

Bushfire Recovery for Wildlife and Habitat

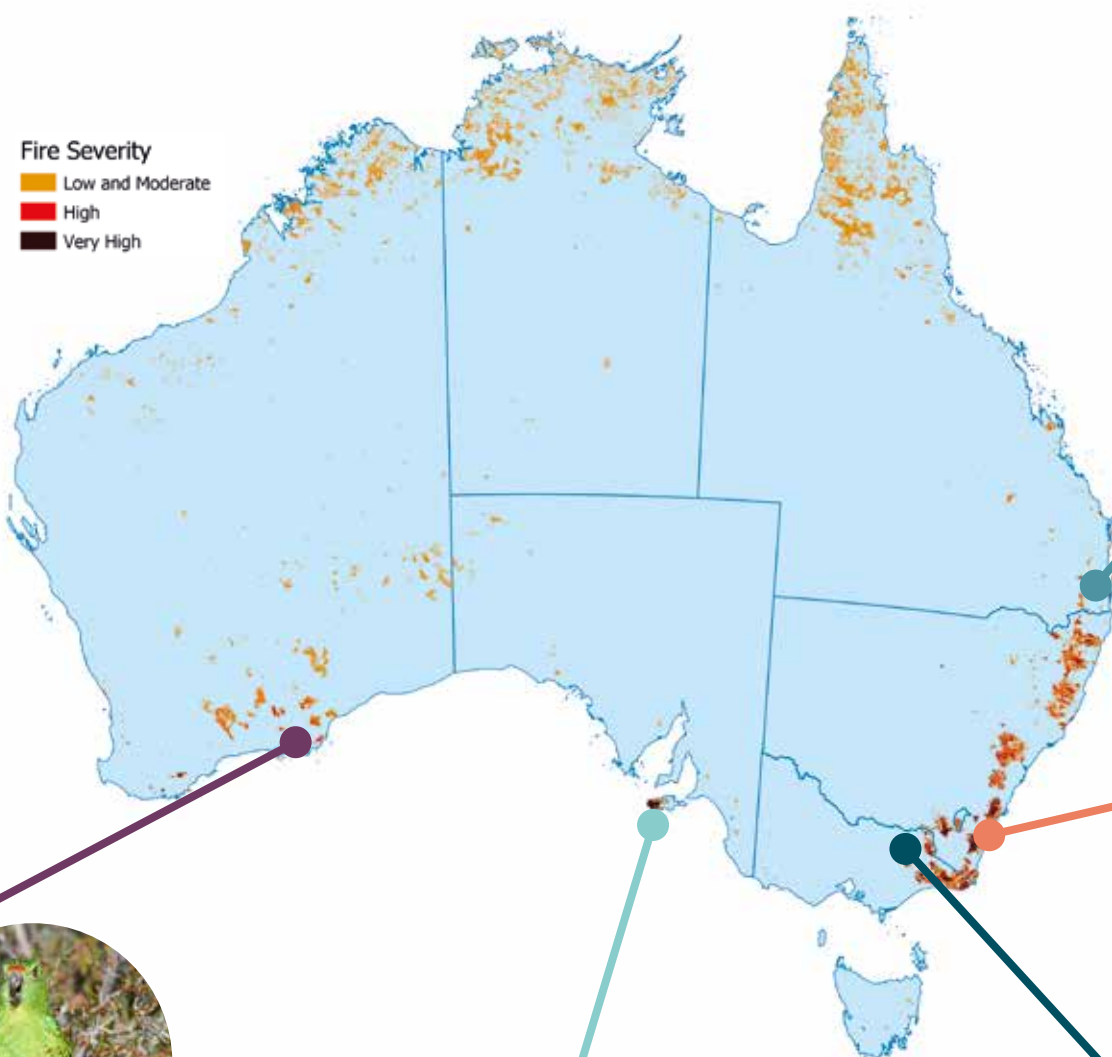
Overview

October 2020

The Australian Government is investing more than \$200 million to support the recovery of our native wildlife and their habitats from the devastating Black Summer bushfires of 2019–20.

