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GLOSSARY⁶

Air photo interpretation (API)

The examination of photographic images for the purpose of identifying objects and patterns and judging their significance (Wolf 1974). API may involve mapping the features of interest from a single photo or from two photos (known as a stereo pair), in which case the interpreter has the benefit of seeing the features in three dimensions. API is both an art and a science, and in general the more experienced the interpreter the better the result. When used for salinity mapping API is seeking to map direct evidence of salt at the surface, or is seeking to infer its presence in the root zone through signs that the vegetation is suffering or through signs that salinity has caused actual changes in the type of vegetation over time.

Asset

A natural or human-made physical entity considered to be of value to humans or future generations, such as land used for cropping, pasture, agricultural produce, built assets, water supplies, and natural entities such as forest, rivers, lakes used for recreation or used to retain wilderness or biodiversity.

Biodiversity

The variety of all life forms—the differing plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems of which

they form a part (CoA 1996). Australia's biodiversity is one of its most precious bequeathed assets and this asset is directly under threat ('at risk') as a result of salinity.

Biophysics

The science that deals with the application of physics to biological processes and phenomena.

Cadastral map

A map showing the parcels of land ownership.

Calibration

- 1. (Engineering)** Adjustments made to an instrument or system so that it reads to the highest possible accuracy. A calibrated instrument should specify error bounds of the measurement.
- 2. (Geophysical surveys)** To adjust processing parameters so that data from one type of survey (e.g. airborne) agree with data from another (e.g. surface and borehole measurements), sometimes by applying constraints in an **inversion** process.
- 3. (Resource Management)** Often used in the sense of 'correlation', where one quantity is numerically related to another quantity. Linear regression is commonly used to derive this calibration relationship.

⁶ Many of these definitions draw from the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Applied Geophysics*, by RE Sheriff: Society of Exploration Geophysics, Tulsa USA, 2002.20d.; CRC LEME/Geoscience Australia, (Ken Lawrie, Matt Gray, Andrew Fitzpatrick, Paul Wilkes, Richard Lane, Colin Pain & Ian Lambert); *Assessing cost-effective salinity mapping strategies using a landscape-based approach to methodologies and technology selection* (see also Lawrie et al. 2003)

Digital elevation models (DEM)

Computer-based representations of the topography of the surface of the Earth. They usually comprise a grid of regularly spaced elevation values that can show the surface in three dimensions. They can be derived from a variety of techniques including:

- aerial photos using photogrammetric techniques;
- multispectral satellite imagery;
- airborne laser scanning; and
- airborne or satellite radar interferometry.

Modern systems can generate DEM with vertical accuracies of 1 to 5 m or better. In future vertical accuracies of around a few millimetres may be possible with new satellite-based radar techniques.

As a rule of thumb the vertical accuracy of a given DEM for any area should be about 1% of the total elevation range of the area. So if the area of interest has a total elevation range of 600 m the vertical accuracy should be approximately 6 m. They may also be known as digital terrain models (DTM).

Dryland salinity

The following description is taken from *Australian Dryland Salinity Assessment 2000* of the National Land and Water Resources Audit, 2001. Two broad forms of salinity are recognised in Australia.

- **Primary** or naturally occurring salinity is part of the Australian landscape, and reflects the development of this landscape over time. Examples are the marine plains found around the

coastline of Australia, and the salt lakes in central and western Australia.

Salts are distributed widely across the Australian landscapes. They originate mainly from depositions of oceanic salt from rain and wind. Salt stored in the soil or groundwater is concentrated through evaporation and transpiration by plants. In a healthy catchment, salt is slowly leached downwards and stored below the root zone, or out of the system.

- **Secondary** salinity is the salinisation of land and water resources due to land use impacts by people. It includes salinity that results from watertable rises from irrigation systems—**irrigation salinity**—and from dryland management systems—**dryland salinity**. Both forms of salinity are due to rising watertables mobilising salt in the soil. There is no fundamental difference in the hydrologic process.

