



Lotterywest

South Coast Possums- Protection, Resilience & Knowledge



Final Report June 2023

Project Officers
Andrea Le Page & Pip Tilbrook

Forward

This report encompasses works from two aligned projects, the Lotterywest funded South Coast Possums – Protection, resilience, and knowledge (\$280,576) and the State NRM funded Building resilience, knowledge and protection – Western Ringtail Possum – Albany Stronghold (funding of \$199,280).

When we learnt that our State NRM application was successful, but significant funds from Australian Government’s RLP program administered in our area by South Coast NRM were not, we were left with only one option that would deliver the type and scale of project we had planned, and that was to look for an alternate funding source. We approached Lotterywest and were successful in receiving funding from them. We ended up with an expanded works program and more funds.

Other funding partners

The City of Albany’s in kind contribution to this project was \$29,750 for feral control across City of Albany managed coastal reserves. In kind contribution also came in the form of equipment loaned to the project, supply of geospatial data, landholder contact and community liaison.

Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee was a partner in this project contributing in kind office and meeting time, time to develop methodology, feral cage traps on loan to community, advertising and communication of events/ workshops to this project \$ 33,220.

DBCA contributed significant in kind to this project via liaising with TCG regularly on various aspects of the project including heading up the Western Ringtail Possum Working Group, providing regulatory documents for trapping and baiting on public lands and discussing/ developing methodology \$25,000.

DPIRD contributed \$4,800 in kind to this project through officer time to run workshops and supply advice.

A small amount of RLP funding (\$42,900 over 4 years 2019-2023) was secured which went towards on ground works (revegetation and fencing).

The State NRM project in-kind was \$142,509 through aligned workshops, revegetation and fencing and baiting in West Cape Howe National Park.

Animal Pest Management Services contributed significant in kind to this project through knowledge sharing, training and use of equipment and the renegotiation of their contract with TCG, \$48,500.

TCG’s committee and volunteers contributed a significant amount to this project in the way of time and expertise. Of particular note are our ongoing and very dedicated team of volunteer possum surveyors, most of whom have been surveying for over 4 years. \$245,180.

Oyster Harbour Catchment Group provided in kind support of \$6,800 in the form of communication and advertising support, meeting and office time and partnering on a workshop.



Project scope and overview

The greater Torbay catchment represents a significant area of the Albany stronghold population of critically endangered Western Ringtail Possums (WRP). Through this project the Torbay Catchment Group (TCG) undertook a series of on ground works and events and worked to identify how far west and north the population extends.

This project undertook activities that:

- addressed knowledge gaps through on ground surveys and desktop data analyses;
- reduced feral predators through baiting, shooting and trapping;
- raised awareness by providing diverse opportunities to a broad range of community members through events and workshops;
- identified landscape linkages to inform strategic revegetation and (in kind);
- protected critical WRP habitat through installing stock exclusion fencing (in kind)

Project works occurred mainly inside the Torbay catchment. The project built on previous investments and community good will. We supported our local communities and instated feral predator control within the coastal reserves that link our much loved and iconic West Cape Howe National Park and Torndirrup National Park. This continuous link forms part of the strategically important coastal macro-corridor. The project outcomes are greater knowledge, improved protection and resilience for the Western Ringtail Possum population and a better-informed community, united in protection efforts.



Figure 1 Torbay Catchment boundary

This project addressed threats listed in the Western Ringtail Possum (*Pseudocheirus occidentalis*) Recovery Plan (2017). The threats addressed are:

- Predation by feral foxes and cats;
- Gaps in knowledge;
- Habitat loss, habitat tree decline and habitat fragmentation;
- Unregulated relocation of orphaned, injured and rehabilitated western ringtail possums and;
- Climate change.

How were recognised threats addressed through these project activities?

Predation

Predation of Western Ringtail Possums by feral animals was addressed by a multi-pronged approach comprising of:

- Contract baiting and trapping on public lands;
- Contract shooting on larger private landholdings;
- Subsidising landholders to undertake training and receive 1080 baiting accreditation to increase the number of landholders baiting across private lands;
- Feral cage traps on loan and;
- Supporting annual community run fox shoots on private land (in kind through StateNRM).

Reduced funding had seen the coastal reserves removed from feral predator control programs. Prior to this project commencing, the last 1080 baiting occurred in 2015 in adjacent West Cape Howe National Park as part of the Western Shield Program. Since then, feral numbers had been allowed to proliferate unchecked in an area that has significant numbers of Western Ringtail Possums. In 2019 this project recommenced feral control in the Coastal Reserves (2164ha) and through the aligned StateNRM project in West Cape Howe National Park (3580ha). A certified feral pest control contract company, Animal Pest Management Services was contracted to undertake this work twice a year. The City of Albany managed coastal reserves stretches from the Albany Windfarm to West Cape Howe National Park, a combined 6920ha area in total, an important reserve system and part of the coastal macro-corridor.



Figure 2 Area of feral control by contractor- West Cape National Park and the City of Albany coastal reserves

There are several constraints with feral management across these lands.

The City of Albany coastal reserves have high visitation rates and dogs are permitted, so only trapping can be used, 1080 baiting as a measure, is *not* used. Some of the reserves also contain priority drinking water sources and consequently cannot be baited as this is considered a contamination risk. Cage traps and soft jaw foothold traps are used. During the 2 week trapping periods, signs are placed in highly visible locations at all entry points and flagging in some areas to attract attention. This has not prevented non-target incidents. Three incidents have occurred where a dog has been caught in a trap. As a result of local community members ignoring the signs and walking dogs off-lead, dogs have left the track and entered bushland and become caught. In Autumn 2022 we added an extra level of notification and sent letters to all adjacent landowners to ensure they had been alerted by mail. This is additional to 4 weeks of advertising in the newspaper prior to and during baiting and flyers at local venues.

