

Spotted-tailed quoll *Dasyurus maculatus* Vulnerable in NSW Endangered nationally

In New South Wales, spotted-tailed quolls mainly live in forests and woodlands of the slopes and ranges of the Great Divide and coastal escarpments and plains. However, with home ranges of up to 3000 ha they can turn up almost anywhere. In the last 20 years, there have even been recorded sightings as far west as Broken Hill!

Quoll distribution in NSW



Poorly constructed
chook pens can harm
our precious quolls



What can I do if quolls visit my poultry pen?

Trapping quolls is illegal and can be very dangerous for both animals and humans. Quolls can harm themselves trying to escape from traps and females can drop their young from their pouches. It may not be safe for the trapper either, as quolls have extremely sharp claws and powerful jaws.

If you suspect or observe a quoll visiting your hen house, please contact your Local Land Services or National Parks and Wildlife office. They may be able to assist you with a motion camera to determine the species or help you safely trap and relocate the animal.

In the wild, quolls typically move along creek-lines to hunt for gliders, possums, rabbits, bandicoots, rats, birds and lizards. They use hollow logs, rocky outcrops and crevices to shelter and raise their young.

While the quolls natural habitat is the forest, they have learnt to travel across open country, including farms where they find abundant, accessible food such as rabbits and poultry. If you've got chooks, you are likely to have quolls checking out your animals.

Historically, quolls were treated as pests and were trapped, shot or poisoned by people protecting their chooks. Occasionally, quolls died from injuries sustained from trying to enter or exit chook pens. These practices have contributed to a decline in quoll numbers, and they are now listed as a threatened species in New South Wales.

To help enjoy the experience of quolls visiting your property and have peace of mind over the welfare of your prized hens, we've pulled together a few tips to help you quoll-proof your hen house. This also has the added benefit of keeping out other predators and egg thieves such as foxes, dogs, goannas, pythons and ravens.

Quolls are natural
climbers and raid
tree hollows for prey



Quoll photographed
by a wildlife motion
camera



Find out more

Contact OEH to:

- report activity of spotted-tailed quolls and other threatened species
- find out about spotted-tailed quoll conservation projects near you.

Contact your nearest Local Land Services office to:

- learn more about pest animal management
- report pest animal activity
- register for pest animal management training
- www.lls.nsw.gov.au.

Photos
Cover: M. Jones
Page 2: F Pearce
Page 3: J Evans
Page 4: Motion camera/OEH
Back: M Todd/OEH

All illustrations by Kiara Mucci.
Animal tracks courtesy of Barbara Triggs, taken from *Tracks, Scats and other Traces: A Field Guide to Australia mammals*.

Published by Office of Environment and Heritage
84 Crown St Wollongong 2500
Phone: (02) 4224 4150
Email: info@environment.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.environment.nsw.gov.au
ISBN 978-1-76039-790-6 OEH2017/0237 May 2017

Know your tracks

Is a predator visiting your hen house? Tracks and prints can help find out who the culprit may be. Alternatively, consider using a wildlife surveillance camera to photograph the predator. You can find these online.



Quolls can be seen during the day, but they are most active at night. Wildlife surveillance cameras and monitoring of tracks can help you make the right decision when managing predators around your chook pens.



