



Creating community awareness of WA's unique mammal emblem

Current estimates of Numbat numbers are less than 1500, approximately the same as the remaining population of the Giant Panda in China. Everyone knows what a panda is, but how many people know what a Numbat is?

Numbats only exist today in small areas of the south-west of Western Australia although they were once found across the southern regions as far east as New South Wales. Habitat loss and introduced predators, such as foxes and feral cats, have caused a severe decline in their distribution. By the 1980s only two remnant populations remained in the south-west Australia eco-region, Australia's only global biodiversity hotspot.

Although habitat management, fox control and breeding programs are helping to increase the Numbat's security in the south-west, awareness levels in the community are still a concern.

Project Numbat Inc, a new conservation group, hopes to ensure a more secure future for Western Australia's fauna emblem through wider community involvement. Project Numbat has been an incorporated group for more than a year now and has developed partnerships with the Numbat Recovery Team, Perth Zoo, Department of Environment and Conservation, WWF-Threatened Species Network and the Malleefowl Preservation Group.

This new conservation group aims to:

- increase public awareness of the Numbat species and its unique qualities,
- inform the public of threats facing Numbat survival in the wild and the programs in place to protect the Numbat's future
- develop an education component for schools
- encourage community participation (where practical) in conservation initiatives, including habitat restoration, fox monitoring and control programs
- involve community members in wild-release and tracking programs
- fundraise for Numbat conservation.

Even though Project Numbat Inc is still in its infancy, the dedicated group of volunteers has been rewarded with some success already. Recently, Project Numbat donated funds towards the purchase of radio collars for recently released captive-born Numbats into introduced predator-free areas.

The group is building its profile by establishing a greater membership base, continuing to fundraise, delivering special talks and conducting field trips. All are key priorities for the next six months. We look forward to your participation in, and support of, Project Numbat.

For more information visit our website, www.numbat.org.au or contact us via email on info@numbat.org.au.