



CORPORATE POLICY STATEMENT NO. 35

CONSERVING THREATENED SPECIES AND ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES

October 2015

1. OBJECTIVES

1.1 Department of Parks and Wildlife activities will contribute to improving the conservation status of listed threatened species and listed threatened ecological communities, and resolving the conservation status of poorly known species and ecological communities on priority lists.

1.2 Processes threatening the persistence of species and ecological communities (threatening processes) will be managed to reduce their potential impact.

2. SCOPE

This policy, and its implementation strategies, apply to the department's management of threatened and priority species and ecological communities both within and outside the conservation reserve system. The policy will be implemented by the department, in collaboration with private landholders, community partners and key stakeholders, where applicable.

3. CONTEXT

Biodiversity comprises three main elements — genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity. Protecting threatened species and threatened ecological communities are important components of biodiversity conservation. Processes that threaten species and/or ecological communities often operate on a regional or landscape scale and conservation efforts at these scales can potentially be most effective. Site-specific action can also be an effective means to mitigate threatening processes directly impacting species or ecological communities.

Conservation of Western Australia's natural biodiversity is a key responsibility of the department. Conservation of threatened species and threatened ecological communities are also agreed national priorities under *Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030*.

Definitions of terms used in this policy and other related documents referred to in section 6 are provided at Attachment 1.

4. LEGISLATION

Parks and Wildlife is responsible for the administration and implementation of the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* and the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act) that together provide the legal basis for the biodiversity conservation in Western Australia.

Plants and animals may be declared 'likely to become extinct, or rare, or otherwise in need of special protection' under the Wildlife Conservation Act. In common terminology, these species are known as either threatened or otherwise in need of special protection. Threatened ecological communities are not provided for under the Wildlife Conservation Act or CALM Act, but are defined under the Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004 as an ecological community that: (a) has been determined by the Minister to be a threatened ecological community; and (b) is referred to in the list maintained by the chief executive officer of the Department of Parks and Wildlife. The department also maintains lists of priority species and ecological communities, to identify those that are either poorly known and are under consideration for listing as threatened, or which are rare or near threatened and require monitoring and/or ongoing management intervention.

The Australian Government has powers under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) in relation to biodiversity and land management issues that are of national environmental significance. Nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities are included as matters of national environmental significance, and include most threatened species and ecological communities listed in Western Australia. Key threatening processes affecting nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities may also be listed under the EPBC Act.

5. POLICY

The department will, consistent with its statutory functions and government policy and within its finite resources:

- 5.1 Identify species eligible for listing as threatened according to legislation and implement an administrative processes to list them.
- 5.2 Identify species that are eligible for listing as otherwise in need of special protection according to legislation, including those species that are dependent on ongoing conservation intervention to prevent them becoming eligible for listing as threatened, and implement an administrative process to list them.
- 5.3 Identify ecological communities eligible for listing as threatened and implement a non-statutory administrative process to list them, until a process supported by legislation is implemented.
- 5.4 Identify species and ecological communities that are eligible for placing on Priority lists and implement an administrative process to do so.
- 5.5 Identify processes that could lead to species and ecological communities becoming extinct (threatening processes) and, where feasible, implement programs to mitigate their potential impacts.
- 5.6 Implement recovery actions to:
 - conserve the widest possible genetic variation within a threatened species and the widest range of variability in distribution and species composition within a threatened ecological community;
 - maintain the extent of occurrence of listed species and ecological communities; and
 - improve the conservation status of threatened species and ecological communities.

- 5.7 Undertake management actions to reduce the risk to priority species and ecological communities from known threatening processes, especially where these occur on lands managed by the department.

6. STANDARDS

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Corporate Guideline No 35: Listing and Recovery of Threatened Species and Ecological Communities, which includes criteria for listing threatened species and ecological communities and definitions of levels for priority species and ecological communities; and
- Corporate Guideline No 36: Recovery of Threatened Species through Translocation and Captive Breeding or Propagation.

Actions taken to determine the status of threatened or priority species or communities or to manage and/or recover threatened or priority species and communities will be undertaken in accordance with relevant departmental operational documents, animal ethics requirements, standard operating procedures and translocation and captive breeding or propagation proposals and/or approvals, where relevant.

The Western Australian Threatened Species Scientific Committee (WATSSC) and Western Australian Threatened Ecological Communities Scientific Committee (WATECSC) will operate according to their respective terms of reference and codes of conduct.

7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The department will coordinate, assist with, and promote the conservation of threatened and priority species and ecological communities in Western Australia, primarily through activities undertaken by Science and Conservation Division, Regional and Fire Management Services Division and Forest and Ecosystem Management Division. The department will:

- 7.1 Administer the listing and ranking of threatened species and ecological communities, and species otherwise in need of special protection or dependent on ongoing conservation intervention, to ensure that lists are current and reflect the known conservation status of the species and ecological communities in the wild.
- 7.2 Assess species and ecological communities for their conservation status based on their total natural range in Australia, and where appropriate (e.g. for species that do not breed in Australia), their range and status outside Australia.
- 7.3 Make recommendations for the allocation of threatened species and ecological communities to categories of threat using the most recent recognised criteria and categories adopted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List. Until Red List criteria for ecological communities are adopted by the department, the criteria used will be those defined in the terms of reference for the WATECSC.
- 7.4 Aim to ensure that national lists of threatened Australian flora, fauna and ecological communities are up to date, by liaising with other States and Territories and the Australian Government regarding any proposed changes to Western Australian lists and providing relevant supporting information for their consideration in amending national lists.

