



Kakadu National Park

EXPANSION OF THE 'TOAD SMART' QUOLLS PROJECT

This project aims to reintroduce 'toad smart' northern quolls to the Mary River District, Kakadu National Park, expanding on the toad smart quoll research conducted in Kakadu since 2010

Year 2 update (3-year project)

OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

- Baseline surveys were undertaken around the quoll release area at the Mary River by the Northern Territory Government Department of Natural Resource Management. In conjunction with Kakadu's threatened species team and traditional owners, 200 camera traps were deployed to assess feral cat densities. Prescribed burning was carried out around the release site to install strategic firebreaks and retain internal cover for the quolls.
- In February 2016, 64 juvenile northern quolls were captured from Astell Island and transported to the Territory Wildlife Park, where they underwent cane toad aversion training.
- The first quoll release occurred during April and May 2016. Twenty-two toad-trained quolls were released, with 7 untrained quolls as controls. Initial survivorship suggested the training was successful, with few trained quolls succumbing to toads. At the end of the 3-week tracking period 3 trained quolls were surviving at the site. Where evidence of mortality was found, 6 were thought to have succumbed to dingo predation and 4 to toads.
- The second quoll release occurred in May 2017, with 9 trained quolls released. Of these, two females survived. Of the remainder found deceased, 5 are believed to have succumbed to toads, one to dingo predation and one from other causes.
- Based on these results, the Kakadu trial to reintroduce toad-smart northern quolls will not proceed with any further releases until the method is refined.



Kakadu staff and Traditional Owners undertaking field investigations in the Mary River area of southern Kakadu National Park