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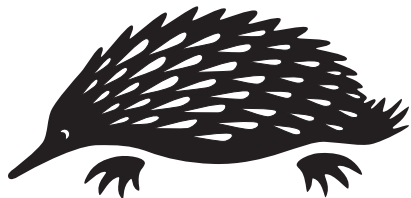
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'AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE'

*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.*

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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 about
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, Patrick Medway and
Suzanne Medway unless stated otherwise.*

From the President's Desk...

96th Annual General Meeting

It was pleasing to see a large number of members attend the 96th AGM of the Society. It is hard to believe that our Society has been so active for so long in helping to save Australian wildlife. Our resolve remains firm and focused after all these years.

Congratulations to the new Councillors elected at the AGM – Dr David Murray, Carol Nolder and Robyn Stock – welcome aboard on our great mission to preserve our native wildlife.

Sincere appreciation to our on-going Councillors and to our Regional Councillors who continue their commitment and good work for the Society. I am pleased and delighted to lead such a team of dedicated and committed members who work so hard for the good of our wildlife.

Annual Luncheon at NSW Parliament House

It was a great pleasure to welcome the Minister's representative Graham West MP and Richard Morecroft as our guests at our Annual Luncheon. Both gave us very interesting addresses on their involvement in wildlife issues. Members and guests were spellbound when Richard spoke of a number of close personal encounters he had experienced with wildlife. Thank you again to those loyal members and friends who support our regular functions at the NSW Parliament House dining room each year. It is a wonderful venue and we are grateful to the Minister Bob Debus MP for his very kind support.

Wayne Reynolds wins Serventy Award

Members were delighted to learn of the commitment and dedication of Wayne Reynolds who has led the Cape Solander Whale Migration Survey for the past 15 years. He works over 80 hours per week as a volunteer and coordinator for this important scientific program of gathering information on whale migration.

Whale watching has become a major eco-tourism activity and is proving to be much more effective and profitable than the hideous practice of killing whales for their oil.

Waterfall Springs Sanctuary Award

Another very committed group of people from Waterfall Springs won the Society's coveted Community Wildlife Conservation Award. This particular group, led by Lloyd Oldfield, has committed themselves to saving the small

wallabies such as the brush-tailed, tamar and bridled nail-tailed wallabies in new and exciting breeding programs. Their major effort to recover the wallabies from Karawa Island in New Zealand when they were going to be euthanased was a tremendous achievement of dedication to a wildlife conservation cause. We congratulate the winners of our special conservation awards for this year and wish them well as they continue with their good work.

Towra Point Project completed

I am pleased to report that the Towra Point Beach Nourishment Project has been successfully completed and I congratulate all those members of the Steering Committee for their perseverance and commitment to such an important wildlife conservation project. The Society reported on this serious environmental problem at Towra in 1996 and has worked consistently with some eight government and non-government agencies to restore this important wildlife habitat for migratory wading birds. A job very well done and I again thank the NSW Minister Bob Debus MP for his magnificent contribution of funds to complete this task.

Patrick W Medway AM
NATIONAL PRESIDENT



Annual General Meeting 2005

The 96th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in a private meeting room at Parliament House, Sydney on Monday 14 March 2005. 25 members attended the meeting and elected the new Council for 2005.

Patrick Medway AM was re-elected as National President, with Dr Clive Williams and Dr Dick Mason as Vice Presidents. Suzanne Medway remains as Secretary/Executive Director and Ralph Campbell was again elected to the position of Treasurer. The members elected to the Council are: Noel Cislowski, John Clarke, Al Glen, Judith May, Vanessa Morrissey, Colleen Murphy, Dr David Murray, Carol Nolder, John Robertson, Natasha Serventy, Peter Stevens, Peter Stock and Robyn Stock.



Councillors for 2005

President's report for 2004

Another very busy and successful year

2004 has been a particularly busy year and, accordingly, a very successful year for the Society. The Council has worked hard to actively preserve our unique Australian wildlife in all its forms across our nation and has made numerous submissions to all levels of government to achieve added protection. Our effort to increase the protection for the wildlife on the Great Barrier Reef and other Marine Parks was officially implemented on 1 July 2004 and is regarded as a major achievement for the conservation movement as a whole and a real success for our Society to save and protect marine wildlife.



Patrick Medway and Virginia Chadwick, chair of Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

95th Annual General Meeting and Luncheon

Her Excellency, the Governor of New South Wales, Professor Maria Bashir AC, was our official Guest of Honour at the 2004 Annual Luncheon. The Hon Bob Debus MP, NSW Minister for the Environment, was our host. A large audience of 168 members and friends enjoyed the fine food and celebrated a great occasion to mark the 95th anniversary of our Society's foundation in 1909.

Her Excellency gave an inspirational address and freely acknowledged the outstanding efforts of the early Councillors of our Society to save Australian native fauna, such as the koala, wombat, egret and lyrebird.



Her Excellency, the Governor of New South Wales, Professor Maria Bashir AC, with the Society's newly elected Councillors for 2004

Serventy Conservation Award

The 2003 Award was presented to Lance Ferris of Australian Seabird Rescue Service of Ballina by the President of Honour, Dr Vincent Serventy AM, and the Governor at the Annual Luncheon. Lance spoke with passion of his special love for Australian wildlife and his vital work to preserve and protect all injured wildlife, especially the seabirds of the east coast area. Over a 20 year period he has rescued thousands of injured animals and birds and returned them to the wild.



