

## WOYLIES REINTRODUCED ON FARMING PROPERTIES



A total of 38 woylies has been released on to two Harvey farms as part of a program to restore nature's balance in the region. The 124-hectare farm Wildwater and the 300-hectare farm Sunnyvale—neighbouring properties on the banks of the Harvey River—are listed with CALM's Land for Wildlife scheme, where part of the land is registered as wildlife habitat. Land for Wildlife is a voluntary scheme where landowners manage part of the property for nature conservation. It is an integral part of the State Salinity Strategy and part-funded by the Natural Heritage Trust.

This is the first time woylies have been released on private property without predator-proof fencing, and reflects the continuing success of CALM's Western Shield native wildlife recovery program. This is



the first step towards reintroducing native animals to private rural properties where the farm owners bait for foxes.

The farmers use 1080, a toxin that occurs naturally in a group of plants known as the 'poison peas' (*Gastrolobium* species). At Wildwater, foxes have been baited with eggs injected with 1080 every two or three months since 1994. Brushtail possum and quenda are now regularly

found on the farm and in surrounding areas. At Sunnyvale, the owner baits nearly every month and no foxes or feral cats are now seen on the property.

Bordering the farms is the Hadfield Forest Block, where a further 31 woylies were also released. Woylies have now been translocated to more than 20 sites in WA, and these latest releases will help consolidate the species.

Woylies eat mostly underground fungi and

supplement this diet with bulbs, tubers, seeds, insect larvae and resin. As they move about, digging for the fruiting bodies of fungi, woylies bring many benefits to their environment, including improved rainfall infiltration of the soil and dispersal of fungi that aid plant growth. Because woylies are prolific breeders and thrive in a wide range of habitats, they are usually the first candidate for reintroduction for many areas in the south-west of WA. CALM will monitor the progress of the animals released in Hadfield Forest Block for the next three years.

*Top: A woylie.*

*Photo – Babs & Bert Wells/CALM*

*Above left: Farmer Don Watts releases a woylie on to his property, Wildwater, as CALM Western Shield Zoologist Peter Orell looks on.*

*Photo – Nigel Higgs/CALM*

Winner of the 1998 Alex Harris Medal for excellence in science and environment reporting.

# LANDSCOPE

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Western Australian botanists are taking part in a global plan to store seed from 10 per cent of the world's flora by 2010. See page 23.



Discover the rich bird life and tranquillity of the Canning River Regional Park on page 17.



Mushrooms the size of a dinner plate can appear within 48 hours of a fire in the karri forest. Read about forest fungi on page 48.



The Pilbara's numerous islands are rich in history, wildflowers and wildlife, with prolific marine life in the surrounding waters. See page 34.



Many of WA's threatened marsupials can be seen in the south-west for the first time in decades. Read about their return to Dryandra Forest on page 10.

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## COVER

Paradoxically, the stinging tentacles of sea anemones—a group of carnivorous invertebrates that sometimes resemble colourful flowers—can also provide a safe haven for many underwater creatures. Anemonefish gain immunity to the stinging cells and live primarily in sea anemone tentacles. Other animals, such as crabs, carry a protective anemone on their backs. Turn to page 28.

Cover illustration by Ellen Hickman



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