

Saving our Species project 2014-15 annual report card

Brush-tailed rock-wallaby

Species attributes

Scientific name:	<i>Petrogale penicillata</i>
NSW status:	Endangered
Commonwealth status:	Vulnerable
Management stream:	Iconic



Photographer: Mel Norton

Key management site: Shoalhaven
Jenolan Caves
Wollemi
Watagans National Park
Northern NSW
Waterfall Springs Wildlife Sanctuary

Project partners: Office of Environment and Heritage
Participating landholders
Waterfall Springs Wildlife Sanctuary
Friends of the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby
Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife
Taronga Conservation Society Australia
Macquarie University
Australian Museum
Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary
Blackbutt Reserve

Summary of outcomes

Over 2014-15, most of the planned activities—predominantly monitoring and pest animal control—were fully implemented. Predator control remains a critical action. Some populations of rock-wallabies are responding to new, more intensive management by continuing to increase (as pest animals decrease). New techniques used during the release of captive-bred rock-wallabies are considered to be markedly reducing post-release stress, which has been implicated in previous mortalities. However, the status of other populations are more difficult to evaluate (including gaining an understanding of threats). Continual progress is being made on testing new monitoring techniques to be able to better understand the status of these populations.



Office of Environment and Heritage expenditure: \$345,043

Project objectives (from NSW Recovery Plan)

- Increase recruitment at priority sites
- Decrease the rate of decline in range and abundance
- Prevent the decline of the species to a level at which it would risk becoming extinct in the wild
- Increase knowledge to enable more effective management of the species

Management site outcomes

Site	Expenditure	Key outcomes
Shoalhaven	\$98,752	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Release of a number of captive-bred rock-wallabies in the Kellets Creek colony. Despite permanent heavy baiting, some died from predation, triggering intensive trapping, shooting and camera monitoring. Investigations suggest that the predator may have been a feral dog, which has subsequently been trapped.• The Kangaroo River colony continues to expand slowly, with three of the previously-released females breeding.• Community interest and participation in recovery actions is strong.
Jenolan Caves	\$94,512	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two trapping sessions conducted.• The population continues to expand in number of animals, area of occupancy and extent of occurrence, with all animals captured in excellent condition and all females breeding.
Wollemi	\$64,018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The population has been responding to fox control, expanding into previously unoccupied habitat while maintaining or slightly increasing numbers at known sites.• Baiting maintains a low level of fox activity in the area.• The population appears to be secure.

Management site outcomes (continued)

Site	Expenditure	Key outcomes
Watagans National Park	\$54,311	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fox, feral dog and feral cat control conducted on private property around the colonies.• An additional landowner has agreed to be involved in the program.• Surveillance cameras deployed to detect pest species travelling along fire trails.
Northern NSW	\$15,450	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The status of these populations are still not well understood, pending development of an effective monitoring method.• Further field assessment was conducted using the most promising techniques. Testing of aerial surveys with a drone was conducted and colony census by remote stationary cameras continued to be refined at several sites. Computer-based individual identification processes were refined. The potential for genetic enumeration continued to be explored. Synthesis of data from available sites refined interpretations of which techniques were worth pursuing.• Helicopter surveys were conducted at Green Gully in Oxley Wild Rivers National Park.
Waterfall Springs Wildlife Sanctuary	\$18,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cyclonic storms damaged many fences and structures in April 2015 at the main captive breeding colony.• Emergency funding was used to carry out urgent repairs in order to prevent the escape of any animals.