



AUSTRALIAN

Wildlife

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Celebrating our Centenary

Journal of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited

(Founded 1909)

Centenary Luncheon

Friday 22 May 2009



L to R: Peter Stock, Robyn Stock, Patrick Medway



L to R: Elena Guerracino, Marny Bonner



L to R: Vanessa Wilson, Steve Wilson, Jack Van Duuren, Sue Van Duuren



L to R: John Grabowski, Peter Nonnenmacher, Stephen Grabowski



L to R: Margaret Deas, Colleen Keys, Deidre Bowes



L to R: Lubica Cosic, Diane Warwick, Deidre Greenhill

Contents

features

7 Centenary Luncheon

13 The Great Barrier Reef's best kept secret - *Gemma Routledge*

16 Why are Indian mynas a problem?
- *Suzanne Medway*

18 The Koala, or Native Bear
- *David G. Stead*

22 Koala conservation between old friends - *Sophia Walter*

23 Hunted koalas still to recover
- *Sophia Walter*

24 Koala conservation intensifies on the Northern Rivers - *Lorraine Vass*

26 Can we save our wild koala?
- *Linda Dennis*

28 Marine Turtles - *Suzanne Medway*

31 Upon whose shoulders we stand
- *Marny Bonner*

33 International Sea Turtle Symposium
- *Jennie Gilbert*

34 *Fascinating Australian Birds*
- *Book Review*

35 A member shares his 100th birthday
- *Margaret Conners*



11



13



16



18



24



29



32



35

regulars

5 From the President's desk

6 Editorial

36 Membership form

37 WPSA merchandise

38 WPSA Centenary merchandise



Front Cover & Back Cover

Green Sea Turtles, Great Barrier Reef.

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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.

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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)

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.

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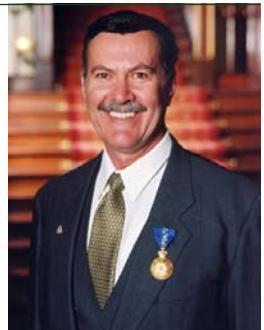
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environmental science

Geoffrey Ross -
wildlife management issues

Jennie Gilbert -
marine conservation

From the President's Desk

Patrick W Medway AM - National President



We were all delighted with the wonderful turnout for the 2009 Centenary Luncheon in May

Centenary Luncheon a great success

We were all delighted with the wonderful turnout for the 2009 Centenary Luncheon in May. Her Excellency, the Governor of New South Wales, was our Guest of Honour and we were all very impressed with her wonderful address and keen support for the wildlife conservation work of our Society. Her presence added luster to this special occasion and we now have some beautiful photographs of the occasion, including Her Excellency unveiling the Centenary Plaque and cutting the Centenary Cake with our youngest new member Jacinta Reuben. A grand occasion worthy of a centenary celebration!

Melbourne Civic Reception

Three directors travelled to Melbourne for the Lord Mayor's Civic Reception to mark our Centenary last month. Two directors travelled

courtesy of Qantas and our Honorary Secretary, Suzanne Medway, travelled at her own expense. We were very impressed with the historic setting for this reception in Melbourne City Hall and the wonderful support from the Lord Mayor's staff and Councillors who attended this significant civic function for the Society.

Some forty members and friends from supportive conservation groups enjoyed the fine food, beverages and great company. Councillor Dr Kathy Oke spoke on behalf of the Lord Mayor and expressed her warm support for the wildlife conservation work of the Society. We are very grateful for the Melbourne Lord Mayor's hospitality to mark our Centenary.

Letters of congratulations

We have now received some wonderful letters of congratulations for our Centenary, including letters

from Her Majesty the Queen's private secretary extending Her Majesty's best wishes, His Royal Highness Prince Phillip and His Royal Highness Prince Charles, who both sent their kind regards for our Centenary; a number of partner organisations, including Wirrimbirra Wildlife Sanctuary at Bargo, which is the home of the David G Stead Wildlife Research Foundation, also sent letters of congratulations. We have received lots of letters and emails from members of the Society across Australia. We are very grateful for these messages of support and encouragement.

Centenary Dinner in the St George area in August

We are planning a local Centenary Dinner at the St George Leagues Club, Kogarah, Sydney on 24 August 2009 for the large number of local members who live in the St George area of Sydney. We are currently preparing an invitation list, but if you would like to attend this special Centenary Dinner or invite extra guests, please contact the National Office for details and to register your interest.

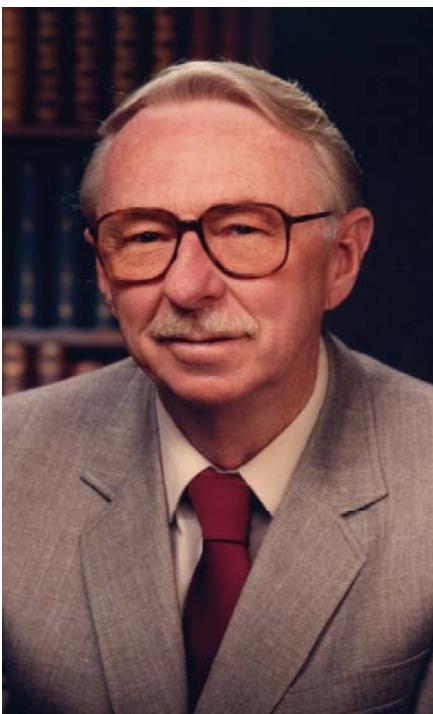
Universal Declaration of Environmental Rights launched

At the 2009 Centenary Luncheon it was my pleasure to officially launch our proposal for a Universal Declaration of Environmental Rights so proudly proposed by our late President of Honour, Dr Vincent Serventy AM. We have fully articulated the proposal and are now seeking active support from other conservation groups and from the state and federal governments, as well as the United Nations Association of Australia, to implement this bold initiative for the good of our environment and all mankind.

VALE

Professor James Allen Keast (1922 – 2009)

It is with sincere regret that we learnt of the death in Canada on 8 March 2009 of one of our iconic wildlife supporters. Professor James 'Allen' Keast was an internationally recognised expert on ornithology and the natural sciences and was a close friend of the late Vincent Serventy. Allen was a member of our expert Scientific Advisory Panel and will be sadly missed by our Executive Officers and his wide range of friends.



Editorial

Suzanne Medway

As part of our recently launched Centenary fundraising strategy, we have expanded our donation program to acquire monthly donors



Centenary celebrations have continued with a spectacular Centenary Luncheon held in Sydney on Friday 22 May. You can read all about this special day in the article on page 7. We have also featured photos taken at the Luncheon on the front inside cover of this issue.

Our second big event in the Centenary diary was a Civic Reception hosted by the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Robert Doyle, on Monday 25 May. It was a great occasion to catch up with our Victorian members and colleagues from other conservation groups. We were especially delighted that John Fenton, the Serventy Conservation Medal winner in 2002, travelled all the way from Hamilton to attend. Photos of the Reception are featured on the back inside cover. Flights for Patrick Medway (National President) and David Murray (Vice President) were sponsored by Qantas.

A Civic Reception hosted by the Lord Mayor of Darwin, Grahame Sawyer, was held on Thursday 2 July. The Chairman of our Centenary Committee, Noel Cislowski, and Regional Advisor Ken Metcalfe travelled to Darwin to represent the Society on this auspicious occasion. Flights for Noel were sponsored by Qantas.

Continuing with our Centenary theme, this issue of *Australian Wildlife* features an article that was written in 1934 by David Stead on the iconic koala. In reproducing this article, we have not changed the English language and punctuation of the day, David Stead's reference to the koala as a "bear" or "teddy bear", or his referring to the Aboriginal people as "blacks". I do not believe it is my right as Editor to censor or correct these original articles - they reflect the opinions of the time, 1934. To bring the issue of the conservation of the koala up-to-date we have also featured articles by the Australian Koala Foundation, Lorraine

Vass, who is President of Friends of the Koala, and a short report from Linda Dennis, WPSA Regional Advisor for Central Western New South Wales. It is distressing to read that after nearly ninety years of advocacy on behalf of the koala, little has changed in the battle to save the koala.

I have enjoyed collaborating with two dear friends, Jenny Gilbert and Marny Bonner to feature in this edition of *Australian Wildlife* the plight of another species of Australian wildlife – the marine turtle. I hope our members enjoy reading the different stories on one of our most endangered species of Australian wildlife.

As part of our recently launched Centenary fundraising strategy, we have expanded our donation program to acquire monthly donors. We have just posted to all members our first direct mail appeal and have been very pleased at the response. There was a slight "hiccup" in matching the envelopes to the letters, but this has now been resolved.

In response to the appeal, we received a delightful letter from Miss Romola Wollaston saying:

"I am responding to your letter concerning Centenary plans for the Society.

"I first joined the Society as a Life Member about fifty years ago when I was living in NSW and although I have lived in different states and overseas since that time and not been able to take an active part, I have kept my interest in its news and activities. My joining fee was minimal and I often feel that I should be more financially supportive but am not sufficiently methodical to send regular donations. This proposal for monthly donations seems an appropriate way for me to contribute on a regular basis."

I hope all our other loyal members feel the same and will support us in our conservation efforts to save Australia's unique wildlife by making monthly donations.



A Marine turtle found on the Great Barrier Reef, one of the many creatures that Reef Check Australia is looking to help with their ongoing surveys of the reef. Full story on page 13

Centenary Luncheon

The Centenary Luncheon to celebrate 100 years of conservation work by the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia was held in Sydney on Friday 22 May 2009 in the presence of Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of New South Wales

Over one hundred members and friends joined our celebrations in the beautiful Cello's Restaurant. Master of Ceremonies, Noel Cislowski (Chairman of the Centenary Committee), opened the proceedings and invited the National President, Patrick W Medway AM, to officially welcome the Governor, life members, members and guests to the Centenary Luncheon.

In welcoming the Governor, our National President said that Her Excellency did us a great honour with her presence at our Centenary Luncheon and thanked her for coming and supporting our important wildlife conservation work in this our Centenary Year.

He continued saying:

"It is with a great sense of honour but also humility that I stand here today to address you as the National President on the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the Society in Sydney in May 1909. Honour because of the outstanding conservation achievements by members of the Society over the past one hundred years; and humility because I recognise those wonderful leaders who have gone before me. I feel I am standing on the shoulders of 'conservation giants' when I look at the list of people who have gone before me as presidents of this great wildlife conservation society. From our Foundation President, the Hon Frederick Winchcombe, a Member of the NSW Legislative Council, followed by Sir Joseph Hector McNeil Carruthers, a former Premier of New South Wales and a friend of Winchcombe, to many other very talented people. To people like David George Stead who was an original Vice President in 1909 but who went on to become President and then served as Secretary and Editor later in life - what a fine contribution. He spent his whole life saving wildlife! To Walter Wilson Froggett, Richard Hind Cambage of botanic fame, Ernest Arthur D'Ombrain (an Ophthalmic Surgeon), Henry Charles Lennox Anderson (public servant with an interest in agriculture),



Directors of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia for 2009.

L to R: Back row – Noel Cislowski, Ken Metcalfe, Tony Cornell, Judith May, Vanessa Wilson, Dr Richard Mason, Peter Hardiman. Front row – Dr Clive Williams, Patrick Medway, Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of New South Wales, Dr David Murray, Suzanne Medway

Sydney solicitor Frederick Lynne Rolin and to Thistle Harris, a teacher/educator/botanist who contributed so much to our knowledge of Australian flora and its protection, Walter Henry Child MVO, a retired NSW police commissioner and keen nature lover, to Captain Roy Frederick Bennett, a veteran of WWI and a keen wildlife conservationist, to the much beloved President of Honour Dr Vincent Serventy AM, an educator, writer and a committed conservationist who led the Society for over thirty years.

"As we move forward into our next one hundred years as an important national wildlife conservation society to save and protect our precious native wildlife in all its forms – fauna and flora for future generations - we are all very conscious of the great responsibility placed on our shoulders. For an all volunteer conservation society to have lasted this long is a tribute to the commitment and leadership of all

those former presidents and executive officers who gave so much to ensure that our precious native wildlife was well preserved and protected for future generations. To our members right across Australia and to our many partner organisations who have supported us in our wildlife preservation work and to have contributed to our longevity, I say a big thank you.

"Today I publicly commit myself and the Society to do our very best to ensure that the great traditions of the Founders of the Society will continued to be honoured for the next one hundred years as we go forth into our second century of Australian wildlife preservation.

"What have been some of our outstanding achievements?

