

## **Progress Report SP 1996-008**

# **Gilbert's potoroo recovery plan**

**Animal Science**

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**Project Team**

granted

**Program Leader**

granted

**Directorate**

granted

# Gilbert's potoroo recovery plan

A Friend

## Context

Gilbert's potoroo is the world's rarest marsupial. The *Gilbert's Potoroo Recovery Plan 2003-2008* provides a list of actions to improve the conservation status of this Critically Endangered species. This project involves, or has involved collaborative arrangements with, Parks and Wildlife South Coast and Warren Regions, South Coast NRM, universities (Murdoch, Edith Cowan, UWA and Adelaide), the Royal Zoological Society of South Australia, the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species (FAME), private sponsors and the Albany-based Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group to implement conservation actions.

## Aims

- Implement and update the *Gilbert's Potoroo Recovery Plan*.
- Increase the numbers of individual Gilbert's potoroos known to be alive in the wild and increase the number of locations in which they occur.

## Progress

- A census of the Mount Gardner population (Two Peoples Bay NR) of Gilbert's potoroos is conducted three times a year. Numbers remained stable from 2001 when this regime was introduced, until November 2013, when a significant decline was detected. Eight potoroos, representing about 75% of the Mt Gardner population were known to be alive in March 2015.
- During 2005-2007, ten potoroos were transferred from Two Peoples Bay to Bald Island. Trapping between three and six times per year showed that the translocated population grew rapidly. Between 40 and 50 potoroos are known to be alive on the island, despite the removal of a total of 42 individuals since 2008 for translocations to the mainland. The majority (36) were transferred to the 380 hectare enclosure at Norman's Beach, Waychinicup National Park. The other six animals were released outside the fence into a fox-baited area.
- Monitoring of the population in the Waychinicup enclosure by trapping, radio-tracking and motion-activated cameras has shown that some of the potoroos use vegetation types floristically and structurally different to that occupied at Two Peoples Bay, and that breeding and recruitment are occurring. Carpet pythons were found to be significant predators of potoroos at Two Peoples Bay and Waychinicup.
- In March 2015, 13 potoroos were known to be alive in the enclosure, of which nine were born on-site.

## Management implications

- Results of the Bald Island translocation and subsequent monitoring indicate that a new self-sustaining population has been established at a site unaffected by introduced predators and lacking most native predators. This new population will provide better security for the species in the face of the greatest threat to its survival, wildfire at Two Peoples Bay. It also provides a source of potoroos for future translocations to secure sites.
- Establishment of potoroos at the Waychinicup enclosure in vegetation types different from those used at Two Peoples Bay implies that a wider range of potential translocation sites may be available than previously believed.

## Future directions

- Continue to monitor the Mount Gardner, Bald Island and Waychinicup National Park (enclosure) populations, by trapping and radio-tracking. Continue to monitor the enclosure for incursion by cats or foxes. Implement structured trapping to determine habitat use.

- Evaluate further translocation sites, both on the mainland and on other islands.
- An updated draft of the Gilbert's Potoroo Recovery Plan will be produced and circulated for comment in 2015-16.