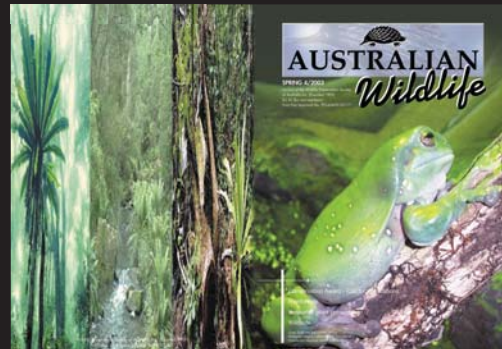




# AUSTRALIAN *Wildlife*

**SUMMER** Vol: 1/2009

**\$10** (non-members)



**Celebrating our Centenary**

Journal of the Wildlife Preservation  
Society of Australia Limited  
(Founded 1909)





WILDLIFE  
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

AUSTRALIA

Celebrating our centenary  
1909 - 2009

# One hundred years of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia

## TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS

**11 May  
1909**

Public meeting held in Royal Swedish Consulate Sydney to consider forming a society to protect native wildlife. 18 May 1909 inaugural meeting held in the Royal Society Hall, Sydney with 50 people present. A Constitution was adopted and a Council of 25 people elected. The Hon F E Winchcombe MLC elected first President.  
First Council meeting of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia was held on 23 July 1909.

**1910s**

David G Stead, co-founder, reports on the necessity to protect the rapidly disappearing koala and complains of the use of potassium cyanide for killing marsupials. President from 1919-1929.  
Successfully lobbied State and Federal Governments to stop the shooting of native birds for their feathers for the millinery trade and to stop the export of native bird plumage.  
Successfully lobbied Lady Denman, wife of the Governor General, to make a public statement against the use of bird feathers in women's hats. She subsequently banned the wearing of bird plumage in hats of Government functions.  
Successfully lobbied United States President Hoover to ban the import of koala skins into United States.  
Drafted a new Bill to protect native birds and animals, which became law in 1919.

**1920s**

Fight began to save Mount Lesueur - one of Western Australia's most valuable botanical provinces.  
Wildflowers and Native Plants Protection Act passed.  
Campaign for Mount Warning to be set aside as a national park - becomes Mount Warning National Park after a long struggle in 1925.  
Australian author May Gibbs becomes member of the Society in 1929, utilising Australian gum nuts in her drawings.  
Society through the Minister for Justice has a public notice displayed in 316 court houses throughout NSW indicating that kangaroos, koalas and platypus were now protected by law.  
Neville Cayley and Alex H Chisholm joined Society's Council.  
Patrons - The Rt Hon Viscount Navar PC GCMG and Viscountess Navar, The Rt Hon Viscount Chelmsford PC GCMG GMSI GWIE GBE, The Rt Hon the Countess of Strathbrooke CBE, Sir Gerald Strickland GCMG, Sir Wm Cullen KCMG LLD and Lady Cullen.

**1930s**

Society sought co-operation from other conservation groups to protect native wildlife - Australian Forest League, Parks and Playground Movement, The Federation of Bush Walkers, Town Planning Association, The Associated Tree Lovers Civic League, Royal Zoological Society, Linnean Society of NSW, Gould League of Bird Lovers and the Army of Junior Tree Wardens.  
Society purchased Angophora Reserve at Pittwater and Chilworth Flora Reserve Hornsby to protect local wildlife.  
Successful campaign to protect Hinchinbrook Island - most of the island declared a national park becoming Australia's largest island national park.  
First issue of *Australian Wildlife* magazine published. Outline of the Society's conservation work is established.  
Northern hairy-nosed wombat close to extinction - Society lobbies to establish Epping Forest Nature Reserve in Queensland.  
St George Girl's High School in Sydney becomes first corporate member of the Society.

**1940s**

Continued campaign on the dangers of marine pests in ballast water and more research needed into methods of countering danger of exotic organisms coming into Australia through shipping.  
Strong lobbying resulted in the Fauna Protection Act (1948), NSW, being passed. Francis James Griffith becomes Chief Guardian of Fauna.  
First non-governmental organisation to attend IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Nature Reserves) to represent world conservation issues.  
Allen Strom becomes secretary and plays a crucial role in the conservation movement across Australia 1949-1952.  
Vincent Servery becomes a Life Member of the Society.

**1950s**

Successful campaign in Western Australia concluded with the passing of the Wildlife Conservation Act 1950 that provides the statute relating to conservation of flora and fauna in Western Australia.  
Lobbied Federal Government to secure world heritage listing for Shark Bay and the Wet Tropics of Queensland.  
Successful campaign to have the Abrolhos Islands conserved as nature reserves.  
Successfully opposed Kings Park (Perth) Board from building an aquatic centre in the Park.  
First public Wildlife shows in Perth led by Vincent Servery.  
Western swamp tortoise rediscovered and efforts instigated to save it from extinction.  
Thistle Yvette Harris-Stead President 1950-1952, 1961-1963.  
Walker Henry Childs MVO President 1953-1960.  
Society celebrates its 50th Anniversary with David Stead publishing *History of the Society*.

**1960s**

Society and Australian Academy of Science successfully lobby to label Kosciuszko State Park a primitive area. National Park Act passed, allowing the area to be known as Kosciuszko National Park.  
Campaign began to save a tiny patch of nature known as Kelly's Bush at Hunters Hill - the world's first green ban put in place.  
Vincent Servery moved from Western Australia to Sydney and began television and newspaper career based on nature conservation and appeared on *Nature Walkabout*.  
Vincent Servery President 1966-2000 after co-founding the Western Australian Tree Society, Western Australian Gould League and Australian Conservation Foundation.  
Campaign began to save the Great Barrier Reef from pollution and exploitation.  
Society and North Peninsula Preservation Society join forces to successfully preserve the Littoral Rainforest, between North Entrance and Touleby, from rutile mining. Now proclaimed as Wyrabalong National Park.  
Sixtieth Anniversary of foundation of the Society - Thistle Stead gave an important historical address.  
Published the value of regional parks in order to save not only wildlife but also the quality of life in urban areas.  
Governor-General, Sir Paul Hasluck GCMG KStJ, became Patron of the Society.  
Instigated the amalgamation of the Fauna Protection Panel with the Department of Lands to form the National Parks and Wildlife Service.  
Joined the "Save the Franklin" and the "Save Fraser Island" campaigns.

**1970s**

Vincent Servery published *Dryandra: the story of an Australian forest*. Coincides with news of Alwest Mining Company given the rights to mine the Dryandra woodlands for bauxite. Society initiated protest with Rupert Murdoch a major shareholder in the mining company and succeeds in stopping the mining of this area.  
Society publishes a guide to assist in preserving the quality of our environment.  
Protest meeting led by Vincent Servery and Patrick White held at Centennial Park, Sydney to prevent development of a sports complex in the Park. Later joined by Jack Munday and Harry Miller - project stopped and Park remained as a passive recreational park.  
Society leads push to develop new wildlife corridors to provide habitat for wildlife migration.  
Campaign for Shoalwater Bay area to be saved from sand mining by placing the region on the national estate.

**1980s**

Successfully lobbied to protect the nearly extinct, flightless Lord Howe Island woodhen. Funds sought to initiate a captive breeding program to save the woodhen.  
Lobbied to protect Lord Howe Island - receives permanent Park Preservation status and listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.  
Society assists Greening Australia program to start up.  
Urged the Federal Government to proclaim the Osprey and Bougainville Reefs a marine national park.  
Began campaigning to form a federation of conservation councils across Australia.  
Vin Servery published *Saving Australia* and highlighted the major problem as "soil degradation".  
Vincent Servery leads Society to prevent Mt. Lesueur area east of Jurien Bay, WA to be used as an open-cut coal mine and power station site.  
Produced brochure in conjunction with the Nature Conservation Council of NSW entitled *Wildlife in Danger in NSW*.  
Famed artist John Coburn prepared five designs for an international conservation logo.  
Push for wildlife corridors successful with Victoria, South Australian and Western Australia making this governmental policy.  
Campaign to preserve Mount Lesueur successful - now protected with 26,987 hectares becoming Lesueur National Park.  
Supported Birds Australia Regent Honeyeater Recovery Project in Capertee Valley by planting native trees.  
Patrick Medway became editor of *Australian Wildlife* magazine, revitalising format and distribution.  
Campaign for the protection of the Creery Wetlands in Western Australia.  
Continued the almost lone war against clearfelling in native forests throughout Australia to save native wildlife habitat.  
Campaign for Jervis Bay successful with large areas of land and sea being preserved as national parks.

**1990s**

Campaign to save Shoalwater Bay area in Queensland from sand mining successful and area now protected.  
Society joined other conservation groups to oppose peat mining at the Wingecarribee Swamp, near the Shoalhaven River area, to save local wildlife. Twelve month injunction granted and area finally degraded by a storm.  
Spike Milligan made Honorary Life Member following his outstanding contribution to wildlife preservation and conservation.  
Campaign to save Towra Point in NSW commenced with Steering Committee established. Formed Friends of Towra Point Nature Reserve to save Towra Beach and Lagoon.  
Inaugural Servery Wildlife Conservation Medal awarded to Mrs Margaret Grace Thorsborne of Melunga Creek, Cardwell Queensland for her commitment to saving the native pigeon.  
Society's patron Judith Wright McKinney dies, called by Vincent Servery as the "Soul of Conservation".  
Society seeks support from NSW Environment Minister, Bob Debus MP, who formally announced a \$1m grant for Towra Beach re-nourishment program to save habitat for migratory wading birds on Towra Beach.

**2000s**

Earth 2000 Conference held in Sydney with Professor Jared Diamond as the Guest Speaker.  
Dr Vincent Servery AM retired and Patrick W Medway AM elected President of the Society.  
Governor General Of Australia, His Excellency Major General Michael Jeffrey AO became the Society's patron.  
Held "Save our Soils" Conference to highlight the effects of soil degradation on native flora and the need to protect our soils.  
Councillors and members of our Society visited the Wellington and Dubbo area to see the problems and abuse of the Southern Brigalow Biosphere reserve system and joined campaign to save the Pilliga Scrub.  
Small caravan purchased to assist the volunteers working on the Cape Solander Whale Migration Study.  
Towra Point Nature Reserve project successfully completed and Towra Point Beach restored for the protection of migratory wading birds in and around Botany Bay.  
Hon Morris Iemma MP, Premier of NSW, launched Centenary Appeal to raise funds for Society's new ECOWORLD GARDENS Environmental Education Centre project at Rockdale with a large donation.  
Patrick W Medway AM became Society's representative on the NSW State Pest Animal Control Council leading campaign to reduce impact of feral pests on wildlife.  
Dr Vincent Noel Servery AM died on Saturday 8 September 2007, aged 91 years.  
Lobbied milk and drink manufacturers for change in design of plastic bottle top rings to snap upon opening to prevent injury to wildlife, especially the blue satin bowerbird.  
Reduction of roadkill campaign continues with emphasis on more scientific research.  
A decade of coalition campaigns continues - ban on duck shooting; River red gum nature reserves; Save the Macquarie Marshes; ban on mass release of helium balloons; Murray River environment flow; save Pilliga Scrub ironbark; Stock Routes Coalition; Brigalow Belt South Bioregion; Bristlebird Recovery Program; Cassowary Conservation; flying foxes; Narrandera Koala Regeneration; Solitary Islands Marine Park; Tasmanian devil facial tumour problem.  
Governor General of Australia, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC, became the Society's patron.  
11 May 2009 - Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited celebrates 100 years of wildlife conservation in Australia.



# Contents

## features

- 7

Launch of the *Australian Wildlife* magazine
- 8

University Grants Scheme - Michael Sale: Comparative ecology of island and mainland swamp antechinus populations
- 14

University Grants Scheme - Jennifer Finn: Is African lovegrass competitively superior to native grasses?
- 16

Proposed national ban on duck shooting
- 18

Sanctuary In a corner of paradise - *Dr Joanne L. Isaac, Post-Doctoral Research Associate, Centre for Tropical Biodiversity and Climate Change, School of Marine and Tropical Biology, James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland*
- 21

Wildside - *Marny Bonner, Australian Seabird Rescue*
- 30

A Marine Mammal Protection Act for Australia - *Suzanne Medway*



## regulars

- 5

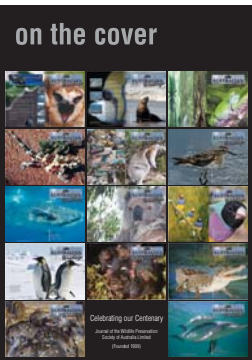
From the President's desk
- 6

Editorial
- 32

Membership form
- 33

WPSA merchandise
- 34

WPSA Centenary merchandise



Montage of covers over the last 5 years.