- Protection of the Australian koala from hunting and shooting was a major issue in 1909*



Patrick Medway presenting Jacinta Reuben with a Centenary Member's Certificate

- Saved the breeding egret and heron from being shot for its fine breeding feathers for use in ladies hats and the millinery trade
- Initiated the legal protection for Australian fauna and flora with the first acts of parliament to provide this protection
- Encouraged the formation of National Parks and Wildlife agencies
- Provided extensive funding into wildlife research across Australia
- Established University Wildlife Research Grants to assist students to apply good science to the preservation of our wildlife
- Visited Tasmania on a number of occasions and argued against the use of 1080 poison to kill native wildlife in their native forests in Tasmania
- Supported a wide range of other conservation groups in their work to preserve and protect our native wildlife such as the wildlife carers groups.

"Today you can feel justly proud of what your Society is doing across Australia through its network of members and volunteers to save our native wildlife in all its many forms:

South Australian Government to match it dollar for dollar for sea lion research on Kangaroo Island; we supported Moorunde Sanctuary and its wombats

- *In Tasmania we are all worried about the terrible facial cancers on the Tasmania devil and the local road kill of native animals*
- *In Victoria we have assisted in the recovery of the eastern barred bandicoot and the regent honeyeater. After the terrible bushfires in Victoria, we referred our donors to Wildlife Victoria to contribute funds to feed and care for animals hurt by bushfires*
- *In Queensland we are partnered with the Queensland Wildlife Preservation Society to save our marine sea turtles and the northern hairy nosed wombats*
- *In the Northern Territory we are working with local groups to reduce the impact of the cane toad on native wildlife*
- *In Central Australia we are funding research work into the greater bilby*
- *Last week we attended a conference at Nowra on the removal of the Indian myna which has such an adverse effect on our small native birds*
- *We later went on to speak with the Wombat Protection Society officials*



Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of New South Wales and Patrick Medway unveiled a Centenary Plaque

on conservation of our native wombats and their habitat and to prevent culling.

- We have initiated an exciting partnership with the University of Technology Sydney to establish a **Wildlife Research Foundation** to assist PhD students undertake appropriate wildlife research studies.

"This is an historic occasion in the long life of the Wildlife Preservation Society. In order to remember this special year I am pleased to announce that we will be supporting the idea of a Universal Declaration of Environmental Rights and introducing the Ten Green Commandments started by the late Dr Vincent Serventy.

"We have introduced for this Centenary Year two University Wildlife Research Grants of \$5,000 each for those past recipients who have achieved outstanding results in their wildlife research projects and who will benefit from our further support for their work.

"We are developing a Wildlife University Research Foundation to further assist our next generation of young scientists to understand and love our native wildlife as much as we do."

At the conclusion of his address, Patrick proposed a toast to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia on the occasion of its Centenary.

Jacinta Reuben of Moriah College in Queens Park, Sydney responded on behalf of the youth of Australia.



Presentation of the Serventy Conservation Medal. L to R: Dr Clive Williams, Professor Marie Bashir, Barry Scott

Jacinta Reuben's speech

"Your Excellency, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, my first encounter with Australian wildlife happened when I went camping with my dad. As we pitched our tent in the shadow of the Warrumbungles I saw wild kangaroos grazing nearby. I went to say hello and give one a pat, and it whacked me in the face. I went scrambling back to my dad with tears in my eyes. I was four years old.

"Two years ago I stood on the beach of a small island in the dark of night

and held a tiny baby green turtle in my hands. It had just hatched, and I had the extraordinary honour of introducing it to the ocean where it would spend the next eighty or more years of its life. As it disappeared into the dark water I wondered what changes would be brought to the world that we would share in our lifetimes. How would the environment cope with the battering we continue to give it? What will the impacts of global warming be on our oceans? I'm not the only person asking these questions.

"That same year I spent two weeks with my family in the jungles of Borneo, looking for wild orang-utans. We saw two, and the sightings are becoming rarer. I learned that their natural habitats are being progressively decimated and are being replaced with palm plantations for palm oil. I expect if I ever take my children to Borneo we would only see orang-utans in the sanctuaries and zoos, if at all. This was the first time I had ever been so brutally confronted with the impact of man on the habitat of an endangered species, I was upset and angry.

"Unfortunately this has also been happening in Australia, many of our native animals and other wildlife have had their natural habitats damaged and in some cases destroyed. There is obviously an urgent need for all Australians to become more aware of just how precious and important our unique wildlife really is.



Presentation of the Community Conservation Award. L to R: Dr Clive Williams, Patrick Medway, Professor Marie Bashir, Trevor Evans



Cutting the Centenary cake. L to R: Jacinta Reuben, Professor Marie Bashir, Patrick Medway

"My generation sees with very open eyes the damage that has been done and is still being done. We watched the last election go by here in Australia and were so pleased to see a government come to power that would agree to ratify the Kyoto protocol.

"Kyoto is great, but when is the government going to start making the hard decisions that will really make a difference? Why are they still mining uranium in fragile environmental areas? Why are Tasmania's pristine wilderness areas still subject to deforestation? Why is duck shooting still allowed?

"You see, my generation doesn't think these things are a matter of right of wealth or right of habit. We believe that all animals and all plants that share this world with us have the same right

to future generations as we do. It's a simple fact that past generations of humanity have put these fundamental rights of existence at risk, but that has to change before it is simply too late.

"I can speak for most young people in Australia when I say that we are determined to continue the work of such groups as the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia, you have been fighting for the last one hundred years and we must continue that fight."

Address by the Governor of New South Wales

"Thank you Patrick for your warm welcome and for your deeply shining humility and appreciation of your role as National President, following many illustrious predecessors.

"It is a great pleasure to join you all today for this truly auspicious occasion - the Centenary of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia.

"There is no doubt that for a century the Society has made an extraordinary contribution to protect and preserve the unique treasures of our natural environment, a continent with a wilderness that is like no other in the world.

"May I, at this point, record my respect for the traditional owners of the land upon which we gather - the Eora Gadigal people, their ancestors and descendants, - indeed, for all Australia's indigenous people who have nurtured this land for tens of thousands of years.

"It is noteworthy and a source of pride to me that the impetus to do something came about around the time of our nation's federation in 1901, initiated by the Society's founder David Stead, and with strong support later from the Swedish Consul General.

"The history of the Society, which I found very moving, tells of an immediate response from the public, with one hundred keen citizens enrolled in the first week. Indeed, I have discovered many inspiring facts in reviewing the Society's historical high points.

"The Society has been a progressive group since its inception, with six women elected to the first committee (some, I believe, went on to become acclaimed naturalists).

"Unrestrained by deference to high positions - regal or vice regal - the Society had written to Queen Mary, the grandmother of our present Queen, and enlisted her support in the banning of the feathers of wild birds in millinery decoration. Her response that she "would not wear the plumage of any wild bird", was immensely influential, and was followed by the pronouncement of the Australian Governor-General's wife that no women guests wearing such plumage at any vice regal functions would be welcome!

"So eventually the trade in exotic plumes ceased, and the destruction of exquisite birds was significantly reduced.

"The naming of a ferry in her honour which plied the beautiful waters of Sydney Harbour for sixty-nine years, is a fitting tribute, I believe. Built in Huskisson in 1912, the Lady Denman Ferry was returned to Huskisson in 1981, to serve as a maritime museum.

"Even the President of the United States, Herbert Hoover, when approached by the Society's fearless first president David Stead, agreed to ban all skins, thus putting an end to the koala trade.

"I recall with great pride my membership, as a child, of the Gould League of Bird Lovers, not realising that although it was initially established in Victoria, before the Society, the Society had played an important role in the formation of League branches across the nation.

"I believe that it would be impossible to estimate the value not only to Australia, but indeed to the world, of the Society and the vision of their outstanding members in the declaration of so many of our glorious national parks. I am particularly proud of New South Wales' contribution in this regard.

"At weekly meetings of the Executive Council, which I have the honour to chair, recommendations for the proclamation of new national parks are frequent agenda items.

"Internationally, the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia has promoted powerful advocacy in the creation of world heritage areas, and a fearless support of threatened areas. The Society has shone as a beacon of courage, integrity and determination for decades, and most Australians are aware of your great contribution over many years. You have our profound sense of gratitude!

"In celebrating with pride the 100 years of historic achievement of the Wildlife Preservation Society, it is also a time to be mindful of how much has been lost in the past despite your efforts, and how much more there is to do - and how all of us who care about our continent and our planet must be ever vigilant.

"Indeed every time I drive through Wakehurst Parkway to the northern beaches through the beautiful forest, my heart accelerates in the hope that I



L to R: Professor Marie Bashir, Patrick Medway, Suzanne Medway

will not see any innocent creatures that have been injured or killed by traffic. I have noticed lately new fences erected to reduce this carnage, but drivers should also be aware of the danger to our unique and valuable wildlife.

"Certainly a nation such as ours, who loudly declare its love and devotion to the wilderness and outdoor life, should determinedly continue to support the Society's efforts over the next 100 years!

"Ladies and gentlemen, it is truly a privilege to share this Centenary celebration of your inspiring and successful efforts.

"Congratulations and thank you all."

The Serventy Conservation Medal for 2008

This special award was inaugurated in 1999 to commemorate the wonderful conservation work by the members of the Serventy family – Dr Vin Serventy, his brother Dr Dominic Serventy and his sister Lucy. Each member of the family has given a lifetime of commitment to the conservation and preservation of Australian wildlife.

The famous words of the renowned African ecologist, Baba Dioum,

encapsulate the philosophy behind the Serventy family's dedication to the environment:

In the end, we will conserve only what we love,

We will love only what we understand,

And we will understand only what we are taught.

The Late Dr Vin Serventy taught us all to love and understand our unique Australian wildlife through his untiring efforts over so many years.

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

It is given to few people to see the fruits of their labours as our current Serventy medallist has experienced. Barry Scott has devoted twenty-three years of his life to the conservation of the koala and indirectly to the conservation of other Australian wildlife. In 1985 he became aware of the declines in koala populations through the effects of the disease *chlamydia*. One year

later he gathered support to form the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF). Since that time the AKF has grown into an influential organisation participating in research, education and active lobbying on behalf of Australia's wildlife. Though based in Brisbane, AKF has had an influence in every state where there are populations of koalas. The AKF's mapping of existing koala populations, alone, is a significant contribution to Australian wildlife and is an example of how conservation societies can contribute to the science of wildlife management. By focusing on the habitat needs of the koala, Barry's organisation also focuses on the needs of other species whose habitats are threatened.

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

Barry Scott said:

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

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

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

"In 1985, as I learned about the problems and diseases affecting the koala and its habitat, I travelled around

Australia meeting animal lovers and setting up branches of the Australian Koala Foundation. Our theme was "Caring and Sharing". Initially we raised funds to help Universities research koala chlamydia health problems, but we then moved more to conservation issues to retain koala habitat against increasing property development and forest destruction.

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

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

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

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

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

Community Wildlife Conservation Award for 2009

The Community Wildlife Conservation Award is made each year to recognise organisations which make a significant contribution to the preservation of Australian wildlife.

Dr Clive Williams announced that the Community Wildlife Conservation Award for 2008 was awarded to

Australian Ecosystems Foundation Inc. (AEFI) of Lithgow, New South Wales. This organisation was founded in 2002 by a group of individuals who believed passionately in an ecosystems approach to the conservation of wildlife. AEFI has both acquired land and received land donated by some of its members. It has planted trees and set out to manage protected habitats, thereby assuring the survival of endangered species. AEFI also conducts and supports research and works in conjunction with university departments. It maintains its own endangered species captive breeding programs, particularly the eastern quoll. At its property, Secret Creek Sanctuary, AEFI provides educational opportunities for visitors to learn about a range of Australian wildlife. Its committee is made up of volunteers from a range of backgrounds, including business executives, scientists, tourist operators and indigenous representatives.

AEFI is a great example of a community organisation in action, providing scientific and educational input into the management of our precious wildlife. They are worthy recipients of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia's Community Wildlife Conservation Award.

Trevor Evans said:

"Thank you so much for a great awards day at the Centenary Luncheon. On behalf of our AEFI team I congratulate the Wildlife Preservation Society on their 100 years....and well done on the day and into the future.

"It was a great thrill to meet the Governor Marie Bashir to hear her interesting presentation and for her mention of Lithgow and the Charles Darwin visit.

"It was an amazing coincidence that the very next day Charles Darwin's great, great grandson Chris Darwin called into Secret Creek and joined our foundation..... it was a very eerie and strange day when that happened."

The Great Barrier Reef's best kept secret

Gemma Routledge of Reef Check Australia



Since 2001, a small troupe of highly-trained community volunteers have been dedicating their weekends to conducting coral reef health surveys across the length and breadth of the Great Barrier Reef. These recreational divers collect vital information useful to marine park managers for planning the sustainable use of the reef by everyone, divers and fishers alike.

