



MEDIA RELEASE

Territorians Urged To Be On The Lookout For Quolls

The fight to save an endangered native Territory species from the threat of toxic cane toads is set to step up at the Territory Wildlife Park.

Park assistant curator Steve Templeton said the Park is in the process of establishing a breeding program for the northern quoll and is calling on Territorians for their assistance.

“To establish a genetically viable captive population the Park will need to maintain about 30 pairs of quolls,” Mr Templeton said.

“The public can help the program by notifying us as to where quolls might be.

“Staff will go to where the quolls are and assess them to ensure they are suitable for the breeding program.”

The northern quoll is the size of a small cat and is the largest predatory marsupial in the Top End and they are especially susceptible to toad poison.

The males in a population are unusual in that they often die after one breeding season and females rarely breed more than once so if one generation is lost there might not be replacement breeders.

The Territory Wildlife Park is playing a lead role in setting up the program with strong support and assistance coming from the Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts Biodiversity Conservation unit.

The park’s captive population of northern quolls will also be very valuable to the NT Government’s established Island Ark program, which involved the relocation of northern quolls to remote Territory islands three years ago to avoid the threat of cane toads.

“Surplus animals from the breeding program could be released on the islands to increase the genetic diversity of the island populations, enabling these populations to thrive for many years to come,” Mr Templeton said.

“Cane toads have been identified as the number one threat to northern quolls with their numbers estimated to have declined by 80 per cent since 1990.

“In the advent of cane toad control the captive population will have the capacity to re-stock areas from where quolls have been decimated and the captive population will also be very valuable in contributing to the limited amount of knowledge on the breeding biology of this species.”

Territorians can contact the Territory Wildlife Park on 8988 7200 if they know where northern quolls could be located.

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