

2017 Serventy Conservation Award

The award for 2017 was presented to Jennie Gilbert. Jennie has devoted her life to caring for all animals, but for her, there is nothing more rewarding than watching a healthy sea turtle swim its way to freedom. The co-founder of the Cairns Turtle Rehabilitation Centre (CTRC), Jennie, along with her dedicated team of volunteers, has helped nurse hundreds of sick and injured reptiles back to health over the past 20 years, releasing them back onto the Great Barrier Reef with satellite trackers attached to monitor the success of the release. CTRC treats injured and sick marine turtles brought in from the Great Barrier Reef and the Cape York Peninsula, with more than 170 sick and injured animals brought in for treatment over the past 20 years. Jennie attends James Cook University for important research on sea turtles. This research is not confined to turtle health but also into turtle movements using satellite tracking, nesting sites and breeding patterns. She shares the knowledge gained from autopsies and turtle injuries with other rehabilitation centres both national and international. It is fair to say that Jennie has become an outstanding expert on turtles, but she doesn't just study them and learn about them, she applies her knowledge to their conservation with a devoted hands-on approach.



Jennie Gilbert

In 2010 the Australian Wildlife Society donated fund to purchase an endoscope to aid Jennie in her treatment of turtles suffering from 'floaters' disease'. This disease causes air to be trapped between the shell and body impacting the animal's ability to dive and feed itself. If left unaided the animal will eventually either starve to death or become easy prey for larger predators such as sharks or crocodiles.

Acceptance speech from Jennie Gilbert

Thank you to Australian Wildlife Society for this award. It is humbling to receive the Serventy Conservation Award on behalf of the wonderful animals I work with. The work that I do at Cairns Turtle Rehabilitation Centre is a passion as much as it is a necessity. Over the past 18 years that I and many dedicated volunteers have contributed to the rescue, rehabilitation and release of marine turtles we have seen a lot of success and it is rewarding that we can contribute to the ongoing preservation of marine turtles. The Seventy Award is a fantastic acknowledgement of the dedication to preserving the life of many sick and injured turtles. Thank you.



Jennie Gilbert at Cairns Turtle Rehabilitation Centre.