In West Cape Howe National Park there are baiting and trapping exclusion zones around areas such as Shelley's Beach, the Bibbulmun Track and several other coastal fishing and camping spots. The vegetation, terrain and lack of access tracks means it is difficult to ensure good coverage of baits over the entire area. There are also many feral cats in the national park, and at this stage cat baits are being assessed for their safety and use in WCHNP. It is well known that soft jaw foothold traps are an acceptable method of trapping foxes (Butcher, MJ. 2018). Due to concerns about injuring off-target species such as quenda, these traps have been set on raised platforms. Throughout the life of this project the contractor was not successful with this method and trapping via this method was removed in Spring 2022. Capture rates on foxes is high compared to the capture rates on non-target native fauna - 1-2 per 6000 trap nights.

Baiting was implemented across the whole of WCHNP with exclusion zones around Shelly Beach Road, Shelly Beach, Dunskey Beach and Bibbulmun Track. It was conducted by a licensed and experienced pest control technician/ contractor using strategic locations to increase uptake. Bait location was determined by sand plot and camera monitoring over a 2-week period prior to baiting. The results were calculated by comparing pre and post baiting camera trap and sand plot data.

Table 1 Tabled results represent the reduction in population levels based on the number of camera detections and sand plot data in of coastal reserves and WCHNP

Control Period	Land	Fox (% reduction)	Cat (% reduction)
May 2019	Coastal Reserves	29	50
	WCHNP	61	2
September 2019	Coastal Reserves	69	55
	WCHNP	71	2
April 2020	Coastal Reserves	66	47
	WCHNP	73	2
September 2020	Coastal Reserves	75	63
	WCHNP	80	2
May 2021	Coastal Reserves	82	87
	WCHNP	71	22
September 2021	Coastal Reserves	79	85
	WCHNP	84	2
May 2022	Coastal Reserves	86	64
	WCHNP	82	No trapping
October 2022	Coastal Reserves	44 ¹	46
	WCHNP	66	No trapping

1 Extremely wet conditions over the whole program period disrupted fox and cat trapping by reducing animal movements and through loss of lures.

2 Insufficient captures to show changes in population

Camera trap data analysis by the contractor, shows fox numbers have reduced across the years 2019-2021. A significant loss of data occurred during the project due to a vehicle being 'trapped' in the eastern states of Australia during the pandemic. See additional contractors report.

Our conservation shooters through their networks regularly gained access to farms totalling (7478ha). This includes properties adjacent to the coastal reserves and West Cape Howe NP. This dedicated and skilled local team have invested in thermal imaging scopes leading to an increase in the number of feral animals sighted and controlled.

The conservation shooters also observe native animals and have captured video and still imagery of brush-tailed phascogales and black cockatoos. In the last two years, reports of phascogale sightings have been steadily increasing. Link to video [brushtailed phascogale \(thermal imagery\)](#)

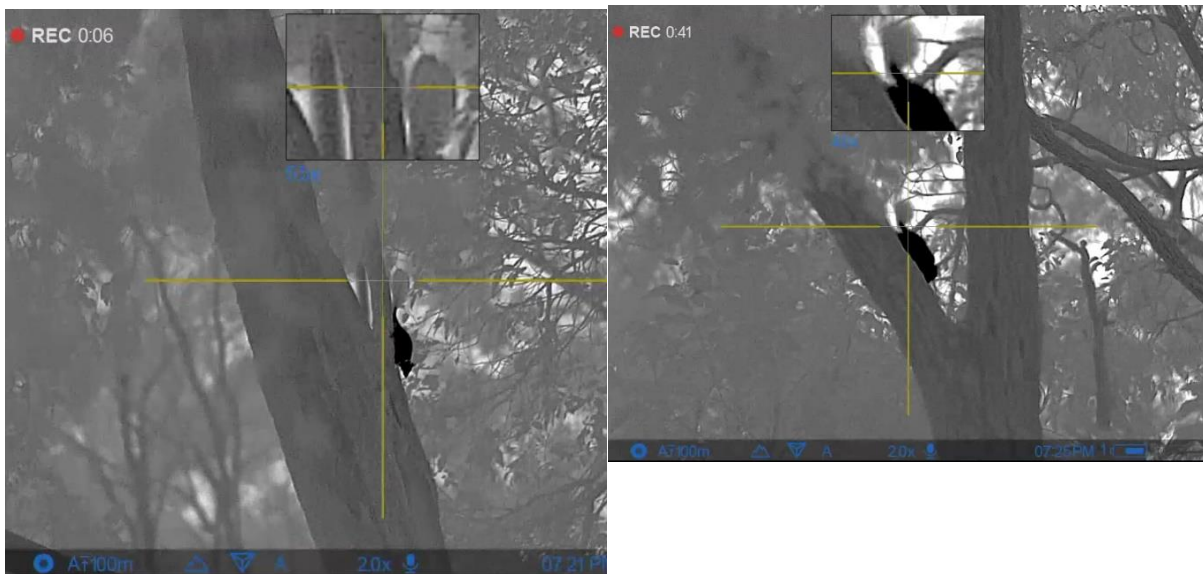


Figure 3 Brush-tailed phascogale. In the last two years reports of sightings of these animals have been steadily increasing

Through support from this project 53 RCP permits for the use of 1080 have been issued to landholders across 4,670ha.

Torbay Catchment Group has 16 fox and cat cage traps which have been on loan throughout the life of this project and are currently on loan.

