

FERAL FAUNA

HAVE YOU SEEN AN INDIAN PALM SQUIRREL?

When I first arrived in Western Australia in 1970, I lived in a flat on Mill Point Road, and was delighted to see pretty little Indian palm squirrels froliccing in the grounds. They were released in the Perth Zoo in the 1900s, and have spread gradually through the leafier Perth suburbs. People (like me!) tolerated them as they are very attractive and did not seem to be causing any problems.

But attitudes have changed and DAFWA is trying to locate feral populations before they become yet another introduced pest rodent species. They are spreading out into the peri-urban surroundings of the metropolitan area, having been found in Wanneroo, Forrestdale



Photo: DAFWA

and Kelmscott, and one was recently captured at Canning Vale.

Indian palm squirrels can cause damage to houses and electrical wiring, damage fruit and vegetable crops and eat birds' eggs. They are about the size of a rat, brownish with a bushy black tail and five white stripes on the back. They move quickly and are excellent climbers.

For more information, look for the Pestnote 'Indian palm squirrel' on www.agric.wa.gov.au. Please report sightings to DAFWA on:

freecall 1800 084 881.

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