Lance Ferris being presented with his award by Vin Serventy

Community Wildlife Conservation Award

The Community Wildlife Conservation Award is designed to recognise organisations which make a significant contribution to the preservation of Australian wildlife. The winner for 2004 was Bringing Back the Flashjack Project of Emerald in Central Queensland.

Flashjack is the name given in the Emerald district to the Bridled Nail Tail Wallaby. These beautiful little animals were once plentiful on the western side of the Dividing Range from Charters Towers in Nth Queensland right through NSW to the northern districts of Victoria. However, the usual culprits of foxes, feral cats and heavy destruction of habitat led to their severe depletion. In fact, they were thought to be extinct, but a remnant population was discovered on a station property at Dingo in Central Queensland in the mid 1970's. Subsequently the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) bought the property to preserve both the colony and the habitat.

Since then a captive breeding program has been conducted at the BHP Gregory mine site, with the co-operation of scientists from the University of Queensland and the QPWS. It was important to establish colonies at other sites so that the animals would not be so vulnerable to natural disasters. A local landholder in the Emerald district, Hugo Spooner and his wife, on their property, 'Avocet', had set aside over 1,100 hectares as a wildlife refuge. QPWS examined the site and determined it was a suitable habitat. Emerald Shire Council appointed a special officer to co-ordinate the project. Volunteers carried out an audit of feral animals on the site and appropriate eradication steps were taken before the Flashjacks were released.

Re-establishing animals is usually conducted in National Parks or other lands managed by governments. When the Flashjacks were released on Avocet it was the first occasion in Queensland, and perhaps elsewhere in Australia that animals had been released on to private land.

One of the most exciting aspects of this project, that made it such a strong community effort, was the involvement of the local Gindie Primary School. Two teachers, with the assistance of an Education Department consultant, developed a science program on Conservation, lasting one term and taught at different levels in the four highest grades of the school. The children not only had the opportunity to learn about the scientific basis of conservation, but also had the delightful experience in being involved in the release of the Flashjacks. There have been several releases of the animals and local TAFE students, scouts and volunteers have also been involved. Each animal has been individually radio-tagged so that its location can be monitored and from all accounts the Flashjacks are doing well and are multiplying.

This is a project which has involved a university, a government department, a shire council, a mining company, a local landholder, a school, a TAFE college, scouts and numerous volunteers. The Bringing Back the Flashjack Project is a worthy winner of our inaugural WPSA Community Service Award. In fact it sets a benchmark for others to emulate.

Janelle Lowry of the QPWS and community volunteer, Yvonne Thompson, received the Award on behalf of Bringing Back the Flashjack Project from Her Excellency, the Governor of New South Wales.



Janelle Lowry, Her Excellency, Clive Williams, Yvonne Thompson and Patrick Medway

Our Society's President of Honour

Dr Vincent Serventy AM is still very active in our wildlife preservation programs. He is in constant touch with the media, mainly through Letters to the Editor, and has many of his letters published on wildlife and conservation issues. He is working on two new conservation books. Our Society has just published his latest book, "Conservation Victories and Battles Yet to Win", which was co-written by Patrick Medway. We congratulate Vin on his continuing commitment to the work of the Society.



Dr Vincent Serventy AM addressing the Annual Luncheon

Visit to Wellington and Dubbo

Councillors and members of our Society made a special visit to the Wellington and Dubbo area in April to see for themselves the problems and abuse of the Southern Brigalow Biosphere reserve system. We were appalled at the extent of land clearing and soil degradation through over grazing in this area. Seriously affected by the drought, one cannot understand why land owners would want to continue to clear more land for farming and grazing. We visited the Wellington Caves and examined prehistoric skeletons and bones of extinct Australian mammals; the Western Plains Zoo to study the endangered species breeding program, especially the bilby; we sat under the famous Gould League Tree in the grounds of Wellington Public School where the League was formed; and enjoyed a visit to the Burrendong Arboretum to see the incredible range of native flora.



Our tour group under the Wellington Tree



In the Wellington Caves

Strategic Planning Day

The Society's annual Strategic Planning Day was held on 11 May 2004. The direction for the future work of the Society was decided, including the development of our environmental education program and the new ECOWORLD GARDENS project. This day was chosen to mark the Foundation Day of the Society on 11 May 1909 and will be commemorated each year with a special meeting to ensure the long term success of the Society.

Wildlife research grants

A number of wildlife research grants were awarded in 2004. Al Glenn, a PhD student at the University of Sydney, received a grant to study the effects of fox predation on native quoll. There is an urgent need to learn more about the status and long term survival of our native quoll and this research work is part of a wider research program to protect the species from predation by foxes and wild dogs. We presented the President of the National Parks and Wildlife Foundation with a cheque for the conservation of a large parcel of land in Green Valley, the home of many protected species. In December 2004, our Society made a presentation to the Australian Wildlife Conservancy to study the rare and beautiful Gouldian finches in the Kimberley at Mornington Station. This Station was recently purchased and donated to the Conservancy to protect all wildlife in the region but in particular the habitat for Gouldian finches.



