

Balla Balla Magnetite Project: barge-loading facility

Forge Resources



CLIENT:

Forge Resources Limited

LOCATION:

Northern coastal Pilbara

SERVICES:

- Migratory shorebird survey
- Impact assessment
- Mitigation and management strategies

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- First comprehensive assessment of the national and international significance of Forestier Bay to migratory shorebirds
- Impact assessment based on detailed dataset enabled demonstration of low impact
- Mitigation strategy designed to ensure negligible impacts on migratory shorebirds
- Project approved at the state level and is currently being submitted for EPBC referral

Surveys conducted for the project provided the first thorough assessment of the significance of Forestier Bay to migratory shorebirds as well as sufficient data to satisfy the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) that impacts from the project on shorebirds would be acceptable.

A preliminary desktop review for terrestrial fauna indicated the potential for the project area to potentially support large numbers of migratory shorebirds. A monthly survey strategy was established across the peak season for migratory shorebirds in order to assess species diversity and distribution.

Despite a small project footprint, the migratory shorebird survey area was extended to the entire Forestier Bay to encompass the 'habitat unit' the bay represented.

A helicopter was used for the survey because of the expansive size of the survey area, access difficulties (few tracks and large tidal flows) and the varied nature of the terrain (mangroves, extensive tidal flats and inland salt lake). The use of the helicopter enabled aerial counts, access to all sites for ground counts and an assessment of the five islands within the bay.

Multiple monthly surveys demonstrated that the bay supports nationally and/or internationally significant populations for several species, fulfils RAMSAR listing criteria and is therefore probably one of the most important bird areas in the coastal Pilbara region.

Phoenix conducted a robust, objective impact assessment determining that the project would have minimal impacts on the conservation values of the bay for migratory shorebirds. Mitigation measures were developed with the aim of ensuring negligible impacts and minimal risk to shorebirds.

Regular liaison with the client ensured this project was implemented smoothly. Effective collaboration with the client and lead consultant, particularly through workshops, contributed to a highly favourable outcome for the client (expedited assessment under the *EP Act*).