

AUSTRALIAN

Wildlife

AUTUMN 1998

Journal of the Wildlife Preservation Society
of Australia Inc. (Founded 1909)

\$2.50 (for non-members)

Print Post Approval No. PP243459/00117



Spike Milligan presented a wonderful evening of entertainment at the Gosford RSL Club in February with all proceeds going to the work of the Society. We are very grateful for his generous support to our wildlife preservation programs and to conservation generally.

Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia, Inc. (Founded 1909)
GPO Box 3428 Sydney NSW 1043



'AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE'

*is the official journal of the
Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc.*

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

Print Post Approval No. PP243459/00117

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REGIONAL COUNCILLORS

We would like to hear from our country members, anywhere in Australia who would like to become regional councillors. The value to us is we would have a more intimate relationship with women and men who have a knowledge which could be valuable for conservation.

Such Regional Councillors would be sent the minutes of our Council meetings so they would know more of what we are doing. They could also submit motions for consideration and so play a part in Society decisions. By being listed in our newsletter State members could contact them in emergencies.

*All articles are written by
Vincent Serventy and Patrick W. Medway
unless stated otherwise.*

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From the Presidents Desk...

Honorary life memberships are commonly found in societies, early in their formation. As the years pass and life members show a wonderful survival rate, the cost of such folk becomes a drain on the societies resources.

Many decades ago our Society decided to drop such honorary membership, keeping that as a title of honour, only to be given to those who have served our organisation well, some who have donated funds or services and politicians who have cared for conservation, not merely because it served their political ends but because they really cared.

One such was Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India. Carol and I, through our good friend Kailash Sankhala who was also a lifetime friend of this remarkable prime minister, was able to gain us a hearing. Our aim was always to make the Indian Ocean a place of peace with nature. Ghandi had proclaimed this should also be a 'zone of peace' among the nations which fronted it so it seemed a small step to make all those countries, share conservation measures.

A small step had been taken but the move needed a rich and powerful nation to push the scheme forward. Australia had only attended as an observer but we felt India had the leadership desired, so Kailash organised a meeting with Carol and myself in Delhi. The day before she cancelled to visit a troubled state and the meeting was postponed for three days.

In between she was murdered so the gifts we had brought were finally delivered to her son some months later.

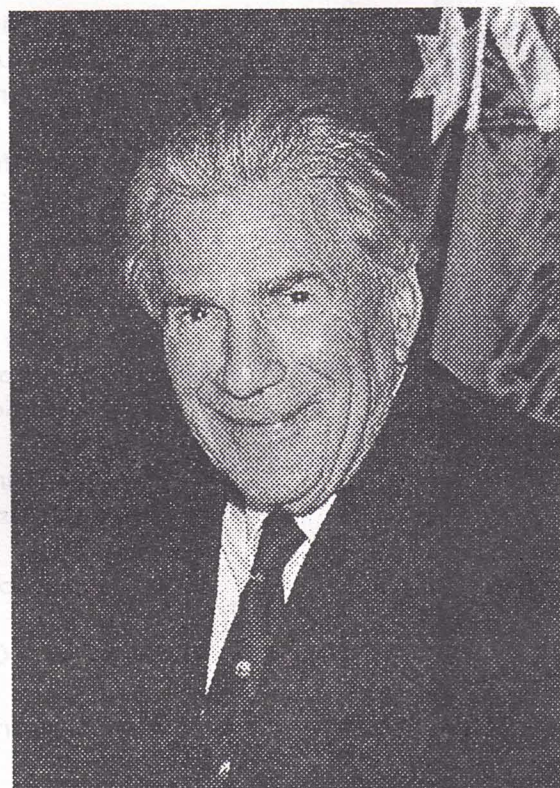
Other honorary life members were Tom Lewis who as a farsighted Minister for Lands in NSW earned our praises. Neville Wran was also a warm supporter and on our first meeting said to me 'Vin, I may be remembered as the politician who set aside a vast area of the Blue Mountains as a national park'. 'What better memorial' was my reply.

Now at our annual general meeting we will offer Spike Milligan Honorary Life Membership.

Not only was he given us two memorable evenings, with the proceeds to be donated to the cause but ceaselessly he has pushed the conservation barrow. With his genius and his friends in high places his was a welcome voice.

I like to think he has now taken his place among the immortals of the Australian conservation movement, joining that first among us, David Stead.

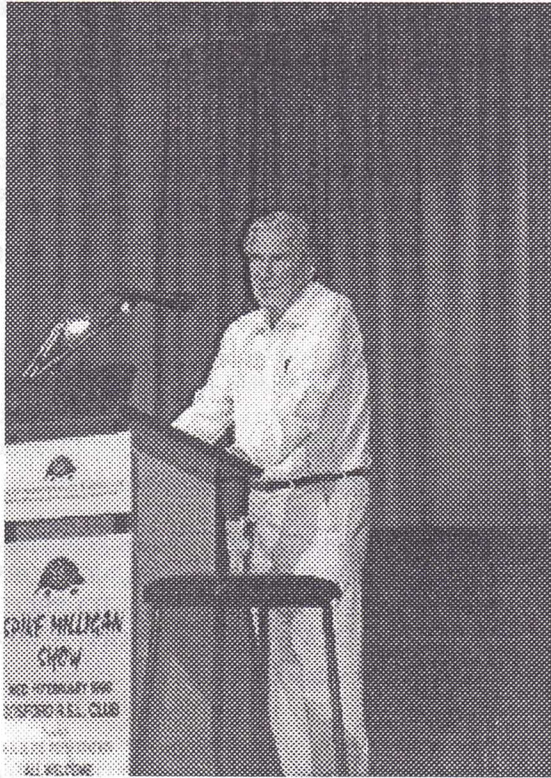
Vincent Serventy
President



Vincent Serventy, AM President

Spike Milligan Turns Green

The international entertainer Spike Milligan kindly agreed to present a special Show at the Gosford RSL Club in February with all proceeds going to the work of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia.



President Vincent Serventy AM introducing his old friend Spike Milligan at the Gosford RSL Club in February 1998.

Spike Milligan has had a long association with our President Vincent Serventy and has given freely of his time and talents to support conservation projects around the world. We are extremely grateful for Spike Milligan's wonderful contribution to the work of our Society by donating his many talents to the Show at the Gosford RSL Club.

The Show was a sell out and fans came from all over the Central Coast to support the evening and to hear their hero speak and read selected poetry for the occasion. Many people have been life long fans of the Goon Show and have read all his books of poetry and verse. Some were fortunate to have Spike Milligan autograph some of his books.

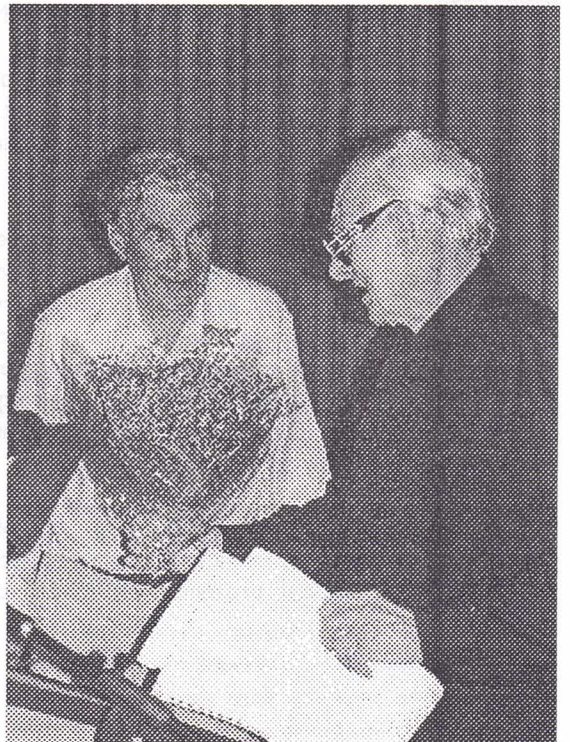
We are also very grateful to the management and staff of the Gosford RSL Club for their very professional way in which they assisted us to present the Show. The local media along the Central Coast were also very kind in helping to promote

the Show and no doubt we could have sold more tickets if we had had sufficient room for a larger Show.



Councillors of the Society assisted in presenting the Spike Milligan Show and staffed a very successful display of the work of the Society in the front foyer of the Gosford RSL Club.

President Vincent Serventy was assisted by four members of the Council in preparing and presenting the Show and the display in the front foyer was well received by the many visitors to the Club.



President Vincent Serventy AM presenting a special bouquet of Australian native flowers to the star of the Show, Spike Milligan at the conclusion of the special Show at the Gosford RSL Club.

All Members Please Note

89th Annual General Meeting on 27 March 1998

All members are cordially invited to attend the 89th Annual General Meeting of the Society which will be held on FRIDAY 27 MARCH 1998 commencing at 12.00 noon in the MITCHELL ROOM, LEVEL 4, 83 ELIZABETH STREET, SYDNEY.

Members who are interested in standing for Council are invited to contact the Secretary and indicate their interest and qualifications prior to the Annual General Meeting.

Please contact the Secretary for further information on Tel/Fax 02 9556 1537

Annual Luncheon on Monday 4 May 1998

The Annual Luncheon will be held in the PARLIAMENTARY DINING ROOMS at Parliament House, Sydney commencing at 12 noon.

The President has invited the Hon. Pam Allan, MP, Minister for the Environment in New South Wales to be our special Guest of Honour at the Luncheon. Members are looking forward to hearing from the Minister about the work of the Government in conservation and wildlife preservation in New South Wales.

Members and their friends interested in attending the Annual Luncheon are asked to contact the Secretary immediately to reserve their seats in the Dining Room. This luncheon is also a wonderful opportunity to introduce a friend or colleague to the work of the Society as the setting in the Dining Room is magnificent. Please book early to reserve your seats.

It is expected that a number of announcements will be made at the Annual Luncheon and several special presentations made to members and guests.

New Regional Councillor Appointed

Ralph Berman BA, Dip in Agriculture, MIAG a former Soil Conservation Service Officer and Land Use Consultant from Wellington and now on the Clarence River on the North Coast of New South Wales has been appointed a Regional Councillor for the Society.

Ralph has been an active conservationist all his life, founding the Wellington Field Naturalists' Club and is a former President of the Mt Arthur Reserve Trust at Wellington. He is a member of the Clarence Valley Conservation Coalition and still actively involved in all wildlife and conservation issues.

He will be keeping the Council informed of relevant wildlife preservation issues in the Clarence Valley area and can be contacted on Tel 02 6647 6450 or by writing to 1275 South Arm Road, BRUSHGROVE, 2460.

THANK YOU RALPH FOR JOINING THE TEAM OF REGIONAL COUNCILLORS OF THE SOCIETY AND HELPING TO PROTECT OUR PRECIOUS WILDLIFE RIGHT ACROSS AUSTRALIA.

Councillors and Scientific Advisers Meet

The Councillors of the Society and members of the special Scientific Advisory Panel of the Society met over lunch in December to discuss the activities of 1997 and to plan for the 1988 year of events.



