

ROCK-WALLABY RESCUE



A large mining company has joined forces with a government department to save a remote population of the endangered black-flanked rock-wallaby, a subspecies of the black-footed rock-wallaby that is confined to Western Australia. CRA Australia has donated \$50 000 this year to establish a recovery program for the wallaby and will

provide an additional \$37 000, following a review of the project in 1998.

The work is being undertaken by research scientist Jack Kinnear and other staff from the Department of Conservation and Land Management in association with local Aboriginal communities. Their efforts are targeted at saving a small colony of black-footed rock-wallabies in the remote Calvert Range, south of Lake Disappointment.

"The wallabies are the only group of black-flanked rock-wallabies known to survive in Australia's western deserts. The isolated colony was discovered in 1985 and its numbers have

been declining steadily ever since," Dr Kinnear said.

"Foxes are the main threat to the mammals and we are intensively baiting the Calvert Range area for foxes.

"It is hoped that cutting fox numbers will enable the rock wallabies to increase their population enough to provide surplus animals that can be moved to Depuch Island off the Pilbara coast. These could then provide breeding stock for future repopulation of the western deserts."

The black-flanked rock-wallaby is distinguished by its black feet, black tail and dark upper spinal stripe. Weighing no more than five kilograms, the wallaby has a delicate appearance that belies its extraordinary high-jumping

ability on steep rock faces, and a rugged constitution that allows it to live with very little water.

Scientists are still gathering information about the general biology, social structure and behaviour of the animals.

Dr Kinnear said that in the last 200 years Australia had lost more mammal species than any other country, with evidence implicating the fox and feral cat.

"Rock-wallabies have been among the hardest hit of surviving medium-sized marsupials. There are about 12 species around Australia, all threatened to varying degrees," he said.

Above: Black-flanked rock-wallaby. Photo - Babs & Bert Wells/CALM



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Flower arrangements featuring eucalyptus foliage are becoming popular with florists. Find out why on page 35.



Unseen for more than 100 years and believed to have been extinct, Gilbert's potoroo turned up quite unexpectedly. See page 28.



Salinity is a problem in the State's south-west, but farmers, communities and government agencies are working to find solutions. See page 39.



A giant dragonfly lives in the south-west of Western Australia. You can find out more about this ancient relict of the jarrah forest in 'Western Petalura' on page 52.



The thick-billed grasswren is one of several animals that may be reintroduced to Shark Bay as part of an ambitious project. See 'Return to Eden' on page 22.

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COVER

The stunning royal robe (*Scaevola striata*) is one of a host of fabulous fanflowers found in Western Australia. Suzanne Curry discusses this and other species in the family Goodeniaceae on page 10.

The illustration is by Philippa Nikulinsky.



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