

**Media Release:**

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## **Hope Rises for Last Territory Population of Golden Bandicoot**

A conservation project aimed at protecting the Golden bandicoot in the Northern Territory is showing encouraging progress, with a recent three week field trip showing some positive results for the long-term conservation of the species.

Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport scientists Carol Palmer and Kym Brennan, together with members of the Indigenous Gumurr Marthakal Ranger group and Kakadu National Park rangers re-visited the Wessel Islands earlier this month on a three week field trip.

Carol Palmer said the trip aimed to sample the bandicoot at both its single known Territory natural population on Marchinbar Island and on Guluwuru Island where some bandicoots were translocated last year.

“The Golden bandicoot (*Isoodon auratus*) once occurred across much of Australia but now they’re one of our rarest animals, with populations known only in a small area of the north Kimberley mainland, a few Western Australian islands, Marchinbar and now because of the translocation - Guluwuru Island,” Ms Palmer said.

“We first found Golden bandicoots living on Marchinbar Island during a wildlife survey trip in 1993 and in subsequent years we began working with the Gumurr Marthakal Rangers to find out how many bandicoots there were and in which areas they lived on the island.

“We have estimated the population of Golden bandicoots on Marchinbar Island at around 3,000.

“In October 2007 we trapped 12 Golden bandicoots – six males and six females - and translocated them from Marchinbar Island to nearby Guluwuru Island to establish a second population in the Northern Territory as this was thought to be the best way to ensure the survival of the species in the Territory.

“This most recent trip was to check on how those 12 translocated Golden bandicoots were faring and to translocate an additional 18 bandicoots.

“It will take a number of years to really know how the translocated population is going on Guluwuru Island but all the signs are promising that we have established a second population.

“Across their formerly wide range, the most likely cause/s of the Golden bandicoot's decline were the usual suspects - changed fire regimes, predation by cats and foxes, and/or disease.”

The Northern Territory is home to another more common bandicoot species, the Northern Brown bandicoot, which is larger than the Golden bandicoot and has subtly different colouring and hair structure.

Ends

**Media Note – for more information contact Carol Palmer on 0400 707 273**

### **Images -**

- 1. Golden Bandicoot – image courtesy of Kym Brennan**
- 2. Carol Palmer and Gumurr Marthakal senior ranger Bruce Lirawa prepare bandicoot for release on Guluwuru Island – image courtesy of Fred Baird**
- 3. Gumurr Marthakal rangers heading to Guluwuru Island – image courtesy of Carol Palmer**

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