A HEALTH MONITORING PROGRAM FOR CAPTIVE, TRANSLOCATED AND WILD CHUDITCH (*DASYURUS GEOFFROII*)

S.A. Haigh and W.T. Gaynor
Perth Zoological Gardens, PO Box 489, South Perth, W.A. 6151
K. Morris
Conservation and Land Management, PO Box 51, Wanneroo, W.A. 6065

To date a total of 40 captive chuditch *Dasyurus geoffroii* have been sampled prior to their release at Julimar Conservation Park and subsequently 15 have been recaptured for testing. Blood was collected for complete blood counts, serum biochemistry and serum protein electrophoresis. Serum was stored for *Chlamydia*, *Toxoplasma*, *Leptospira*, and *Listeria* antibody titres. Faeces was examined for parasites and to review bacterial flora. A wild population of chuditch at Batalling block (50 km east of Collie) was used as a control population and the same protocol followed. Reference intervals for haematological and biochemical parameters were established from 15 animals to allow comparison with captive and translocated animals. The implementation of the program and logistical considerations are discussed.

It is anticipated that haematology, serum biochemistry and serum protein electrophoresis may be useful tools in assessing the health, progress, nutrition and level of stress in wild and translocated animals, and several preliminary findings support this. Results to date suggest that wild animals may carry parasitic and bacterial infections without apparent clinical disease in the short term. Results will be critically analysed when there is sufficient data.

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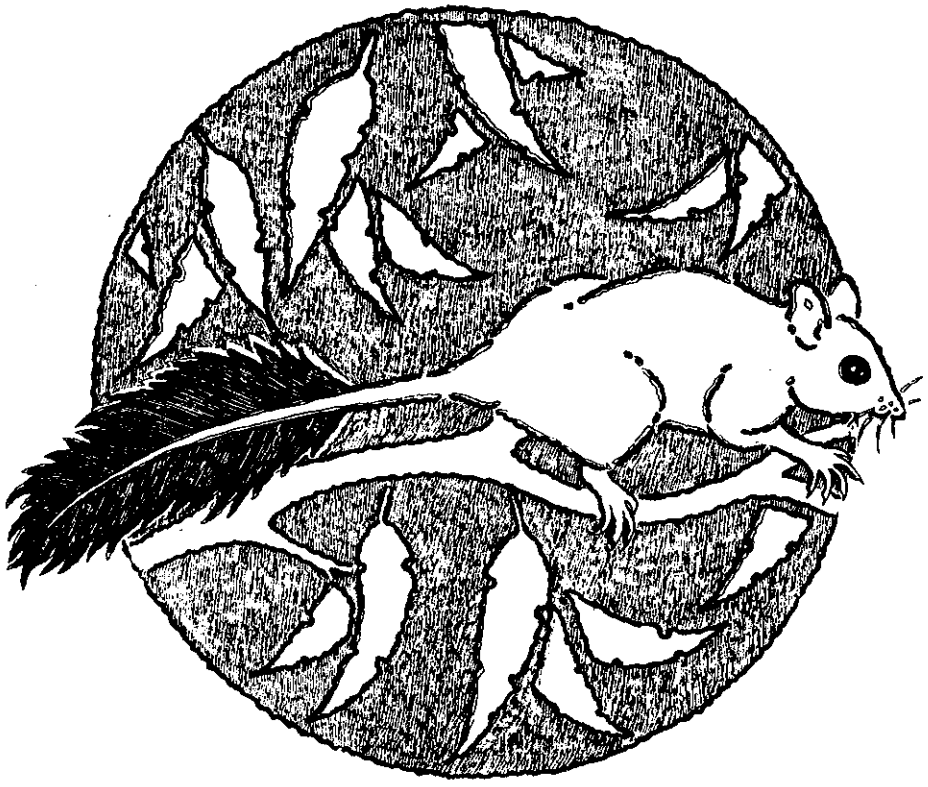

ABSTRACTS