

Western quoll



Long-term conservation efforts mean the future is looking brighter for the western quoll. WA Parks and Wildlife

The second largest of Australia's quoll species, the western quoll (or chuditch) now occurs naturally only in south-western Australia. It was once found across most of the Australian mainland, but like other quolls, it declined rapidly following European settlement, mostly due to predation by foxes

and cats but with contributions from many other factors.

However, the outlook for the western quoll is more encouraging. It has responded well to long-term conservation management, particularly the landmark [Western Shield fox control program](#) in Western Australia. It has also been reintroduced into places where it once occurred, with a reintroduction currently underway in the [Flinders Ranges of South Australia](#).

Thanks to that action, populations are now stable or possibly even increasing. The fate of the western quoll shows that we not only have the power to drive species to decline and extinction, but we also have the capacity to repair our damage.

The slippery slope to extinction

The high abundance of quolls at the time of European settlement, and their deadly taste for poultry, may have contributed to our quolls' modern decline. Common species often receive less attention and resources than species that are iconic or rare. However, threatened species listings around the world are filled with species that were once common, illustrating that the slippery slope from commonness to extinction is not as unlikely as it may seem.

The encouraging signs of recovery for the western quoll illustrate that population declines can be stopped and even reversed. But bold strategies, innovative approaches, large-scale implementation and long-term planning are needed to tackle the key threats to our threatened species. Our quolls are approaching the point of no return – and if we don't want to see them go the way of the Tasmanian tiger, we need to act now.