

8. Activities of WA Malleefowl Network 2009 – 2011

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Abstract

The WA Malleefowl Network was established by WWF under its Threatened Species Program in 2003, to provide contact between the various groups and individuals monitoring Malleefowl in WA. In 2009 support for the Threatened Species Program was greatly reduced and WWF could no longer support the Network. The Network approached the WA Department Of Environment and Conservation with three options to maintain the coordination of mound monitoring and transmission of data to the National Database: (i) the Department provide an officer one day a week to coordinate these activities, (ii) the Department provide \$10,000 to enable the Network to employ someone part-time to do this, or (iii) coordination be left to volunteer groups. The Department refused to provide any support; the Malleefowl Preservation Group then undertook to maintain the coordination and transmission. That is the present situation.

The WA Malleefowl Network 2003 - 2011

The WA Malleefowl Network was established at a meeting of interested people at Panda Cottage, WWF's office in Perth, on March 18, 2003. It was established by WWF within its Threatened Species Program and was chaired by Raquel Carter, then the WWF Threatened Species coordinator.

It had clearly defined aims:

- To take a state wide coordinated approach to the conservation and recovery of Malleefowl through the implementation of actions within the national Malleefowl Recovery Plan.
- To strengthen partnerships and working relationships between groups working towards Malleefowl conservation in WA
- To increase communication between groups and increase state-wide awareness of Malleefowl activities and projects.
- To take a collaborative approach to applying for funding in relation to Malleefowl conservation.
- To establish a state-wide data base for Malleefowl sightings to evaluate the success and progress of the implementation of the Malleefowl Recovery Plan and Recovery Program.

The Network has made some progress with the first three objectives, one successful approach to the fourth aim, but no progress with the fifth.

The WA Malleefowl Network has met 18 times since its establishment. It has also taken part in or organised several workshops to help people understand the methods of monitoring mounds.

In 2005, working with the Avon Catchment council, WWF was able to obtain funding for the position of Malleefowl Coordinator within its Threatened Species Program. The first coordinator was Alice Rawlinson and she was succeeded by Carl Danzi. The availability of a coordinator, with a permanent office and phone gave a considerable boost to monitoring activities. The network became incorporated in 2009, but has not so far attracted funding to

support Malleefowl conservation. In 2009 funding to WWF's Threatened Species Program was severely cut and the position of Malleefowl Coordinator had to be terminated.

The WA Malleefowl Network then wrote to the WA Department of Environment and Conservation seeking support for the coordination of volunteers to monitor mounds and for the transmission of data to the national data base. The Malleefowl is not considered to be a threatened species in Western Australia, and is classified as vulnerable. This means work on it has a lower priority than work of many threatened species, and the WA Department of Environment and Conservation was unable either to provide time of a staff member or provide funds to employ a part time person to coordinate volunteers and transmit the monitoring data. When this decision was made the Malleefowl Preservation Group offered to undertake these roles. I understand that it is in the process of transmitting data to the national data base, doing some monitoring and undertaking some surveys with support from mining companies.

The WA Malleefowl Network did take a major role in the organization of the Katanning National Malleefowl Forum in 2008, and did manage to get Peter Mawson of the Department of Environment and Conservation to the Forum, but participants were not able to persuade him of the need for support for Malleefowl monitoring. The classification of the Malleefowl as vulnerable rather than endangered in Western Australia depends, not only on many other competing species, but on its widespread occurrence in the vast areas of uncleared woodland and its survival for many years in small remnants in the wheatbelt, despite the presence of foxes and cats. Nevertheless, support from the National Malleefowl Recovery Team in a further approach to the WA Department of Environment and Conservation for support for monitoring work would be very helpful.