Now with over 150 qualified survey volunteers, Reef Check Australia is a not for profit organisation based in Townsville, Queensland. It has been leading the way in citizen science, with a solid baseline data set collected annually on over 25 sites across the Great Barrier Reef for the last eight years. More recently, teams have also begun to survey the Ramsar wetlands around Moreton Bay as part of the South East Queensland reefs project. This long term monitoring is an important addition to the government programs already surveying selected sites with their own teams of professional researchers.

Reef Check Australia, following its own internationally acclaimed monitoring protocol, is able to survey many popular dive sites on a far more cost effective basis than the government programs. This allows each site to be surveyed annually, rather than biennially as in many cases of state commissioned monitoring. The survey teams are made up of passionate individuals, such as Deborah Eastop from Cairns, who says, "Having spent years going out to the reef as a dive instructor, it's just nice to be able to get out there and give something back."

Through generous donations of berth space from dive operator partners,

the organisation is able to access arguably some of the most important sites on the Great Barrier Reef - those most important for tourism; the reef itself generates over \$6 billion for the Australian economy each year. Many of their research sites are important for specific species, ie the green turtle, which can often be found enjoying the reefs at the Low Isles off Port Douglas.

The volunteer teams have also been called out on occasion by the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators to do a SWAT team monitoring exercise on sites where suspected outbreaks of crown of thorns starfish are threatening the health of the Reef.

Not content with hands-on research, the charity is also targeting the younger generation with an education program aiming to establish a root awareness of the environmental concerns facing the Reef and what people can do individually to mitigate these impacts. Simple things can make

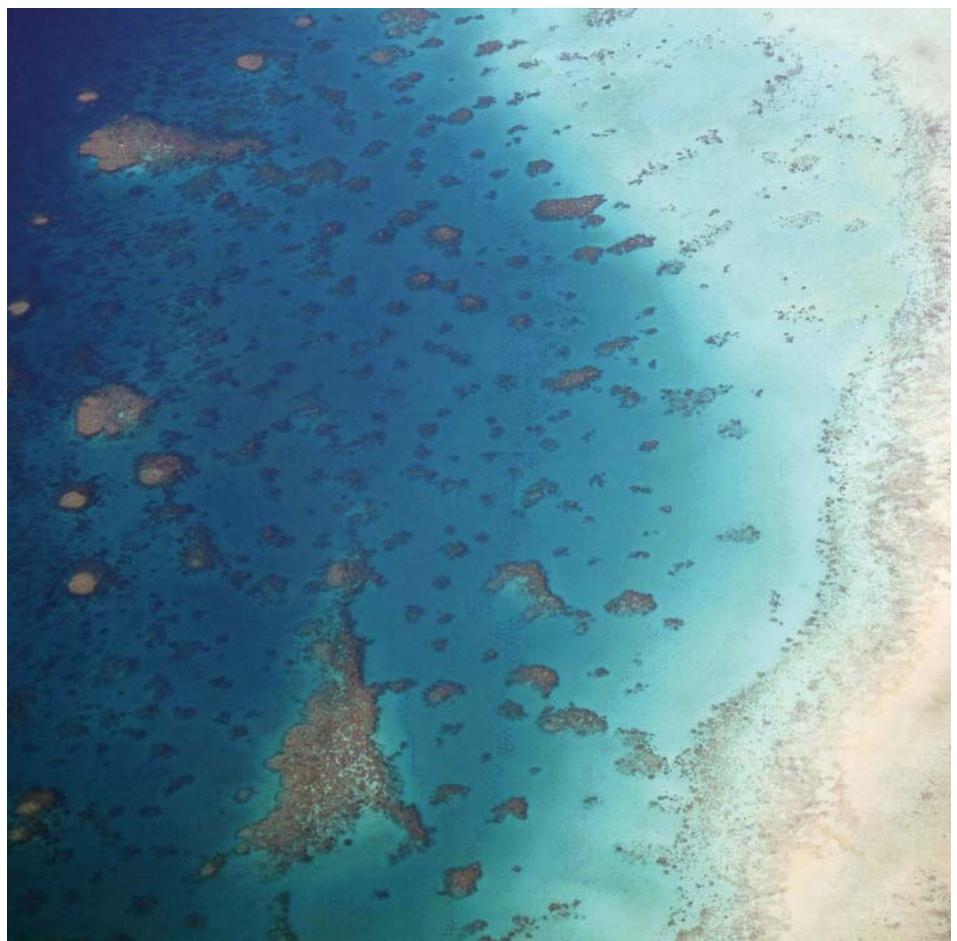


A Reef Check Australia surveyor in action

a real difference, such as reducing the use of products that pollute the sea like fertilisers and household cleaning products; eating seafood caught from a sustainable fishery; and using less fossil fuel by riding to work or school. Hopefully tomorrow's Australian citizens will be more environmentally aware than previous generations.

Reef Check Australia congratulates the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia on its Centenary of wildlife conservation this year. As a younger organisation, a centenary is still ninety years away - and there will certainly be something to celebrate if coral reefs are still around then. Current prognoses are not so good with twenty percent of reefs under threat of loss within forty years, without even considering the potential effects of climate change. Coral reefs are in decline but they *can* be rescued and the unsung heroes of Reef Check Australia are doing their best to help.

To find out more about Reef Check Australia and make a tax-deductible donation, visit their website at www.reefcheckaustralia.org and sign up to receive the quarterly newsletter.



The Great Barrier Reef from the air



A Reef Check Australia survey team



Surveys bring divers into close contact with many reef creatures



A brightly coloured sea star, *Fromia* sp.



A coral garden in the Ribbon Reefs

Why are Indian mynas a problem?

Suzanne Medway



In India, where the common Indian myna originated, it is called the "Farmer's Friend" because it eats insects that destroy crop plants. The name myna comes from a Hindi word, "maina" meaning a bird of the starling family, *Sturnidae*, to which mynas belong. Mynas in India are also regarded as symbols of undying love, because they often pair for life and *maina* is also sometimes used as a term of endearment for young girls.

Image courtesy of Iwan Beijes

Common Indian mynas and some other species of myna, particularly Indian Hill mynas, *Gracula religiosa*, are accomplished mimics and can learn to talk. For this reason mynas have been taken to many parts of the world as cage birds.

Common Indian mynas were brought to Melbourne in 1862 to control insect pests in market gardens, but even though they were not successful at this, they were taken from Melbourne to many other places in Australia, including north Queensland, where it was thought they would control insect pests of sugar cane. Cane toads were introduced to Queensland for the same reason and have also become pests. Common Indian mynas have established feral populations in many parts of the world.

Common Indian mynas can be an economic problem because they damage fruit and grain crops and their noise and smell can be annoying where they are in large numbers. Mynas can also spread mites and they have the potential to spread disease to people and domestic animals. Mynas become quite fearless of people if they are not hassled and can be a problem in outdoor eating areas by stealing food off people's plates. There are a few records of mynas attacking people, but this is not common.

Perhaps the common Indian myna's most serious "crime" is that it competes aggressively with native wildlife for nesting hollows. Common Indian mynas nest in tree hollows, or places like them, such as holes in roofs. Hollows are in short supply over much

of Australia because of clearing for agriculture.

Mynas reduce biodiversity by fighting for hollows with native birds like rosellas, destroying their eggs and chicks, stopping them from breeding. Indian mynas are capable of evicting even large birds such as kookaburras and dollar birds from their nests. They also evict small mammals, like sugar gliders from hollows – which commonly means a death sentence for the gliders because they have nowhere else to go. It is not uncommon for groups of mynas to mob other birds and mammals, like possums.

In the ACT and some other places in Australia mynas have invaded woodland habitats. There is not much woodland left in Australia and this

additional threat to native wildlife can be a serious problem for biodiversity conservation.

Feral common Indian mynas are a serious problem for biodiversity conservation in many countries other than Australia. In the year 2000, common Indian mynas were listed by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) as one of the World's 100 Worst Invasive Species.

Mynas were recently voted the most unpopular feral animal in Australia

Ironically, common Indian mynas have not been formally recognised as a problem by conservation agencies in Australia, except in the ACT, where the ACT Government has directed resources to seeking solutions.

Can you tell the difference?

The common Indian myna is a medium sized chocolate brown bird, about twelve centimetres tall, with a black head and neck, a yellow beak, eye patch, feet and legs. White wing patches are obvious when the birds are flying. Juvenile mynas look a bit different but are also easily recognisable as mynas.

Mynas are distinctive, because unlike most birds, they move with a jaunty walk rather than hop. European starlings also walk rather than hop. Common Indian mynas can be confused with noisy mynas (*Manorina melanocephala*) a native Australian



Noisy myna (*Manorina melanocephala*)

species that is also aggressive and often moves around in groups, as do common Indian mynas and they look superficially similar to them.

Help to exclude nuisance Indian myna birds from our urban areas

Indian myna populations are exploding in urban areas. In a 2001 "Birds in Backyards" survey, these birds were found in around eighty percent of participants' Sydney gardens. Without realising it, we have helped their numbers expand by providing them with an abundance of food and breeding sites, right in our own backyards!

You can help to reduce the impact of Indian mynas

There are a few simple steps that can be taken to help reduce the number of Indian mynas in urban areas and to protect our backyards and local area from the threat and nuisance they cause.

You can deter Indian mynas from your backyard, and help bring back native birds and mammals, by taking a few simple steps:

- Prevent access to food waste, compost and uneaten pet food
- Remove weeds from your garden
- Remove bird feeders where they attract pest birds, or add to problems for native species (bird feed also attracts rats and mice)
- Create a garden that is native bird friendly, using a good mix of local native species. Call your local council for help and more information
- Replace some of your lawn with native grasses to provide food for native birds
- Repair eaves and gaps in your roof
- Continually "shoo" Indian mynas away
- Provide a bird bath with varying water depths to encourage native birds (make sure you place it close to a shrub to provide a safe place for small birds to escape)
- Encourage your friends, family and neighbours to take these steps
- Report the location of roost trees to your council.



Mirror trap assembled



The Koala, or Native Bear

David G. Stead

When the first settlers came to Port Jackson they found themselves surrounded by all sorts of strange trees and wild flowers, birds and the quaintest of animals imaginable. One can readily understand the amazement of our forefathers when they beheld animals which could not fit in with any kind that they had been used to in their own native land, and how they used their imaginations in coining names for these strange and wonderful beasts. What they did, in many cases, was to prefix the word "native" on to the name of some domestic or other animal which they had known in

their old lands, so long as the animal so named had some real or fancied resemblance to such creatures. And so, very early in our history, we hear of Native Cats (which were not cats at all), Native Rabbits (Bandicoots), Native Moles or Duck Moles (Platypus), Native Tigers (Tasmania), Native Dogs and so on. The only one of these that was a really good name was that of Native Dog, for the Dingo is a real dog.

Among the animals that lived in the trees of the young settlement was a funny little fluffy creature,

with a passing resemblance to the smaller bears of the Old World. This attracted much attention because of its tameness, its amusing (though somewhat glum) little face, and its general suggestion of the toy Teddy Bears - as we now call them - which even then were playthings for many European children. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that this animal soon became known as the Native Bear. But the aboriginal human inhabitants of young Sydney called the animal COLO or COOLA, and so we find in one of the dispatches from the new settlement that here was to be found "a kind of monkey, called by the natives 'Colo'". Of course, it was not really a kind of monkey any more than it was a true bear, as it belonged to the strange order of marsupiated or pouched animals-generally termed Marsupials - characterised by the possession of a frontal pouch or marsupium, in which to nurse their young. But we will come back to that point later.

I have said that the animal was called Colo or Coola. As with many others among our native names, there was no general agreement as to the proper way of spelling the name as pronounced by the aborigines, and by some it was spelled K-o-a-l-a. That is the way we spell it to-day; but the pronunciation is ko-la, and not, as commonly favoured, ko-ah-la. While I am on this question of the native names, I should say that many names of places in eastern New South Wales owe their origin to this lovable little animal. For instance, there are Coolah, Colah, Colo, perhaps Coila, and Coolac. Other names for the Koala in various parts of its habitat were Kula, Kulla, Kulawine, Coorabun or Coolabun, Koolewong, as well as some other names not having the same sort of sound, such as Boorabee (North Coast), Burroor, Bangaroo, Pucawan, Banjorah, and Burrendong. In the Northern Suburbs of Sydney, also, we have a Koola Road. This list could be greatly added to if we were to take the names from all the many tribes of blacks who lived where the little Koala lived.

It was mentioned that the Native Bear was not a real bear, as it belonged to the marsupials or pouched animals. Consequently, it belongs to the same general group as the Kangaroos, Wallabies, Possums, etc. Its nearest relatives in the tree branches are the

Possoms; but a much nearer sort of cousin is the Wombat, which is far more like a bear in its form than the Koala, digs holes in the ground in which to hide, and cannot climb trees at all. But, even so, it is interesting to note that the illustrious naturalist who gave the Koala its scientific name, when publishing a description of it, must have been struck by certain bear-like appearances, for he called it *Phascolarctus* - from the Greek *Phascolos*, pouched; and *arctos*, a bear.