Where the water balance has been altered due to changing land use (e.g. clearing of native vegetation for broadacre farming or grazing) the excess water entering the watertable mobilises salt which then rises to the land surface. Movement of water drives salinisation processes and may move the stored salt towards the soil surface or into surface water bodies. It is the combination of the effects of salt and its movement by water through the landscape that leads to the creation of dryland salinity.

Electrical conductivity (EC)

The ability of electrical current to pass through a substance. EC is commonly used to estimate the amount of soluble salt in solution. EC measurements can be made with a range of devices on ground and stream water, soils, and soil-paste extracts. Units of electrical conductivity are commonly given in mS/m, dS/m or $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$; $100 \text{ mS}/\text{m} = 1 \text{ dS}/\text{m} = 1000 \text{ }\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. Here, *S* is the symbol for siemens, and the prefixes *d* is deci (10^{-1}), *c* is centi (10^{-2}), *m* is milli (10^{-3}) and μ is micro (10^{-6}).

Geographic information system (GIS)

A computer-based mapping system that records information about objects at any point in the landscape. Such information includes the location, type, size, boundaries, neighbours, history, distances to other objects and many more data depending on the amount of information actually collected. The GIS offers an efficient storage, retrieval and analysis approach for any map-based information.

Geophysics

The study of the Earth by quantitative physical methods, such as magnetics, electromagnetics, gamma ray spectrometry (radiometrics), seismology and gravity.

Geophysical interpretation

Determination of the location, size, geometry and depth of bodies in the subsurface from spatial measurements of a geophysical field such as magnetics, electromagnetics, gravity. Multiple interpretations are often made based on different assumptions depending on the type

of **model**. Interpretations should be constrained by known information from ground observations or drill hole data, and may use computer-based **inversion** techniques.

Geomorphology

The branch of geology and geography that deals with the study of the evolution and configuration of landforms.

Ground penetrating/probing radar (GPR)

A **radar** system used to map the shallow subsurface using electromagnetic waves, usually in the 10 to 1000 MHz band. The two-way travel times of reflected radar waves give the depths to where changes in electrical properties occur. The antennae of GPR systems are held in close contact with the ground to reduce surface reflections and maximise depth range.

Hazard

For the purposes of this book, a hazard is defined as anything that can potentially cause harm to an asset (NLWRA 2001). Salt becomes a hazard when it has the potential to move into a position where it has the ability to threaten an asset. Water is the means by which salt moves in the landscape. Thus a dryland salinity hazard will mean the combination of salt with the potential for movement by surface or groundwater.

The word threat can be used interchangeably with hazard in the context of this review.

Hydrogeology

The branch of geology that deals with the occurrence, distribution, and effect of groundwater.

Groundwater is important in salinity studies, because it controls the mobilisation and movement of salt through the landscape.

Hydrology

The scientific study of the properties, distribution, and effects of water on the Earth's surface, in the soil and underlying rocks, and in the atmosphere.

Hyperspectral imagery

A form of **remote sensing** that involves the acquisition of images at typically tens to hundreds of sensor wavelengths using an airborne or spaceborne imaging spectrometer that collects electromagnetic radiation, typically from visible light to the shortwave infrared (0.4 – 2.5 μm) and less commonly at thermal infrared (8 – 12 μm) wavelengths. Hyperspectral systems have continuous wavelength coverage (i.e. their wavelength channels are contiguous). Interpreted or derived information is usually presented using 'false-colour images' that use colours to show the spatial distribution of different mineral or environmental targets (see *multispectral remote sensing*).

Impact

The consequence of an occurrence (e.g. increasing salinity) on an asset such as a person, entity or the environment.

Information product

A map-based product that provides information of immediate use for decision making. Information products are derived from a range of data that may be in mapped form through a process of expert assessment. A typical information product may be a whole-of-farm map and plan that shows the location of assets such as productive pasture and the presence of salt somewhere below it.