Dr Dick Mason presents a cheque towards the purchase of land in Green Valley to Gillis Broinowski, Chairman of the National Parks and Wildlife Foundation



Patrick Medway, Dick Mason and Natasha Serventy at the cheque presentation to Mike Fidler, Australian Wildlife Conservancy for the Mornington Station, Gouldian Finch project

Wildlife Animal Expo

The Society again staged a major display at the 2004 Wildlife Animal Expo at Rosehill Gardens, attracting large crowds of visitors interested in all aspects of wildlife and animal management. We invited Mark Richmond from Crocodile Encounters to join us with an animated public display featuring live wildlife, which always attracts great interest. The conservation stories behind wildlife and their environment has a strong appeal to the public and assists in our public education program for wildlife preservation. If anyone would like to help with this public display next year, please contact the National Office and register your interest.



Our Society's stage demonstration attracted huge crowds

Seminars with Birds Australia

During 2004 we sponsored two conservation seminars with Birds Australia – a Parrot and Cockatoo Seminar at St Leonards and a Shorebird Seminar at Newcastle University. The seminars were enthusiastically received by a capacity audience keen to learn more about the plight of parrots and shorebirds and the wellbeing of their environment. Experts outlined the research being carried out on parrots, cockatoos and shorebirds and everyone enjoyed the delightful photographs of the birds involved in the programs.

NSW Pest Animal Control Council

Our Society's President, Patrick Medway, became a representative on the NSW State Pest Animal Control Council. The Council's aim is to minimise the disastrous effects of feral animals on livestock and wildlife across New South Wales by developing new biological control agents for four of Australia's most damaging pest animals - the European rabbit, the European red fox, the introduced house mouse and the carp. This important Committee is funded by the NSW Department of Agriculture.

Towra Beach work completed


One of our Society's major projects since 1996 has been saving the Towra Point Nature Reserve beach area from serious erosion. Following the development of the Plan of Management and funding by the Minister for the Beach Nourishment work for Towra Beach, the Steering Committee met and prepared the vital EIS report in 2003. Formal approval was given to commence the re-nourishment work on the beach on 15 June 2004 and commenced immediately. The beach nourishment work was finished on 31 October 2004 and planting of native trees on the new dunes has now commenced. This habitat is vital for the long term survival of migratory wading birds, which are protected under the international RAMSAR, CAMBA and JAMBA agreements. Our Society continued to play an important role in sponsoring the Friends Group and in providing publicity and volunteers to carry out the regular restoration and weed removal work on the Towra Reserve. More volunteers are always very welcome and are invited to assist.



Towra Beach on Botany Bay, New South Wales has been restored

"Australian Wildlife" magazine

We successfully launched our new coloured cover magazine "Australian Wildlife" in 2003 and it continues to be widely acclaimed by our members and the wider community. Our Editor, Suzanne Medway, works tirelessly to gather articles and



photographs for each edition and has raised the standards high in reporting on our conservation work across Australia. More articles are always welcome to assist in making the magazine interesting and worthwhile. Plans are underway to explore the possibility of moving to full colour production in 2005.

“Conservation Victories and Battles Yet to Win” published

In 2004 our Society published this new book which was written by Vincent Serventy and Patrick Medway and edited by Carol Serventy and Suzanne Medway. The book outlines the Society's involvement in major conservation victories over the past 60 years.

Society's publications

We reprinted and upgraded our Society's membership brochure in 2004 to appeal to a wider and more sophisticated audience. It has been well received and is readily available to give out to schools and the general public at any time. Please call the Office for copies. Our Society's history continues to be widely distributed and we recently sold some 40 copies through a conservation bookshop outlet, which all helps spread the conservation message.

Conferences and wildlife seminars

Councillors attended and contributed to a number of important wildlife meetings throughout the year, including:

- RSPCA Scientific conference, Canberra, 25 March
- Parrot and Cockatoo Seminar, St Leonards, 12 April
- Meeting with Victorian wildlife and conservation groups, 1 June
- Shorebirds Seminar with Birds Australia, Newcastle University, July 2004
- GEKO Environment meeting, Currumbin, 10 September
- Nature Conservation Council Annual General Meeting, 29 October
- National Parks seminar on quolls, Armidale, October
- Reduction of Roadkill meeting, Sydney, 18 November
- Wildlife Management Conference, Kangaroo Island, December

Wildlife management conference

Our Society was represented at the Australian Wildlife Management Society conference on Kangaroo Island in December 2004. The Island

is richly endowed with native wildlife such as Australian sea lions, fur seals, kangaroos, tamar wallabies, echidnas, koalas and many bird species, which form a strong base for local tourism. Delegates from all over Australia assembled to discuss and present papers on an extremely wide range of wildlife management issues. Many were from government departments, universities, and private and commercial institutions involved in finding solutions to the many contentious issues of wildlife management. This was a particularly rewarding conference and we made our mark by representing our Society's position on wildlife preservation and handing out hundreds of leaflets on the work of the Society.

Quoll Research Advisory Committee

As we have been outspoken about our concern at the loss of habitat and the decline in numbers of native quoll, our Society was invited to attend the inaugural meeting of the NPWS Northern Region's Quoll Research Advisory Committee at Armidale NSW on 17 November 2004. We are already sponsoring a research grant for spotted quoll and hope to do more work in 2005.

Website a great success

Our WPSA website is proving to be a great success with an increased number of hits per month. Public enquiries can be accessed directly from the website with many frequently asked questions being answered from this information site. It is possible to purchase Society souvenirs and to enroll in the Society directly through the website. Many schools can access wildlife information for projects from this source. Our site can be viewed at <http://www.wpsa.org.au>

Environmental education

Our National Office continues to receive and answer hundreds of routine wildlife calls each month and distributes project material to school children and the general public. Our reputation as a reliable source of wildlife information means that we are often called upon to supply additional information on current wildlife management issues, ie Quoll Advisory Research Committee, Towra Point migratory wading bird enquiries, etc.

