27 November 2020

Re: Barry Mountains Long Footed Potoroo Predator Control Program

Parks Victoria in conjunction with Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning (DELWP) manages a fox control project in the Barry Mountains to protect the endangered Long-footed Potoroo (LFP). This ongoing fox control program is conducted in the Alpine National Park, Tea Tree Range State Forest, Buffalo River State Forest and Dandongadale State Forest.

About the Long-footed Potoroo

The Long-footed Potoroo is a forest-dwelling rat-kangaroo which inhabits forest with a dense understorey in East Gippsland, south-eastern New South Wales and north-eastern Victoria. It feeds almost exclusively on fungi found partially or completely embedded in soil or hummus, and thus depends on habitat with a year-round supply of this type of fungi. LFP occur in small, low-density colonies, which are vulnerable to random processes, such as wildfire which destroys its food source. The LFP is listed endangered in Victoria under the Victorian Flora and fauna Guarantee Act 1988.

Summer bushfires

Last summer's bushfires have had a significant impact on the habitat of the LFP. Red Foxes are known predators of the species, placing further pressure on their survival. The ongoing survival of this species requires the continuation of predator control.

Use of fresh 1080 Poison baits

In December and March, we are implementing a 'pulse' baiting program throughout the designated fox baiting area (see map attached for baiting zone and tracks used). A pulse program involves weekly laying of fresh 1080 poison baits as opposed to a four-week program using manufactured baits. This is timed to coincide with the fox life cycle of juvenile foxes looking for new territory and the breeding season. As fresh baits are more enticing to all Canids greater caution needs to be taken if you are traveling with dogs into the baiting zone within the Buffalo River State Forest, Tea Tree Range State Forest (Humffray River SF), Buckland Valley State Forest and Dandongadale State Forest.

In January, February, April and May manufactured baits will be used. The 2020-21 fox baiting project in the Barry Mountains ends in June with all baits to be removed by June 30, 2021.

New tracks added to the baiting run

The original design of the 2007 baiting program included a small network of tracks in the Mount Cobbler area. This satellite area to the main baiting network is being re-instated this year. This includes Williams Logging Road, Cobbler Lake Track and Cobbler Road. These tracks are in the Alpine National Park and the Dandongadale State Forest.

Long-footed Potoroo Camera Monitoring Project

A partnership between DELWP, Parks Victoria and the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research has been developed to implement and evaluate a camera monitoring project focusing on the Long-footed Potoroo (LFP). A significant amount of the FLP's habitat was destroyed in the 2019-20 fires. The monitoring project's goal is to determine where the LFP now are, in the Barry Mountains landscape, post fires, to further inform a strategy for their protection.

Track work in the Barry Mountains

Hazard tree removal, drainage and road work is ongoing in the Barry Mountains. A few tracks remain closed. Debris flows after rain is an issue in fire burnt areas. Landslides are possible and mud, rock and fallen trees can cut off tracks and roads. Please respect road closure signs and be aware of forecasted weather conditions. Current road closure details can be found at:

Vic Roads

https://traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au/

Forest Fire Management Victoria

https://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/media-releases/park-and-forest-closures

Parks Victoria fire affected parks

https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/get-into-nature/safety-in-nature/fire-affected-parks

Please find attached a notification letter for the use of 1080 Poison in the Barry Mountains.

For more information, please contact the Bright office of Parks Victoria on 13 19 63.

Yours sincerely

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