

Life in Wallum Country

Wallum country is a small strip just inland from the coast of south-east Queensland and north-east New South Wales. The word “wallum” is thought to have come from the indigenous Kabi Kabi people’s word for the Banksia tree that grows in the country. Seasonal rain turns the wallum country into an acidic swamp.



Large trees cannot easily survive in wallum country, due to the nutrient-poor soil and windy conditions. However, many other plants thrive in the acidic, sandy soils. There are many varied grasses and smaller shrubs such as the Banksia. In natural conditions, fire maintains the grassy wallum heathlands, allowing new seeds to germinate and preventing tree growth.

The grasses and shrubs feed a variety of insects, which in turn are eaten by small birds such as the fairy wren.

The fairy wren also sometimes eats seeds from the grasses. Larger species of birds, including honeyeaters and hawks can also live in wallum country. Honeyeater birds feed on the nectar from the flowers on the shrubs, whereas the hawks eat small birds, snakes and frogs.

A few different varieties of snakes live in wallum heathland. They eat small birds and frogs. Lace monitors also roam the area, looking for food. Lace monitors eat small birds, insects and small snakes, and are eaten by hawks and foxes.



Lace Monitor
photo by: M Tattersall 2018

It takes a special sort of frog to survive in wallum country. The acidic swamps are not good for most frogs, however some are specially adapted to survive in this habitat. Wallum country is home to the Wallum sedgefrog, the Wallum rocket frog and other species. They catch and eat insects. Unfortunately, because wallum country is being increasingly used for housing developments and pine tree plantations, these frogs are gradually losing their natural habitat.

habitat.

Wallum banksia: Thought to be the origin of the aboriginal word “wallum”.



Wallum rocket frog



Life in Wallum Country – Organisms highlighted for assisted Food Web Construction

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Wallum swamp

Photo by: Doug Beckers, 2013

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Wallum rocket frog

Food Web: Wallum Country

