FIRE-DRIVEN SUCCESSION: THE EFFECTS ON SMALL MAMMALS AND LIZARDS AT ULURU NATIONAL PARK

Pip Masters
Division of Wildlife and Ecology, CSIRO, Alice Springs.

Fire is becoming increasingly important as a tool for managing conservation areas and maintaining species diversity. The objectives of this study were to provide information on the effects of fire driven succession on small mammals and lizards in spinifex grasslands.

I have sampled an area of *Triodia basedowii* at Uluru National Park for three years using Elliott and pitfall traps. One area was burnt in 1986 and the other area has not been burnt since 1976.

Within this period I caught a total of 42 species of lizard and eight species of small mammal. The lizards were grouped into *Ctenotus spp.*, terrestrial geckos, *Ctenophorus isolepis* and Goannas but the mammals were analysed separately.

On the sites burnt in 1976 the *Ctenotus spp*, goannas, *Ctenophorus isolepis*, three rodent species (*Pseudomys desertor, P. hermannsburgensis, Mus domesticus)* and three dasyurid species (*Dasycercus cristicauda, Ningaui ridei, Sminthopsis youngsoni*) were significantly more abundant.

On the sites burnt in 1986, *Notomys alexis* and *Sminthopsis hirtipes* were significantly more abundant. During the first year geckos were also more abundant on the 1986 sites but not in subsequent years. This could be a response to the changing vegetation states or the weather conditions.