



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

## Consultation Document on Listing Eligibility and Conservation Actions

### *Pseudocheirus occidentalis* (western ringtail possum, ngwayir)

You are invited to provide your views and supporting reasons related to:

- 1) the eligibility of *Pseudocheirus occidentalis* (western ringtail possum, ngwayir), assessed using the [Common Assessment Method](#), for inclusion on the EPBC Act threatened species list; and
- 2) the necessary conservation actions for the above species.

Evidence provided by experts, stakeholders and the general public is welcome. Responses can be provided by any interested person.

Anyone may nominate a native species, ecological community or threatening process for listing under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) or for a transfer of an item already on the list to a new listing category. The Threatened Species Scientific Committee (the Committee) undertakes the assessment of species to determine eligibility for inclusion in the list of threatened species and provides its recommendation to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment.

Responses are to be provided in writing either by email to:  
[species.consultation@environment.gov.au](mailto:species.consultation@environment.gov.au)

or by mail to:

The Director  
Marine and Freshwater Species Conservation Section  
Wildlife, Heritage and Marine Division  
Department of the Environment  
PO Box 787  
Canberra ACT 2601

**Responses are required to be submitted by 31 July 2017.**

## **General background information about listing threatened species**

The Australian Government helps protect species at risk of extinction by listing them as threatened under Part 13 of the EPBC Act. Once listed under the EPBC Act, the species becomes a Matter of National Environmental Significance (MNES) and must be protected from significant impacts through the assessment and approval provisions of the EPBC Act. More information about threatened species is available on the department's website at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/index.html>.

Public nominations to list threatened species under the EPBC Act are received annually by the department. In order to determine if a species is eligible for listing as threatened under the EPBC Act, the Threatened Species Scientific Committee (the Committee) undertakes a rigorous scientific assessment of its status to determine if the species is eligible for listing against a set of criteria. These criteria are available on the Department's website at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/pubs/guidelines-species.pdf>.

As part of the assessment process, the Committee consults with the public and stakeholders to obtain specific details about the species, as well as advice on what conservation actions might be appropriate. Information provided through the consultation process is considered by the Committee in its assessment. The Committee provides its advice on the assessment (together with comments received) to the Minister regarding the eligibility of the species for listing under a particular category and what conservation actions might be appropriate. The Minister decides to add, or not to add, the species to the list of threatened species under the EPBC Act. More detailed information about the listing process is at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/nominations.html>.

To promote the recovery of listed threatened species and ecological communities, conservation advices and where required, recovery plans are made or adopted in accordance with Part 13 of the EPBC Act. Conservation advices provide guidance at the time of listing on known threats and priority recovery actions that can be undertaken at a local and regional level. Recovery plans describe key threats and identify specific recovery actions that can be undertaken to enable recovery activities to occur within a planned and logical national framework. Information about recovery plans is available on the department's website at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/recovery.html>.

## **Information about this consultation process**

Responses to this consultation can be provided electronically or in hard copy to the contact addresses provided on Page 1. All responses received will be provided in full to the Committee and then to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment.

In providing comments, please provide references to published data where possible. Should the Committee use the information you provide in formulating its advice, the information will be attributed to you and referenced as a 'personal communication' unless you provide references or otherwise attribute this information (please specify if your organisation requires that this information is attributed to your organisation instead of yourself). The final advice by the Committee will be published on the department's website following the listing decision by the Minister.

Information provided through consultation may be subject to freedom of information legislation and court processes. It is also important to note that under the EPBC Act, the deliberations and recommendations of the Committee are confidential until the Minister has made a final decision on the nomination, unless otherwise determined by the Minister.

## Privacy notice

The Department will collect, use, store and disclose the personal information you provide in a manner consistent with the Department's obligations under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Department's Privacy Policy.

Any personal information that you provide within, or in addition to, your comments in the threatened species assessment process may be used by the Department for the purposes of its functions relating to threatened species assessments, including contacting you if we have any questions about your comments in the future.

Further, the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have agreed to share threatened species assessment documentation (including comments) to ensure that all States and Territories have access to the same documentation when making a decision on the status of a potentially threatened species. This is also known as the '[common assessment method](#)'. As a result, any personal information that you have provided in connection with your comments may be shared between Commonwealth, State or Territory government entities to assist with their assessment processes.

The Department's Privacy Policy contains details about how respondents may access and make corrections to personal information that the Department holds about the respondent, how respondents may make a complaint about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle, and how the Department will deal with that complaint. A copy of the Department's Privacy Policy is available at: <http://environment.gov.au/privacy-policy>

## Your details

Name:

Organisation (if applicable):

Phone:

Email:

## Consultation questions

*(Note: for the purpose of this assessment, generation length for the western ringtail possum has been estimated at 3 years. The listing guidelines for Criterion 1 consider decline over a period of three generation lengths or 10 years, whichever is the longer, which in this case is 10 years.)*

### SECTION A GENERAL

1. Is the information used to assess the nationally threatened status of the species robust? Have all the underlying assumptions been made explicit? Please provide justification for your response.
2. Can you provide additional data or information relevant to this assessment?
3. Have you been involved in previous state, territory or national assessments of the species? If so, in what capacity?