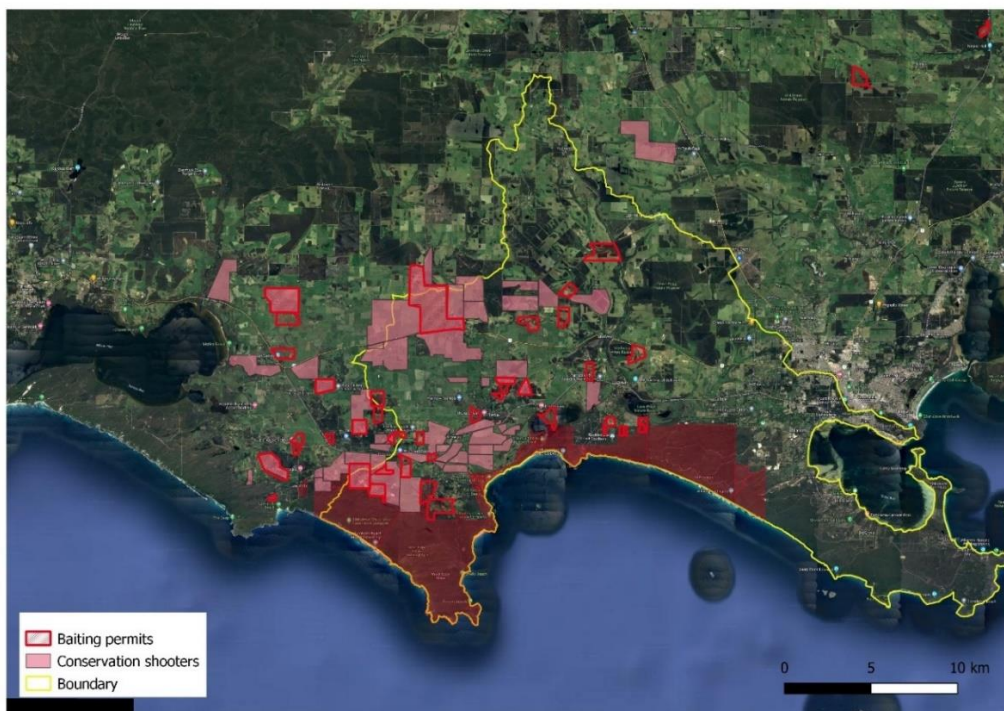


Figure 4 Properties covered by conservation shooters and RCP permits to use 1080 for fox baiting

Lack of knowledge

Presence & absence surveys

When this project commenced there was a limited data on possums to the west or north of Albany. Through presence and absence surveys over the life of this project we have been able to move towards a better understanding of the extent and distribution of possums in this area. There have been constraints. While some private landholders have been more than willing for us to survey on their properties, others have been difficult to engage, therefore gaps in data still exist.

What has become evident, is that the further west and north surveyed, the less likely possums are to be found. A private landholder at Mt Lindesay, north of Denmark, alerted us to an outlier population there, which we surveyed. We also found a small number around Redmond.

There were areas where no possums were detected. However, as possum density declines away from what we consider to be their core habitat, the lower numbers of possums make detection during surveys more difficult. Therefore, no detections does not necessarily mean no possums are found there. It may simply mean low density in that area, but this has not been confirmed yet. We have surveyed on the Nullaki peninsula on several occasions but not observed any ringtail possums. Recently Ringtail remains were discovered and it was determined that this individual was most likely from the area. In 2021 the Nullaki volunteers captured a possum on a camera set up to detect feral predators. The volunteers have been camera monitoring in this area for several years and have also surveyed extensively in this area and have never detected any ringtail possums until this time. This highlights the argument that a nil detection does not necessarily mean no possums are present. Overall, our presence and absence surveys have given us a much better understanding of the habitat they prefer and the extent to which we can observe them.

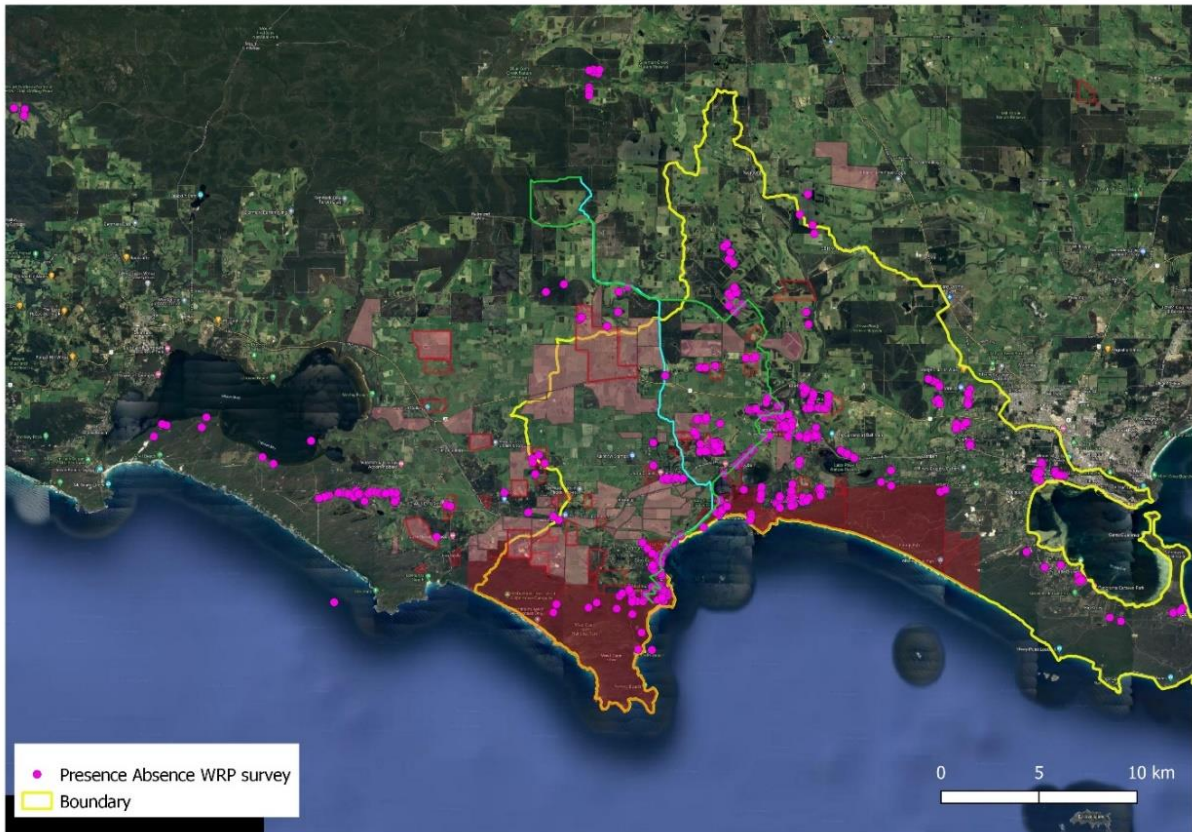


Figure 5 Presence and absence surveys for WRP conducted from 2017-2023

Distance sampling

As part of this combined (State NRM and Lotterywest funded) project we set up two sets of transects approximately 1.5km apart. The transects were surveyed twice a year (autumn and spring) with the idea of assessing the stability of Western Ringtail Possum populations in those areas. We were also wanting to record any population trends which may be apparent due to feral control being undertaken as part of this project. The areas were chosen for a number of reasons, possums were detected during presence and absence surveys, and while the sites are close together they contain different terrain and vegetation types.