And now we must have something about the interesting life history of the Koala. Like other marsupials, the young is born at a very small size and at a very backward state of development - almost a worm-like creature of little less than an inch in length. Further development takes place in the pouch, where the baby remains for a period of about six months. The pouch grows larger and larger to adapt itself to the growing baby Koala, until at last the baby outgrows its very comfortable home, and must seek a resting place on its mother's woolly back. Many people who have seen the young Koala in this position have been sorry either for the young one or the mother, or perhaps for both. But they may spare their concern, for both young and adult are admirably adapted for hanging on with their great prehensile claws, which are enormously strong relative to the size of the animal itself.

Probably there is no prettier sight than that of the mother Koala carrying a well-developed young one on her back and up a tree to the safety of some comfortable forked bough, there to rest and to look down in contempt upon the dangers of the earth below. Long after the young one has left the pouch it is still suckled by the mother; even up to twelve months old. It can then begin to shift for itself and to select from the great collection of Gum Trees (*Eucalyptus*) leaves just the particular sort that it may fancy. These leaves form the Koala's staple diet at all seasons. A number of people have claimed that the animal descends from the trees occasionally for the purpose of obtaining other vegetation and certain roots; but, at best, such food must be of minor importance to this strange feeder, which lives almost exclusively upon the Gum leaves.

When I was a boy at North Shore

(Sydney), I used to observe the Koalas also eating some of the leaves, and apparently the fruits of the Mistletoe (*Loranthus*), which grows upon the Gum Trees. This habit has been reported to me also by other observers in several parts of New South Wales.

In a state of nature, the Koala is found only in the eastern States of the mainland of Australia, from the southern most parts of Victoria up to the tropical parts of Queensland. It has never been found in Tasmania. For about one hundred years after the beginning of settlement in Australia, the Koala remained in great abundance

in many parts of the heavily timbered bushlands; and could still be bound in many places where most of the timber had been removed. But during the last forty years there has been a tremendous diminution of their numbers, until to-day they are only to be found in numbers in a very few localities, while, in most of the places where they used to be common, they are now either altogether absent or are only found in very small numbers indeed. We can all see, therefore, how great is the need for us to bestir ourselves to take action so that the Koala will not become extinct.



Koala at Rockhampton

Only in a few places in Queensland are large numbers of the Koala to be found, but only the most careful protection by the Government and by the Australian people will prevent them from being exterminated in these places, as so many thousands of their kind have been destroyed in the past. Telling of the terrible destruction which has gone on in Queensland (until it was stopped to a large extent recently) makes a very unhappy story, and makes one rather ashamed to think that his own people should so cruelly destroy one of the most fascinating, harmless and most interesting living things in the whole of the world of Nature. One feels particularly ashamed because it cannot be truthfully said that the Koala is in any way a pest. It has never been known to destroy fruit or grain crops of any kind, living, as I said before, on the leaves of certain of the Gum Trees or Eucalypts.

Very few people have any idea of the immense number of these harmless animals killed in the one State of Queensland in only a few years before the present season of protection was introduced. In 1927, about 600,000 were killed during one month's open season (August), and, for the whole year, including a so-called close season, not less than one million were slain. Altogether, several millions of the poor little Koalas were killed in a space of a few years in Queensland, until a great wave of public indignation put a stop to it for the time being.

Although very large numbers of the Koala have been killed by shooters and trappers in Victoria and New South Wales, the majority of them seem to have died out through the incidence of some form of disease. Some people think that this might have been a disease introduced with domesticated animals from abroad: others think that it might have been brought in by the European rabbit, which has become so widespread and such a great pest in many parts of Australia. We do not know this, however; but the fact remains that during the years from about 1885 to 1895, immense numbers died in both these States. The deaths were not limited to the Koalas, as a number of other marsupials also suffered - principally the so-called Native Cats or Dasyures. When I was a small boy, staying for a school

holiday at the junction of the Colo and Hawkesbury Rivers, I actually saw numbers of these poor little Koalas sitting in the trees, or at the foot of a tree, looking very sick and miserable, scratching their heads aimlessly, while some of them whimpered very like a baby.

This curious baby-like cry has always attracted attention, and has been the means of encouraging the sympathy of their human friends, though it does not seem to have helped very much in preventing the dreadful killings which I have just mentioned.

Now, after mentioning the destruction of the species, it is important to speak of the steps that are being taken for the re-establishment of the Native Bear in at least some parts of its old habitat. The first of these steps is protection. In each of the States of Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales, the animal is protected by law. But protection by the law and protection by the whole of the people are not always one and the same thing. Unfortunately, there are still many people who, when they find a thing is worth money, will forget all other things and will try to make use of that thing for their own profit. This is what has happened repeatedly with the Koala. Men found that they could sell the skins, and so they killed the animal, whether it was protected by law or not.

Some years ago, the Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia found that almost the whole of the skins of the Koala were being sent for sale to the United States of America - many of them during closed seasons in Australia, when the killing of the animal was forbidden. In this Case, the skins were sent out under the name of "Wombat," although the Wombat has a very coarse, hair-like fur. So, after having taken necessary preventive action in Australia, it was decided to approach the President of the United States personally - because he (President Hoover) had once lived in Australia and had become very interested in Australian Wild Nature - with the request that no more skins of the Koala (or even any marked as Wombat) would be allowed to come into any port of the United States. President Hoover agreed to this, and absolutely prohibited the entry of such skins into any portion of the United

States, or its dependencies. This was a very important step forward, of course, and helped us and other friends of the Koala, who were fighting for its life and freedom, very much indeed.

In addition to this measure of protection, the State Governments were each asked to do their utmost to prevent the Koalas or their skins from being destroyed or from being exported from one State to another, and the Commonwealth Government (which controls all exports overseas) was asked to prohibit all exportations. This was agreed to.

While this official Government protection has been in force, a number of people here and there in Australia have been doing their utmost to spread a knowledge of the Native Bear and its habits and of the great need for helping it and protecting it in every possible way throughout our country. Never before in our history was there so much public interest in the Teddy Bear's welfare as in these last few years; and that must help a great deal to bring the little animal back again to its beloved wild bushlands in the future.

During the last ten years or so there have been occasional reports of the appearance of one or two Native Bears in some parts of New South Wales and Victoria from which they had previously disappeared. Unfortunately, in a number of cases, people have caught these - although it was, and is, unlawful to do so - with the intention of keeping them as pets, nearly always with disastrous results to the poor little Koala, which requires very special care in handling and feeding, and should only be so handled and kept in a very few public institutions, under scientific control. But the fact that the Koalas have appeared in these bush places again is important, and helps us to see what might be done if we encourage them - and even restore them in such places, where they will not be interfered with at all by humans, and where they might again live their wild existence, just as they did for the thousands of years before the white man came to Australia.

At the present time specimens of the Koalas are kept on view in a living state in several Australian zoos, including at least three private ones - one near Sydney, one not far from Brisbane and another near Adelaide. The difficulty

about such establishments is that while it may be pleasant for humans to be able to go places where they may see this dear little bush charmer and where they may even handle it, the circumstances surrounding their life anywhere in captivity or semi-captivity are quite unnatural to them. The Koala is, of course, nocturnal, usually shunning the daylight and hiding his eyes as much as possible from the strong glare of the sun, even when asleep in the open, or some tree fork, as may happen. Many of our people, therefore, think that it is unwise and perhaps even cruel to the Teddy Bear to expose him to such an unnatural life. But, in any case, whether we approve of such establishments or not, it cannot be expected that they will assist us to bring the animal back to its own native environment in the bushlands - and this is just what we must do. This view has been officially endorsed by the Society (see Annual Report, ante).

Some very good beginnings have already been made in this direction, and of these I must say something. In Victoria some few years ago, the Government determined to take a hand in putting the Koala back where he belonged, so they made a very good start by collecting odd specimens here and there and placing them together in localities where they could be quite free in the trees to live their own lives without interference by the public. One of these places was the great National Park at Wilson's Promontory. Here there are now to be found many specimens living happily in this great wild park.

Another place in Victoria where the Koalas are now very firmly established is on the islands in Westernport - just "round the corner" to the south, on the Victorian coast. Here, at French Island and Phillip Island, the visitor and holiday maker may go out into the bush or along the public roads - even in the settled parts - and see quite a lot of happy Koalas curled up in the gum trees. In these parts the trees are not very tall, so that everyone has a splendid opportunity of seeing the animals in their natural habitat without being able to interfere with them at all, and without causing them any fear or any of the discomforts of being handled or artificially fed. So well have the Koalas done on Phillip Island that they are now being spread



Koala's at Australia Zoo

from there to still more places in Victoria - and so the good work goes on, and Teddy Bear is steadily coming back again.

In New South Wales we have not yet carried out this work, although we have done so much to encourage protective laws and popular interest. The Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia, however, aided by the splendid Gould League (of which there are so many thousand of school pupil members) and the Junior Tree Wardens, is trying to get Government and public support to enable us to do what Victoria is doing. With the help of all of you no doubt we shall succeed, so that our quaint Teddy Bear will not only be again common in many wild bushlands along the eastern part or coastal division of New South Wales,

but may again be found within the metropolitan area of Sydney. There is no scientific or biological reason that this should not be so, whatever may be said by some interested people to the contrary. When that day comes it will be a happy time not only for the Koala but for the thousands of bush walkers, nature lovers and holiday makers who are so fond of journeying out along the roads and the beaches near to our glorious Australian bushlands, in the incomparably beautiful Sydney region.

This re-establishment or putting back of the native animals of various countries is going on more and more in many parts of the world, so that nowadays one may go through a great park, like the noble Kruger Park, in South Africa, and see Antelopes and Buffaloes, and even Lions and many

other four-footed creatures of the wilds in their native state and with very little fear of man. Or, as in America, where we may see Moose or Bison or Bear and a host of the smaller animals in full view in their own homes and without that terrible fear which the poor animals have so sadly learned from their past contact with the human race - which has so often killed the animals without any just cause at all.

Australia also must have these great wild nature parks filled with all our own (not introduced) interesting and peculiar native animals and birds. We already have many wonderful National Parks set aside for permanent preservation in their wild state with beautiful trees and ferns and wild flowers; but we must go a step further and encourage the living wild things to come and stay there without fear that

we may perhaps shoot or trap or snare them. By this means we may make the great bushlands not only a paradise for the birds and animals, but also for ourselves.

I hope that all my readers will do their utmost to bring this happy state of affairs about, for the Koala - our dear Teddy Bear - and for all our other bush fauna.

Koala conservation between old friends

Sophia Walter, Public Relations & Communications, Australian Koala Foundation

The Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia (WPSA) was one of the first advocates for the koala and this year is recognising the efforts of the organisation that now acts as the primary advocate for our beautiful national icon, the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF).

The conservation of the koala has been a major objective of the WPSA since its inception in 1909. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Society fought to stop koalas from being killed for the export of their skins, eventually leading to the koala being declared a Protected Species. Koala populations were so severely depleted that they have yet to recover.

During the 1980s, disease was widely seen as the major threat to the survival of koalas. A Queensland accountant witnessed the devastation of disease amongst his local school's koala population and realised something had to be done to help these beautiful animals. These koalas were suffering from *chlamydia* - a disease far too common in urban koala populations - which causes blindness, wet bottom and infertility. In 1986, he formed the Australian Koala Association, later to become the Australian Koala Foundation, to find a cure for *chlamydia* and help save the koala.

This man is Barry Scott, founder of the Australian Koala Foundation. This year, in WPSA's 100th year anniversary celebrations, the Society has awarded Mr Scott with one of its most prestigious medals, the Serventy Conservation Medal.

Each year, this Medal recognises a person who has been outstanding in their commitment to the preservation of Australian wildlife. The Serventy

Medal is intended to honour conservation work that has not been done as part of a professional career. It is given to those whose labour in the conservation field is driven by a love of nature and a determination that it should be conserved. Often these have been non-scientists who have earned their conservation skills through pure dedication. Barry Scott was the ideal candidate.

In the early years of the AKF, it was quickly discovered that habitat destruction was the leading threat to the survival of the koala, Barry and the AKF adjusted accordingly. Now, the organisation is dedicated to achieving the conservation and effective management of wild koalas and their habitat.

Mr Scott's vision and dedication has seen the AKF grow under the direction of CEO Deborah Tabart OAM into an internationally recognised scientific organisation that has funded one of the largest bodies of research on a single species in the world. Mr Scott sees the koala as a flagship for the plight of biodiversity around the world and hopes the Australian Koala Foundation's conservation efforts can be trailblazers for wildlife protection everywhere.

"By creating the koala as a symbol to make people think more about their environment, we can help to pass on to future generations a greater awareness of what animals mean to man and the important relationship that flora and fauna have as a balanced part of our existence on Earth," Barry Scott, 1988.

