



Kimberley Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

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Kimberley rangers discover Australia's fastest snake on the Dampier Peninsula

Kimberley rangers have discovered Australia's fastest snake – the greater black whip snake – on the Dampier Peninsula for the first time.

The discovery was made after increased biodiversity survey efforts by Kimberley rangers who have also found three unnamed gecko species, recorded six nationally threatened species and found a tree frog 100km from where it was previously located.

Nyul Nyul ranger Ninjana Walsham said his team recorded the venomous black whip snake as part of a three day biodiversity survey in November near Beagle Bay.

"Finding the greater black whip snake was one of the big outcomes. It shows that if you do good surveys, you find good animals living in healthy habitats," he said.

"It lives in vine thicket areas, in habitats that are close to the beach with sand and lots of vegetation."

The increased biodiversity survey efforts of Kimberley rangers has produced impressive results with six nationally-threatened species including bilbies, northern quolls, Gouldian finches and purple-crowned fairy wrens recorded.

In another exciting find the magnificent tree frog (*Litoria splendida*) was found in the Fitzroy Valley about 100km further south from where it had been previously recorded in the north Kimberley. This frog is the largest frog in Western Australia.

The Kimberley Land Council has teamed up with WWF to conduct the biodiversity surveys which were carried out by 12 ranger groups over 50 days across the entire Kimberley region. Biodiversity surveys are used not only to record threatened species but to assess the benefits of Indigenous fire management activities and pest animal control programs.

Ninjana said a variety of methods were used to carry out biodiversity surveys and often depended on which species rangers were targeting.

"For the greater black whip snake we used a pitfall trap, where you dig a hole and put a bucket inside. It has mesh running over it that acts like a fence. The animals run across and fall in," he said.

"We also use funnel, Elliot and cage traps to capture animals. We then record them and depending on what type of animal we caught, we measure them and write down all their details, so we can track the progress of that species."

The Kimberley Land Council receives funding from Commonwealth Caring for Our Country and WWF Australia to assist Indigenous Rangers across the Kimberley deliver regional biodiversity conservation services.

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