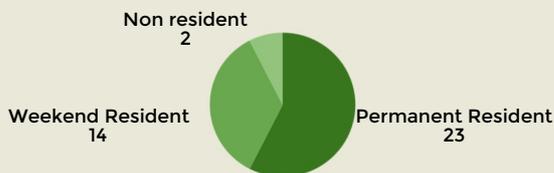


French Island Community Perception Survey

37 residents and 2 non residents provided their thoughts and opinions on the proposed release of Eastern Barred Bandicoots on French Island.

Only resident responses are contained in this infographic.



Based on your comments we will take these ACTIONS:

- 1 Conduct baseline surveys of invertebrates
- 2 Complete risk assessments of threatened flora and fauna
- 3 Closely monitor the Churchill Island EBB population to determine impacts on island values and population regulation
- 4 Obtain full exemption to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act
- 5 Assist with cat control
- 6 Write a detailed project plan for community comment
- 7 Send regular updates on all proposed actions

51% of respondents thought an EBB release would have BENEFITS:

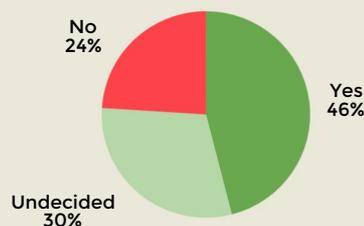
- Save the EBB from extinction
- Increase island profile and encourage tourism
- Aide relationships with government and environment agencies
- Improve and protect French Islands natural values through more reveg work and restrictions on overdevelopment
- EBBs could control pasture pests
- Assistance with cat control

62% of respondents have these CONCERNS:

Impact on native flora and fauna, particularly invertebrates

- EBBs will become a pest
- Government restrictions on land management
- Impact on farming
- EBBs will expand beyond their release site
- Impact of feral cats on EBBs
- Impact on gardens

SUPPORT for an EBB release was mixed:



We are working hard to address **YOUR** concerns with our **ACTIONS**, stay tuned for further details and **UPDATES**



A full list of survey results can be obtained by contacting Amy Coetsee ACoetsee@zoo.org.au

French Island Actions for EBBs

Thank you for completing the survey 'Community Perceptions to a Possible Eastern Barred Bandicoot Release on French Island'. Your responses have informed the next steps we will take to address your concerns regarding the suitability of French Island for an Eastern Barred Bandicoot (EBB) release.

ACTION 1: Conduct baseline surveys of French Island invertebrates

Baseline surveys of invertebrates will be conducted in all major habitat types across the island. We will seek expert advice on the frequency and duration of surveys and employ an experienced contractor to undertake the work. A pilot study may also commence soon by a Zoos Victoria invertebrate specialist.

Research into the effect of EBB diggings on invertebrates is underway on Churchill Island. This follows on from other research that found foraging digs made by native mammals play an important role in improving ecosystem function, by positively influencing invertebrate and plant communities (G. Davies, U Tas, unpubl. data), improving soil condition and reducing the severity and frequency of fires (Fleming et al. 2014).

*This action will address the community concern:
'impact on native flora and fauna, particularly invertebrates'*

Fleming P., Anderson H., Prendergast A., Bretz M., Valentine L. & Hardy G. (2014) Is the loss of Australian digging mammals contributing to a deterioration in ecosystem function? *Mammal Review* 44, 94-108.

ACTION 2: Complete risk assessments of threatened flora and fauna

A risk assessment of the impact of EBBs on French Island's rare and threatened flora and fauna will be undertaken, prior to any potential release.

*This action will address the community concern:
'impact on native flora and fauna, particularly invertebrates'*

ACTION 3: Closely monitor the Churchill Island EBB population to determine impacts on island values and population regulation

In August 2015, 16 (8 male and 8 female) breeding EBBs were released on Churchill Island, a 57 ha island off Phillip Island. This is our island test site. This breeding population of EBBs will be monitored very closely to determine their habitat use and impact on the island's flora, fauna and soil condition across the three habitat types (natural bush land, historic gardens and pasture). This will be done through radio tracking, trapping, remote cameras, habitat analyses and invertebrate surveys. Given Churchill Island's small size we should also be able to determine how EBBs regulate their population size on islands.

Interested members of the French Island community are welcome to visit the Churchill Island and see firsthand what they could expect from an EBB release.

*This action will address the community concerns:
'impact on native flora and fauna, particularly invertebrates'
'EBBs will become a pest'
'EBBs will expand beyond their release site'
'Impact on farming'
'Impact on gardens'*

ACTION 4: Obtain full exemption to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)

A full release of EBBs will not go ahead on French Island unless the Government approves a full exemption to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999) as well as state regulations protecting endangered species. We do not want landowners to be restricted in any way by a possible release. When obtained, a copy of this exemption will be sent to all community members for their records.

*This action addresses the concern:
'an EBB release will impose government restrictions on land management'*

ACTION 5: Assist with cat control

The French Island trial EBB release highlighted that cats pose a threat to EBBs through direct predation and toxoplasmosis infection. Prior to any proposed EBB release, cat control in immediate release areas would need to be increased. As Parks Victoria and French Island Landcare currently carry out a cat control program, Zoos Victoria will need to have discussions with them to determine exactly how we can assist in controlling feral cats on French Island.

*This action will address the concern:
'impact of feral cats on EBBs'*

ACTION 6: Write a detailed project plan for community comment

A long term project plan will be developed in consultation with the community. This will include timelines, objectives and any biosecurity risks, including a disease risk analysis conducted by the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group from the IUCN.

As with all our current release sites, the EBB Recovery Team would monitor this population in spring and autumn indefinitely and in winter as necessary. Summer monitoring is avoided as this poses a welfare risk for EBBs due to high temperatures.

ACTION 7: Send regular updates on all proposed actions

Updates will be emailed to the French Island Community via Glenys Ralph, FICA and Landcare. Community meetings will be organised as new information comes available or at the request of the community.

Prior to holding a community vote on whether EBBs are suitable for release on French Island, we will work on the above actions and address your concerns as best we can. There is a lot of work to do, but this should help reduce uncertainties surrounding a potential EBB release.

Thank you again for responding to the survey. If you would like any more information on the above actions or have any additional concerns or comments please contact Amy Coetsee ACoetsee@zoo.org.au.