

Media Release:

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Quoll refugees safe from toads and thriving

A five year \$300,000 Northern Territory Government funded initiative 'Island Ark' which has helped preserve the northern quoll population from the invasion of cane toads has been deemed a success.

The northern quoll relocation program is a component of a broader 'Island Ark' program designed to evaluate the conservation significance of Northern Territory islands and to work with landholders to foster those conservation values.

Northern Territory Government Biodiversity Conservation Senior Scientist, Mr Tony Griffiths, says the program involved translocating 65 northern quolls to Astell and Pobassoo Islands, off North Eastern Arnhem Land, in 2003.

"The program is aimed to establish safe refuges for some mainland quoll populations on islands prompted by the invasion of cane toads across mainland Northern Territory impacting the quoll population," Mr Griffiths said.

"We have been regularly monitoring the fate of the marooned quolls to ensure the success of the program, with our latest monitoring trip undertaken in December 2007.

"Based on the capture-recapture analysis, it is estimated that the current population is now several thousand individuals and the animals appear to be healthy and are obviously thriving.

"We were pleased to note that the translocated quolls have had no significant impact on the islands' conservation values".

The quoll program is a collaboration between the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and The Arts, the Gurmurr Marthakal Rangers and the islands' Indigenous owners.

In addition to Government funding the program was also financially supported by Australian Geographic, the Threatened Species Network and The Natural Heritage Trust with other support from the Territory Wildlife Park and Parks Australia.

"It's fantastic to see such a strong alliance between all parties involved; we all worked together as a team to ensure the success of the project," Mr Griffiths said.

Northern Territory Government's Biodiversity Conservation Scientists will be analysing the results from the latest monitoring report over the next few weeks.

Ends

Media Note – for more information contact Tony Griffiths on 8995 5004.

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