

Media Release:

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The Life of Inland Waters

More than 200 scientists, environmental managers and landholders from across Australia will converge on Alice Springs when the annual scientific conference of the Australia Society for Limnology (ASL) takes on a desert flavour from 28 September to 1 October 2009.

Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) senior scientist Angus Duguid said this is the 48th annual ASL conference but this will be the first to be held in central Australia.

“Limnology is the study of inland water, covering the physical processes, geology, hydrology and biology including the plants and animals that inhabit these precious ecosystems,” Mr Duguid said.

“The conference is unique as it gives water scientists a different perspective on Australia’s water resources, and many participants have never been to central Australia.

“The aquatic environments in central Australia display an amazing diversity of dependent species.

“Waterholes in rivers, isolated rockholes, claypans and swamps are all common wetland types and these wetlands range enormously in size from vast salt lakes to small spring fed pools.

“Some of the species that rely on these wetlands include fishes, frogs, aquatic birds, bats, water-bugs (aquatic macro-invertebrates) and plants.”

NRETAS staff based in Alice Springs are helping organise the conference and will present the results of research and management work in central Australia.

“Research work undertaken by NRETAS includes surveys of plants and animals at important sites and valuable collaborations with Aboriginal land owners,” Mr Duguid said.

“The Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service undertakes important land management practices both on national parks and reserves, and supports other landholders, in regards to feral animal control to preserve our precious natural resources.

“The NRETAS Natural Resources Division also plays a vital role in understanding the roles of both groundwater and surface water in sustaining desert wetlands.”

Mr Duguid said Aboriginal people and culture have an intimate relationship with wetlands for drinking water, food and spiritual values and this will also be explored during the conference.

“The people of central Australia can be proud of the natural assets of our environment and the desert wetlands can rightly be called the jewels of our crown,” Mr Duguid said.

“With Alice Springs hosting the ASL conference these jewels will be in the national spotlight.”

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Media Note – for more information contact Angus Duguid on 8951 8793

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