One set of transects is located within the coastal reserves in the Cosy Corner area and are approximately 2.2km, half the length of the second set of transects in WCHNP. The vegetation and terrain are more homogenous across the transect site. The vegetation is predominantly medium height marri/sheoak, and generally the understorey is much more open. The terrain is much flatter making it a much easier site to survey. A few banksias are found in this area, and they are *Banksia attenuata* and *Banksia grandis*.

The West Cape Howe National Park transects have a total length of 4.3km. The vegetation is highly variable, often extremely dense and the terrain can be quite challenging for night-time surveys. This area is long unburnt however we are unsure of the exact fire age. It includes a good proportion of tall karri/marri forest (*Eucalyptus diversicolor/Corymbia calophylla*); patches of medium height forest made up of marri or sheoak/jarrah (*Allocasuarina fraseriana, Eucalyptus marginata*); and some significant patches of kwongan heath containing a mix of *Banksia grandis, Banksia illicifolia* and

stunted coastal jarrah. The area contains notable granite outcrops (large size and number) and a number of wetland patches.



Figure 6 The proximity of the transects in the coastal reserves and WCHNP

There are several notable observations shown in the graph below (WRP/km). The lowest number of possums recorded was when surveying commenced in 2019 and this occurred on both sites. While this may be because of the effect of feral control, there are many variables, and it is not certain. With the WCHNP transects other variables include very dense vegetation and difficult terrain. This meant during the first season considerable noise was made just pushing through the understorey. Possums may have moved away due to this. Now that a small transect track can be found, noise has decreased. During these initial surveys considerable time was spent trying to locate the transect and place feet safely so not as much time was spent on observation. This was alleviated with transect familiarity over time.

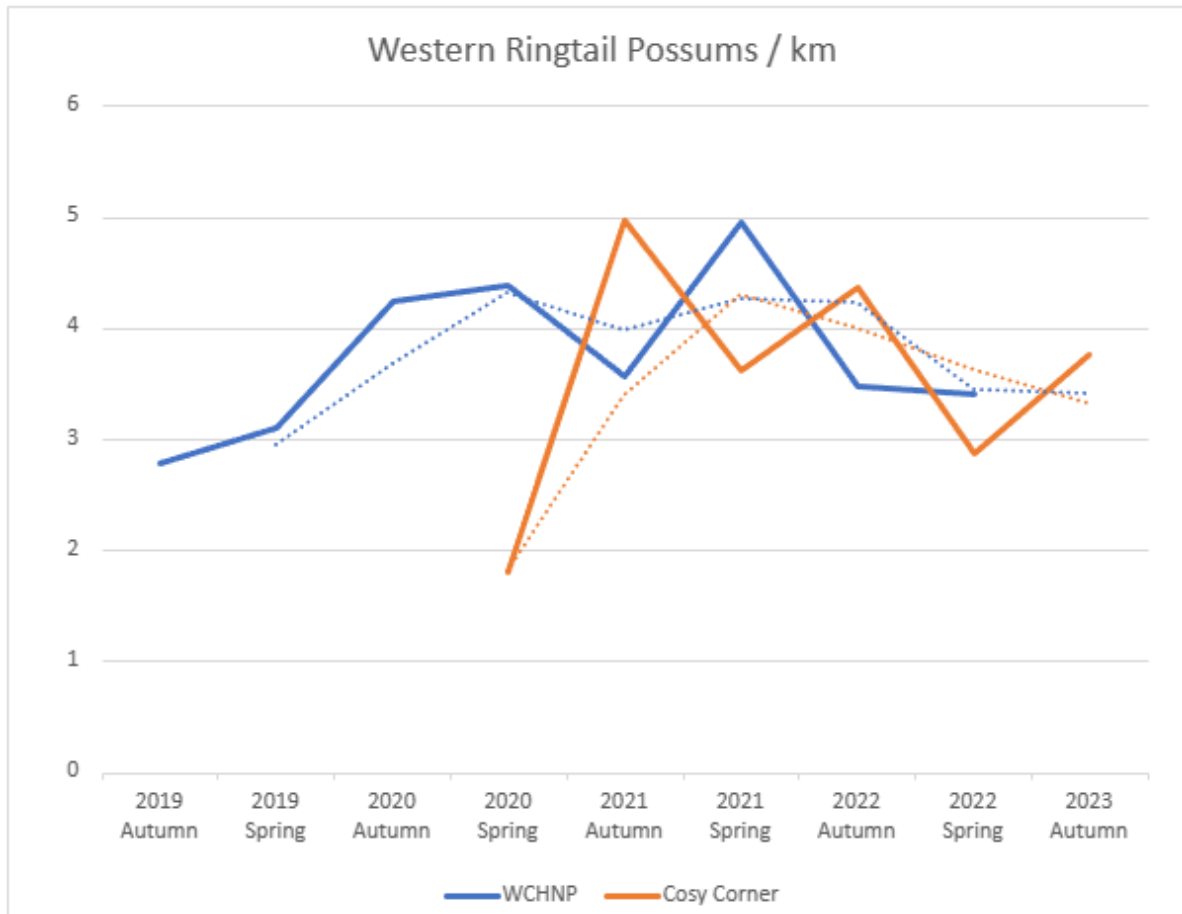


Figure 7 2019-2022 number of WRP per km during Autumn and Spring sampling

The low numbers recorded at the commencement of surveying of the Cosy Corner transects were seemingly influenced by other factors. We commenced surveying during the height of peppermint (*Agonis flexuosa*) flowering in Spring 2020. Possum numbers observed were very low. However, it was observed that possum numbers in the peppermint dominated beach fringe nearby, which is not inside the transect area, had a very high density of possums. We were aware of this as we had several events that included night walks in these locations. This has led us to understand that possums are ranging over a considerable distance to obtain foods at certain times of the year. Each Spring survey on the Cosy Corner transects displayed similar results, that is, a reduced number of possums sighted in spring, supporting the theory that possums are moving to the flowering peppermint trees to feed.

