

**From:** [Coghill, Stacey](#)  
**To:** [Breitkopf, Suzie](#)  
**Subject:** RE: DRAFT FOR COMMENT - Conservator Guidelines for Burrowing Animals  
**Date:** Tuesday, 4 June 2024 2:23:00 PM

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Hi Suzie – Thanks for this. Appreciate you having a look. We don't anticipate getting a large volume of applications from landholders, however, still important to consider and we have done 2 that im aware of although I think both were for [REDACTED]. We sent Greg from our team out to do those surveys. Of course this may need to be revisited if, as you suggest, workloads don't allow time but so far this has been working. I was conscious of keeping cost to landholders down in order to promote compliance which is partially why the use of sticks for monitoring was included to lessen the number of burrows requiring camera monitoring. Wombat Rescue are also able to assist with burrow monitoring, oneway gates and mange treatment for landholders requiring support.

Many thanks'

Stacey Coghill  
Conservation Officer  
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**From:** Breitkopf, Suzie <[Suzie.Breitkopf@act.gov.au](mailto:Suzie.Breitkopf@act.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 4, 2024 9:44 AM  
**To:** Coghill, Stacey <[Stacey.Coghill@act.gov.au](mailto:Stacey.Coghill@act.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Tasker, Kirsten <[Kirsten.Tasker@act.gov.au](mailto:Kirsten.Tasker@act.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** FW: DRAFT FOR COMMENT - Conservator Guidelines for Burrowing Animals

**OFFICIAL**

Hi Stacey

I only have a minor comment about the Wombat information sheet. It would be in terms from a landholder point of view. I think the information requiring an Ecologist to do an inspection may be a point of contention simply as there would be a timeliness issue (if using Ecologists from ONC) due to their high workload and whether they would be able to do studies at the same time as landholders would require them.

The other issue may be cost (if using a private Ecologist) as land holders would be looking at the bottom line.

The use of sticks and cameras at entrances is excellent information and maybe there is a way that this could be incorporated to the Ecologists to gather information on the areas that wombats are impacting without the Ecologist needing to do large on ground surveys.

kind regards

*Suzie Breitkopf*

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**From:** Tasker, Kirsten <Kirsten.Tasker@act.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 29, 2024 3:40 PM  
**To:** Breitkopf, Suzie <Suzie.Breitkopf@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: DRAFT FOR COMMENT - Conservator Guidelines for Burrowing Animals

**OFFICIAL**

Might be worth checking out the wombat one from a landholder point of view

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**From:** Coghill, Stacey <[Stacey.Coghill@act.gov.au](mailto:Stacey.Coghill@act.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 29, 2024 2:47 PM  
**To:** Tasker, Kirsten <[Kirsten.Tasker@act.gov.au](mailto:Kirsten.Tasker@act.gov.au)>; Tennent, Simon <[Simon.Tennent@act.gov.au](mailto:Simon.Tennent@act.gov.au)>; Pearson, Julie <[Julie.Pearson@act.gov.au](mailto:Julie.Pearson@act.gov.au)>; EPD Impact <[EPDImpact@act.gov.au](mailto:EPDImpact@act.gov.au)>; Daines, Nicholas <[Nicholas.Daines@act.gov.au](mailto:Nicholas.Daines@act.gov.au)>; Boyd, Kate <[Kate.Boyd@act.gov.au](mailto:Kate.Boyd@act.gov.au)>; Mclachlan, Adam <[Adam.Mclachlan@act.gov.au](mailto:Adam.Mclachlan@act.gov.au)>; Young, Wade <[Wade.Young@act.gov.au](mailto:Wade.Young@act.gov.au)>; Stratford, Simon <[Simon.Stratford@act.gov.au](mailto:Simon.Stratford@act.gov.au)>; Cotsell, Peter <[Peter.Cotsell@act.gov.au](mailto:Peter.Cotsell@act.gov.au)>; Kuzman, Nadia <[Nadia.Kuzman@act.gov.au](mailto:Nadia.Kuzman@act.gov.au)>; Orgill, Oliver <[Oliver.Orgill@act.gov.au](mailto:Oliver.Orgill@act.gov.au)>; Milner, Richard <[Richard.Milner@act.gov.au](mailto:Richard.Milner@act.gov.au)>; Gould, Kristy <[Kristy.Gould@act.gov.au](mailto:Kristy.Gould@act.gov.au)>; Alegria, Stephen <[Stephen.Alegria@act.gov.au](mailto:Stephen.Alegria@act.gov.au)>; Harmer, Sharon <[Sharon.Harmer@act.gov.au](mailto:Sharon.Harmer@act.gov.au)>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@iconwater.com.au>  
**Cc:** Schofield, Warren <[Warren.Schofield@act.gov.au](mailto:Warren.Schofield@act.gov.au)>; Glennon, Chris <[Chris.Glennon@act.gov.au](mailto:Chris.Glennon@act.gov.au)>; Pegg, Stacey <[Stacey.Pegg@act.gov.au](mailto:Stacey.Pegg@act.gov.au)>; Watts, Michaela <[Michaela.Watts@act.gov.au](mailto:Michaela.Watts@act.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** DRAFT FOR COMMENT - Conservator Guidelines for Burrowing Animals

