

The Serventy Conservation Award for 2008

Each year the Serventy Conservation Award is made to a very special person who has been outstanding in their commitment to the preservation of Australian wildlife. This year the Award was made to **Barry Scott**.

It is given to few people to see the fruits of their labours as our current Serventy medallist has experienced. Barry Scott has devoted twenty-three years of his life to the conservation of the koala and indirectly to the conservation of other Australian wildlife. In 1985 he became aware of the declines in koala populations through the effects of the disease Chlamydia. One year later he gathered support to form the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF). Since that time the AKF has grown into an influential organisation participating in research, education and active lobbying on behalf of Australia's wildlife. Though based in Brisbane, AKF has had an influence in every state where there are populations of Koalas. The AKF's mapping of existing Koala populations, alone, is a significant contribution to Australian wildlife and is an example of how conservation societies can contribute to the science of wildlife management. By focusing on the habitat needs of the koala Barry's organisation also focuses on the needs of other species whose habitats are threatened.

Barry has been a director of AKF over that period and as evidence of his commitment it is sufficient to point out that he has missed only three meetings in all that time. The AKF is now a strong viable organisation which could survive without Barry, however, it would not have started without him. His contribution to the welfare of Australia's wildlife justifies the award of the Wildlife Preservation Society's Serventy Conservation Medal.



Dr Clive Williams (Vice President WPSA), Her Excellence, Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of New South Wales and Barry Scott

Barry Scott said:

“May I thank, very sincerely, the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia for the 2008 Serventy Conservation Medal. Also for the recognition of the Australian Koala Foundation's 23 years of work to preserve the koala and its habitat.

“We at the Australian Koala Foundation would like to congratulate the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia for its 100 years of existence. Your exceptional conservation work since 1909 has helped the public recognise the need to save Australia’s unique wildlife and precious flora and fauna.

“I began to love animals at an early age with a variety of pets. I learnt to love and respect all the creatures that roam our earth, climb trees, fly through the air and swim in the sea. I have been privileged to see the earth from space in high flying jet fighters, explore many areas with bush walking clubs and swim with sharks, dolphins and other creatures under the sea.

“In 1985, as I learned about the problems and diseases affecting the koala and its habitat, I travelled around Australia meeting animal lovers and setting up branches of the Australian Koala Foundation. Our theme was “Caring and Sharing”. Initially we raised funds to help Universities research koala Chlamydia health problems, but we then moved more to conservation issues to retain koala habitat against increasing property development and forest destruction.

“With the help of Deborah Tabart OAM and our enthusiastic staff, we have developed our Koala Habitat Atlas which uses G.I.S. technology to identify, map and rank koala habitat so that local Governments can preserve essential environment and leave corridors for the koala and other animals to move around in.

“The koala is a unique Australian animal icon which has world recognition. Our tourist industry attracts visitors spending over \$1 billion dollars to see our unique animals. The Australian Koala Foundation conservation issues are based on sound ecological and biological research and we share this with the public at our website www.savethekoala.com.

“We enjoy partnerships with many animal and wildlife groups. As the Australian Governments are the custodians of our wildlife, we use political pressure to remind them of Their responsibilities and share with our many volunteers the work of saving our habitat and setting aside areas where the koala will not be affected by human growth and development.

“I am delighted to share this award with our founding board members, Bob Gibson, Dr. John Woolcock and Dr. Russ Dickens and our many other board members, trustees, staff, sponsors and supporters around the world.

“May the koala in its present vulnerable state, be preserved for the enjoyment of our children and many future generations.”