In 2009, the Australian Koala Foundation has been focusing on positioning the koala firmly on

Federal and international agendas. As well as the AKF's nomination of Southeast Queensland's Koala Coast koala population as Vulnerable under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act, an assessment of the species' Threatened Species listing at a national level is also underway. This assessment is due in September 2010 but, with local extinctions occurring regularly, this may be too late.

In addition, Ms Tabart is the only non-Government National Koala Steering Committee member so the Australian Koala Foundation is exerting its power to influence the new National Koala Conservation Strategy. A ten year review by the Federal Government has found this Strategy to be severely deficient in protecting the koala.

The Australian Koala Foundation is also formulating a National Koala Act to lead the way in biodiversity protection around the world. This three-pronged piece of legislation will aim to protect the species using planning powers, encouraging and supporting landholders to nurture their environment and protect it for the community at large.

Under the leadership of Deborah Tabart and guidance of the 2009 Serventy Medal winner Barry Scott, the Australian Koala Foundation's work is internationally renowned. To help the Australian Koala Foundation influence decision makers to protect the koala and its habitat, join their free group *Koala Campaigners*. For more information on the AKF, visit www.savethekoala.com or call 07 3229 7233.

Hunted koalas still to recover

Sophia Walter, Public Relations & Communications, Australian Koala Foundation

As koala numbers continue to dwindle towards extinction, a history of hardship shows it is amazing they have survived this long.

The koala has had a controversial history since white settlement. The Australian Koala Foundation estimates there are only around 100,000 koalas left in the wild, and historic factors and contemporary habitat loss are the leading reasons for the threat to the survival of the species.

Early European settlers decimated koala populations in a way they have not yet recovered from. Hunted as a source of fur to trade, at least three million animals were killed. By 1924, they were extinct in South Australia and severely depleted in Victoria and New South Wales.

In Queensland, the government declared an open season on koalas and in six months one million were killed. The season was temporarily closed and, when re-opened, another 800,000 were slaughtered in just over one month. The lasting impact of this scale of hunting was finally felt. Public outrage forced governments to declare koalas a 'Protected Species' by the late 1930s.

But koala populations now faced a new threat. No laws protecting eucalyptus trees upon which koalas rely on for their food and shelter were brought in, and habitat loss has become the key issue stalling the recovery of koalas. Except for some recently implemented laws in New South Wales, a lack of protection for significant trees remains the case throughout the koala's range.

The Australian Koala Foundation now acts as the primary advocate for koalas, urging change at legislative levels in order to encourage the preservation and effective management of the animal and its habitat. Through the creation of a Koala Habitat Atlas, the organisation maps koala habitat in order to identify and rank eucalyptus forest. The maps make it possible to plan for future habitat protection in urbanising areas, and to manage existing landscapes.

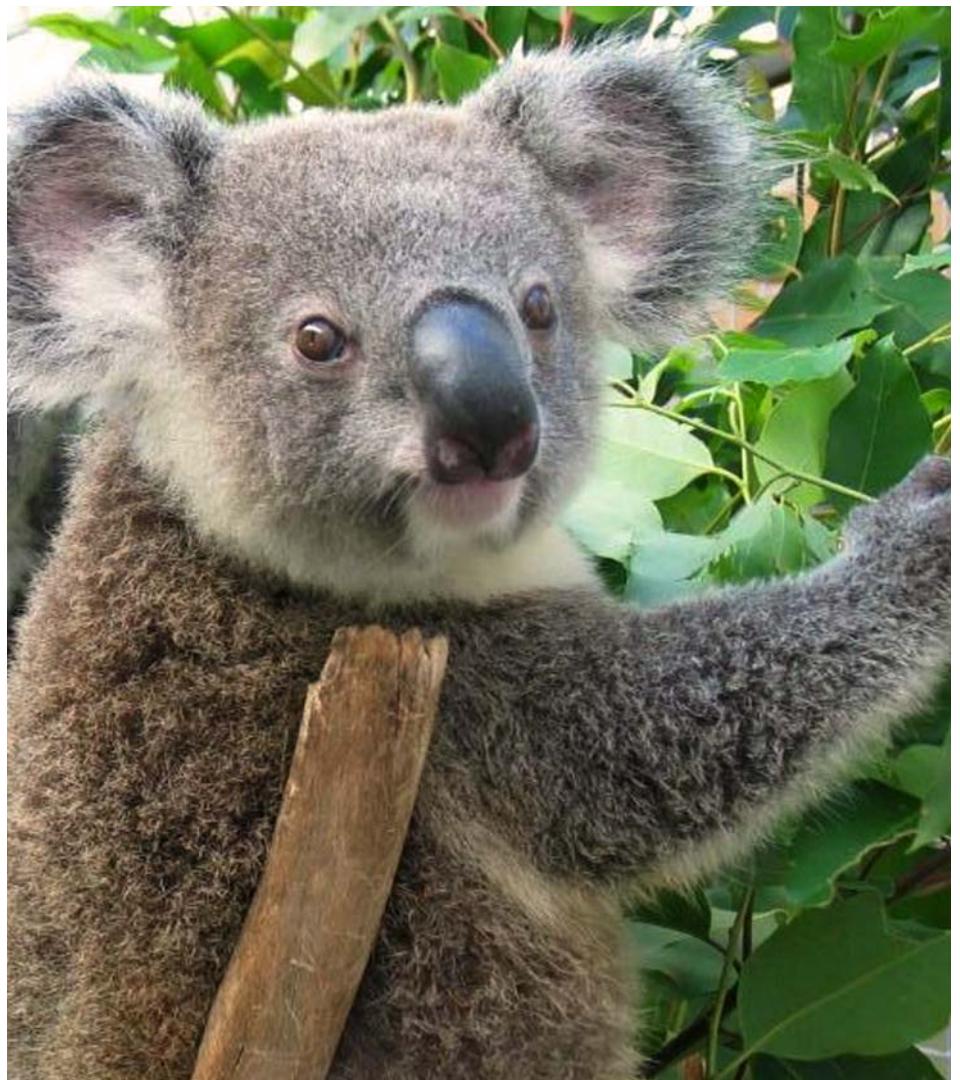
Over eighty percent of remaining koala habitat is on private land and what is

traditionally the koala's most abundant region in south east Queensland and north east New South Wales is also prime real estate for Australia's booming development industry. The relentless fragmentation of their habitat and irresponsible urbanisation (resulting in threats such as dog attacks and car accidents) are proving devastating for koalas. Local extinctions and the isolation of populations are reducing genetic diversity and therefore drastically reducing the long term viability of the species.

Koalas have a long history, probably evolving on the Australian continent some 45 million years ago, but since European settlement, the numbers have

declined so severely that extinction may be imminent. Koalas are a flagship for the plight of Australia's wildlife and the need to change the direction of the way we impact the land.

September is Save the Koala Month, the principal time for the Australian Koala Foundation to raise awareness and funds for the fight to protect wild koalas and their habitat. The AKF has launched a new campaign that doesn't ask for money but your political voice. You can help make legislative change by joining our free group of environmental campaigners. To find out more about this and other ways to protect wild koalas and their habitat, visit www.savethekoala.com



Koala conservation intensifies on the Northern Rivers

Lorraine Vass, President, Friends of the Koala Inc. (Northern Rivers)

The *Consultation Draft National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy 2009-2014* is presently on public exhibition. The foreword outlines the known threats to koala declines as extensive habitat clearing and fragmentation, hunting, disease, fire, drought, road deaths and predation by dogs, noting that "... only hunting has been effectively eliminated as a threat" (p.3).

The significant role that the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia played in bringing an end to koala hunting is not forgotten and at the time earned the gratitude of a shamed nation.

Friends of the Koala's work to conserve koalas on the Northern Rivers of New South Wales commenced in 1986 with a focus on advocacy and tree planting. In 1989, encouraged by National Parks and Wildlife Service personnel, some group members underwent

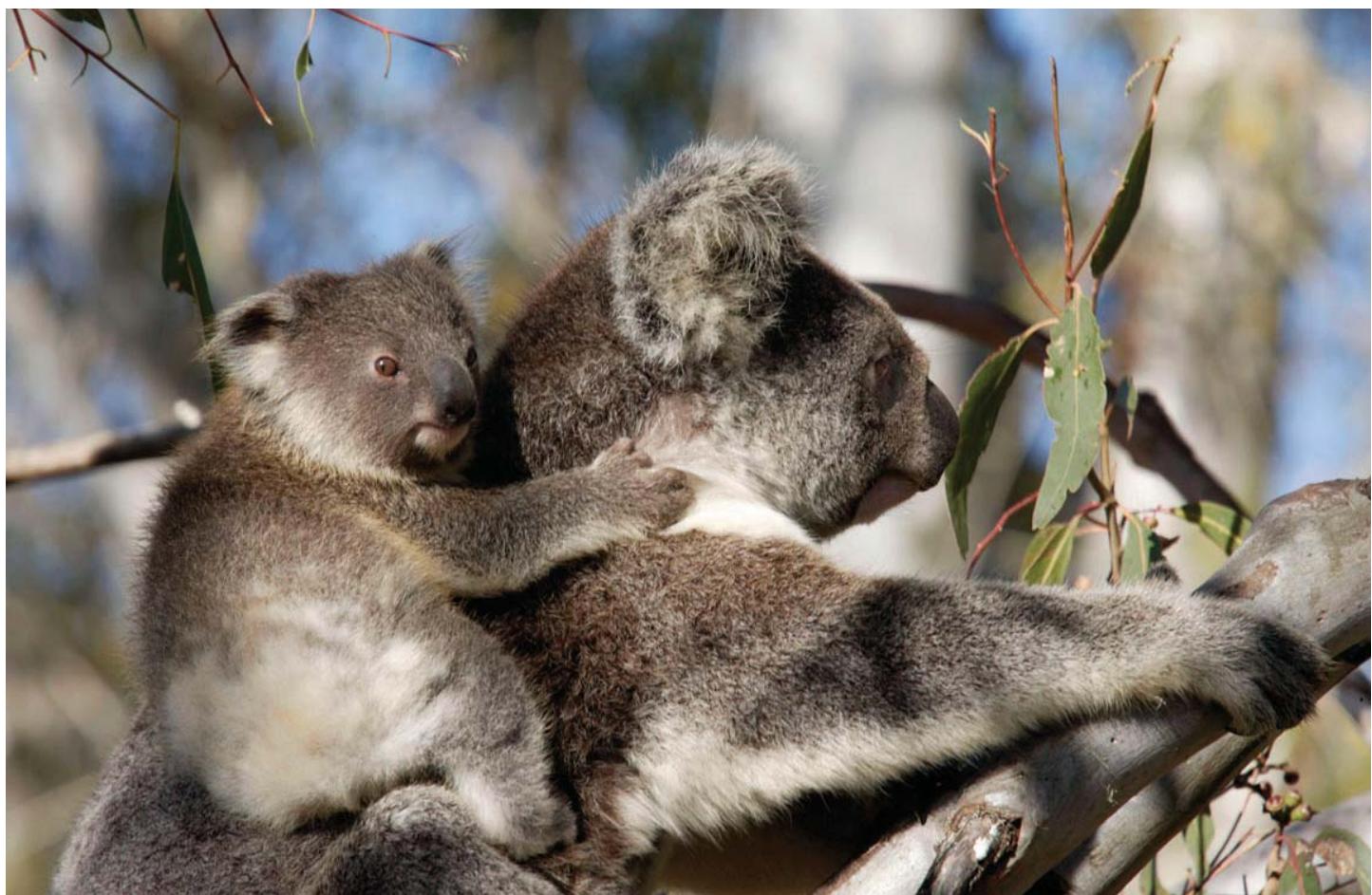
training to become koala rescuers and rehabilitators. Throughout this year we are celebrating our 20th anniversary of licensed koala rescue, rehabilitation and release.

Today, Friends of the Koala's core business has expanded further to include the formation of research partnerships and community education.

You will read elsewhere in this issue of *Australian Wildlife* a report by Regional Councillor, Linda Dennis, on our very successful Koala Conservation Conference, held in Lismore in May. It was a big undertaking for an entirely voluntary group. We targeted the broad spectrum of professionals and volunteers who work with wild koalas and habitat issues on a daily basis, bringing together ecologists, veterinarians, disease researchers, government bureaucrats, planners, law experts and koala rehabilitators.

Conference delegates were united in their sense of urgency and sheer frustration that regulators and legislation at all levels of government continue to fail to address koala declines in any meaningful way. Speaker after speaker presented evidence to support ongoing and often dramatic decline in koala numbers east of the Great Divide.

