DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY AND ENVIRONMENT

BAM Assessor Update – Number 28 – 17 December 2019

Christmas shutdown/BAM Support webinar Series/In-draft information expected for publication in early 2020/Assessment of Rhodamnia rubescens and Rhodomyrtus psidioides

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A big thanks to everyone

We would like to begin this update with a big thank you for all of your patience, persistence and support you have given to implementing the Biodiversity Offset Scheme (BOS) throughout 2019. There continues to be increasing activity and interest in the BOS through the completion of development and stewardship applications. We look forward to continuing to support your work in the BOS in 2020 through active engagement and learning opportunities, completion of further survey guides, Stage 3 of the Operational Manual and planned improvements to the management system including BAM-C, BOAMS and the supporting data sets.

Wishing you and your families a safe, happy and restful Christmas holiday.

1. Reminder regarding Christmas shutdown

We will not be monitoring the BAM Support Mailbox over the Christmas/New Year holiday period from Monday 23 December 2019 through to Friday 3 January 2020, inclusive. We will attend to any queries that are lodged during that period once staff return from their Christmas break.

2. BAM support webinar series

'BAM Support' is a webinar series hosted by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to support accredited assessors working with the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme (BOS). These webinars provide a regular forum for interested participants to build their understanding of the BOS and Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM), ask questions and stay up to date. Each webinar includes content presented by Department subject matter experts and an opportunity for Q&A with panel members.

The webinars are providing a regular forum for active engagement with assessors to hear more about different topics in applying the BAM, or other aspects of the BOS. Since the series began in September 2019, we have completed six webinars attended by over 1200 participants with 80% providing positive feedback. If you have missed any of the topics covered to date, you can still listen to the webinar at Biodiversity Offsets Scheme on Vimeo These sessions provide an excellent source of feedback, with the questions asked during the panel session added to the Assessor Q&A webpage. It also provides information for future webinars and other resources to support your work in the BOS.

We'll be hosting more sessions in the new year, beginning early February 2020 with a webinar that explains the BAM gain model and the use of active restoration management actions at proposed biodiversity stewardship sites.

To get involved in future sessions and catch up on past topics, go to Biodiversity Assessment Method Support webinars.

Proposed webinar topics for 2020 (dates for these will be confirmed):

- Update on the 12-month BAM review
- How to apply the habitat suitability assessment
- Important Mapped Areas
- Assessing post-fire and drought affected sites
- Determining Category 1 – Exempt Land
- Biodiversity Values Map and Threshold Tool
- Credit Equivalence
- BOS administration and the accreditation scheme
- Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement applications

3. Assessment of *Rhodamnia rubescens* and *Rhodomyrtus psidioides*

Individuals and populations of *Rhodamnia rubescens* and *Rhodomyrtus psidioides* are being severely impacted by the pathogen myrtle rust and as such, have been listed as critically endangered. There are a number of uncertainties regarding the impact of myrtle rust, including how long infected plants are likely to persist for, and why some individuals or populations persist better than others. Observations of plants in flower or fruit are considered to be relatively rare, and most fruit tends to be seedless, possibly due to poor fertilisation or seed abortion as a result of the myrtle rust infection.

Given the severity of the myrtle rust on these species, any individuals that are currently alive are potentially significant to the survival of the species and as such, should be given the opportunity to flower and produce seed. A precautionary approach to assessing potential impacts on these species needs to be undertaken, including the assumption that any individuals or populations that remain are potentially viable, particularly where they are on a proposed biodiversity stewardship site. Where feasible, these individuals or populations need to be afforded protection to optimise the survival and recovery of these species. Note that some individuals thought dead, have been observed re-sprouting including from root suckers.

Research is ongoing, and a number of actions are being planned or undertaken to assist in the survival and recovery of these species.

4. Guidelines and products planned for publication in 2020

We are continuing to prepare a range of survey guides and products support the use of the BAM on development sites and proposed stewardship sites. Over the first few months of 2020, we are expecting to finalise and publish:

- BAM version 2 (finalisation of the 12-month review) and improvements to the BAM-C
- An online viewer for Important Mapped Areas
- Operational Manual stage 3
- BAM Amphibian Survey Guidelines
- BAM Plant Survey Guidelines (revised)
- BAM Birds Survey Guidelines
- Revised Bat Survey Guidelines (revised)
- Guidance for determining Category 1 – exempt land
- Guidance for assessing sites post-fire

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