

REINTRODUCTION OF THE CHUDITCH TO JULIMAR CONSERVATION PARK

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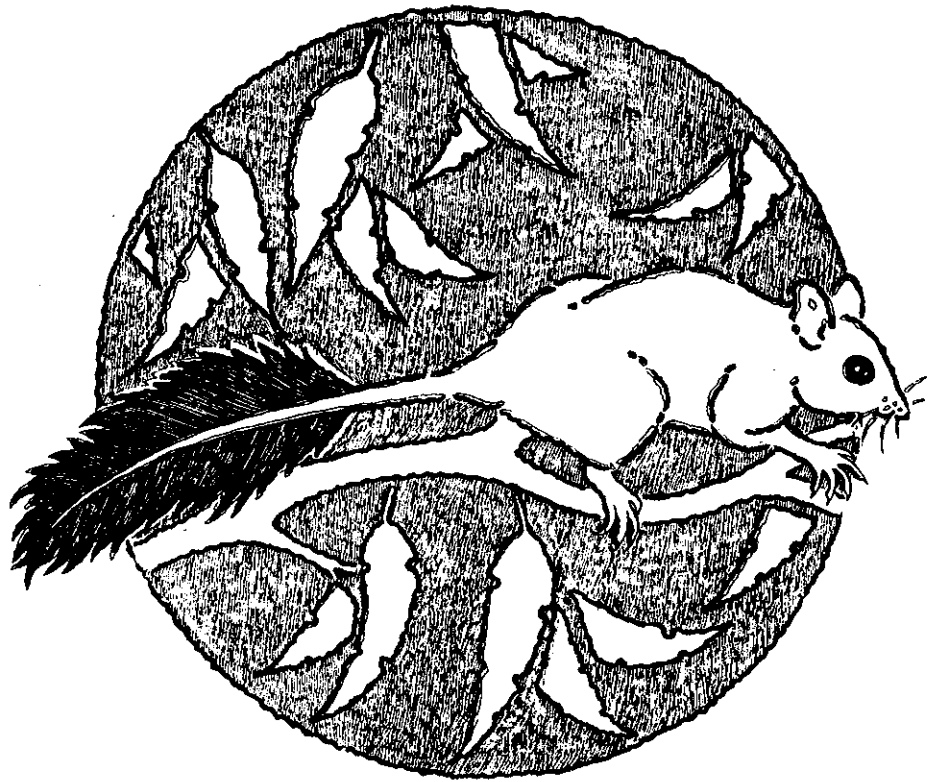
The establishment of Chuditch *Dasyurus geoffroii*, (Marsupialia: Dasyuridae) populations outside their present range is one of the objectives of the Recovery Plan for this species. In September 1992, 24 captive bred Chuditch (19 radiocollared) were reintroduced to Julimar Conservation Park, in the northern Jarrah forest. These were subsequently monitored by radiotracking and trapping. Another 19 captive bred Chuditch (10 radiocollared) were released at Julimar in March 1993. Ages of the animals released ranged from 9 months to 4.5 years. Chuditch initially lost about 9% of their bodyweight but then regained weight. All of the radiocollared Chuditch released in September, except one, have survived. Half of the animals have established home ranges within 2 km of their release point. The maximum movement from release point in this time has been 6.3 km. Dispersal distance does not appear to be related to either sex or age. One female which had 4 pouch young when released has successfully raised these and in January 1993 these were dispersing away from the mother's home range. The quality of diurnal refuge site increased with time after release. Arboreal sites were used by 3 animals. Preliminary dietary analysis suggests that large invertebrates are an important food source as they are in other parts of the Jarrah forest. It appears at this stage that this trial reintroduction has been successful, although the true measure of this will be this winter when breeding should occur. This study has, and will continue to provide valuable information necessary for undertaking a reintroduction to a semi-arid location in 1995.

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