We and other rehabilitation groups represented were particularly dismayed to hear disease researchers Jon Hanger and Jo Loader of the Australian Wildlife Hospital echo our experience that the high prevalence of disease in koalas, although recognised for well over a century, has only recently received acknowledgement as a key threatening process for the koala's survival. Two of the most important infections, koala retrovirus (KoRV) and *chlamydia* are still not well understood and are decimating wild koala populations up and down the coast.



Koala and back young - not always as healthy as they look



Friends of the Koala's Koala Care and Research Centre, adjacent to Southern Cross University (Lismore Campus), East Lismore

During 2007-2008 Friends of the Koala admitted 283 koalas into care and released a mere 51 back in to the wild. Mortality due to disease is running between sixty-five to seventy percent. The vast improvement in veterinary diagnostics over recent years is giving us and other rehabilitation groups a much clearer picture of what we're dealing with, although researchers still have a lot to learn about disease pathogenesis, ecological impact and distribution.

Another aspect of the research being undertaken into disease detection, which is also borne out by Friends of the Koala's on the ground experience, is that a healthy looking koala is not necessarily a disease free koala. Overt signs of *chlamydiosis* such as 'pink-eye' and 'wet bottom' are readily identifiable. Koalas that suffer subclinical reproductive tract disease invariably present as beautiful, healthy animals. In most cases these females will be infertile, which impacts on fecundity and population viability. Friends of the Koala's policy is to ultrasound every female koala admitted into care. Increasingly, males too are being ultrasounded to pick up internal damage from *chlamydia*.

Research into *chlamydia* has been going on for years. Recent work has been Sydney University's Koala Infectious Diseases Research Group's *Prevention and treatment of chlamydiosis and cryptococcosis* project, part of which has focused on clinical trials of current treatments for *chlamydiosis*.

Other recent work, undertaken by Queensland University of Technology's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation has focused on developing an effective chlamydial vaccine for koalas. Australian Research Council Linkage funding of \$290,000 for the *Development of an anti-chlamydia vaccine for the koala* project, to be undertaken over the period 2009-2012 will enable continuation, and we hope

successful conclusion of, this long-held but ambitious solution to a major koala killer.

The multiple frustrations of dealing with increasing numbers of koalas whilst habitat disappears under the 'death of a thousand cuts' syndrome, together with continuously scrounging

for scarce government and other funding sources to keep our programs viable, are wearying. However, while there are people of passion and commitment who are prepared to do what they can for the koala's survival on the Northern Rivers, Friends of the Koala will continue with its community-based conservation work.



Roy, an orphan we have recently nurtured and released



Orphans – Ricki, Hayley and Skye – have now been treated and released

Can we save our wild koala?

Linda Dennis, WPSA Regional Advisor for Central Western New South Wales

The conference

Friends of the Koala, also widely known by the acronym FOK, certainly know how to deliver a memorable conference. Just as koala conservationists from around Australia had braved the elements and gathered for the Koala Conservation Conference in Lismore - the first of its kind in Australia - the Wilson River peaked at an incredible twenty centimetres below the town levee (nearly eleven metres) and consequently, the town was declared a natural disaster zone.

Unfortunately, due to the treacherous weather conditions and flooding, many of the conference delegates had to leave Lismore in the early hours of the morning. Among them were several of the guest speakers for the day, including Professor Frank Carrick and Dr Bill Ellis of the University of Queensland, who were to deliver, respectively, the keynote address and a paper entitled '*Climate change and the koala*'. Also making an emergency departure was the conference opening guest speaker, Colleen Wood of Southern Ash Wildlife Shelter in Victoria. She is currently caring for the famous koala 'Sam', who reached world-wide fame by those amazing photos that show her drinking from a fireman's water bottle while holding tightly onto his hand.

The FOK Team re-planned with ease and the Conference was launched by Mark Graham of Coffs Harbour City Council with his paper '*Are our laws and policies knocking North Coast koalas out of their trees?*' I must admit this set a rather depressing atmosphere for the start of the Conference and, unfortunately, this seemed to last through the entire day as more and more speakers verified Mark's words.

Habitat loss

Mark painted a very grim picture for the future of our koalas, particularly those in the northern areas of New South Wales, an area which is drawing more and more sea-changers who see the beauty of the north as prime human habitat. Sadly, as more humans migrate north, massive urban development follows, resulting in habitat destruction for our precious and vulnerable koalas.

Development seems to be today's top priority and it comes at the cost of many

of our native animal species. Numerous loopholes exist in current state and local laws that allow indiscriminate broad-scale clearing of native vegetation. Many of the agencies that are responsible for the koala, including the Department of Environment and Climate Change, Department of Planning and the Catchment Management Authority are 'turning a blind eye' and are not pursuing breaches of the legislation designed to protect the koala and its habitat. As a result, we are seeing local extinctions of the koala, even in areas where it has quite recently been considered abundant.

The State Environmental Planning Policy No 44 – Koala Habitat Protection (or better known simply as SEPP 44) as outlined by Sue Higginson, a solicitor with the Environmental Defenders Office, is a law that was introduced to New South Wales in 1995 after critical problems in koala conservation had been recognised.

It would seem though that today, fourteen years after the policy commenced, we are not seeing any improvements in koala conservation and SEPP 44 is not considered a useful or effective tool in the management of koala conservation.

Part of the reason for this is that SEPP 44 is not valid for land areas of less than one hectare. Much of the koala habitat in northern New South Wales is located on land parcels of less than one hectare, so SEPP 44 is not relevant. As a result, large areas of koala habitat are cleared in a patchwork manner and nothing can be done about it.

SEPP 44 is also not recognised on land dedicated or reserved under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* or the *Forestry Act* and as mentioned above, government agencies are not interested in pursuing relevant legislation breaches when it comes to native animal protection and so these areas seem to fall into a black hole.

SEPP 44 encourages local governments to implement a Koala Plan of Management (KPoM). However, the wording within the policy is vague at best, stating that 'a plan of management may be prepared for...' - the use of the word *may* renders the policy redundant

as it is merely a suggestion, not an enforcement. The word *must* would have been more useful in a policy aimed at protecting a species.

Out of the 106 local government areas listed in SEPP 44 (areas with known koala habitat) only one has implemented a Koala Plan of Management (KPoM), and that is Port Stephens. Coffs Harbour was the first council to implement a KPoM, but it has since been audited and was found to have failed in its objective. Taree's council, we were told by Christeen McLeod of Koalas in Care, wrote a KPoM some years ago but it has never been implemented.

Sue Higginson writes that State Environmental Planning Policies are necessary and important, but there is dire need for policies such as SEPP 44 to keep up with changing pressures and growing knowledge. SEPP 44 needs to be monitored and assessed in order to be able to be considered and measured as an effective species protection tool. The long-awaited and welcomed recent approval and release of the *NSW Recovery Plan for the Koala* makes specific references to the need to reform SEPP 44, which arguably does not go far enough.

Disease

Jon Hanger, of the Australia Wildlife Hospital at Australia Zoo, presented his paper '*Infectious disease in koalas: implications for conservation*', which seemed to deepen the depressed mood of the Conference. Jon discussed how, along with habitat destruction, koala diseases are undoubtedly one of the most critical threatening processes contributing to the koala's dramatic population decline in New South Wales and Queensland. Two of the most troubling diseases for the koala are retrovirus (KoRV) and *chlamydia*, which are both still relatively poorly understood.

John told us that 'the koala retrovirus is a fragile organism that is able to integrate its own genetic sequence into the DNA strands of the cell that it has infected. In doing so it is able to hijack host cell processes to produce many more virus particles, in effect turning the host cell into a virus factory'. Scary! While in this process, the virus may



Linda and koala

also 'accidentally' switch on genes of the host cell and this in turn may cause cancer.

The following conditions may be caused by infection with KoRV:

- leukaemia (a cancer of the blood)
- myelodysplasia (abnormalities in production of blood cells)
- immunodeficiency syndrome (koala 'AIDS')
- other cancers, including lymphoma, osteochondroma and mesothelioma, and more.

Jon believes, based on current research, that one hundred percent of the koala population in New South Wales and Queensland is affected by KoRV at some level. Interestingly, it would seem that the prevalence of KoRV in Victorian and South Australian koalas is considerably lower, but that result may be due more to the lack of study in that region. The reasons for such a prevalence of KoRV is that it is a genetic disease, inherited by offspring from the parent, but it also spreads from koala to koala in close contact, similar to the spread of other viruses.

Jon told us that it was still unknown where the virus had come from and what kind of impact it would have on koala populations. He said that studies into this were continuing.

It is considered that chlamydiosis is now more common in koalas because of KoRV. Although *chlamydia* affects most mainland koala populations and many island ones too, it is more common in the northern koalas of New South Wales and Queensland.

Some of the symptoms of *chlamydia* include:

- cystitis
- conjunctivitis
- reproductive tract disease
- infertility.

Again, it would appear that southern koalas are not affected by these illnesses as much as the northern koalas are. *Chlamydia* in southern koalas is relatively minor and rarely causes debilitating disease. In contrast, severe chlamydial disease is commonly reported in their northern cousins.

Koalas that are infected with *chlamydia* and KoRV may not show any outward

signs of illness and, therefore, some believe that these diseases are not as prevalent as they really are.

It is clear that more research into koala diseases is paramount to saving the species. Jon strongly urged all to lobby governments to reach this goal and even suggested that, as our past and previous governments seemed very lax on native animal research - and indeed saving species from decline - that we should all be 'voting green'!

Conclusion

It would appear that the two key issues that threaten the survival of the wild koala - habitat loss and disease - really need to be fused into one very big, important issue. If we as a nation focus on habitat protection only while comprehensive disease research is not funded and quickly implemented, then we are simply wasting our time. And vice versa.

We need to see more laws that protect the koala - better laws that don't have loopholes or can simply be ignored by lazy governments. We need to see legislation breaches pursued. We need to see the rehabilitation or construction of wildlife corridors for easy movement of the koala, and we need to implement a comprehensive public education program. Disturbingly, there are still so many people who share the koalas' home but don't know enough about koalas, how they live and what threatens them. We need to see comprehensive and in-depth research carried out on koala diseases - and we need to see it NOW!

The state of the koala is very poor. Beside the two key issues discussed above, there are the others that threaten all of our wildlife, including predator attack, roadkill and injury. It is clear that there is much work to be done to ensure the longevity of these beautiful Australian icons.

The question is: can we save our wild koalas in time?

This report was written with the help of Jon Hanger and Mark Graham, who kindly forwarded their conference papers to me. Many thanks to them both.

Sources:

'Are our laws and policies knocking North Coast koalas out of their trees?' – Cr Mark Graham

'Infectious disease in koalas: implications for conservation' – Jon Hanger, Australia Zoo

State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) No. 44 – Koala Habitat Protection



Marine turtles

Suzanne Medway

First appearing more than 100 million years ago, marine turtles represent an ancient and distinctive part of the world's biological diversity. As recently as the 18th and 19th centuries, marine turtles were highly abundant, with some populations numbering well into the millions. In the last several hundred years, however, humans have overwhelmed the species' ability to maintain their numbers. We capture them intentionally for food, skin and shell. We capture them accidentally in fisheries. We destroy their foraging, nesting and resting habitats. Most recently, we have been polluting the environment in which they live, the oceans. Today, few populations of marine turtles are unaffected. Most are declining, often seriously. Many are extinct.

Marine turtles are an integral part of the traditional culture of many coastal indigenous peoples throughout the world.

Marine turtles serve important functions in the ecosystems in which they are found, although the details of those functions can be hard to clarify where populations currently are seriously depleted. For example,

seagrass beds where green turtles graze regularly are more productive, nutrients are cycled more rapidly, and the grass blades have a higher protein content, thus benefiting other species. Furthermore, some populations of marine turtles, whose feeding areas may be hundreds or even thousands of kilometres from their nesting beaches, serve an important role in nutrient cycling by transporting

massive quantities of nutrients from these feeding grounds to typically more nutrient-poor coastal and inshore habitats in the vicinity of the nesting beaches.

Without active intervention and management, marine turtle populations are expected to continue to decline to extinction. With the resulting loss of productivity within marine ecosystems, we can expect a resulting decline in quality of life for human populations dependent on coastal ecosystems.

Marine turtles migrate long distances between their feeding grounds and nesting sites. They have a large shell called a carapace, four strong, paddle-like flippers and, like all reptiles, lungs for breathing air. The characteristic beak-like mouth is used to shear or crush food.

All marine turtle species are experiencing serious threats to their survival. The main threats are pollution and changes to important

turtle habitats, especially coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangrove forests and nesting beaches. Other threats include accidental drowning in fishing gear, over-harvesting of turtles and eggs, and predation of eggs and hatchlings by foxes, feral pigs, dogs and goannas.

There are only a few large nesting populations of the green, hawksbill and loggerhead turtles left in the world. Australia has some of the largest marine turtle nesting areas in the Indo-Pacific region and has the only nesting populations of the flatback turtle.

