

Regional Highlights Case Study

North Coast Weeds Action Plan driving the contemporary approach to weed management

The NSW North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee (NCWAC) region is one of the fastest growing areas in NSW and includes some of the highest biodiversity values in the state. The region has a sub tropical climate combined with fertile soils and the highest rainfall of any area in the state. These features render it as possibly the most vulnerable part of NSW to the invasion of new plant species and further the proliferation of existing weeds.

The North Coast Weeds Action Program (NCWAP) takes a very proactive approach to the threat of these new invasive plants by targeting high risk species and the pathways through which they enter the region. Through this strategic approach, several species new to the region have been discovered, their location mapped and all known infestations controlled. In addition, further infestations of high risk species have been discovered as a result of the NCWAP and their impacts reduced in the region.

The NCWAP is closely aligned with the key objectives of the NSW Invasive Species Plan (ISP). The following examples from year 1 of the NCWAP demonstrate that the goals of the ISP are integrated into all facets of weed management in the region.

1. Exclude – prevent the establishment of new species

- Far North Coast Weeds has identified that Siam Weed would successfully establish in the region and has identified possible vectors and put in place community education as a preventative measure. Inspection programs have ensured that none has established to date.
- A coordinated extension program incorporating media releases, advertising and public awareness has been developed to build the community knowledge of invasive species which could establish in the region as a preventative means (photo 1 and 2)

2. Eradicate or contain – eliminate, or prevent the spread of new species

- Far North Coast Weeds has implemented an intensive program to identify isolated infestations of Alligator Weed. These infestations have been mapped, managed and monitored.
- Tropical Soda Apple (TSA) has been identified in Far North Coast Weeds region, Clarence Valley and Nambucca Shires. All isolated sites have been effectively managed and are subject to an ongoing monitoring program to ensure that there is no regeneration and spread
- Water Lettuce has been identified, eradicated and appropriately disposed of in Nambucca Shire (photo 3)

3. Effectively manage – reduce the impact of widespread invasive species

- 4414 high risk sites were inspected (equates to 21 964ha) for established and emerging high priority weeds
- 7724km high risk pathways (rivers, roads, creeks) were inspected for known high priority weeds
- 88329ha of other priority sites (wetlands) were inspected for known high priority weeds
- 13615 private property inspections were undertaken across the NCWAC region
- In addition, LCA's are working closely with landholders to promote use of best practices on their own land and integration of ISP principles in their own activities

4. Capacity building - expand in Extension and Education

- Extension programs are targeted and focus on the identification, education and reporting of new species combined with best practice management of established species. Capacity building is further expended in the Community Extension and Education section.

The NCWAP focuses on strategic invasive species management rather than providing an ad hoc approach to weed control in the region. The focus on exclusion and eradication, targeted extension and rollout of a coordinated mapping program ensures that the NCWAP is providing the very best returns for the environment and for the landholders of the NCWAC region.

WANTED INFORMATION



Cecropia peltata AKA Trumpet Tree. AKA Snakewood

Description:
Tree to 20m high. Stems with u shaped leaf scars. Leaves round in outline, with 7-11 lobes; seedling leaves unlobed.

Fruit: Grey-green, slightly fleshy, single-seeded.
Seeds: Brown, about 2mm long
Dispersal: Spread by birds, bats and possums

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

- Hollow stems partitioned at nodes
- Lobed leaves 10-60cm wide with stalk attached away from the margin
- Upper leaf surface dark green, lower surface densely covered with white hairs

EARLY DETECTION AND MAPPING
FNCW requires your assistance in identifying the location of Cecropia plants. Early detection through reports from the public will assist in mapping Cecropia distribution across our region. Gaining an understanding of its current spread will help in determining its invasive potential and whether it poses a threat to our environment.

IF YOU HAVE THINK YOU HAVE SEEN THIS WEED PLEASE CONTACT FAR NORTH COAST WEEDS FOR POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION AND ASSISTANCE.
We are the Far North Coast County Council covering Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Lismore City, Richmond Valley and Kyogle Shires. We work with all communities in the fight against weeds. By working together in weed management we will protect our region's environmental values and agricultural industries.



FAR NORTH COAST WEEDS (02) 6623 3933
219-232 MOLESWORTH ST, LISMORE | WWW.FNCW.NSW.GOV.AU

Photo 1 – Coordinated Extension Program

Photo 2 – Coordinated Extension Program

FNCW services the community of the Northern Rivers region by controlling noxious weeds on roadsides and conducting inspections of private property.

The area covered includes all of Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Lismore City, Richmond Valley and Kyogle shires.

FNCW Noxious Weed Officer for Tweed Shire is Howard Alston. Please contact Howard on 0427 335 506 for advice on noxious weed control and identification.

FNCW head office is located in Molesworth Street, Lismore, within the Rural Water Administration Centre.

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HAVE YOU SEEN THIS PLANT?

Watch out for miconia

Please check your gardens and land for miconia.

Miconia is one of the world's most invasive plants, with the potential to take over Australia's tropical and sub-tropical rainforests. The plant has been banned from sale since 1990 but it still exists along the coast east of Alstonville.

Identifying and destroying these plants is vital to the protection of our tropical plants and animals.

What does Miconia look like?

- Miconia is a small tree that grows up to 15 metres high.
- Its leaves are large – up to 70 cm long – with a vibrant purple underside.
- Three prominent veins run along the length of the leaf.
- Flowers are white to pink 4-6mm wide and arranged in panicles.

- Individual flowers are 4.5 cm wide.
- Fruits are 6mm in diameter and turn purple-black when ripe. Fruiting birds feed on the plants berries, spreading them into surrounding forests and gardens.




Miconia infestation now covers up to 70 per cent of Tahiti.

Alligators infest the north coast

Alligator weed (*Aelochloa catenulata*) is a perennial herb native to South America.

Believed to have arrived in ships ballast water in the 1940s, alligator weed has now overtaken rip and down the east coast. The spread was enabled by its ability to grow on both dry land and in water.

Sub-tropical parts of the world's worst weeds, alligator weed poses a real threat to agriculture and the natural environment, capable of out-competing many aquatic and terrestrial plants.

It is currently listed as a Weed of National Significance (WONS) as it has the potential to restrict water flow, deplete water bodies, increase transmission of disease, vegetation and dominate food chains.

Only very small fragments containing rhizomes are required to produce new plants and can be easily spread by water-birds, floods or machinery and livestock.

It can be identified by the dark green, glossy, spear-shaped leaves in an opposite arrangement along the hollow stem.

The flowers are a small, papery structure, spherical, in shape attached on a small stalk extending from the nodes.

The physical appearance of this weed can vary widely depending on the environment it is growing.

Up close with alligator.

If you suspect you have a problem with alligator weed or you believe you have the location of the weed please call Far North Coast Weeds on (02) 6623 3833 for advice and assistance.






Far North Coast Weeds
Far North Coast County Council

Photo 3 Water Lettuce Nambucca Shire

