

# ANIMAL BREEDING

by Peter Mawson

For some animal species, augmentation of wild populations is necessary to improve their conservation status and reduce the risk of extinction. Breeding of native species is undertaken in facilities at Perth Zoo for numbats, western swamp tortoises, dibblers, and orange-bellied and white-bellied frogs for release into protected areas. More than 4000 animals bred or reared at Perth Zoo have been released to bolster wild populations in the Swan, Midwest, South West and South Coast regions of WA, while some animals have been translocated to areas of New South Wales. Animals are released into sites where fox and/or feral cat control has been carried out through the department's *Western Shield* fauna conservation program, or to fenced sanctuaries operated by conservation partners. Perth Zoo is also undertaking studies to understand the biology and husbandry requirements of western ground parrots to inform potential breeding of this critically endangered bird.

Breeding of native species leverages the expertise of staff across the department, from zoologists with animal husbandry skills to the fauna monitoring conducted by science and regional staff. It also occurs in partnership with other non-government organisations such as the Australian Wildlife Conservancy, in conjunction with the relevant native species recovery teams.

DBCAs staff also work with local friends groups, such as those for the western swamp tortoise, numbat and western ground parrot, recognising the important role the community can play in conserving wildlife. In addition, the work is supported by university researchers and students who contribute to the breeding programs and translocations by conducting baseline research and undertaking projects to measure the survival and dispersal of animals released to the wild.

