

THREATENED SPECIES OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY



KOWARI

Dasyuroides byrnei

Conservation status

Australia: Vulnerable.

Northern Territory: Data Deficient.

Conservation reserves where reported:

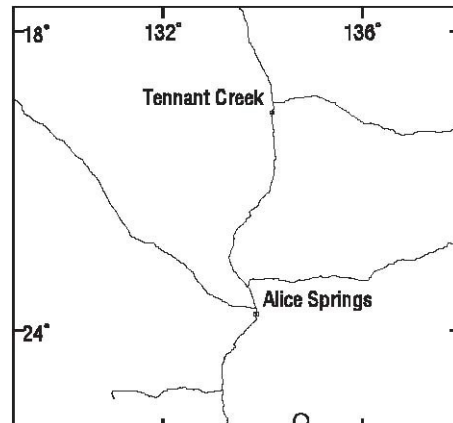
None.

Description

The kowari is a robust, grizzled grey carnivorous marsupial up to 140 g in body mass and with a head and body length up to 180 mm. The distinguishing feature of this species is the tail, which is slightly shorter than head and body length, thick and reddish in the basal half with a large black brush encircling the distal half. The hind feet have only four toes.



kowari.



Known location of the Kowari
o = pre 1970

Ecology

The kowari is a terrestrial, burrowing animal that occurs on gibber patches among grasslands, sand dunes and river channels (Lim 1992). The diet consists of invertebrates and small vertebrates.

Breeding occurs between May and December with up to 6-7 young per litter being born 30-35 days later (Aslin and Lim 1995).

Conservation assessment

Nationally, the kowari is considered to be vulnerable. It is not known whether the species still occurs in the NT: there are no records since the few specimens collected more than 100 years ago. Although there has been a range of general wildlife surveys undertaken recently in the vicinity of those historic records, none have specifically targeted the kowari. Given the sparsity of information on this

Distribution

The species occurs on the gibber plains of northeastern South Australia and southwestern Queensland, where it is patchily distributed. It is doubtful whether it still occurs in the Northern Territory. Records from the Territory come from Charlotte Waters (several specimens collected by P. M. Byrne in 1895 including the lectotype), Illamurta (four specimens collected in 1895) and Barrow Creek (one specimen collected in 1901) (Mulvaney *et al.* 2000). However, suitable habitat does not occur at the last two localities, so it is highly likely that the specimens were incorrectly labelled (Parker 1973).



Threatened Species Information Sheet

species, it is classified as **Data Deficient** in the Northern Territory.

Threatening processes

The exact cause of the decline in the kowari is unknown (Maxwell *et al.* 1996). Introduced herbivores (cattle and rabbits) reduce cover and food for invertebrates and small vertebrates that are the prey of kowaris. Feral predators (cats and foxes) may affect the species. Roads and tracks are often located on gibber plains and the gibber is used as road base. This disturbance has the potential to have a detrimental effect on kowari habitat (Lim 1992). In its range outside the NT, an increase in traffic along roads has increased the incidence of road-killed kowaris (Lim 1992).

Conservation objectives and management

There is no existing management program for the kowari in the NT. Before any plans for management are formulated it is necessary to establish whether kowaris occur in the Territory. Targeted searches for the species should be included in any future survey of the Stony Plains bioregion in the NT and any reliable potential sightings should be followed up as soon as possible.

Compiled by

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References

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