

## IDNYA and VIRLDA e-NEWS

**Welcome to the eighth edition of e-News, a regular update on the trial reintroduction of the western quoll and brushtail possum to the Flinders Ranges National Park. Idnya is the Adnyamathanha name for the western quoll whilst Virlida is the name for brushtail possum.**



### BACKGROUND

During April 2015, 37 idnya were released into the Flinders Ranges National Park following on from the successful release of 41 idnya in 2014. The release is a partnership between the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered species (FAME), the South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) and the Western Australian Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW). In July 2015, 79 brushtail possums were also released into the park in an attempt to halt the decline of possums in arid South Australia.

### UPDATE- IDNYA

Our December trapping was conducted in the Flinders Ranges National Park between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of December and we trapped 172 trap sites for 5 nights each. Despite the hot temperatures we captured 45 individuals from 67 idnya captures. Our trap success continues to increase relative to the previous two trapping periods suggesting that the idnya population is expanding.

Table: Trap success of idnya in each of the three trapping sessions since release

	Dec 2015	March 2015	December 2014
Trap nights	172*5=860	162*4=648	152*4=608
No. captures	67	36	19
Trap success	7.8%	5.5%	3.1%
No. individuals	45	29	16

Individual trap success	5.2%	4.5%	2.6%
2014 release animals	5	15	8
2015 release animals	3	-	-
F1	10	14	8
F2	27	-	-

This year we captured 27 second generation idnya which represent the young of new animals born last year. This means we now have grandchildren of the released animals being captured.



**Volunteer Mark LePla with a captured quoll**

Catching idnya involves getting up at 4.30am to check traps before it gets too hot and going out again in the afternoon and evening to reset and bait traps. Our trapping team included 6 volunteers (including two from the Western Australian Department of Parks and Wildlife), 2 PhD students, 2 DEWNR staff and 2 contractors who worked tirelessly to make the trapping week a success.



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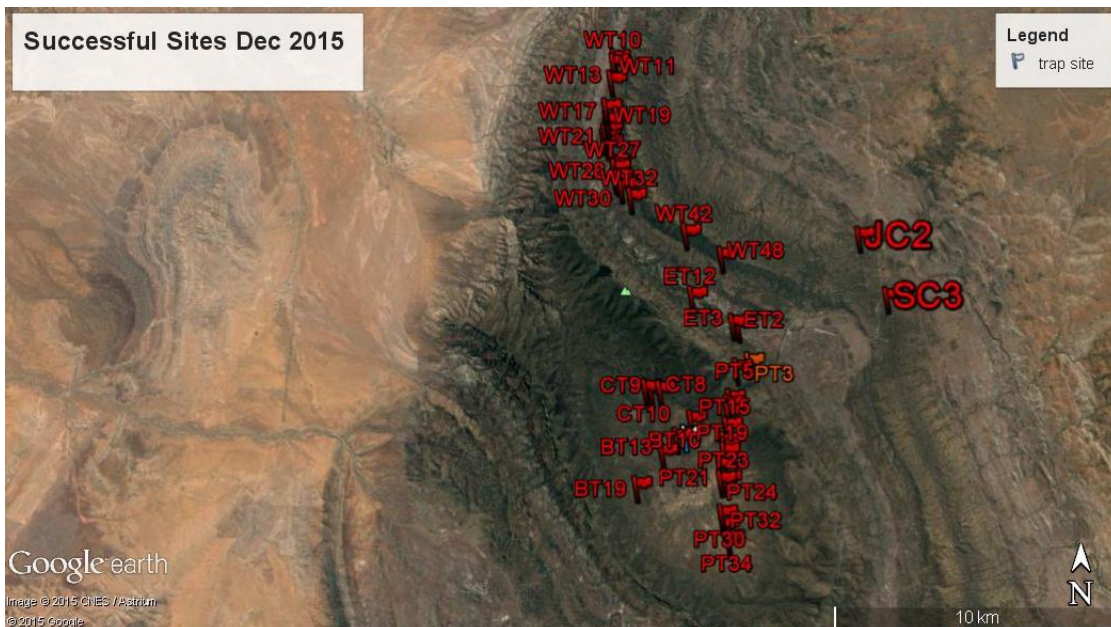
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**The December 2015 trapping team after another successful trapping trip  
(Rob Brandle and Jenna Hollamby not in photograph)**

Idnya were captured from 48 of the 172 trap sites and were captured from every trap line (Jones Camp, Sacred Canyon, Release Pen Track, Coinda Camp, Bridle Gap track, Wilcolo Track, Emergency Track) suggesting they are spread throughout the release areas.



**Sites where idnya were captured in the Flinders Ranges National Park**



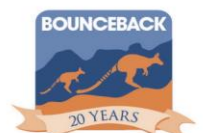
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**Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species Ltd.**



FAME donors provided names for a number of new quolls this year including Winifred Violet Scott, Acacia Rose, Suzibaby, David, Maxie, Gorgeous, Cabby, Clare, Jeannie and TC. The positive trapping results suggests that the idnya reintroduction is progressing well and the population is expanding.



