Malak Malak country, Sawfish country
Indigenous partnerships for management of euryhaline species

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Why the scientific interest in Largetooth sawfish (*Pristis pristis*)?

- Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List)
- Protected species in Australia
- Northern Australian hotspot
- Euryhaline life-cycle
- Daly River genetically distinct
Where it all began….the Daly River

- 52,577 km² catchment
- Perennial river with extensive floodplains
- Recreational fishing
- Commercial gillnetting
- Pastoral lands
- Small areas of private land
- Indigenous land including Malak Malak traditional country
Malak Malak Rangers

Ranger team:
• Cultural advisor
• 4 Full time
• 2 casual
• 1 coordinator

Some of the work the rangers do:
• WoNS and other weed management
• Fire management
• River patrols
• Other collaborative research
  • Fish and flows
  • River bank erosion
  • Shark and catfish
In the beginning......aims of original project

- Occurrence of *P. pristis* in the Daly River region
- Molecular studies
- eDNA (a late addition only made possible by local knowledge, collab with JCU)
How it happened, in the rangers words
The next step, new Project aims

• Raise the profile of the Largetooth Sawfish in communities of Northern Australia where it is known to persist
  – Communications products based on community requests

• Build a more holistic understanding of the species, including traditional ecological knowledge and values alongside western science

• Support culturally appropriate, locally driven conservation measures

* Human Ethics approval from Charles Darwin Uni
Project outcomes

Conducted a floodplain sawfish survey
– Included testing a draft I-Tracker Sawfish application and sampling protocol, providing specialised equipment, demonstrating sampling techniques etc.

• Capacity building, knowledge sharing
• Community driven conservation action, to be undertaken annually
Project outcomes

3 day sawfish themed ranger exchange, Roper River, 14 rangers 3 ranger groups (Malak Malak, Yugul Mangi and Numbulwar Numburindi)

- Applied standard sawfish sampling techniques, identified suitable sawfish habitat, discussed threats and explored peoples memories of sawfish
  
  • Capacity building, knowledge sharing, strengthening relationships

Also presented about the project at NZMSS and AMSA conference in Wellington last year

- Raising the profile of the species, and demonstrating an example of successful research partnerships
Project outputs continued

Malak Malak Rangers I-Tracker Sawfish application and sampling protocol

Video just viewed
documenting fieldwork with a conservation message from the Traditional Owner perspective

Trip reports
Internal project documents intended to assist ranger groups demonstrate the work undertaken
Project outputs

**Save a Sawfish** animation, demonstrates safe handling & release techniques, includes conservation message
- Features local art, Two versions with narration in English and Kriol (a local language)
  - Collaboration with Ngukurr Language Centre (relationship building)

**Educational signage from Traditional Owner perspective**
- 3 versions, aimed at recreational fishers and local community
Thank you