**OFFICIAL**

Good Afternoon All

The Office of the Conservator has been working on the development of a set of guidelines for the protection on non-threatened burrowing animals in the context of development. Once finalised, these guidelines will sit as a Notifiable Instrument under the Nature Conservation ACT and will ensure that a consistent approach is applied to the assessment of all proposals for developments seeking Conservator advice or approval.

Attached is the Draft version of the guidelines and a species specific info sheet for each animal covered by the guidelines.  
Could you please review and if you have any feedback or comments to make please do so by return email no later than **COB WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> JUNE.**

Many Thanks  
Stacey Coghill  
Conservation Officer

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**From:** [Coghill, Stacey](#)  
**To:** [Pearson, Julie](#)  
**Subject:** RE: DRAFT FOR COMMENT - Conservator Guidelines for Burrowing Animals  
**Date:** Monday, 1 July 2024 4:54:00 PM

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Hi Julie – Thanks very much for your feedback. I think feedback from as many areas as possible helps us to end up with a much more informed outcome. It is important to note that the implementation of these guidelines is really only adding some steps to ensure better outcomes for non-threatened native species on development sites. There has always been a requirement to have a Nature Conservation license prior to any disturbance of or destruction of a burrow/nest. The aim of the guidelines is to inform and guide developers in the better management of burrows found in the path of development. I've provided some responses to your below thoughts.

There is a lack of public mapping available of areas of identified habitat of these common (not listed) species which makes it very difficult for projects to be aware of where protection of non-threatened burrowing animals is an issue – it is important that this is clear from the initial development stages of a project so the constraints, opportunities and requirements are clear and can be built into the design and construction scopes (and costed into the project's funding provisions). Has a layer been considered on ACTMAPi identifying this area or do the guidelines intend for it to be surveyed/assessed on all projects in the ACT?

[Not that I am aware of – you could check with the spatial data team on whether this is planned but I'm not aware of any plans. We have provided habitat info in the guidelines to assist in identifying which animals are likely to be found in each habitat type. The Conservators office will also provide this advice when commenting on DA's/CEMPs / EIS/ESO's.](#)

Common (protected, but not listed) species are not usually surveyed for – there is a considerable additional cost associated which would be borne by proponents which would need to be funded on all development projects including those delivered by government. This requirement will need to be more clearly understood so this survey can occur at the appropriate stage in a project (to aid in establishing constraints for projects), and potentially at the correct time of year.

[Most developments in the ACT over 1ha \(other than standard residential development of single dwelling homes\) will require an Ecology survey with the introduction of BSUD requirements. The addition of a burrow survey to that work was not thought to create too much additional work. Realistically this should always have been included as a license is required under the nature conservation act to destroy /interfere with a burrow.](#)

It is considered it would be better to do a sweep pre-construction works as modifying for burrows and monitoring etc during design is likely to be costly and not necessarily result in the best design outcome. [Design mitigation for burrow avoidance would not be expected. Burrow surveys are best done as early in the process ie preclearance. Occupied burrows cannot be closed/destroyed and need to be confirmed as unoccupied before any decommissioning work can commence. In cases where the burrow homes a mother and at foot Joey \(not in the pouch\) the burrow cannot be destroyed until the Mother AND Joey have left which, can take some time. For best outcomes it is best to be aware of these issues early in the process. If you were to wait until pre-construction sweep before checking for burrows you could end up with delays while awaiting the monitoring to indicate an unoccupied burrow.](#)

Lack of detail included in these guidelines about when these provisions will commence and if there will be a roll out period during which they will not be retrospectively applied by the Conservator's team to existing ESO/EIS and DA applications and CEMP requests which are in progress. Their will be a media release and communication internally and to associated industry once they are finalised and notified under the NC act. The guidelines will be applied to all developments moving forward. I don't think we could reasonably apply them retrospectively to already approved projects.

Some of this is just common sense. Standard mitigation measures tell you to stop work and call WIRES if you encounter fauna onsite during construction works. Many of the general public will also know about that. The guidelines aim to have any animals residing in burrows to be moved on prior to any works commencing.

