern Territory Government. All cultural information and photographs remain with the Djelk rangers. The indigenous language used in this report is Kune, from the Bininj Kunwok language group.



# Our activities in 2013

- We continued building the plant and animal story for this area. We set out a large number of traps, recorded tracks and signs of animals that are too hard to catch in traps.
- It is important when working on country that the right people are present, so local Traditional Owners were supported to camp with Djelk during this time.
- Djelk Rangers and the Maningrida school have a strong relationship working together for education and employment outcomes, and the school was invited to attend this 2013 camp with the rangers. The kids were able to do different activities, including trapping, learning about rock art, bushtucker and traditional dance, and early burning.
- While on country running the traps, the Djelk rangers were able to start their early dry season burning and do some feral buffalo control, recording the information using CyberTracker
- It was very important to us that people enjoyed being on country, so we made sure enough time was provided to gather healthy bush foods and for relaxing at the end of the day while still doing a good amount of work.





**When** 10 days, 15<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> May 2013

- Who**
- Djelk rangers
  - Traditional Owners from Kolorbidadah Outstation
  - Maningrida College school kids and their teachers (22 – 24 May)
  - Researchers from Melbourne Uni with the school (22 – 24 May)
  - Northern Territory Government scientists



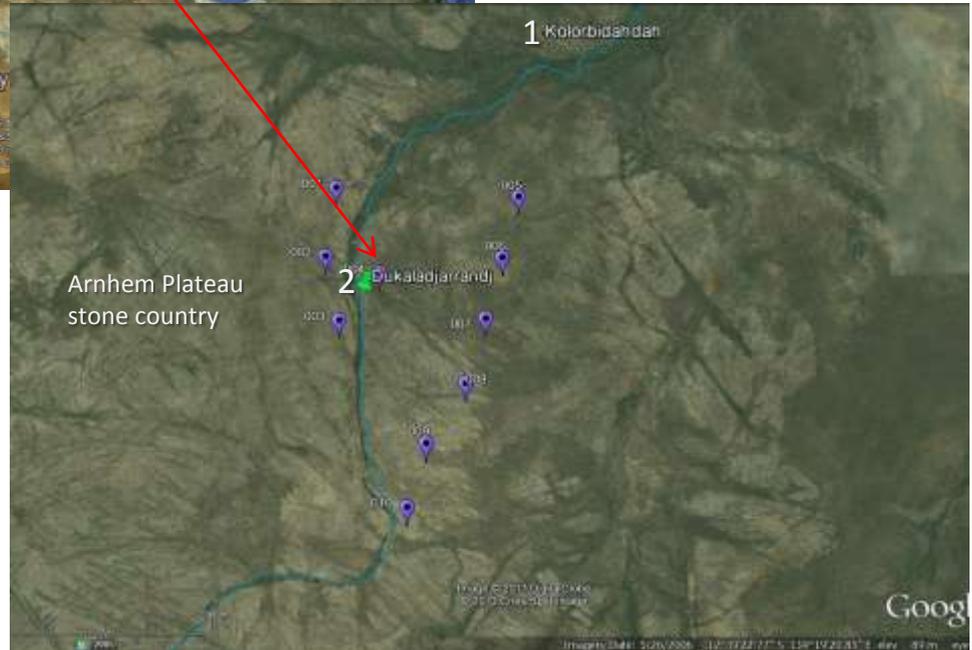


At each place shown with this symbol, we put out traps for animals

## Where?

1. Kolorbidadah is a permanently occupied outstation in Djelk IPA

2. Dukaladjarrandj is an important place for culture, camping and harvesting healthy bush foods



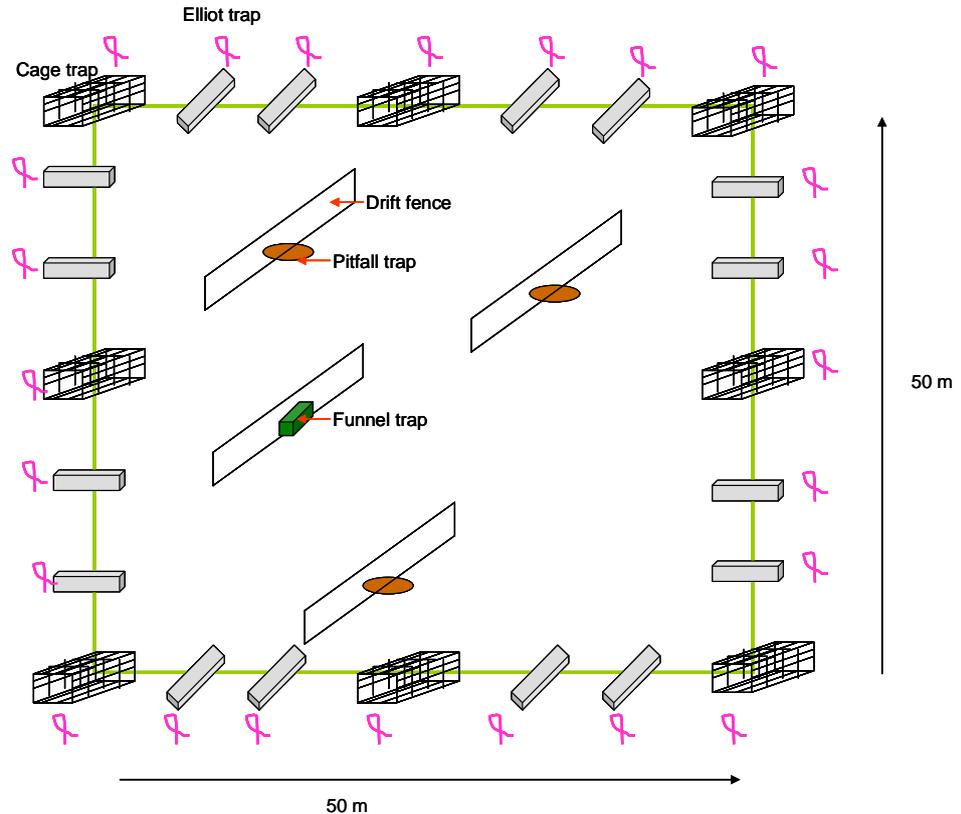


# Trapping for animals

We put our traps in the same arrangement every time in different areas. We put 8 cage traps, 16 Elliot traps, 3 pitfall traps and 2 funnel traps in 10 different places.

