

Cost effective approaches to threatened species management: the south coast integrated fauna recovery program

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It is widely acknowledged that conservation of threatened species one by one is expensive, and may be ineffective if threatening processes are not managed in a holistic fashion. On WA's south coast, the Western Ground Parrot has suffered precipitous decline and is heading to imminent extinction, despite considerable efforts to manage the population. This has stimulated concern that a number of other threatened animal species in this area may suffer a similar fate.

Our approach has been to identify the major likely threatening processes, in particular wildfire and predation. In the past ten years wildfire suppression and proactive fire management has mitigated the threat of fire, but population decline has continued. During the past 18 months we have commenced implementation of an integrated introduced predator control program in an adaptive management framework. The purpose of this collaborative approach has been to implement management action immediately, but in a way that will allow us to determine the actual impact of predation by foxes and cats, so that we can evaluate the efficiency of the action and its impact on an array of threatened species including the Dibbler and Chuditch. Trials already carried out indicated that the proposed management actions would not impact negatively on non-target species. Because of the dire position of the Western Ground Parrot, we are putting in place an 'insurance policy' for this species through captive management for future reintroduction. The success of the program is dependent on significant volunteer input.

Outcomes of this project will provide important lessons that could be applied across the state and elsewhere. But despite the long-term conservation benefits that could flow from such an approach in terms of value for money, current funding and resource allocation arrangements have proved to be a major challenge to implementation.

Threatened Species Research Forum



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A Review of WA Government Research into Threatened Species