

Dampier Peninsula Bilby Project 2016-2019



The Dampier Peninsula in northwest Western Australia is a stronghold of the greater bilby (*Macrotis lagotis*). This is despite the lesser bilby becoming extinct, and the greater bilby disappearing from at least 80 percent of its former range across Australia with an ongoing northward decline. The greater bilby is now listed as Vulnerable both in WA and under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. As part of the Cape Leveque Road upgrade, in 2016 Main Roads WA provided offset funding to undertake a three year project to survey, monitor and commence adaptive management of threats to bilby populations across the Peninsula.

Coordinated by the Department of Parks and Wildlife, this project will help fulfil a primary objective of the current interim bilby recovery plan (Bradley *et al.* 2015) and identified management priorities (Cramer *et al.* 2016). This is to retain/maintain the naturally-occurring distribution and genetic diversity of the bilby through understanding populations at the margin of the species' range on the Dampier Peninsula, gaining information on threats to populations and cost-effective strategies that can be implemented to manage threats.

Project objective

To monitor the occupancy and abundance of bilbies as well as key threatening processes on the Dampier Peninsula, while initiating on-ground actions to reduce the impacts from key threatening processes.

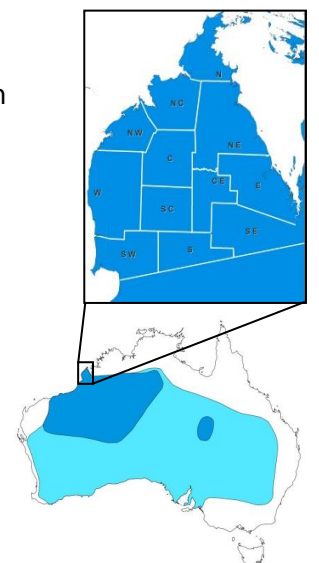
Aims and methods

- *Define the area of occupancy* through an array of a minimum of 180 sign plot surveys and supplementary Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) surveys across 12 sectors on the Peninsula;
- *Population monitoring* – four core populations monitored annually, involving genotyping individuals from scats collected along transects to measure abundance, occupancy from sign plots, predator occupancy from remote cameras, data on food resources, stock grazing pressure, introduced predators and fire regimes and
- *Management of threats* – priority management activities including managing fire and stock grazing implemented.

The project will employ Traditional Owners and Ranger Groups including Nyul Nyul, Yawuru, Bardi Jawi, Goolarabooloo, Jabirr Jabirr and Nyikina Mangala on a fee-for-service basis. Best practice bilby survey and data collection methods will be used with Indigenous Biocultural Knowledge. The project will collaborate with WWF, Environs Kimberley and Rangelands NRM to contribute to the broader Kimberley Bilby Project.

Contacts

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Past and present distribution of the greater bilby in Australia and survey sectors on the Dampier Peninsula



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