Vegetation monitoring
Plot Methodology

Saltmarsh Vegetation Plot Tasks

- Setting up the plots (quadrats) for digital photographs
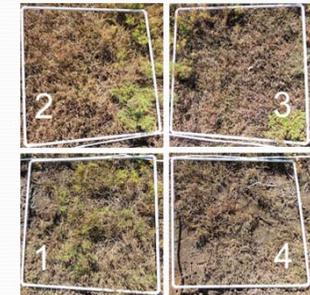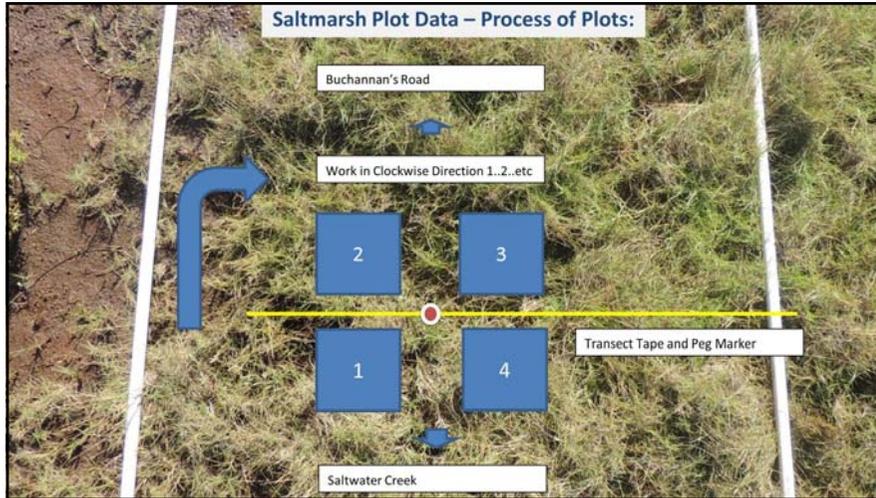- Measuring soil compaction
- Epifauna Gastropod monitoring

Setting up the Plots

- Record the position of the plot within the designated transect
- If the plots are not part of a transect program then record the location of the plot markers including GPS coordinates
- Insert a stake into the ground as a permanent marker for the plots

Plot Quadrat Methods

1. Run out the transect tape and then locate the designated plot stake (e.g. "Plot A" is at the 23 M mark on transect 1)
2. Place the 1 M quadrat in the location and adjacent to the transect tape (refer to the diagram on the right). It is important that you follow a set order for photographing the 4 quadrats associated with the plot marker

Digital Camera Tips

- Holding the camera over the quadrat can be quite demanding especially as you have to avoid standing on the adjacent quadrat.
- Try and keep the camera square and directly over the quadrat and make sure the entire quadrat is in the view finder. Also try and maintain a constant height – say shoulder height.
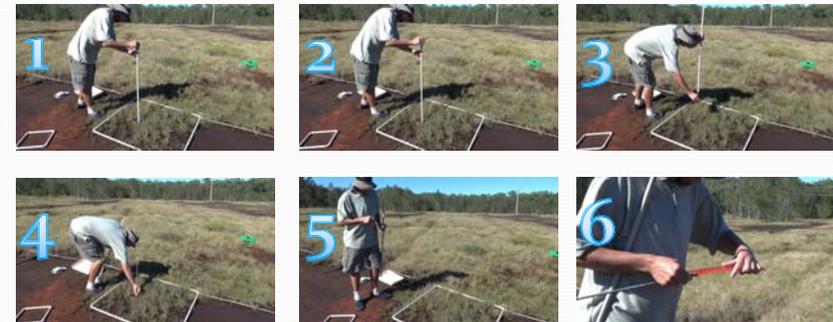- This activity is not recommended for anyone with a back issue.

Measuring Soil Compaction

Place the PVC pipe adjacent to the ground and in a vertical position

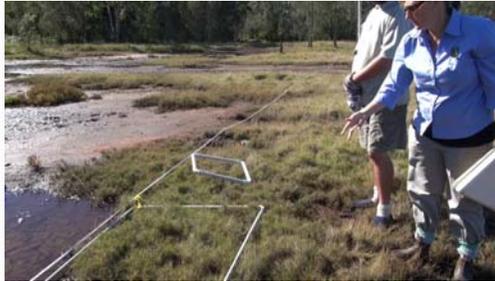With your top hand hold the rod so that it is in line with the top of the PVC pipe

Allow the rod to drop into the substrate

Remove the PVC pipe and grab the rod at the soil surface so you can measure the length of the rod that has penetrated the soil

Epifauna Surveys (Gastropods)

1. Randomly place the 250mm quadrat within the I M plot (quadrat)

Gastropods: "The Catcher"

2. Carefully sort through the vegetation looking for snails greater than 3mm in length and place them in the sorting tray

Gastropods: "The Counter"

1. Write on the datasheet the plot letter and date
2. Examine snails and sort them into groups
3. Take a photo of any different types
4. Record the type and number on the datasheet
5. Return them to the quadrat, intact, and only a little shell shocked!

Sort through vegetation

Sort snails into groups

Record number and type

Return snails to quadrat