To undertake on-ground recovery activities the government is working with:

- local communities
- wildlife carers
- zoos
- natural resource management organisations
- Indigenous organisations
- conservation groups
- universities
- state, territory and local governments.



Found only in **Western Australia**, the western ground parrot is one of the world's rarest birds with fewer than 150 remaining in the wild. The fires burnt through thousands of hectares of the birds' habitat but Birdlife Australia, with its local partners in Western Australia, are surveying the population to determine the viability of a wild-to-wild translocation. This is part of a long-term strategy to save these beautiful birds.

Image: Ground parrot – Brent Barrett from Dunedin, New Zealand, CC BY-SA 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons



Kangaroo Island is home to several rare species including the endangered Kangaroo Island dunnart. With more than 95% of its habitat burnt, there were grave concerns for the dunnart population. Thankfully, motion-sensing cameras installed by the Kangaroo Island Landscape Board and the National Parks and Wildlife Service South Australia have captured images of this elusive mammal. Feral cat controls are being undertaken to protect the surviving population.



Image: Male black-tailed dusky antechinus. Credit: Dr Andrew Baker, Queensland University of Technology

Detection dogs are helping scientists protect the future of the antechinus—a small, endangered native marsupial with a mouse-like face. The dogs are trained to detect their scent, as part of surveys for the antechinuses in high altitude areas of **south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales**. Led by the Queensland University of Technology, this project will help establish locations of surviving populations and inform future management of the species.

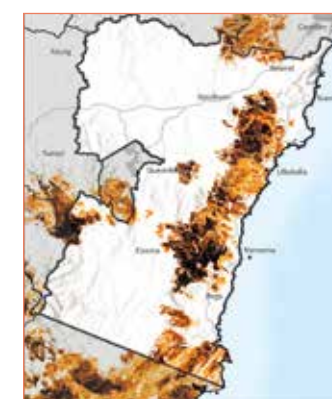
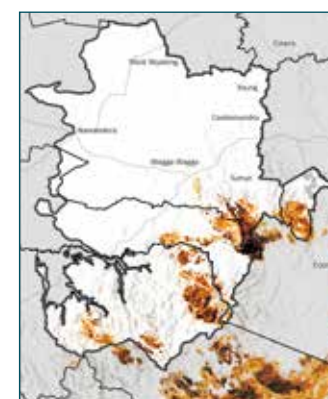
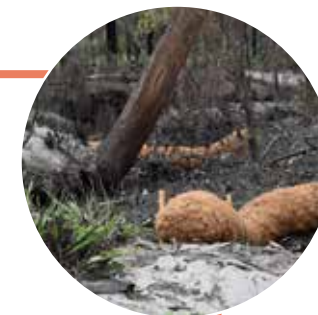


Image: Post-bushfire recovery activities, South Coast New South Wales © South East Local Land Services

In the **south eastern corner of NSW**, bushfire recovery teams have been working hard to reduce sediment and ash washing into, and clogging up, local waterways. Using jute mesh and eco-logs made from compacted coconut fibre, South East Local Land Services and the Batemans Bay and Mogo Local Aboriginal Land Councils, are helping to alleviate damage to local creeks and rivers and reducing the impact on native animals, such as the threatened Macquarie Perch.



Victoria's high country is home to more than 4000 hectares of alpine peatlands. It is an ecological community that is crucial for the health of the region—people, plants and animals. The North East Catchment Management Authority is leading a project to undertake feral animal control to protect the peatlands from trampling and overgrazing. Through the project, weed removal is underway in the Alpine National Park to protect the peatlands from these invasive plants.



