

Rural News

Bandicoots thrive in Eden forests

SEASONAL monitoring using remote cameras shows a population of endangered southern brown bandicoots is continuing to thrive in State forests near Eden with the aid of a permanent pest animal baiting program.

Forestry Corporation of NSW's Eden-based Senior Field Ecologist Peter Kambouris said the bandicoots were being detected at more sites every time surveys are conducted.

"Any farmer will be able to tell you the problems pest animals such as foxes and wild dogs cause live-stock, but monitoring over the years has shown they're also the major threat to forest wildlife," Mr Kambouris said.

"Before changing our seasonal baiting program to a permanent predator control program, we had only detected the southern brown bandicoot at one site following a 15,000 survey-night effort in the region's State forests six years ago.

"Since we installed permanent baits in Nadgee, East Boyd, Yambulla, Timbillica and Bruces Creek State Forests we've seen a remarkable turnaround in the endangered southern brown bandicoot population and the most recent survey has shown once again the population is thriving.

"We've now detected them at 38 of the 40 monitoring sites since monitoring commenced, and up to 25 different sites across the vast state forests south of Eden.

"We complete regular surveys over an area of around 100,000 hectares using 120 remote cameras to monitor size and health of wildlife populations within the habitats they occupy. Our latest data indicates once again that the forests are in great health and native wildlife is thriving.

"Southern brown bandicoots are just one of the endangered species we carefully monitor to ensure our forest and pest management programs are appropriate and effective.

"The threatened Long-nosed Potoroo was one of the first species to respond positively to the changed baiting program and is now also regularly detected at many of our monitoring sites.

"The success of the potoroo's response has allowed us to establish a partnership with Environment Australia who wanted to reintroduce the species into Booderee National Park near Jervis Bay where it once occurred.

"We trapped 24 potoroo from various locations in our State forests in October and, working with staff from Environment Australia, Australian National University and Taronga Zoo, the tiny mammals were relocated to Booderee National Park to re-establish a resident population. Animals are being radio tracked and appear to be doing well in their new home."

For more information about Forestry Corporation of NSW, visit www.forestrycorporation.com.au

• Forestry Corporation of NSW Senior Field Ecologist Peter Kambouris with a Southern Brown Bandicoot. Photo Andrew Tatnell of Parks Australia.

