

S00121 – Stuart Johnson

As a full time zoo keeper of over 15 years specializing in reptiles but also many years of experience with native birds and marsupials, I believe there can be some positive advantages in inclusion of a number of native marsupial species on the native animal system.

There are species such as some glider and possum species that have similar or easier husbandry needs than the current hopping mice and plains rats that are currently listed on the species list.

Wildlife Parks and zoos in NSW are often inundated with non releasable joeys that have become either too dependent on human care or too aware of humans to be safely returned to the wild.

In the case of some breeding and captive management programs, population numbers can become compromised once zoos hit maximum numbers, putting successful breeding to a standstill along with restriction of growth and diversity in bloodlines and genetics.

Individuals with sound knowledge and experience, that have the facilities to satisfy standards/codes of practice could play a positive roll in strength and growth of many marsupial species.

I dont believe anyone should be able to keep quolls or gliders or a number of macropod species, but those that can meet a satisfactory level of experience etc could meet the requirements of and advanced tiered level licence. eg. zoo keepers/animal handlers- current or retired, scientists, etc.

Victoria and to an extent in some other states have had native marsupials in a licencing system for some years now with sufficient evidence of the low risk benefits associated.