Articles and comments expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor, Society or members. Articles contributed from outside sources are included for the reading enjoyment of members and to encourage discussion on different points of view.

Articles may be copied or quoted with appropriate attribution.



Celebrating our centenary  
1909 - 2009

## Australian Wildlife

is the official journal of the  
Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited.

Founded in 1909, the Society is dedicated  
to the conservation of our unique Australian  
wildlife in all its forms.

**Print Post Approval No:** PP243459/00117

**Price \$10** (for non-members)

## Membership

**Concession: \$30**

(pensioner, student, child)

**Individual Members: \$40**

**Family Members: \$50**

(being husband, wife and children jointly)

**Associate Members: \$60**

(being schools or incorporated or unincorporated  
associations with a principal object related to  
conservation, nature study or education)

**Corporate Members: \$100**

(being incorporated or unincorporated associations  
not being associate members)

## National President

**Patrick W Medway AM, BA,  
M Ed Admin, FPRIA, MACE**

Tel: (02) 9556 1537

Fax: (02) 9599 0000

## Contact

**National Office**

**Wildlife Preservation Society  
of Australia Limited**

PO Box 42

BRIGHTON LE SANDS NSW 2216

**Tel:** (02) 9556 1537

**Fax:** (02) 9599 0000

**Email:** [info@wpsa.org.au](mailto:info@wpsa.org.au)

**Website:** [wpsa.org.au](http://wpsa.org.au)

**Correspondence to:**

**Executive Director:**

**Wildlife Preservation Society  
of Australia Limited**

PO Box 42

BRIGHTON LE SANDS NSW 2216

## Directors 2008

**Patron**

Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC  
Governor-General of Australia

**National President**

Patrick W Medway AM

**Vice Presidents**

Dr Clive Williams and Dr David Murray

**Hon. Secretary/ Executive Director/ Editor**

Suzanne Medway

**Acting Hon. Treasurer**

Tony Cornell

**Directors**

Max Blanch

Noel Cislowski

Bernie Clarke

Judith May

Dr Richard Mason

Colleen Murphy

Steve Wilson

Vanessa Wilson

**Scientific Advisory Committee**

Dr Mike Augee -

Mammologist/Paleontologist

Bernie Clarke OAM -

Botany Bay

Professor Alan Keast -

Ornithology

Dr David Murray -

Botanical

Prof Richard Kingsford -

Environmental Science

Geoffrey Ross -

Wildlife management issues

## Our Mission

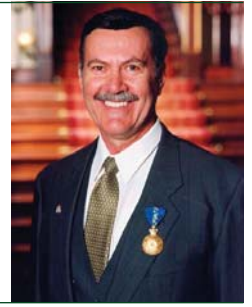
The Wildlife Preservation Society is an independent, voluntary, non-profit conservation organisation, formed in 1909, and is committed to the preservation of Australia's precious flora and fauna. We act as a watchdog and provide advice to government agencies and institutions regarding environmental and conservation issues concerning all aspects of wildlife preservation. 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.

Our Society has always known that a conservation battle is never really won until the victory is enshrined in legislation. We have always tried to convince politicians of the necessity to include the preservation of Australia's precious wildlife and its vital conservation habitat in all their planning and environmental issues and discussions.

# From the President's Desk

Patrick W Medway AM - National President

JANUARY 2009 our Centenary year



## Congratulations to all our members

I sincerely congratulate all members of the Society across Australia, who have supported the Society in our conservation work, on reaching our Centenary in 2009. It is a remarkable milestone for an all volunteer conservation organisation such as ours. Formed in May 1909 by a small band of dedicated and enthusiastic nature lovers, the Society has evolved into a national conservation body with a sound financial foundation and a wide membership base right across Australia - with some international members. The Society remains totally dedicated to the preservation of our native wildlife in all its forms – as we were in 1909 and I am sure we will always be so committed to such a worthy cause.

## Oldest members of the Society

I am delighted to advise you that Mrs Dorothy Burgoyne and Mrs Margaret Deas of Sans Souci in Sydney have been identified as the oldest living members of the Society. Dorothy was born in England in 1912 and Margaret was born in 1913 in Dublin. Both ladies



Dorothy Burgoyne and Margaret Deas

have said that although they found the weather and habitat daunting at first; they have come to love the Australian landscape and its diverse and unique wildlife. We proudly acknowledge and congratulate Dorothy and Margaret on their proud heritage and commitment to the future of our Society and its very important conservation work.

## Centenary program

We have now developed a full Centenary year program to mark this special year in the life of our Society, which will start with a Sydney Lord Mayor's Reception in February and ending with an official Centenary Dinner in December, hopefully with our Patron as the Guest of Honour. We are keen to involve every member across Australia as well to attract new members to the wildlife conservation work of the Society. Please feel free to contact the National Office at any time for more details or see our website.

## AGM and morning tea – Wednesday 25 February commencing 10 am

I extend a special invitation to all members of the Society to attend the 100<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting to be held in Sydney at the NSW Masonic Club, 169 Castlereagh Street, Sydney. This is a very historic occasion in the Society's history and we would like to celebrate with as many financial members as possible – especially our life members. All members are invited to join us for morning tea after the meeting to cut the Centenary cake and unveil a Centenary plaque.

## Invitation to new members

The Society is keen to build our membership base up to 1,000 members. Please help us in our quest to join up 1,000 members in 2009 to mark our Centenary year. If you know anyone who might be interested in assisting us with our wildlife conservation work, please invite them to join with us. In many cases it is only by that personal approach that new

people join our Society. Please feel free to offer membership to your grandchildren or other family and friends to help us swell our ranks to better preserve our native wildlife.

## Looking ahead in 2009

The Society has developed a new strategic plan to prepare and move the wildlife conservation work ahead in 2009. We have expanded our publication base, moved into full colour for our national magazine, developed a complete history of the Society, adopted a new constitution and a new legal company structure to qualify for taxation exemption status and deductible gift recipient status for the real benefit of our members, expanded the sponsorship and bequest program for wildlife projects, developed a new website program and strengthened our Partnership Program to more like-minded conservation groups to enable us to be collectively more effective in saving our native wildlife.

## Expanding the university wildlife research grants scheme

Our student university grants have proved to be very popular and when you read of their wildlife research work you can only feel inspired by their efforts and dedication to saving our native wildlife. At a recent national wildlife management conference in Freemantle, the first university grants recipient, Dr Al Glenn who now works for the WA Government, was one of the coordinators for this important scientific conference. We congratulate all our graduate members such as Dr Al Glenn for their dedication and commitment to their ongoing wildlife research work and wish them all well for the future.

Please enjoy our Centenary celebrations wherever you are across Australia.



# Editorial

Suzanne Medway

## Welcome to the beginning of a very exciting year for the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia – our Centenary year



I am very excited as Editor of *Australian Wildlife* to introduce you to the first edition of the Society's quarterly magazine in full colour. The magazine started as a journal in 1934 and has continued in one form or another to this day. Prior to 1934, the Society published an annual report and, by visiting the National Library in Canberra, you can read the early editions of the journal and annual report. It is fascinating to look back on the history of the Society and realise that the issues affecting Australian fauna and flora are the same today as they were nearly one hundred years ago.

In planning our Centenary year, the first coloured edition of *Australian Wildlife* and commissioning the writing of the last ten years of the Society's history by Dr Joan Webb, I have spent many hours reflecting on my involvement as a member of the Society and how I ended up working full time as a volunteer.

Six years ago I finished a very rewarding position as Company Secretary in a Defence industry and decided to help my husband, Patrick Medway, tidy up the paper work of the Society before seeking further employment. Somewhere along the way what I thought would take up a few hours a day for a few months continues six years later into volunteering seven days a week and has completely taken over my life.

Why do I do it? The answer is very complex. My background is in administration and I enjoy putting systems in place that make life easier. Over the last ten years one of the biggest changes in the business world has been electronically via computerisation. The Society's records and systems for handling correspondence, accounts and membership were not computerised back then and I have enjoyed establishing the systems and records

for the national office via the computer. Next was creation of a website, updating the literature, updating the quarterly magazine, publishing the history of the Society, and then publishing *Conservation Victories*. You can see how a few month's volunteer work has stretched into six years. I never did go back to the paid work force.

What do I get out of it? Lots of things. I do enjoy administration work, and I enjoy working with computers. I have discovered that writing articles and research doesn't come easy, but there is great satisfaction in seeing the finished article in a pamphlet, magazine, book or the website. There is the knowledge that in a small way I am contributing to the preservation of Australia's precious fauna and flora, continuing the proud heritage of a conservation organisation that is one hundred

years old and hopefully encouraging a younger generation of Australians to learn about and care for Australian wildlife. But the main benefit I get from my volunteer work as Editor of *Australian Wildlife* and my position as Executive Director of the Society is meeting and being inspired by all the other volunteers who dedicate their lives to the conservation of Australia's indigenous fauna and flora. I am in awe of these wonderful people and I have met some "heroes" over the years. I could name hundreds, but will mention only two in this editorial that are no longer with us – Dr Vincent Serventy and Lance Ferris. These two men inspired me and I greatly miss their mentoring and encouragement.

In memory of Vin and Lance, I dedicate this first coloured edition of *Australian Wildlife*, the first edition of our Centenary year.

## 100th Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 25 February 2009  
Commencing at 10 am

Adam Room – 4th Floor, NSW Masonic Club (Castlereagh Inn)  
169 Castlereagh Street, Sydney

### AGENDA

1. Welcome and recording of those present
2. To receive apologies
3. Minutes of the 99th Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 26 March 2008
4. National President's Report for 2008
5. Treasurer's Report for 2008. Receive and adopt the Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure of the Society for the year ending 31 December 2008 in accordance with our Constitution.
6. To elect and confirm
  - A) The Officers of the Society: President/Chairman, two Vice Presidents, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Secretary (Executive Director) and;
  - B) 5 Directors of the Society for the next twelve months in accordance with the Constitution. Nominations must be received in writing by 25 January 2009.
7. To appoint an Auditor for 2009.
8. Address by the NSW Minister for Climate Change and the Environment.
9. Closure.
10. Morning Tea

**RSVP for Catering:**  
Ph: (02) 9556 1537  
Email: [info@wpsa.org.au](mailto:info@wpsa.org.au)

Issued by authority of Council of the Society  
Suzanne Medway  
Executive Director/Secretary

# Launch of *Australian Wildlife Magazine*

The first issue of the Wildlife Preservation Society's magazine *Australian Wildlife* was published in 1932 – Volume 1 No. 1. David G Stead was the first Editor of the Journal and the President at that time was Roy F Bennett.

Featured below is a reproduction of the Introductory Note written by David Stead.

The mission statement at that time was:

The Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia was formed in 1909 to encourage the protection of, and to cultivate interest in Australian flora and fauna. The Society needs the help and interest of every citizen of Australia.

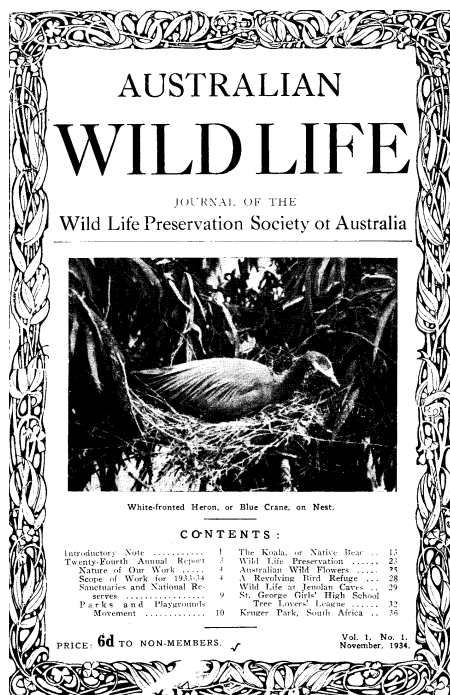
The Annual Subscription was 2/6 for women: 5/- for men. Life Members £2/12/6 for women: £5/5/- for men.

## Introductory Note

In launching our modest Journal and thereby issuing our publications in a more permanent manner than heretofore, it seems appropriate to give at least some passing reference to the history of this Society and of the work which it stands for in the Australian community. On May 19, 1935, the Wild Life Preservation Society will be twenty-five years old and will thus have completed a quarter of a century's earnest work in the cause of fauna and flora protection and conservation in this country. A few words in regard to our own life story as a public movement will be of value to members and friends and of some general interest to the public - whom we like to regard as at least potential friends of the movement.