Dr Mike Augée (Mammals - University of NSW); Dr David Butcher (Wildlife - WWF); Councillor Sandy Johnson and Dr David White (Plants) at the luncheon.

Members of the Scientific Advisory Panel which covers a wide range of wildlife expertise were thanked for their ready assistance with specialist advice when needed to ensure that the Council can speak and act authoritatively on all current issues of wildlife preservation matters.

Any member of the Society who has scientific expertise and can advise the Society from time to time on wildlife preservation matters is asked to contact the President or Secretary about joining the panel.

Patron Presents Certificates

The Patron of the Friends of Towra Point Nature Reserve, Stephen Mutch MP, Federal Member for Cook which includes the Towra Point Nature Reserve presented a framed Certificate of Appreciation to the President of the Society, Vincent Serventy AM at a special end of the year function at Kurnell in December 1997.

Vice Present John Robertson and Treasurer Ross Bernie accepted the Certificate on behalf of the President at the function.

Some 35 volunteers attended the final working bee to clear weeds from the Reserve, erected impressive new signage at the end of the causeway and later enjoyed a barbecue luncheon where the Presentations took place at Alpha Farm (the original farm house built in 1845 and now restored as a meeting centre) in the Botany Bay National Park at Kurnell.



Patron of the Friends group Stephen Mutch MP presenting Ross Bernie with a framed Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the Friends of National Parks Foundation to President Vincent Serventy AM for the Society's outstanding conservation work on the Towra Point Nature Reserve wetlands.



Stephen Mutch MP, Patron of the Friends group presenting a Certificate of Appreciation to Secretary Patrick Medway for his outstanding support to the Towra Point Nature Reserve project as Chairman of the Friends group. Ms Jo Ridley (National Parks Foundation) and Jammy Erskine (Ranger, NPWS) look on.

Death of our Assistant Treasurer Frans Brandt

We are sad to report the death of our Assistant Treasurer Frans Brandt who died in the Royal North Shore Hospital in December after a short illness.

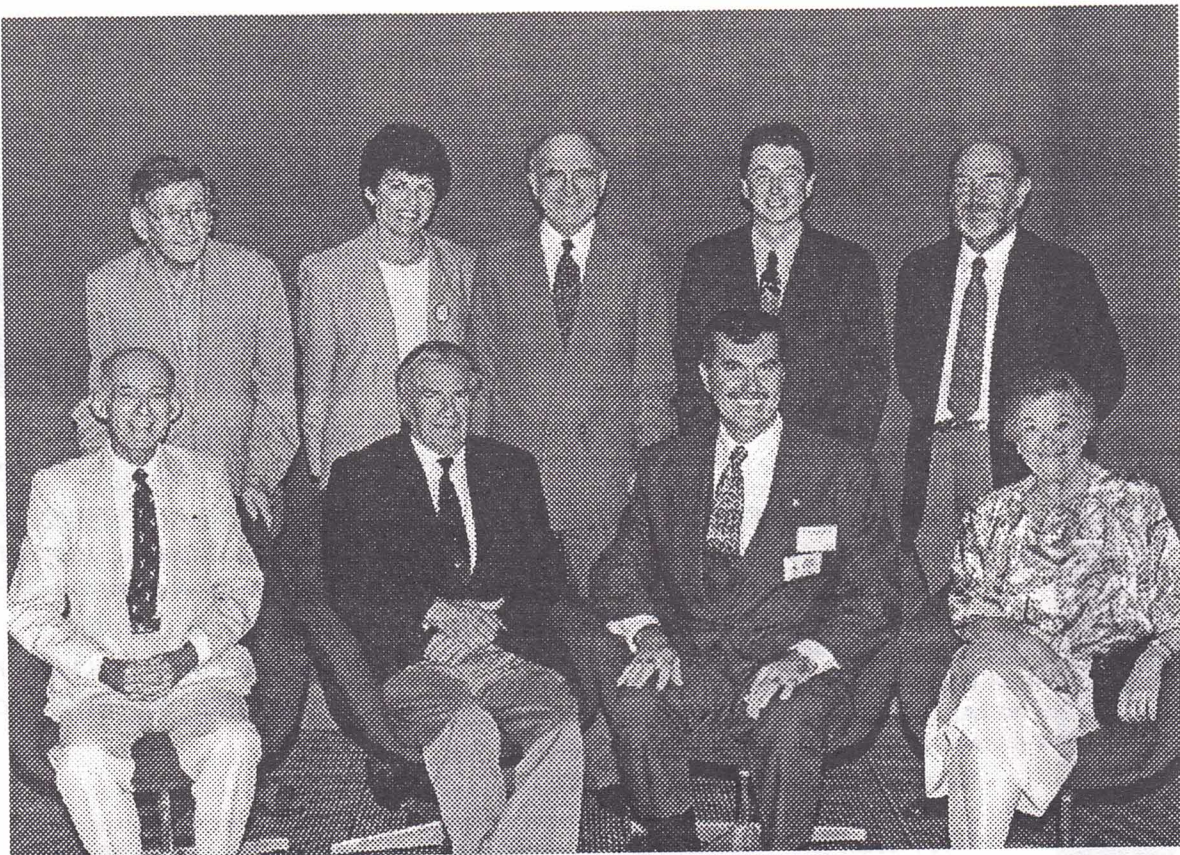
Frans and Joan were long time members of the society and both have served loyally on the Council as Treasurer and Minute Secretary for many years.

Frans and Joan first met at a meeting of the Society back in the 1960's and maintained an active interest in all aspects of the Society, with Frans serving as Treasurer for some thirty years. He was also Treasurer for the Homeopathy Society and the Liberal Catholic Church at the time of his death.

The Funeral Memorial Service for Frans was held at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium where his many friends paid their respects and farewells, with the Society represented by the Secretary Patrick Medway, Treasurer Ross Bernie and Vice President John Robertson.

We extend our condolences to Joan and the family for the sad loss of a great friend.

VALE FRANS BRANDT.



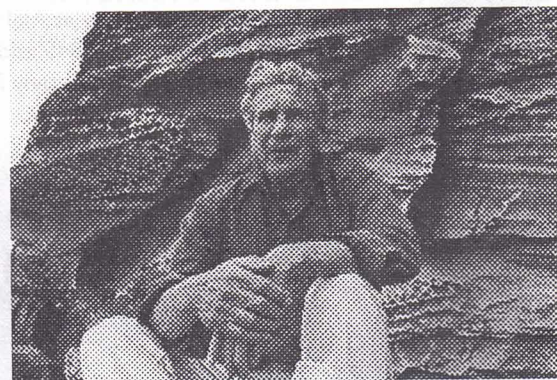
Assistant Secretary Frans Brandt at the 1997 Annual General Meeting when he stepped down as Treasurer after some 30 years of service to the Society.

President Honoured with Local Award

The President of the Society, Vincent Serventy AM was recently honoured by the Gosford City Council with two awards - Winner of the Gosford City Environment Award and with his wife Carol, they were honoured by the Gosford City Council as Citizen of the Year for 1998.



President Vincent Serventy AM honoured as Gosford City Council's Winner-Environment Award for 1998 and with his wife Carol, Citizen of the Year 1998.



President Vincent Serventy on the rocks overlooking the beach at Pearl Beach during his daily patrols to keep the area clean of rubbish and pollution after being honoured by the Gosford City Council as Winner - Environment Award for 1998.

Congratulations from the Council and all members of the Society on these two wonderful awards in recognition of your work for wildlife and conservation.

International Bird Expert Joins Panel

The international bird expert, Professor Alan Keats of the Queens University, Canada and Australian by birth has agreed to join the Society's Scientific Panel of experts to guide and advise the President on important wildlife conservation decisions.

Professor Keats attended the 1997 Annual General Meeting and Luncheon at Parliament House, Sydney and met the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Pam Allan, MP. The Minister outlined her Governments achievements in wildlife preservation and conservation as the Guest of Honour at the Luncheon.



Professor Alan Keats with the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Pam Allan MP and President Vincent Serventy AM at Parliament House, Sydney.

History of the Society Being Recorded

The Council of the Society recently commissioned Dr Joan Webb to research and write the history of the Society since its inception in 1909.

Dr Webb who has written many historical accounts of organisations and prominent people, recently completed a biography of Dr Thistle Stead (Harris), a one time President of the Society and has an intimate knowledge of the history of the Society and many of its former presidents and personalities.

Many of the current executive officers of the Society including our President for the past 31 years have related many interesting anecdotes to be recorded in the history of the Society book.

Dr Webb expects to have the final draft completed by 1999 in readiness for publication in Year 2000 and for the Official Launch at the EARTH 2000 Conference.



Ross Bernie, Dr. Joan Webb and President Vincent Serventy.

Official Excursions for 1998

All members and their friends are very welcome to join the excursions.

• Saturday 2nd May 1998

"Rescuing Towra Point Nature Reserve"
Commencing at 10am at the entrance way off Captain Cook Drive, Kurnell.

Followed by a BBQ luncheon at Alpha Farm at Botany Bay National Park with "Friends of Towra Point Nature Reserve" and NPWS Rangers.

Food and Drinks provided free of charge.
Enquiries to Patrick Medway,
Tel: (02) 9556 1537

• Sunday 2nd August 1998

"Reptiles of the Central Coast"
Visit the Australian Reptile Park and Wildlife Sanctuary at Gosford for a special wildlife tour.

Commencing at 10am at the Australian Reptile Park, Gosford followed by lunch.
Enquiries to John Robertson,
Tel: (02) 9363 9629

BOOK EARLY AND INDICATE IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TRAVEL BY BUS OR TRAIN.

Annual Garden Bird Count Another Success

The 18th Annual Garden Bird Count was again conducted right across Australia on New Years Day 1 January 1998 and we were again inundated with wonderful reports of birds in peoples back yards.

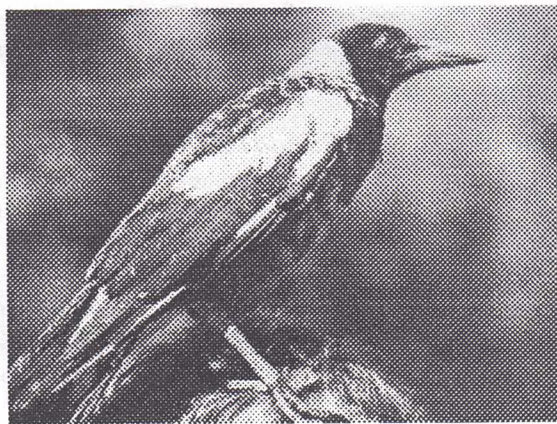
Last year was a record year with some 1200 entries being received. This year we have received about 650 survey sheets to date and the Bird Count Compiler Mrs Rosalind Gordon has been extremely busy entering the details on to her computer.

We propose to publish the results for everyone's information in the Winter edition of the Australian Wildlife Magazine.