Interpretation

The process of converting data to useable information. In a geoscientific context, interpretation is the derivation of a simple, plausible geological or other **model** that is compatible with all observed data. The model is never unique or complete and should be refined as more data comes to hand. Everything about an area should be considered when formulating an interpretation (see *air photo interpretation, geophysical interpretation*).

Inversion

Deriving from field data a geologically plausible **model** of the subsurface that is consistent with observed data (also known as inverse modelling).

Landscape processes

The complex interactions between the natural events of the environment and the impact of human land use. The natural events include the movement of water through gravity and other forces, solar irradiation, climate, weather, plant and animal growth, droughts and floods and so on. Human land

use includes the cultivation of land, construction of built assets such as roads and dwellings, irrigation, management of national parks, forestry, and other activities. It is the interaction of human activities and the natural processes that have led to the occurrence of dryland or secondary salinity in Australia.

Lidar (light detection and ranging)

A **radar** system that operates using visible, near infra-red or ultra-violet light. Lidar systems can measure surface material properties as well as deriving accurate DEM.

Mapping methods

In this book a salinity mapping method is any technique on its own, or in combination with another, that can be used to detect or infer the presence, concentration, location and extent of salinity at the time at which the techniques are applied. The extent is best defined by considering the breadth, width, and depth (the primary axes of an existing feature; the x, y and z axes) of a patch of salinity of consistent concentration. Salinity mapping methods range from soil sampling for salt concentrations to the use of satellite-based techniques for mapping vegetation that is indicative of salt in the root zone. Soils, groundwater, regolith, vegetation and other spatial data can also be mapped using mapping methods.

Model

A concept from which to deduce effects in comparison to observations. The 'model' may be conceptual, physical or mathematical. Models are essential in any **interpretation** or **inversion**.

Modelling

The process of developing a better understanding of observations.

1. The use of interpolating techniques to produce a contiguous picture of the Earth expressed in two and three dimensions from point-based data (put simply, the joining of the dots).

2. Forecasting into the future the likely extent, location and amount of a feature. In this book, modelling is often used in this context; as a forecasting technique for the likely location and concentration of salinity in the future. Therefore modelling introduces the fourth dimension, time.

3. The computer simulation of a mapping method over a particular scenario in order to determine whether that mapping method is suitable for the particular mapping task. Modelling in this sense is often used as a survey planning tool. (see also *numerical modelling*).

Multispectral remote sensing

A form of **remote sensing** that involves the acquisition of images at more than two and typically less than 20 sensor wavelengths using an airborne or spaceborne imaging spectrometer that collects electromagnetic radiation, typically from visible light to the shortwave infrared (0.4 – 2.5 μm) and less commonly at thermal infrared (8 – 12 μm) wavelengths.

Multispectral systems do not have continuous wavelength coverage, or necessarily evenly spaced wavelength channels. The precise wavelengths of the channels are generally chosen to sense spectral features of specific targets.

Interpreted or derived information is usually presented using 'false-colour images' that use colours to show the

spatial distribution of different mineral or environmental targets (see *hyperspectral imagery*).

Numerical modelling

1. Use of numerical techniques to calculate the theoretical response caused by an assumed set of subsurface parameters (also known as forward modelling).

2. Use of direct or iterative methods for deducing subsurface parameters from geophysical or other data (also known as inverse modelling (see *inversion*)).

Palaeochannel

An ancient water channel or stream bed, which has been covered by materials laid down by subsequent geological processes.

Prediction

A reasoning or statement about the future. The application of a modelling technique in the context of this report produces a prediction of the timing, location, extent, and concentration of future salinity, thereby permitting an analysis of the consequences of the prediction.

Radar

A system in which short-wavelength (radio and microwave) electromagnetic waves are transmitted and the energy scattered back from reflecting objects is detected. Acronym for 'radio detection and ranging'. The radar spectrum ranges from P-band (225 – 390 MHz) to V-band (46 – 56 GHz). Airborne and satellite radar systems employ a narrow beam reflected from the ground from which an image similar to air photos is derived. (see also *Lidar* and *ground probing radar*).