Our traps were open for 4 nights. We check our traps every morning and then close up the cage and Elliot traps. We check our pitfalls throughout the day, and then re-open the cage and Elliot traps in the late afternoon.

Putting those numbers together, that means we had 290 traps x 4 nights = 1160 'trap nights'.



# Trapping for animals



# What did we find?

We observed or found tracks and scats from 36 different mammal, reptile and frog species. For a full list, please see the end of the report.

8 species are endemic to Arnhem land or the NT, including *barrk* (black wallaroo), *djaddi* (Jabiru toadlet), 3 different *moloborndok* (Arnhem Land dtella, giant cave gecko and jewelled velvet gecko) and 3 different *rlokrlok* (Cogger's Ctenotus, scant-striped Ctenotus and Douglas' skink). 'Endemic' means that they are found no where else in Australia.

## What about all the mammals?

The only small mammal observed was a *djirrkkinj* (delicate mouse) found by Jay Rostron and 'caught' on camera trap (see next section). Northern Australia is in the midst of an extinction wave of small mammals – they are being lost every where. Our work in the Djelk IPA is very important – rangers need to keep taking care of country and we need to keep looking for these animals so when they are found, they can be protected with good land management. Djelk is part of a Northern Australian program of collaborative research (NERP) concerned with small mammal decline



## What did we find?



*Boywek – Northern knob-tailed gecko*



*Djaddi - Burrowing frog  
Notoden melanoscaphus*



*Crowned gecko*



*Rlokrlok – Ctenopus's  
vertebralis and inornatus*



*Kalkkalk - Baby rock ring-tailed lizard*



*Djurn – black-headed python*



*Djaddi – Uperoleia arenicola*



*Kalkkalk - Gilbert's dragon*



*Rlokrlok - Coggers' Ctenotus*

*Dird - Burton's legless lizard*



*Kalkkalk - Rock ring-tailed lizard*



*Rlokrlok - Douglas' skink*



*Djarraroerroe - Delma borea*

*At one site, the rangers found a fresh and very large track from a python, which they think could have been naworan (Oenpelli python)*



## Using camera traps



Some animals are too hard to catch in traps. At each area where we put traps, we also put 'camera traps'. These cameras are attached to trees, with a post with some lure put in front. Whenever an animal walks past, the camera will take a picture.

