

Progress Report CF 2018-040

Fauna conservation and recovery

Species and Communities

Project Core Team

Supervising Scientist

Juanita M Renwick

Data Custodian

Amy Mutton

Site Custodian

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Project Team

granted

Program Leader

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Directorate

granted

Fauna conservation and recovery

JM Renwick, M Davies, K Bain, A Mutton, T Johnston, A Robey, K Rick

Context

The fauna conservation team provides a range of science based support for fauna conservation and recovery programs. The team provides advice and input on the range of recovery programs for threatened fauna, coordinates recovery programs, including developing recovery plans and supporting recovery teams, administers strategic translocation planning and conservation activities involving threatened and priority fauna. The team oversees the collation of information through capture of threatened and priority fauna records. Maintaining the Threatened and Priority Fauna database allows the department to provide accurate technical and scientific advice on threatened and priority fauna to decision makers in land use planning and environmental impact assessment processes. The department facilitates the Threatened Species Scientific Committee (TSSC). The team facilitates the department's Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) to manage requirements for ethical consideration of animals in research and management projects.

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 are 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 risks to individual animals and subpopulations are minimised during survey, monitoring and relocation activities.
- 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 31 July 2020, 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.
- Support and advice was provided to the national Wildlife and Threatened Species Bushfire Recovery Expert Panel on key priorities for Western Australian species impacted by the 2019-2020 summer bushfires.
- A total of 39,251 records of sightings, captures or evidence of threatened, specially protected and priority fauna were added to the Threatened and Priority Fauna database, bringing the total number of records in the database to 107,981.
- Three hundred and forty two threatened and priority fauna data searches and extract requests were performed and numerous responses were provided to fauna enquiries.

- Two hundred and twenty one Ministerial Authorisations to take or disturb threatened fauna under section 40 of the BC Act were assessed and granted.
- Continued to support Wildlife Protection Branch by providing expert technical advice on applications for fauna licences under the Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018.
- Thirty seven formal written advice requests were provided in relation to assessment of environmental impacts associated with clearing permit applications, mining development projects and land use planning proposals, in addition to numerous informal requests for potential or hypothetical significance of impacts on threatened or priority fauna.
- Advice and support was provided to 17 fauna recovery teams to ensure continued conservation and appropriate management for threatened species.
- Provided advice and reviewed proposals for translocation and captive-bred releases for threatened fauna species including dighters, numbats, western swamp tortoises, Shark Bay bandicoot, rufous hare-wallaby and Shark Bay mouse.
- Contributed to the national review related to the commercial harvesting of kangaroos.
- The AEC met six times, conducted a total of 302 assessments, approved 11 new projects and approved the renewal of 38 projects. There were 128 active projects that covered the following broad areas of research and monitoring: fauna monitoring, general fauna research, translocations, fauna surveys, education, feral animal control research and marine research.

Management implications

- Enhanced data sets and lists for 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, or 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 outcomes.
- Provision of input into the environmental impact assessment and land use planning processes maximises the potential for positive conservation outcomes.

Future directions

- Continue to deliver strategic direction and coordination of the conservation, management, protection and recovery of fauna in an efficient manner.
- Transition to the new threatened species and communities database, and ensure high quality data is maintained and shared.
- Prepare fauna advice within requested time frames.
- Finalise the draft guideline for the survey and relocation of bilby, in relation to vegetation clearing and other significant disturbance activities.
- Continue to ensure that the correct processes and advice is in place for the department to meet its requirements under the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*.
- Continue to implement the BC Act, through issuing of Ministerial Authorisations and processes and guidelines are in place as required.