

Promising results

Various surveys have been conducted to monitor and compare biodiversity and animal health inside Perup Sanctuary with comparable areas outside the sanctuary. In the first two years, 200 volunteers have contributed more than 7,000 hours to assist Parks and Wildlife staff, research collaborators and students to complete this work.

As well as woylies, Perup Sanctuary supports other native mammals such as the numbat, wambenger (brushtailed phascogale), koomal (common brushtail possum), quenda (southern brown bandicoot), tammar wallaby, pygmy possum, ngwayir (western ringtail possum) and dunnart. More than 25 species of reptiles and frogs, and an estimated 200 species of plants, are found in the area.



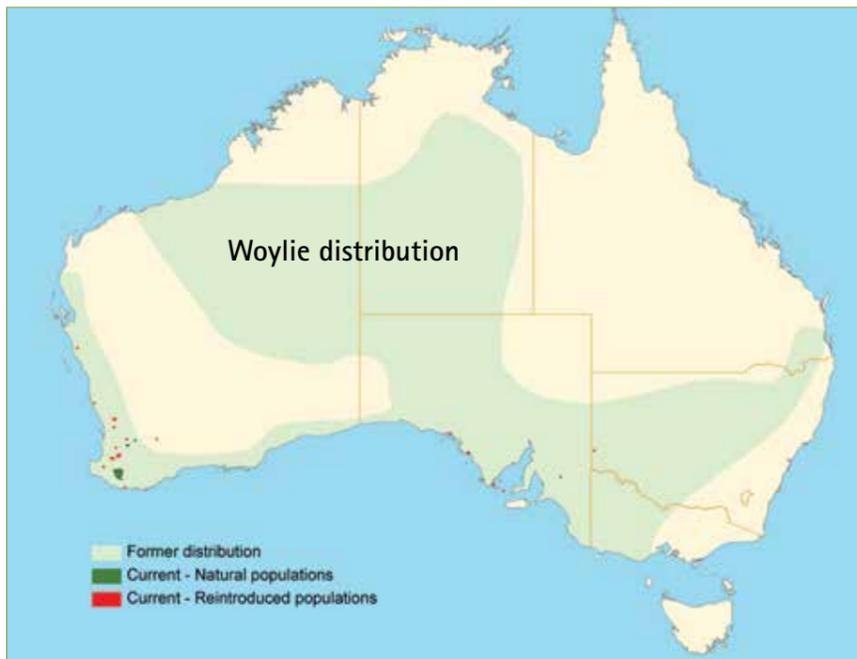
Taking head length measurements of a woylie.



Setting cage traps for woylie monitoring.



Setting up a remote sensor camera to provide 24-hour surveillance of wildlife and predator incursions.



For additional information contact

Department of Parks and Wildlife
Locked Bag 2, Manjimup 6258, WA
Ph (08) 9771 7988

Or web search 'Woylie Conservation Research Project'

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This publication is available in alternative formats on request.

Perup Sanctuary



Department of Parks and Wildlife



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY



PERTH ZOO



Perup Sanctuary in Tone-Perup Nature Reserve is a fenced-off 420-hectare predator-free area of prime habitat that protects woylies (*Bettongia penicillata ogilbyi*) from feral predators and enables scientists to carry out vital research into woylie health and conservation.

Woylie history

Woylies once populated much of southern and central Australia. Each woylie can dig about five tonnes of soil a year as they forage for underground fungi, bulbs, tubers and seeds. This makes them important 'ecosystem engineers', as their foraging helps recycle nutrients, promote water absorption into the soil, disperse and cache seeds and provide seed beds for many native plants to germinate. But woylies are constantly under threat from introduced predators such as cats and foxes.



Woylie foraging for food.

Protecting the woylie

In an effort to understand why woylies declined so rapidly, the Department of Parks and Wildlife set up the Woylie Conservation Research Project. Evidence so far indicates that feral cats and foxes are preying upon woylie populations, with cats responsible for 62 per cent of predation. Research into declining populations has also found that disease could be making woylies more vulnerable to predation. At least one population has recently disappeared and some are teetering on the verge of extinction having declined by 99 per cent.

