



Figure 1: Waterbirds in flight over flooded wetlands, east of Gingham Waterhole in the Gwydir Wetland State Conservation Area. Photo Credit: Jared Reid

## A Wet Gwydir Wetlands

After a dry 2019, conditions over the last two years have been kinder to the Gwydir Wetlands with a hefty sum of 883 mm of rain recorded in 2021 against the long-term average of 537 mm at Moree.

A full dam, a wetted up system and whole lot of rainfall towards the end of 2021 across the Gwydir catchment has resulted in widespread and enduring inundation of the Gwydir Wetlands. This flow from natural flooding is now being supplemented by water for the environment.

After prolonged wet conditions during 2021, it's no surprise how well the vegetation is doing (check out the height of that Typha in Figure 2).

**Gomeri First Nations**  
 People harvest *Burrarra* (Typha in Gamilarraay Language) as a food source, for leaves to weave baskets and mats, and at times its stems would be used as a light spear for hunting the animals inhabiting burrarra such as ducks, fish and snakes. Typha can provide shelter for a diverse range of aquatic species and nesting habitat for waterbirds including straw-necked ibis which are congregating in their thousands to nest in the Gwydir Wetlands this summer.

These natural flows have triggered large scale colonial waterbird nesting to occur in the wetlands for the first time in 10 years. We're expecting the frogs and fish to similarly reap the benefits of the replenished system.

Right now, collaborative monitoring is underway looking at the waterbird colonies, wetland conditions and water levels so that we can report back on what these flows mean for the system.



Figure 2: The team making their way through the burrarra (taller plants), knotweed and spike rush (shorter plants) in the Gwydir Wetlands. Photo Credit: Louisa Andersen, NPWS

Managing water for the environment is a collective and collaborative effort, working in partnership with communities, private landholders, scientists and government agencies - these contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live, work and play. We also pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

