Pest eradication team issues ‘simple rules’

AUSTRALIAN ecologists have developed a set of simple rules that will not only help protect endangered native species and eradicate introduced pests, but also manage biosecurity and disease outbreaks. The rules will help overcome the practical difficulties in deciding which populations to manage first in a network of pest or endangered species populations. The rules also are credited with overcoming the problems of detecting pests or endangered species when conducting surveys and were developed by a research team from The University of Queensland (UQ), CSIRO and the University of Melbourne.

Co-author of the research, which was published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences recently, Dr Yvonne Buckley (pictured) from UQ’s School of Biological Sciences, said developing management plans to help protect endangered species required accurate surveys of regions where those species existed.

“If plants or animals are hard to detect it is possible that some areas which need management are ignored and some areas are being unnecessarily managed while the invasive pests, diseases, or threatened species have already disappeared,” Dr Buckley said.

“We have developed a decision tool that will help wildlife conservation managers to prioritise management strategies and focus on the most efficient conservation or control strategy.”

As part of the study, new rules have been developed that show that the best places to manage and survey for endangered species and pests are the same.