The reason for the fluctuations in possums sighted between seasons is not so clear for West Cape Howe National Park although this may also be related to travelling to selected food sources. One of our regular possum volunteers is an apiarist and he was the first to note that the possums appear to be more often sighted in food sources in flower. This is anecdotal and would be worth further investigation.

The data collected over 3-4 years shows some trends, however a longitudinal study would help define what may be the influencing factors. Other potential influencing factors observed may be; the effect of a severe saw fly larvae infestation on marris, drought and extremely high rainfall events/ years, additional new surveyors (Spring 2022).

The graphs below show Autumn and Spring data across the 2 transect sites. There appears to be an interesting trend developing. Generally, possum numbers are increasing in Spring until 2022 and there is a trend downwards in Autumn. The reasons for this are unknown currently unknown. Some potential reasons may be that more juveniles are seen in Spring, and for predators Autumn is generally a food scarce season for predators and therefore they may spend more time predated on possums resulting in lower possum numbers in autumn. Ongoing surveys will help determine if this is a trend we can expect long term.

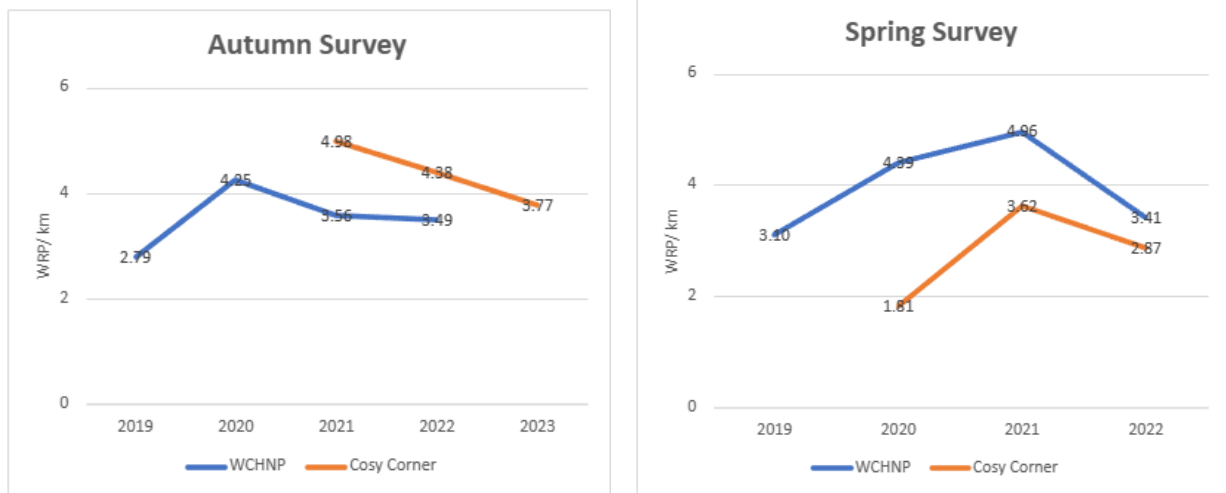


Figure 8 WRP survey data for Autumn & Spring

The graphs below show where possums sightings occur along the transects and also pick up interesting trends between Autumn when possums are spread more diffusely through the landscape and Spring when possums tend to be in tighter groupings. This could be as a result of foraging more widely during Autumn when less plants are in flower, but it may also be due to other unknown factors.

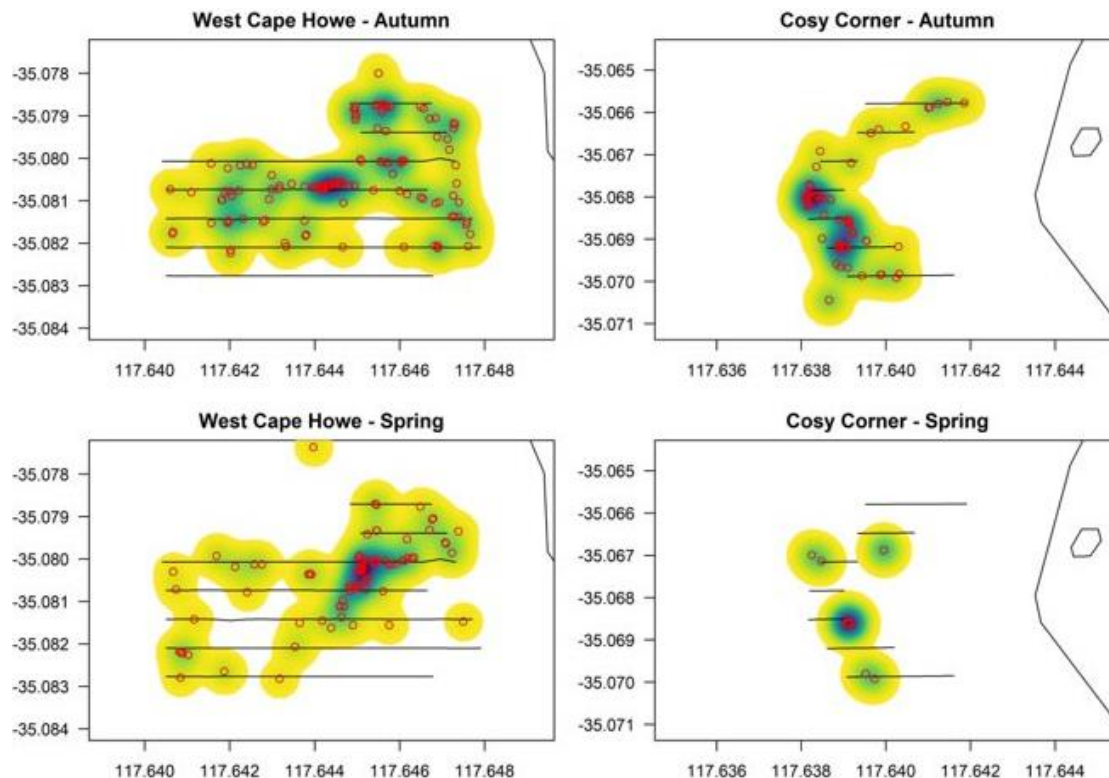


Figure 9 Autumn and Spring WRP records showing clustering patterns during Autumn and Spring