We have been so impressed with the heart warming letters that have accompanied some of the entries that Mrs Gordon hopes to publish extracts from some of the more interesting replies.

Last year the Australian Magpie topped the list of the most observed bird in the backyards and gardens across Australia. The exception was in Tasmania where the Blackbird was noted in some 83% of local gardens. The blackbird was also common in both Victoria (79%) and South Australia (93%). The Australian Raven was also very common in Queensland and Western Australia where it topped the list in that State with 59% observance.

We thank all those wonderful people who have sent in their entries for 1998 and remind others that late entries can still be received by sending your details to the Bird Count Compiler at our Box 3248, GPO SYDNEY NSW 1043.



The Australian Magpie topped the 1997 List.

Visit to Cumberland State Forest



Some 25 members enjoyed a great day in the Cumberland State Forest on Saturday 14 February 1998 last and learned about the State Forests extensive conservation program.

Welcomed by Lianne Hayward, we learned about the way State Forests is managing the 3.4 million hectares of forests covering a wide range from rainforests, open forests, hardwood and softwood plantations through New South Wales

The State Forest Research and Development Division at West Pennant Hills has some 70 staff working on more than 1000 projects. Many of the successful projects which have resulted in better trees and shrubs are available in the Nursery.

State Forests are public assets and are managed for a range of values and competing interest including grazing, four wheel drivers, bee keepers, aboriginal archaeological sites, camping and bushwalking and of course timber production.

Cumberland State Forest at West Pennant Hills was originally an orange grove and farm. It has become a wonderful forest haven on the edge of big city where birds, animals and plants safely co-exist with many human visitors each day. One of the special features of the Forest is that of an Arboretum with some 250 different types of trees planted out. We were most impressed with the fine stands of eucalyptus trees throughout the grounds. The flooded gums planted in the 1940's now reach some 25-30 meters high, along with the Bunya Pine plantation with its huge seed pods dropping around us as we walked through the forest pathway.

We learned of the conservation surveys, community volunteer ranger program, the timber harvesting policy, national forest policy statement, selective cutting, genetic diversity programs, with much healthy discussion following the address.

Conservation policy covered the Flora Reserve System - dedicated areas for rare and threatened species of plants and trees, Filter Strips - 20-40 metre reserves each side of creeks and rivers to form wildlife corridors which are very important for conservation of all wildlife, old growth forests - preservation of genetic diversity and natural homes for so much of our wildlife, comprehensive reserve systems with 15 % of each Forest type being preserved in reserves and value added timber industry.

The re-organised State Forests include the Softwood Division with some 200,000 hectares under plantation mainly radiata pine; Natural Forests Division for major state forests; Hardwood Plantation Division; Harvesting Advisory Board; Joint Venture Program involving both public and private landowners planting out eucalyptus trees for future harvesting and the Trees on Farms program.



Members listening to Lianne Hayward at the State Forests Education Centre.

After the Address we went on an extensive walk through the Forest looking at and identifying the rich variety of trees and plants growing so healthily throughout the grounds before journeying back to the barbecue area for lunch.

Following a short break for lunch, members of the ANPC met for a planning meeting for the next visitation program. We agreed to recommend a visit to Katandra Trust property at Ingleside near Mona Vale where there is a fine collection of rare

and threatened species of plants in early spring 1998. Another suggestion was a visit to the Castlereagh State Forest and to the Munmorah State Recreation Area in August- September.

The next visit of the Network is to the Rare and Threatened Species bed in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney in May 1998.



Society Supports 'Birds Australia' Project

The Council of the Society recently made a major contribution to Birds Australia which is committed to the purchase of the 126,000 acre 'Gluepot Station' in South Australia to protect all its outstanding flora and fauna. Of special significance are the populations of one of our rarest mainland birds, the Black-eared Miner as well as the threatened Malleefowl, Scarlet-chested Parrots, Regent Parrots, Red-lored Whistlers and Striated Grasswrens.



Black-eared Miner (hybrid).



Red-lored Whistler.

Birds Australia has a proud history of helping native birds through research and conservation projects and launched this special appeal to create the Birds Australia Murray Mallee Reserve to protect this internationally important habitat forever.

Australia's native birds are disappearing at an alarming rate; some species are already so depleted that they are poised on the brink of extinction. So when an untouched block of mallee was discovered, containing no fewer than six nationally threatened species, Birds Australia knew they had to save and protect this important parcel of land. With no likelihood of anyone else stepping in to save it, Birds Australia had to act and launched a national funding raising campaign to buy the land and preserve it for its wildlife, and for future generations of Australians.

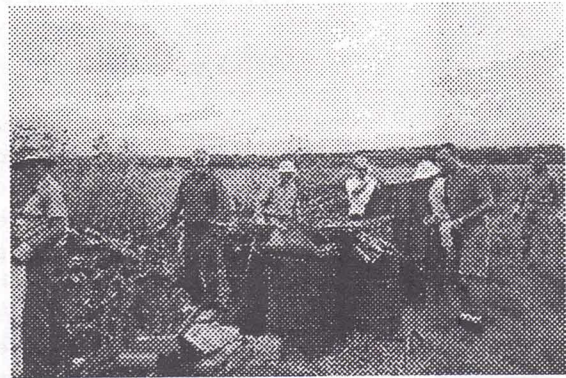


President Vincent Serventy AM presenting the NSW Chairman of Birds Australia Peter West with a cheque for \$1000 from the Society to help save the 126,000 acre 'Gluepot Station' for a bird conservation reserve.

BIRDS AUSTRALIA, (formerly known as the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union) is the senior bird conservation and research organisation in Australia. It works to conserve native birds and biological diversity in Australasia and Antarctica, through the study and management of birds and their habitats, and the education and involvement of the community. It has over 6000 members and supporters and inspires the involvement of thousands of volunteers.

Many of our members also belong to Birds Australia and support their bird conservation programs.

Towra Point Up-date

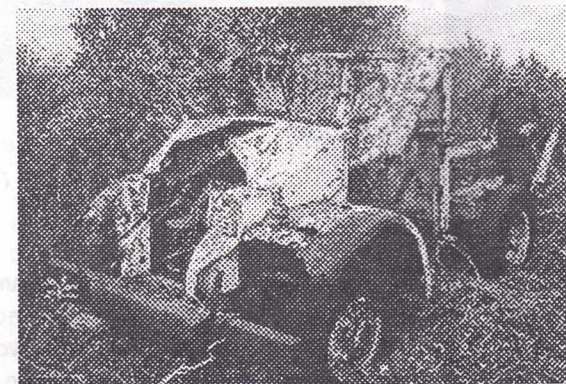


Members working on Towra Point Nature Reserve on Clean Up Australia Day to remove the accumulated rubbish.

Members assist in the annual Clean Up Australia Day on 1 March 1998 by helping to clear tonnes of rubbish from the Towra Point Nature Reserve at Kurnell on Botany Bay. With the assistance of the National Parks and Wildlife Service Ranger Jamie Erskine and two vehicles we collected and removed tonnes of old iron, metal sheeting, drums, old tires and bottles and other rubbish from the site.

An exciting discovery was clearing the lantana from an old rusting vehicle when it turned out to be a 1942 Army blitz wagon apparently used when the Department of Defence Radar Station was operating from a base in the Towra Point wetlands during World War II.

A full program has been drawn up to continue the removal of exotic weeds and rubbish from the Reserve to provide a safe habitat for migratory wading birds.



An old army vehicle was uncovered when clearing the rubbish from the Reserve. We hope to research the history of the vehicle and its association with the Reserve as part of the History of the Towra Point Nature Reserve.



Minard Crommelin and Mr Cattley, the first caretaker of the Biological Research Field Station at Pearl Beach taken in the late 1940's.

Minard Crommelin - Early History

Following our recent article on Minard Crommelin and the Crommelin Native Arboretum at Pearl Beach, NSW, Dr Joan Webb who has been commissioned to write the history of the Society, tells me that Minard Crommelin was a member of the Council of the Society from 1935 to 1939.

During those years Minard was the Society's official representative of the Associated Tree Lovers Civic League.

We would like to correct the caption of the photograph published in the recent edition and point out that the photograph of Minard was taken in the grounds of the Biological Research Field Station and not the Arboretum.

Minard Crommelin thought to have been taken in the late 1920's or early 1930's when she was in her forties.



Minard Crommelin at the University of Sydney Biological Research Field Station at Pearl Beach taken in 1958.



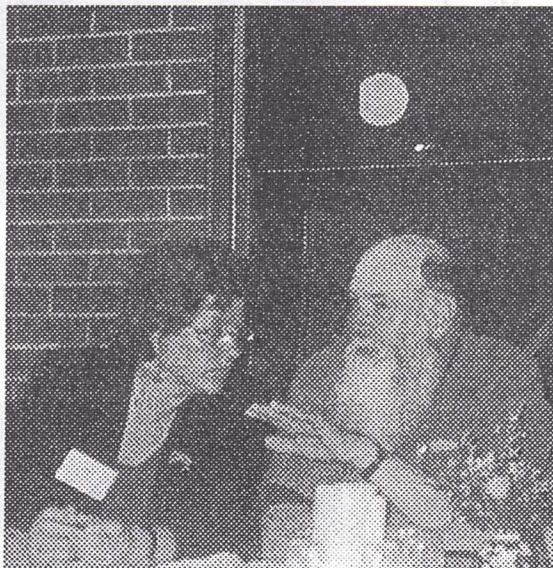
Crommelin Native Arboretum at Pearl Beach (NSW) named in memory of Minard Crommelin.

Conservation - A Balancing Act!

Murray Hunt

A conference entitled 'Urban Wildlife Ecology - the Balancing Act!' was recently held by the Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife Services. The conference was facilitated by the presentation of seminars by a number of expert lecturers including Robyn Kruk, Director General of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and Dr John Walmsley, Managing Director of Earth Sanctuaries.

A myriad of processes threatening wildlife and its habitat in the Sydney region were discussed. The recurring theme over the two day workshop was the devastating effect that introduced plants and animals have had on the Australian environment. A second theme was the difficulty in determining an appropriate response to these threats. In some cases efforts to 'improve' habitat may actually be detrimental to the continued survival of animal communities. Bush regenerators need to consider the possibility that the removal of stands of weed such as Lantana (*Lantana camara*) from an area may leave resident animals vulnerable to predation due to the animals using the weed as habitat in the absence of more suitable protection. A patchwork pattern approach to regeneration work for an area may have merit so that former residents of today's work area have only a short distance to travel to find shelter.



Robyn Kruk, Director General of NPWS and Dr. John Walmsley of SA discussing the finer points of wildlife conservation.

