

FAUNA

FINDING OUT ABOUT YOUR LOCAL MAMMALS

Tips from the Wellstead experience

THE Wellstead community wished to find out what mammals occurred in their area, and because many of our native mammals are nocturnal and secretive, it meant they needed to set up a trapping programme. (Mammal survey traps are designed to catch the animal without any physical hurt, so that it can be released unharmed.) A grant from the Save the Bush section of the National Landcare Program was obtained, which enabled them to buy traps and materials (including gallons of peanut butter!) and to fund a professional biologist to train volunteers and oversee the work.

The aim was to provide an opportunity for local people to become familiar with some of the elusive bush-dwelling native mammals that resided in the remnant vegetation and discover information about their habits and needs.

The project was very successful. 21 families took part in the survey, which involved attending training days, then installing and monitoring traps in suitable remnant vegetation, usually on their own properties. Many different animals were recorded, and a tremendous amount of information gathered. People also discovered that a mammal survey is immensely interesting - and great fun!

If you are interested in finding out what is in your area by organising a mammal trapping programme, there are a number of things you will have to consider.

- Firstly, you need a local person ready to put in the time to act as coordinator of the project (grant monies may be able to help with telephone costs and mileage, but time would be donated).
• To make it worth while, a substantial number of local families must be ready to



People looking at the display at the official launch of the book 'Mammals of the Wellstead District'.



Grey Bellied Dunnart
An illustration from 'Mammals of the Wellstead District'.

- nominate a trapping site and donate the time needed to install and monitor the traps.
• To comply with animal handling regulations, the whole project must be under the supervision of a professional biologist - possibly a locally-based consultant (grant monies can meet the costs of this person's time).



- A licence is required from CALM to trap or otherwise capture any protected native fauna
• CALM may be able to help by providing experts to train local people in trapping and animal handling techniques.

Ring me if you'd like to discuss this idea further. (08) 9334 0530.

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