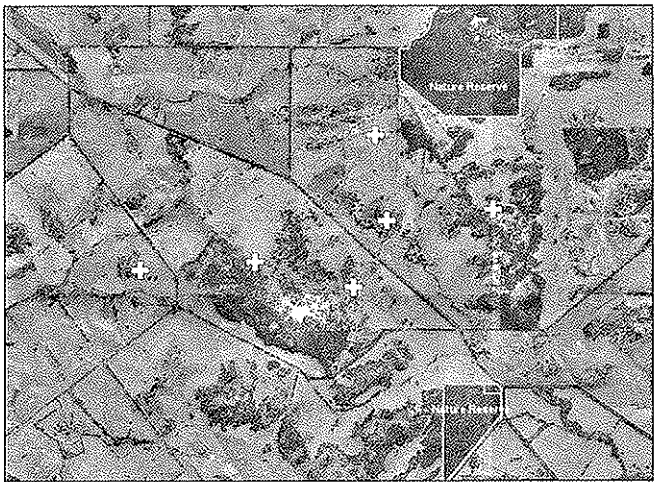


# BOODIE RATS

Brian English



Another reason for us to support the 'Red Card for the Red Fox' programme is that the harmless boodie rats fell victim to the fox. My wife's grandfather, who took up land at Arthur River over 100 years ago, described the boodie rat to me at least 50 years ago. My recollection is not clear, but I think he said that they were bigger than a rat, but smaller than a rabbit. He also said that they were very numerous.

To this day we can still see the homes of these animals. I have farmed a property at Pingelly for the last 40 years and, as you can see from the crosses on this photo, have six sites the same as those described by the late pioneer of Arthur River. The boodies dug out many tonnes of earth from granite outcrops. Typically the site would be an aggregation of large boulders with all the soil removed from between them. The soil is mounded around the stones some three to five metres from the granite. It appears that they removed all the soil. Development of these sites would have taken many years. With the demise of the boodie, these premises were enjoyed by foxes particularly and to some degree by rabbits. The arrival of the rabbit as a competitor for food also had a serious influence on the population.

Today the boodie is known as the burrowing bettong and is being bred in protected environments such as the Francois Peron National Park at Shark Bay. The WA Museum website has comprehensive information on these and other native animals.

*It is interesting that we don't value things till they are gone and nearly forgotten.*