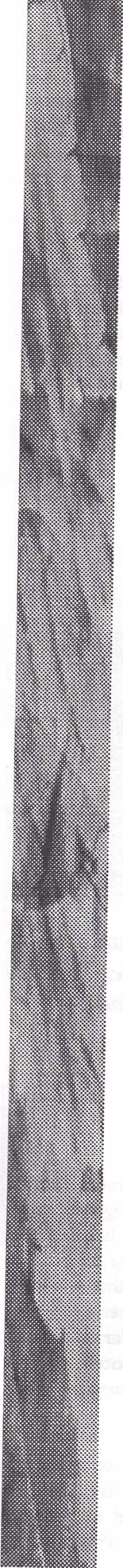
A similar balancing act is required when we consider the removal of 'junk' such as sheet metal and old cars from the Australian bush. Almost invariably these areas have become habitat for various reptiles and small mammals such as bandicoots. It is suggested that before the removal of the non-natural habitat more suitable habitat must be established for the resident wildlife. In a similar vein, stands of blackberry are commonly used as habitat for the smaller birds such as finches and wrens.

Man also has an insidious impact on the environment whilst 'helping' nature by planting plants in his own backyard. The use of exotic plants changes the ecology of the whole suite of animals living in that area and may advantage some over others. One should remain conscious that planting larger trees may advantage larger birds and disadvantage smaller birds from visiting the garden. The environmental impact of planting hybrid plants was also raised. The hybrid plants that we are planting in our gardens flower for longer periods throughout the year and produce a much greater quantity of food for nectar-eating birds and other animals. It was suggested that the planting of hybrid plants may be affecting the migration of bird species with birds remaining in the local area to take advantage of the high levels of food for greater periods of the year. Furthermore, it may be that the hybrid species help support an exaggerated population of the aggressive honeyeater, the noisy miner.

Efforts in rehabilitating injured animals to the wild should also be carefully considered. Wildlife carers may actually have a detrimental affect on the larger wild population though the release of disease carrying animals to the wild after assisting in the recovery to 'health' of individual animals.

The examples mentioned here are simply the tip of the iceberg and it is probable that every response to environmental problems has negative effects, either foreseen or not, given the complexity of the ecosystem in which we live. The moral of the story is that we need to think very carefully about appropriate responses before responding to environmental problems, and also before introducing non-native and non-natural plants to our 'backyards'.

Lectures also raised the level of awareness of the audience to environmental issues that are often forgotten at conferences such as the bio-accumulation of toxic substances, and the conservation of the smaller animal species such as frogs, macro-invertebrates, native bees, bats and flying foxes. For example, I was not aware that the Sydney region has over 400 species of native bee, but unlike the ubiquitous imported commercial bee,



the Australian bees are predominantly solitary, stingless, and small. Australian bees are better able, and in some cases solely able to pollinize Australian plants and some commercial crops. They are also able to produce honey (that tastes uniquely of the Australian bush) but only in small quantities. It should also be noted that some species have a preference for nesting in the hollow stems of lantana which places further complexity in the removal of this exotic weed.

News from Africa

Our honorary life member Robert Saunders sends us news from this country and the latest magazine had some fascinating nature items, mostly tragic but with lessons for Australia.

Killer Weed

Our old enemy, water hyacinth, has attacked Lake Victoria. It now has the worst example in the world of infestation by this pest plant. There are schemes to bring in the insect eaters which have controlled the hyacinth in other parts of the world but some locals say we have had enough troubles with importations so do not bring in new ones.

However local experts say the nutrient pollution must be controlled otherwise algal blooms will return in place of the hyacinth.

Others are turning the curse into a blessing by making rope and furniture out of the stems of the weed.

A Possible Native Cure

Near the Carnivore Restaurant, hyacinth has been killed by a disease. The plant once grew in a wetland created to treat sewage from the restaurant and nearby sporting ovals. The hyacinth was also proving useful but now the struggle is to keep it alive.

Rinderpest

This is a disease of cattle which also kills wildlife such as buffalo. In some places wildlife numbers have been reduced by 85 percent. The solution is simple. Vaccinate all cattle so the disease cannot spread from them to the wild creatures.

War

Burundi national parks were settled by refugees who killed the wildlife so humans could survive. How can parks be protected when nations are at war?

Quote from 'Burning Bush, a fire history of Australia' by Stephen Pyne, which should be required reading by all conservationists

'...By 1965 almost all of Australia in need of organised protection had a statutory mandate to provide it...the creation of this infrastructure was an astonishing achievement.

Half a century after the 1926 fires..Australia could boast of 300,000 volunteers organised into 7,000 brigades. Roughly one rural Australian in ten belonged to a bushfire brigade. These were... proportions not paralleled anywhere in the world.

Volunteers are the most remarkable of our achievements for fighting fires, saving our wildlife, nurturing museums of all kinds, providing the kind of social services needed to fill the gaps in government care, fighting weeds, and in a hundred and one ways we are an example to the world.

Monarto

This was a great dream of the Dunstan government, similar to the attempt to create a new town from Albury.-Wodonga

Political ideals crumbled when faced by civil servants determined not to leave their capital city comfort zones. A tough government, willing to say move or be sacked, as was done, when the Antarctic Division was moved from Melbourne to Hobart with final success.

Decentralisation is the only hope for Australia where we could show the world that cities do not have to grow larger and larger until they decay in a welter of cars, smog and poor quality living. Sydney-siders will understand that bigger is not beautiful. The famous Canadian town planner, Lewis Mumford, made clear that cities of half a million can offer all the cultural advantages any normal person can desire.

At least something was saved out of Monarto, The Royal Zoological Society zoo is rapidly becoming a tourist attraction. One thousand hectares of land of which part is a wilderness of mallee and zoo where visitors can study animals in captivity and the fascination of the wild.

New South Wales was also able to do the same in Dubbo where an open plain zoo has been a great tourist success.

Public Liability in National Parks.

NSW spends a million dollars a year on insurance coverage for protection against public liability suits for people injured when visiting national parks. This is a waste of public money and we have suggestions both from the United States and Environmental Defenders offices in Australia showing how State Acts could protect against such suits.

We wrote to all the State National Park Services on our suggestions and here is a typical reply from Western Australia.

17 November 1997

Dear Vincent,

Thank you for your letter of 30 October 1997 regarding the issue of parks and public liability. This is an issue which has been raised during my visits to National Parks in this State. It is clearly worrying officers who have the task of managing public access in our natural environment.

I would not like to see the threat of expensive litigation result in the public being denied access to natural areas. The ideas outlined in your paper are clearly options along with the provision of safe access ways near known hazards and public information about how to move safely in the natural environment.

As you suggested the issue is now on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Environment Conservation Council (ANZECC).

Thank you for your constructive input.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Cheryl Edwardes

Minister for the Environment

This is a typical letter showing how down the years our Society has earned the respect of governments of all shades of political opinion.

Mercury Poisoning

The 22 November issue of New Scientist has some alarming news on this old danger. Seafood often has high levels of this metal. It has been found that if pregnant women have too high levels their children can suffer a mental loss of some ten points in their subsequent IQ.

Next July Europe will consider cutting emissions to zero by the year 2020. One method is to install mercury scrubbers on the chimneys of power stations. Although teeth fillings which use mercury in amalgams are a possible danger it is fortunate that the mercury in its release into the human body directly as the metal is far less dangerous. However getting a dose from teeth fillings and power stations is a double jeopardy.



Marlin. Large predatory fish can accumulate mercury in their bodies and so become dangerous as human food.

Recycling is Good

That has become almost a conservation axiom. Yet is recycling always the most ecologically sound way to go. Some years ago we learned that returnable bottles was not the way to go. This work was done by CSIRO showing that the energy cost of sterilising bottles, the water used were all counter productive. It was sounder to do what is now being done. Crush all glass bottles and use this material to add to sand for the furnaces which turn this into new glass.

The problem with paper is more complex but careful studies in Europe show that two thirds of waste paper should be incinerated rather than recycled. One example will show the problem.

One Kent village is the largest recycling plant in Europe. It receives 30,000 truck deliveries each year. Just think of the diesel used, the carbon dioxide given off and all the other problems.

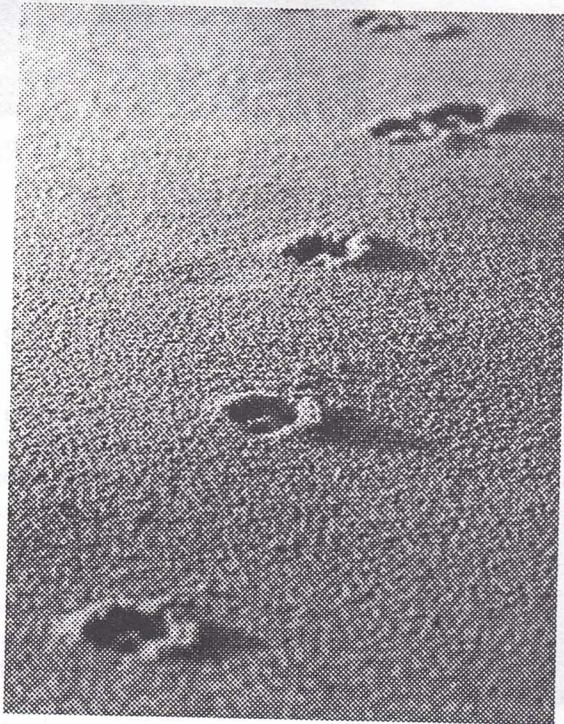
We suggest the CSIRO be asked to do a similar study for Australia to see if we should change our methods, keeping such good things as metal and glass recycling, as well as using other wastes for compost but discarding ecologically unsound practises.

We will write to Senator Hill with this suggestion

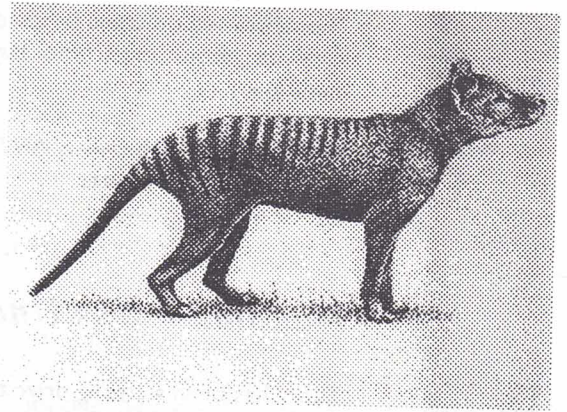
Feral Pests

At long last we have managed to get the Western Shield, the conservation success story in Western Australia trialled as the Eastern Shield in New South Wales.

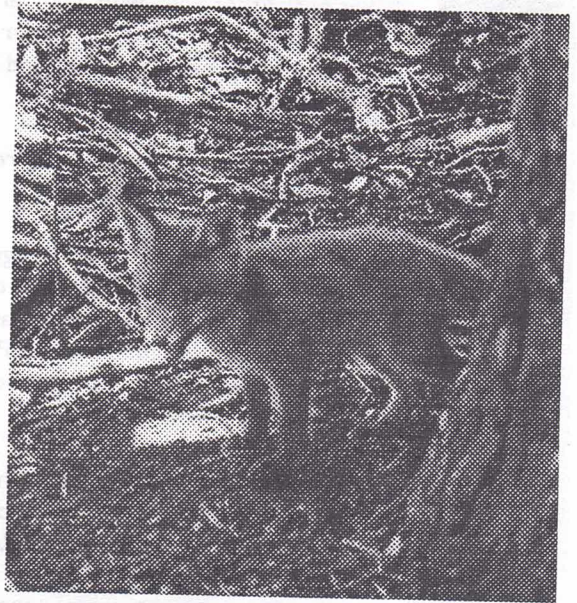
At the last meeting of the Pest Animals Council they agreed to ask the Minister to provide more funding for vertebrate pest control particularly aimed at fox and feral cats.