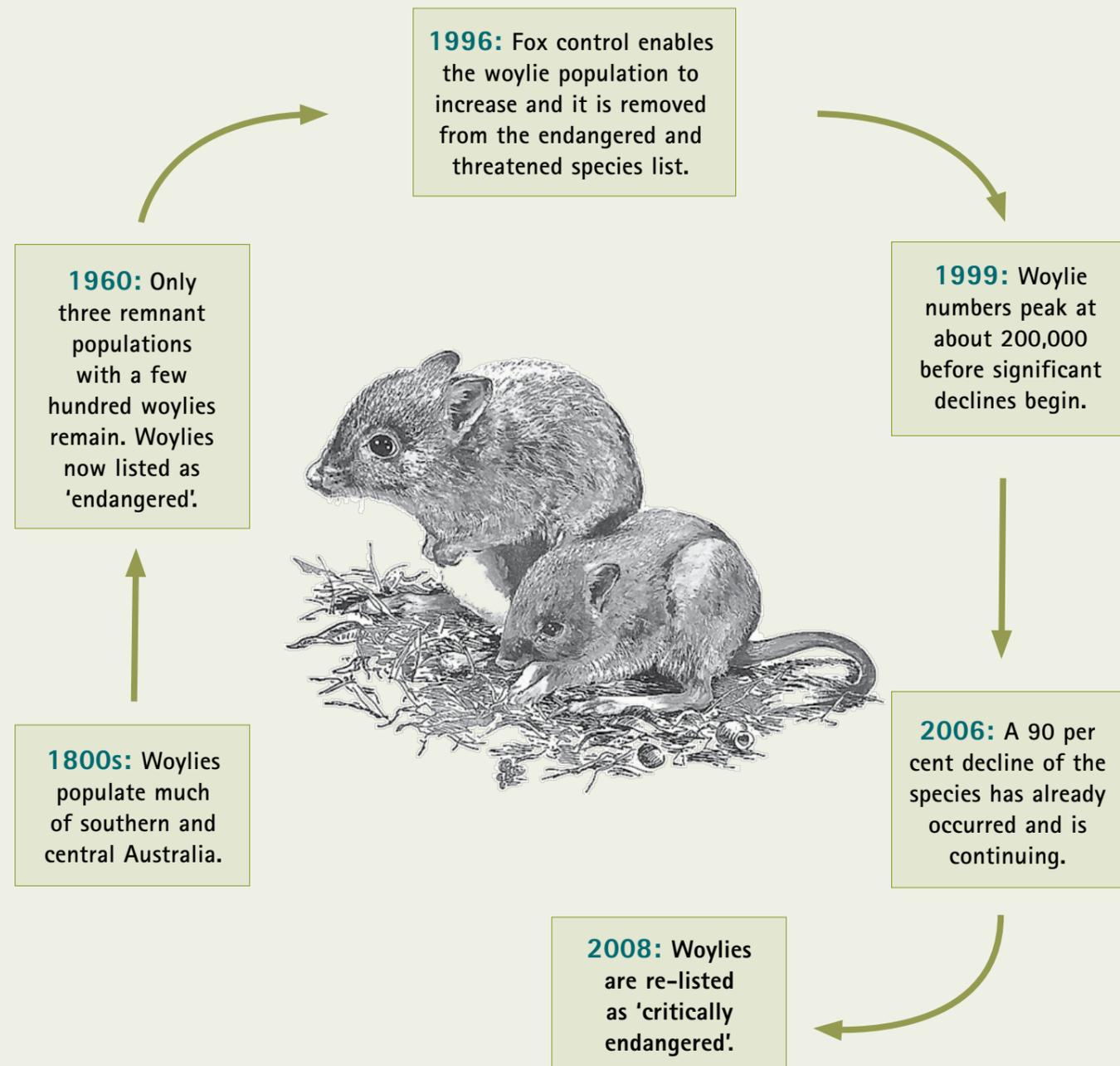
Creating Perup Sanctuary

To protect some important woylie populations from local extinction it was necessary to establish insurance populations. One way to achieve this is a haven where woylies can live wild and free from feral predators. So, with funding secured, work on the Perup Sanctuary began in 2009. By October 2010 the fence had been completed and the sanctuary had been confirmed to be free of cats and foxes. In November and December 2010, 41 woylies captured from surrounding areas were carefully selected to represent the genetic diversity across the Perup and Kingston populations and released into the sanctuary. In the first two years alone woylie numbers quadrupled. Perup Sanctuary should sustainably support more than 500 woylies by about 2014.

Insurance populations like the one at Perup Sanctuary also buy time for researchers to identify the causes of the population decline and the factors that are threatening this ecologically important species with extinction. Once this is better understood, conservation efforts can be more effectively directed toward a species recovery program that can enable the woylie to successfully bounce back. Once this happens, Perup Sanctuary will play a key role in providing woylies for translocations to establish new and healthy populations across their former range.



A woylie gets a health check before being released in Perup Sanctuary.



Fence facts

Fencing off Perup Sanctuary required a significant amount of resources:

- 1,700 x 2.4-metre galvanised star pickets.
- A total of 32.64 kilometres of netting.
- 52 kilometres of standard tensile wire to support the netting.
- 9.9 kilometres of high tensile wire to support the 'floppy top' that prevents predators climbing the fence.
- 4,500 Reo-bar pegs to pin the skirting to the ground.
- 460,000 clips used by pneumatic guns with an average output of 15,000 clips per day.
- The electric fence runs at 6.5kV-7kV, enough energy to make a cat or fox fall back off the fence.



The fence with its electric wires and 'floppy top', which prevents predators from climbing over.