While for some time previously a number of people had been talking of the necessity for the formation of such an organisation, the first practical move was actually made by a foreign nobleman, Count Birger Morner, early in the year 1909. The Count - a well-known naturalist and poet - was at that time Consul-General for Sweden in Australia, and was at that time making a study of our wild life. The preliminary meeting was held at the Royal Swedish Consulate on May 11, 1909. It was decided to call a public meeting for the formation of the Society, and this was held in the Royal Society's Hall, 5 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, on the night of May 19, 1909. Despite the fact that it was an extremely unfavourable night, about fifty people attended. The Honorable F. E. Winchcombe, M.L.C., presided, and a committee was appointed to draw up a draft constitution for submission to members. This committee consisted of the following:- Dr. Mary Booth, Mrs. L. Harrison, Mrs. S. Kearney, Mr. H. E. Finckh, Mr. W. W. Froggatt, Mr. L. Harrison, Mr. Charles Hedley, Mr. A. S. Le Souef, Count Morner, Mr. David G. Stead, Mr. C. Thackeray, and Mr. F. E. Winchcombe.

The first council meeting was held on July 23, 1909. It is of interest to note two of the matters which occupied attention at this first meeting. One was the necessity for protecting the fast-disappearing Koala or Native Bear, and the other was a complaint



as to the use of cyanide of potassium for killing marsupials. Both of these things have occupied our attention more or less ever since, with a host of other questions of importance to the preservation of our unique fauna and flora.

It is hoped to publish in the not too distant future a general account of the work of this organisation and the part played by it in educating and directing public opinion throughout its useful career. Suffice it to say for the present that, both officially as a united body and through the action of its individual members, much has been achieved in wild life and wild flower preservation-through active educational propaganda, by working on the growing patriotism and national consciousness of the people, by active and sometimes aggressive action in urgent cases, and by constantly keeping in touch with the Government authorities concerned. Assistance has frequently been given to the Government in the preparation and passage of enactments, proclamations, etc., relating to Birds and Animals Protection and to the Preservation of our Wild Flowers and other Native Plants. In addition, through

the same agencies, a vast acreage has been added to the area covered by our National Parks and Sanctuaries. To speak of the work accomplished by the Society in any detail would require a large volume. It is mentioned only in passing, here, as a reminder to members that, notwithstanding the constant need for watchfulness and the great work that still lies before the Society, this organisation has been a very potent agency for good in the community and has helped in no small measure to preserve for the future generations of Australians that extraordinarily valuable and unique legacy handed down to them in the form of the wild life of our bushland.

On many occasions during our career there has been talk of the institution of a permanent medium for the better presentation of our reports and informative matter relating to the fauna and flora of Australia and their preservation. During the past year the Council of the Society determined to make a beginning - even though quite a modest one - in this direction, and the present constitutes the first issue of this Journal. Frequency of publication of future numbers of "Australian Wild Life" and the extent of its pages will naturally depend upon the amount and kind of support which we may receive from our members and from the general public.

Ours is peculiarly a movement which needs the help of the whole of the rank and file of the people of this Commonwealth if we are to succeed - and if we have their help, then even the incidence of protective laws will scarcely be needed as time goes on. There is a constantly growing army of our people desirous of saving our beautiful Wild Australia as far as may be for the delectation of ourselves and future generations; but, to be articulate, they must band themselves together in some such movement as ours. We ask our members and friends, therefore, and the City and Country Press, to do all they can to assist in spreading our membership and in our progress in carrying on work which can only be of lasting good to the people of our Australia.



# University Grants Scheme

**Michael Sale**

**In 2006 Michael Sale, a PhD candidate at the School of Life and Environmental Sciences at Deakin University, received a research grant from the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia.**

**This is a brief report of the major findings of his study.**



# Comparative ecology of island and mainland swamp antechinus populations

## Background

Animal populations that become isolated on islands develop distinct features. Such features, from pygmy elephants to giant mice, have captured the attention of scientists for centuries, and have been documented world-wide. Island isolation may result in changes in the animal's life-history, population dynamics, behaviour and morphology in comparison to mainland counterparts. Such changes have been variously termed the "island effect", the "island rule" and the "island syndrome". Comparative research investigating differences between island and mainland populations of small mammals has focused primarily on small herbivorous/omnivorous eutherian mammal species. Far less attention has been given to island populations of insectivores/carnivores or marsupials.

Over the past three years I have been studying the swamp antechinus, a small, insectivorous marsupial species. The main aim of my project was to investigate and compare differences in the ecology, life history and behaviour between island and mainland populations. It is not known whether this species exhibits traits that occur in small mammals, such as rodents, including increased body size and behavioural changes.

The swamp antechinus are found only in closed heaths and tussock grasslands in southern Australia. As a result of their specialist habitat requirements swampies are considered rare and threatened by numerous forces such as predation of introduced pests, fire, land clearing and changes in the climate.

Currently the swamp antechinus is considered to be near-threatened on mainland Victoria and Endangered in South Australia. However, high density populations have been recorded on offshore islands off the coast of Wilsons Promontory. Off-shore islands are becoming increasingly important for conserving endangered species as islands often are free from introduced predators, human disturbance and habitat fragmentation. This makes them favourable sites



The swamp antechinus (*Antechinus minimus*)

for reintroductions. A greater understanding of island ecosystems, such as those off the coast of Wilsons Promontory may aid conservation management decisions, especially when islands are being considered as habitat refuges.

Another hypothesis I explored was the possibility that high densities of the swamp antechinus on offshore islands are due to the presence of large island populations of local colonies of burrowing seabirds. These birds bring enormous quantities of nutrients, principally in the form of guano, which potentially could increase the primary productivity and also invertebrate biomass within the island ecosystems.

Often mistaken for a "small mouse with a pointy nose", antechinus

actually have more in common with kangaroos than they do rodents. Antechinus have folds of skin which form a pouch that envelopes up to eight babies which are the size of a tick-tack when first born. Neil Young said "It's better to burn out than to fade away", and it's a philosophy that the swamp antechinus appears to follow, at least the males. During autumn males become particularly amorous and breed with many females for long periods of time. However, as a result of their tremendous romantic activities, all males in the population tire and die in the following weeks. This unique aspect makes the swamp antechinus an interesting species to study.

As a result of this unique life-history, antechinus are thought to have





Swamp antechinus habitat, Wilsons Promontory National Park

evolved in stable environments where the seasonal (spring) flush of insect prey is regular from year-to-year, thereby optimising juvenile survival. Interruptions in the predictable seasonal invertebrate food supply, particularly during the spring weaning period, may be devastating. Stochastic events, such as severe droughts, may be particularly harmful since the abundance of many invertebrate species, and consequently the food supply for insectivorous species, is negatively influenced by reduced rainfall. The timing of this study was particularly relevant as the driest spring drought on record occurred in 2006. Therefore, I also assessed how rainfall impacts the swamp antechinus.



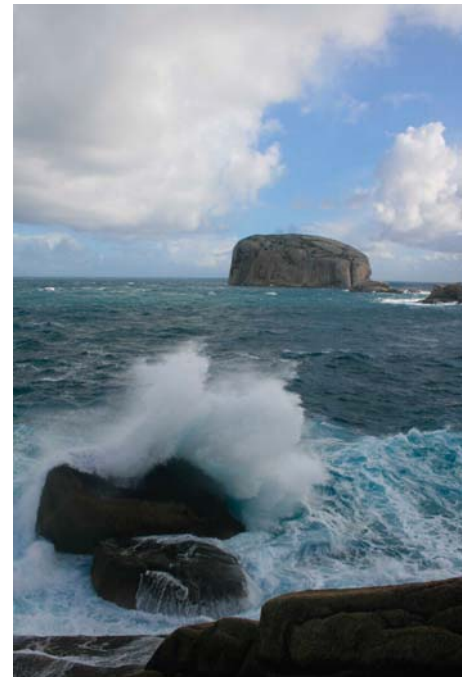
Swamp antechinus female with litter of young

## Methods

I've encountered my fair share of challenges throughout this project; from having tents blown away in gale force winds, to being in the firing line of gunshots from angry fishermen and witnessing my study populations decline to the point of extinction. Probably the hardest aspect of the project was the difficulties associated with undertaking field-work on remote islands. Field-work involved camping on these remote islands for extended periods, generally for more than two weeks. Transport was provided by rangers from Parks Victoria but was heavily dependent on weather. This meant we were often stranded during bad weather!

In terms of data collection, this project has utilised a number of techniques which would not have possible without the support from the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia.

Firstly, I used small aluminium traps baited with a mixture of peanut butter, honey and oats to catch the small mammals. Although, the swamp antechinus primarily eat insects they also appear to have a 'sweet tooth'. Once I had captured an animal it was measured, weighed, marked and then released. During winter I was also able to count the numbers of young which were in the females' pouch. Later in the project I used some more modern techniques to investigate the behaviour and physiology of the swamp antechinus. One such technique was



Large wave crashing into Kanowna Island, Skull Rock in background

to attach small radio transmitters to animals, which weigh less than two grams. These transmitters emit a signal or 'beep' that is picked up on a receiver, which I was then able to track to determine the position and behaviour of the animal.

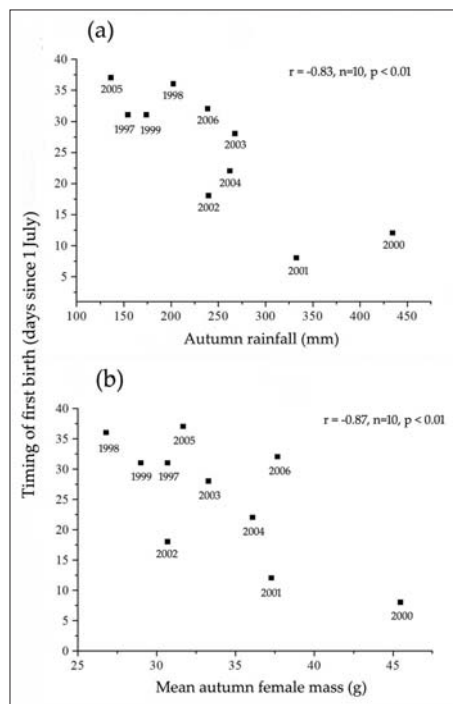
I also used the ratios of elemental isotopes to investigate a number of different aspects in the project. Isotopes are different types of atoms of the same chemical element each having different atomic mass. For example, I was interested in seeing whether marine nutrients were



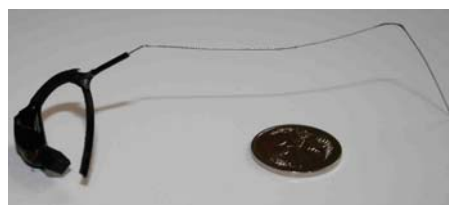
transported to the island by seabirds. Because the isotope ratios of carbon and nitrogen differ between terrestrial and marine ecosystems they can be used to trace the transport of nutrients across ecosystem boundaries. I also used isotopes to investigate the metabolism of wild antechinus. By injecting a known amount of rare isotopes of hydrogen and oxygen (also known as heavy water) into the bloodstream of an individual, recapturing the same animal later and measuring the amount of isotopes left in their blood, I could calculate the amount of water and oxygen that was being utilised and back calculate how much energy was used.

### Major findings from the study

Large demographic differences were observed, with the island population density often one hundred times greater than that on the mainland. High island densities were attributed to greater juvenile recruitment, combined with restricted emigration and a likely reduction in predation and inter-specific competition in the island habitat. The swamp antechinus in the mainland habitat were influenced by extrinsic climatic forces with juvenile recruitment, individual body mass and overall population size being affected by rainfall, a factor likely to influence food availability for the species.



The relationship between the timing of first observed births in first-year female swamp antechinus (*A. minimus*; 1997-2006) in the eastern Otway Ranges with (a) the corresponding autumn (Feb-May) rainfall in the same year or (b) female body mass prior to breeding



The transmitters used to radio track the swamp antechinus

However, the island population did not appear to be affected by drought to the same degree where marine nutrient inputs may have offset any drought-induced reduction in primary production (findings *In Press* Australian Journal of Zoology.)

