

**Progress Report CF 2018-040**

**Fauna conservation and recovery**

**BCS Species and Communities**

**Project Core Team**

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# Fauna conservation and recovery

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## Context

The fauna conservation team provides a range of science based support for fauna conservation and recovery. The team coordinates recovery programs and provides advice and input to recovery programs for threatened fauna, including developing recovery plans, supporting recovery teams, administering strategic translocation planning and other conservation activities, as well as leading management plans for non-threatened species. The team administers the department's Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) to manage requirements for ethical consideration of animals in departmental research and management activities.

## Aims

- Provide evidence-based advice for the management, protection and recovery of threatened and priority fauna.
- Collate, manage and interpret information and data on the presence and distribution of threatened and priority fauna.
- Provide a data provision service to ensure threatened and priority fauna data is available within and outside the department.
- Guide strategic and coordinated recovery programs for threatened fauna, including translocations.
- Undertake assessments of conservation status based on all available data, and where appropriate, prepare nominations for the consideration of the TSSC.
- Inform policy and strategic direction relating to fauna.
- Assess applications for Ministerial authorisations to take or disturb threatened fauna under section 40 of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, (BC Act) to ensure authorised activities do not cause unacceptable risks to the conservation of threatened species biodiversity.
- Provide technical advice on assessment of environmental impacts on fauna for development and vegetation clearing proposals, and licence applications to take fauna for relocation, scientific and other purposes, in accordance with relevant policy and legislation.
- Ensure that animals used for scientific purposes are cared for and used in an ethical and humane manner and that the department meets its commitments under the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*, its licence to use animals for scientific purposes, and the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes.

## Progress

- As at 30 June 2022, under the BC Act, a total of 249 fauna species were listed as threatened species (57 as critically endangered, 58 as endangered and 134 as vulnerable), 23 as extinct species, and 88 as specially protected species (seven conservation dependent, seven other specially protected and 74 migratory species). There were 219 species on the department's priority fauna list.
- A total of 305 new records of sightings, captures or evidence of threatened and priority fauna occurrences were added to the Threatened and Priority Fauna database.
- Two hundred and forty one Ministerial authorisations to take or disturb threatened fauna under section 40 of the BC Act were assessed and granted. Continue to progress development of processes and systems to support Ministerial authorisation approvals
- Advice and support were provided to internal and external stakeholders on recovery actions for threatened species and land management activities to support conservation, including advice on national recovery plans.
- Advice and support were provided to 17 state fauna recovery teams to ensure continued conservation and appropriate management for threatened species. Advice was provided to national recovery teams for mala, malleefowl and bilby.
- Supported Wildlife Protection Branch by providing expert technical advice on applications for fauna licences under the *Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018*.

- Provided advice and reviewed proposals for intra- and interstate translocation and captive-bred releases of threatened fauna species.
- The AEC met six times, conducted a total of 330 assessments, approved 22 new projects and approved the renewal of 48 projects. There were 126 active AEC approved projects that covered fauna monitoring, general fauna research, translocations, fauna surveys, education, feral animal control research and marine research.

## Management implications

- Enhanced data sets, and data management systems, and more accurate and comprehensive lists of threatened and priority fauna, facilitate improved assessment and conservation.
- Updates to the threatened fauna database assists in supporting nominations and reviews of the conservation status of fauna and provides improved information for impact assessment, land use planning and management.
- Management advice and assessment of applications for authorisations and licences to take and disturb fauna and for the translocation of threatened fauna, assists the department and other land managers to maintain or improve the conservation status of threatened and priority fauna.
- Departmental animal welfare requirements are maintained through operation of the AEC.
- Threatened fauna recovery plans and teams guide conservation activities and outcomes.
- Input into environmental impact assessment and land use planning processes maximises the potential for positive conservation outcomes.

## Future directions

- Continue to deliver strategic direction on and coordination of the conservation, management, protection and recovery of fauna in an efficient and effective manner.
- Prepare fauna advice within requested time frames.
- Continue to ensure that the correct processes and advice are in place for the department to meet its requirements under the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*.
- Continue to implement BC Act requirements related to native fauna, and ensure processes and guidelines are in place as required.