



Appendix N
Nature Conservation



The respondent comments provided in this section have been collated from all stakeholder submission comments relating to EIS Appendix NA Nature Conservation Aquatic Flora and Fauna. Please refer to **Attachment A** for copies of all submissions received.

Appendix N4 Nature Conservation – Aquatic Flora and Fauna Rev 1

Aquatic Ecology Impact Assessment - Turtle Communities

Respondent Comment

*Department of Environment and Resource Management request that further surveys using appropriate techniques should be carried out to accurately quantify presence and abundance of *R. leukops* and *E. albagula* turtles and subsequently develop appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures to reduce impacts on these species.*

Santos Response

Aquatic ecological studies for the gas transmission pipeline and CSG fields reveal the general aquatic biodiversity for these areas to be of low biodiversity, with only fish and macro invertebrate's species that are tolerant of varying and often harsh conditions to inhabit the study area. No rare or threatened aquatic fauna have been recorded from the water courses of the study area (EIS Appendix N4). However the upper Dawson River does support potential nesting habitat for the Fitzroy River turtle (*Rheodytes leukops*) between the Yebna crossing and Dawson's bend, and so potential presence of this species cannot be discounted in the catchment. As such a commitment is made in the EMP for pre-construction surveys to be undertaken for nesting sites for Fitzroy River turtle (*Rheodytes leukops*) at any major waterways where the species is considered potentially present that may be impacted by proposed construction and operations (**Attachment B2**).

Limitations

Respondent Comment

Department of Environment and Resource Management state that as suggested in Section 3.10 of Appendix N4, further surveys are required to adequately assess and describe aquatic communities of the study area (particularly for non-dry periods after rainfall). Until this time, any conclusions made in the EIS based on this data will be speculative and should be appropriately qualified.

Santos Response

A detailed assessment of the aquatic values for the CSG field was undertaken at the catchment level and is presented in detail EIS Appendix N4. This assessment was undertaken from 23 of September to 3 November 2008, surveying a total of thirty two waterways across three catchments at targeted and representative sites. Aquatic habitat assessments of major watercourses among the gas transmission pipeline alignment were also undertaken (EIS Appendix N2).

Surveys reveal the general aquatic biodiversity for these areas to be of low biodiversity, with only fish and macro invertebrate species that are tolerant of varying and often harsh conditions to inhabit the study area. No rare or threatened aquatic fauna have been recorded from the water courses of the study area (EIS Appendix N4).

However the upper Dawson River does support potential nesting habitat for the Fitzroy River turtle (*Rheodytes leukops*) between the Yebna crossing and Dawson's bend, and so potential presence of this species cannot be discounted in the catchment.

EIS Appendix N

Seasonal surveys would reveal further additions to species diversity for the study area; however the conservation significant species for the region have previously been well documented, and are generally known for the region.

A commitment is made in the EMP for pre-construction surveys to be undertaken for nesting sites for Fitzroy River turtle (*Rheodytes leukops*) at any major waterways where the species is considered potentially present that may be impacted by proposed construction and operations (**Attachment B2**) to enable specific well and associated infrastructure sites to be selected so as to minimise impact.