Some of these guidelines are pushing for an ecologist to do pre-clearance at any construction site which has naturalised soils/rocks/timber debris. In the case of echidnas, it requires that this be done on a few consecutive days. There is a lack of resourcing in the ecology field in the ACT and this is likely to put more pressure on consultants. – There is a requirement for ecologists /fauna spotters doing this work as it does require some knowledge of animal behaviour and ecology.

On some sites, people might not always think to do a pre-clearance, because there may not be any mapped native vegetation that is being cleared, but there may still be burrows. For those people, are they in trouble for not also engaging an ecologist to do a pre-clearance? If the site has habitat suitable for sheltering animals a pre-clearance survey should be done. If a burrow is found unexpectedly, it should be fenced off and works ceased in the vicinity of the burrow and monitoring commenced inline with the guidelines. A NC act license would also be required to destroy the burrow . Again this is not a new requirement as a license would always be required to destroy the burrow. We are only adding the monitoring and management requirements to ensure the animals involved are moved on prior to construction.

Echidna guideline says that piles of timber need to be moved apart by and ecologist using their hands. – Both relevant points thank you. I will look at tightening up that wording.

- If an ecologist is required to move away any pile of timber branches that is lying around in the ACT, the ACT is going to need a lot more ecologists with capacity to do that (def not every pile in the ACT- only those in the path of clearance/development that may be suitable for use by sheltering Echidnas as guided by the info provided in the Info sheet for Echidnas).
- Surely this is a significant WHS risk regarding the potential for snake bite

It appears unlikely that this would apply to the Athllon Dr projects, but it is not clear- This project has not had any suitable habitat flagged at this point though I have only seen plans for the Southern end of the project at this stage.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Many thanks

Stacee Coghill

Conservation Officer

Conservator Support | Environment, Heritage & Parks

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**From:** Pearson, Julie <Julie.Pearson@act.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 25, 2024 10:21 AM  
**To:** Coghill, Stacee <Stacee.Coghill@act.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Smith, Darren <Darren.Smith@act.gov.au>; [REDACTED]@smec.com>;  
Taylor, Karen <Karen.Taylor@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: DRAFT FOR COMMENT - Conservator Guidelines for Burrowing Animals

**OFFICIAL**

Stacee,

Apologies about how long it has taken us to respond to you with some comments about the set of guidelines for the protection on non-threatened burrowing animals in the context of development. We do appreciate you reaching out to those on the ground to provide some comments about this as implantation of these changes is often the biggest challenge. As we discussed I shared this document with SMEC as we are currently working with them on the Athllon Dr upgrade projects, and I knew they would have other projects to consider in relation to these proposed guidelines as well.

The initial thoughts are:

- There is a lack of public mapping available of areas of identified habitat of these common (not listed) species which makes it very difficult for projects to be aware of where protection of non-threatened burrowing animals is an issue – it is important that this is clear from the initial development stages of a project so the constraints, opportunities and requirements are clear and can be built into the design and construction scopes (and costed into the project’s funding provisions). Has a layer been considered on ACTMAPi identifying this area or do the guidelines intend for it to be surveyed/assessed on all projects in the ACT?
- Common (protected, but not listed) species are not usually surveyed for – there is a considerable additional cost associated which would be borne by proponents which would need to be funded on all development projects including those delivered by government. This requirement will need to be more clearly understood so this survey can occur at the appropriate stage in a project (to aid in establishing constraints for projects), and potentially at the correct time of year.
- It is considered it would be better to do a sweep pre-construction works as modifying for burrows and monitoring etc during design is likely to be costly and not necessarily result in the best design outcome.
- Lack of detail included in these guidelines about when these provisions will commence and if there will be a roll out period during which they will not be retrospectively applied by the Conservator’s team to existing ESO/EIS and DA applications and CEMP requests which are in progress.
- Some of this is just common sense. Standard mitigation measures tell you to stop work and call WIRES if you encounter fauna onsite during construction works. Many of the

- general public will also know about that.
- Some of these guidelines are pushing for an ecologist to do pre-clearance at any construction site which has naturalised soils/rocks/timber debris. In the case of echidnas, it requires that this be done on a few consecutive days. There is a lack of resourcing in the ecology field in the ACT and this is likely to put more pressure on consultants.
  - On some sites, people might not always think to do a pre-clearance, because there may not be any mapped native vegetation that is being cleared, but there may still be burrows. For those people, are they in trouble for not also engaging an ecologist to do a pre-clearance? What is the threshold for determining whether pre-clearance is or isn't required?
  - Echidna guideline says that piles of timber need to be moved apart by and ecologist using their hands.
    - If an ecologist is required to move away any pile of timber branches that is lying around in the ACT, the ACT is going to need a lot more ecologists with capacity to do that
    - Surely this is a significant WHS risk regarding the potential for snake bite
  - It appears unlikely that this would apply to the Athllon Dr projects, but it is not clear.