Smaller litter sizes and greater body mass of animals on the island support predictions of a re-allocation of energy combined with life history shifts of insular vertebrates. However, inter-annual variability in litter sizes in the island population suggests that litter size and body mass are more responsive to local conditions, such as population density and food availability, than directional genetic changes. In contrast to other antechinus species, biased sex ratios of litters were not evident. In addition, large variations in the timing of births are estimated at both sites and these appear to be related to seasonal







Parks Victoria Rangers who take researchers to these islands

conditions such as autumn rainfall and female body mass prior to mating. (Findings *In Press* Journal of Zoology, London.)

Radio-tracking, mark-recapture trapping and genetic analysis indicated a high degree of philopatry (failure to disperse) for both sexes on an island habitat. This contrasts to the



Brown Falcon swooping to catch a swamp antechinus

behaviour of the swamp antechinus on the mainland, where males disperse (leave home) following weaning. This suggests that the island population may be at greater risk from inbreeding. The fact that male home range size increased dramatically during the breeding season, overlapped with several females during this time, and single females were found nesting with different males at the time of mating (and *vice versa*), indicates that the mating system is promiscuous. (Findings submitted for publication in the Canadian Journal of Zoology.)

Multiple paternity within litters occurs in many species across a variety of social mating systems. In the present study, paternity patterns in the swamp antechinus were investigated using genetic analyses. This revealed that, of the ten litters sampled, a minimum of eight litters were fathered by more than one male with many litters sired by more than three males. Therefore, multiple mating by females during a single breeding period occurs in

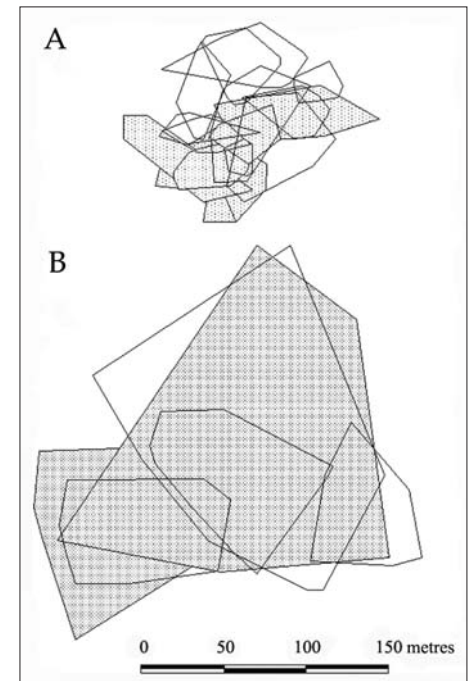
the swamp antechinus indicating the potential for sperm competition. Mating with multiple males may enable females to increase offspring viability and to ensure fertilization. (Findings submitted to Australian Journal of Zoology.)

Individuals from island populations generally have: (i) reduced home range sizes, (ii) increased territory overlaps, and (iii) reduced aggressiveness with neighbours, in comparison to their mainland counterparts. In this study, we set out to test the hypothesis, that based on observed patterns in the spatial organisation of other vertebrates, island and mainland populations of the swamp antechinus will differ in their use of space. It was predicted that the home ranges of individuals on an off-shore island is reduced and their territory overlaps increased, compared to a population at an adjacent mainland site in south east Australia. These dasyurid marsupials were social animals and nested together at both sites, and so a high degree of overlap was recorded in both populations. Island individuals did occupy significantly smaller home ranges and were mainly nocturnal, whereas mainland individuals were diurnal and had large home ranges.

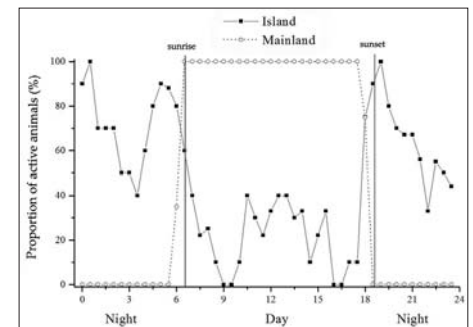


Australian fur seal, live in large colonies on Kanowna Island

The small home ranges of island individuals may have been in response to increased food resources, resulting from large allochthonous inputs from seabirds. The nocturnality of island animals was likely to be a predator avoidance mechanism to evade diurnal raptors in the open tussock grassland. (Findings *In Press* Journal of Mammalogy.)



Comparison of island (a) and mainland (b) minimum convex polygon home ranges for males (filled) and female (open) swamp antechinus



The proportion of active female swamp antechinus) during the full twenty four hour diel cycle from Kanowna Island (solid) and Wilsons Promontory (dashed)

Island mammals often differ behaviourally, demographically and morphologically from their mainland conspecifics. A comparison of the water turnover, daily energy expenditure, activity budgets, body mass and diets of the swamp antechinus (*Antechinus minimus*) from island and mainland habitats was undertaken to ascertain whether features associated with the island habitat influenced their physiological ecology. Water turnover differed



Sunset on Kanowna Island looking over Bass Strait

significantly between the two populations with mainland animals having a thirty six percent greater turnover than island animals. However, there was no significant difference in daily energy expenditure between individuals in different habitats (island versus mainland) although they exhibited marked divergent behavioural patterns. Differences in diet and availability of free water for drinking may have caused the divergence in water turnover between mainland and island individuals. Although energy requirements play a key role in the spatial ecology of the small mammals, other factors such as the distribution of food resources could cause observed differences in the spatial organisation between island and mainland populations of the swamp antechinus (Findings submitted to Journal of Zoology, London.)

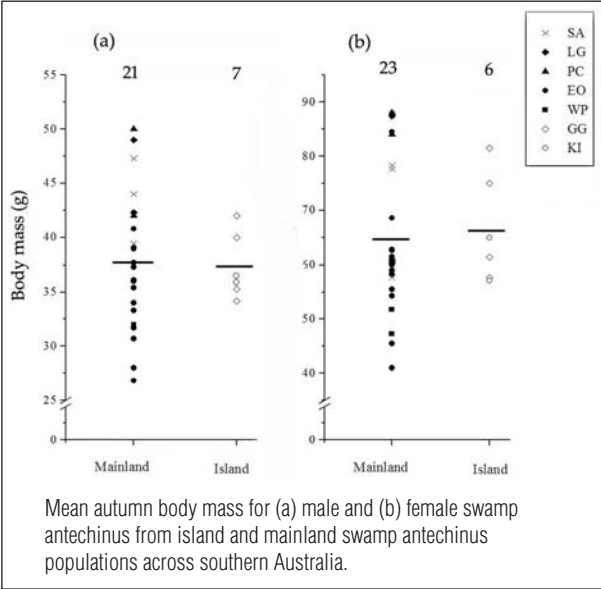
Marine feeding vertebrates, such as seabirds and seals, contribute large nutrient/energy loads to terrestrial ecosystems on which they rest and reproduce. These marine inputs have previously been implicated as causes for higher population densities, increased juvenile survival rates, and smaller home ranges recorded for the swamp antechinus on islands in Bass Strait in comparison to mainland habitats. In the present study, stable isotope and soil nutrient analyses were used to test the prediction that marine nutrients were abundant in the terrestrial island ecosystem. In

addition, the biomass and abundance of active ground-dwelling invertebrates were measured at mainland and island sites using pitfall traps to determine whether greater prey resources for the swamp antechinus might occur in the island habitat. Soil nutrient concentrations and the biomass and numbers of invertebrates collected in pitfall traps were significantly greater at the island site, compared to the mainland site. Stable isotope ratios ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ ) in the tissues of plants, invertebrates and the antechinus, indicated that marine nutrients were incorporated into the terrestrial island food web, but not in the mainland habitat. Greater productivity due to marine nutrient inputs may result in greater food availability for the swamp antechinus and influence various aspects of their ecology.

Island populations of the swamp antechinus, compared to mainland populations, are exposed to different selection pressures. These influence numerous aspects of their ecology. However, evolutionary divergence in life history and morphology, which occur in isolated island populations of eutherian rodents, were not recorded in this study. This suggests that that general ecogeographic theories, such as the ‘island

syndrome’ or the ‘island rule’, are not be valid for the swamp antechinus on islands.

A PhD is a large undertaking and would certainly not have been possible without tremendous support from a large number of people. This project would not have been possible without funding from numerous sources. I gratefully acknowledge the generous funding provided by the Holsworth Wildlife Research Endowment, the Winifred Violet Scott Estate, the Australian Geographic Society, M A Ingram Trust, the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia, the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales, the Ecological Society of Australia and the Faculty of Science and Engineering at Deakin University.







# University Grants Scheme

Jennifer Firn

In 2007 Jennifer Firn of the Spatial Ecology Lab, The Ecology Centre, The University of Queensland, St-Lucia received a Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia University Research Grant for her project. This is a brief final report.



# Is African lovegrass competitively superior to native grasses?

Disturbance and competitive superiority are commonly identified as possible mechanisms that facilitate plant invasion. Ecological studies generally aim to identify which of these two are critical. We suggest that one mechanism alone may not be of critical importance for all stages of the invasion process. Instead, disturbance and competition may interact and/or shift in importance between establishment and persistence stages.

We used a glasshouse competition trial to investigate interactions between an invasive grass species African lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*) and two functionally similar, but palatable native grasses, kangaroo grass and pitted bluegrass (*Themeda australis* and *Bothriochloa decipiens*) that it replaces in grazed pastures. The Wildlife Preservation Society University Student Grant we received to help fund this study allowed us to use a temperature controlled glasshouse for the full length of the experiment.

We found that African lovegrass was not competitively superior when grown with established native grasses, regardless of the water and nutrient treatments. This suggests that African lovegrass, although often described as highly competitive, is not able to establish in healthy grasslands that are unaffected by disturbances such as selective grazing. We found that



To investigate competitive interactions between lovegrass, pitted bluegrass and kangaroo grass, we conducted a pairwise competition trial in the glasshouse where we varied the water supply and nutrient levels

African lovegrass, once established, was generally competitively superior than the native grasses. Except not under low nutrients and pulsed water supply which favoured pitted bluegrass growth and not under low nutrients and continuous water supply which favoured kangaroo grass.

Overall our findings provide essential information for the development

of more effective control strategies for invasive plants in general and African lovegrass specifically. Because managing a disturbance when the species is also competitively superior and or manipulating competition when the invader is advantaged by continued disturbance may not be effective when both mechanisms are critical.



Pasture predominantly dominated by native grasses (*Aristida* spp. and *Bothriochloa* spp.)



Adjacent pasture invaded and now dominated by African lovegrass



# Proposed National Ban in Duck Shooting

by Suzanne Medway

The Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia added their name to the list of 135 groups across Australia who support the Common Position Statement (see below), calling on the Federal Environment Minister, Peter Garrett, to adopt a national strategy to ban the recreational shooting of native waterbirds.

A meeting was held in Canberra on 3 November between Environment Minister Peter Garrett's adviser, Peter Wright, and RAMSAR, wetlands and EPBC policy representatives from the Federal Government, and representatives from the ALP Members Opposed to Duck Shooting, Birds Australia, Animals Australia and the Coalition Against Duck Shooting. The Common Position Statement book was handed to all present.

A spokesman for Mr Garrett said there would be federal involvement only where it affected matters of national environmental significance.

With waterbird numbers down by a massive eighty two percent

across eastern Australia, diminished wetlands due to on-going drought and climate change and birds crossing borders in search of wetlands (only to risk being shot in Northern Territory, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania) this issue is now a matter of national environmental significance.

## **Common Position Statement of Conservation, Animal and Political Groups calling for a permanent ban on the recreational shooting of native waterbirds**

### **RESOLUTION**

The endorsing organisations call on the Federal Government to:

- (a) Adopt and implement a national policy to permanently ban the recreational shooting of native waterbirds.
- (b) Amend the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Subdivision B – Wetlands of international importance)

to provide for a specific ban on recreational hunting of native ducks on RAMSAR Sites\* throughout Australia.

- (c) Work in co-operation with States and the Northern Territory to reach an intergovernmental agreement for all governments to legislate for a permanent ban on the recreational shooting of native waterbirds.