**One of our new idnya trapped during the December trapping. This idnya was named Winifred Violet Scott after a FAME donor**

## **Virda**

The brushtail possum reintroduction occurred in July 2015 and is progressing positively with no mortalities from predation. All females that were moved with small pouch young have successfully raised their young to pouch exit. Additionally, all females captured recently have new pouch young. We now have 9 juveniles collared and they are all still staying close to their mothers. In addition, 28 adult possums are radiocollared and will be monitored over the summer months to look at movement, use of springs and survival. Honours student Kate Cornelson from the University of Adelaide has been observing the possums at night to look at home range overlap and interactions and has observed possums in the pound feeding on new leaf tips in mallee. Her observations will be added to PhD student Hannah Bannister's scat analysis to enable us to gain an understanding of their diet. Hannah has also been spending a lot of time fitting collars to juvenile possums and keeping track of their movements.



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One of the new possum pouch young recorded recently in the reintroduced population. Photo: Hannah Bannister



Bounceback Coordinator Trish Mooney releasing a possum Photo Pat Hodgens



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A possum pouch young that has emerged but is still living with its mother photo: Katherine Moseby

We have been fitting GPS collars to possums to look at their movements and foraging behaviour. Results from the first 7 collars are mapped below. The female virlda have much smaller home ranges than the males (Sherbet, Happy, Nathan are males)



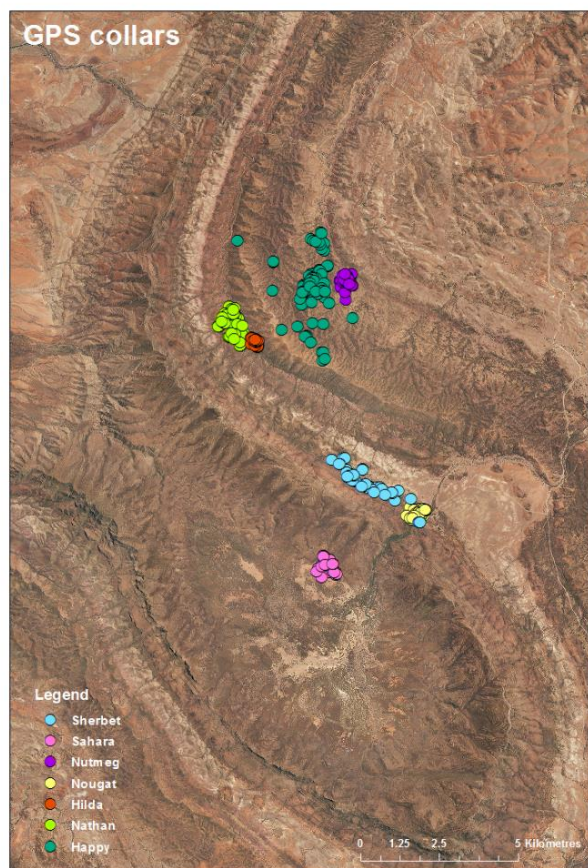
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Map of GPS collared possums: Katherine Moseby and Hannah Bannister

Report by Katherine Moseby (Ecological Horizons Pty. Ltd.)

### THE REINTRODUCTION TEAM

Idnya Reintroduction Team- **FAME** Peter Kay (Chair, Executive Taskforce), Cheryl Hill, Elizabeth Davis, David Peacock; **DEWNR** Anthony Freebairn, Rob Brandle, Trish Mooney, Greg Patrick, Peter Copley, Jenny Barker; **Ecological Horizons** Katherine Moseby (Project Coordinator); **WA Department of Parks and Wildlife** Keith Morris.

Idnya contractors- Pat Hodgens

Idnya volunteers-Kiarrah Smith, Mark LePla, Helen Crisp, Brent Johnson, Jenna Hollamby, Dave Peacock, Shaun, Arkaba staff (Brendon Bevan and Charlie)

Idnya Pilot- Matt Graham

Idnya research student- Mel Jensen, The University of Adelaide

Virda research student- Hannah Bannister, The University of Adelaide



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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Last seen in the Flinders Ranges during the 1880s, the Western Quoll is a small Australian native carnivorous marsupial which once thrived across 80% of the Australian continent. Until the start of the trial re-introduction project, the nation's western quoll population could only be found in the south-west of Western Australia. Vilda were once widespread and abundant throughout South Australia's arid lands but were driven to extinction by introduced animals causing habitat degradation and loss through predation by foxes.

Expected to bring ecological and tourism benefits to the Flinders Ranges, idnya and virda also have great cultural significance for the Adnyamathanha people, for whom the quoll (Idnya) is a totem and an integral part of their Dreaming.

Since their release, idnya and virda survival rates are being actively monitored by radio tracking and trapping individuals to assess their condition and breeding status.

## PROJECT PARTNERS

Through its Bounceback program, the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources has been controlling predators such as foxes and cats, and herbivores such as goats to protect the habitat in the Flinders Ranges needed for the quoll's long term survival.

FAME is leading the drive to raise approximately \$1.7 million over a five year period that will support the recovery of the species in one of its former territories.

Western Australia's Department of Parks and Wildlife has donated the idnya from their conservation parks

Australian Wildlife Conservancy donated the virda from their sanctuary at Yookamurra in the Murraylands

Thanks to the many donors, land managers and partners of *Bounceback* for their support for this project.

## KEEP INFORMED!

To receive these regular e-updates please email [SAAridlands@sa.gov.au](mailto:SAAridlands@sa.gov.au) with the subject 'Quoll update' and you will be added to or contact the Natural Resources Centre in Port Augusta 8648 5300.



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