

2016 Western Ringtail Tally

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are you holding this event to count ringtails?

The Western Ringtail Tally event aims to build a reliable set of observation data that will improve our knowledge about where Western Ringtail Possums are found and in what numbers.

2. Why is the survey period 4 weeks?

Ringtails are highly territorial and may have several "nesting" places within their territory. They tend to move around their territory, spending a few nights in each nesting place, so you may not see them for a week or two at a time, before they return.

3. How do I tell a ringtail possum apart from a brush tail possum?

- Ringtails have a long, skinny tail with a white tip
- Ringtails have smaller, rounder ears
- Ringtails are smaller than brush tails



Western Ringtail Possum: photo by L.Jackes



Common Brush tail Possum: photo by L.Jackes

- Ringtails have different scats:

Look carefully for droppings (scats); possum scats are 1- 2cm long and 0.5-1cm wide. Mice and rat scats are generally skinnier with pointy ends.



Brush-tail possum scat



Ringtail possum scat



Black Rat Scat



House mouse scats

Source: Cherie Kemp, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Busselton.

4. We see Ringtails all the time. Why are they considered endangered?

The Busselton-Dunsborough region is considered to be the last 'stronghold' for Ringtails. Their range (area where they are found) has contracted hugely, so while we may see them often in this area, they are not seen in many other places anymore. Their population is decreasing and we are likely to see less of them into the future.

5. What else can I do to save Ringtails from extinction?

- protect any mature peppy trees on your block or plant one in your garden
- keep cats and dogs inside at night
- always put the lid/hood down on BBQs after use - there a huge number of ringatils that suffer burns by jumping on BBQs
- hang a water bowl in a tree during summer

6. Who do I contact?

If you would like to take part, please contact Bree Brown, Project Coordinator, GeoCatch, Busselton at Breanne.Brown@water.wa.gov.au (97810 111 or mobile 0416618835). Alternatively, you may contact Geoff Barrett at Parks and Wildlife at geoff.barrett@dpaw.wa.gov.au (mobile 0418 953 050).

7. Who is funding this project?

This project is being coordinated by GeoCatch, with technical support from the Department of Parks and Wildlife and funding through the National Landcare Program.

8. Who should I tell if I see a Ringtail after the survey period has closed?

The Department of Parks and Wildlife collects fauna sightings all year round. If you see a Ringtail (dead or alive) please contact fauna@dpaw.wa.gov.au for a simple fauna report form to submit.

Lastly! We would love to see your ringtail photos!

If you take any great photos of your ringtail visitors, and you'd be happy to share them with us, please email them to breanne.brown@water.wa.gov.au



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