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Fauna Spotter Catcher Vegetation Clearing Report – Caval Ridge

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Black Cat Civil

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1 Introduction

1.1 Project scope

Ausecology was engaged by Black Cat Civil to provide Fauna Spotter Catcher (FSC) services for vegetation clearing activities associated with pit extension at Peak Downs Mine located approximately 20km south-east of Moranbah, Queensland. The total clearance footprint was made up a single small area located near Ramp 40 (See Appendix A). Vegetation clearing occurred from the 28th of July to the 13th of August, for a total of eleven days. An FSC was present on site for the entire duration of clearing works to reduce potential impacts on wildlife and/or habitat.

2 Methodology

Ausecology has extensive experience with a wide variety of fauna species obtained during fauna surveys, fauna spotter catcher work and long-term fauna monitoring works.

2.1 Equipment

Ausecology staff are trained in fauna handling techniques and were provided with the following equipment:

- Snake hook and hoop bag
- Three-pronged rake for raking through leaf litter and small woody debris
- Jimmy bar for rolling small logs, rocks and peeling bark off trees
- Calico bags, plastic container and cages for appropriate capture of animal and transfer to release site or veterinarian/fauna rehabilitation carer
- GPS unit
- All required PPE

2.2 Qualifications, permits and licences

For a person/s to undertake the duties associated with being a FSC, they must be suitably qualified and experienced for the task and have the appropriate permits/licences in place from the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI). The FSC work was conducted under the relevant licences held by Ausecology as listed in *Table 2-1*.

Table 2-1 Relevant licences held by Ausecology

Title	Licence Number	Expiry Date
Animal Ethics Committee	CA 2025/01/1924	12/03/2029
Damage Mitigation Permit	WA0053702	17/08/2026
Rehabilitation Permit	WA0046797	16/10/2025
Scientific Purposes Permit	WA0027791	05/11/2025
Scientific Use Registration Certificate	SUR000483	13/03/2029

In addition, staff working as an FSC have the appropriate vaccinations (e.g. Australian bat Lyssavirus) where required.

2.3 Inspection and spotter-catching methods

The fauna spotter catcher activities undertaken included:

- Inspecting vegetation and habitat prior to clearing
- Raking leaf litter for small reptiles
- Inspecting under logs and other objects
- Inspecting stockpiles of soil and/or vegetation
- Capture of fauna and relocation of fauna to suitable habitat
- Euthanasia of pest species or fauna suffering from unrecoverable injuries when required
- Debarking trees for small reptiles

Preceding vegetation clearing and immediately prior to the commencement of vegetation clearing, a visual inspection and search for fauna and their breeding habitat was undertaken and any potential habitat was marked.

During clearing works, any fauna encountered were, where possible, captured and relocated to suitable adjoining habitat as soon as practicable. Pest fauna or critically injured animals beyond the potential for practical rehabilitation were promptly euthanised to alleviate suffering as per the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*.

3 Results

3.1 Pre-clearance summary

The clearance footprint of the area was dominated by non-native grass species with scattered stands of immature brigalow (*Acacia harpophylla*). The only habitat features present were small patches of leaf litter under denser clusters of brigalow, but other than this, no significant habitat features were present.

Table 3-1 Habitat features present and management actions to mitigate impacts

Habitat feature	Potential fauna and associated use	Proximity to clearance footprint	Management Actions	Photos
Leaf litter	Small reptiles	Within footprint	Raking and searching for fauna	

3.2 Post-clearance summary

During post-clearance works, the total clearance footprint underwent soil levelling (Figure 3-1).

Figure 3-1 Landscape post-clearance

Nine species of fauna were encountered, with a total of twenty individual animal interactions (Table 3-2). Of these, twelve animals were captured and released out of the clearing area, one self-relocated, five were humanely euthanised, and two were found dead. Captures of species are displayed in Figure 3-2 to Figure 3-5. Appendix A presents a map of each encounter, the details of which are recorded in Appendix B.

