



## Kakadu National Park

### CREATING A WILDLIFE REFUGE ON GARDANGARL (FIELD ISLAND)

*This project involves practical action to improve the long-term viability of Kakadu's threatened wildlife through the management of an island refuge.*

## Year 2 update (3-year project)

### OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

- A small mammal survey was carried out in August 2015, revealing a high abundance of grassland melomys (*Melomys burtoni*), but no small-medium mammal diversity beyond this species. A vegetation assessment of the island was completed by the NT Government Department of Land and Resource Management, to assess habitat suitability for future translocations.
- Cane toad monitoring in 2016 discovered many toadlets and a few adults in and around freshwater creeks and swamps. While toads die off once the island's freshwater seasonally dries up, cane toad control measures have now been implemented, using solar-powered cane toad traps.
- A burning program of cool patch burning has been implemented to begin breaking up fuel loads and diversify habitats.
- Plans are underway to translocate the threatened brush-tailed rabbit-rat (*Conilurus penicillatus*) to Field Island from Garig Ganuk Barlu National Park on the Cobourg Peninsula. This translocation aims to establish an additional viable population on the feral predator-free island to support conservation of the species. Approval for the translocation has been gained from the Cobourg Board of Management and a translocation plan prepared. The translocation of ~30 individuals is planned for April-May 2017. Once released on the island, animals will initially be tracked daily to monitor dispersal, while ongoing monitoring will use cameras and trapping. In collaboration with Charles Darwin University, nest boxes will be installed on the island to increase the survival rate of the rabbit-rats.



Kakadu National Park officer monitoring cane toads at a Field Island freshwater soak