Financial Report - summary

The Society's Councillors continue to exercise effective control over our finances and reviewed and adjusted the investment portfolio during the year to take advantage of higher interest rates. Using expert financial advice from the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (our Bankers) we were able to re-align our investments to take

advantage of rising interest rates and now look forward to strong growth in our investment portfolio.

Donations, bequests and gifts

During the year we received many generous donations from our members, who continue to support the work of the Society in the preservation of Australia's precious wildlife. We are most grateful for the generosity of these special members. We continue to encourage donors to support our work through advertising with the Solicitor's Pro-Bono publication.

The future

We are now embarked on a very positive course of action to promote and market the Society and its vital work for Australian wildlife. Our quest for a permanent national office is under way and hopefully will reach an agreed solution in 2005. Membership is essential for our long term success and it is vital that all existing members continue to encourage family and friends to join us. The new coloured membership leaflets are freely available from the National Office.

Ecoworld Gardens

We are in the final planning stage of establishing the National Office in the new ECOWORLD GARDENS Environmental Education Centre at Rockdale, Sydney and are confident that membership will continue to grow when we have a successful operating base for members to visit and contribute to our vital wildlife preservation work.

Our Society is extremely grateful for the wonderful support received from all our elected Councillors. They contribute tirelessly behind the scenes to make the Society function.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the volunteers, especially Suzanne, who assists and runs the National Office and the various projects and activities on behalf of the Society.

My sincere thanks to everyone concerned for their hard work and commitment!

Patrick W Medway AM

NATIONAL PRESIDENT

96th Annual Luncheon

At the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting members retired to the Parliament House Dining Room for a very successful luncheon hosted by Graham West MP. Our guest speaker was Richard Morecroft, who has always had a strong interest in wildlife and the environment and has been able to translate some of that commitment into television programs and books.

Master of Ceremonies, Noel Cislowski, opened the luncheon proceedings and invited the newly elected National President, Patrick W Medway AM, to officially welcome the Minister, guest speaker, members and guests.



Noel Cislowski

Address of welcome by National President

Patrick Medway extended a warm welcome to the 96th Anniversary Luncheon, including Graham West MP, representing The Hon Bob Debus MP, NSW Minister for the Environment, Richard Morecroft, our Guest Speaker, Dr Serventy, President of Honour and his wife Carol Serventy, plus Councillors of the Society, Life Members, Society members and friends committed to wildlife preservation.

He expressed appreciation on behalf of the Society to Bob Debus MP, the Minister for the Environment for NSW. We have a wonderful working relationship with the Minister, his Office and its many departments, in our Society's ongoing quest to save our precious wildlife in all its forms. Our Society appreciates his support for the Towra Point project and we are pleased to advise that the work on the beach at Towra Point has been completed.



Patrick Medway

Also in attendance at the Luncheon were past Awardees of the Serventy Conservation Award - Bernie Clarke, Judy Messer and Val Taylor.

Life Members who attended the Luncheon were Dr Vin Serventy, Dr Dick Mason, Max Blanche and Joan Yap.

New life member

Our Society's Vice President, Dr Clive Williams was awarded Life Membership. Clive has been a member of our Society since 1988. He has made a considerable contribution to the success of our current wildlife preservation work across Australia. He has been continuously on Council since joining the Society and has been a Vice President for many years.



Patrick Medway presents Clive Williams with his Life Membership certificate

New Councillors for 2005

Newly elected members to the Council of our Society are Dr David Murray of Wollongong who has served on our Scientific Advisory Panel as a distinguished botanist for quite some time; Carol Nolder, who has a keen interest in plants and environmental education and Robyn Stock, who is a keen conservationist and supporter.



Patrick Medway presents David Murray with his Councillor's Commission



Patrick Medway presents Carol Nolder with her Councillor's Commission



Robyn Stock holding her Councillor's Commission



Graham West MP hosted the luncheon, and Suzanne Medway

Guest speaker – Richard Morecroft

Richard Morecroft is best known for his two decades as the principal news presenter for ABC Television in New South Wales and the ACT. He has always had a strong interest in wildlife and the environment and hosts *Go Wild* - a regular national wildlife program for the ABC on Saturday nights at 6pm. Richard has been involved with the production of several films through the ABC's Natural History Unit. He has also narrated numerous other wildlife documentaries. He is a Governor of the Taronga Foundation, a trustee of the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and a patron of WIRES (the Wildlife Information and Rescue Service).



Richard Morecroft

Richard's speech at our Luncheon about wildlife captured the imagination of all the guests who attended as he shared his own adventures in the wild. He described awe inspiring encounters with leopard seals in Antarctica and turtles off Galapagos. He painted some very evocative pictures of an encounter with that "elegant and dangerous creature", the leopard seal; the true perspective of humans amidst the snowy vastness of an Antarctic vista. Richard then spoke of an encounter with a giant tortoise on the Galapagos Islands, and a lizard in the Daintree. While Richard spoke the audience were enthralled as he painted such vivid pictures in their minds of his encounters with some of our unique wildlife.

The Serventy Conservation Award for 2004

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 our Australian wildlife.

The famous words of the renowned African Ecologist, Baba Dioum, encapsulate the philosophy behind the Serventy families' 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.

Vin Serventy and his family have taught us all to love and understand our unique Australian wildlife through their untiring efforts over so many years.

