



Conservation Regulator

Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning

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Cat Smith
Administration Officer
Department of the Legislative Council
Parliament of Victoria
Spring Street
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Dear Ms Smith

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO ECOSYSTEM DECLINE

Thank you for your email on 27 April 2021 regarding further questions on notice from Ms Melina Bath which relate to my appearance at the public hearings on 10 March 2021. I apologise for the delay in my response.

Please see my responses to each question below, and apologies for my delayed reply.

Question 1: Has your office or DELWP ever conducted a systematic, state-wide survey to determine the population of Leadbeater's Possum?

Answer: Yes, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning has undertaken extensive surveys over the last five years as part of the funded Leadbeater's possum recovery program. These surveys help to determine the distribution and abundance and these were completed in 2016-17 by the Arthur Rylah Institute. For more information on this please visit <https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/our-wildlife/leadbeaters-possum>.

Question 2: I understand you are responsible for surveying protected species. How much of your effort is directed at identifying threatened species in parks and reserves?

Answer: The Conservation Regulator surveys for threatened flora and fauna under the Forest Protection Survey Program. The purpose of these surveys is to determine if protection measures need to be applied for timber harvesting coupes and focuses entirely on proposed areas for harvesting. Approximately \$4.5 million per annum of the Conservation Regulator's budget is allocated to the Forest Protection Survey Program. We invest further effort in assessing and investigating reports of threatened species in coupes through our Timber Harvesting Compliance Unit. In 2019-20, we received 74 threatened species reports, all of which were assessed, and where verified, appropriate management actions put in place.

I would like to again thank the Legislative Council's Environment and Planning Committee for the opportunity to provide evidence at the Parliamentary Inquiry and look forward to reviewing their final report.

Yours sincerely


Kate Gavens
Chief Conservation Regulator

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