

Black range bandicoot recovery project



Anecdotally and from trapping results, bandicoot numbers in the Black Range have plummeted over the last ten years. The Black Range Bandicoot Recovery Team in partnership with Project Platypus, representatives from Victorian government departments and other project partners and with the assistance of a Threatened Species Network Community Grant, aimed to address the serious decline in the Black Range bandicoot population by promoting community awareness of bandicoots and their threats, surveying and monitoring bandicoot populations, increasing bandicoot habitat by revegetation in key areas and establishing a coordinated pest control program.

Southern brown bandicoot (*Isoodon obesulus obesulus*)

Commonwealth Status: Vulnerable (EPBC Act 1999)

NSW Status: Endangered (Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995)

The southern brown bandicoot is found in the Grampians area and along coastal Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. It is a medium-sized, ground-dwelling marsupial, with a creamy-white underbelly and coarse dark grey fur with golden brown flecks on its back. The major threats to this species include altered fire regimes (especially frequent fuel reduction burning), predation by foxes and feral cats and habitat loss and fragmentation.

Project outcomes

Shortly after the project commenced in 2005 fires swept through seventy-five percent of the Black Range, destroying much bandicoot habitat and necessitating a review of the planned project activities. The Black Range Bandicoot Recovery Team and partners immediately responded to the fires by promoting a widespread fox control program and providing refuges for bandicoots and other small native fauna. 150 bandicoot boxes were made by volunteers and distributed across the range and sixteen large bandicoot refuges were erected in key areas. After the fire fox and rabbit control was undertaken on four large properties. Cat and fox traps have been distributed to help eradicate feral threats and local landholders will be encouraged to maintain feral control activities.

Despite the disruption caused by the fires, the project had many successes. The community education and awareness program has generated interest in the plight of the bandicoots, particularly through the ongoing distribution of a Bandicoot Kit. An educational sign is to be placed in a high traffic area. Satellite images, remnant vegetation mapping, site visits and advice from experts identified key nodes and corridors for revegetation works with indigenous shrubs species, and targeted revegetation works will be an ongoing activity.

Outputs

Area conserved: 14 ha

Area surveyed: 25 ha

Volunteers participated: 42

Person days worked: 39

Products

- Bandicoot display
- Bandicoot kit
- Educational sign

Expenditure

TSN grant funds - \$11,100.00

Proponent - \$12,815.00

Total project - \$23,915.00