SMEC have raised that capacity issue is a significant concern. Particularly as the environmental planning industry is pretty busy right now nationwide with meeting Australia's growing infrastructure and housing needs. Taking ecologists out of serious project work to attend to these minor matters is going to put more strain on the planning system and cause further project delays across the industry.

Another suggestion could be to run a one-day training session for construction personnel, like the white card safety training. If a construction team has one person who is trained in how to spot potential goanna burrows and what not, they could simply raise the alarm with WIRES if a burrow is found, etc. Alternatively, these should go into CEMP matters, to be managed by on-site staff - this could be similar to the unexpected finds protocols that are already used for unexpected heritage finds and contaminated material ie to enable on site staff to keep an eye out for burrows etc during works and to stop work to have the burrow assessed if one is found.

I am happy to discuss any of our comments and am sure that [REDACTED] who was the contact for this at SMEC would be too. We need to ensure the new guidelines are realistic, clear to understand and apply (ie it is clear where protection of non-threatened burrowing animals is an issue), and manageable both during the design and construction phases for projects. Otherwise, they have the potential to become another financial and time burden for all projects, and the industry.

Julie

**Julie Pearson | Senior Project Manager**

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*CURRENTLY MAINLY WORKING FROM HOME*

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**From:** Coghill, Stacey <[Stacey.Coghill@act.gov.au](mailto:Stacey.Coghill@act.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 29, 2024 2:47 PM

**To:** Tasker, Kirsten <[Kirsten.Tasker@act.gov.au](mailto:Kirsten.Tasker@act.gov.au)>; Tennent, Simon <[Simon.Tennent@act.gov.au](mailto:Simon.Tennent@act.gov.au)>;

Pearson, Julie <[Julie.Pearson@act.gov.au](mailto:Julie.Pearson@act.gov.au)>; EPD Impact <[EPDImpact@act.gov.au](mailto:EPDImpact@act.gov.au)>; Daines, Nicholas <[Nicholas.Daines@act.gov.au](mailto:Nicholas.Daines@act.gov.au)>; Boyd, Kate <[Kate.Boyd@act.gov.au](mailto:Kate.Boyd@act.gov.au)>; Mclachlan, Adam <[Adam.Mclachlan@act.gov.au](mailto:Adam.Mclachlan@act.gov.au)>; Young, Wade <[Wade.Young@act.gov.au](mailto:Wade.Young@act.gov.au)>; Stratford, Simon <[Simon.Stratford@act.gov.au](mailto:Simon.Stratford@act.gov.au)>; Cotsell, Peter <[Peter.Cotsell@act.gov.au](mailto:Peter.Cotsell@act.gov.au)>; Kuzman, Nadia <[Nadia.Kuzman@act.gov.au](mailto:Nadia.Kuzman@act.gov.au)>; Orgill, Oliver <[Oliver.Orgill@act.gov.au](mailto:Oliver.Orgill@act.gov.au)>; Milner, Richard <[Richard.Milner@act.gov.au](mailto:Richard.Milner@act.gov.au)>; Gould, Kristy <[Kristy.Gould@act.gov.au](mailto:Kristy.Gould@act.gov.au)>; Alegria, Stephen <[Stephen.Alegria@act.gov.au](mailto:Stephen.Alegria@act.gov.au)>; Harmer, Sharon <[Sharon.Harmer@act.gov.au](mailto:Sharon.Harmer@act.gov.au)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@iconwater.com.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@iconwater.com.au)>

**Cc:** Schofield, Warren <[Warren.Schofield@act.gov.au](mailto:Warren.Schofield@act.gov.au)>; Glennon, Chris <[Chris.Glennon@act.gov.au](mailto:Chris.Glennon@act.gov.au)>; Pegg, Stacey <[Stacey.Pegg@act.gov.au](mailto:Stacey.Pegg@act.gov.au)>; Watts, Michaela <[Michaela.Watts@act.gov.au](mailto:Michaela.Watts@act.gov.au)>

**Subject:** DRAFT FOR COMMENT - Conservator Guidelines for Burrowing Animals

## OFFICIAL

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Many Thanks

Stacee Coghill

Conservation Officer

Conservator Support | Environment, Heritage & Water

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