Impacts



7.7 million hectares burned
61% at high or very high severity

The devastating scale of the bushfires

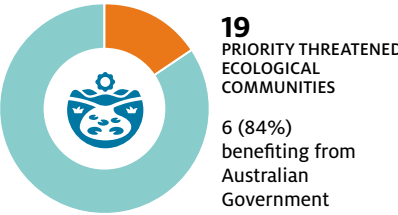
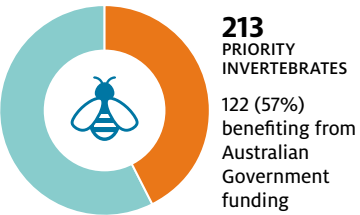
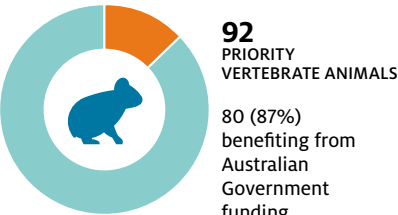
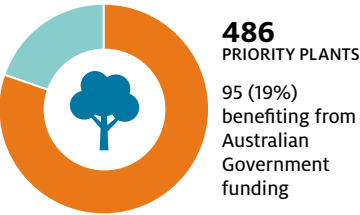
- Nearly 40% of Kangaroo Island was burnt, with more than 80% severely burnt.
- More than 60% of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area was burnt, with more than half of this at high or very high severity.



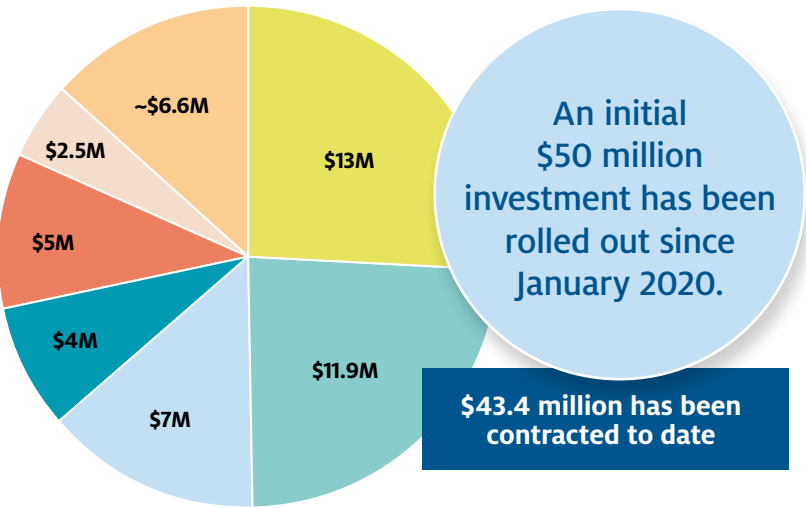
Assessment of impacts on wildlife and habitats

Desktop analysis by experts has identified 810 priority matters (native plants, animals and ecological communities) for immediate management following the bushfires.

On-ground surveys are underway to assess the condition of native plants and animals, pest animals and weeds.



Funding



- \$13 million to state and territory governments for on-ground emergency interventions
- \$11.9 million to 37 Wildlife and Habitat Bushfire Recovery Program grants
- \$7 million to 18 natural resource management organisations in affected areas
- \$4 million to zoos and wildlife carers to treat injured wildlife and establish insurance populations for at-risk species
- \$5 million to Greening Australia to increase supply of seed and native plants for revegetation
- \$2.5 million to Conservation Volunteers Australia to mobilise volunteers through a national coordination point
- approximately \$6.6 million yet to be contracted

What's next?

- A new program will support captive breeding for identified high-priority species
- Regional workshops have identified priority recovery actions to be funded with \$110 million for the 7 most vulnerable bushfire affected regions
- A \$10-million grants program to support communities to deliver bushfire recovery activities for their local environment
- A \$2-million grants program to fund knowledge exchange workshops on Indigenous fire and land management

Action

Protecting burnt and unburnt areas and restoring habitat

- ✓ 1,065,282 ha of pest animal treatment
- ✓ 6,898 ha of initial weed treatment
- ✓ 707 ha of erosion control



Community participation

- 11,896 volunteers have been registered by Conservation Volunteers Australia to assist with bushfire recovery projects
- 67 groups and/or individuals, including wildlife care organisations, are being supported to deliver recovery and future preparedness activities



The number of organisations registered with Conservation Volunteers Australia and the number of grants provided under the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife Heroes program only.

Emergency rescue and wildlife care

- 6 animal populations were translocated to unburnt habitat
- More than 7000 animals have been treated for bushfire-related injuries



Conservation away from burnt habitats

- 5 priority animal species are being bred in new or expanded conservation facilities