## PART 1 – INFORMATION TO ASSIST LISTING ASSESSMENT

### SECTION B DO YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE ECOLOGY OR BIOLOGY OF THE SPECIES? (If no, skip to section C)

#### Biological information

4. Can you provide any additional or alternative references, information or estimates on longevity, average life span and generation length?
5. Do you have any additional information on the ecology or biology of the species not in the current advice/plan?

### SECTION C ARE YOU AWARE OF THE STATUS OF THE TOTAL NATIONAL POPULATION OF THE SPECIES? (If no, skip to section D)

#### Population size

6. Has the survey effort for this species been adequate to determine its national adult population size? If not, please provide justification for your response.
7. Do you consider the way the population size has been derived to be appropriate? Are there any assumptions and unquantified biases in the estimates? Did the estimates measure relative or absolute abundance? Do you accept the estimate of the total population size of the species? If not, please provide justification for your response.
8. Can you provide a further estimate of the current population size of mature adults of the species (national extent)? Please provide supporting justification or other information.

If, because of uncertainty, you are unable to provide a single number, you may wish to provide an estimated range. If so, please choose one of the ranges suggested in the table below of possible species numbers, and also choose the level of confidence you have in this estimate:

Number of mature individuals is estimated to be in the range of:

1–50  51–250  251–1000  1001–10 000  >10 000

Level of your confidence in this estimate:

- 0–30% - low level of certainty/ a bit of a guess/ not much information to go on
- 31–50% - more than a guess, some level of supporting evidence
- 51–95% - reasonably certain, information suggests this range
- 95–100% - high level of certainty, information indicates quantity within this range
- 99–100% - very high level of certainty, data are accurate within this range

**SECTION D ARE YOU AWARE OF TRENDS IN THE OVERALL POPULATION OF THE SPECIES? (If no, skip to section E)**

9. Does the current and predicted rate of decline seem reasonable? Do you consider that the way this has been derived is appropriate? If not, please provide justification of your response.

**Evidence of total population size change**

10. Are you able to provide an estimate of the total population size at or soon after the start of the last 10 year period (around 2006)? Please provide justification for your response.

If, because of uncertainty, you are unable to provide a single number, you may wish to provide an estimated range. If so, please choose one of the ranges suggested in the table below of possible species numbers, and also choose the level of confidence you have in this estimate.

Number of mature individuals is estimated to be in the range of:

- 1–50  51–250  251–1000  1001–10 000  >10 000

Level of your confidence in this estimate:

- 0–30% - low level of certainty/ a bit of a guess/ not much information to go on
- 31–50% - more than a guess, some level of supporting evidence
- 51–95% - reasonably certain, information suggests this range
- 95–100% - high level of certainty, information indicates quantity within this range
- 99–100% - very high level of certainty, data are accurate within this range

11. Are you able to comment on the extent of decline in the species' total population size over the last approximately 10 years? Please provide justification for your response.

If, because of uncertainty, you are unable to provide an estimate of decline, you may wish to provide an estimated range. If so, please choose one of the ranges suggested in the table below of ranges of decline, and also choose the level of confidence you have in this estimated range.

Decline estimated to be in the range of:

- 1–30%  31–50%  51–80%  81–100%  90–100%

Level of your confidence in this estimated decline:

- 0–30% - low level of certainty/ a bit of a guess/ not much information to go on
- 31–50% - more than a guess, some level of supporting evidence
- 51–95% - reasonably certain, suggests this range of decline
- 95–100% - high level of certainty, information indicates a decline within this range
- 99–100% - very high level of certainty, data are accurate within this range

12. Please provide (if known) any additional evidence which shows the population is stable, increasing or declining.

**SECTION E ARE YOU AWARE OF INFORMATION ON THE TOTAL RANGE OF THE SPECIES? (If no, skip to section F)**

**Current Distribution/range/extent of occurrence, area of occupancy**

13. Does the assessment consider the entire geographic extent and national extent of the species? If not, please provide justification for your response.

14. Has the survey effort for this species been adequate to determine its national distribution? If not, please provide justification for your response.

15. Is the distribution as described valid? If not, please provide justification for your response and provide alternate information.

16. Do you agree that the way the current extent of occurrence and/or area of occupancy have been estimated is appropriate? Please provide justification for your response.

17. Can you provide estimates (or if you disagree with the estimates provided, alternative estimates) of the extent of occurrence and/or area of occupancy.

If, because of uncertainty, you are unable to provide an estimate of extent of occurrence, you may wish to provide an estimated range. If so, please choose one of the ranges suggested in the table below of ranges of extent of occurrence, and also choose the level of confidence you have in this estimated range.

