



## **CORPORATE POLICY STATEMENT NO. 35**

# **CONSERVING THREATENED SPECIES AND THREATENED ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES**

January 2022

### **1. OBJECTIVE**

To ensure that the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (department) acts to conserve and protect the biodiversity associated with threatened species and threatened ecological communities throughout Western Australia.

### **2. SCOPE**

This Policy Statement applies to all department activities and decision-making processes relating to threatened native species and threatened ecological communities. The policy will be implemented through divisional plans, guidelines and procedures for the implementation of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act). Actions will be implemented within the conservation reserve system, on other lands managed by the department and elsewhere in collaboration with private landholders, community partners and key stakeholders, as appropriate.

The department recognises that other native species and ecological communities are either close to meeting the criteria for listing as threatened under the BC Act or may meet the criteria but, for lack of sufficient scientific evidence, cannot be adequately assessed for listing. This policy extends to the conservation of biodiversity associated with these priority species and priority ecological communities, as necessary.

This Policy Statement does not apply to, or in relation to, any fish or pearl oyster that is the subject of any activities referred to under section 12 of the BC Act (aquaculture, fishing, hatchery or pearling activities).

### **3. CONTEXT**

Western Australia has rich and unique biodiversity, much of which is endemic and recognised as being both nationally and globally significant. Conservation of this biodiversity includes maintaining and restoring variability within and between native species, ecological communities and other biodiversity components, including ecosystems, habitats, genes and ecological processes.

Under the BC Act, native species are listed as threatened when they face a high to very high risk of extinction in the wild, and ecological communities are listed as threatened when they face a high to very high risk of collapse. Conserving and protecting threatened species and threatened ecological communities is a key element of the department's biodiversity conservation responsibilities.

The department's approach to conserving threatened species and threatened ecological communities balances landscape-scale management with targeted conservation actions that are primarily focussed within the conservation reserve system. In addition, management of biodiversity off-reserve and ex-situ conservation actions are essential to achieving successful biodiversity conservation outcomes for threatened and non-threatened species and ecological communities. The department works in partnership with, and recognises the contributions of, Aboriginal traditional owners, individual landholders, State and local government authorities, land managers, community groups and other stakeholders to achieve off-reserve conservation outcomes.

Biodiversity conservation actions are informed by the department's strategic plans and aim to deliver long-term, on-ground outcomes that maintain or recover biodiversity components at local, regional and landscape scales. These actions are informed by best-practice science and in accordance with the Principles outlined in the *Framework for Fauna Conservation* and *Framework for Flora Conservation*. Conservation actions and information requirements for managing threatened and priority species and threatened and priority ecological communities are determined at a regional scale through regional conservation plans.

This Policy Statement should be read in conjunction with:

- Corporate Policy Statement No. 28: Science
- Corporate Policy Statement No. 4: Environmental offsets
- Corporate Policy Statement No. 36: Conservation Reserve System
- Corporate Policy Statement No. 37: Management of Wildlife Utilisation
- Corporate Policy Statement No. 56: Risk Management
- Corporate Guideline No. 35: Listing and Recovery of Threatened Species and Ecological Communities
- Corporate Guideline No. 36: Recovery of Threatened Species Through Translocation and Captive Breeding or Propagation

Conservation of threatened species and threatened ecological communities is a national priority under *Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019-2030*.

#### **4. LEGISLATION**

Relevant to this policy, the BC Act provides the statutory basis for determination and listing of threatened species, threatened ecological communities, critical habitat and key threatening processes. It also provides for Ministerial authorisation to take and disturb threatened species, modify threatened ecological communities and for implementing recovery plans. The BC Act requires the conservation and protection of biodiversity and biodiversity components on all lands including those managed under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act), the *Rottnest Island Authority Act 1987* and the *Botanic Parks and Gardens Authority Act 1998*.

The Western Australian *Environmental Protection Act 1986* has requirements for the conservation of flora and ecological communities listed as threatened under the BC Act.

#### **5. POLICY**

The department will, within available resources:

- 5.1 Maintain and enhance knowledge of threatened and priority species and ecological communities to inform conservation decisions.

