

Piloting State of Nature Metrics at a Landscape Scale in Western Australia

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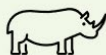
About

The South Coast of Western Australia is one of the most biodiverse regions in the world, spanning more than 8.6 million hectares of mixed land uses, including national parks, conservation areas, plantation forestry, agriculture, viticulture, and other productive landscapes. The region contains areas of exceptionally high conservation value and supports many endemic and threatened species, but it also faces increasing pressures from climate change, land use change, and ecosystem fragmentation.

Improving the state of nature at a landscape scale requires collaboration across land tenures, sectors, and management approaches. While significant conservation investments already exist in the region, there remains a gap in consistent, comparable approaches to measuring nature outcomes across mixed-use landscapes. This lack of a shared measurement framework may act as a barrier to coordinated decision-making, regional planning, and investment in nature-based solutions, but it also represents an opportunity for new initiatives and partnerships.

Nature positive agendas have emerged globally as a shared ambition to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, supported by the Global Biodiversity Framework and a growing set of public and private commitments. In response to the proliferation of fragmented and inconsistent biodiversity metrics, the Nature Positive Initiative (NPI), a coalition of leading conservation organisations, standard-setters, and sustainable business platforms, launched a global pilot program in 2025 to test a draft set of universal terrestrial State of Nature Metrics (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Draft Terrestrial State of Nature Metrics for Piloting

	ECOSYSTEM EXTENT		ECOSYSTEM CONDITION		SPECIES
Universal Indicators	Ecosystem Extent 		Site condition 	Landscape Condition 	Species Extinction Risk 
Case-specific Triggers	If Priority Ecosystems are present, also measure:	If located in an Intensive Land Use Biome, also measure:	If Priority Ecosystems are present, also measure:	If located in an Intensive Land Use Biome, also measure:	If Priority Species are present, also measure:
Case-specific Indicators	Extent of priority ecosystems 	Proportion of semi-natural habitat 	Condition of priority ecosystems 	Condition of semi-natural habitat 	Species population abundance 

Source: NPI, 2025.¹ These metrics have been subsequently revised following pilot and consultation feedback and applied to the freshwater and marine realms. They will be finalised in 2026, please see www.naturepositive.org/metrics.

The pilot program was designed to assess whether a small, aligned set of ecosystem and species indicators can provide a scientifically credible and practically applicable way to measure the state of nature across sectors and geographies, and to support greater harmonisation across emerging nature-related frameworks and initiatives. The pilot also provided an opportunity to test the legibility and usability of indicators with local land managers.

¹ Available at https://www.naturepositive.org/app/uploads/2025/02/Draft-State-of-Nature-Metrics-for-Piloting_170125.pdf.

Key Initiative

To explore whether the NPI State of Nature Metrics could support landscape-scale collaboration and decision-making, New Forests partnered with South Coast Natural Resource Management (SCNRM), PF Olsen, and BirdLife Australia to deliver a regional pilot in the South Coast of Western Australia as a component of New Forests' broader NPI State of Nature Metrics pilot. This pilot in Western Australia was the only landscape-level project in the pilot program, providing valuable and unique insights for partners and broader stakeholders.

The regional pilot was designed to test whether the NPI State of Nature Metrics could deliver practical and strategic value across several dimensions, including assessing the metrics' ability to:

- Strengthen asset resilience and value by applying consistent, landscape-scale measures that identify material nature-related risks and opportunities and to inform targeted management actions.
- Enhance portfolio transparency and build investor confidence by determining whether nature-related outcomes can be measured and communicated in a credible, comparable, and globally aligned manner.
- Support SCNRM's Natural Capital Program through improved evaluation, communication, and prioritization of nature-based projects, while establishing a common evidence base to guide future investment decisions and alignment with global nature initiatives.

The analysis was conducted across multiple spatial scales, including:

- Approximately 56,000 hectares of plantation forestry, cropping, and conservation areas, as part of New Forests' Forestry Investment Trust (FIT) portfolio managed by PF Olsen.
- Three priority SCNRM sites, ranging from 500,000 hectares to 2.5 million hectares, encompassing agriculture, forestry, conservation, and mixed land uses.
- The broader South Coast region, covering over 8.6 million hectares.

Importantly, the pilot was grounded in practical application, with a focus on ensuring the metrics reflect on-the-ground realities and provide meaningful value to regional stakeholders managing diverse land uses. To achieve this, the pilot engaged two global geospatial providers to calculate the metrics, primarily using satellite-based datasets to test whether a lower-cost, lower-granularity approach could deliver meaningful insights. These datasets were supplemented with local spatial layers and ground-based data, including bird survey information. The pilot also included extensive stakeholder engagement, with workshops held to share results with regional partners, representatives of traditional custodians, researchers, government representatives, and industry groups.

Impact

The pilot demonstrated that NPI State of Nature Metrics provide a useful starting point for regional-scale conversations about nature condition and connectivity across mixed-tenure landscapes. While satellite-based calculations at low granularity were found to be insufficient for detailed regional decision-making on their own, they showed value as a screening and hot-spotting tool to identify areas that may warrant further investigation, conservation, or restoration. The NPI State of Nature Metrics show potential to support strategic decision-making, including but not limited to:

- Supporting assessments of ecosystem condition and functional connectivity across large landscapes.
- Informing where additional local ecological data or ground-based monitoring is required.
- Facilitating engagement among diverse stakeholders by providing a shared conceptual framework for discussing the state of nature.
- Highlighting data gaps and other limitations to support robust, decision-relevant measurement.

While the nature metrics are not a substitute for on-ground ecological data, they play a valuable role in enabling collaboration, guiding investment discussions, and supporting more coordinated approaches to improving nature outcomes at a landscape scale.

New Forests, SCNRM, PF Olsen, and BirdLife Australia recommend that other organisations test whether the NPI State of Nature Metrics can help inform regional land management, provide a useful framework for collaborative regional nature-related initiatives, and support scaled investment into delivering nature positive outcomes. The piloting organisations welcome engagement with other groups to improve data quality and availability in the South Coast region.