



Tuesday 19 August 2008

Operation Possum – citizen science unites!

20/08 2008 – There's another event beginning with O which starts on an auspicious date – move over Olympics, here's Operation Possum.

Following the success of Operation Bluetongue last year where 1500 South Australians contributed to a wildlife survey, 891 ABC Adelaide and UniSA have joined forces once again.

This year the online survey, which is available from Wednesday 20 August at abc.net.au/adelaide, aims to find out how possums live and interact with humans in South Australia. Through the power of citizen science and harnessing the knowledge of the public, UniSA and 891 ABC Adelaide both hope to gain some useful insights into this protected and somewhat endangered species.

Professor Chris Daniels from UniSA is excited about Operation Possum, saying: "We know essentially nothing about the natural history of possums in our parks and backyards. This is a really useful way to use the collective observations of South Australians to help build a complete picture concerning the distributions, habits and life styles of our most iconic native urban mammal and what we do to encourage, or even repel, these animals from our parks and gardens."

ABC's Matthew Abraham and David Bevan will officially launch Operation Possum on Wednesday at an outside broadcast of 891 ABC Adelaide's Morning Program live from UniSA's Mawson Centre. Guests will include Professor Chris Daniels and Philip Roetman from UniSA discussing citizen science and how listeners can help us all learn more about these nocturnal native animals.

Love them or hate them, all South Australians are encouraged to visit the website and take part in the 3 month survey to give us a better understanding into the possum.

The Operation Possum website, abc.net.au/adelaide/features/possum, will prove a valuable resource for anyone who interacts with possums or just wants to know more about them. Visitors can do the survey, find out what possum features are coming up on air on 891, get the latest information on managing possums in their environment, upload photos of possums in their backyard or pose a question to UniSA researchers via the Message Board.

Possums polarise opinions and 891 ABC Adelaide expects plenty of talkback on the subject - it's as much about attitudes to these animals as it is about facts and figures! So come along to the Mawson Centre on Wednesday 20 August to take part in the broadcast, help launch Operation Possum and log on to the survey at the Operation Possum website: abc.net.au/adelaide/features/possum

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