### **The endorsing organisations recognise that:**

- The recreational shooting of native waterbirds is unsustainable. Aerial surveys conducted by Professor Richard Kingsford (University of NSW) since 1983 show waterbird numbers across eastern Australia have decreased by eighty two percent due to climate change, extended droughts and more frequent El Ninos.
- Duck shooting is cruel because of high wounding rates caused by the spray of shot gun pellets. One in four waterbirds fly away wounded. The Victorian government's Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) has repeatedly recommended that the recreational shooting of native waterbirds be banned on cruelty grounds.
- The public overwhelmingly opposes the activity. Duck shooting has been banned in Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia. A statewide Morgan Research poll conducted in Victoria in 2007 showed that seventy five percent want the recreational shooting of native waterbirds permanently banned.
- The Victorian, Tasmanian, South Australian and Northern Territory governments are ignoring environmental and ethical issues in maintaining legislation that authorises the shooting of native waterbirds for recreational



Grey teal which was shot through the bill on the opening of the 2005 duck shooting season in northwest Victoria - photo by Kerry Tait



purposes. As waterbirds are nomadic and cross over state boundaries, the duck shooting policies of these governments undermine the protection afforded to native waterbirds by other states.

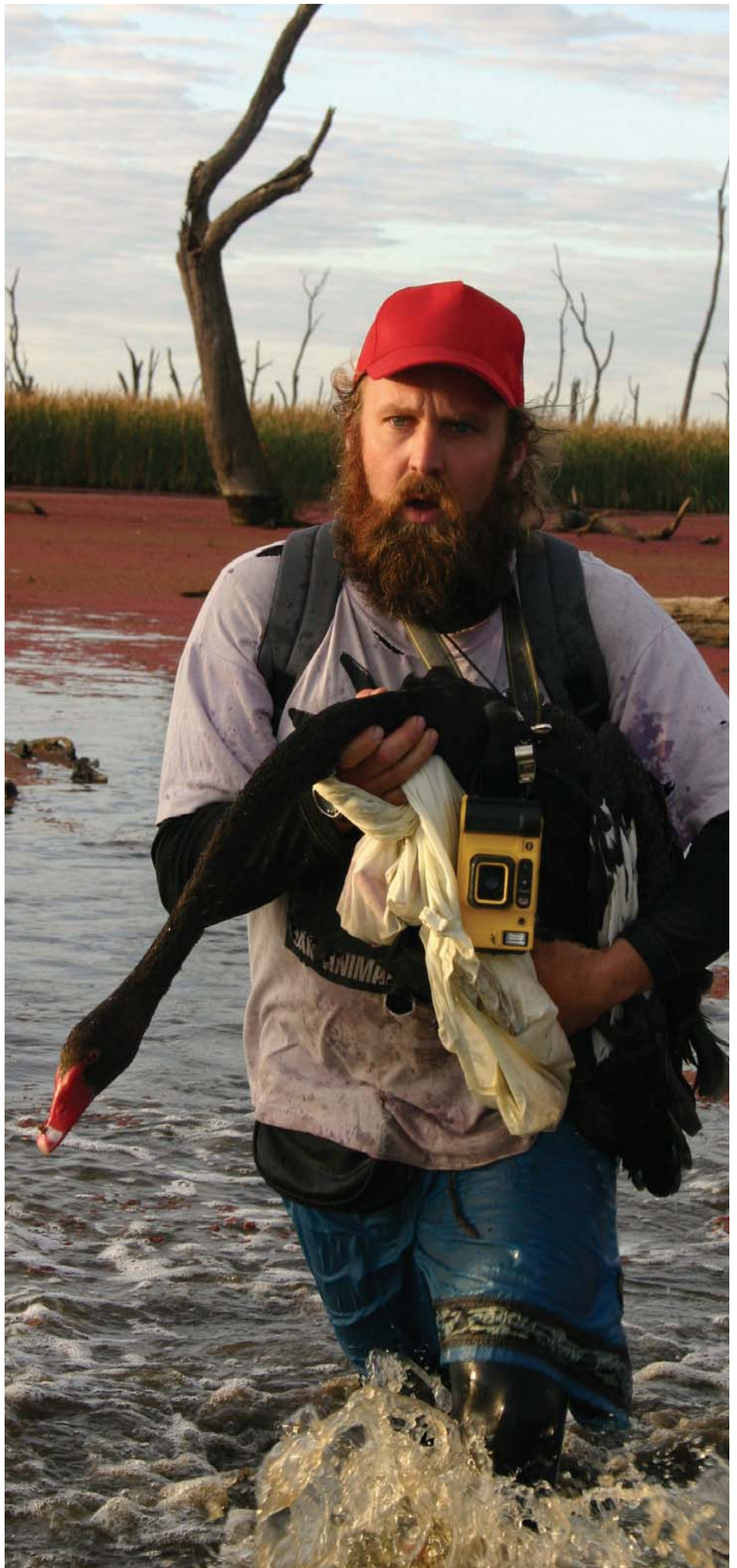
- Given community concern over the ethics of duck shooting, combined with declining bird numbers, diminishing wetlands and the effects of drought and climate change, as well as inconsistent policies of the states/territory governments on duck shooting, there is an urgent need for the Federal Government to:
  - (a) develop a national approach to the issue by permanently banning recreational duck shooting on all RAMSAR wetlands throughout Australia; and
  - (b) seek the co-operation of all states/territory governments for an agreement nationwide to permanently ban the activity.

**\*RAMSAR Treaty (*The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat.*)**

The Commonwealth is a signatory to the international RAMSAR Treaty giving it direct management and responsibility for significant areas of Australia's wetlands known as RAMSAR Sites, being 'Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat'. Under the RAMSAR Treaty the Commonwealth is obligated to work in partnership with state/territory and local governments to:

- conserve Australia's wetlands through the promotion of their ecological, cultural, economic and social values; and
- ensure a sound scientific basis for the conservation and ecologically sustainable development of wetlands.

A rescuer brings in a wounded, protected swan, illegally shot on the opening of the 2005 duck season in north west Victoria.  
Photo by Noah Hannibal





# Sanctuary

## in a corner of paradise



Stoney, a hand-reared mahogany glider released at Daryl's property. Stoney still makes nightly visits to the house, and brings himself in for TLC after run-ins with other gliders or predators

**by Dr Joanne L Isaac,  
Post-Doctoral Research  
Associate, Centre for  
Tropical Biodiversity and  
Climate Change, School of  
Marine and Tropical Biology,  
James Cook University,  
Townsville, Queensland**

**D**aryl Dickson greets me outside the cluttered shed; she is struggling with a large stack of papers and files. Although her rainbow hair clip and butterfly pendant reflect her usually outgoing nature, today she seems anxious and preoccupied. She has just taken a phone call about releasing some mahogany gliders, an endangered marsupial found only in north Queensland, and is not happy with the finer details.

Daryl's husband, Geoff Moffatt, also emerges from behind the shed. He is holding a precious package - an agile wallaby joey snuggled into a fabric pouch.

The joey belonged to Pearl, the wallaby that Daryl and Geoff hand reared some six years ago. Daryl explains that Pearl was killed on the road outside their property last week; her joey survived and made it home. She is fighting tears as she tells the story; it has not been a good week. Later she reflects 'My father asks why I do this to myself. But I wouldn't swap the sorrow that I feel sometimes for the absolute joy of the times when it actually works'.

Born in England and raised in South Australia, in the late 1980s, Daryl was running a successful telecommunications business and flew hot air balloons in the Barossa

Valley. But one ballooning trip over the luxuriant rainforests of northern Queensland was enough to change everything.

'I was overcome by the colour, vibrance and richness. Just seeing that there was somewhere like this left in Australia'. Daryl told Geoff that they needed to move. They closed the business, sold the house, packed the car and moved north. 'It was a move primarily driven by the environment, and the idea I could spend some time painting, which had always been a bit of a dream really', Daryl recalls.

While Daryl has painted since childhood, she never thought she could





Daryl Dickson

earn a living from it. 'My vocational guidance officer at school told me there was no future for women in art and I was wasting my time.' I ask her if he thought there was a future in art for men. She laughs, 'I presume so, I didn't stop to ask that'. She packed her backpack at sixteen and headed out on overseas adventures.

Despite the dire warning of the guidance officer, the dream is now a reality. As a professional wildlife artist, Daryl's main income derives from Wildcard Art; as she crafts her paintings on the timber verandah, Daryl takes her inspiration from the flora and fauna that share her steamy tropical haven.

But a decade on, injured and orphaned wildlife compete with painting for Daryl's precious time. 'It all happened by chance really' she says, when I ask how she got involved in wildlife care and rehabilitation.

After moving to Queensland, Daryl and Geoff got involved with the Wet Tropics Volunteers, going out on field trips and helping with the release of one of the first rehabilitated mahogany gliders. In 2000, they received a phone call; two mahogany gliders had been found in the pouch of their dead mother. Daryl and Geoff took on their care and rehabilitation.

'That phone call changed our whole way of living' Daryl recalls. Since then, Daryl and Geoff have accumulated a vast amount of knowledge about both caring for and rehabilitating mahogany gliders, and about their ecology and conservation. They even documented the first known vocal communication in the species; Geoff's celebrated ipod recording now resides with the Queensland Museum.

They have also helped educate the local community about gliders and other north Queensland wildlife, involving the media and talking at local schools. In particular, Daryl is passionate about educating people on the dangers of barbed wire fencing for wildlife. She is actively involved in the Wildlife Friendly Fencing initiative and she and Geoff have successfully rehabilitated a number of mahogany gliders that were rescued from barbed wire.

These days, Daryl and Geoff are well known for both their knowledge and warm hospitality. Notable scientists often visit their little corner of paradise in the tropics and Daryl was awarded an Australia Day Achievement Medallion in recognition of her efforts in environmental education and wildlife rescue.

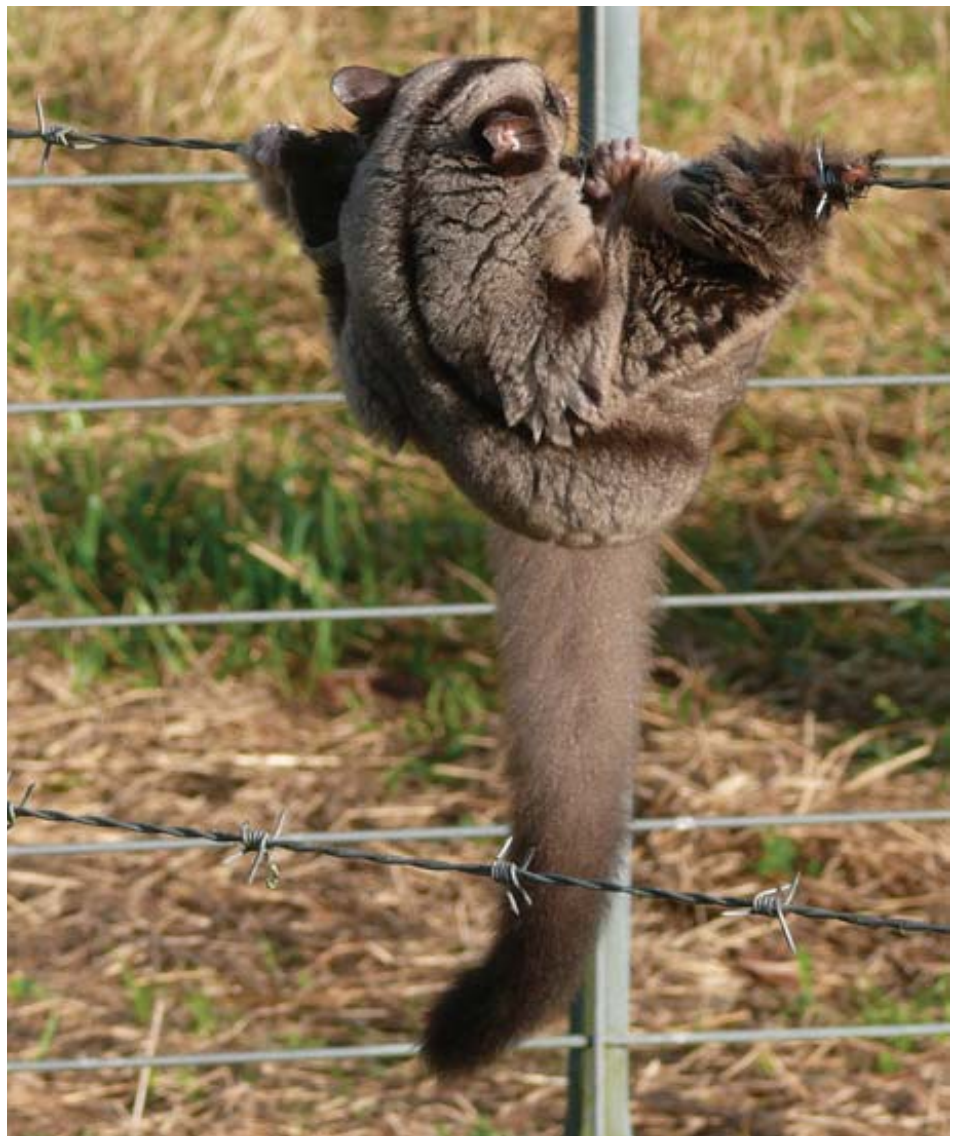
Remarkably, Daryl has also found time to make a foray into the world of children's books. *Glissandra the glider* was launched in May this year, written

by Pam Galeano with illustrations by Daryl. The book was also self-published by the two women.

