

## IDNYA e-NEWS

**Welcome to the third edition of “Idnya e-News”, a regular update on the trial reintroduction of the western quoll to the Flinders Ranges National Park. Idnya is the Adnyamathanha name for the western quoll.**



During April and May 2014, 41 idnya (21 females and 20 males) were released into the Flinders Ranges National Park after an absence of more than 150 years. The release heralded the start of 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).

Our female idnya are now denning in earnest with 11 of our females now confirmed with pouch young. We can age the pouch young using their crown rump measurement and so estimate that all young are being denned between July and the end of September (at around 60 days old). Idnya are weaned at around 170 days so between November and January, young idnya will start to emerge from their dens and disperse across the Flinders Ranges National Park. Many of the female are denning in hollow Eucalypt trees whilst others have found hollow logs or burrows.



Marri's denning site in a hollow tree on the edge of the ABC range.  
Photo: Katherine Moseby



Juli's pouch young just before denning. Spots are just starting to appear.  
Photo: Melissa Jensen



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Our diet analysis has found adult rabbit remains within scats and we recently found a fresh rabbit carcass that had been fed on by a male idnya. It is likely that idnya are tucking into rabbits as well as a range of other foods (we have also found eggshell, feathers, house mice and lizard scales in their scats).

Of the 41 idnya released we have now lost 12 animals (7 females and 5 males), 10 due to cat predation. Recently one of our radiocollared females with denned young was killed by a cat and a rescue mission was mounted to retrieve the seven denned young left in a tree hollow. The young were successfully rescued and are now being raised by Zoos S.A. staff and they will be re-released into the wild when they are around 6 months of age.



One of the 7 young idnya rescued when their mother was killed by a feral cat.  
Photo Hannah Bannister

To date four larger than average male cats are thought to be responsible for most of the idnya deaths and three of the four cats were removed immediately after they killed idnya. The fourth male cat has been evading us for over 2 months but recently this cat was trapped and removed from the pound. We think this cat may have killed up to 4 idnya.



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The male cat recently caught in the pound and believed to be responsible for up to 4 idnya deaths

We are currently removing radiocollars from idnya and moving to monitoring using cage trapping. Collars have been on for nearly 6 months. We hope to radiocollar some juvenile idnya in December to enable us to track their survival over the summer months as they disperse.



Adult idnya caught on remote camera. The radiocollar can be seen under his chin.



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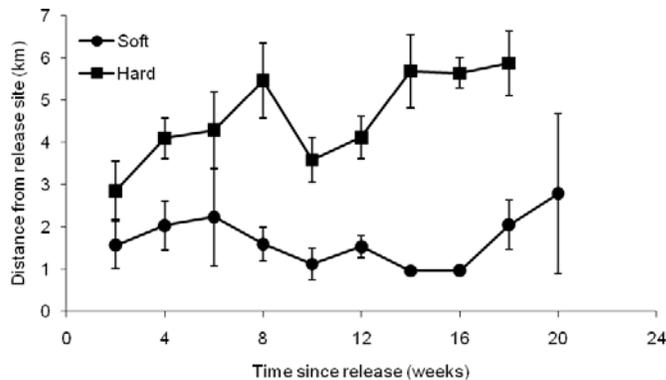


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Data collected during this trial release is currently being analysed. This graph shows how far the idnya moved from their release sites when they were hard released and soft released (left in a small pen in Wilpena Pound for 10 days to acclimatise before release). Animals kept in a pen for 10 days prior to release stayed closer to their release site than idnya released directly into the park. Data analysis will assist us in determining the best way to release idnya in the future.

The female, Manji, who was attacked by a feral cat and released back into the park after treatment, is doing well and has settled back into her home range. She is likely to be in oestrus now as several males have been recorded near her shelter sites. We will trap Manji in the next few weeks to check for pouch young.

The reintroduction is progressing well and short term success criteria have been reached. Females have denned young and are maintaining weight whilst males are moving several kilometres a night and overlapping with female home ranges. Trapping in early December will reveal how many young idnya have made it to pouch exit and who will form the next generation of idnya in the Flinders Ranges. Stay tuned...

Report by Ecological Horizons Pty. Ltd.

### THE IDNYA 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, Nicki Stewart; **Ecological Horizons** Katherine Moseby (Project Coordinator); **WA Department of Parks and Wildlife** Keith Morris.

Idnya contractors- Pat Hodgens

Idnya volunteers- Hannah Bannister, Bronwyn Fancourt, Alyson Stobbo-Wilson, John Read

Idnya Pilot- Matt Graham

Idnya research students- Mel Jensen, The University of Adelaide, Adele Thomasz, Murdoch University

Idnya cat shooters- Frank Bernhardt, Dylan Koerner

Juvenile Idnya rescuers- Steve Jennings and Arthur Coulthard



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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.

Expected to bring ecological and tourism benefits to the Flinders Ranges, the western quoll also has 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 the quolls' survival rates and well-being have been actively monitored by radio tracking individuals and, once the re-introduced quolls have established themselves in their new habitat, trapping will be undertaken to assess their condition and breeding status.

If there are positive signs of the population re-establishing itself, then a full re-introduction will be considered.

## 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 \$1.3 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 Western Quolls from their conservation parks.

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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