

# The Balijup Eco-Sanctuary in WA's Gondwana Link: A Focus on The Role of Digging Mammals

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The Balijup Eco-Sanctuary project is a fenced 111 hectare fox and cat free enclosure sited in Wandoo and Jarrah eucalypt forest near Cranbrook, in Western Australia (WA). The overall Balijup property is an eco-restoration focal point for this part of the Gondwana Link landscape conservation program west of the Stirling Ranges National Park in the (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLaxA5Lc1Sc>) .

Since the Eco-Sanctuary's launch in May 2016, a citizen science program is monitoring ecosystem recovery. Quenda (Southern Brown Bandicoot - *Isodon obesulus*) have been successfully reintroduced into the Eco-Sanctuary. One goal is to investigate the role of soil digging Australian mammals such as Quenda in ecosystem function. This paper reports on the history of the Balijup project, progress of various monitoring activities, and implications of this project for broader ecosystem restoration across Gondwana Link.

This project represents a collaboration between Green Skills ([www.greenskills.org.au](http://www.greenskills.org.au)) and the WA Conservation Council's Citizen Science program, supported by the landowners, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Gondwana Link Ltd ([www.gondwanalink.org](http://www.gondwanalink.org)), regional and local Natural Resource Management (NRM) organisations and a volunteer program. This project builds on published research on the vital role of digging mammals in ecosystem health, including through the WA based Centre of Excellence in Climate Change, Woodland and Forest Health.