

Recovery of the Chuditch *Dasyurus geoffroii*.

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The carnivorous marsupial, the chuditch *Dasyurus geoffroii* formerly occurred in every mainland State and the Northern Territory. By the 1950s this range had contracted to the south-west corner of WA. In 1983, it was listed as fauna that is rare, or is likely to become extinct, under the State's *Wildlife Conservation Act (1950)*. In 1992 it was listed as Endangered under the Commonwealth's *Endangered Species Act 1992*. Following a review in 1996 it was listed as Vulnerable under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)*. A recovery plan was prepared in 1994, and a recovery team formed to oversee implementation of the plan. Many of the recovery actions were derived from research undertaken into chuditch distribution, biology and ecology in the jarrah forest between 1986-1989 and a wildlife management program published for the chuditch in 1991. This work estimated that only 6000 chuditch persisted in the south west at this time.

The chuditch recovery plan identified six recovery actions:

1. Investigations into the impact of timber harvesting.
2. Investigations into the impact of prescribed burning.
3. Investigations into the impact of foxes and fox control.
4. Undertake captive breeding.
5. Translocate to areas outside current (1992) range.
6. Monitor existing and translocated populations.

Criteria for success:

- > 1 % trap success rates at monitoring sites.
- Establishment and maintenance of at least one semi-arid populations.
- Establishment of at least one self-sustaining population outside the 1992 range.

Research into actions 1 and 2 found no detrimental impact to local chuditch populations from these two management operations. Likewise fox control by means of 1080 poison baiting showed an initial positive correlation to chuditch abundance. Trials with dried meat bait and subsequently with sausage type (Probait) showed that chuditch do find and consume baits but appear unlikely to consume sufficient quantities to be at risk. Captive breeding in collaboration with the Perth Zoo was highly successful with 339 individuals being available for release into 6 sites over 10 years from this source. Four translocations are considered successful with the Lake Magenta and Kalbarri populations meeting the criteria to establish a semi arid population and one outside 1992 range. Long term monitoring sites maintained under Western Shield indicate that the >1% trap success criteria is being maintained but they also fail to show positive trends. A subsequent review of conservation status indicated that it was premature to consider removing chuditch from State and Commonwealth threatened fauna lists.

Threatened Species Research Forum



Western Australian Ecology Centre

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A Review of WA Government Research into Threatened Species