



Support conservation efforts in the Kimberley

Thank you for being a supporter of Australian Wildlife Conservancy's (AWC) conservation efforts in the Kimberley. It has been over a year now since Mornington-Marion Downs Wildlife Sanctuary, located in the heart of the Kimberley, was washed out in the heavy rainfall from ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie. The largest flood event on record forced staff and visiting researchers to evacuate by helicopter as river levels rose and backfilled onto Mornington's operations base – personal belongings, equipment, and years of herbarium specimens floated away in the downpour.

Sanctuary Manager, Stella Thomas, estimated that 95% of the sanctuary's operations base was affected – the infrastructure of which was completely destroyed, leaving only four houses and a single workshop as a foundation for the mammoth recovery effort ahead. Your contribution to AWC's conservation efforts in the Kimberley has been essential in this recovery.

Species Monitoring

Mornington's Operations team has worked tirelessly over the last few months to bring the sanctuary back to working condition: renovating buildings, clearing space, and even constructing an entire lab. These efforts made it possible for the Science team to recommence critical wildlife surveys, with the team recently wrapping up the 20th year of live trapping at Mornington Marion Downs.

The month-long trapping survey has been a huge success - in just the first two weeks, 192 individuals were trapped across 26 species. This survey also marked the first time that a Northern Brushtail Possum has been captured in a cage trap at Mornington. Other exciting finds captures from the survey include the Western Chestnut Mouse and the Long-tailed Planigale, which is the world's smallest marsupial.

Thanks to your support, AWC's Operations and Science teams have been able to restore sanctuary function to a level that supports ongoing biological monitoring. Thank you.





Purple-crowned Fairy Wrens. Niki Teunissen/AWC.

Purple-crowned Fairy Wrens

After electricity and water were restored to Mornington's main workshop, land management activities could resume and the early dry season prescribed burns began. These priority activities were essential in providing fire breaks to protect the remaining infrastructure at Mornington, as well as habitat for the endangered Purple-crowned Fairy-wren.

A small team of ecologists from Monash University returned to the sanctuary in May to restart their 17-year research into a population of Purple-crowned Fairy-wren at Mornington - one of the longest ongoing field studies of a bird population in northern Australia. They were relieved to find that 74% of the population had survived the floods, and over a quarter of the breeding groups were observed with fledglings.

The researchers are now on break from their time at Mornington, and set to return again in October to continue with their surveys. These studies often require access to remote areas - such as Spider Gorge in the south eastern section of Mornington - which is only achievable by helicopter. Your support ensures that our researchers and ecologists remain safe when conducting critical wildlife surveys in some of the most remote places in the country.

Thank you for supporting this project – your contribution to conservation in the Kimberley has been essential in ensuring the future of AWC's operations in Australia's expansive north region.

