

Community Workshop Summary

Launching the possum and glider citizen science app

In July 2019, the Threatened Species Recovery Hub launched a new addition the CAUL Urban Wildlife App – a tool for people to share their sightings of possums and gliders across Australia.

As the flagship species for this launch, the western ringtail was the drawcard species for as suite of community workshops held throughout the South West of Australia in the lead up to and shortly after the launch. Development of the app and several of the workshops in the South West were kindly funded by South West Catchments Council, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program. The aim of the workshops was to introduce the app to the community and provide them guidance on how to use it. We also outlined the background information on why it was needed and what researchers hope to learn from the data the community could contribute.

An added feature of the South West workshops was that they provided an opportunity for transitioning citizen scientist to conservation actors – through the provision of western ringtail possum habitat plants at each workshop. Community members were given a choice of habitat plant species to choose from, specifically suited to western ringtail

possums, that they could take home and plant on their properties. Across these workshops and additional engagement activities with some local wineries, we facilitated the planting of approximately 2000 habitat plants for the critically endangered species.

We had over 300 attendees across 10 events in the South West and Great Southern parts of the western ringtail possum's range. We also had an additional 21 attendees at three workshops in Tasmania, where the app was presented in a regionally relevant context, given the unique conservation challenges regarding sugar gliders in the state.

We proudly worked with multiple stakeholder groups and organisations to deliver the workshop, tapping into their local networks to reach the interested public in each area. Organisations assisted us in promoting the events among their supporters on social media and electronic newsletters. In many cases, the venues where the events were held were provided in-kind by businesses and organisations and we were also supported by the local media channels, getting the word out on radio and local newspapers.

Gelorup Citizen Science Event 11 March 2019. Photo: Rochelle Steven





Images (top to bottom):

Community Workshop 31 July 2019. Photo: L. Knight

Hobart Community Workshop 10 December 2019. Photo: L. Knight

Dalyellup Community Workshop 24 September 2019. Photo: M. Gaff

Bunbury Wildlife Park Community Workshop 19 August 2019. Photo: L. Knight

Planting habitat plants for western ringtail possums at Passel Estate 8 August 2019. Photo: S. Wilson



The feedback from the community after all of these workshops was overwhelmingly positive! This is illustrated by the written affirmations provided by attendees during questionnaire feedback surveys after the events. For example, when asked "How will you apply the things you learnt from this event?" attendees provided the following responses:

"To spread the awareness of these beautiful possums in our own backyards! We must try to cohabit with these animals if they are to succeed and provide the correct food sources which are our native plants, peppie trees, hakeas and several others"

"We have planted a banksia, another peppermint tree and various other natives which were given to me at the event. I have downloaded the caul app on my phone and I have used it once I have spread the word to others; including a science teacher and an environmental officer with city of BUNBURY"

"Planting more habitat, educating people where I can and encouraging others to be proactive towards conserving the ringtails"

"Provide a safer habitat – i.e. pets being kept inside at night"

"I will look out for possums in my area and report back via the app when I am able to do so"

"I will ensure my garden is possum friendly and I will spread the word to others. I will be more careful when driving through known possum habitats at times when they are active"

"Planting possum friendly plants; using App; spreading the word!!"

"Include data in my teaching program at U3A"

"I have a family of ringtails that have lived in my yard for the past 18yrs that I know of, this event reaffirmed the things I have been doing to support them. I will also be sharing the information I learned with friends. Also, the plants I received have been planted both in my yard and on a friends property."



Organisations to be acknowledged for their support in making these events a success include:

South West Catchments Council
Leschenault Catchment Council
GeoCatch
Nature Conservation Margaret River
Bunbury Wildlife Park
ABC South West
City of Bunbury
Shire of Capel
City of Busselton
FAWNA Inc.
Parade Hotel, Bunbury

Dunsborough Country Club
University of Western Australia, Albany Campus
Oyster Harbour Catchment Group
Torbay Catchment Group
NRM South, Tasmania
NRM North, Tasmania
ABC Launceston
ABC Hobart
Triabunna Community Hub
New Sydney Hotel, Hobart