- 7.5 Administer a process to set and record levels for priority species and ecological communities to ensure that records are current and reflect the known conservation status of the species and ecological communities in the wild.
- 7.6 Maintain databases of threatened and priority species and ecological communities. Most data will be publicly available, although some data may be restricted, such as the exact location of populations or occurrences.
- 7.7 Ensure that its actions do not lead to detrimental impacts on listed threatened species and ecological communities, nor cause species and ecological communities to become eligible for listing.
- 7.8 Ensure management plans approved and adopted under the CALM Act include provisions to conserve threatened species and threatened ecological communities, and appropriately manage priority species and ecological communities occurring within the subject area.
- 7.9 Prepare recovery plans or conservation advice that document the conservation requirements, recovery or management actions and information requirements of threatened species and ecological communities.
- 7.10 Identify threatening processes impacting threatened species or ecological communities, and implement programs to mitigate the threats.
- 7.11 Establish recovery teams or management teams, where considered necessary, to coordinate actions to recover threatened species or ecological communities, or mitigate the effects of threatening processes, including community engagement and awareness raising.
- 7.12 Carry out scientific research aimed at providing an evidence base for conservation actions and developing cost-effective broad-scale and local techniques to reduce threats.
- 7.13 Monitor populations of threatened species and occurrences of threatened ecological communities and impacts of recovery actions, on a priority basis.
- 7.14 Process applications to take threatened species and, where necessary, provide advice to the Minister on the potential impact of such applications.
- 7.15 Work cooperatively with State government agencies, including Perth Zoo and the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, and where appropriate with other State, Territory and Commonwealth conservation agencies, with the community, landowners and managers, to ensure cost-effective recovery and appropriate management of threatened and priority species and ecological communities.
- 7.16 Provide advice and information to the Environmental Protection Authority, other State government and Commonwealth government agencies, other land managers and the community, as needed, to promote the conservation of threatened species and ecological communities, and as appropriate, priority species and ecological communities.

8. CUSTODIAN

Director Science and Conservation

9. PUBLICATION

This policy will be made available on the department's website and intranet.

10. KEY WORDS

Conservation, conservation dependent, critically endangered, endangered, IUCN Red List, listing, priority ecological community, priority fauna, priority flora, recovery, threatened ecological community, threatened fauna, threatened flora, translocation, threatening process, vulnerable

11. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed no later than October 2020.

12. DIRECTOR GENERAL APPROVAL

Approved by



Jim Sharp
DIRECTOR GENERAL

Effective date: 16 October 2015

DEFINITIONS

Captive breeding is the generation of animals through managed breeding in an enclosed facility for a conservation purpose.

Conservation advice is a brief statement that provides guidance for the conservation of the species or ecological community in the absence of a recovery plan or interim recovery plan.

Conservation dependent fauna is a category of 'Other Specially Protected Fauna' declared to be 'otherwise in need of special protection' pursuant to section 14(4) of the Wildlife Conservation Act, which are the focus of a conservation program, the cessation of which would result in the species becoming eligible for listing as threatened.

Ecological community is a naturally occurring biological assemblage that occurs in a particular type of habitat.

Interim recovery plan is a preliminary version of a recovery plan prepared where full information is not available.

Introduction means the intentional release of animals or planting of plants in a location outside the known historic indigenous range of the species.

Other specially protected fauna is that subset of 'Specially Protected Fauna' declared to be 'otherwise in need of special protection' pursuant to section 14(4) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.

Priority species and *priority ecological communities* are species and ecological communities that are not listed as threatened but which are either poorly known and are under consideration for listing as threatened, or which are rare or near threatened and require monitoring.

Recovery plan outlines actions required to improve the species' or ecological community's conservation status.

Recovery team is an informal group that provides advice to and assists the department in coordinating species or ecological community recovery, and will include representatives of stakeholder groups who are willing to work towards and/or financially support the recovery of the species or ecological community concerned, including conservation managers, scientists, landowners or land managers, local government, and appropriate local non-government conservation or community organisations or individuals.

Reinforcement means the intentional movement and release of animals or planting of plants into an existing population of the same species. This may also be referred to as re-stocking or population supplementation.

Re-introduction means the intentional release of animals or planting of plants into locations where the species was previously known to occur, but where it no longer naturally occurs. This may also be referred to as re-establishment.

Specially protected fauna is fauna that has been declared to be 'likely to become extinct, or rare, or otherwise in need of special protection' pursuant to section 14(4) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.

Species includes subspecies, varieties and distinct populations determined by the Minister for Environment to be 'flora' or 'fauna'. This may include geographic, morphological or genetic entities as accepted conservation units.

Threatened ecological communities are ecological communities that have been determined by the Minister to be threatened, and listed in the Department's Threatened Ecological Communities Database.

Threatened fauna is that subset of 'Specially Protected Fauna' declared to be 'likely to become extinct' pursuant to section 14(4) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.

Threatened flora is flora that has been declared to be 'likely to become extinct, or rare, or otherwise in need of special protection', pursuant to section 23F(2) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.

Translocation means the movement of animals or plants from one area followed by their release or establishment in another as wild, free-living specimens.