



Department of
Environment and Conservation

Our environment, our future



**ANNUAL REPORT
THREATENED SPECIES OR COMMUNITY RECOVERY TEAM**

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Recovery Team name	Gilbert's Potoroo Recovery Team	
Reporting Period (Financial/Calendar Year)	Calendar year 2009	
Current membership		
	Member	Representing
1. Chair	Sarah Comer	DEC South Coast Region
2. Executive Officer	Steph Hill	DEC Science Division
3.	Tim Button	DEC Science Division
4.	Ron Dorn	Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group
5.	Tony Friend	DEC Science Division
	Val Hack	DEC Science Division
6.	Peter Mawson	DEC Species and Communities Branch
7.	David Taggart	Research Scientist, Royal Zoological Society of S.A.
8.	Jackie Courtenay	Consultant Wildlife Biologist (corresponding member)
9.	Alan Needham	Edith Cowan University, Applied Science (corresponding member)
10.	Vic Smith	Retired veterinarian, South Coast Community member (corresponding member)
Dates meetings were held	6 th November 2009.	
One to two paragraph	<i>Please note: please contact Tony Friend for an update</i>	

<p>summary of achievements suitable for WATSNU</p>	<p>The Gilbert's potoroo program again made great progress in 2009, with great success of the Bald Island translocation and removal of foxes and cats from the recently-constructed 380-hectare enclosure in Waychinicup National Park.</p> <p>Trapping on Bald Island proved that in less than five years, the population had grown from 10 founders to at least 29 animals by November 2009, despite the removal of seven individuals from the island in 2008 and early 2009. These seven potoroos are being held in captivity at Two Peoples Bay until conditions are suitable for their release into the Norman's Beach enclosure.</p>
<p>List of actions undertaken by Recovery Team (from actions in Recovery Plan)</p>	
<p>Action 1 Protect the existing wild population and habitat</p>	<p>The Gilbert's potoroo population at Two Peoples Bay exists in long-unburnt bushland on Mount Gardner. During 2009, routine management of the nature reserve included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fox control by following the approved baiting prescription distribution: quarterly aerial baiting complemented by monthly ground baiting along firebreaks, • Fire management, including maintenance of firebreaks including slashed breaks, maintenance of readiness to respond to reports of fire, wildfire suppression • Observation of <i>Phytophthora</i> dieback hygiene practices • Visitor management to restrict access to potoroo areas
<p>Action 2 Increase understanding of ecology and population biology of Gilbert's Potoroo to underpin management strategies</p>	<p>The Gilbert's potoroo populations at Mount Gardner and Bald Island were monitored by trapping at regular intervals – three times during 2009 on Mount Gardner and three times on Bald Island.</p> <p>The following studies were continued:</p> <p>Population biology of Gilbert's potoroo through four-monthly census on nine regular traplines (March, June, and November) and annual census on Mount Gardner transect (October).</p> <p>Collaborative study of potoroo diet at Mount Gardner, Bald Island and potential translocation areas with Dr Neale Bougher: this study completed and a paper published in Australian Mammalogy in 2009.</p> <p>Collaborative study of blood parasites in Gilbert's potoroo and quokkas with Jill Austen (Murdoch Uni)</p>
<p>Action 3 Search for new populations of Gilbert's Potoroo outside Two Peoples Bay</p>	<p>No new searches for Gilbert's potoroos were carried out in 2009.</p>
<p>Action 4 Establish and maintain a captive breeding colony of Gilbert's Potoroo</p>	<p>The Gilbert's potoroo captive colony was maintained, involving daily feeding, three-weekly catch-up and checks and quarterly sand changes. During 2009 the main function of the captive facility was to house potoroos transferred from Bald Island in September 2008 and January 2009 while awaiting release into the Norman's Beach enclosure. The captive facility will continue to have a valuable role in housing animals for quarantine and parasite removal while being moved between field sites, i.e. Two Peoples Bay, Bald Island and the Ryedene and Norman's Beach enclosures.</p>

