Progress Report SP 2018-098

Numbat breed for release program

Perth Zoo Science

Project Core Team

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Update requested

Document endorsements and approvals as of July 26, 2022, 1:48 p.m.

Project Team	granted
Program Leader	granted
Directorate	required

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Context

Numbats (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*) are listed as endangered, and occur in only two natural populations at very low densities. Establishing new populations entirely with wild caught numbats is not feasible and captive breeding provides a source of animals for supplementation of wild populations and establishment of new populations. A captive breeding program for numbats at Perth Zoo has been in place since 1992. Captive-bred numbats have enabled new populations to be established at Boyagin Nature Reserve, Battaling Forest and fenced reserves at Dryandra National Park, Mount Gibson Sanctuary in Western Australia, Yookamurra Sanctuary and Secret Rocks Mallee Refuge (South Australia), and Scotia Sanctuary and Mallee Cliffs National Park (New South Wales).

Aims

- Produce yearling numbats in sufficient quantity to support proposed reintroductions to sites approved by the Numbat Recovery Team.

Progress

- Produced five yearling numbats for release into the a fenced enclosure in Mallee Cliffs National Park, NSW.
- Three adult numbats surplus to the requirements of the breeding program was also released into a fenced enclosure in Secret Rocks Mallee Refuge, South Australia.
- Two female numbats were brought into the program from Dryandra National Park to expand the genetic integrity of the breeding program.
- Produced 14 pouch young, with 13 young developing normally.

Management implications

- Breeding of numbats provides animals to supplement existing numbat populations and establish new populations across the former range of the species. The program also aims to ensure the genetic viability of populations through monitoring genetic diversity and undertaking supplementary releases to enhance population genetic diversity.

Future directions

- Continue to produce numbats through captive breeding to meet demand from approved translocation programs.