

Conservation Matters

Born to be wild..... on Dirk Hartog Island National Park!

So far, 2022 has been a pretty good year for the Dirk Hartog Island National Park *Return to 1616* Ecological Restoration Project. The science team has kept the ball rolling with the reintroduction of native animal species and monitoring of established populations. But best of all, many of the native animals found during monitoring are new offspring! They have been born on the island - born to be wild! And to top it all off, there has been above average rainfall, supporting the plant growth needed to provide habitat and food for the island's inhabitants to enthusiastically repopulate.

Fauna updates

Rufous hare-wallabies are now found over a large portion of the island from Cape Ransonnet to Turtle Bay and banded hare-wallabies continue to steadily expand their range which runs from as far north as Herald Bay having been released as far south as Surf Point.

Shark Bay bandicoots are breeding like well, breeding like bandicoots and are now found from south of Notch Point to Withnell Point in the north of the island and may reach Turtle Bay in the near future.

Right Shark Bay bandicoots are breeding well on the island. *Photo – Rebecca Quah*



Shark Bay mice began their reintroduction journey to the island last year and those first island pioneers have now been joined by 50 more of their kin from Bernier Island. This now completes the reintroduction numbers for this species, and they appear to be making an enthusiastic job of re-establishing themselves on the island.

Left Dirk Hartog Island National Park welcomed 50 Shark Bay mice this year from Bernier Island. *Photo – DBCA*

The translocation of the greater stick-nest rats is also complete now following the logistically challenging journey of 60 'stickies' from East and West Franklin islands, South Australia. This was a significant achievement and was made all the more remarkable given that it was undertaken during the peak of Western Australia's COVID-19 'wave'. Their journey to Dirk Hartog Island is aimed at increasing genetic diversity of their Western Australian counterparts. Although 'stickies' continue to be elusive in dodging the more standard monitoring methods like trapping, newly introduced technology allows them to be scanned with something like a supermarket bar code scanner at the entrance to their stick nest. This, together with photographs collected from remote cameras, is showing promising signs of success for this species.



Right Greater stick-nest rats made an epic journey all the way from South Australia to Dirk Hartog Island National Park this year. *Photo – Steve Reynolds (DBCA)*

And last but most certainly not least, more dibblers bred in the captive breeding facility at Perth Zoo will be flying up in mid-October to join the 93 dibblers previously translocated from Perth Zoo to Dirk Hartog Island.

You can help protect fledgling native animal populations

With the ongoing success of the threatened native animal reintroductions on Dirk Hartog Island National Park, it's a timely reminder to prepare well if travelling to the island by boat. We can all be involved and 'do our bit' to help protect this internationally significant wildlife restoration project. Please leave your pets at home when visiting the island by boat.

Right It only takes a few seconds for a dog to have a serious impact on a small, newly introduced population of precious, threatened native animals. Dogs are not permitted in the national park.





Left Remember to keep rodent bait stations installed and topped up on your boat to prevent bringing any 'freeloaders' with you to the island.

Right Welcome to the island human. Please tread lightly while you're here.
Shark Bay mouse Photo – Babs and Bert Wells.