<p>Action 5 Develop techniques to enhance the reproductive potential of Gilbert's Potoroo</p>	<p>Cross-fostering:</p> <p>Although the long-nosed potoroo colony was maintained throughout 2009, no transfers of Gilbert's potoroo pouch young were carried out. Several transfer occasions were targeted but on each occasion either no suitable Gilbert's potoroo wild pouch young were found, or, on one occasion, both suitable recipient long-nosed potoroo females were found to have recently lost their young when a suitable Gilbert's potoroo pouch young was found. This project is run in collaboration with Dr David Taggart of the Royal Zoological Society of South Australia.</p> <p>Ryedene enclosure:</p> <p>No young have been produced in the captive breeding colony since 2001. Breeding occurred in the early years of the colony but has not been sustained. In an attempt to get long-term captive animals breeding, a 14-hectare enclosure has been built on private property (Ryedene) near Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve. Pairs of long-term captives have been introduced into the enclosure and provided with the artificial diet daily since October 2007. Analysis of scats from the potoroos indicated that they were accessing fungal food as well as the food provided.</p> <p>The experiment was interrupted from September to December 2008 by the harvesting of a blue-gum stand within the enclosure, which necessitated the removal of both animals to the Two Peoples Bay captive facility. They were returned to the Ryedene enclosure in December 2008. The provision of food was terminated in July 2009, after both animals were radio-tracked for three nights to document their movements. Another three-night tracking session conducted after the food was removed showed that the potoroos ranged more widely within the enclosure. During 2009 no young were produced by the female, although both animals were in good condition when captured for a check-up in November 2009.</p>
<p>Action 6 Enhance the breeding capacity of Gilbert's Potoroo</p>	<p>The methods to enhance breeding capacity in the last section are still regarded as under trial. If and when they have been proven, action will be taken to determine whether the methods should be applied on an ongoing basis.</p>
<p>Action 7 Extend the range of Gilbert's Potoroo through translocation of animals to suitable habitat outside Two Peoples Bay.</p>	<p>Bald Island: The translocation of Gilbert's potoroos to Bald Island commenced in 2005 and the population has been steadily growing since then. Three extended monitoring trips and one day-trip to Bald Island were carried out during 2009. A total of 44 person-nights were spent on the island. Monitoring activities mainly comprised trapping and radio-tracking.</p> <p>During the November 2009 trip, a total of 29 independent potoroos were captured, including eight of the original 10 founders transferred to the island between August 2005 and December 2007.</p> <p>This was despite the removal in September 2008 and January 2009 of a total of seven Gilbert's potoroos, including a male pouch young that subsequently emerged from his mother's pouch and achieved independence in captivity. At the end of 2009, these animals were still being held in captivity, awaiting release into the Norman's Beach enclosure early in 2010.</p> <p>Norman's Beach enclosure: In 2006 funding through the Saving Our Species program was secured to establish a second mainland population of Gilbert's potoroos by building a fox- and cat-proof</p>

	<p>enclosure in Waychinicup National Park near Norman's Beach. Final work on the enclosure was completed in March 2009, although the two culverts damaged after an extreme rainfall event in November 2008 had not been repaired. Fox and cat removal has been in progress since January 2009 although further flood damage in winter 2009 allowed the reinvasion of the enclosure by foxes. These have been seen since July 2009. Cat-trapping is continuing as the methods used to bring cats to the traps (scent and sonic attractants), together with monitoring sand-pads, provide the best means of detecting cat presence. Should no further sign of cats or foxes be found in the enclosure by February 2010, the captive Bald Island and Two Peoples Bay potoroos will be released into the enclosure.</p>
<p>Action 8 Secure ongoing funding for the implementation of the Recovery Actions</p>	<p>In 2009, the Gilbert's potoroo recovery program received major funding from the Commonwealth Government's Caring for our Country interim funding scheme, through South Coast NRM, providing staff for maintenance of captive breeding and cross-fostering facilities and operational funds for monitoring the Two Peoples Bay population. This funding ceased, however, on 30th September 2009. During 2009/10 the project will also receive \$30,000 from the WA State NRM for "Critical Recovery Actions" to continue the monitoring of the wild population at Two Peoples Bay.</p> <p>Major funding was also received from DEC for two projects under the Specific Nature Conservation Projects Program: 1) the Gilbert's potoroo enclosure, 2) the Bald Island translocation. This continues the support received from the predecessors of this program, the Biodiversity Conservation Initiative and Saving our Species programs.</p> <p>In previous years, generous support from the Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group (GPAG) has purchased equipment for the program. GPAG and the Gilbert's Potoroo Recovery Program are currently examining purchase options for equipment to be funded by GPAG's fundraising efforts.</p>