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REINTRODUCTION OF WESTERN SWAMP TORTOISES : WHY, HOW, WHEN, WHERE

G. Kuchling

Department of Zoology, The University of Western Australia

A.A. Burbidge

Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management

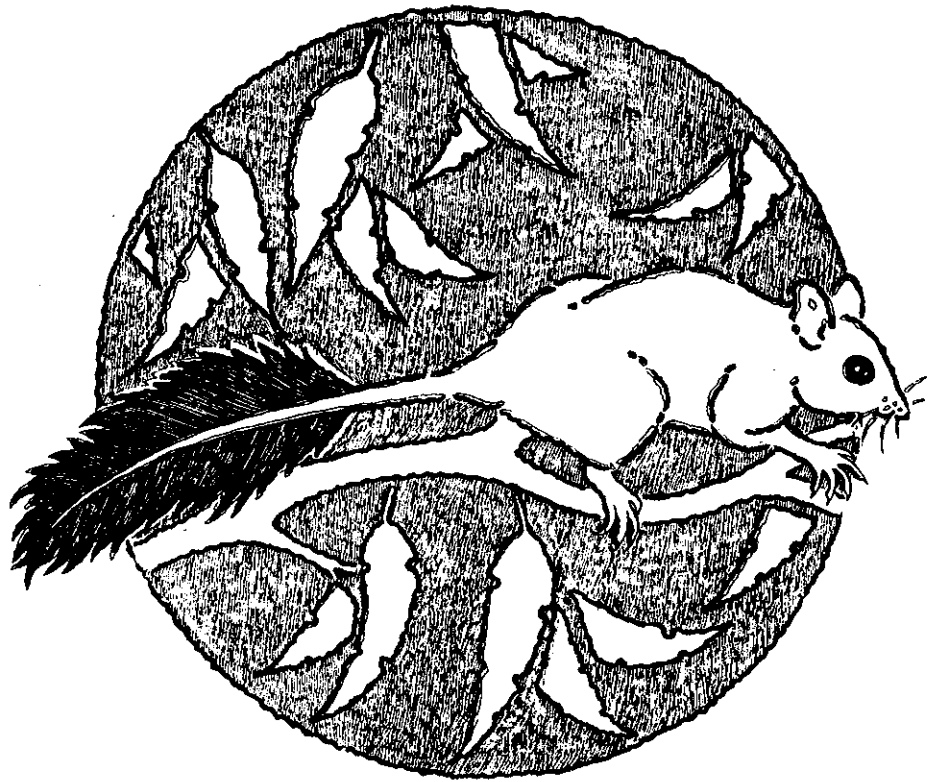
Only one wild population of about 30 Western Swamp Tortoises *Pseudemydura umbrina* (WST's) exists at Ellen Brook Nature Reserve (EBNR) near Perth. A goal of the ten-year Recovery Plan, being implemented by the WST Recovery Team, is to create a second wild population at nearby Twin Swamps Nature Reserve (TSNR). During 1993-94 a predator-proof fence will be constructed around TSNR and a bore and pumps will be installed to pump groundwater to supplement some of the ephemeral swamps in order to extend, during dry years, the period of swamp life. These measures should eliminate the causal factors for the local extinction of the species at TSNR during the 1980's. During the past four years a captive breeding project at Perth Zoo has produced 44 WST's. All captive-bred tortoises are DNA fingerprinted and genetic management will ensure that, in the long term, all available founders (including wild animals) will contribute genetically to the translocated population. Re-introductions are planned to commence in the winter of 1994, when captives of sufficient size are available. Five to ten WST's will be released and closely monitored by radio-tracking, which will extend through the summer, when wild animals aestivate, to ensure that the captive-bred animals can cope with the somewhat harsher natural conditions. Further releases are planned from 1994 onwards, with releases numbers depending on the continuing success of captive breeding.

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**ABSTRACTS**