

Australian Wildlife Conservancy

Paruna Sanctuary
2005Dec-2004

June

Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus vulpecula*

Introduction and Background

Under a translocation proposal endorsed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (November 2002) nineteen Brushtail Possums (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), consisting of ten males and nine females (with two juvenile male pouch-young), were translocated from Karakamia Sanctuary to Paruna Sanctuary during the period 25/02/03 to 24/06/03. In April 2004 a further forty nine (twenty two females and twenty seven males) possums were translocated to Paruna from Karakamia Sanctuary. An additional female was released 19/7/04. These animals were fitted with yellow or blue reflective ear tags to separate them from the previous translocation.

As part of both translocation proposals, all possums were fitted with reflective ear tags. The monitoring protocol, undertaken by Australian Wildlife Conservancy staff, includes monthly spotlighting at the release site, and bi-annual trapping as part of the overall monitoring regime at Paruna. This report is an addendum to six monthly reports from June 2003.

Methods

The spotlighting methodology has been modified to include three consecutive nights every three months as opposed of one night every month as part of an overall monitoring strategy, and involves recording numbers of all vertebrates observed along a standard route, using standardized methodology in the immediate vicinity of the Brushtail release site. The reflective tags allow easy identification of translocated animals.

Additional data on Brushtail Possums has been collected during this period via cage-trapping as part of the Paruna Sanctuary biannual trapping program, as well as cage-trapping specifically targeting Woylies. Although this trapping is not intended for Brushtail Possums, occasional individuals are captured.

Results and Discussion

During this period there were six spotlight transects completed and no possums were sighted.

Table 1 – Brushtails sighted during spotlight transect

Date	No	Sex	Eartag	Time	Location
22/2/05	0			7.30pm-8.30pm	Drive Transect
23/2/05	0			7.30pm-8.30pm	Drive Transect
24/2/05	0			7.30pm-8.30pm	Drive Transect
10/5/05	0			6.00pm-7.00pm	Drive Transect
11/5/05	0			6.00pm-7.00pm	Drive Transect
12/5/05	0			6.00pm-7.00pm	Drive Transect

Table 2: Trapping Effort

Date	N/R	Tag Type	ID	Sex	Age	Pes	Wt	Notes
27/04/2005	N	P	502	M	A	48.8	1965	slight rip in R ear not from tag
29/04/2005	RT	P	502	M	A	32.2/48.8	1840	

As seen in table two, one brushtail was trapped twice during the biannual trapping period. It was a new individual.

Brushtail Possums are still being recorded in low numbers across the sanctuary and are occasionally sighted during spotlight surveys. Monitoring will continue in the proceeding months.