While the charismatic gliders are most often in the media spotlight, the Dickson-Moffatt household takes in just about any animal that needs their care. 'There are only three carers in the Cardwell region' says Daryl, 'and Parks don't respond to wildlife calls anymore, so we go out and pick up the animals.'

Even the wildlife from the surrounding rainforest spills in. On my very first visit, I almost squished an antechinus. It seems that this particular minute marsupial was rather partial to sleeping in the stuffing of the chair I was about to flop into. Luckily Daryl warned me and disaster was averted; the furry lodger slept on, blissfully unaware.

Daryl concedes that a good proportion of her earnings from art go back into working for the gliders and other animals 'it does cost a lot, but we do



Female mahogany glider, named BB after her rescuer, caught on barbed wire. Unfortunately BB didn't make it



it by choice, we don't grumble about it' she shrugs. Unbelievably, she tells me that until after Cyclone Larry (2006) the Environmental Protection Agency didn't pay for mahogany glider treatment even though it is classed as a globally endangered species.

As we sit on the verandah, honeyeaters flit around behind us in the lush vegetation. I compliment Daryl on their new swimming pool. 'Geoff and I think of it as our holiday area'. An influx of baby bats saw last year's holiday cancelled; this year their holiday has been sacrificed to organise the release of the gliders. I wonder if they'll even find time to use the pool.

I ask Daryl about the most unusual animal they have rescued 'maybe the little echidna, unfortunately he didn't make it - but was an absolute treasure'. A fleeting look of sadness crosses her face before she goes on, 'the grass owl was special - we reared him. The striped possum probably rivals the gliders for character'.

Daryl's face lights up as she talks about the animals. 'They have totally enriched our lives' she says 'I never expected to feel the way I do about this place. We feel ourselves listening somehow, like an animal, to things that move in the night, recognising footsteps, bird calls, animal calls'.

'A realisation that we are part of something bigger is something we all need a good dose of in order to understand the world and our part in it. The art fits into that too, an integrated part of depicting the place we live in'.



"Y" Striped Possum. An original artwork by Daryl. In November 2008 Daryl was awarded a prestigious Cassowary Award 2008 for her work in fine art and conservation in the Wet Tropics



Pan, a female mahogany glider rescued from barbed wire and successfully rehabilitated by Daryl and Geoff

Daryl credits both the north Queensland environment and tactile contact with the animals for helping her to mature as an artist. 'In the early stages, my work was disjointed, I didn't relate to where animals came from.'

Now, she mostly paints only north Queensland wildlife. 'I am much more pedantic than I ever expected to be; I try hard to come up with some semblance of what is natural for the animal to be part of,' she ponders, 'this is a reflection of the way our life has become - from being someone that lives in a city environment to being one of the animals on the ground out here - a huge step of understanding'.

Daryl sees her art as part of an education process as well, helping to put wildlife and conservation issues into the spotlight. 'I see it as a way of engaging people that you can't engage in any other way. All my cards and prints have information about the species. They see a painting that appeals to them and hopefully they also learn something about the species.'

But she has a typically pragmatic view of how important wildlife rehabilitation is with respect to the conservation of endangered species such as mahogany gliders. 'All the stuff we do with rehab and breeding programs, it's not about

conservation purely. There's actually not a lot we can do for the gliders, and there's not a lot they need in a way, because they're very resilient'.

**She believes that the key threats are habitat loss and fragmentation.** 'Fragmentation and isolation of genetic groups of animals; it's the same for the cassowary, the tree kangaroo, the gliders' she says. 'In trying to rectify this for one species, we assist many others in the process.'

Daryl thinks that dealing with current and future habitat loss will take some bravery from our government, but considers that we have no choice but to face things head on.

'We're past a point where we can mess around - we may be too late already' she sighs, 'we talk about highways and power as essential infrastructure; when we need land for these things we acquire it. But our biodiversity is even more essential than all of these things'.

#### Links:

Wildlife Friendly Fencing:  
<http://www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com>

Daryl's Wildcard Art site:  
<http://www.wildcardart.com.au/>



# Wildside

by Marnie Bonner, Australian Seabird Rescue

## Problem pelican calls in for help

Pelicans are predators, top predators. Since they are not preyed upon by anything they have little fear. They are the labradors of the bird world, confident and docile. Once they've had their tucker for the day, about 700-800 grams of fish, it's time to relax.

Even when captured they usually completely relax within minutes. Observers and trainee rescuers often comment, "They seem to know you're trying to help them".

When interacting with wildlife this is a risky thought to have. No matter how relaxed a wild creature appears to be when captured it has only one thing in mind, escape. Relaxing is a ploy to

that end. If it relaxes the captor relaxes, which makes escape easier.

In the course of teaching people the art of pelican rescue over the past fifteen years I always stress that, "Wild animals do not know you are trying to help them! If you let your guard down you risk getting injured or losing the animal". However, news from South Australian Seabird Rescue (SASR) has caused some review.

SASR president Aaron Machado recently spent two weeks trying to capture a pelican that was badly entangled hook, line and sinker. The bird had been wing-tagged by Adelaide Zoo with the number 693 so Aaron



knew that it was the very same pelican he had rescued and rehabilitated on six previous occasions.

The pelican also seemed to recognise the rescuers and remained out of reach. They even disguised themselves as fishermen, to no avail. Eighteen days went by and concern was mounting for the bird's welfare as wounds from the ever tightening fishing line around one wing were apparent.

Then one night, as Aaron was completing paperwork at the rehabilitation centre office, he heard shuffling at the front door. He was surprised that someone was visiting at 10.30 at night but nothing could have prepared him for what he discovered. There at the door was pelican 693.

"I couldn't believe it!" Aaron said. "After I opened the door he just limped in, looking up at me as if to say, 'Where have you been?'"

After removal of the fishing line and treatment of the wounds caused by it, the pelican enjoyed a night's warm dry accommodation followed by a fish breakfast and release.





# Ghosts of the Gulf

The Gulf of Carpentaria is a remote place, one we don't hear much about. Free from the pressures of intense human habitation, it is a haven for wildlife. Unravelling, its coast spans two thousand kilometres. The indigenous communities that are scattered throughout this vast coastline have culturally diverse backgrounds but all are united by their connection with the gulf waters, their sea country. They are the environmental custodians of this northern frontier.

Northern Australia is especially vulnerable to marine debris because of its proximity to intensive fishing operations in neighbouring regions and the patterns of ocean currents. They sweep everything straight into the natural catchment that is the Gulf of Carpentaria, dustpan of the Indo-Pacific. Once in the gulf the rubbish swirls around in an endless gyre.

Over the decades local people grew especially concerned by the amount of marine wildlife that was trapped and killed by ghost nets, fishing nets

that have been lost accidentally or deliberately discarded.

Ghost nets come in all colours, shapes and sizes, often larger than a football field. From floats around their perimeter they drop in curtains for many metres to snare all that swims into them. When abandoned they roam with the currents and tides, creating havoc with vessels at sea while continuing to trap dugong, dolphins, sharks, sea turtles and undersized fish indiscriminately.

## Ghostbusters

Three years ago concerned people representing eighteen communities from the Torres Straits, Arnhem Land and the Gulf of Carpentaria formed the Carpentaria Ghost Net Programme. Together with other non-government and government agencies, their mission is to remove, record, rescue, report, reduce and research.

The Dhimurru Land Management Aboriginal Corporation is one such participant. Djawa Yunupingu is their spokesperson.



Turtle caught in net. Photographer: Alistair Dermer.  
Location: Dhambaliya (Bremer Island), Northern Territory



One of the bigger nets



“The Ghost Net Project is for people from (Indigenous) communities all around the Gulf of Carpentaria to find ways to work together to get rid of marine debris in their sea country”, he says.

For the past three years the floating death traps have been hauled ashore - over 4,500 of them. The largest was a Taiwanese gill net that was six kilometres long with a drop of four metres. It weighed six tonne and

took several attempts by numerous organisations working together to get it ashore.

Even with the enormous task of clearing decades of oceanic litter, the resourcefulness of the coastal communities continues to expand. The Kiriri Arts and Craft Group decided to create miracles out of ghost nets. They use them to weave colourful hammocks, bags, guitar straps and other craft items.



A hammerhead shark, just one of the many victims of ghost nets. This six tonne net was retrieved from the ocean off Arnhem Land by a joint operation with Australian Fish Management Authority, Customs, NT Parks and Dhimurru personnel. Location: Nhulunbuy, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia. Photographer: Jane Dermer, Carpentaria Ghost Nets Project Officer based at Dhimurru Land Management Aboriginal corporation office in Nhulunbuy, Northern Territory



A bag woven by the Kiriri Arts and Craft Group

### Just reward

Not surprisingly, the Carpentaria Ghost Net Programme has recently won the prestigious national Banksia Environmental Award for the second year in a row in the ‘Caring for Country’ category. All the people associated with the project can be justifiably proud. It is only through their dedication that hundreds of marine animals are spared these lethal floating environmental disasters.

For more information, see the website [www.ghostnets.com.au](http://www.ghostnets.com.au)



# Top teamwork saves dolphins

Six organisations, forty people, one mission – to return a dolphin mother and her calf to freedom.

Bottle-nosed dolphins often weave their way up Ballina's Richmond River and its seaward tributary, North Creek. Every now and then they chase a school of fish into Prospect Lake, a man-made waterway carved out of North Creek to create waterfront residences. The Lake is connected to North Creek by a narrow channel, passable by dolphins at high tide only.

Last year Socrates the dolphin got into the lake. After giving him ten days to find his own way out, a team comprising Australian Seabird Rescue volunteers, SeaWorld, the Cape Byron Marine Parks Authority, National Parks and Wildlife Service and NSW Fisheries was successful in herding the confused dolphin back into North Creek. A recommendation to Ballina Council to install a dolphin proof barrier across the channel was met with no response.

Late year, during the night, Socrates was back – this time with friends – a mother and her calf. It was estimated that there were enough fish in the lake to support them for a fortnight. Socrates left after a week, not before researchers realised that HE was probably a SHE since a mother and calf usually have female companions only.



Dolphin rescue team

On the tenth day, the combined rescue team tried to herd out the remaining pair. At the peak of high tide, SeaWorld's huge net was deployed to surround the dolphins and move them slowly towards the channel. At the last moment they balked and fled, finding a way out underneath the net.

The SeaWorld rescue team returned to their Gold Coast base to organise a replacement net, this time much more heavily weighted along the bottom.

On the thirteenth day the troops gathered once again. Lennox Head vet Evan Kosack joined us to monitor the dolphin's health and an RSPCA officer monitored the operation. Ballina police

assisted with crowd and traffic control. As curious locals and school holiday makers gathered, we were also joined by six TV news crews plus photographers and reporters who would relay the event to millions of viewers throughout NSW and the Gold Coast.

It was a day of concern, co-operation and camaraderie. Forty people united by purpose, five boats, a huge net, a specially designed marine mammal transport trailer and two nervous dolphins. As the net closed in on the dolphins, the calf – thought to be about twelve months old – was captured but his mother escaped. Care was taken to keep the little fellow's beak in the water so that he could continue communicating with his mother. Soon mum returned to her son's side.

**The net was redeployed. Within half an hour, his mum was captured. "Turn them around so they're facing each other," instructed SeaWorld Rescue Team leader, Trevor Long. Both mother and calf seemed reassured.**

It had been four tense hours and victory was ours. The dolphins were transported by road to the mouth of the Richmond River. Time seemed to stop as they were lowered into the river. In one split second we were all released – the dolphins to freedom, and rescuers to cheers and tears of relief and joy. In these troubled times, on this one day, together we all made a real and tangible difference. All that remains is for Ballina Shire Council to do the same.



Rescuing the dolphin



# Plastic pollution solutions possible

Word is out. Reducing our use of plastics is important, something we can all do to lighten the load on our increasingly depleted planet. Individuals, schools, companies and whole towns are now seeking solutions to excessive waste, especially plastic.