In Australia, all species of marine turtles are protected under various State and Territory legislation and the Australian Government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Due to increasing threats to marine turtles, all the six species which occur in Australian waters are listed under the Australian Government's EPBC Act. The Act identifies the need to prepare a recovery plan and specifies the content of the plan.

In 1996, the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species classified the hawksbill turtle as critically endangered.

Marine turtles are recognised internationally as species of conservation concern. Five of the species found in Australia are listed in the 2000 IUCN (World Conservation Union) Red List of Threatened Animals.

In 2000, the IUCN listed the leatherback as critically endangered as it was estimated that there were less than 1,700 leatherbacks left on the planet. They are especially vulnerable to ingesting plastics because their only food source is jelly fish. Like any animal with a narrow habitat or range of food, it is clearly doomed.

Today, thousands of individuals in volunteer and government-supported management and conservation programs throughout the world are working to conserve marine turtles. Although marine turtles spend the majority of their time at sea, these programs primarily focus on nesting beach activities, an emphasis that has resulted in large gaps in our



Loggerhead turtle



Hawksbill turtle

Of the seven species of marine turtles in the world, six occur in Australian waters:

Common name	Species	Status
Flatback turtle	<i>Natator depressus</i>	Vulnerable
Green turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	Vulnerable
Hawksbill turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	Vulnerable
Leatherback turtle	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	Endangered
Loggerhead turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	Endangered
Olive Ridley turtle	<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>	Endangered

knowledge about these animals. Furthermore, recent population modelling suggests that conservation of eggs and hatchlings, without concurrent conservation of the older life stages, might be of limited value. The lack of international coordination also hampers conservation efforts. This is unfortunate as marine turtles are under assault throughout their lives as they move from the waters of one nation to another.

All marine turtle species occurring in Australian waters are listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In addition, all marine turtles occurring in the Indo-Pacific region are a priority for conservation under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (the Bonn Convention or CMS).



Green turtles



Flatback turtle



Olive Ridley turtle



Leatherback turtle

Upon whose shoulders we stand

Marny Bonner, President, Australian Seabird Rescue Inc and WPSA Regional Advisor for Northern New South Wales

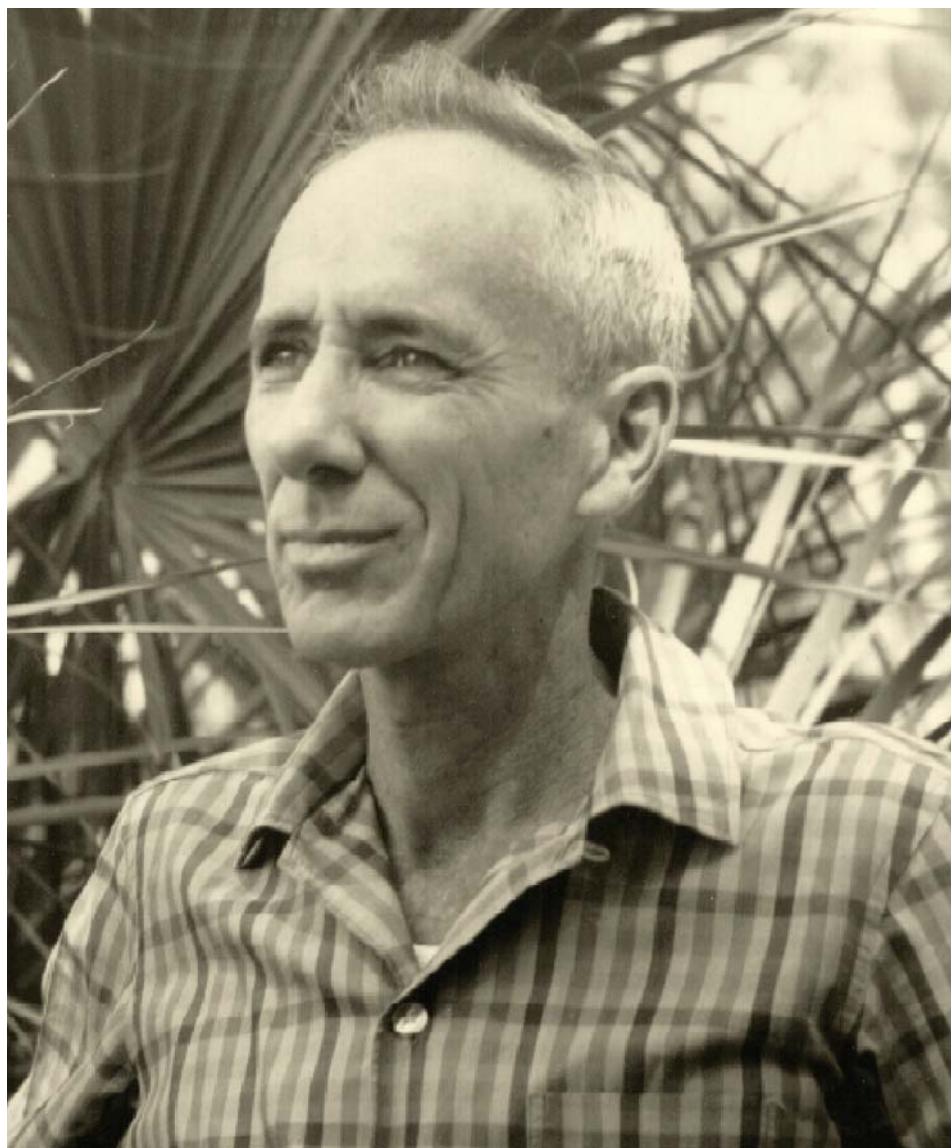
What a very significant year 2009 is, not only for the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia (WPSA) but also for sea turtle conservationists throughout the world. It is the centenary of the birth of Archie Carr, renowned as the inspirational and highly esteemed 'father of sea turtle research and conservation'. It is also the 50th anniversary of the turtle research organisation he founded, the Caribbean Conservation Corporation.

I recently attended The International Symposium in Brisbane, along with Jennie Gilbert (WPSA Scientific Advisor for Marine Conservation), Patrick Medway (WPSA National President) and Suzanne Medway (WPSA Executive Director), plus some 700 other avid 'turtlers' who came together from sixty-six countries to exchange their news and views. Appropriately, a larger than life photograph of Archie Carr watched over us from alongside the stage of the main auditorium. Over the four days, eighty-five speakers presented their latest research, progress, news and views. Most had been inspired by the work of Dr Carr and his students, now themselves the elders of turtle conservation.

I sat in the front row and have to admit that, from time to time, I would find myself drifting away from the speaker and into the photograph of Archie Carr. His eyes twinkle with a sense of humour, his face is kind but clearly focused. It portrays a man on a mission. I have only mental snapshots of his achievements and know nothing of the man, but I find myself wondering about his world, his time.

When Archie Carr was born in Florida in June 1909 the oceans abounded with sea turtles. By the time he was teaching high school biology in Central America, he was thoroughly fascinated with the ancient marine reptiles. They became his life's study.

When Carr realised that the edible green sea turtle was in rapid decline, he was deeply concerned. Over-exploitation and loss of habitat was taking its toll. In search of a greater



Professor Archie Carr (1909-1987), pioneering elder of sea turtle conservation

understanding of turtle migration, reproduction and impacts on their survival, his quest led him around the world wherever the species occurred. He became their greatest ambassador.

Later, while professor of zoology at the University of Florida, Dr Carr founded the Caribbean Conservation Corporation. In 1959 this was the first organisation entirely dedicated to sea turtle research and remains the focus of the world's longest running studies. His pioneering research in tagging, tracking and recording green turtle populations saved the species from extinction.

As a lecturer he was renowned for his wonderful field trips and mischievous

sense of humour. As one of his students, Dr David Ehrenfeld, explains, zoology was not Professor Carr's only passion.

"He loved the sounds and rhythms of English. For those of us gathered after an evening walking a turtle beach, hearing Archie recite from memory '*Jabberwocky*' ... with the accompaniment of the night sounds of the jungle and the Caribbean surf, was an experience of a lifetime."

Considered the world's leading authority on sea turtles, Archie Carr influenced government officials, students and people everywhere through his example. He published more than 120 scientific papers,



A young green sea turtle is released at Byron Bay following rescue and rehabilitation by Australian Seabird Rescue.
Image courtesy of Mike Larder: www.mikelarder.com

inspiring research and conservation around the planet by his many dispersing students and, in turn, their students. He also wrote ten books for the general public, his engaging literary style drawing attention to the plight of the turtle through his adventures.



Rochelle Ferris from Australian Seabird Rescue helps the next generation to understand sea turtles. Image courtesy of Mike Larder: www.mikelarder.com

In 1986 the University of Florida established the Archie Carr Centre for Sea Turtle Research in recognition of his achievements. With the emergence of the internet in the 1990s, this centre established the CTurtle email service for the expanding international network of turtle conservationists.

In 1995, when we at Australian Seabird Rescue (ASR) first encountered sick and injured sea turtles on beaches of the New South Wales north coast, we too became fascinated with these dinosaurs of the deep.

Desperate to understand how to save the turtles, our only link to experienced rehabilitators was the CTurtle network.

What goes up, does come down

Working on the beaches all the time, we soon realised the impact of marine debris on seabirds and sea turtles, especially the regular release of helium balloons. When helium balloons burst at high altitudes and descend into the ocean they resemble a major turtle food source - jellyfish. When consumed, the latex balloons block the gut of animals and they slowly starve to death.

During ASR's five-year campaign to ban the mass release of helium balloons

in New South Wales, we issued a call for help via CTurtle. We received dozens of letters from accomplished scientists around the world endorsing our position. In Australia, Dr Nancy Fitzsimmons of the University of Canberra, assisted by personally addressing members of parliament, thus providing the ace card.

On 2 November 2000, thirteen years after Archie Carr's death, legislation banning the mass release of helium balloons in New South Wales was introduced, setting an important precedent in Australia and saving many hundreds of turtles and other marine wildlife from the deadly debris.

Archie Carr's single-minded devotion saved a species. But as we contemplate the centenary of his birth we celebrate an even greater achievement: his capacity to inspire others to share a vision, and to act on that vision.

In honour of Dr Archie Carr, 16 June 1909 – 21 May 1987, upon whose shoulders we stand.

Recommended reading:

Carr, A 1979, *The windward road*.

Davis, FR 2007, *The man who saved sea turtles: Archie Carr and the origins of conservation*

Reference: www.cccturtle.org

International Sea Turtle Symposium

Jennie Gilbert (WPSA Scientific Advisor on Marine Conservation)

The International Sea Turtle Society held the 29th Sea Turtle Symposium in Brisbane, Australia in February this year.

The news that the 29th Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation Conference would be held in Brisbane was great excitement for all 'turtlers', especially Australians. This conference, presided by Dr Colin Limpus, created a golden opportunity for turtlers to listen to the world's leading turtle researchers and to network with fellow researchers from many select universities worldwide.

As the co-founder of the Cairns Turtle Rehabilitation Centre (CTRC), with Paul Barnes, the opportunity to talk face-to-face with fellow turtle rehabilitators, whom we had communicated with via email for all these years, was finally within reach. As the CTRC is run by volunteers with no government funding, I was elated when the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia asked me to represent them at the conference. This was not only an honour, but also created the opportunity for me to attend this international conference.

Finally, it was Monday 16 February and the day of the conference had arrived. As I waited to register in the reception area of the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, I was already meeting some of the world's leading turtle researchers, putting faces to names of people with whom I had only ever read about in journals and books. I could see by the number of people who were attending the conference that it was going to be an exciting few days.



Suzanne Medway and Marny Bonner at the opening reception



L to R: Patrick Medway, Kristin Keane, Paul Barnes, Jennie Gilbert, Marny Bonner and Suzanne Medway

The first day opened with an Australian mini-symposium, where speakers presented their research on turtle conservation projects, indigenous management in northern Australia, Raine Island nesting successes and turtle education projects, to name a few. During lunchtime, Marny Bonner from Australian Seabird Rescue's Marine Turtle Division, ran a forum on turtle rehabilitation where we 'rehabbers' were able to share ideas and stories of our successes and methods of rehabilitation, as well as the struggles this unique research area faces. The day ended with a 'Welcome to Country' - an official opening held at the Southbank Piazza, where we were treated to a wonderful performance by an Aboriginal dance troupe followed by a spectacular dinner and conversation.

On the second day of the conference, the presentations focused on the status of and threats to the survival of marine turtles. The topics included environmental impacts, health and migration, and cultural, economic and social aspects of turtle research. Other areas addressed were sustainable turtle use, bycatch, foraging, biology

and genetics. There were also many poster presentations that covered topics from hatchlings to satellite tracking of breeding female turtles. The posters were informative and inspired many questions from fellow researchers. It was wonderful to see the great effort that my fellow researchers put into getting this important information out there.