The track of the dingo. White invaders were not the first to bring in new animal pests. This is the track of a dingo, an animal brought here some time in the last ten thousand years and responsible for the disappearance of a number of our native species, including the Tasmanian Tiger.



Tasmanian Tiger.



Foxes will be targeted in the western shield programme.

Saving the Rhino

A great suggestion has come from the Explorers Journal. Rhino populations are dropping tragically because of the stupidity of Arabs and Asiatics in their belief that rhino horn is good for you, particularly for your virility.

Since horn is the same composition as human hair and many other animal horns it is obvious that any change is only in the human mind.

However logic will not save the rhino. The suggestion is to lace horns with poison and publicise this around the world. There are large stockpiles in store and the poison suggested is paraquat, A cancer causing pesticide which caused a panic among marijuana smokers a few decades ago.

The same method could be used with the ecologically dangerous fools who buy tiger bones as medicine.

We will send this belief to WWF as a solution to rhino and tiger slaughter.

National Parks Under Threat

There has been a strong drive to open up national parks to various recreation groups. The most vociferous have been the four wheel drive enthusiasts, closely followed by horse riders and recreational fisher folk who number millions. They want the right to use their four wheel drives to reach every beach, estuary and river, destroying whatever lies in their goal.

Most will not walk a few hundred metres if they can drive.

Many years ago our Society suggested a solution where human activities are considerable but where a great deal of natural beauty remains. That is the declaration of a Regional Park where a conservation umbrella protects the beauty but still allows considerable human use,

The best known example is in the Lake District of England though we do have two prime examples. The first is the Great Barrier Reef which is managed as a number of zones, some completely sacred as nature reserves, some allowing commercial fishing and boating, some allowing tourist activities and the like.

The second is Sharks Bay. Here there are also pastoral leases where farming continues. Such farmers can encourage caravan parks, four wheel drive users who pay the entrance fee, sandalwood cutting and of course the traditional sheep to produce wool.

All these are sensible solutions to the increasing pressure to cater for our recreational needs.

There are also forestry plantations where horse riding, bike riding and the like can take place between the trees as is common in the pine forests of the ACT.

Hopefully at the parks conference to be held in 1998 all these suggestions will be discussed.

Towra Point

This has remained a prime endeavour and our executive officer, Patrick Medway has worked hard to produce practical results. One was to regenerate the freshwater pool where Captain Cook filled his water barrels.

Patrick was helped by Bernie Clarke who knows more about Botany Bay and its shorelines than any other person. Centuries ago it was said of Queen Mary that after she was dead, the word Calais would be found engraved on her heart. That was because she had lost the last of the French possessions which England, quite wrongly still claimed.

Towra Point is engraved in Bernie's mind and also in all of his friends, a worthy memorial.



Volunteers working on the Reserve to clear the weeds and rubbish.

Santos and Coongie Lakes

Our patron Judith Wright wrote of 'those corporations whose bellies are never full' baving been saddened by the greed of companies which have destroyed so much natural beauty and wealth in this land of ours.

Coongie Lakes is almost unknown to most of us but it consists of more than a hundred lakes and ephemeral wetlands in the arid heart of Australia. Because of their immense scientific value they were given the prestige of RAMSAR listing, an honour equivalent to Word Heritage listing of more famous places.

Enter the corporation. Santos have the right to explore for oil and gas in this region. Financially they have done very well out of this concession Since Coongie Lakes is only one percent of this huge area we hoped they would listen with some sympathy to our pleas to relinquish their rights to

this tiny fragment. Thirty years before Rupert Murdoch had the same plea with regard to mining rights to Dryandra forest in Western Australia. He accepted the truth of our claims and relinquished the region to mining though it still remains an important nature reserve.

From Santos we have not had even the courtesy of a reply. We note their shares are rising steadily on the stock market. At their next Annual meeting we will send a spokesperson to plead our case. Perhaps the shareholders may be more generous in spirit than the Santos managers.

Koalas

The kangaroo island koalas are once more in the news.

Once more the academic scientists are peddling their old mantra. These are introduced animals. They lack genetic variability. It is kinder and cheaper to shoot them.



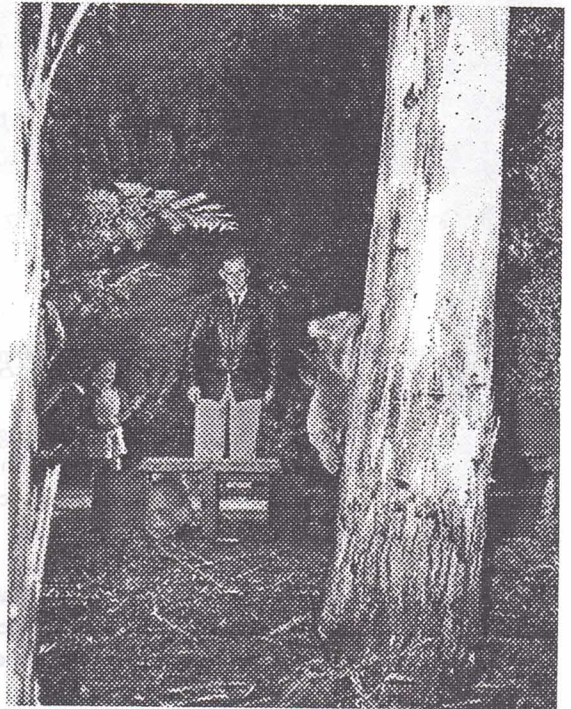
Kangaroo Island Koalas. Some scientific 'experts' state we should shoot the excess animals on Kangaroo Island. This would be a disaster for public relations as this animal is a tourist animal worth millions.

What are our answers?

Rabbits, all twenty nine of them did not have much genetic variability yet conquered our continent and now number tens of millions.

Koalas were once on Kangaroo Island as they were once in Western Australia.

Shooting koalas would set back nature conservation a hundred years. Academics care little about the emotional side of conservation. They enjoy shocking the romantics and being 'realistic'.



Translocation is our solution. There are many parts of the mainland deluded of koalas because of past hunting. Here is an animal taken from offshore islands when they became too abundant and released into mainland forests.

What is the solution?

Huge areas of Australia, once the home of these marsupials are now empty. Translocate koalas to such areas including the millions of hectares of eastern Australia recently burned out of most wildlife, including koalas. Forget about diluting a pure strain so beloved of academics. Victorian koalas have been interbreeding with northern races frequently in zoos for many years just as the various races of giraffes have done in our zoos. What is wrong with hybrid vigour? It made America strong with its mixture of races. Perhaps it will improve our koalas.



How koalas can be caught to be translocated. The noose is placed over an animal high in a tree, then a pole is placed to push on the head of the animal so it will climb down slowly to the ground.

The Water is Getting Warmer

There is an old story about frogs in a container. Someone lit a fire under it but the frogs were not troubled. Then the moment came when they decided to jump out. Too late!

Greenhouse warming is like that. Except in this case humans are the frogs. Most scientists are certain the hot times will come, slowly at first, then with the kind of rush which makes it too late to do anything.



Greenhouse warming. Many islands like this one in the Indian Ocean will be flooded and the people will demand we should provide a new home since it was our bad example which increased greenhouse warming.

Politicians rarely look beyond winning the next election. Howard and his team will be in the dustbin of political history before the greenhouse chickens come home to roost.

The Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia has always worked on a longer time scale. Formed in 1909 we are the oldest in Australia, possibly the oldest in the world since conservation, like ecology, is a new science.



Beach resorts like this one on the Great Barrier Reef will be destroyed.

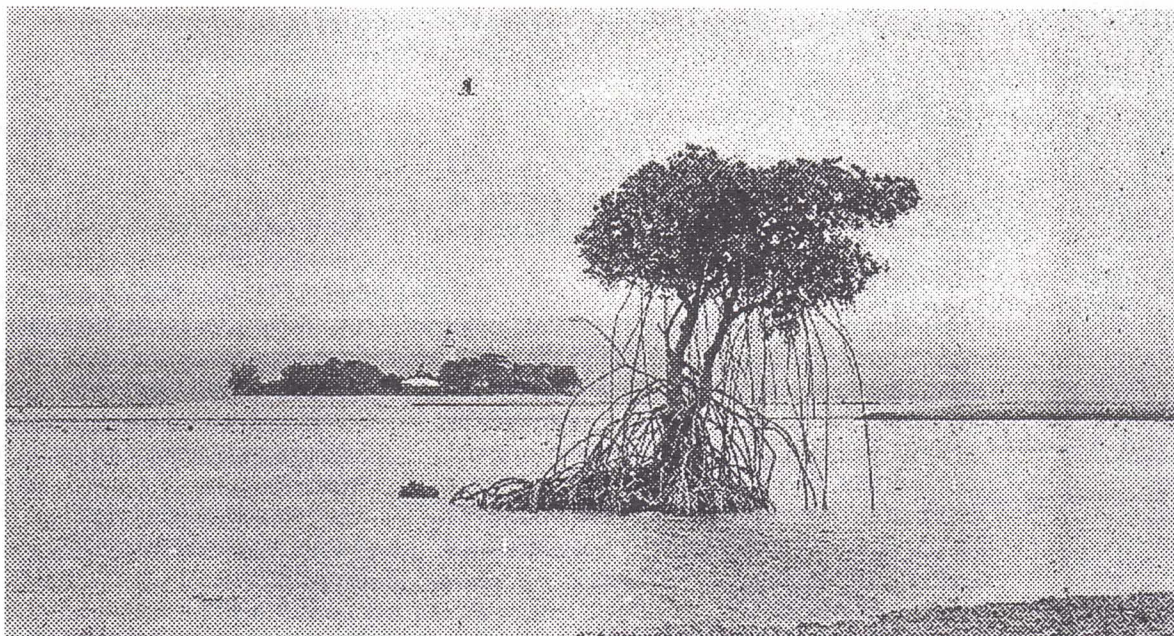
We have only had four presidents down the years, David Stead our founder, the second, while I have held that position for over thirty years. All of us held to the truth that environmental safety would not come in our lifetimes. This was first written by Edmund Burke two hundred years ago when he stated '...nobody made a greater mistake than those who did nothing because they could do so little.'

Little added to little can finally move mountains, just as a stream wears the high lands to fertile plains

I know the greenhouse disaster will probably come after my own death. Increasing temperatures will make the oceans of the world expand, just as water boils over from a too full saucepan when it is heated.

In August 1988 two Australian scientists pointed out that when the predicted one metre sea-level rise takes place, as it will in the next fifty years, half a million people living on coral islands in the Pacific and Indian oceans will be looking for a new home.

