

Mice make out OK

by Keith Morris

THERE is now every indication that the translocation of the threatened Shark Bay Mouse (*Pseudomys fieldi*) to Doole Island in Exmouth Gulf is succeeding.

Until June of this year, this native rodent was found only on Bernier Island, 40 kilometres west of Carnarvon and was regarded as one of Australia's most threatened mammals.

Establishing another population was considered a priority for the recovery of the species and Doole Island was selected by the recovery team as the first translocation site.

It was considered suitable because it is large enough to support a viable

population and has a suitable sandy habitat.

It has no exotic predators or competitors such as cats or foxes. It does have a goanna population so some predation is bound to occur, although not at levels likely to jeopardise the success of the translocation exercise.

It is also readily accessible for CALM staff.

In June, Peter Speldewinde, the technical officer overseeing the recovery of the species, took 27 mice from Bernier Island and released them on to Doole Island with the help of the Exmouth district staff.

Close monitoring

through radio-tracking and trapping indicated that these pioneers liked their new habitat and soon established their own home ranges and burrow sites.

Since June, another 17 mice have been taken from Bernier and added to the Doole Island population.

Some of the original females have now bred on Doole Island and the animals have established up to three kilometres from their release site.

Peter reported his findings from Doole Island to the recovery team, comprising members from CALM, Australian Nature Conservation Agency (formerly ANPWS), World Wide Fund for Nature, CSIRO and Useless Loop Salt, in September.