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Article

<< Previous | Next >>

 Contents Vol 56(3)**A conceptual basis for the wise use of wetlands in northern Australia – linking information needs, integrated analyses, drivers of change and human well-being** PDF (656 KB)
\$25 Export Citation[ShareThis](#)C. Max Finlayson ^{A B C}, Maria Grazia Bellio ^A, John B. Lowry ^A^A Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist, GPO Box 462, Darwin, NT 0801, Australia.^B International Water Management Institute, PO Box 2075, Colombo, Sri Lanka.^C Corresponding author. Email: m.finlayson@cgjar.org*Marine and Freshwater Research* **56**(3) 269–277 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1071/MF04077>

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Abstract

Australia's north supports many wetlands. The biodiversity of these wetlands is highly regarded, but many are increasingly being affected by well recognised pressures that result in adverse change in their ecological character. The extent of the knowledge base and causes of adverse change in Australia's tropical wetlands are reviewed with an emphasis on the linkage between direct and indirect drivers of change. Within the context of the existing knowledge base, an integrated model for collecting information on the ecological character of tropical wetlands is proposed. The model encompasses hierarchical and multi-scalar approaches to wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring and was developed largely from research undertaken in northern Australia. It is based around the concepts of wise use and maintenance of the ecological character of wetlands, which in turn emphasises the value of wetlands to people through the delivery of ecosystem services. A broader conceptual framework linking ecosystem services and human well-being to the condition of wetlands is introduced as a forerunner to considering research needs for tropical Australian wetlands. The integrated model and framework entail community consultation and the involvement of stakeholders in decisions about wetland research and management. In conclusion, it is emphasised that the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetlands of northern Australia is a task for wetland managers, users and owners in collaboration with scientists from many disciplines.

Keywords: ecological character, sustainable development, tropical wetlands, wetland inventory and assessment, wise use.[Legal & Privacy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Help](#)

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