Australia having become the pariah among Developed Nations, determined to increase our gas emissions which we have claimed as being for our nation's present good, asking the future to



Low Isles, the scene of the first great scientific study of our corals will become even lower and disappear under rising oceans.

take the blame for our sins, The world will demand we must take those greenhouse refugees. Fortunately we can probably absorb half a million with not too much discomfort.

Time magazine in a special number for November 1997 had this statement, '...a modest one metre sea-level rise would send one hundred million refugees searching for new homes...' Rightly or wrongly Australia will again be blamed for the disaster, since we will be living comfortably in an almost empty continent.

So far we have handled a few thousand boat people. What will we do when these become an avalanche? No nation will come to our aid for a disaster to which we added so much in the mak



Northwest Island on the Great Barrier Reef will lose its lighthouse as the island goes under a metre of sea water.

ing. Useless to say those blank spaces on the Australian map are mostly desert, All the world knows we support eighteen million people and export food and clothing for many millions more on land we claim is infertile.

This time the chickens which come home to roost will turn out to be vultures!

Is there still time to save the situation?. By the year 2000 we can either change our policy, or elect a more environmentally sensible government. We will not then be isolated but shoulder to shoulder with other nations ready to share the environmental burden. .

Our present greed has isolated us to stand alone but with a more humane policy we will no longer stand alone.

Hinchinbrook

Keith Williams has ignored Canberra displeasure and cleared more mangroves. What chances therefore for stopping broadscale land clearing as part of our evil Greenhouse compact?

As someone wrote in a letter to the SMH Canberra bulldust can be spread in that region but clearing land is under State control. And most State governments are under conservative control.



Good News from Pam Allan

18 November 1997

'...Thanks for your comments in your letter of 22 August 1997 in relation to the protection of Cumberland Plain Woodland and the creation of Silverwater Nature Reserve.

I have also noted your comments on the loss of native plant and animal species due to the impact of introduced species and the effectiveness of the 'Western Shield' programme established by CALM. I would be pleased if you would also consider this as a response to our letter of 2 April sent direct to the Director-General of the NP and WL Service regarding these matters. Please accept my apologies for the delays in responding.

As you are aware the Western Shield programme was recently discussed at a meeting of the NSW Pest Animal Council and you would therefore be familiar with the NPWS view on the possibility of duplicating the programme in eastern Australia. The strategy adopted by the NP and WS will be to continue to focus on the protection of critical populations of threatened species.

I can also advise that in 1997-98 the NP and WS will allocate almost \$5 million to pest control. Approximately half these funds will be used to control pest animals amongst which foxes and feral cats are given a high ranking. The similar amount allocated last year, a summary of which is to be enclosed for your information, enabled over 400 control programs to be undertaken across the State.

In addition I have recently endorsed the nomination of predation of native fauna by the European Red Fox as a threatening process under the TSC Act. If this nomination is accepted by the scientific committee the NP and WS will have three years to develop a Threat Abatement Plan for foxes. The development of these plans will include wide community consultation.

You may also be aware that a draft National Threat Abatement Plan has been prepared by Environment Australia under Commonwealth legislation.

Thank you for your comments on these matters and I appreciate your interest.

Yours sincerely

Pam Allan MP
Minister for the environment

Criminals

Desmond Milligan, brother of Spike, is one of our new members. He sent the following news item from the Gosford Sun.

'Police have charged five people after they allegedly attempted to remove 15,000 single stemmed flannel flowers from Wyrabalong National Park near Pelican Beach on Friday morning. The flannel flower is a protected native plant. National park officers became suspicious when they stumbled across a new trail leading through the park. Upon further investigation they found an area where a large quantity of flannel flowers had been removed and bundled together. The officers hid in nearby bush and after alerting police detained five people...'

These folk will be charged later.

Fortunately criminals who take the easy way instead of working hard for a much better living are only a small section of our community. In the same region are native plant farmers who are making a good living by growing Christmas bush and selling the flowers to Japan.

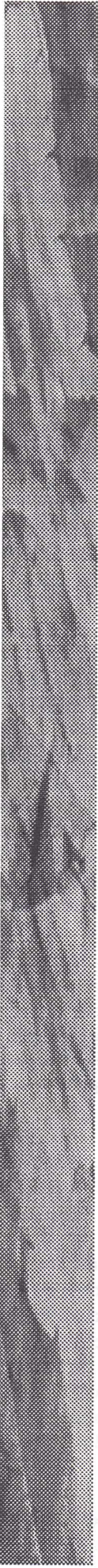
Stealing may seem cheap and easy but most find out the hard way it is not in the long run. Unless of course you steal in millions through the business market. Though even there, more and more are ending in gaol.

Plundering our Oceans

The Commonwealth controls all the oceans of our Economic Zone except a narrow five kilometre coastal fringe handed back to the care of the States. A recent report from the Federal Minister tells a sad story. Overfished are the following: southern bluefin tuna, tiger prawns probably overfished, while the southeast fisheries has one species overfished and eight fully fished.

Also fully fished are northern prawns and Torres Strait prawns. All this under the control of a national government which is boasting of how we convinced the world we should increase greenhouse gas emissions as though that was an environmental triumph.

Perhaps it was time we equipped our navy with dozens of smaller boats capable of policing our coastal waters where overseas pirates probably harry the remnants of the fish and prawns still left.



The world's commons, the oceans, are suffering everywhere and we should be setting an example in ocean caring.

Factor Four

This is a new book from the Club of Rome and deserves to be read by every member. The Club fell into some environmental discard due to alarmist predictions, a trap into which folk like Paul Erlich also plunged to the sad discredit of environmental causes everywhere.

This book however deals with important questions affecting our immediate future. The report deals with the factors which do not increase productivity per individual worker but with decreases in the use of the earth's resources, yet at the same time an increase in the wealth of the companies practising new methods.

Drip Irrigation

This is now new in Australia being practised by all sensible farmers using our water to grow crops. Usually this is water held in dams

This is not a new idea. Red Indians in the United States had a way of growing maize in the desert. Unglazed earthen ware pots were buried in the ground with only the neck showing. The pot was filled with water, the lid put on, and maize and bean seeds planted in the surrounding soil. Water leaked out and fed the roots growing in the moist clay.

Every week a child would refill the pots until the plants were ready to harvest.

Modern farms use high tech polymer emitters and tubes instead of clay pots and computer controls instead of children to keep up the water. As the book states the modern drip method is similar.

The Sundance Farm in Arizona covers 830 hectares and abandoned the water wasteful furrow irrigation for drip feeds from tubes buried 25 centimetres in the soil.

As a result the system is a hundred percent efficient since none is lost through evaporation, the roots using all the water and transpiring it. There is no problem with salination which in past centuries destroyed many cultures.

Other advantages are there was no need for deep tillage, only surface working being needed, cutting

such use by half. Fertilisers and herbicides were also reduced since none was wasted. Also salts did not accumulate in the fields. Production increased by between 15 to 50 percent.

The crops included cotton, wheat, maize and other suitable forms.

And all this by copying the ancient system used by the Anaszi Indians of the American southwest.

What Else?

On the same piece of photocopied pages was a suggestion that governments should not pay companies to build bridges. They should only lease them. This would encourage companies involved to search for durability and low management costs. Many municipalities in Germany are using this pattern.

We can do the same.

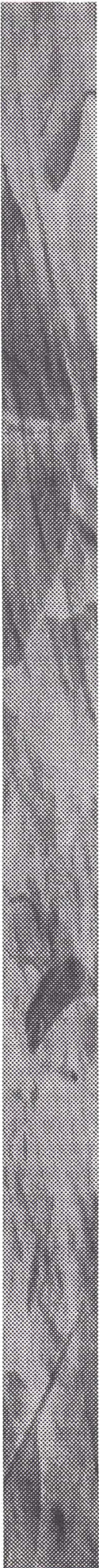
The report has become a best seller since wideawake companies are using the ideas to increase their profits without incurring environmental anger because they also are using the earth's finite resources.

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Pest Management Annual Report 1996/97

The NPWS allocated \$4.4 million for pest management during 1996/97. The funds have been used to plan and implement a wide array of pest management programs. Such programs are developed, and often undertaken, in collaboration with NSW Agriculture, Rural Lands Protection Boards, local government councils, CSIRO, universities, landholder organisations such as Landcare and Dunecare, community groups such as bush regeneration Volunteers and park neighbours. Each District has prepared a Pest Management Strategy which includes a prioritised list of pest programs being undertaken.

Threatened Species

Vertebrate pests and weeds have been identified as threatening processes under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. Submissions are being prepared to nominate foxes and bitou bush as threatening processes requiring remediation; submissions for other pests will follow.



A number of fox/cat control programs have been undertaken to protect a variety of threatened animal species: viz, yellow-footed rock-wallaby, brush-tailed rock-wallaby, malleefowl, mountain pygmy possum, long-nosed potoroo, koala and little tern.

Pest Animals

During 1996/97 the Service has undertaken over 400 programs aimed at minimising the impacts of animal pests. Results of a survey indicates that foxes are the most commonly occurring pest on Service estate being present on 73% of the reserves. Rabbits (53%), cats (56%), wild dogs (39%), pigs (28%) and goats (28%) were also present on many reserves.

Control of pest animals in urban areas is more difficult than in rural areas and North Metropolitan District is working closely with eight local councils and the community to address this issue. Key pest animal control programs are summarised below.

Rabbits

To capitalise on the release of the rabbit calici virus in a number of parks, the Service is working closely with NSW Agriculture and Rural Lands Protection Boards to ensure effective follow-up programs using conventional control techniques (i.e. 1080 baiting, fumigation and warren destruction) are implemented. To this end Service staff are actively involved in District Committees which have responsibility for developing an integrated approach at the local level.

Very extensive fumigation and warren destruction programs have been undertaken in Lake Mungo, Mallee Cliffs, Gunderbooka, Kosciuszko and Goulburn River National Parks and Kinchega, Yathong, Nombinnie and Round Hill Nature Reserves to maximise the effectiveness of RCD. In many of these areas vegetation exclosures have been installed to monitor vegetation responses in the wake of RCD.

The Service contributed \$104,000 towards the national research program on RCD and is working with the University of Western Sydney to monitor the spread and impact of RCD in Cattai National Park near Windsor.

A major pest control program at Little Llangothlin Nature Reserve (rabbit proof fencing, poison baiting, fox and blackbeny control) has reduced rabbit numbers to low levels and native plants are already responding.

Foxes

In response to the spread of RCD most Districts have implemented additional fox control programs to protect native animals from fox prey-switching should it occur as a result of reduced rabbit densities. A research program in the Hunter Region is monitoring the impact of foxes on brush-tailed rock-wallabies and assessing the effectiveness of current control strategies.

