



Tanami bioregion

Description

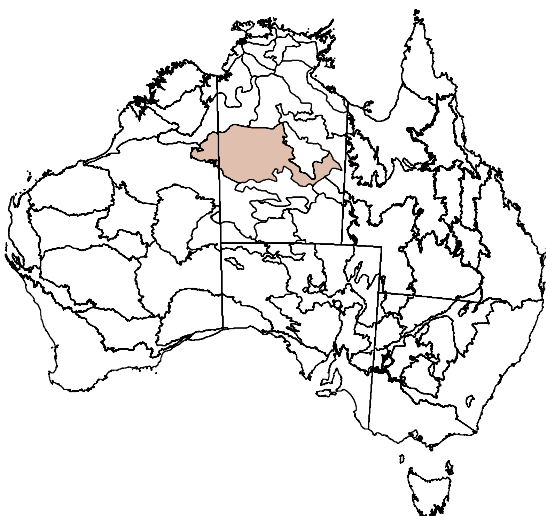
Area: 259 970 km²

The Tanami bioregion is found in both Western Australia (WA) and the Northern Territory (NT). Landscapes are mainly featureless sand plains with small areas of alluvial plains, low ridges and stony rises. Vegetation is predominantly spinifex hummock grassland with a tall-sparse shrub overstorey. The land is mostly Aboriginal freehold, with some pastoral leases and conservation reserves in the NT. Pastoralism, gold mining and tourism are important industries. Major population centres are Tennant Creek, Lajamanu and Ali Curung.

Location

The Tanami bioregion is located in the central NT (88% of bioregion area), extending into WA (12% of the area). Figure 1 shows the location of the Tanami bioregion.

Figure 1 Location of the Tanami bioregion



Data sources available

Site-based monitoring data are not available.

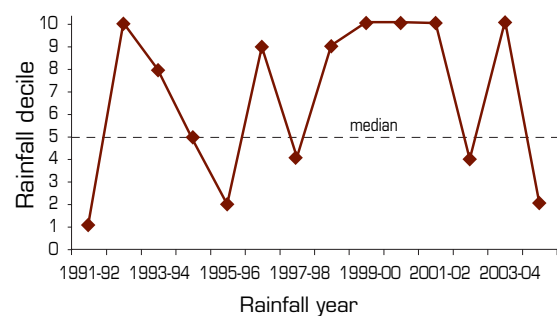
Other data sources include:

- fire extent, intensity and frequency, which provides high reliability for reporting change
- distance from water
- distribution and relative abundance of invasive animals and weeds
- land use
- conservation estate.

Climate

The climate of the Tanami bioregion is semiarid with a monsoonal influence. Rainfall is summer dominant and the spatially averaged median (1890–2005) rainfall is 298 mm (April to March rainfall year; see Figure 2).

Figure 2 Decile rainfall for the period 1991–1992 to 2004–2005



Annual rainfall is for the 12-month period 1 April to 31 March.



Decile rainfall was highly variable throughout the reporting period, with some particularly wet years (1992–1993, 1998–1999 to 2000–2001, and 2003–2004). There were also notably dry years (1991–1992, 1995–1996 and 2004–2005).

Note that regional averaging of rainfall almost certainly conceals spatial variability in this large bioregion. Some parts of the Tanami bioregion probably experienced slightly better *seasonal quality* and others worse during the 1992–2005 period.

Landscape function

There are no suitable data for reporting change in landscape function.

Sustainable management

Critical stock forage

There are no suitable data for reporting change in critical stock forage.

Plant species richness

There are no suitable data for reporting change in plant species richness.

Change in woody cover

There are no suitable data for reporting change in woody cover.

Distance from stock water

Most (approximately 75%) of the bioregion is not grazed and so is remote from stock waterpoints. Insufficient of the grazed area has been analysed to reliably report distance from stock water.

Weeds

Weeds known to occur in the Tanami bioregion include:

Common name	Scientific name
Athel pine	<i>Tamarix aphylla</i>
Bellyache bush	<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>
Calotrope	<i>Calotropis procera</i>
Hyptis	<i>Hyptis suaveolens</i>
Parkinsonia	<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>
<i>Sida</i> spp.	<i>Sida</i> spp.

See www.anra.gov.au for distribution maps

Components of total grazing pressure

Domestic stocking density

Although grazing occupies approximately 25% of the bioregion area, data lack reliability to report change in stocking density.

Kangaroos

There are no suitable data for reporting change in kangaroo populations.

Invasive animals

Invasive animal species known to occur in the Tanami bioregion include:

Common name	Scientific name
Feral pig	<i>Sus scrofa</i>
Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>
Wild dog	<i>Canis</i> spp.
Feral cat	<i>Felis catus</i>
Camel	<i>Camelus dromedaries</i>
Donkey	<i>Equus asinus</i>
Horse	<i>Equus caballus</i>

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Products that support reporting of landscape function and sustainable management

Fire

Fire extent between 1997 and 2005 was variable. Significant areas burnt between 1999 and 2002 and again in 2004 during and following exceptionally wet years.

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
% area burnt	4.1	2.6	13.5	34.2	30.5	30.6	2.3	18.8	0.6

The greatest area burnt for most years was during the cooler months (April to November) when fires were likely to be less intense than those occurring through the summer months.

The frequency of fire during the reporting period was moderate to high compared with all rangeland bioregions, with a mean frequency (\log_{10} transformed) of 0.28.

Dust

The mean Dust Storm Index value (1992–2005) was 2.26, which was a moderate value compared with all rangeland bioregions. Dust levels were fairly uniform across the whole bioregion apart from the far west (in WA), where they were negligible.

Biodiversity

In the Tanami bioregion, there are (Biodiversity Working Group indicator: Threatened species; see **Section 7 of Chapter 3** of *Rangelands 2008 — Taking the Pulse*):

- 1 threatened plant species
- 17 threatened mammal species (including 8 extinct species)

- 6 threatened bird species
- 1 threatened reptile species
- 1 threatened invertebrate species.

There are records for 110 reptile, 215 bird and about 1200 plant taxa (Biodiversity Working Group indicators: Flora surveys and Fauna surveys).

Socioeconomic characteristics

Land use and value

One quarter (25%) of the Tanami bioregion is grazed. This area has not changed appreciably over the 1992–2005 reporting period.

Key management issues and features

Key issues and features of the Tanami bioregion include the following:

- NT:
 - Feral camels, horses and donkeys are management issues in the southeast of the bioregion. Control programs are being developed.
 - *Parkinsonia* is establishing around watering points on pastoral leases on the edge of the bioregion.
- WA:
 - Camels are increasing in number.