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

Wayne Reynolds

Wayne Reynolds has an inspirational love for Australia's wildlife and has been responsible for the success of the Cape Solander Whale Migration Study carried out on the coast line of the Royal National Park, Sydney. The study takes place during June-July each year. He was the original volunteer for this project twelve years ago when he began his seven-day, 84-hour weeks, braving the winter weather to provide scientists and researchers with invaluable written and photographic records of the migrating whales along our coastline.

His enthusiasm has gradually spread throughout the community and now thousands of visitors come to the site every winter to study, watch and learn about the migrating whales.



The whale watching shelter at Cape Solander

Despite long-term and ongoing health problems, he has dedicated himself to helping Australia's wildlife - both through rescuing and caring for individual animals, and through research to benefit ongoing conservation of Australian wildlife.

Wayne has also been a WIRES volunteer for over ten years, rescuing thousands of native animals of over 80 different species for rehabilitation and release back to the wild and training others in good animal rescue techniques. His love for paperwork has never been close to his love for Australian wildlife, so the statistics collected by WIRES on his rescues are certainly an underestimate, especially with all the direct calls he willingly receives from others well aware of the great conservation work that he does.



Wayne Reynolds with the Serventy Conservation Medal



Wayne Reynolds and supporters from National Parks & Wildlife

Runner-up

The standard of the entries in the Serventy Conservation Award for 2004 were so high, that a runner-up's award was made to Elizabeth Hartnell. Elizabeth's greatest contribution to Australian wildlife has been in relation to preservation of habitat for the endangered grey-headed flying fox. She was the inspiration and motivation behind the establishment of the Ku-ring-gai Bat Colony Committee which in turn saved the habitat of the only metropolitan colony site of grey-headed flying foxes from destruction for development.



Elizabeth Hartnell receives her Award Certificate from Richard Morecroft



Young grey-headed flying fox

Community Wildlife Conservation Award for 2004

The Community Wildlife Service Award is made each year to recognise organisations which make a significant contribution to the preservation of Australian wildlife. The winner of the Community Wildlife Conservation Award for 2004 was Waterfall Springs Conservation Association Incorporated of Kulnurra near Gosford, NSW.

Waterfall Springs Conservation Association

Waterfall Springs is an outstanding example of a dedicated community group working to save some of the rarest and most vulnerable species of wildlife in Australia. Their mission statement is to co-ordinate and unite with the community and organisations to conduct recovery projects for endangered native species at Waterfall Springs Wildlife Park, which constitutes 33 acres (approx. 13.5 hectares) of freehold land at Kulnurra, near Gosford, purchased by Lloyd Oldfield and his wife in 1990. Part of the property has been registered as a licensed sanctuary and part is zoned conservation and preserved as a Nature Park for flora and fauna. Their objective is to provide responsible community education relevant to the plight of endangered species. They focus on the need for wild habitat preservation as the primary means of ensuring the long-term survival of Australia's vitally important native species, as


well as managed breeding programs and habitat regeneration initiatives for currently endangered species.

WSCA Ltd is a not-for-profit organisation. It employs a manager, while the remaining workforce is made up of volunteers. Funding is primarily derived from donations from the corporate sector. The major project of Waterfall Springs is the saving of endangered species, particularly the brush-tailed rock wallaby.



Brush-tailed rock wallaby (Petrogale penicillata). The brown colour is ornamented only by a white cheek stripe and a long tail with a distinct brush at the end. It inhabits suitable very rocky areas in the eucalyptus forests of inland South Eastern Australia. Males are up to 30% larger than females of the same age. It eats grass, herbs, leaves and some fruits. The tail is used primarily as a balance aid when running at speed up and down cliff faces in their rocky home. This animal is now one of the most critically endangered kangaroos in Australia

Many of you will remember reading about, or seeing on a TV program, the rescue of a translocated colony of brush-tailed rock wallabies from Kawau Island near Auckland, New Zealand. Sir George Grey, a former Governor of South Australia, took some with him when he became Governor of New Zealand in the middle of the 19th century. At the same time as predation and loss of habitat threatened their survival in their homeland, they



proliferated to pest proportions on Kawau. The New Zealand Government planned to exterminate them and Lloyd Oldfield determined to save them. This meant negotiating with governments in both New Zealand and Australia, building quarantine enclosures and raising the cost of capture and transportation. The total cost of this successful exercise was \$210,000, plus a lot of volunteer hours. In all, 33 wallabies were repatriated and now form the basis of a scientific breeding program.

The Victorian sub-species of the brush-tailed rock wallaby was down to only six known animals in the wild. Waterfall Springs is assisting in a breeding and release program for these animals also, as well as holding small colonies of bridled nail-tail wallabies (primarily a Queensland recovery program) and yellow-footed rock wallabies (primarily a South Australian recovery program), to provide an insurance genetic pool.

Waterfall Springs also provides educational experience for students in a local TAFE college and provides practical experience for persons under the "Work for the Dole" scheme.

This is truly a community project. Significantly, it has operated without any government financial assistance – Commonwealth or State. It does, however, co-operate closely with the Department of Environment & Conservation and its equivalent in other States. The corporate sector has been a tremendous help, providing both cash and materials, which includes many hundreds of tonnes of rock and well over 1,000 tonnes of soil. However, the whole operation could not proceed without all the volunteers involved. Our Society is delighted to provide its support through this award.