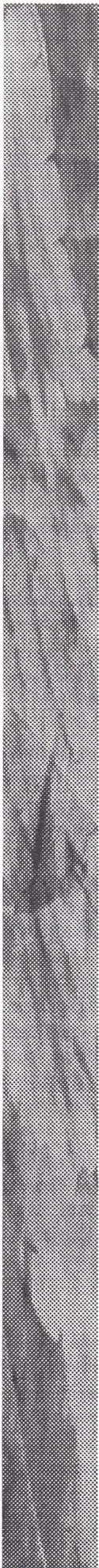
In addition, the Service has identified critical populations of endangered fauna most at risk. These are the yellow-footed rock-wallaby in the Coturaundee Nature Reserve and Mootwingee National Park near Broken Hill; Brush-Tailed Rock Wallaby in the Kangaroo Valley. Warrumbungle National Park and on private land near Tamworth, the malleefowl on several reserves in south-western NSW; ground-nesting birds on the coast; and potoroos in southern forests. Environment Australia has provided special grants to protect these populations.

The protection of the Brush-Tailed Rock Wallaby in the Kangaroo Valley is the most advanced of these programs. So far more than 400 foxes have been removed using the bait station technique. The success of this program has resulted in the formation of a local community group "Friends of the brush-tailed rock-wallaby" which aims to increase public awareness of wallabies and the threat posed by foxes, cats and dogs, and to raise money to support the program. The Friends won the 1996 National Community Award of the Readers Digest 50th Anniversary Award for Environmental Endeavours.

Blue Mountains District has a similar, but less advanced BTRW protection program in the Wollemi National Park. The District and scientists from the Research Division have worked closely with landholders to locate what is now assumed to be the second largest population of rock-wallabies in the State. Studies of the wallaby population, along with fox and cat predation, have allowed the District to develop control strategies to protect key colonies.

In Kosciuszko National Park foxes are attracted in large numbers during winter to the artificial food source around ski resorts. At the end of the ski season when this food source declines, foxes switch to native animals including the threatened mountain pygmy-possum. A very successful program has been implemented at Charlotte Pass Village and this will be expanded to all ski resorts on the Perisher Range next year.

The Coonabarabran District is undertaking an extensive fox control program in the Macquarie



Marshes Nature Reserve. This Ramsar listed wetland is a very important habitat for a number of endangered ground-nesting birds at risk from fox predation. The Service is combining with the Coonamble, Nyngan and Walgett RLPBs to implement a fox baiting program over 200,000 ha in and around the Macquarie Marshes.

Many other cooperative programs have been undertaken. For example, the Hunter District received wide community support in a very successful baiting program coordinated by the Port Stephens Feral Animal Advisory Committee. This resulted in more than 300 foxes being removed in and around Tomaree National Park to protect koala populations. Lismore District has combined with Tweed RLPB, DLWC, Southern Cross University and local landholders to protect the threatened pied oyster-catcher from foxes at South Ballina Beach.

Cats are a major threat to wildlife in many national parks and the Service undertakes small programs on most reserves. Trapping and shooting are the most common control methods used. Other methods include poison baiting (restricted use through permits) and improved garbage management.

A major problem faced by the Service is the continual dumping of unwanted cats. Hence, most cat control programs incorporate a community consultation component. Good examples of programs incorporating education and awareness aspects are those undertaken in and around Royal and Tomaree National Parks, Glenrock State Recreation Area and in the Macquarie Valley in western NSW and the Kangaroo Valley west of Nowra.

Apart from reducing the number of feral cats the Royal NP program will also capture valuable data on the number and type of cats within its reserves and on the urban interface. A brochure on the impact of cats on wildlife has been produced and this and other material on the need for community participation (responsible pet ownership) have been distributed to the local community.

In the Macquarie Valley Program representatives from Rural Lands Protection Boards, NPWS, Department of Land and Water Conservation, Landcare and Nyngan, Coonamble and Warren Shire Councils have formed a Pest Management Committee which is specifically targeting cats. Twenty six cat traps have been purchased to allow landholders to undertake their own trapping programs. In addition a number of public meetings have been held in each of the towns to raise public awareness.

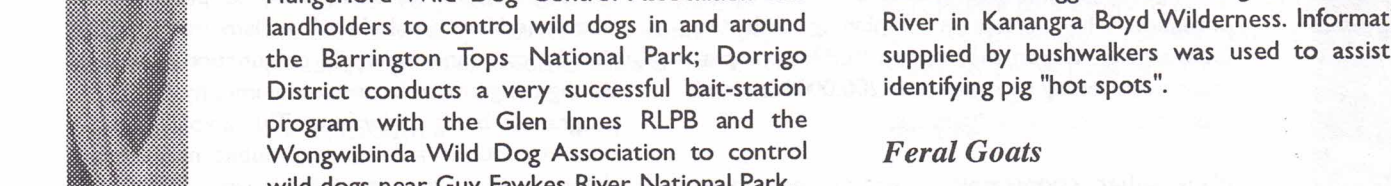
In the Kangaroo Valley the Service in conjunction with the Moss Vale RLPB recently obtained a permit for the use of 1080 baits to protect the threatened brush-tailed rock wallaby from predation by cats (and foxes). In conjunction with the baiting program an intensive community relations program is being undertaken. This involves property inspections and surveys, public notification through local media, information packages, newsletters and field days.

Wild Dogs

The management of wild dogs at the interface of Crown lands and grazing properties has always been a contentious issue. In response to community concern in south-eastern NSW a steering committee has been formed to develop a coordinated approach to wild dog control. The committee comprises representatives from Yass, Gundagai, Holbrook, Cooma, and Bombala RLPBs, NPWS, State Forests, DLWC, NSW Agriculture, ACT Parks and Wildlife and the ACT Leaseholders Association. Wild dog populations and movements will be monitored to enable a more strategic approach to control by identifying priority areas. In a similar way, Narooma District engaged CSIRO scientists to determine the population dynamics of wild dogs in Wadbilliga National Park so that management programs could be focussed on key areas.

Because of potential non-target impacts aerial baiting of wild dogs has been phased out in most parks. To compensate for this reduction the Service has greatly increased its use of bait-stations with their associated sand pads. For example, Blue Mountains District has conducted a very extensive control program for wild dogs which consisted of over 200 permanent bait stations along fire trails in the Kanangra Boyd and Blue Mountains National Parks. The program is supported by the Oberon Pig and Wild Dog Control Committee and has greatly reduced the number of wild dog attacks on neighbouring properties. An even more extensive program has been established by Upper Hunter District in Wollemi National Park where over 400 bait stations have been established. Other large programs are operating in Gibraltar Range, Washpool, Oxley Wild Rivers, Abercrombie River, Gardens of Stone and Kosciuszko National Parks and Torrington State Recreation Area.

Many programs are run in conjunction with RLPBs and Wild Dog Control Associations. For example, Eden and Narooma Districts have contracted Bega RLPB to control wild dogs in a number of reserves on the southern escarpment; Bathurst District conducts a baiting program in and around the Winburndale Nature Reserve with the local



RLPB. State Forests and a local farmer group; Hunter District works closely with the Mt Hungerford Wild Dog Control Association and landholders to control wild dogs in and around the Barrington Tops National Park; Dorrigo District conducts a very successful bait-station program with the Glen Innes RLPB and the Wongwibinda Wild Dog Association to control wild dogs near Guy Fawkes River National Park.

Feral Pigs

Very effective pig control programs have been implemented in most reserves in western NSW. One of the most successful is a regional program with the Brewarrina and Walgett RLPBs which removed more than 1,300 pigs from the Narran Lakes Nature Reserve. In Willandra National Park pig numbers are now at their lowest level for many years; this is the result of an excellent collaborative program undertaken with park neighbours and the Hillston RLPB.

The "Judas" pig program in the Kanangra Boyd National Park and Yerranderie State Recreation Area continued with Sydney Water during the year. In this program animals are trapped and fitted with radio collars to allow their movements and behaviour to be studied so that preferred habitats can be identified and better targeted. This technique is now widely adopted by the Service.

A good example of a regional approach to pest control is the Wiarborough Vertebrate Pest Management Project being coordinated by the Goulburn RLPB. This project aims to develop a cooperative feral pig management strategy in the Wiarborough area near Taralga with all stakeholders: NPWS Blue Mountains District, Goulburn RLPB, Mulwaree Catchment Management Committee, Inverary Landcare Group, Wiarborough Feral Pig Action Group, Sydney Water and Mulwaree Shire Council. If successful it will be used as a prototype for managing other vertebrate pests in the area, and hopefully elsewhere in the State. Another example of good collaboration is in the Eden District where the Service is working jointly with Bega and Bombala RLPBs, State Forests, and the Victorian Department of Natural resources and Environment to a regional vertebrate pest control especially with feral pigs.

Other successful trapping and/or baiting programs have been undertaken in Cathedral Rocks, Barrington Tops, Gunderbooka, Culgoa and Kosciuszko National Parks and Nocolche, Yathong and Nombinnie Nature Reserves. Feral pigs often reside in inaccessible areas.

A combination of helicopters and horses were used to implement a pig control program in remote and rugged areas along the Kowmung River in Kanangra Boyd Wilderness. Information supplied by bushwalkers was used to assist in identifying pig "hot spots".

Feral Goats

The Service rates goats as a high priority pest issue because of browsing impact on native plants, competition for shelter and their potential to transmit diseases such as foot rot and Johnes disease. A collaborative program with the Topar Rangecare Group to muster goats in and around the Mootwingee National Park has been operating for several years. A grant from Environment Australia has allowed this program to be expanded to include poison baiting of foxes. Goat and fox control are essential to protect the two remaining colonies of the yellow-footed rock-wallaby in New South Wales.

Similar goat harvesting programs have been undertaken in Lake Mungo, Mallee Cliffs and Gundabooka National Parks and in Tarawi, Yathong, Nombinnie, Round Hill and Nocolche Nature Reserves in south-western NSW.

Other major goat control programs include Culgoa, Mt Kaputar, Oxley Wild Rivers, Severn River, Kings Plain, Kwiambal, Blue Mountains, Abercrombie River, Gardens of Stone, South East Forests and Brisbane Waters National Parks. In and around Cocoparra National Park and Nature Reserve aerial shooting has reduced goat densities from 8 goats/square km in 1990 to less than 1 goat/square km in 1997. This, along with reduced rabbit densities from the introduction of RCD and good seasonal rainfall has increased the regeneration of native species such as rosewood and cypress pine. In Kosciuszko National Park goat numbers have been reduced to such low levels that quolls are now recolonising rocky cliff ledges.

Scientists are working closely with field staff in Coolah Tops National Park and the Macleay Gorges to study the impact of goats and to develop more cost-effective management strategies.

Deer

Deer cause minor problems in several parks. However, at Royal National Park numbers, and hence impact, have been greater and a management strategy is being developed to manage the population. The strategy, developed in consultation with the RSPCA and scientists from Taronga Park Zoo, involves the relocation of captured animals to deer farms.

Cane Toads

A major education and awareness program including the production of a Discovery Program Resource Kit, identification brochure and specimen bottles, has continued on the North Coast.

