

Bounceback and Beyond

Protecting threatened semi-arid species
and their habitat across the landscape

Short-tailed Grasswren

Deb Hopton

This project, funded over five years (2018-2023) through the Australian Government's Regional Land Partnerships Fund (a National Landcare Program) will reduce the impacts of foxes and goats on wildlife and livestock across the landscape, and improve the conservation status of a range of native flora and fauna species.

It will significantly expand the positive impacts of 26 years of coordinated landscape-scale feral animal control under the State-funded *Bounceback* Program and related Commonwealth grants, the most recent being 'Ranges Riches' which supported work on privately managed land from 2013-2017.

This ongoing investment directly resulted in the spectacular recovery of the Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby across much of its former range which, during the 1980s, had contracted to small isolated refuges. This work, with the help of our funding partner – the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species Ltd (FAME), also made possible the unfenced reintroduction of Western Quolls (*Idnyia*) to SA during 2014-16. To prevent loss of introduced fauna, it is vital that we maintain effective landscape-scale fox and goat control across participating privately and publicly managed lands.

Bounceback and Beyond will expand management and monitoring activities well beyond the current *Bounceback* footprint, benefiting plants and animals recognised as threatened

under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*. In addition to the Western Quoll and Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby, these species include: the Sandhill Dunnart; three bird species – Malleefowl, Plains-wanderer and Short-tailed Grasswren; a native fish – Flinders Ranges Purple-spotted Gudgeon; and six tree or shrub species – Slender Bell-fruit, Menzell's Wattle, Purplewood Wattle, *Xerothamnella parvifolia*, Spidery Wattle and Ooldea Guinea-flower.

Primary management activities that will be undertaken as part of this project include working with landholders to ensure complementary ground baiting with 1080 for foxes and wild dogs is undertaken at optimal times between aerial baiting operations, and that goat mustering and ground shooting is also undertaken at optimal times. Through re-engaging with private landholders previously involved in the program and targeting new areas that support habitat for threatened species, we aim to expand current activities by more than 4600 km².

FACT SHEET *Bounceback and Beyond*



Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby

ATC



Purplewood Wattle

Car Lynch



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

At the grass roots level, community stakeholders will be involved in planning and promoting on-ground activities through the relevant NRM groups. Landholders, Aboriginal Traditional Owners, community groups, Friends of Parks groups and volunteers will be involved in the management activities and monitoring where possible.

WHAT MONITORING WILL WE UNDERTAKE?

Monitoring will be a key part of this project so that we can assess the value of public investment in landscape-scale pest control (primarily for foxes and feral goats). To do this, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands staff need to set up complementary monitoring on properties undertaking normal land management in similar types of country. This is so we can compare our more intensively fox and goat managed areas against current standards. We are looking for properties that are interested in becoming monitoring partners for the project for the next four and a half years with no obligations to adopt extra pest management or monitoring activities.

This monitoring will include the use of motion cameras and on-ground assessments of the impact of goats and other herbivores on vegetation. Monitoring of threatened species will also be undertaken using a combination of best practice methods.

CAMERAS

Some of the benefits for properties which choose to be involved in this project will be access to information from motion activated infra-red cameras on the medium sized animals found on their properties. Cameras will be set up to provide comparative information on Euros, Western Grey and Red Kangaroos, Goats, Wild Dogs, Foxes, Feral Cats, Rabbits, Emus, Echidnas and any other animals larger than a rat that may be in the area. In some areas, information on Yellow-footed Rock-wallabies, Possums, Quolls, Malleefowl and Bustards will also be collected.

The number of cameras on any one property will vary and is likely to be less than 40. Cameras will be set up close to existing tracks with groups of 10 cameras placed around 1-2 km apart in similar parts of the landscape. The areas where cameras are set will be determined through negotiation with property managers.

This work will also provide information on the effectiveness of dog control on properties involved in the Biteback program. Livestock will also be recorded, so efforts will be made to keep cameras away from waterpoints to reduce the number of photos that need to be sorted through!

HERBIVORE IMPACT

The impact of herbivores is assessed along transects in areas inaccessible to livestock – usually the steeper ranges or areas away from waterpoints. These impact assessments are focussed on shrubs and trees, particularly those that are most palatable to goats. We record the proportion of individuals of a species that are heavily browsed vs lightly browsed along each transect. This will provide a baseline for comparison with areas where goats are effectively managed and a reference for future monitoring. At a regional scale it will inform us about which vegetation species may be threatened if goats are not managed to low levels.

Purplewood Wattle flower



Cat Lynch

Menzell's Wattle



SA Seed Conservation Centre

Feral goats



Idnys family caught on infrared camera



Malleefowl mound

Cat Lynch



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National
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Program



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