Some wallabies have already been returned to their former habitat in Victoria through state government agencies. Waterfall Springs works closely with National Parks and Zoos in other states and maintains small populations of other endangered species of wallaby to assist programs undertaken in Queensland and South Australia.

Dr Clive Williams, Vice President of the Wildlife Preservation Society when announcing Waterfall Springs as the winner said that he was particularly pleased to be able to offer the Award to Waterfall Springs as that organisation operated on private land and almost entirely with local volunteer labour and great dedication from management and staff. Waterfall Springs' achievement, without any government financial assistance, is a great example of a community effort from which Australian wildlife will substantially benefit. It is a worthy recipient of the 2004 Wildlife Preservation Society's Community Wildlife Conservation Award.

Debbie Breen, the Sanctuary Manager, accepted the Award on behalf of Waterfall Springs and thanked Dr Clive Williams, Richard Morecroft, and the Wildlife Preservation Society. She said it was an honour and a privilege to receive this prestigious Award. Debbie thanked the Society for recognising the hard work and dedication by Waterfall Springs towards saving our endangered native wildlife. She believed the encouragement and financial donation by the Wildlife Preservation Society would help Waterfall Springs meet their conservation objectives.



Clive Williams, Debbie Breen and Richard Morecroft

Debbie took the opportunity to personally thank the Waterfall Springs volunteers, who are instrumental in the success of the Sanctuary's operations. Their dedication and tireless unpaid efforts have helped make the Sanctuary a perfect place for these sensitive creatures to survive and thrive. She also thanked their corporate sponsors such as Red Ranger who to date have funded the Projects at Waterfall Springs. During the past three years, Waterfall Springs has invested a quarter of a million dollars of Red Ranger's precious funds into their conservation projects.

Waterfall Springs has a vision to engage in additional endangered species recovery programs, such as the Northern hairy-nosed wombat and the red tree kangaroo. Debbie asked that our Society and its supporters help them make it happen and continue to support their goals. She also, on behalf of Waterfall Springs, thanked Lloyd Oldfield for his unrelenting determination towards creating and building this project; for his commitment to conservation, his unselfish passion and love for all Australian animals. Debbie said that without his professional attitude to getting the job done, they would not be receiving the Award and she thanked Lloyd on behalf of everyone.

New book launch Conservation Victories and Battles Yet to Win

Dr Vincent Serventy AM launched this new book which chronicles many successful conservation battles to protect and save the Australian environment across a wide range of controversial issues.

Written by Dr Vincent Serventy AM, who as President of Honour of our Society is still a prominent conservation and environmental activist, and Patrick W Medway AM, this book covers conservation battles ranging from the campaign to extend the protection zone of the Great Barrier Reef to the restoration of the Towra Beach RAMSAR site. Examples of conservation victories achieved by some of the actual people who were on the ground at the time of these conservation battles are faithfully recorded in great personal detail.

Featuring a delightful cover photograph of the underwater world of the Great Barrier Reef kindly provided by Ron and Val Taylor, this new book illustrates how and why the Wildlife Preservation Society campaigns with other conservation groups to save Australia's precious natural environment.

Inspiring stories are featured chronicling the dedication and commitment of a wide range of ordinary people who became highly motivated to save the rare, the vulnerable and the threatened natural features of our continent.

Published by the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia, it records the hard work and commitment of many of its past and present members of the Society who were closely involved in these great conservation battles to save our precious native wildlife.

Copies of the new book titled *Conservation Victories and Battles Yet to Win* are available by post or 'on line' from the Society's website for \$25 postage paid or by calling the National Office on Tel 02 9556 1537.

This new publication complements the recently published history of the Society – *Conserving Australian Wildlife* which records the work of the Society since its establishment on 11 May 1909.



Dr Vincent Serventy AM launches his new book

Birds Australia Wildlife Seminar

A cheque for \$500 was presented to Ian Hume, Chair of Birds Australia (Southern New South Wales and ACT Group), as a contribution to a special "Birds and Bush Fire" Seminar to be held in Canberra in April 2005.



Ian Hume receives a donation from our Society

Donation to help save the Gouldian finch

Our Society recently made a cash donation to the Australian Wildlife Conservancy to be allocated to their Gouldian finch project on Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary in the Kimberley Region of Western Australia.

Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary

The Sanctuary is one of northern Australia's most important nature reserves. Cradled by the ancient sandstones of the King Leopold Ranges, it hosts a landscape of spectacular scenery. Flat-topped mesas cut by steep-sided valleys and gorges overlook vast savanna woodlands and a network of tropical rivers and streams. Some of the features that make Mornington so important include:

- Covering in total more than 312,000 hectares (780,000 acres), Mornington is one of Australia's largest non-government protected areas.
- Mornington is located in the Central Kimberley bioregion, one of the highest priority bioregions in Australia for the development of the National Reserve System.
- Mornington protects a diversity of ecosystems, including several ecosystems that are not protected in any existing national parks.
- Several rare and threatened species, such as the Gouldian finch and the purple-crowned fairy-wren, find refuge on Mornington. In total, over 170 bird species and potentially more than 40 mammal species occur on Mornington.

It is an enormous challenge for any organisation to implement an effective conservation program over such a large and remote area. However, with support from donors such as our Society and assistance from key organisations such as the Tropical Savannas Co-operative Research Centre and the WA Department of Conservation and Land Management, AWC is aiming to establish Mornington as a model for conservation and land management in northern Australia.



