BAM Assessor Update – Number 20 – August 2019

1. Planned update of biodiversity data referenced by the BAM Calculator 27 September 2019

Please be aware that DPIE (formally OEH) is planning to update the biodiversity data referenced by the BAM Calculator (BAM-C) at COB on Friday 27 September 2019. The update will import the biodiversity data that is currently in Bionet into the BAM-C. This will be the first comprehensive update to the biodiversity data referenced by the BAM-C since February 2018.

Since February 2018, we have completed a number of minor one-off data imports. These have been to add *Rhodamnia rubescens* and *Thelymitra alpicola* for assessment by the BAM-C, align TECs in the SAII guidance document with those in BMA-C, change to the unit of measure allocation for *Eucalyptus pulverulenta* (from area to count) and *Hibbertia fumana* (from count to area), as well as other minor data improvements.

The majority of this planned update will apply to assessment data for threatened flora species as a result of a comprehensive review of the information held in the Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection (TBDC) that has been underway since mid-2018. The review of threatened flora information has been based on a series of workshops with flora experts in regional locations across NSW. As a result, updated information on flora species has been progressively added to the TBDC since mid-2018 through to early 2019 (see BAM Assessor Update – Number 15 for further information).

DPIE will provide a more detailed description of the data changes in coming weeks. Prior to the 27th September, we will provide you with a guideline that assist you when you first open your existing BAM assessments following the data import.

However, please be aware that any Biodiversity Assessments Reports for BAM-C cases that have not been finalised within 14 days following the data import on 27th September will need to be prepared to be consistent with the updated data (Section 2.2.3.4 of the BAM).

Given that data in the TBDC is reviewed and modified on an ongoing basis as new information becomes available, we still recommend that you review the data and notes within BioNet TBDC to ensure you have access to the latest information. The General Notes section of the TBDC also provides additional useful information not displayed in the BAM-C.

Please note that the update will:

- not involve the changes to the current PCT classification. This means that no PCT's will be decommissioned or added.
- align species listed as potential serious and irreversible impacts (SAII) species in the TBDC to those shown in the BAM-C as a potential SAII. Over 50 species will be impacted.
- add 12 new species and associated BAM assessment data (*Caladenia montana, Callistemon purpurascens, Cucumis althaeoides, Eucalyptus largeana, Gygis alba, Leucopogon fletcheri subsp. fletcheri, Macropus dorsalis, Nitella parooensis, Pimelea cremnophila, Prostanthera gilesii, Pterostylis alpina, Zieria odorifera subsp. copelandii*).
- Align the recommended survey months to the TBDC to those in the BAM-C. Over 200 species will be impacted, including 12 species with mapped important areas no longer requiring survey.
- Modify the unit of measure allocation for 27 flora species.
- update the biodiversity risk weighting to align with the TBDC of close to 100 species
- add the association of species with paddock trees. This will only affect the paddock tree module of BAM-C

2.   Biodiversity risk weighting for TEC's and PCT's

Appendix 7 of the BAM sets out the assignment of the biodiversity risk weighting for threatened entities. It currently states:

> The biodiversity risk weighting for determining the credit requirement for ecosystem credits is based on the sensitivity to loss of either the listed TEC, or the PCT identified at the site.

This does not adequately set out how the biodiversity risk weighting applies in the BAM. It should instead state:

> The biodiversity risk weighting for determining the credit requirement for ecosystem credits at a site is based on the sensitivity to loss of the listing status of TEC, or where no TEC is present, PCT percent cleared estimation.

The intent of the BAM is that it will prioritise the listing of a TEC ahead of the estimate of percent cleared of a PCT. This is because the status of TEC's is based on a stronger more robust evidence-base. The threat status of listed TECs have been determined using a robust, repeatable and transparent process against internationally established threat criteria (IUCN criteria). In contrast, the estimated percent cleared values of a PCT are based on a combined desk-top assessment/expert-derived.

The intent of using the estimated percent cleared value to derive the sensitivity to loss class is to provide a safety net for those PCTs that have been heavily cleared but have not been nominated as a potential TEC. Therefore, where a TEC is identified within the vegetation zone, the listing status (vulnerable (Moderate), endangered (High), critically endangered (Very High)), of the TEC, rather than the % cleared value of the associated PCT, is used to calculate the biodiversity risk weighting.

3.   Correction to advice provided in update 19 – Removing candidate/predicted species from lists generated by BAM-C

Unfortunately, the line in red below was accidentally deleted from the advice we provided in Update 19 regarding removing candidate/predicted species. The text below is consistent with what DPIE presented at the recent Ecological Consultants Association on 25 July. We apologise for the confusion and appreciate your quick feedback on this. The correct advice is:

> DPIE has received a number of enquiries from consent authorities about when an assessor can remove a species from the candidate (species credit species) and predicted lists generated by the BAM-C. The assessment requirements are set out in Steps 2 and 3 of chapter 6 of the BAM.
>
> **Any species can be taken off the list if the species:**
>
> a.   has habitat constraints listed in the Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection (TBDC) and none of these constraints are present on the site. Documentation in the Biodiversity Assessment Report should reflect the TBDC information and evidence that the features are not present (field reconnaissance will be required)
>
> b.   is vagrant to the area. Vagrancy is taken as the record being well outside the species range or natural distribution. The suspect record will need to be reviewed against the species known distribution and the assessor will need to confirm with species experts that it is likely to be a vagrant. If agreed by experts the assessor should contact DPIE to have the record quarantined from BioNet Atlas and re-labelled as vagrant. The BAR will need to contain supporting information such as who was contacted, when, their credentials and the resultant response from DPIE.

A species can also be removed from the candidate list (i.e. species credit species) if:

c.   the habitat constraints listed in the TBDC or known microhabitats that the species requires to persist on or use because the habitat constraints are degraded to the point where the species will no longer be present. Evidence in the BAR could include reference to the attribute scores for in the vegetation integrity assessment to illustrate the poor condition of the site. Other information sources include peer-reviewed or other published information relating to the microhabitats used by the species, photographic evidence and maps etc that illustrate these features are significantly degraded.

Note that we have also corrected Update 19 to include the line that was omitted.