

Woylie translocation activities 2013 By Adrian Wayne

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The critically endangered woylie or brush-tailed bettong (*Bettongia penicillata*) is the target of a third Western Australian recovery plan for the species.

The exact cause(s) of the estimated 90 per cent decline in the species between 1999 and 2006 has not been verified, although predation by feral cats and foxes, and possibly disease, has been implicated.

Translocation Perup to Yendicup

Recent monitoring at the 420ha predator-free Perup Sanctuary between Manjimup and Boyup Brook indicated that the 41 founders released in December 2010 had increased to around 300 to 400 adult woylies by July 2013. A 1 000 per cent increase in 2.5 years! With such strong growth, it provided an opportunity for the translocation of these animals to try and stimulate a recovery of the species in the wild. In July 2013, 87 individuals (51 males, 36 females) were relocated to nearby Yendicup forest block at the centre of Perup Nature Reserve.

The majority of the Department of Parks and Wildlife's managed conservation estate in the Kingston and Perup areas are aerially fox-baited quarterly. At the same time, ground-baiting is also done around most of the forest perimeters adjacent to freehold land. To further improve the prospects for the relocated woylies, increased fox-baiting at and around the release site was undertaken on Parks and Wildlife



*Woylie (*Bettongia penicillata*) released in the Perup Sanctuary during July 2013 as part of the recovery program. Photo – DPaW*

Most of the people involved in the April 2013 trapping monitoring of Perup Sanctuary. Photo – DPaW



managed-lands in conjunction with targeted control of introduced predators involving landholders on adjacent farmland, co-ordinated by the Warren Catchments Council.

Translocation to Perup Sanctuary

Following the translocation of woylies to Yendicup, 36 woylies (23 males, 13 females) from Dryandra were released in Perup Sanctuary in late July. The first five offspring of six adult woylies from Tutanning, being held and captive bred at Kanyana Fauna Rehabilitation Centre, were also released into Perup Sanctuary in mid-August and October. More woylies from Tutanning will be translocated in the coming months. The inclusion of Dryandra and Tutanning animals in the Perup Sanctuary will increase genetic diversity of the insurance population designed to conserve

as much of the remaining genetic diversity of the species as possible.

Monitoring

Remote sensor cameras are being used to monitor changes in woylie activity and abundance associated with the removal and/or addition of woylies at the three main sites involved – Perup Sanctuary, Yendicup and Dryandra. This is also an excellent opportunity to calibrate and measure the sensitivity and reliability of woylie detection rates using remote sensor cameras. Cage trapping in October found 40 woylies alive and well at the Yendicup release site with many others expected to have dispersed further afield. Woylie numbers in the Perup Sanctuary have also continued to grow strongly. Monitoring will continue to track the progress of woylies at these and other sites in the south-west of WA.