On Wednesday I attended a necropsy workshop at the University of Queensland's Veterinary Department. This workshop was led by Dr Mark Flint and Dr Jeanette Wyneken, both leading experts on marine turtles. Dr Wyneken is the author of numerous books and articles. This was a thrilling experience for me and the other delegates, especially those who have never had this unique opportunity.

The traditional "Live Auction" was held on Wednesday night, where friends old and new vied to outbid each other for treasures and bargains, including a trip to Vanuatu on a research vessel, a week's holiday at a ski resort in the United States and on a luxurious island off the coast of America! Unfortunately, I was outbid for these, but I won some

great bargains: a stuffed turtle and a foot duster for a total of \$70! My friend Marny Bonner from Australian Seabird Rescue got the catch of our group though, winning the bid for a beach towel for just under \$100! A great idea for a great cause, with all of the proceeds contributing towards next year's travel awards for fellow students and delegates.

On the last day of the conference, Thursday, the talks focused on the environmental impacts on turtles. As this is my field of interest, it was fantastic to hear about the research that is being undertaken worldwide. Many of the impacts affecting Australia are echoed worldwide and as researchers we are all working towards the same goal of identifying the impacts facing marine turtle populations, and to build a promising future for these fascinating animals.

During the three days of the conference, renowned keynote speakers reflected

on what has been achieved and learnt during the past forty years since international turtle conservation efforts began. Thursday also brought excitement with a very special guest - a live flatback turtle! This species is found only in Australia, and what a great surprise to many delegates who had never seen a flatback turtle before. The uniqueness of this species lies in its different type of shell that feels soft to touch. We all agreed that it is the love and mystery of sea turtles that drives this exciting and innovative research worldwide.

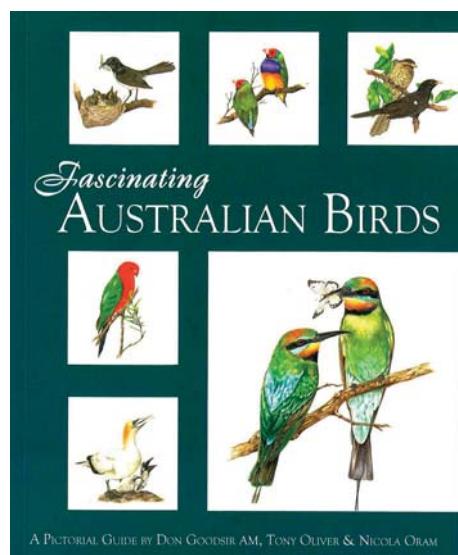
Finally, it was time to say goodbye to each other at the farewell banquet where we ate and danced the night away. There were many people recognised for their extraordinary efforts in turtle research and management, notably the Northern Territory indigenous community of Dhimurru. The Dhimurru Community won an award for their endless work in cleaning up the ghost nets that wash

up onto their beaches in the Northern Territory, which are known to injure and kill turtles. Due to their great efforts, hundreds of turtles have been rescued from this fate. Well done!

With almost seven hundred delegates, many from around Australia, it was exciting to see the successful outcome of the 29th Symposium which demonstrated the requirement for provincial co-operation as turtles are a migratory species. It was agreed that resources need to be shared worldwide to halt the extinction of many of these turtle species. For me, the symposium provided the opportunity to meet marine turtle researchers from around the world as well as friends both old and new, with whom I will be able to continue discussing ideas and potential outcomes for marine turtle research now and in years to come.

Fascinating Australian Birds

A new book on birds by WPSA member, Don Goodsir



A PICTORIAL GUIDE BY DON GOODSIR AM, TONY OLIVER & NICOLA ORAM

Long time Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia member and former committee member, Don Goodsir, recently released his third book on Australian fauna, *Fascinating Australian Birds*. His new book is written in a format for the average Australian who likes birds and wants to learn more.

This book features more bird species than his previous book and includes snippets of Australian poetry, historical

facts, habitat maps and Aboriginal legends. The birds are beautifully illustrated by the late Tony Oliver and Nicola Oram of Armidale.

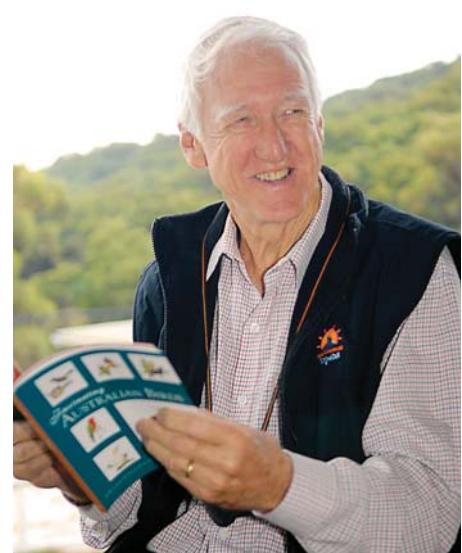
Don wrote his first book when as a school principal he realised there were no books for children on Australian birds. He was subsequently commissioned by Golden Press to write an appropriate book for Australian children. *The Gould League Book of Australian Birds* was published in 1979 and received two children's book awards that year, one from the Children's Book Council and the other from the Royal Zoological Society. *The Gould League Book of Australian Mammals* followed soon after. Don attributes his love of birds to the time he spent living on a cattle property in the Hunter Valley as a child and teaching in a one-teacher school on the north coast.

Don has always been dedicated to environmental issues. As well as being responsible for environmental education when a Director of Schools with the NSW Department of Education, Don headed up the Headland Preservation Group. This grass roots community group

successfully protested against the sale of surplus military land around Sydney Harbour for development.

Don acknowledges the help given to him by our former President, Vincent Serventy.

Fascinating Australian Birds is a perfect gift to encourage and foster interest not only in birds but in conservation issues. Published by Brolga Press, it is available from all leading booksellers.



Wilf on his 99th birthday with family



A member shares his 100th birthday

Margaret Conners (nee Dews), Daughter

Wilfred Dews OAM, recipient of the Order of Australia Medal for his lifelong service to conservation, the environment and to the community of Lake Macquarie, celebrated his 100th birthday on 14 April 2009.

Wilf was a man ahead of his time in his thinking, especially on conservation issues where he worked tirelessly to protect the Hunter's environment. With his wife Mavis, now deceased, Wilf founded the Newcastle Flora and Fauna Protection Society in 1960 and worked tirelessly with the Northern Parks and Playground Movement in protecting Blackbutt Reserve, Koragang Island and many public recreation areas. He helped to establish the Glenrock State Recreation Area and was appointed as a member of the Sugarloaf Trust.

While he was a member of these conservation groups, Wilf demonstrated that he could complement his organisational activism with very practical work for the environment. Over the years he propagated hundreds of native plants and donated them to schools and public parks in the Lake Macquarie area.

He delighted in encouraging young people to appreciate and protect their natural heritage by giving many talks to school children about Australian plants and animals. Wilf's interest in local

history ensured that he was a popular speaker for many groups in the region.

In 1971 Wilf predated "Clean Up Australia Day" by eighteen years when he organised the first "Cleanathon" in the Lake Macquarie area. With a group of forty-nine like-minded citizens, Wilf helped collect tonnes of rubbish from the bush and roadsides around the eastern side of the Lake. Until three years ago he was still helping his family in their annual "Clean Up Australia Day" campaign near Oberon.

Wilf's dedication and voluntary work for his community was recognised in his later years. He received the Premier's Award for Senior Citizens, the inaugural Hunter Environfest Award for Excellence in 2000 from the Lake Macquarie City Council and was made a life member of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia. In 2005 he proudly received the Order of Australia Medal at Government House, Sydney.

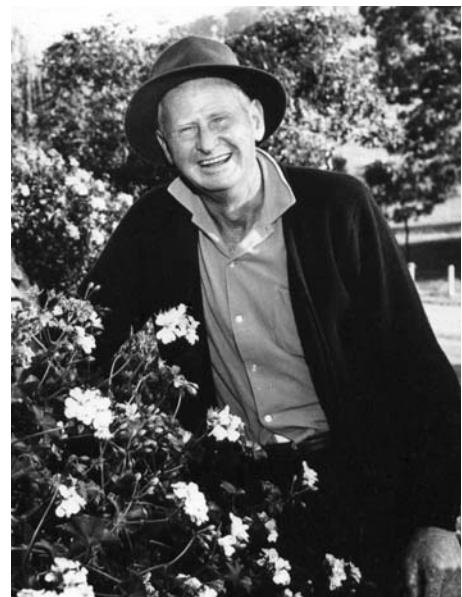
Wilf left school aged fourteen to follow his father and brothers into employment at Stockton Borehole Colliery in Teralba. The Dews family has had a combined association of more than 200 years of employment at Stockton Borehole Colliery.

When eyesight problems prevented Wilf from working down in the mine, he used his love of horticulture to become the mine's first gardener. Wilf's colliery garden became a popular attraction for many visitors which included BHP senior executives, one of whom, Sir Essington Lewis, became a personal friend. Past employees would take pleasure in revisiting the trees they had planted to mark their retirement, all of which had combined to form a beautiful avenue of Australian flora at the entrance to the colliery.

Wilf's garden consisted principally of Australian plants, and the local bird population grew to such an extent that it attracted many local ornithologists to it to observe the bird life. One of his most satisfying successes at the colliery occurred when he lobbied the BHP executives to preserve the nearby swamplands from proposed development and filling. This saved the natural habitat and breeding grounds for many waterbirds.

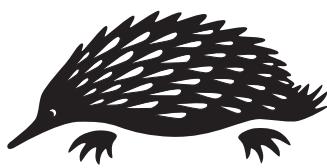
Life these days is now much quieter for Wilf. Several years ago he moved from the Newcastle area to "Three Tree Lodge" nursing home in Lithgow to be closer to his daughter Margaret and son-in-law Robert who had retired to a cattle property in Oberon.

He misses his extended family and friends from the Newcastle region and loves to reminisce about his early life in Teralba. He now enjoys seeing the hundreds of trees he propagated and planted on his family's farm thriving in the beautiful central tablelands. His great legacy will be enjoyed for many generations to come.



Wilf on his 60th birthday

Membership Form



WILDLIFE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED

PO 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 \$20 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

Website: www.wpsa.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)



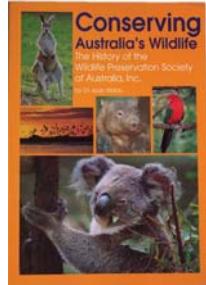
Kids T'Shirts - \$10
(Navy with white logo / White with navy logo)



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 Serventy and
Patrick W Medway - \$20

Product	Quantity	Size	Cost per item	Total
Polo shirts	_____	M,L	\$25	_____
Children's Tshirts	_____	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 \$20 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

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



Plastic Travel Mug - \$10



Caps - \$10

(Adjustable - One size fits all)

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 \$20 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

Melbourne Lord Mayor's Centennial Reception



L to R: Jan Rogers, Anna-Lisa Thomson, Barry Barker, Robyn Barker, Dr David Murray (Vice President WPSA)



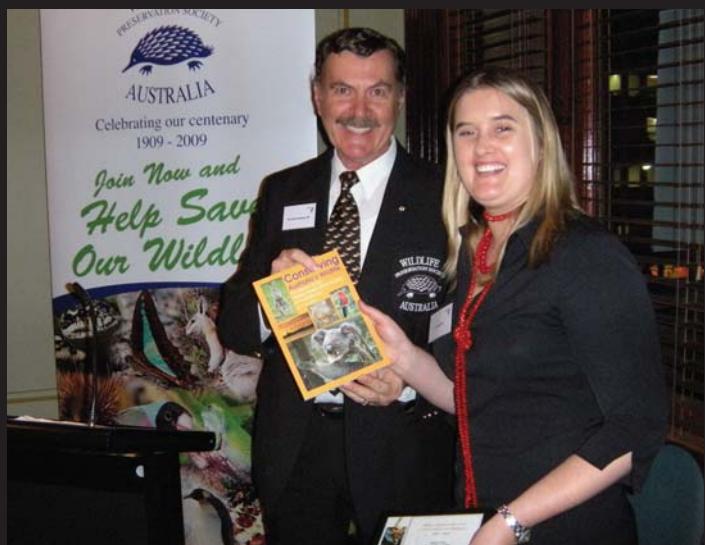
L to R: Barry Barker, Peter Vaughan, Ken Tucknott



L to R: Lew Smedley, Peter Vaughan, Penny White, Barry Barker



L to R: Dr Graeme Hamilton (Chief Executive Officer, Birds Australia), Luke Simpkin (Manager, Live Exhibits Melbourne Museum), Rob Jones (Melbourne Aquarium)



L to R: Patrick Medway (National President WPSA) and Dr Kathy Oke (Melbourne City Council)