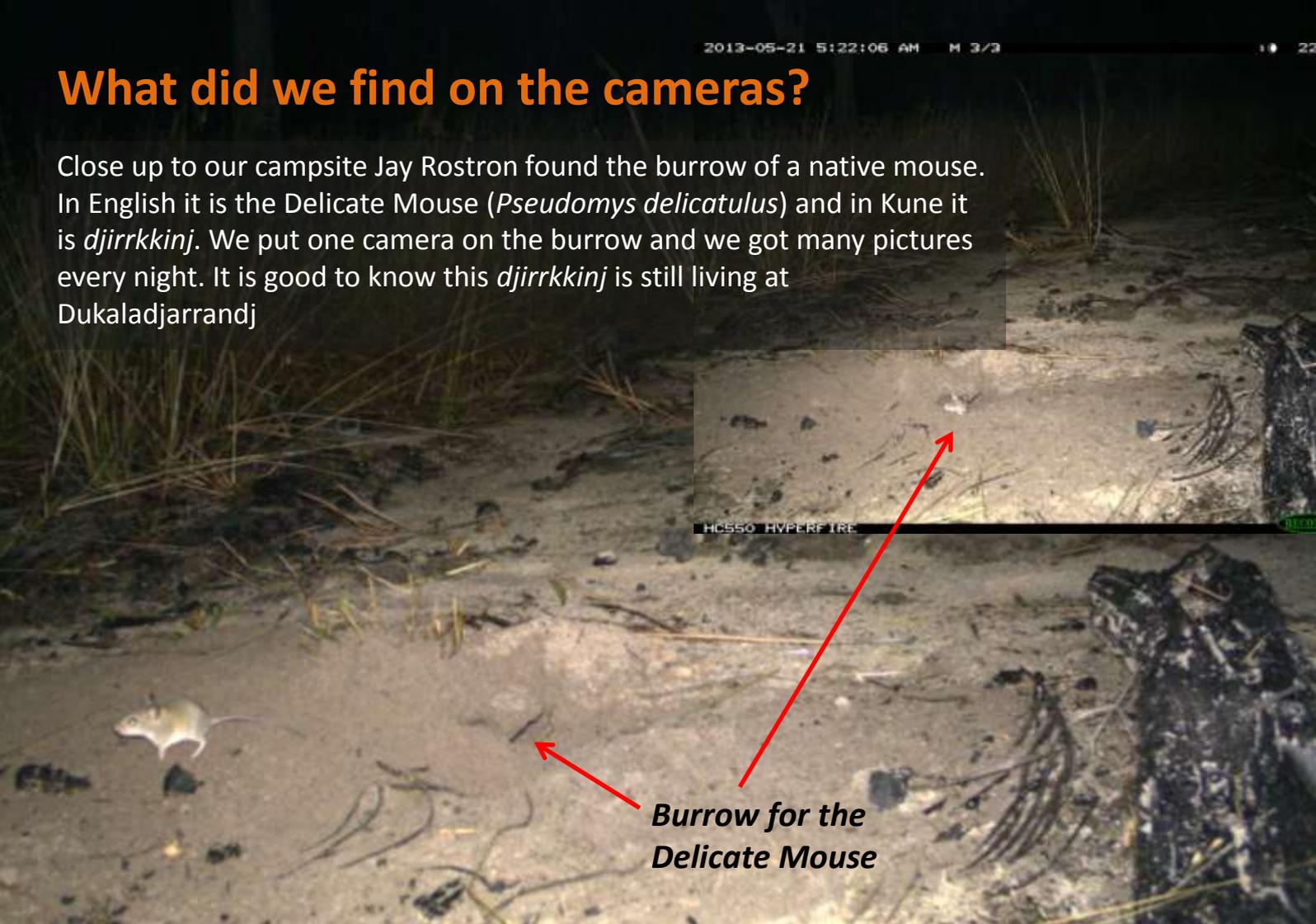


It's important to set the cameras up properly.

We clear the grass and make sure the camera is facing at the lure, so we don't get lots of pictures of grass blowing!

## What did we find on the cameras?

Close up to our campsite Jay Rostron found the burrow of a native mouse. In English it is the Delicate Mouse (*Pseudomys delicatulus*) and in Kune it is *djirrkinj*. We put one camera on the burrow and we got many pictures every night. It is good to know this *djirrkinj* is still living at Dukaladjarrandj



**Burrow for the  
Delicate Mouse**



We also took pictures of *wak wak*, buffalo, dingo and sometimes our legs and heads!



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## Night walking

Spotlighting is an important part of looking for animals. Students, teachers and Terry Mahney went on a night walk around Dukaladjarrandj and made some good finds

*Giant cave gecko*



*Alicia with an Arnhem land spotted rock gecko, *Gehyra pamela**

## Manwurrk – early burning

When they weren't trapping, the Djelk rangers started their early dry season burning. They were making fire breaks along roads and around outstations for infrastructure protection.



## Working with the men



The students went out working with the men rangers. They were clearing tracks, doing early burning and getting meat for the camp that night.

A feral cat with 2 kittens was found. The kittens were taken to be domesticated and kept out of the wild. Feral cats can be a big problem for native animals in the bush



# Bungul - Kunborrk



*The Rostron family organised a bungul for the school, showing different dances and songs. Everyone was invited to join in at the end*



## Amazing rock art

*Catfish*

*Senior TO Wesley Campion took the students on a tour of four different rock art sights from Ngarradj to Dukaladjarranj. He explained the early history of the area, the art and his life.*



## Bush food and art materials

*Senior women took the school girls and showed them important bushtucker, art materials and cultural places*





## **Sacred site visit**

*The senior men took the students to visit the near by registered sacred site at Bukbirdik.*

*They explained the story and significance of the area.*



*At the end of the camp all visitors were invited to put their hand print on the rock at Dukaladjarrandj.*



## Important things

A person with long dark hair is smiling and being splashed by water in a natural setting. The background features rocky outcrops and green trees under a blue sky with white clouds.

