Progress Report SP 2012-023

Feral cat control and numbat recovery in Dryandra woodland and other sites

Animal Science

Project Core Team

Supervising Scientist	Tony Friend
Data Custodian	
Site Custodian	

Project status as of July 4, 2017, 6:10 p.m.

Update requested

Document endorsements and approvals as of July 4, 2017, 6:10 p.m.

Project Team	granted
Program Leader	granted
Directorate	granted

Feral cat control and numbat recovery in Dryandra woodland and other sites

A Friend

Context

Dryandra Woodland supports important populations of several threatened mammals, including the numbat, woylie and red-tailed phascogale, as well as significant populations of a number of threatened birds. Recent research has shown that feral cats are responsible for the majority of numbat and woylie deaths. This project investigates the feasibility and efficacy of using the *Eradicat*^{ő} feral cat bait to reduce numbat and woylie mortality and promote their recovery at Dryandra.

Aims

- To determine the uptake of rhodamine-labelled non-toxic *Eradicat*^{ő} baits by chuditch, red-tailed phascogales and mardos in Dryandra.
- To determine the survival or mortality of groups of radio-collared chuditch, red-tailed phascogales and mardos during a baiting campaign using toxic *Eradicat*^{ő}baits in Dryandra.
- To determine the survival or mortality of feral cats through a baiting campaign using toxic *Eradicat*^{ő} baits in Dryandra.

Progress

- Four of the eight chuditch radio-collared at Dryandra in 2015 were recaptured and their collars removed. The other four were not found or trapped before their collars failed.
- Camera traps were set at Tutanning Nature Reserve in March 2016 to monitor cats before and after an *Eradicat*^{ő} baiting event. Of 37 cameras deployed around tracks in the reserve, 16 were stolen. As a result the camera monitoring was suspended. *Eradicat*^{ő} baiting was carried out as programmed in April 2016.

Management implications

- *Eradicat*^{ő} can be used with minimal non-target impacts in the Dryandra Woodland. This is significant for the implementation of integrated fox and feral cat control programs at Dryandra and elsewhere in the south-west of Western Australia.

Future directions

- Repeat an *Eradicat*^{ő} trial with GPS collared cats in Dryandra Woodland in 2016-17 to determine the effectiveness of this control method.
- Assess the effectiveness of setting leg-hold traps in raised sites (buckets of sand) for cats to reduce non-target capture.
- Monitor cat density before and after baiting using camera traps.
- Carry out an additional trial to determine the risk to red-tailed phascogale from *Eradicat*^{ő} baiting by monitoring 8-10 radio-collared phascogales through a baiting event at Dryandra and Tutanning.