

AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE SOCIETY

PO BOX 42 BRIGHTON LE SANDS NSW 22161 (ACN 134 808 790)

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2018

A year in review

The past year for the Society has been one of consolidation and growth. I was honoured to be elected as President following the Annual General Meeting. We were delighted to welcome a new member to the Board – Assoc. Professor Julie Old, a very keen wildlife conservationist and author.

One of the highlights of the year was the presentation of our three awards – the **Serventy Conservation Award**, **Community Wildlife Conservation Award** and **Wildlife Rehabilitation Award**. Our Society knows that many organisations and thousands of volunteers are already working tirelessly to save our threatened species as well as the humble and more common Australian species and the precious wildlife habitat in which they live. We are all aware of the wonderful work being carried out by conservation organisations and volunteers across the country. We are very proud to acknowledge and reward these individuals or conservation groups and encourage them to continue their good work on behalf of the whole community.

Another highlight is the awarding of our ten University Scholarships offered to honours or postgraduate students at Australian universities. Each year, ten \$1,500 grants are awarded. Grants are available for research projects of direct relevance to the conservation of Australian wildlife – plant or animal. We also award two special scholarships at University Technology Sydney and University of New South Wales.

Australian Wildlife magazine

Our coloured *Australian Wildlife* magazine is the flagship of the Society and has proved to be extremely popular amongst all of our members. We invite members to distribute copies to family and friends and to invite them to become members. A special thankyou to our Subeditor, Sabine Borgis, for her valuable contribution to assisting with the editing of the magazine.

Our fortnightly email wildlife newsletter has also proven to be very popular with our members and we encourage them to forward the newsletter on to their family, friends and associates to help spread the wildlife conservation word. A big thankyou to Linda Dennis, Editor of the newsletter, for her valuable work in keeping us regularly informed on wildlife matters. If you have not registered your email address and would like to be put on the email list to receive the fortnightly newsletter, please contact accounts@aws.org.au with your details.



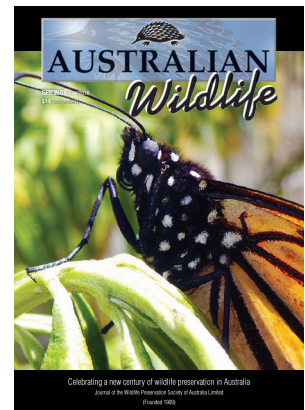
Summer Cover



Autumn Cover



Winter Cover



Spring Cover

Website

We continue to update our website to make it more user friendly. Changes to the structure and layout will be an ongoing process. We are in the process of constructing a 'Members Only' section. This year also saw the introduction of a free membership to all students and educational institutions via our website.

Membership

We introduced a new category of free membership classified as a Class B membership. Class B members do not have the right to vote at company general meetings, and receive an Emag subscription to the quarterly magazine *Australian Wildlife*. To be eligible a person must be a student at any school or registered educational institution, and hold a current student ID card or be a registered school.

Members are encouraged to view the website and send any feedback via email to: info@wpsa.org.au

Wildlife rescue calls

We continue to receive numerous and wide-ranging distress calls for help from members of the public about sick, injured and stranded wildlife across Australia. Calls are received at all hours of the day and night and often the best we can do is to advise the caller to keep the animal or bird warm until a local rescue service can assist further.

Our Mission

Part of our Mission Statement reads: “Our mission is to conserve Australia’s fauna and flora through education and involvement of the community. We are dedicated to the conservation of our unique Australian wildlife in all its forms through national environmental education programs, political lobbying, advocacy and hands on conservation work.” To fulfil this goal we introduced the University Student Grants Scheme in 2005 and since its inception have awarded over 150 grants to very worthy recipients. In 2016 we increased the grant to \$1,500 and plan in the future to steadily increase the dollar amount of the grants subject to further donations, which are always welcome.

Wildlife Science Ecology Research Scholarships

The **University Technology Sydney Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship** was awarded to UTS School of the Environment PhD student Etsy Yanco, for her project titled “*Foxlights: A tool for coexisting with wildlife on production landscapes of New South Wales*”.

The inaugural **University of New South Wales Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship** was awarded to UNSW School of the Environment PhD student Corey Callaghan for his project “What impact do cities in the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area have on bird-life?”.

Wildlife Conservation Awards

The winner of the **Serventy Conservation Award** was Jennie Gilbert. Jennie has devoted her life to caring for all



Jennie Gilbert

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.

The winner of the **Community Wildlife Conservation Award** was Port Stephens Koala and Wildlife Preservation Society, who have been operating in the Hunter region of NSW for 40 years. The group has built up a magnificent set of statistics on koala rescues and has been able to demonstrate conclusively the decline in the local population. This has led to efforts to have the local koala population classified as Endangered by the NSW Scientific Committee.



Port Stephens Koala and Wildlife volunteers

The winner of the **Wildlife Rehabilitation Award** was Robin Crisman. Robin is a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine with additional degrees in Veterinary and Biomedical Science. Robin has practised for over 25 years, and in that time her work has included veterinary care of wildlife at Blackbutt Reserve and Australia Walkabout Wildlife Park. Robin’s devotion to animal care and her passion for veterinary excellence makes her a worthy recipient of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Award.



Suzanne Medway presenting Robin Crisman with her award

Wildlife Photographic Competition

The annual judge's prize of \$1,000 was won by Tom Burd for his photo of a short-necked turtle.