- Working from bush is good for rangers and the country
- Outstation and bush life is more peaceful and healthy
- Making time for enjoying country when camped out bush is essential for a happy and hard working team
- Djelk is planning more trips like this in different places throughout the year
- We will keep looking for our mammals so they can be protected
- Working together with Maningrida school to create pathways from school to caring for country is a key part of the future of Djelk Rangers

# Species List

A species list of all mammals, reptiles and frogs either trapped/photographed or unequivocal signs observed.

Colours: **Feral species** and **endemic species**.

All Kune names are from W Champion and the Garde dictionary (in prep.). Please note, in Kune some species have multiple names based on sex, lifestage and behaviour; the names chosen here are hopefully the most common and collective term.

Group	Family	Scientific name	English common name	Kune
Mammal	Bovidae	<i>Bubalus bubalis</i>	Swamp Buffalo	
	Canidae	<i>Canis lupus</i>	Dingo	<i>Dalkken</i>
	Felidae	<i>Felis catus</i>	Cat	
	Macropodidae	<i>Macropus bernardus</i>	Black Wallaroo	<i>Barrk</i>
	Muridae	<i>Pseudomys delicatulus</i>	Delicate Mouse	
Frog	Hylidae	<i>Litoria meiriana</i>	Rockhole Frog	<i>Jati - Kodbolbok</i>
		<i>Litoria nasuta</i>	Rocket Frog	<i>Jati - Kodbolbok</i>
	Limnodynastidae	<i>Notaden melanoscaphus</i>	Northern Spadefoot Toad	<i>Jati - Kodbolbok</i>
		<i>Opisthodon ornatus</i>	Ornate Burrowing Frog	<i>Jati - Kodbolbok</i>
	Myobatrachidae	<i>Crinia remota</i>	Remote Froglet	<i>Jati - Kodbolbok</i>
		<i>Uperoleia arenicola</i>	Jabiru Toadlet	<i>Jati - Kodbolbok</i>
Reptile	Agamidae	<i>Ctenophorus caudicinctus</i>	Ring-tailed Dragon	<i>Kalkkalk</i>
		<i>Diporiphora arnhemica</i>		<i>Madjandemed</i>
		<i>Diporiphora bilineata</i>	Two-Lined Dragon	<i>Madjandemed</i>
		<i>Lophognathus gilberti</i>	Gilbert's Dragon	
	Colubridae	<i>Stegonotus cucullatus</i>	Slaty-grey Snake	
	Gekkonidae	<i>Gehyra nana</i>	Northern Spotted Rock Dtella	<i>Moloborndok</i>
		<i>Gehyra pamela</i>	Arnhem Land Spotted Dtella	<i>Moloborndok</i>
		<i>Heteronotia binoei</i>	Bynoe's Gecko	<i>Belerrk</i>
		<i>Lucasium stenodactylum</i>	Crowned Gecko	
		<i>Nephurus sheai</i>	Northern Knob-tailed Gecko	<i>Boywek</i>
		<i>Oedura gemmata</i>	Jewelled Velvet Gecko	
		<i>Pseudotothecadactylus lindneri</i>	Giant Cave Gecko	
	Pygopodidae	<i>Delma borea</i>	Rusty-topped Delma	
		<i>Lialis burtonis</i>	Burton's Legless Lizard	
	Pythonidae	<i>Aspidites melanocephalus</i>	Black-headed Python	
	Scincidae	<i>Carlia amax</i>	Two-Spined Rainbow Skink	<i>Burndjingh</i>
		<i>Cryptoblepharus metallicus</i>	Metallic Snake-eyed Skink	<i>Burndjingh</i>
		<i>Ctenotus coggeri</i>	Cogger's Ctenotus	<i>Rlokrlrok</i>
		<i>Ctenotus inornatus</i>	Plain Ctenotus	<i>Rlokrlrok</i>
		<i>Ctenotus vertebralis</i>	Scant-Striped Ctenotus	<i>Rlokrlrok</i>
<i>Glaphyromorphus douglasi</i>		Douglas' Skink	<i>Rlokrlrok</i>	
<i>Glaphyromorphus isolepis</i>		Smooth-Tailed Skink	<i>Rlokrlrok</i>	
<i>Lerista karlschmidti</i>		Karl Schmidt's Lerista	<i>Dird</i>	
<i>Morethia storri</i>		Storr's Snake-Eyed Skink	<i>Burndjingh</i>	
<i>Notoscincus ornatus</i>		Ornate Snake-Eyed Skink	<i>Burndjingh</i>	

# Acknowledgements

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