

HEAVY rain over the preceding week did not prevent the release of 43 captive-bred dibblers at the 6530-hectare Peniup proposed nature reserve, 20 km south-west of Jerramungup, in October 2003. The release followed a gathering of about 30 local community members and volunteers, many of whom are involved in management and monitoring of Peniup and neighbouring Corackerup Nature Reserve.

The dibblers were the third group bred at Perth Zoo for release at Peniup by the zoo's Native Species Breeding Program. They are descended from 11 wild individuals captured in 2000 and 2001 by CALM scientists and volunteers in the Fitzgerald River National Park. Dibblers have now been released in early October each year since 2001, in the first reintroduction of dibblers on the mainland. Regular trapping by CALM Science Division and Albany District staff with help from community members has shown that dibblers are surviving and breeding in Peniup. Fourteen young dibblers born on site were captured this spring, prior to the 2003 release.

Dibblers were believed to be extinct until 1967, when a small population was found at Cheynes

FAUNA

EVEN MORE DIBBLERS RELEASED AT PENIUP!

Tony Friend

Beach, east of Albany. Other populations were discovered in the Fitzgerald River National Park in 1984 and on Boullanger and Whitlock islands off Jurien Bay in 1985. The Dibbler Recovery Team, comprising dibbler experts and other stakeholders from CALM, Perth



A dabbler in the hand - note the pale eye-ring.

Zoo, five universities, the Malleefowl Preservation Group and local communities, has overseen dibbler recovery since 1996. The first new dibbler population was successfully established on Escape Island, through the release during 1998-2000 of 83 dibblers bred by Perth Zoo from nearby Boullanger and Whitlock Islands stock.

The good rains that have fallen in the region over winter and spring this year are expected to increase insect food for dibblers in Peniup and aid the rapid growth of the fledgling population.

Tony Friend is Principal Research Scientist, CALM, Albany.



Cathy Lambert, Dibbler Keeper at Perth Zoo, with one of her progeny.

IN BRIEF

PANDAS IN THE BUSH?

WITH approximately only 3% of tall eucalypt woodlands left in the Western Australian Wheatbelt, there is still much to be learnt about their extent, health and status. WWF Australia's Woodland Watch project, now in its fourth year, has recently expanded into the Northern Agricultural Region. The project works with individual landholders and communities to raise awareness of just how complex these woodlands are, their current health, and how securing their future will have long term benefits to landholders.

Woodland Watch Project Officers Bronwen Smith and Joel Collins are working with interested landholders to achieve best practice bush management, but readily acknowledge the good stewardship by many farmers that is already occurring. Some of the benefits landholders may receive by becoming involved include professional flora surveys of woodland remnants, practical management advice, help with funding applications (for projects such as fencing), and assistance in accessing

other bush conservation incentive schemes, not to mention the long-term flow-on effects from keeping your bush healthy in the context of whole farm planning.

Woodland Watch works closely with a range of other NRM agencies and programs, including *Land for Wildlife*, and congratulates *LFW* on its impressive achievements in community conservation. WWF looks forward to continued cooperation with the *LFW* team in assisting private landholders in the NAR manage their remaining bush habitat.

You can contact Bronwen and Joel at the Shire of Dalwallinu on 9661 1001 or on their mobiles 0427 387 644 (Bronwen) and 0427 389 764 (Joel) and by email: bsmith@wwf.org.au and jmcollins@wwf.org.au Woodland Watch is supported by the Natural Heritage Trust, Alcoa World Alumina Australia and the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council.