- 5.2 Ensure native species and ecological communities that meet the criteria are assessed for listing as threatened under the BC Act to provide for their protection and conservation.
- 5.3 Identify and, where feasible, manage risks from anthropogenic and natural processes on department-managed lands that threaten or may threaten the survival of native species and ecological communities.
- 5.4 Identify and protect habitats that are critical to the survival of threatened species or threatened ecological communities on department-managed lands and through co-operation with land managers elsewhere.
- 5.5 Undertake actions that support the maintenance and recovery of threatened species and ecological communities to maximise their chances of long-term survival in the wild.
- 5.6 Manage lands and reserve systems under the CALM Act to meet the requirements for conservation of threatened species and threatened ecological communities.

## **6. STANDARDS**

Risk assessment and management of threatened and priority species and ecological communities will be conducted in a manner consistent with the current version of the standard specified in Corporate Policy Statement No. 56 - Risk Management.

The Threatened Species Scientific Committee (TSSC) and Threatened Ecological Communities Scientific Committee (TECSC) operate according to their respective Terms of Reference and Codes of Conduct.

## **7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

Activities to promote the conservation of threatened and priority species and ecological communities in Western Australia, will be undertaken by Biodiversity and Conservation Science, Regional and Fire Management Services Division, Conservation and Ecosystem Management Division, Parks and Visitor Services Division, Zoological Parks Authority, Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, Rottnest Island Authority and through collaborations with external stakeholders.

The department will:

- 7.1 Administer procedures and criteria for nominating species and ecological communities for listing as threatened, as required by Ministerial Guidelines issued under s. 260 of the BC Act and support the functions of the TSSC and the TECSC to provide advice to the Minister as required by s. 37 of the BC Act.
- 7.2 Maintain a collaborative relationship with the Commonwealth government to maintain consistency in lists of threatened species.
- 7.3 Issue authorisations to take or disturb threatened species and to modify threatened ecological communities according to s. 40 and s. 45 of the BC Act, based on assessment of risks of species extinction, or ecological community collapse.
- 7.4 Develop, maintain and populate data management systems to inform science, recovery, risk assessment and management actions.
- 7.5 Monitor threatened and priority species and threatened and priority ecological communities to inform conservation decisions and actions, determine the effectiveness of recovery actions and assess conservation status.

- 7.6 Carry out scientific research to provide the evidence base for decision making and informing conservation actions to reduce threats to threatened and priority species and threatened and priority ecological communities.
- 7.7 Provide risk assessment advice to other State and Commonwealth government decision making bodies to support conservation of threatened species and threatened ecological communities, and to ensure consistent application of legislation.
- 7.8 Develop and implement actions for mitigating threats, and maintaining and recovering threatened and priority species and threatened and priority ecological communities on conservation reserves and other lands managed by the department.
- 7.9 Ensure management plans approved and adopted under the CALM Act include provisions to conserve threatened and priority species and ecological communities.
- 7.10 Ensure that department actions that have potential for detrimental impacts to listed threatened and priority species and threatened and priority ecological communities are assessed and managed in accordance with Policy Statement No. 56 Risk Management.
- 7.11 Prepare Recovery Plans or Interim Recovery Plans in accordance with Part 6 of the BC Act where a plan is considered necessary.
- 7.12 Work proactively and cooperatively with State and Commonwealth government agencies, Aboriginal people, research institutions, Non-Government Organisations and the community to develop and implement activities that promote the conservation of threatened biodiversity components on and off the conservation reserve system.
- 7.13 Raise public awareness and understanding of threatened and priority species and threatened and priority ecological communities, and related conservation issues, to promote stewardship and support for their conservation.

## **8. CUSTODIAN**

Executive Director, Biodiversity and Conservation Science

## **9. PUBLICATION**

This policy will be made available on the Department's website and intranet.

## **10. KEY WORDS**

Terms used in this policy are defined in Part 1(5) of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*.

## **11. REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed 5 years from approval.

**12. DIRECTOR GENERAL APPROVAL**

Approved by

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'mew', is positioned below the 'Approved by' text.

Mark Webb  
DIRECTOR GENERAL

Effective date: 13 January 2022