For half a century the world has gobbled and guzzled with little thought for the consequences. It's a sobering thought to look at retail outlets and realise that all of their contents are the landfill of the future. And almost all of it is wrapped in plastic or encased in polystyrene foam at some stage. Even for prudent purchasers the inbuilt redundancy of many goods ensures a regular turnover.

Big stuff and plastic bags, however, are only part of the problem. The little stuff that doesn't go to land-fill becomes ocean-fill. Litter around shopping centres, schools and parks usually find it way into stormwater drains. Cellophane wrappers, cling-wrap, straws, take-away containers and plastic bottle rings all wreak havoc on wildlife. If councils do not have litter traps on stormwater outlets it all ends up in our waterways. To the creatures of the ocean everything is edible. Hard plastic looks like crab shell. Soft plastic looks like jellyfish or squid. Polystyrene balls look like fish eggs.

## Turning the tide

As far as plastic bags go, our local councils do not have to reinvent the wheel. In the past six years, twelve



Turtle with plastic bag – to the creatures of the ocean, everything is edible. When spotted munching on plastic, this young sea turtle was promptly rescued by an underwater research team.

Photo by Ron Prendergast, Melbourne Zoo

Australian towns have become plastic bag free. Huskisson, on the NSW south coast, is the largest to join Planet Ark's 'Plastic Bag Free Town' campaign – making the move to protect the marine life in Jervis Bay Marine Park. Co-ordinator Matt Cross said it really galvanised the community.

"Huskisson has ninety one retailers and over 750,000 visitors every year. If we can go plastic bag free there's no reason why other towns can't do the same", he says.

Consumer demand for fewer plastic carry bags and more reusable shopping bags has seen the world's

largest plastic bag manufacturer close its US plant. Last week the vice president of Hilex Poly Company stated: "The Company is now dedicating substantial company resources to a reusable bag line of products in support of our customers' efforts to embrace environmentally friendly packaging solutions".

**All it takes it seems is the greatest force on the planet – the will of the people.**

For more information on plastic pollution solutions, see [www.planetark.com](http://www.planetark.com)

## On rocky ground

Customs at Perth airport arrested two German men recently for having "fungus and fungi spore samples" in their baggage. They were charged with exporting "regulated native species" without permission and later fined \$3,000 each.

Even fungus endangered? Not quite, a "regulated native species" is any indigenous or migratory animal or plant that was here before the fifteenth century and is not on the "list". The Australian Customs Service has a list of things that can be exported rather than a list of things that are banned. Unsurprisingly the list mostly covers our fishing and timber industries.

Beware! If you want to take your pet rock with you next time you visit the old country, best give him a scrub first, lest he's gathered some moss.



# Rare birds find refuge in bustling Brisbane

Whether you want to walk, swim, rollerblade, eat or see a show, you can do it all at Brisbane's South Bank any time of the day or night. This vast human playground covers seventeen hectares and is aptly described as a 'vibrant precinct', attracting nine million visitors annually. You can even take your dog. Artificial beaches surround an artificial saltwater lagoon. Tropical palms and manicured lawns flank neatly edged paths between the many restaurants and cafes. An avenue of bougainvillea connects shops, museums, concert halls, amphitheatres and art galleries.

Bush stone-curlews were once common throughout Australia. They are nocturnal and forage on the ground for insects, preferably in woodland near watercourses and swamps. Sharing the night with foxes, dogs and cats has not worked out well for them, nor has nesting on the ground. I have not seen a bush stone-curlew for years. They and their cousin, the beach stone-curlew, are now in danger of extinction.

As I walked briskly through South Bank parkland on a busy Friday evening recently nothing could be further from my mind. Suddenly a haunting call from somewhere behind me stopped me mid-stride. I scanned the parkland shadows, still not quite



Bush stone-curlew. Photo by Glen Fergus

believing my ears, and then a passer-by confirmed that it was indeed a bush stone-curlew.

"It's there, underneath those fig trees. There's another one across the river in the botanical gardens", he said.

The bird stood fast in the shadows of the trees. In the background was a huge brightly lit ferris-wheel, families were walking past just metres from this usually secretive bird and close by was a busy road and bustling outdoor café strip.

Banjo Patterson once said that his "imaginative cousin described stone-curlews as the souls of lost people seeking their way home". These days the stone-curlews are the ones seeking a home, any home. All they need is some cover, some insects and safety from feral predators. It is ironic that the "vibrant precinct" of Brisbane's South Bank could provide it.

## Alternative turtles

Saving sea turtles is a huge challenge. When turtles wash ashore they are usually comatose. They need immediate emergency care and bringing them around can take many days.

One very determined and pioneering vet in the US, however, has been thinking outside the square. Dr Steve Canion of Texas decided that there was nothing to lose by trying some alternative treatments. By applying the same acupuncture methods used to resuscitate humans in deep shock, he has been able to revive turtles in one to ten minutes.

"The acupuncture protocol for sea turtle resuscitation can be performed anywhere", Dr Canion explained. "In the clinic, in the field or on a trawler."

Several other vets in the US are also reporting excellent results. With

the arrival of their breaking news in Australia this week, turtle rescuers are looking forward to improved recovery rates for these endangered species.

### **Making sea turtles count**

No one knows just how many sea turtles are foraging in the coastal waters of the NSW Far North Coast. Considering they are all threatened species, this is a big gap in the local knowledge bank of conservation. Their numbers cannot be monitored unless there is a benchmark for comparison.

The Ballina-based Australian Seabird Rescue (ASR) organisation has been rescuing sea turtles since the mid 1990s. They long since realised that a systematic study of the turtle population was needed but lacked the necessary resources.

That changed when the Threatened Species Network announced that they would support a turtle monitoring project as proposed by ASR. The Network is a partnership between the World Wildlife Fund-Australia and the Commonwealth Government. Successful grant applications are announced annually on Threatened Species Day, 7 September, and this year it was ASR's lucky day.

Project co-coordinator Keith Williams is justifiably proud of the group's success. Their application was one of only four awarded in the State.

"With the help of beachgoers ASR has been able to save hundreds of stranded turtles over the years. Now we can all work together to find out more about them", he said.



The 'Make Turtles Count' project was launched recently and celebrated with the release of two rehabilitated young turtles at Byron Bay's Main Beach. 'Sassy' and 'Rasputin' came into care because they had beached themselves. Both were suffering bowel impaction because they had mistaken plastic debris for food. After four months in the WildlifeLink Turtle Hospital, the two green turtles are once again enjoying a wild life.

The monitoring program will span the turtle nesting season, 1 November to 30 April. It's an ambitious project, covering 225 kilometres of coast between the Clarence and Tweed Rivers as well as four ten-day underwater surveys. Partner agencies include the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Cape Byron Marine Park, Southern Cross University (Lismore) and the Byron Underwater Research Group, but ASR is keen to see local dive and tourist operators involved as well as beach walkers, fishers, swimmers and surfers.

**"We need at least a hundred people to help monitor the beaches", Keith explained, "and we'd love to hear from anyone who'd like to be involved".**

For further information, email [keithwilliams@seabirdrescue.org](mailto:keithwilliams@seabirdrescue.org)



Keith Williams: excited about making turtles count on the Far North Coast of NSW

## Total eclipse of the art

In the Australian history of wildlife awareness John Gould is an esteemed ancestor. Gould was an English zoologist, born in 1804. Adventurous young men were exploring new frontiers, often returning with specimens of strange colourful birds. Londoners were fascinated and the specimens were highly sought after as house decorations, providing they could be restored to their lifelike form. John Gould was also fascinated and spent his teenage years learning the art of preserving, stuffing and mounting birds. At just twenty years of age he established a successful taxidermy business in London and became a leading expert in bird identification. His knowledge was so exceptional that Charles Darwin sought his collaboration in identifying specimens from the Galapagos Islands.

In 1838 Gould and his wife travelled to Australia, keen to document the birds and mammals of the new colony. Their two year visit resulted in his most

famous work, *Birds of Australia* (1840-1848), comprising seven volumes.

Sixty years later a young school teacher, Jessica McMichael, was so inspired by John Gould's work that she wanted to influence school children to admire and protect them. The nation's second wildlife protection group, the Gould League of Bird Lovers, was launched in Victoria on 29 October 1909 with the Prime Minister Alfred Deakin as president. The movement captured the imagination of school teachers everywhere and within a year, a branch was established in Sydney. This was serious business for children. To join the League you had to make the bird lovers' pledge - to protect native birds and refrain from collecting wild birds' eggs. Then you got a beautiful certificate, tinted in green and illustrated with drawings of birds.

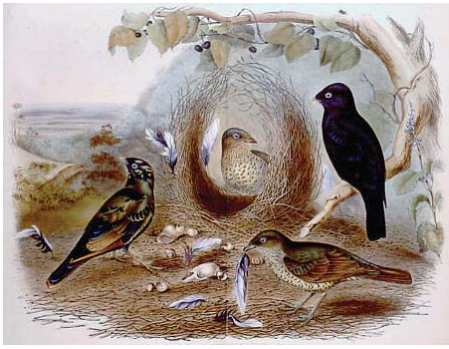
Many baby boomers will remember the coveted Gould stickers, miniature replicas of the beautiful illustrations in his books. They developed into

Australia's first collectables for kids. Within thirty years, despite the Great Depression and two world wars, the Gould League had 600,000 members - eight percent of the Australian population.



Elizabeth Gould





Satin bower-bird (*Ptilonorhynchus holosericeus*: Kuhl.) John Gould (1804 – 1881). From *The birds of Australia: in seven volumes V.4*

But who ever heard of Elizabeth Gould? Elizabeth was John's wife, an artist in her own right. She made hundreds of drawings for her husband's publications as well as illustrating the bird section of Charles Darwin's *Zoology of the Voyage of*

*HMS Beagle*. Despite bearing seven children Elizabeth produced over six hundred time-consuming hand coloured lithographs but they were published under the name of one of her husband's colleagues, Henry Richter. Subsequently her reputation and importance became almost totally eclipsed by the fame of her husband.

Elizabeth Gould died at the age of thirty seven following the birth of her eighth child. It would be a hundred years before a bird-loving journalist by the name of Alec Chisholm would give her due recognition in his 1944 biography, *The Story of Elizabeth Gould*.

The Gould League lives on; these days it is called the Gould Group. They still mark the anniversary of their 1909 launch with National Bird Day on 29 October each year and are gearing

up for their centenary in 2009. The organisation is seeking the help of the public in gathering memorabilia as a fire in their headquarters some years ago destroyed many valuable records. Old newspaper cuttings of Gould League events and original signed certificates are all keenly sought. All of these just need to be borrowed so that they can be scanned and added to the Gould Group's digital collection. They are especially interested in getting in contact with descendants of any past Gould committee members or general members, and people's descriptions of childhood memories about the signing of their pledges are also sought so that they can be recorded on the Gould Centenary website.

People can send their memories and details to [memories@gould.org.au](mailto:memories@gould.org.au)

## When attack is the best defence

Imagine wandering down to your veggie garden to pick some food and being confronted by a large ruthless predator. You have a split second to decide what to do. For creatures on the bottom rungs of the food chain, life is like that - an unrelenting battle for survival. It's not just the fastest and fittest that survive, cunning and courage often play a big part. When confronted with danger a split-second decision has to be made, fight or flight.

Lizards aren't renowned for their intelligence and in cool conditions speed is not an option either. Their only hope is camouflage and bravado, puffing themselves up to look larger and fiercer with a bit of hopeful hissing thrown in. The problem is that the display of a blue or pink tongue is not going to deter a kookaburra.

Kookaburras are fast accurate predators with excellent vision and a powerful beak. For the small reptiles and insects they target there is little escape from their ruthless gaze. Lizards eat insects too, and would normally be no match for a kookaburra, but local ecologist Bob Moffatt happened to come across a very brave skink recently that clung to life in more ways than one.

When Bob saw a kookaburra swoop on a pink-tongue skink the opportunity for a life and death photo was too



Skink and kookaburra. Photo by Bob Moffatt

good to pass up. As the scared skink displayed its terrifying pink tongue and hissed as fiercely as it could at the kookaburra, it suddenly realised that bluff was not enough. In the nano second between life and death, the skink decided that attack was the best defence. It grabbed the kookaburra's beak and hung on for, well, dear life. Then the stakes changed.

As Bob moved closer for the photo the two realised they had something in common, something that was bigger than both of them. Again, in a split second, both simultaneously made a choice. The skink released its grip and the kookaburra took off. The predator at the top of the food chain was the winner; he got a great photo!



