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Controlling Introduced Predators

Introduced foxes and feral cats are significant threats to many native species and controlling these predators is critical to their long term survival.

SWCC and its project partners Blackwood Basin Group and Southern Forests Catchments Council, are working with farmers adjoining the Tone-Perup Nature Reserve to undertake broadscale fox control through shooting and baiting. This fox control work will help to create a buffer around the nature reserve that is regularly baited by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, and will help to protect the numerous threatened species that inhabit the area.

SWCC is also working the Gnowangerup Aboriginal Corporation to undertake fox control at the Mindarabin Aboriginal Reserve to protect Malleefowl and other native species in the reserve.

Felixer Feral Cat Control Trial

Feral cats are one of the most significant threats to many small and medium sized native fauna, but effectively controlling these predators is very difficult, especially in the higher rainfall forests that are found in the south west of WA.

A new feral cat trap, the Felixer™, is being tested by SWCC, Blackwood Basin Group and the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) at the Muir-Byenup wetlands as an innovative approach to native wildlife protection.

This ecologically diverse wetland system covers an area of 10,631 hectares and ranges from fresh to saline and even rare peat-based wetlands, with some permanent and others seasonal. Feral cats pose a significant threat to the wetland's waterbirds, including black swans, Australian shelducks, little bittern, Eurasian coot and the threatened Australasian bittern. Up to 52,000 birds have been recorded at the wetlands during periods of high rainfall and the wetlands regularly support over 20,000 birds at a time.

The effectiveness of the Felixer™ is being trialled in bushland surrounding the wetlands. 'Safe mode' testing has confirmed that the traps are extremely safe for native species. The trial is testing the validity of modelling that suggests a potential 80%+ reduction in feral cat density with 8 traps deployed over 8 weeks.

The trial is continuing through to 2022. When the Felixer units become commercially available, it is hoped they will provide a vital tool in the fight against feral cats and foxes.





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