



Website on threatened species

A NEW database available on the Internet provides key information on threatened plants, animals and ecological communities.

The Species Profile and Threats Database (SPRAT) profiles what a particular animal or plant looks like, where it lives, what it needs to survive, how it reproduces, and its protected status under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

The database will help people make informed decisions about whether their proposed activity may require approval under the EPBC Act to protect nationally threatened species. It also provides guidance on conservation activities for plants and animals and is an excellent resource for educational activities.

Information is available on threatened frogs, reptiles, freshwater fish and marine mammals, including whales and 12 plants groups. The database will expand and be updated as new information is available and species profiles are completed.



Bell Frog. Photograph by F. Lemckert

It builds on tools already available on the website to help the community understand and act in accordance with the EPBC Act.

For example, the Protected Matter Search Tool lists threatened plants and animals, including migratory species, internationally important wetlands, listed heritage places

and world heritage properties in any given area.

Contact: For brochures on database, phone Dept of Environment and Heritage's Community Information Unit, freecall 1800 803 772; SPRAT website <www.deh.gov.au/cgibin/sprat/public/sprat.pl>.

New insight into feral fauna interactions

THE SUCCESS of feral animal control operations aiming to benefit native species can be affected by interactions between pest species, and between pests and native species.

Through the Australian Government's \$3 billion Natural Heritage Trust, the Department of the Environment and Heritage is working to develop and implement co-ordinated actions to reduce damage caused by feral animals to the natural environment.

A report investigating 'Interactions between feral cats, foxes, native carnivores and rabbits in Australia', prepared by the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research, is now available.

It reviews evidence of interactions between three pest species — feral cats, foxes and feral rabbits, their control and the impact on native species.

The report highlights that while existing data is limited, there is some evidence of: direct interactions between cats and foxes; control of feral predators providing benefits to native mammal species; and links between fox and rabbit



One type of interaction between two feral species — the fox eating the rabbit. Photograph by Brent Johnstone

population dynamics in arid areas.

It was also found that in the absence of rabbits, feral cats and foxes tend to predate on the next most abundant prey species, and there is no evidence of an increase in predation on threatened species.

The report recommends areas for future research, which would ultimately help conservation managers plan pest control work. It is available at <www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/publications/interaction/index.htm>.