Habitat decline

Stock grazing is a significant cause of remnant habitat decline in this area. State NRM funded 8.25km remnant vegetation stock exclusion fencing and 2ha of revegetation to address habitat loss, habitat tree decline and fragmentation. Australian Government's Regional Landcare Partnership funding which came via South Coast NRM contributed 9km of stock exclusion fencing and 1ha of revegetation to this project. Other state NRM revegetation and fencing grants during the lifetime of this project include 6.81km in 2021/ 2022 term and 17.38km fencing currently being completed to protect and restore critical habitats and protect remnant bushland and waterways, and planting of 7.29ha of revegetation during the 2021/2022 term.



Figure 10 Fencing to exclude stock and protect remnant vegetation

Unregulated movement of possums

This area is regulated by DBCA. As members of the DBCA convened Albany Western Ringtail Possum Working Group we have been able to have some input into discussions on potential local release sites carers may be able to use in the future. Through this group we are aware that the Western Ringtail Possum Recovery Group has been assessing the situation across the south-west and looking for solutions. This is not straightforward given the constraints of regulations, and concerns over unknowns of possum densities, suitability of habitat and predator numbers etc in a given area. We do know that the Nullaki Peninsula has been proposed and is being considered as the first release site on the south coast. The unauthorised relocation of urban possums due to garden damage and nesting in ceilings is still very difficult to address.



Figure 11 Western Ringtail Possum juvenile in the hands of wildlife carer and citizen of the year Nicole Link during a workshop in February 2022

Climate change

On the west coast in recent years, there have been reports of possums observed falling from trees during extended periods of extreme temperature. This has not been observed here on the south coast where the weather is generally cooler and extreme temperatures are short-lived. However, temperatures further inland can be significantly higher.

One way to assist in mitigating the risk of climate to possums was through the identification of a suitable north-south linkage or corridor. This would ensure possums suffering extended periods of dry or hot weather can migrate towards the coast. The coastal macro-corridor is buffered from extreme temperatures due to proximity to the ocean. West Cape Howe National Park linked by the coastal reserves to the nearby Torndirrup Peninsula are particularly well buffered with ocean on 3 sides. It is considered by some to be a climate refugia.

We worked to identify both the least cost corridor, and the best possum habitat north south corridor. These have been used and will be used going forward as guides for future works.

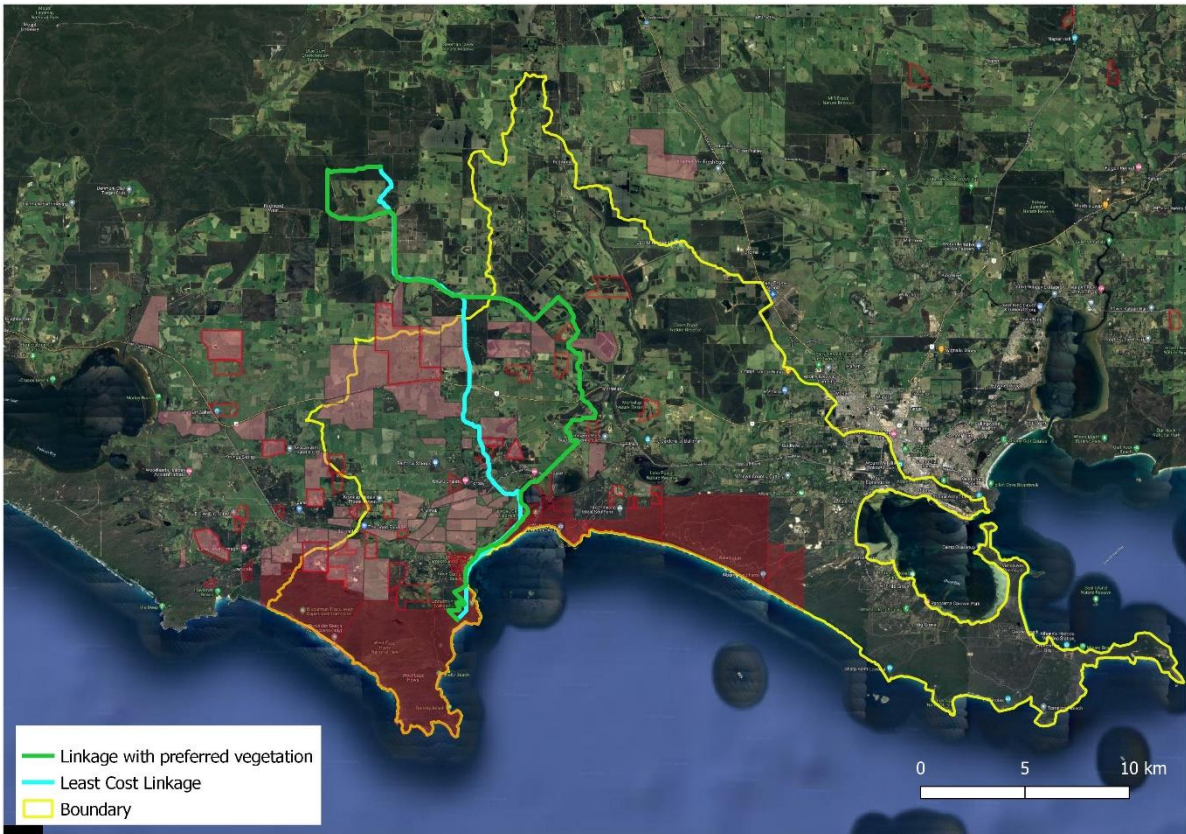


Figure 12 Linkage corridors

Awareness Raising

Raising awareness within the community is an important means of assisting with possum conservation and the importance of feral animal control. Fourteen awareness raising events were run as part of this project. These ranged across a diversity of topics aimed at engaging a wide audience. We were particularly pleased to find that running art / science events attracted a different sector of the community. These events were attended by people we do not generally see at events run in the past. This format provides an excellent opportunity to educate people on species conservation while providing a stimulating and fulfilling creative experience.

