

Quolls reintroduced to Australian mainland after extinction

2 March 2016



An eastern quoll leaps into its new home in the Mulligan's Flat Woodland Sanctuary.

ANU is helping the eastern quoll make a comeback to mainland Australia after its disappearance more than 50 years ago.

Professor Adrian Manning from the ANU Fenner School of Environment and Society leads the team that has released a new generation of wild eastern quolls from Tasmania, the only area the animals can be found in the wild, into the Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary in Canberra.

"This is the first translocation of wild eastern quolls directly into a free ranging situation on the Australian mainland," Professor Manning said.

"Our aim is not just to establish a healthy and diverse population of eastern quolls but also undertake critical research to understand the best way to introduce the species to improve success in future reintroductions on the mainland."

The eastern quoll, a small carnivorous marsupial, was once widespread in south-eastern Australia. Its extinction can be attributed to habitat loss, foxes and cats, disease, accidental poisoning and deliberate persecution by humans.

The last recorded sighting of an eastern quoll in the Sydney region was in 1963. Its absence in the Canberra region is closer to 80 years.

The quolls are fitted with radio-tracking collars to allow researchers to do regular health checks and monitor their breeding and habitat.

Professor Manning said there is debate in conservation about whether using captive-bred or wild founders is the best for successfully establishing new populations.

"We will test this by comparing the two, having also released six captive-bred eastern quolls from Mount Rothwell in Victoria," he said.

"This is a long-term project. To be at the stage where we release quolls straight into the wild is rewarding for everyone involved because we are not only building on our science, but also leaving a legacy that can have an impact throughout Australia."

The reintroduction of the eastern quoll follows the successful reintroduction of Eastern bettongs in 2012 as part of the [Mulligans Flat-Goorooyarroo Woodland](#) Experiment, which is a long-term ecological experiment and research partnership lead by Professor Manning.

Provided by Australian National University

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