Koala Rescue

Canberra - Wildlife veterinarian and tour operator, Dr. George Wilson has offered to help the South Australian Government save some of the koalas on Kangaroo Island by flying them to vacant forests along the Murrumbidgee and Lachlan Rivers in western NSW.

The aim is to move some of the koalas, which are about to be sterilised, off Kangaroo Island so that they can set up new colonies and continue to breed.

Red gums along the rivers are suitable habitat. Koalas released at Narrandera in similar circumstances 25 years ago have thrived.

"The South Australian wildlife authorities have said they are ready to collaborate and will catch the koalas.

Local farmers at the proposed destinations are also ready to work with me". Dr Wilson said, "They see it as an important part of their Landcare program, tree conservation and catchment management activities."

"The Australian Geographic Society has supported the project so far but other sponsors are needed to cover the costs of research, transport, equipment and the applications to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service" Dr Wilson said.

People or companies interested in sponsoring a koala and supporting the project should contact Dr. Wilson. Sponsors who make a significant contribution will be invited to fly to Kangaroo Island to see the release site, plus the koalas at Narrandera which are breeding and doing so well.

The problem is urgent because Koalas on Kangaroo Island are breeding too fast and destroying their trees. Estimates by a SA Koala Management Task Force put the population at between 3000 and 5000 and recommended that up to 600 be sterilised and moved. Earlier advice from scientists had recommended that they be shot.

"Our initial task is to move several families, about 20 koalas, on a trial basis, radio tag them. They will not be sterilised but will have the opportunity to breed and live a normal life. If all goes well, we will bring larger numbers in the spring. The outcome will be newly established populations in vacant habitat in forests in western NSW."

But before that we will need sponsorship for research and equipment and a permit from the NSW NPWS. The process requires preparing an application under the Threatened Species Act - a sort of Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

The permit to import koalas from SA and release them in NSW will be on behalf of the Lachlan Catchment Management Committee and the local Landcare Group.

Indonesian Deer in Royal National Park

History

Javan Rusa Deer (*Cervus timorensis*) were introduced from Indonesia for hunting purposes into the Royal national Park in 1907 by the then Park Trustees. The Deer escaped their peninsula enclosure by swimming around the fence and have survived in the surrounding bushland since.

Deer numbers in the Royal are estimated at around 700-800. The numbers change with seasonal conditions but are increasing each year.



Environmental Impacts

Destruction of Vegetation

Rusa Deer in Royal National Park eat grassy vegetation and the soft growth of shrubs and small trees during dry times.

Parts of Royal National Park that were previously farmland are not regenerating naturally with shrubs and trees, due to deer grazing.

The amount they eat varies depending on the food available and their own requirements. Pregnant females and young fawns consume the most.

In the wild an 80kg Rusa female can consume 2-3kg/day, or 20-30 average sized shrubs per day. Multiply this by 500-700 deer and 365 days and the deer could be destroying 750 tonnes of grass and shrub material each year. Imagine the impact on our National Park.

Regeneration of plants after fires is greatly reduced by deer grazing, when all animals are in competition for food.

Native grasslands in the coastal valleys are damaged by male deer ripping out tussocks with their antlers in practice for territorial fighting with other males.

Trees are ring-barked by males rubbing off antler velvet during winter and spring.

Private gardens and fencing are being damaged in areas adjoining known deer populations.



Ecological Competition

Vegetarian native animals, like the swamp Wallaby, are in competition with deer for food and shelter.

Soil Erosion

Unlike native animals, deer have hard hooves that compact the soil and lead to soil erosion and shifting of sand dunes.

Creation of 'shortcut' tracks on hillslopes by the deer increase water channelling.

Other impacts

- Traffic hazards, especially at dusk and during the night when deer move about.
- Encouragement of illegal deer hunting, posing threats to wildlife and park visitors.
- Creation of muddied waterholes and creeklines where deer have been wallowing.
- Faecal contamination to water sources in areas they inhabit.
- An additional vector for ticks (which may harbour Lyme Disease).

Management Strategy

NPWS will trial a deer removal program in 1998. This will involve relocation of some deer from selected areas in the Park to registered deer farms.

Further Research

The damage caused by the existing number of deer in Royal National Park is unacceptable. To determine the "acceptable" population level more research into the sensitivity and resistance of its native bushland and coastal valleys is planned.

Research topics will include:

- accurate measurement and monitoring of deer impacts on native herbivores.
- population management methods which may include sterilisation.
- a comprehensive ground survey to gain accurate population levels and rates of increase to assess future management strategies.

For more information about national Parks contact the NPWS Information Centre on ph: (02) 9585 6333 or the South Metropolitan District office on ph: (02) 9542 0666.

Research Money



Coral is tourist goldmines. Managing them is costly and visitors should pay a fair share of this cost.

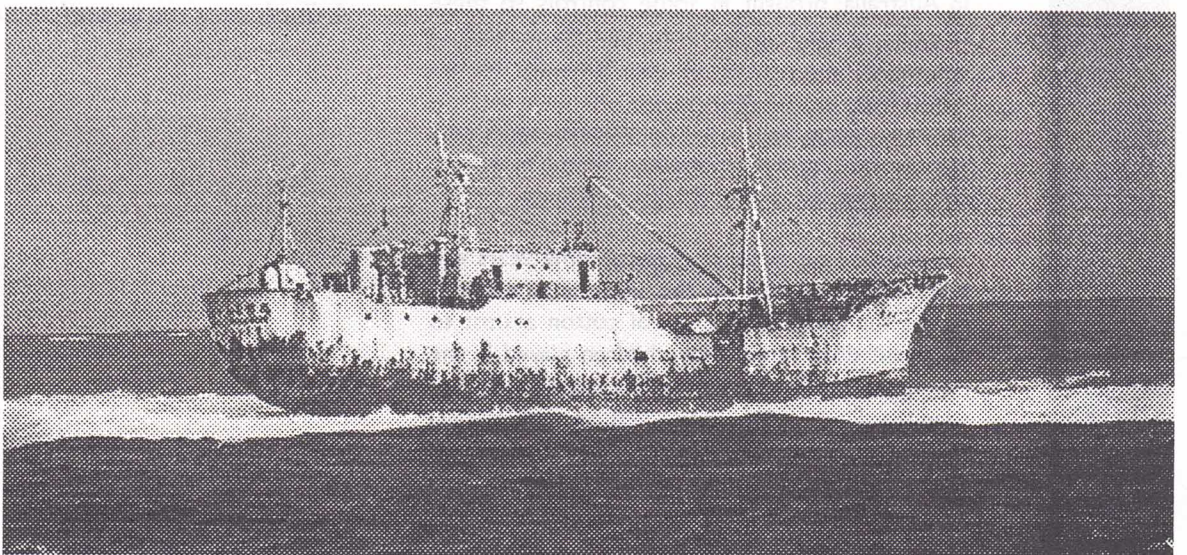
It is always good to hear of government helping research and development funding. Yet there must be a balance with most money going to the most important 'industries'.

The New Scientist quoted Penny Van Oosterzee, the keynote speaker at a World Heritage Forestry Conference in Cairns. She is a director of Ecotours so is concerned with tourism. This industry produces nearly seven percent of our economic activity. The present government gives it the widow's mite of 0.3 percent of the R and D budget.

Mining and agriculture develop eight percent of our economic activity. They get 21 percent of public spending!

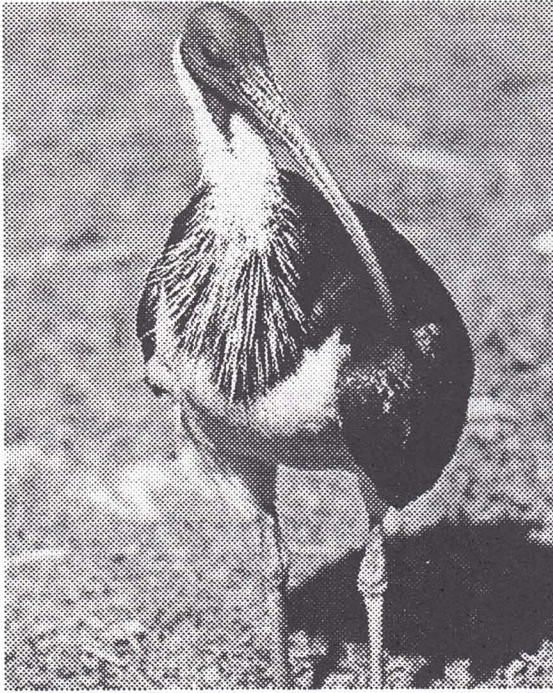
Penny points out that while our five world heritage areas cost the taxpayer 50 million dollars to run each year the returns from fees etc are only four million. Uluru gets closest to user pays since the charge for admittance meets nearly two thirds of their budget. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is recommending the raising of daily admittance from one dollar to six dollars but there are screams of anguish from our tour operators.

Perhaps the conservation movement can suggest ways we could increase our share of the R and D funding. Ian Lowe thinks some of the money could go to taxonomy, the naming of our myriads of plants and animals, most of which are still waiting for such investigation. At the current rate it will take 1000 years to complete the job. Much of this work is done by museums, CSIRO and some universities, all of them underfunded.



Wrecks on the Great Barrier Reef can increase costs of management.

A Risky Project



Straw-necked Ibis.

Queensland is once more on the environmental road of the bad old days when Peterson ruled that beautiful land. Now we have the sad story about the attempt of four NSW cotton farmers, once working on the Macquarie River, wanting to shift to the Cooper and use the water from that stream for their water hungry crops.

Perhaps it was the fact that NSW government officials realising the damage being done to the Macquarie Marshes, one of the greatest wetlands

In Australia, brought in some controls so these marshes would not die. From here come many of the ducks which travel all over Australia, the Ibis which help control grasshoppers in many parts of our land saving high costs of pesticides and a variety of other birdlife to brighten all our lives, with the possible exception of cotton farmers.

We visited one of these regions some years ago and were saddened by the sight of a worker's home, surrounded by a sea of cotton almost to the front door while dirty children played in the remains of an abandoned car. The last time we had seen that kind of degradation was on an Aboriginal settlement in the west where the family were not playing but living in such a place.

Pauline Hanson, a politician also from Queensland, complains these first people are getting too much. She should travel more, not only to the Gold Coast but in the regions where these folk live.

A seminar on the Cooper Creek proposal was held recently and all the experts gathered there agreed that the cotton project was too risky, threatening to endanger the future of the whole Lake Eyre basin. Mr Howard Hobbs, the Queensland minister for natural resources is not convinced. They had not supplied the ecological information he needed to make a decision.

I wonder if he asks his doctor before an operation where was the evidence to go ahead. In this life sensible folk are guided by experts who have spent all their professional lives in particular studies. When a large number of such people agree it is time to take notice. Yet it is not only scientists and conservationists who are opposed but local graziers whose future lies in cattle grazing threatened by the loss of water. Perhaps this last group may convince the Minister.



A flock over an inland swamp.

Membership Form...



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

"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."

VINCENT SERVENTY

President