The annual people's choice prize of \$500 was won by Nicholas Chu for his photo of a crest-tailed mulgara.



Gala Ball

The 2018 Gala Ball was held again in the Grand Ballroom of the Western Leagues Club, Campelltown, on Saturday 7 July. It was another outstandingly successful evening, with some 220 guests enjoying the festivities of music and dancing. A special thankyou to all our sponsors who contributed to the fundraising for the evening, and especially to Damion Stirling of Wollondilly Council for being our special guest speaker to raise the awareness of the local koala populations. We thank director Trevor Evans for bringing along two baby dingoes, a koala and a snake to help highlight the plight of our wildlife of which many species are facing the threat of extinction.

A big thank you to our major sponsor, Family Conveyancing Practice.



L to R: John, Jonathan and Louise Howart-Sparks



Helpers at the Ball. L to R: Olivia Grabowski, Cindy Aldridge, John Grabowski and Will Grabowski

2018 – University Student Grants Scheme

The Australian Wildlife Society's University Research Grants are scholarships offered to honours or postgraduate students at Australian universities. Each year, ten grants of \$1,500 are awarded. Grants are available for research projects of direct relevance to the conservation of Australian wildlife – plant or animal. The winners for 2018 were:



Michael G Bertram - School of Biological Sciences, Monash University
Project Title: Sex on steroids: Effects of a widespread agricultural pollutant on reproductive processes in fish



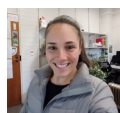
Kimberly Chhen - School of BioSciences, University of Melbourne
Project Title: Preying upon a pathogen: The effects of species interactions on chytrid fungus



Anita Freudmann - School of Earth, Environmental and Biological Sciences (Queensland University of Technology)
Project Title: Foraging ecology and behaviour of eastern tube-nosed fruit bats (*Nyctimene robinsoni*)



Angela Hansen - University of Tasmania
Project Title: Plastic pollution in Australian waterfowl and wetlands



Jacinta Humphrey - La Trobe University
Project Title: Beyond the fringe: Temporal and spatial change in peri-urban land-use and avian communities



Oliver Jewell - Centre for Sustainable Aquatic Ecosystems, Harry Butler Institute, Murdoch University, Western Australia
Project Title: Functioning without food? Energy landscapes and foraging energetics of white sharks



Peter Puskic - University of Tasmania; Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)
Project Title: More than skin deep: Examining the cellular-level effects of ingested plastic on the flesh-footed shearwaters of Lord Howe Island



Alexandra Ross - Centre for Ecosystem Science, University of New South Wales
Project Title: The Nailtail Nursery: Assessing a novel conservation strategy



Anthony Waddle - James Cook University
Project Title: Using emergent genetic tools to identify genes associated with resistance to chytridiomycosis

Wytamma Wirth - James Cook University, Epidemiology
Project Title: Epidemiology of Ranavirus in Australian freshwater turtles

2018 Conservation Group Grants

The Board of Directors carefully considers all requests for grants from other wildlife conservation groups and places a special emphasis on native wildlife research, conservation and the preservation of wildlife habitat. We lobby organisations and government bodies on their behalf and make donations to assist them in their special wildlife conservation projects. Conservation grants were made to the following projects:

- Kit Prendergast, PhD researcher, was awarded a grant of \$5,000 from the FlowHive Pollinator Support Program for her project Barcoding Bees for Biodiversity Assessments.
- Kimberley Wildlife Rehabilitation Inc. was awarded a grant of \$5,000 for the purchase of a building for caretaker/keeper accommodation.
- Queensland Platypus Alliance was awarded seeding funds to establish the campaign to protect platypus from Opera House nets throughout Queensland.

Conferences and wildlife research seminars

The Society's directors attended and contributed to a number of important wildlife conservation conferences, seminars and meetings throughout the year. We initiated and sponsored many of these conferences and participated in others. AWS is an active member of the

Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales. Our Society's CEO is a representative on a number of pest animal control committees and attends both city and country meetings.

Donations, bequests and gifts

During the year we continued with our bequest program to encourage donors to support our wildlife conservation work across Australia through the website and through general publicity. We are very grateful to all our members for considering using the bequest program to help the Society with its long-term planning. Please contact the National Office for more details on the Bequest Program and on how to join the Friends of the Society and make a regular monthly donation to support our national wildlife conservation programs. We hold Australian Tax Office gift deductible status for any donations over \$2.

Financial Report summary

The Society's directors and the Finance and Investment Committee continue to exercise tight and effective control over our finances, reviewing and adjusting the investment portfolio as required during the year. The investment funds of the Society have continued to grow. The board will conduct a review of our investments in line with ethical issues.

Moving Forward

The process of gradually moving the national office to Narellan was commenced with the transferring of the membership functions to what we hope will be the permanent national office of the Society.

A special thankyou to all our members

May I wish every member of the Society a happy, healthy and prosperous 2019. This will mark our 110th anniversary. We thank you all most sincerely for your tremendous support and continued dedication and commitment in helping the Society to preserve and protect our native wildlife for future generations of Australians.

Suzanne Medway AM | PRESIDENT | 31 December 2018



Board of Directors at a Christmas luncheon. L to R: Julie Old, Wayne Greenwood, Stephen Grabowski, Suzanne Medway, Clive Williams Philip Sansom, Trevor Evans, Ken Mason, Dick Mason and Patrick Medway