# In the myths of time

According to Cambodian myth, people believed that the Irrawaddy dolphin was a fair maiden with the body of a fish. As the story goes, a beautiful maiden was forced by her parents to marry a magical python but decided to cast herself into the Mekong River. Her suicide bid failed and she was transformed into a dolphin.

For centuries the Irrawaddy dolphin was sacred, never hunted by the small communities who depended on the river. The dolphin was known to even help fishermen locate and round up fish. But an arterial river travelling through southern Asia's rapid population growth was destined for disaster. Dams, siltation, pollution and overfishing have all contributed to the dramatic decline of the dolphins.

When I first met Dr Verné Dove in 2006 I was immediately impressed by the young lady passionate about marine mammals. With her course firmly set she had already completed several degrees in veterinary science and conservation medicine.

For the past two years Verné has been working in Cambodia on a World Wildlife Fund project to save the Irrawaddy dolphins of the Mekong River. From a population of five thousand there are just seventy left.

When Verné returned to Australia for a break recently it was an excellent opportunity to connect her with local dolphin researchers, Christine Fury and Liz Hawkins, of Southern Cross University's Whale Research Centre. All three 'dolphin divas' are working to protect and conserve dolphin species.

For the past five years Christine has been studying the dolphins of the Clarence and Richmond Rivers in order to understand their population status, habitat use and impact of flood events. She has just completed her PhD thesis on the project.

Dr Liz Hawkins has been studying dolphin communication and behaviour while researching the potential impacts of boating. Her research has provided valuable information on the ecology of our local Byron Bay region dolphin population that many of us encounter every day. As coastal populations and boat usage increases, such information is vital for future management strategies.

## Lessons learned

As Christine and Liz establish an understanding of impacts on the abundant bottlenose dolphins here in Australia, Verné has conceded that her work can now only help

other endangered species of the rare freshwater dolphins. After conducting DNA studies on the Irrawaddy dolphins, she has discovered that they are all related.

"It's just too late", she said. "Even if all the impacts miraculously disappeared overnight, we can not save them because the in-breeding is only going to get worse."

Bearing witness to an extinction is a huge drain on Verné, but she continues to strive in defence of the dolphin. She says that all she can do now is take the lessons learned to help save other endangered freshwater species such as the Amazon Pink River dolphins.

It seems the biggest lesson of all is for the supposedly most intelligent species on the planet to actively heed the warnings before a species reaches critical status. Where extinction is concerned, time is of the essence lest many more species fade in the myths of time.



Dolphin divas: (L to R) Christine Fury, Verné Dove and Liz Hawkins share a decade of dolphin research.  
(Photo by Garry Fenton)



# A Marine Mammal Protection Act for Australia

by Suzanne Medway



Australia's Federal environment laws do not offer sufficient protection for whales and dolphins. Every day whales and dolphins face being entangled, drowned, contaminated, harassed, starved and evicted from where they feed, breed and take shelter. But

perhaps an even greater danger is Japan's contention that they must kill whales in order to study them. During the Antarctic Ocean summer whaling season, Japan regularly kills more than one thousand whales for research.

A breathtaking forty six species of whale and dolphin call Australia home, with at least five of these species on the brink of extinction. Astonishingly, hardly anything is known about most of the whales and dolphins in our backyard - forty of the forty six species. This makes them invisible to the laws that are meant to conserve them.

We need stronger laws to help protect Australia's whales and dolphins. Our Society has campaigned for a Marine Mammal Protection Act to ensure our whales and dolphins are protected in Australian waters.

## **The blue whale - conserving a giant of the deep**

The endangered blue whale is the largest animal ever to have lived, almost as long as a Boeing 737 and weighing four times as much. After over a century of being hunted, the blue whale is close to extinction, with only two to five percent of its original population left.







Travelling vast distances, being slow to breed and being so threatened with extinction, blue whales are even more susceptible to the man-made dangers in our oceans.

Every summer Australia becomes the guardian of these incredible whales when they feast on krill off the south coast of Western Australia and off the south eastern coast of South Australia and Victoria. Unfortunately the blue whales are sharing these vital feeding areas with the oil, shipping and gas industries, which threaten these animals with loud seismic, drilling and vessel noise, entanglement in fishing nets and lines, and direct collisions with ships.

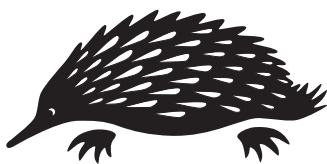


Photos taken from Merimbula in New South Wales by Wayne Reynolds of the Southern whale migration in the 2007 and 2008 seasons

The whale covered with lice was a humpback stranded on the sand at Minimurra beach



# Membership Form



**WILDLIFE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED**

P0 Box 42 Brighton Le Sands NSW 2216

## Membership

## Why not become a member of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited?

Simply fill out this form.

Name: .....

Address: .....

City/Suburb:..... Postcode: .....

Telephone: ..... Fax: .....

Email: .....

**Membership category (please circle)**

Individual: \$40      Family: \$50      Concession (pensioner/student/child): \$30

Associate (library, school, conservation groups): \$60      Corporate: \$100

(Includes GST and postage within Australia. Add \$10 for overseas postage)

### Payment details (please tick)

☐ Cheque    ☐ Money Order    ☐ Mastercard    ☐ Visa    ☐ Bankcard

Card Number: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Amount \$.....

Name on Card: ..... Expiry: .....

Donation \$.....

Signature:.....

**Total**      \$.....

**Mail to the:** Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited

**PO Box 42, Brighton Le Sands NSW 2216.**

**Email: [info@wpsa.org.au](mailto:info@wpsa.org.au)**

**Website: [www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au)**

## Consider - A Bequest

Another way which you can support the work of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited is to remember us in your will.

If you would like to make a bequest to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited, add the following codicil to your Will:

I bequeath the sum of \$ ..... to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited shall be complete discharge to my Executors in respect of any sum paid to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited.

"The challenge to the present adult generation is to reduce the increasing pressures on the Earth and its resources - and to provide youth with an education that will prepare them emotionally and intellectually for the task ahead.

**PATRICK W MEDWAY AM**  
National President



# WPSA Merchandise

Many of our members have expressed interest in purchasing gift merchandise for friends and family (or even themselves)! This is a great way to support the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia, so we have responded below with a mail order system. Simply send your cheque or credit card details (with expiry date) and we will post your order out to you. All prices include GST and 20% member's discount. All proceeds go towards our conservation projects.



## Polo Shirts - \$25

(Navy with white logo / White with navy logo)



## Kids T'Shirts - \$10

(Navy with white logo / White with navy logo)



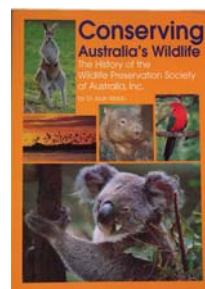
## Cap - \$10

(Navy with white logo)

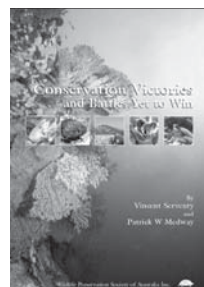


## Drink Bottle Bag - \$10

(Navy with white logo)



## Conserving Australia's Wildlife By Dr Joan Webb - \$15



## Conservation Victories and Battles Yet to Win By Vincent Serverty and Patrick W Medway - \$20

Product	Quantity	Size	Cost per item	Total
Polo shirts	_____	M,L	\$25	_____
Children's T-shirts	_____	4-6,8,10	\$10	_____
Caps	_____	n/a	\$10	_____
Drink Bottle Bag	_____	n/a	\$10	_____
Conserving Australia	_____	n/a	\$15	_____

Add \$2.50 per item postage and handling within Australia:

Add \$10 per item postage and handling for Overseas orders:

Please allow 14 days for delivery **TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Delivery Details

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment Details** (please tick) ☐ Cheque ☐ Money order ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Bankcard

Card Number: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Send this order by MAIL:

Wildlife Preservation  
Society of Australia  
PO Box 42,  
Brighton Le Sands NSW 2216  
or for CREDIT CARD  
payments by fax to:  
02 9599 0000  
Email: [info@wpsa.org.au](mailto:info@wpsa.org.au)



# Centenary Souvenirs

Many of our members have expressed interest in purchasing gift merchandise for friends and family (or even themselves)! This is a great way to support the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia, so we have responded below with a mail order system. Simply send your cheque or credit card details (with expiry date) and we will post your order out to you. All prices include GST and 20% member's discount. All proceeds go towards our conservation projects.



## Bucket Hats - \$10

(Brushed Twill)

Adult: 70cm (Medium/Large), 80cm (Large/XLarge)

Child 50cm (Small), 60cm (Medium) -  
with elastic sizing band and toggle



## Pen - \$5



## Celebrating our centenary 1909 - 2009



## Caps - \$10

(Adjustable - One size fits all)



## Plastic Travel Mug - \$10



## 2009 Centenary Calendar - \$10 - reduced to \$5

Product	Quantity	Size	Cost per item	Total
Bucket Hat (Adult)	_____	70cm, 80cm	\$10	_____
Bucket Hat (Child)	_____	50cm, 60cm	\$10	_____
Caps	_____	n/a	\$10	_____
Pen	_____	n/a	\$5	_____
Plastic Travel Mug	_____	n/a	\$10	_____
2009 Centenary Calendar	_____	n/a	\$10 reduced to \$5	_____

Add \$2.50 per item postage and handling within Australia:

Add \$10 per item postage and handling for Overseas orders:

Please allow 14 days for delivery **TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Delivery Details

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment Details** (please tick) ☐ Cheque ☐ Money order ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Bankcard

Card Number: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Send this order by MAIL:

Wildlife Preservation  
Society of Australia  
PO Box 42,  
Brighton Le Sands NSW 2216  
or for CREDIT CARD  
payments by fax to:  
02 9599 0000  
Email: [info@wpsa.org.au](mailto:info@wpsa.org.au)



Patron: Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC  
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

# HELP US SAVE AUSTRALIA'S UNIQUE WILDLIFE

The Society was formed on 11 May 1909 and is a voluntary, non-profit organisation committed to the preservation of Australia's precious wildlife in all its forms.

Since our formation the Society has contributed to the conservation of a wide range of native fauna and flora by lobbying governments for better protection of native fauna, preventing the slaughter of koalas and native birds for their skins and feathers, working on special conservation projects such as the "Save the Bilby" project, cleaning up fragile habitats for wildlife such as Towra Point in Botany Bay Sydney, awarding annual university grants to bright young students to study our native wildlife, presenting community awards to recognise other conservation groups and individuals, promoting environmental education programs throughout the community and holding seminars and conferences on key environmental topics such as the reduction of the road kill of native animals.



## HELP CELEBRATE OUR CENTENARY IN 2009

**Join the Wildlife Preservation Society and become a Centenary Member to support our conservation work around Australia**

## *An Appeal by the National President*

I now appeal to all Australians to help the Wildlife Preservation Society save our precious native wildlife in all its forms for the next generation of young Australians.

As we honour the work of the past, we are mindful of the passing of Dr Vincent Serverty AM in September 2007, a tireless worker for conservation and former President of Honour of our Society. We propose to name the new double classrooms in the Wetland Environmental Education Centre in the Rockdale wetlands – Sydney ECOWORLD GARDENS Rockdale after Dr Serverty to commemorate and record our appreciation of his great contribution to saving Australian native wildlife throughout his lifetime.

Our Society is committed to working with all major conservation groups across Australia and invites all conservation and environmental groups to help us celebrate our Centenary.

As climate change effects humans and wildlife, we are encouraged to move towards educating our next generation of young Australians about our precious environment.

Please consider contributing to our work to save and preserve our native wildlife  
and help us educate our young people.

**Patrick W Medway AM**  
**NATIONAL PRESIDENT**



## JOIN THE SOCIETY AND BECOME A CENTENARY MEMBER



Please cut out and post your membership application to:

**Secretary**  
**Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited**

P O Box 42 Brighton Le Sands NSW 2216

Tel: 02 9556 1537   Fax: 02 9599 0000

Email: [info@wpsa.org.au](mailto:info@wpsa.org.au)

Website: [www.wpsa.org.au](http://www.wpsa.org.au)

## Centenary Membership \$100

I wish to become a **Centenary Member** for **\$100** (2009-2010), and also make a donation to our new **ECOWORLD GARDENS** project to help educate the next generation of young Australians about our environment and its wildlife.

Name .....

Address .....

Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Bankcard ☐ Expiry ..... Amount:.....

Card Number 

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

**Total:** .....

Name on Card: ..... Signature: .....



