

Media Release:

06.11.09

Newborn Bilby at Alice Springs Desert Park

The Alice Springs Desert Park (ASDP) has welcomed a new addition to the Nocturnal House with a captive bred male Bilby emerging from his mothers pouch in the last week.

ASDP Mammals Specialist Keeper Peter Nunn said the Bilby joey was born in August and can be occasionally seen following his mother around the exhibit.

“The frequency at which the joey is seen being active will increase as time goes on and as he advances towards weaning and independence,” Mr Nunn said.

“Bilbies are weaned at about four months of age and this joey will be on display until the end of summer.

“The Bilby pair are part of a national captive breeding program and this is the first offspring for the adult Bilby pair, although we have bred many bilbies in the past.”

The Bilby is a protected species in the Northern Territory and is listed as Vulnerable in the Northern Territory Threatened Species List.

The National Recovery Plan for the Greater Bilby (*Macrotis lagotis*) was produced by the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and The Arts (now NRETAS) and published in 2006.

“As part of the recovery plan captive Bilby breeding programs are maintained to safeguard against the possible catastrophic decline of wild populations,” Mr Nunn said.

NRETA developed the National Recovery Plan together with the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Western Australia Department of Environment and Conservation through funding from the Australian Government.

Mr Nunn said the Alice Springs Desert Park has always maintained close links to the Bilby with the entire captive Bilby population in Australia catalogued and managed by staff at the Desert Park as part of the Australian Species Management Program co-ordinated by the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria

“Breeding programs are established at the Alice Springs Desert Park and the Territory Wildlife Park, located south of Darwin,” Mr Nunn said.

“The Desert Park also celebrated National Bilby Day on the 13 September 2009 with children’s activities and a short talk on the Bilby inside the Nocturnal House.”

Ends

**Media Note – for more information contact Peter Nunn on 8951 8788
Images – Bilby mother and joey, bilby joey.**

Issued: 11am Friday, 6 November 2009