Regolith

The unconsolidated material between the surface and fresh bedrock, consisting of products of weathering, transport and deposition. Regolith often has a complex structure and can vary in thickness from a few centimetres to hundreds of metres.

Remote sensing

Remote sensing is the science and art of obtaining information about an object, area or phenomenon through the analysis of data acquired by a device that is not in contact with the object, area or phenomenon under investigation (Lillesand & Keifer 1979). In common usage, remote sensing refers to measurements made at a large distance, usually from high-flying aircraft or Earth satellites, although it can include ground based measurement systems as well. Especially refers to measurements of either natural electromagnetic radiation (**passive techniques**) or radiation from a source near the sensor (**active techniques**) that has been reflected back from the Earth's surface. While the most common data are available for Landsat, Spot and AVHRR, there are many other remote sensing data sources such as radar, airborne geophysics, and the hyperspectral instruments. The information is usually presented using false-colour imaging to create an image of the target species of interest.

Risk

The chance that a hazard will cause harm to an asset at some defined time in the future. Risk is classically defined as an impact (usually an unwanted impact) multiplied by its

likelihood of occurrence at some given time in the future. In effect, it is a way of weighting possible unwanted events by their likelihood. So a highly unlikely but serious impact may be regarded as presenting the same risk as a likely but minor impact (see Chapter 4).

Risk management

The systematic process of identifying, analysing and responding to potential project risk. Risk management includes maximising the probability and impact of positive events and minimising the probability and consequences of events adverse to project objectives (ANAO 2003).

Salinity

The presence of mineral salts such as sodium chloride (NaCl), potassium chloride (KCl), lime (calcium carbonate or CaCO_3), gypsum (calcium sulphate or CaSO_4), either in solution or as solids (see also *dryland salinity*).

Salt

The general term for mineral salts such as sodium chloride (NaCl), potassium chloride (KCl), lime (calcium carbonate or CaCO_3), gypsum (calcium sulphate or CaSO_4).

Scale

The ratio of the dimensions of objectives in real life as represented on maps. They are mainly expressed as the following simple ratios.

1:10 000

1 mm on the map is equivalent to 10 m on the ground, and 1 square mm is equivalent to 0.01 ha. This is a useful scale for representing *paddock level* information.

1:50 000

1 mm on the map is equivalent to 50 m on the ground, and 1 square mm is equivalent to 0.25 ha. This is a useful scale for representing *subcatchment level* information.

1:100 000

1 mm on the map is equivalent to 100 m on the ground, and 1 square mm is equivalent to 1 ha. This is a useful scale for representing *subcatchment and catchment level* information.

1:250 000

1 mm on the map is equivalent to 250 m on the ground, and 1 square mm is equivalent to 6.25 ha. This is a useful scale for *regional* representations.

1:500 000

1 mm on the map is equivalent to 500 m on the ground, and 1 square mm is equivalent to 25 ha. This is a useful scale for *regional* and *State/Territory* representations.

1:1 000 000

1 mm on the map is equivalent to 1 km on the ground, and 1 square mm is equivalent to 100 ha. This is a useful scale for *State/Territory* representations. Forty-one 1:1 000 000 map sheets are required to cover Australia.

The larger the scale the closer one gets to the real life object. Thus 1:10 000 is considered to be large scale in relation to 1:1 000 000 which is considered to be small scale. Expressions of local, regional and national scales are also commonly used.

Sodicity

Measure of the proportion of exchangeable sodium ions in the soil. High sodicity weakens soil structure and increases susceptibility to erosion (erodibility).

Soil chemistry

The chemical composition, structure, properties, and reactions of a soil.

Soil salinity

The accumulation of salts in the environment. Saline soil is normally assumed to be non-alkaline. Where $\text{pH} > 8.5$ the soil is referred to as saline-alkaline (see also *dryland salinity*).

Threat

Threat is considered to have the same meaning as hazard for this report.

Validation

The process used to verify the quality of the outcome of a mapping project. It usually needs to do so by using an independent source of information from that which was used to construct the original map.

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⁷ See also Glossary on p. 221.

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