**Current extent of occurrence** is estimated to be in the range of:

- <100 km<sup>2</sup>  100 – 5 000 km<sup>2</sup>  5 001 – 20 000 km<sup>2</sup>  >20 000 km<sup>2</sup>

Level of your confidence in this estimated extent of occurrence

- 0–30% - low level of certainty/ a bit of a guess/ not much data to go on
- 31–50% - more than a guess, some level of supporting evidence
- 51–95% - reasonably certain, data suggests this range of decline
- 95–100% - high level of certainty, data indicates a decline within this range
- 99–100% - very high level of certainty, data is accurate within this range

If, because of uncertainty, you are unable to provide an estimate of area of occupancy, you may wish to provide an estimated range. If so, please choose one of the ranges suggested in the table below of ranges of area of occupancy, and also choose the level of confidence you have in this estimated range.

**Current area of occupancy** is estimated to be in the range of:

<10 km<sup>2</sup>  11 – 500 km<sup>2</sup>  501 – 2000 km<sup>2</sup>  >2000 km<sup>2</sup>

Level of your confidence in this estimated extent of occurrence:

0–30% - low level of certainty/ a bit of a guess/ not much data to go on

31–50% - more than a guess, some level of supporting evidence

51–95% - reasonably certain, data suggests this range of decline

95–100% - high level of certainty, data indicates a decline within this range

99–100% - very high level of certainty, data is accurate within this range

## **SECTION F ARE YOU AWARE OF TRENDS IN THE TOTAL RANGE OF THE SPECIES? (If no, skip to section G)**

### **Past Distribution/range/extent of occurrence, area of occupancy**

18. Do you consider that the way the historic distribution has been estimated is appropriate? Please provide justification for your response.

19. Can you provide estimates (or if you disagree with the estimates provided, alternative estimates) of the former extent of occurrence and/or area of occupancy.

If, because of uncertainty, you are unable to provide an estimate of past extent of occurrence, you may wish to provide an estimated range. If so, please choose one of the ranges suggested in the table below of ranges of past extent of occurrence, and also choose the level of confidence you have in this estimated range.

**Past extent of occurrence** is estimated to be in the range of:

<100 km<sup>2</sup>  100 – 5 000 km<sup>2</sup>  5 001 – 20 000 km<sup>2</sup>  >20 000 km<sup>2</sup>

Level of your confidence in this estimated extent of occurrence

0–30% - low level of certainty/ a bit of a guess/ not much data to go on

31–50% - more than a guess, some level of supporting evidence

51–95% - reasonably certain, data suggests this range of decline

95–100% - high level of certainty, data indicates a decline within this range

99–100% - very high level of certainty, data is accurate within this range

If, because of uncertainty, you are unable to provide an estimate of past area of occupancy, you may wish to provide an estimated range. If so, please choose one of the ranges suggested in the table below of ranges of past area of occupancy, and also choose the level of confidence you have in this estimated range:

**Past area of occupancy** is estimated to be in the range of:

<10 km<sup>2</sup>  11 – 500 km<sup>2</sup>  501 – 2000 km<sup>2</sup>  >2000 km<sup>2</sup>

Level of your confidence in this estimated extent of occurrence:

0–30% - low level of certainty/ a bit of a guess/ not much data to go on

31–50% - more than a guess, some level of supporting evidence

51–95% - reasonably certain, data suggests this range of decline

95–100% -high level of certainty, data indicates a decline within this range

99–100% - very high level of certainty, data is accurate within this range

## **PART 2 – INFORMATION ON THREATS AND CONSERVATION ACTIONS**

### **SECTION G DO YOU HAVE INFORMATION ON THREATS TO THE SURVIVAL OF THE SPECIES? (If no, skip to section H)**

20. Do you agree that all major threats have been listed and described adequately?
21. To what degree are the identified threats likely to impact on the species in the future?
22. Are the threats impacting different populations equally?
23. Can you provide additional or alternative information on past, current or potential threats that may adversely affect the species at any stage of its life cycle?
24. Can you provide any further information about the causes of the population decline over the past 10 years?
25. Can you provide supporting data/justification or other information for your responses to these questions about threats?

### **SECTION H DO YOU HAVE INFORMATION ON CURRENT OR FUTURE MANAGEMENT FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE SPECIES? (If no, skip to section I)**

26. What planning, management and recovery actions are currently in place supporting protection and recovery of the species? To what extent have they been effective?
27. Can you recommend any additional or alternative specific threat abatement or conservation actions that would aid the protection and recovery of the species?
28. Would you recommend translocation within the species' historic range as a viable option as a conservation action for this species?

### **SECTION I DO YOU HAVE INFORMATION ON STAKEHOLDERS IN THE RECOVERY OF THE SPECIES?**



29. Are you aware of other knowledge (e.g. traditional ecological knowledge) or individuals/groups with knowledge that may help better understand population trends/fluctuations, or critical areas of habitat?
30. Are you aware of any cultural or social importance or use that the species has?
31. What individuals or organisations are currently, or potentially could be, involved in management and recovery of the species?
32. How aware of this species are land managers where the species is found?