Awareness raising events are invaluable to our organisation. Not only do they allow us to present relevant topics and information to our community, but they ensure we maintain contact with our community, allowing us to gauge what is important to them. It is an opportunity to attract new members, committee members and volunteers to our organisation and they ensure we remain connected and an organisation the community is aware of and trusts.

Education, events & workshops

2019

Presentation to Threatened Species Forum

2020

Feral animal management workshop with Mike Butcher APMS

Morning tea with Sally Talbot

Community fox shoot (supported event)

1080 baiting training workshop

Possum print making x 2

Eucalypt identification workshop

Strong and Proud

Dieback Training for volunteers and staff

2021

Community fox shoot (supported event)

Dieback training

Possum information, pizza and nightwalk

1080 Accreditation training

2022

Basic wildlife care – Kinjarling Animal Rescue

Joey rescue – Kinjarling Animal Rescue

1080 Accreditation training DPIRD x 2

Feral animal management and best practise workshop with Mike Butcher APMS

Feral animal management workshop with Gavern House

What's Happening Possum

TAFE conservation and land management unit presentation

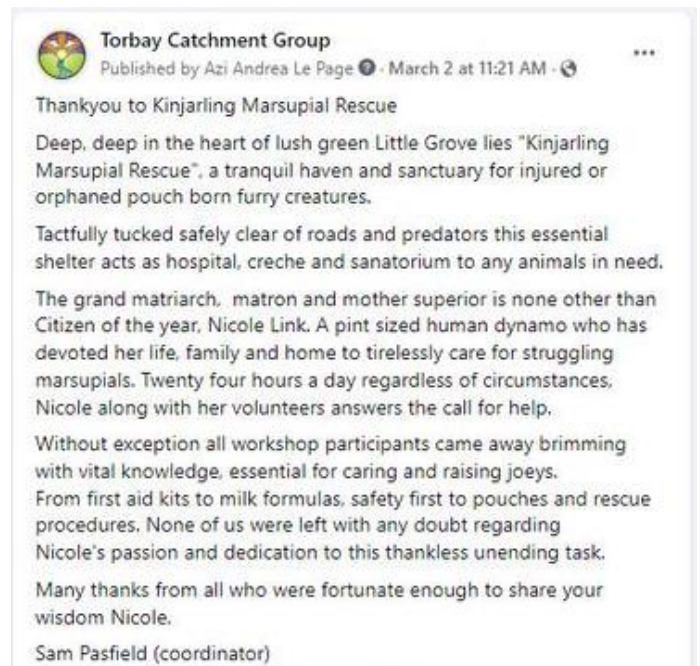


Figure 13 Social media post



Figure 14 Possum art workshop attendee

2023

Possum information, pizza and Night Stalk with Dr Bronte Van Helden

First Aid training

QGIS training for data management

ADVERTISEMENT

What's Happening Possum?



The Torbay Catchment Group is a community-based volunteer organisation, whose primary focus is on protecting and restoring the health of the lands and waterways within the greater Torbay catchment and supporting a prosperous and sustainable community within the area. We welcome you to read our stories and look forward to possibly joining us as a member. For further information go to torbaycatchment.org.au or call 0429 614 312

Possums 2022 – What's happening?

The possum spotting has already begun this year with our volunteers meeting on a regular basis to conduct presence/absence surveys for the critically endangered Western Ringtail Possum. They have covered huge areas of bushland near Elleker and the Albany windfarm, with many successful sightings already reported. From March until May we will begin our distance sampling for possums and roll out our large feral control program. The combined area that has feral control in place is now over 6500 hectares of DBCA and City of Albany managed land and over 6000 hectares of private land.

We have just received fantastic news of another State NRM grant awarded to the Torbay Catchment Group. This project encompasses fencing and revegetation works across five farms to be undertaken this year. The aim is to protect remnant vegetation, exclude stock from watercourses and to bolster habitat for wildlife, with a focus on the endangered Western Ringtail Possum and the three black cockatoo species. Each farm has a staged plan of works for their property and the fencing and revegetation from this grant, will form part of their habitat and environmental protection works. In total this project will undertake: 6.81km of stock exclusion fencing (6.01km to protect remnant vegetation, 0.8km to protect riparian areas); and 7.29ha revegetation.

Joining the dots - collaborative feral management at landscape scale

The Torbay Catchment Group, Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee, Oyster Harbour Catchment Group and Southern Aboriginal Corporation, will run a collaborative project across our three catchments starting this year. We have been working together to create something of high value with legacy, integrity and equal representation at its centre. Landscape scale feral control is a driver of the onground works that are designed to protect the Western Ringtail Possum, Australian Bittern, other native animals as well as the domestic livestock in the Great Southern.

This project is supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program

Possum information, pizza & night walk

In October last year we ran a possum information night to present some of our data from the last two years. The distance sampling data involved visiting the same locations multiple times to learn more about population and habitat. We discovered possum numbers in a particular area may be very low in some seasons and high during others, indicating that possums in bushland areas may travel larger distances to locate better feeding grounds. This gives weight to the idea that possums take advantage of different vegetation types and flowering activity at different times of the year. We think this also indicates the importance of landscape connectivity and diversity in bushland habitats to allow for thriving possum populations, whereas in urban areas, possums don't appear to travel very far. The presentation concluded with a night possum spotting trek at Cosy Corner where we were lucky enough to see a healthy population of ringtail possums and even a mother and baby!