Purple-crowned fairywren (Malurus coronatus)

Gouldian finch

Researchers are hoping to unlock the key to the decline in numbers of the Gouldian finch. The finch is one of the world's most beautiful bird species, known for its green, gold and lilac coloured body, azure neck, and black, scarlet or gold face. It is estimated there are just 2,500 adults remaining across Northern Australia and it is hoped research could hold the key to its decline and that of other species such as flock bronze wings, doves and pigeons.



Gouldian finches, Photo courtesy of Mike Fidler

Duck shooting

Duck shooting is cruel because the way shotguns operate make it impossible to ensure that a duck is killed outright, even by a skilled marksman. Ducks can sustain horrific injuries from the broad scattering of pellets. Legs and wings can be left dangling and bills smashed. Eyes can be shot from sockets or left bulging and full of blood by a pellet blow to the head. Internal injuries are less obvious but more insidious. A live bird with no obvious external injuries may die days or weeks later after suffering prolonged pain. Claims that duck hunting controls the duck population cannot be substantiated because duck populations are mainly determined by water levels, with wet winters leading to high breeding rates and dry winters leading to low breeding rates. A resultant problem from duck hunting is the lead poisoning found in waterbirds which comes from the birds eating lead shot used in duck hunting. Lead shot is not used in South Australia, some parts of the Northern Territory and will be phased out in Victoria over the next three years.

Between 594,000 and 900,000 ducks are crippled or wounded annually in the name of 'sport' - and our Society demands the 'sport' be killed off. This annual mayhem amounts to no more than killing for fun and has no other purpose. There are 27,500 licensed duck shooters in Australia with 85% of those hunters living in Victoria.

Duck hunting was banned in Western Australia, ACT and New South Wales. New South Wales banned duck hunting in 1995 on the grounds that "the level of pain and suffering through cruelty is unreasonably high".

Our Society calls for all States to take the issue of cruelty seriously and ban this cruel 'sport'.



Grey teal

Victorian recreational duck shooting

by Lynn Trakell

Coalition Against Duck Shooting



Laurie Levy of the Coalition Against Duck Shooting has campaigned tirelessly to save native waterbirds for the last 18 years. His efforts have resulted in Victorian shooter numbers dropping from 95,000 in the mid-1980s to 17,600 in 2003, but of those only a few thousand are still active. (Many shooters renew their duck shooting licences in order to keep their guns.) On cruelty grounds, Labor governments banned recreational duck shooting in WA in 1990 and in NSW in 1995. There can be no so-called balance between conservationists and shooters in Victoria. On behalf of the native waterbirds, we are fighting for a permanent stop to the killing.

Because Labor currently controls both Houses of Parliament in Victoria we believed Mr Bracks' government would follow WA and NSW and put an end to this cruel practise, but this Victorian Labor government has let down the 70% of Victorians who want a permanent ban (A.C.Neilsen poll, Feb. '03).

Dr. Richard Kingsford (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service) has conducted annual aerial surveys of game bird numbers across NSW, Victoria, eastern South Australia and most of Queensland since 1983. His surveys show that waterbird numbers are currently at the lowest ever recorded.

Last year, despite the presence of threatened and endangered species (Painted Snipe and Freckled Ducks) at Hird Swamp near Kerang, the Bracks Government left this wetland open to shooting.

By calling another shooting season (commencing March 19, 2005), the Victorian government has disregarded the recommendation of ornithologists and scientists and pampered to an aggressive minority who enjoy killing innocent birds for fun. They will again be responsible for the unnecessary slaughter and wounding of beautiful native birds that are part of Australia's ecology and biodiversity. The spray from shotgun pellets will

knock out eyes and feet, smash wings and lodge near bones and nerves, causing severe pain and suffering. According to ballistic experts and the RSPCA, wounding rates range between 30 – 50%.

Please help put an end to this barbaric behaviour, write to Victorian Premier Steve Bracks, and Environment Minister John Thwaites at 1 Treasury Place, East Melbourne, 3001, asking for a total ban on recreational shooting of native waterbirds in Victoria.

Last year rescuers brought in 78 dead or wounded birds from just one wetland in northern Victoria.

National Tree Day – Sunday 31 July 2005

Join in with thousands of volunteers across the country to help 'Green Up' Australia by planting native trees in your community. National Tree Day is Australia's biggest community tree-planting event. In 2004 more than 230,000 volunteers helped to plant over 1.2 million native trees and shrubs at 3,193 sites around Australia! These are impressive results considering the widespread drought and water restrictions that are currently affecting so much of the country. Trees help to filter water, combat salinity, clean the air and increase flows into water catchments. They also provide food and shelter to Australia's unique wildlife and are an integral part of our country's biodiversity.

It's not too late to get your hands dirty and get involved in helping our environment. If you would like to find out more details about National Tree Day, call the Tree Day Hotline on 1300 88 5000.

Family tree planting and sausage sizzle

Join members and their families of the Wildlife Preservation Society to plant trees in the Rockdale Wetlands. We will also carry out a small amount of bush regeneration on the day.

When: Sunday 31 July 2005, commencing at 10am
Where: Rockdale Bicentennial Park, 248 West Botany Street, Rockdale, Sydney

To be followed by a free sausage sizzle at 12 noon. Come along and bring your family and friends.

For catering purposes RSVP to Ph: 02 9556 1537

Quolls

Quolls are a spectacular example of a large carnivorous marsupial that has declined in numbers whenever it has encountered humans.

The Eastern quoll

Other common name is the eastern native cat.