Protect your chooks and save our quolls

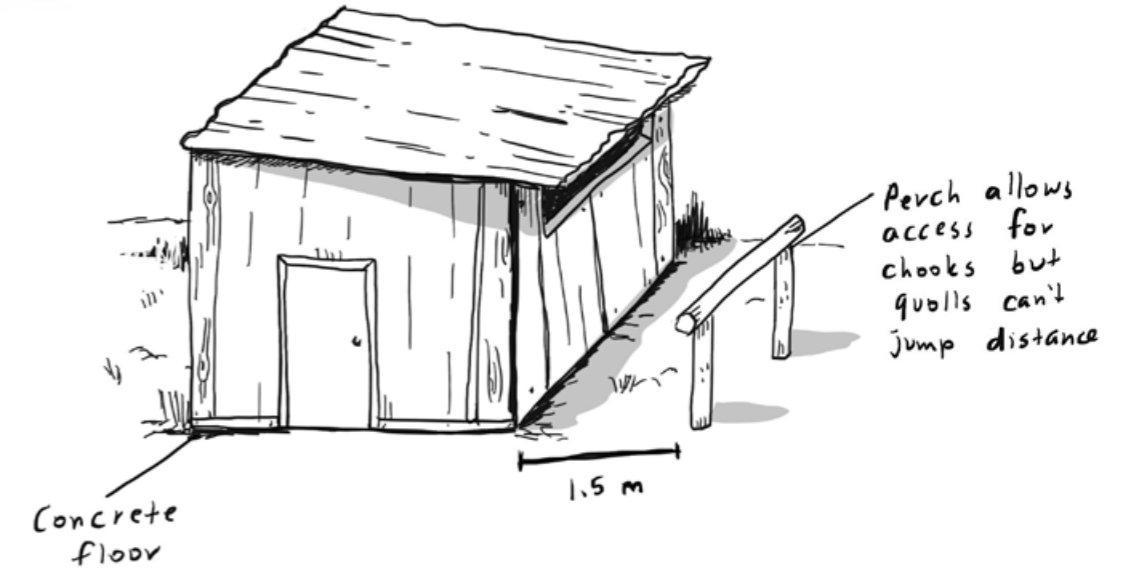
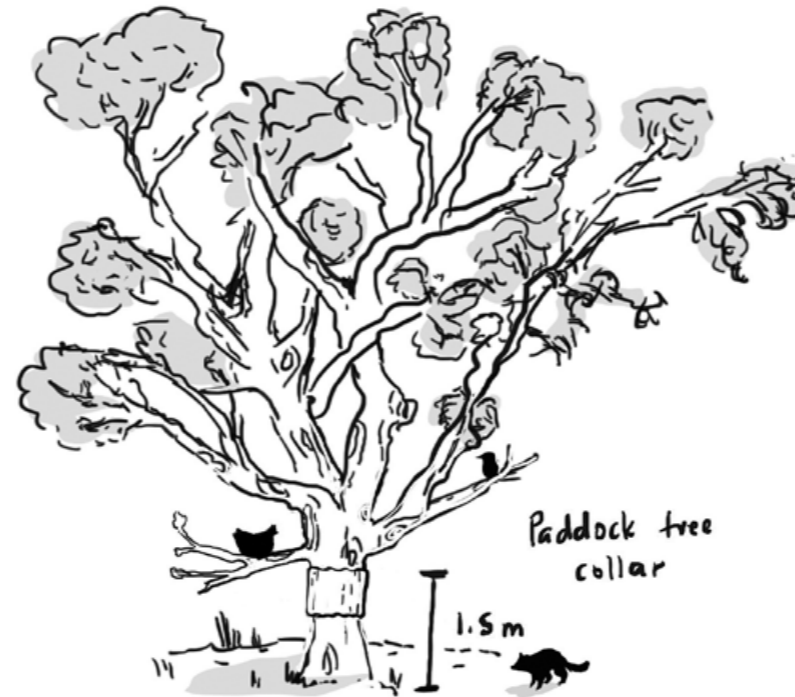
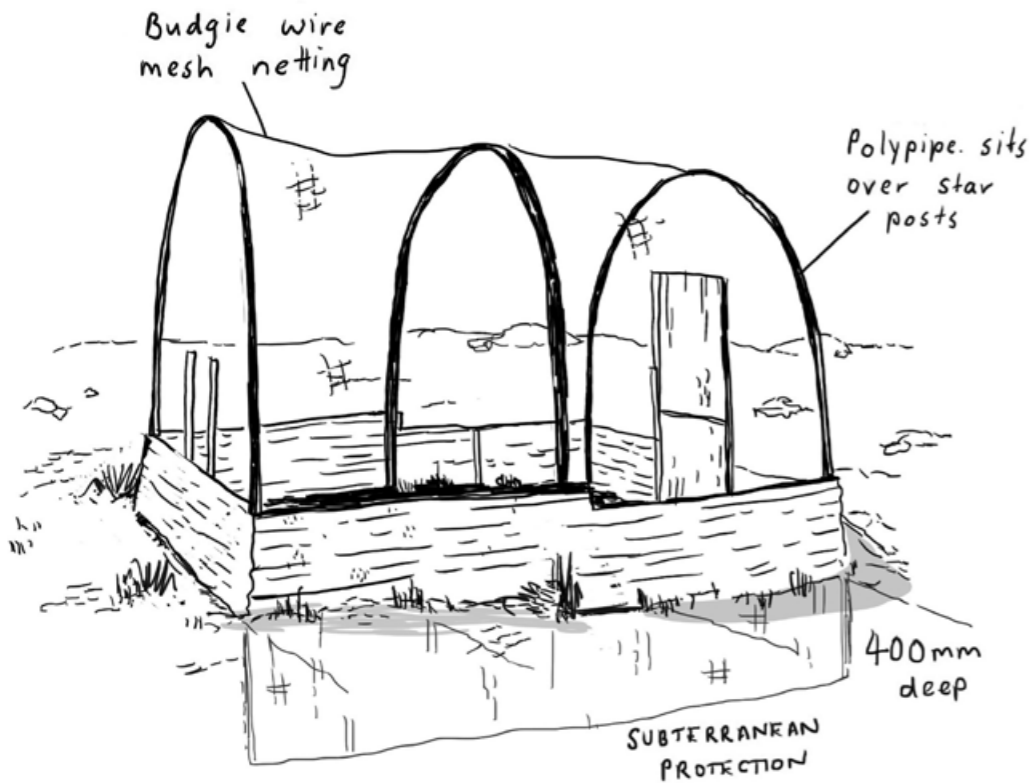


Design your poultry pen to keep predators out – not just to keep your chickens in!

Quolls can be seen during the day, but they are most active at night. They are awesome climbers and can easily scale trees to hunt for gliders, possums and birds.

They are smaller than you think – juveniles may fit through regular 40mm hexagonal chicken wire. Worse yet, they can strangle themselves attempting to do so. And adult quolls can easily chew through the thin gauge wire.

Quolls can dig – if your pen has an earth floor, you will need to extend your fence below ground. This is also critically important to keep out foxes.



Eight tips for quoll-proofing your hen house

1. Use 10-15mm² spot weld aviary mesh.
2. You will need a roof or cage mesh canopy that has no gaps larger than 20 mm.
3. If your pen has an earth floor, extend the mesh or walls at least 400 mm below ground.
4. If your pen isn't quoll-proof, secure your chooks in a night roost.
5. Keep free range hens safe by providing protected perches. Isolated trees with a tin collar around the trunk about 1.5 metres up are ideal.
6. Electric fences are costly and require significant maintenance, but can be a good option if you're retro-fitting an existing hen house.
7. Mobile 'chook tractors' are a great way to allow your birds to scratch and fertilise the lawn or garden bed – but they are vulnerable to attacks from quolls or foxes. Peg a protective wire skirt around the base, or only let the hens use the tractor during the day and lock them up in a permanent coop at night.
8. If you use recycled materials to build your hen house, make sure you follow the tips about gaps and the need to extend below ground and secure the materials well so they can't be forced apart.