Volunteer Sam Pasfield on site for distance sampling surveys (photo TCG, Western Ringtail Possum).

Kinjaring Marsupial Rescue workshops Feb 2022

Deep, deep in the heart of lush green Littlegrove lies "Kinjaring Marsupial Rescue". A tranquil haven and sanctuary for injured or orphaned pouch born, furry creatures. Tactfully locked safely clear of roads and predators, this essential shelter acts as hospital, creche and sanatorium to any animals in need.



Juvenile Western Ringtail Possum (photo Taysha Barrett)

The grand matriarch, matron and mother superior is none other than Citizen of the year, Nicole Link. A pint-sized human dynamo who has devoted her life, family and home to tirelessly care for struggling marsupials. 24 hours a day regardless of circumstances, Nicole along with her volunteers, answers the call for help. We arrived just in time to watch Nicole feed the 2 baby ringtails that had just been placed in her care.



2-hourly feeds for juvenile WRP (photo Taysha Barrett)

Without exception all workshop participants came away brimming with vital knowledge, essential for caring and raising joeys and what to do if you encounter injured wildlife. From first aid kits to milk formulas, safety first to pouches and rescue procedures. None of us were left with any doubt regarding Nicole's passion and dedication to this thankless unending task.

Many thanks from all who were fortunate enough to share your wisdom Nicole.

Written by Sam Pasfield (coordinator)



Nicole Link with kangaroo joeys (photo Taysha Barrett)

Conservation and education for young adults

In November last year we were lucky enough to have three high school students join us for a few nights of our possum survey distance sampling at our two sites in West Cape Howe National Park and Cosy Corner. The students were doing a school-based traineeship with Greenskills as part of their Certificate II in Land Management. We were very grateful for Bernard de Burmest from Greenskills and the students for joining our team of surveyors and were most impressed with their possum spotting abilities and their quick mastery of the field gear we use to record our data. Thanks for all your help!

The Volunteers

We recently had a chat with Carol, Sam, Matt & Paul, who have for several years been volunteering their time to help us determine where the possums are and the health of the populations. They get together for presence/absence surveys about once a week and then twice a year they take part in the challenging distance sampling which can average 20 nights per season.

This is what they had to say...

What do you do?

Carol: Printmaker, artist, bushwalker by day, bushwalker by night

Sam: Retired, surf, run on the beach, Qi Gong

Matt: Bookkeeper

What's the most amazing observation you've made while surveying at night?

C: West Cape Howe National Park at night is amazing, seeing the stars shining through the majestic trees. Kim and Mari. Looking down on a moonlit ocean, the white sand and the crest of the waves illuminated by the moon.

How would you like to see the ringtail possums protected?

C: To find out as much as we can about them to ensure their survival and by providing protected habitat.

S: I would like to see a protected corridor from Walpole to the East - legally protected that allows wildlife to move and access.

M: I'd love to have the full extent of their habitat understood and receive some special protection from controlled burning.

What do you love most about volunteering?

C: Comradeship, going out as a group - we're going to find possums! I find it exciting, where are we going tonight?

S: It has stuck and I'm hooked. Being out in the bush at night can be challenging, particularly in dense forest, but immersing oneself, adapting to darkness, listening to the frogs, owls and marsupials, is its own reward. In Lake Side there was an old tree stump with a hole. A ringtail possum disappeared down the top and then we saw a little nose and eyes poking out through a hole... too cute!

M: I've made some fantastic friendships.

P: Seeing other animals out there - owls, bandicoots, giant moths, frogs up the trees, spiders.

What do you like most about surveying?

C: The unexpected and actually spotting something. The eyes aren't orange so what is it? It's exciting seeing something such as a bookcase owl.

M: Apart from my weekly exercise, it feels good to contribute to the protection of these precious little critters.

Who do I contact if I see an injured possum?

- Kinjaring Marsupial Rescue Inc: 0408 080 477
- Born Free Wildlife Care: 0427 772 312
- Healing Hands Wildlife Care: 0475 442 202
- Wildcare Helpline: (08) 9474 9055
- Wildlife Rescue Australia (24 Hr helpline): 1300 596 457

Conclusions

This project has provided significant benefits. We have gained further understanding of the Western Ringtail Possum, their distribution, preferred habitat, and their habits in our area. We have been able to undertake works to mitigate threats listed in the Western Ringtail Possum Recovery Plan and we have developed a wide ranging feral cross tenure control program.

Our community has benefitted from this project. A range of events and educational activities and workshops were provided which engaged a broad range of community members by providing diverse opportunities. The coastal region and West Cape Howe National Park is much loved by the local community so works that assist with improving or maintaining the area are appreciated. This project also provided feral control within the coastal reserves and National Park which assisted the landholders adjacent to the park. With no feral control occurring within these areas it had become an unchecked breeding ground and feral control on adjacent lands was having little impact on numbers. The feral control within this project has alleviated that problem as well as supported feral control on private property.

This project has provided stability of funding, works and employment over more than 3 years. This has enabled TCG to apply for other funding to complement the works in this project providing additional value. The continuity of funding has enabled TCG staff to develop stronger partnerships with DBCA, City of Albany, Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee (WICC), Oyster Harbour Catchment Group (OHCG) and Southern Aboriginal Corporation (SAC). TCG membership has grown as a direct result of this project and the complimentary StateNRM funded portion, and our contact with community members has increased considerably.

TCG contributed significantly to officer time to manage this project.

The funding secured through this project and the StateNRM project enabled the development of a format for feral control across multiple land tenures. We used this to engage with WICC, OHCG and SAC and we successfully sourced funding through State NRM to collaborate on a joint project to address feral control across a larger land area. This has allowed previous efforts to be maintained and harness the diverse skills within each of the groups. We intend to continue to apply to other funding sources to further this collaboration and the works undertaken through the Lotterywest grant.