

To: Government of Western Australia.

Subject: Inquiry into potential environmental contribution of recreational hunting systems

Attention: Public Administration Committee.

Submission by Lawrie Poole,

Date 27 March 2014

Dear Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this inquiry.

The Western Ground Parrot is a critically endangered species which inhabits a few isolated reserves along the south coast of Western Australia. Because the bird nests and breeds on the ground it is subject to predation from foxes and feral cats which are one of the major reasons for its endangerment and numbers decline. Fires also have significant impact. There are very few parrots left in the wild and they are now in isolated breeding pockets. These numbers continue to decline.

The Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPW) manages these reserves for control of feral animals under its programme Western Shield (1080 baiting programme). The 1080 programme has no scientific performance benchmarks with respect to its measurement and control of feral numbers in its reserves. The DPW programme has been criticised by Professor Hugh Possingham with respect to its effectiveness in controlling feral animal numbers in Western Australia. Professor Possingham is Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Environmental Decisions (CEED) and Vice-chancellor's senior research fellow (2012-2015).

Research by the DPW is carried out on an ad hoc basis with respect to the success of Western Shield. I am not aware of any broad statistics data collected to show the success of such programme across the states reserves and if it is successful in controlling feral animal numbers. This was also the primary criticism by Professor Possingham about the Western Shield Programme.

Your committee has an opportunity to make real change with respect to the impact of feral animals on the states endangered fauna and controlling their numbers by recreational hunting. Recreational hunting licenses issued for reserves would be a valuable tool to eradicate cats and foxes in the states reserves with little or no cost to government. Statistical data could be compulsory collected on condition of the issue of a licence to hunt in such reserves to applicants.

A number of private reserves have been fenced for the purposes keeping out feral cats, dogs and foxes for the purposes of captive breeding programmes. These programmes are designed to increase numbers and reintroduce endangered species to the wider habitat. The successfulness of such newly released fauna directly relies on a feral predator free native environment. All such programmes use shooting to control and eliminate non indigenous predators within the fenced control area. It's the only way you get rid of every last one.

Please help the ground parrots before they become extinct

Yours faithfully, _____

