

Eastern Barred Bandicoots on Phillip Island

The mainland Eastern Barred Bandicoot is extinct in the wild. We can help save this species!

Foxes and habitat loss have wiped out the wild population of Eastern Barred Bandicoots (EBBs) on mainland Australia. Our best chance to save this rare and unique animal is establishing them on large fox free islands like Phillip Island.

In October 2017, Phillip Island Nature Parks and the EBB Recovery Team will be releasing up to 100 EBBs onto the Summerland Peninsula.



EBBs at a Glance

EBBs live a solitary, secretive life foraging in open grasslands at night and resting in a shallow nest during the day

EBBs eat soil invertebrates such as beetle larvae and worms, surface invertebrates such as crickets and millipedes and some fallen fruit and onion grass bulbs

EBBs can only be found on mainland Victoria in three fenced reserves

EBBs were released onto Churchill Island in August 2015 as a trial for future releases onto other fox-free islands

The EBBs on Churchill Island went from 20 to about 120 in two years before the population stopped growing and they stabilised

VITAL STATISTICS

Length: up to 35cm (including tail)

Weight: 600g to 900g

Life Expectancy: 2 to 3 years in the wild

Breeding: 1 to 3 pouch young each litter

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and future.

Spotlight on EBBs

What did we learn from the Churchill Island trial?

EBBs can successfully establish in island environments with no negative effects. Positive effects on the island's habitats have been recorded; diggings have reduced soil compaction, and we have seen improved nutrient and water infiltration.

What will happen during the release?

Up to 100 EBBs will be released onto the Summerland Peninsula in October 2017 after being treated for disease and parasites. Some will be radio-tagged to locate nesting sites and monitor survival. EBBs will also be caught regularly to monitor population growth and overall health.

Will EBBs become a pest?

On Churchill Island, densities levelled off at about 2 EBBs per hectare which is similar to densities seen in other populations. There have been no reports where the species has been considered to be overabundant.

Will they cause any damage to the island?

EBBs do not graze or browse and leave very little sign of their presence besides small foraging digs that are rarely more than 5 cm deep. There have been no reports of EBBs negatively impacting natural habitats.

Where else has re-population been tried?

Re-population has been attempted at 9 different sites over the last 28 years, with varied success due to the difficulties in controlling foxes. Mainland populations currently exist at the 'fox-proof' fenced sites of Mt Rothwell, Woodlands Historic Park, and Hamilton Community Parklands.

Why not just create a fox-free area on the mainland?

Building fox-proof fences can cost up to \$40,000 per km and daily fence checks and maintenance are required to ensure the fence's integrity.

Could the release fail?

EBBs are not just vulnerable to fox predation, they are also vulnerable to feral cat predation and a disease that cats spread called Toxoplasmosis. While every attempt is being made to reduce the feral cat population on Summerland Peninsula, it is possible the release could fail.

Who will manage the release?

Phillip Island Nature Parks will manage the release, supported by the EBB Recovery Team including: Conservation Volunteers Australia, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Mt Rothwell Biodiversity Interpretation Centre, National Trust of Australia, Parks Victoria, the University of Melbourne, Tiverton Property Partnering and Zoos Victoria.

How can I find out more?

www.penguins.org.au or call 5951 2804