Figure 3-2 Brigalow scaly-foot (Paradelma orientalis)

Figure 3-3 Common brushtail possum (Trichosurus vulpecula)

Figure 3-4 Dubious dtella (Gehyra dubia)

Figure 3-5 Spotted python (Antaresia maculosa)

Figure 3-6 Common green treefrog (Litoria caerulea)

Figure 3-7 Cane toad (Rhinella marina)

Table 3-2 Summary of fauna encounters across clearance footprint

Scientific Name	Common Name	NC Act Status	Total Encountered
Aepyprymnus rufescens	rufous bettong	C	1
Antaresia maculosa	spotted python	C	2
Gehyra dubia	dubious dtella	C	1
Heteronotia binoei	Bynoe's gecko	C	2
Litoria caerulea	common green treefrog	C	6
Paradelma orientalis	brigalow scaly-foot	C	2
Rhinella marina	cane toad	*	4
Trichosurus vulpecula	common brushtail possum	C	1
Varanus tristis	black-tailed monitor	C	1
Total			**20**

NC ACT Status: [CE] – Critically endangered, [E] – Endangered, [V] – Vulnerable, [NT] – Near threatened, [C] – Least concern species
Introduced species [*]

Appendix A – Fauna Encounters Mapping

Capture Locations

- *Aepyprymnus rufescens* - rufous bettong
- *Antaresia maculosa* - spotted python
- *Heteronotia binoei*- Bynoe's gecko
- *Litoria caerulea* - common green treefrog
- *Paradelma orientalis* - brigalow scaly-foot
- *Rhinella marina* - cane toad
- *Trichosurus vulpecula* - common brushtail possum
- Study Area

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Appendix-A

Fauna Encounters Map

Survey Period - 28th July -13th of August

N

0 250 500

Meters

GDA2020 MGA Zone 55

Appendix B – Fauna Capture Data

Encounter Type	Encounter Date	Encounter Location		Scientific name	Common name	NC Act Status*	Count	Release Date	Release Location		Outcome**				
		Latitude	Longitude						Latitude	Longitude	R	R2	D	E	S
Captured, Found Dead	12-08-2025	-22.12271118	148.0690493	*Rhinella marina*	cane toad	-	2						X	X	
Captured	06-08-2025	-22.1196919	148.0674967	*Paradelma orientalis*	brigalow scaly-foot	C	1				X				
Captured	05-08-2025	-22.1233823	148.0705858	*Heteronotia binoei*	Bynoe's gecko	C	2	05-08-2025	-22.119051	148.0723762	X				
Captured	05-08-2025	-22.1234931	148.0704941	*Trichosurus vulpecula*	common brushtail possum	C	1	05-08-2025	-22.1190114	148.0724193	X				
Injured	05-08-2025	-22.1235275	148.0705005	*Litoria caerulea*	common green treefrog	C	1	05-08-2025	-22.1197542	148.0730185	X				
Found Dead	05-08-2025	-22.1233078	148.0704373	*Antaresia maculosa*	spotted python	C	1						X		
Captured	05-08-2025	-22.122782	148.0699164	*Litoria caerulea*	common green treefrog	C	1	05-08-2025	-22.1265376	148.0746008	X				
Captured	05-08-2025	-22.1228053	148.0698263	*Litoria caerulea*	common green treefrog	C	4	05-08-2025	-22.1264438	148.0746144	X				
Injured	01-08-2025	-22.1257462	148.0740969	*Rhinella marina*	cane toad	-	1							X	
Captured, Injured	01-08-2025	-22.1248481	148.0720837	*Paradelma orientalis*	brigalow scaly-foot	C	1							X	
Not Captured	01-08-2025	-22.1246042	148.072244	*Aepyprymnus rufescens*	rufous bettong	C	1								X
Captured	28-07-2025	-22.1656482	148.1180456	*Varanus tristis*	black-tailed monitor	C	1	28-07-2025	-22.1498911	148.0983431	X				
Injured	30-07-2025	-22.1654057	148.113239	*Antaresia maculosa*	spotted python	C	1							X	
Captured	30-07-2025	-22.165055	148.1133857	*Rhinella marina*	cane toad	-	1							X	
Captured	30-07-2025	-22.1653785	148.113652	*Gehyra dubia*	dubious dtella	C	1	30-07-2025	-22.1645827	148.1154015	X				

** NC ACT - Nature Conservation Act 1992; CE – Critically Endangered, E – Endangered, V – Vulnerable, NT – Near Threatened, C – Least Concern*

*** D = Found dead, E = Euthanised, R = Released with no further action, R1= Taken to local vet, S = Self relocated.*