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"Human Niche Construction: Noongar Evidence in Pre-colonial Southwestern Australia"

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Through a lens of Human Niche Construction theory, we examine Noongar (an indigenous people of south western Australia) relationships with southwestern Australian flora and suggest influences of these relationships on contemporary botanical patterns in this global biodiversity hotspot. By conducting a review of historical and contemporary literature and drawing upon the contemporary knowledge of Noongar Elders, we examine the merits of five key hypotheses of human niche construction theory in relation to this large cultural group. We find compelling evidence that supports Noongar niche construction, but caution that further research is required to test its likely ecological and evolutionary outcomes. We suggest that further collaborative, multi-disciplinary research that applies Noongar and Western science will lead to a greater understanding of the biological assets of southwestern Australia. (Text from authors' abstract)

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