

24: possum hypothetical

teacher's notes

- 1) The “beauty” of this scenario is that almost every school is situated in a town or suburb through which flows a degraded creek. Such local features can be sources of adventure, learning & environmental service.
- 2) There are many ways to view the various relationships that underpin this worksheet. Rather than give loads of formulaic answers, we have prepared the grid below that summarises some of those relationships.
- 3) Bear in mind if (say) rats prosper, snakes will be more likely to prosper. If rabbits decline, foxes are more likely to decline.
- 4) Human settlement clearly favours some native species. For example, our buildings provide habitat; introduced plants & refuse provide more reliable food sources.
- 5) Otherwise positive environmental actions (e.g. clearing old car wrecks, reduction of rabbit numbers) can have some detrimental outcomes.
- 6) One value of this worksheet is that it asks students to look at things from the creature's perspective.

relationships between creatures & habitats in urban fringes

	rats	rabbits	wrens	rosellas	possums	foxes	snakes
blackberries	shelter from predators/ nesting site/ food source (seasonal)	shelter from predators/ nesting site	shelter from predators/ nesting site/ food source	food source	shelter from predators/ food source	shelter from predators/ den site/ food source	shelter from predators
old gum trees		shade/ nesting site	shade/ food source (insects)	shelter from predators/ shelter from weather/ nesting site/ food source (gumnuts)	shelter from predators/ shelter from weather/ nesting site		
long grass	shelter from predators/ food source	shelter from predators/ nesting site/ food source	shelter from predators/ food source (mainly insects)	food source (seeds)		shelter from predators/ food source (e.g. mice)	shelter from predators/ food source (e.g. mice)
small fires	diminished food source (roasted insects)	short term loss of food; long term gain (stimulation of grass shoots)	diminished food source (roasted insects)	loss of food	loss of food	diminished food source (roasted insects & displaced prey)	diminished food source (displaced prey)
car wrecks	shelter from predators/ shelter from weather/ nesting site	shelter from predators/ shelter from weather/ shade/ nesting site	shelter from predators/ nesting site		not preferred as shelter	shelter from predators/ shelter from weather/ shade/ den site	shelter from predators/ shelter from weather/ nesting site
building sites	shelter from predators/ food source (scavenging)		food source (e.g. crumbs)		food source (scavenging)	shelter from predators/ food source (scavenging)	shelter from predators/ food source (e.g. mice)