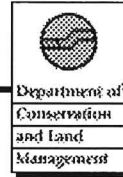


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News

R E L E A S E



24/3/97

Bilbies to benefit from Easter chocolates

Easter for one of Western Australia's most threatened native animals means a step closer to conservation.

The bilby - or rabbit-eared bandicoot - is set to benefit again from the sale of every chocolate Bush Bilby sold by Coles Supermarkets across Australia this Easter.

Funds raised last year by Coles helped the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) implement a breeding program to bring the bilby back from extinction.

CALM Executive Director Dr Syd Shea said the \$23,000 given to CALM last year was used to locate wild bilby populations and establish captive breeding colonies.

"A breeding program was established in Broome with three males and two female bilbies at a cost of \$5 000, while another pair of breeding bilbies are in the care of the Kanyana Nature Fauna Rehabilitation Centre at Gooseberry Hill," he said.

"Five thousand dollars has also been allocated for an expedition to the Pilbara region to search for more bilbies to breed.

"Nearly half the funds raised were used to build breeding homes at Peron Peninsula, which imitate as closely as possible the desert conditions in which bilbies roam in the wild."

Peron Peninsula, in the Shark Bay's World Heritage area, would soon be home to some of the bilbies as part of CALM's bold conservation plan Project Eden, which aims to make the peninsula a safe haven for native threatened animals.

Dr Shea said CALM planned to further develop its recovery program for bilbies and other endangered animals this year.

"Through operation Western Shield - the biggest conservation project ever undertaken in Australia - we have had success in controlling the threat of introduced predators," he said.

"This has led to the Australian native woylie being removed from the list of animals on the verge of extinction, an Australian first.

"It is hoped the bilby will follow the woylie and be taken off the threatened species list and by supporting the Save the Bilby Fund you are helping this happen."

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