



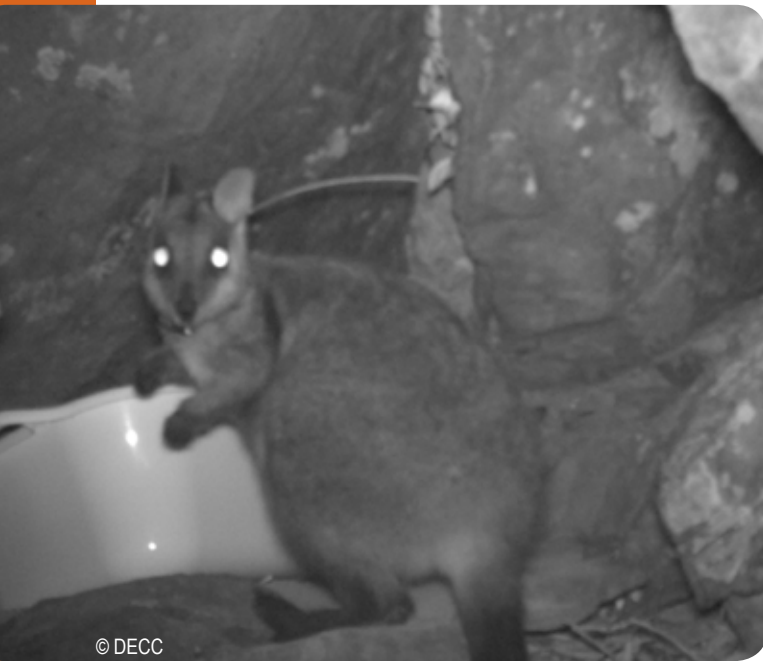
Warrumbungle Wallaby

Warrumbungle Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby Release – Update 4

Ryan Collins, Conservation Officer – Threatened Species, WWF-Australia

Welcome to the fourth update of Australia's largest ever release of captive bred brush-tailed rock wallabies!

Over the previous week our intrepid team got a close up look at all the rock wallabies during the successful re-collaring of the released animals, but not before the dedicated group lugged the awkward traps through thick shrub, across arduous cliffs, up difficult rocky sections to the top of the mountain. Human chains had to be formed to pass the traps over some of the most challenging parts!



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There was a reward at the top though, as the group were able to enjoy the rare pleasure of observing two native rock wallabies of the Warrumbungles at close range. Both were apparently quite comfortable sitting nearby in the rocky habitat. Todd Soderquist (from DECC) said that he had never had that quality of experience in the nine years he has been working in the mountains.

The team thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect more closely with the rock wallabies, despite having to deal with extreme wind and rain during the week. Being able to physically assess the animals no doubt provided greater confidence in the potential for this colony to survive. Most of the rock wallabies had maintained nearly identical weights to those measured prior to release. Muscle mass was increasing whilst fat levels were lower in all individuals as they became more athletically accustomed to their new rocky habitat. The rock wallabies had become lean, mean, fitter machines (well maybe not mean)! This showed that they were eating well and the week of rain will assist the growth of suitable grasses and shrubs for food.

A number of the females were carrying pouch-young, some that had been born after release, obviously a result of some Warrumbungle romance. Thus, we should be able to look forward to an influx of youngsters to the colony!

NB: The container of water in the photo is proving to be an attraction at night allowing us to get a look at a rock wallaby.



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This project, appropriately named 'Pulling rock wallabies from an extinction vortex,' was made possible due to funding by an Australian Government Caring for our Country grant.