The Eastern quoll is a solitary marsupial and historically was widely distributed throughout south-eastern Australia, from south-east South Australia, throughout Victoria and Tasmania to eastern New South Wales. This species experienced a dramatic decline and is now considered extinct throughout most of its former range. They are protected animals due to their decreasing numbers, and today the only known populations are in Tasmania.

The Eastern quoll is listed as an Endangered Species on Schedule 1 of the New South Wales Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995 (TSC Act). This species is also listed as a Vulnerable Species on Schedule 1 of the Commonwealth Endangered Species Protection Act, 1992.

This slightly built species occurs in two colour phases (black or fawn), both with white-spots. It is distinguishable from the larger spotted-tailed quoll by the absence of spots on its tail. Individuals with either black or fawn coat colour occur in the same litter, independent of their sex or the colour of the parents. The quoll is about two feet (60 cm) long (including a long tail), and weighs roughly 2.9 pounds (1.3 kg). The female is slightly smaller than the male.



The Eastern quoll (Dasyurus viverrinus)

Ecology

The Eastern quoll is nocturnal, feeding at night and sheltering in dens by day. Insects and grubs, small terrestrial mammals and birds form much of an individual's diet. However, as an opportunistic carnivore, they may scavenge on carcasses of large animals. Grasses are often eaten and berries

also form part of the species' diet. Although the Eastern quoll is a solitary feeder, the home ranges of individuals overlap considerably. Males may travel over a kilometre in a night while females restrict their movements to a few hundred metres surrounding their dens. Despite overlaps in home ranges and apart from occasional instances of den sharing, adults generally avoid one another. Social interactions increase during the short breeding season when fights between males become more frequent.

The breeding period is from May to August with females producing up to thirty young after three weeks gestation. However, mortality is high and the first six young to attach themselves to the six teats of the female are the only survivors. Young are carried in the pouch for six to eight weeks, after which they are deposited in a den or carried on the mother's back. Weaning takes five months after which time the young become independent. Of the young that enter the den, mortality is low, so large numbers of juveniles enter the population around November. Juveniles disperse over summer, reducing the local population size. Home-ranges are relatively small, with females remaining within a few hundred metres from their den. Males travel larger distances, but are thought to restrict their movements to one kilometre from the den. Dens are made in hollow logs, underground burrows or amongst rock piles. Males may have numerous dens within their home-range. Although most males and females can breed for several years, most breeding adults consist of young of the previous season.



Mother and young quoll

Distribution

In New South Wales, Eastern quoll populations once occurred from the mid-north coast to the Victorian border. There have been recent unconfirmed sightings in the Wyong and Cessnock districts on the central coast and inland of Kempsey, however extensive surveys have not found any evidence of the species and its current distribution in New South Wales remains uncertain.

The Eastern quoll is extinct in South Australia and no animals have been caught elsewhere on the mainland in the past twenty years. In the 1980's there were claims of sightings in Victoria and New South Wales. Tasmania is the only remaining location of the Eastern quoll and that population is considered vulnerable due to a lack of knowledge about the disease which wiped out the mainland population around 1901.

Habitat

The Eastern quoll utilises a variety of habitats including dry sclerophyll forest, shrub, heathland and agricultural land. In Tasmania individuals occur most commonly where there are ecotones between cleared pastures and eucalypt forest, reflecting the availability of prey along forest edges. Riparian forests are also frequently used, particularly where a movement path is provided through cleared landscapes. The Eastern quoll requires hollow logs, rock piles and even haystacks in which to den.

Threats

- Loss and degradation of habitat through clearing of native vegetation and subsequent development
- Loss of large hollow logs suitable for den sites
- Competition for food and predation by foxes and cats
- Spread of epidemics, such as a parasitic protozoan, by cats to quolls
- Historically this species was persecuted by humans
- Road mortality
- Baiting of dingoes results in direct poisoning and changes the composition of predators, reduced dingo numbers favours foxes which compete with quolls.

Management

- Protection and maintenance of known or potential habitat, including the implementation of protection zones around recent records (particularly known or potential den sites)
- Appropriate pest control programs which are targeted towards reducing fox and feral cat numbers without affecting native species
- Alteration of prescribed fires and grazing regimes to ensure the enhancement and maintenance of known or potential habitats and the reduction of habitat fragmentation.

The spotted-tailed quoll

Other common name is the tiger cat.

The spotted-tailed quoll is the second largest of the world's surviving carnivorous marsupials (the largest being the Tasmanian devil). Spotted-tailed quolls vary from reddish brown to dark chocolate brown with white spots on the body and tail (unlike Eastern quolls which do not have spots on the tail). The species is considerably larger than the Eastern quoll, with males measuring up to 130 cm long and seven kg in weight. Females are significantly smaller than males. The eyes and ears of the spotted-tailed quoll are comparatively smaller than those of the Eastern quoll. Also the spotted-tailed quoll is physically strong in appearance, with a thick snout and wide gape.



Spotted-tailed quoll (Dasyurus maculatus)

Distribution and habitat

The spotted-tailed quoll is also found on the east coast of mainland Australia, but is rare. Two subspecies have been described - a smaller one (*D. m. gracilis*) is found in northern Queensland. *D. m. maculatus* occurs from southern Queensland to Tasmania. The spotted-tailed quoll is now threatened throughout its mainland range.

Behaviour and diet

Spotted-tail quolls are largely solitary and nocturnal, although the species does sometimes forage and bask during daylight hours. Spotted-tailed quolls spend a tenth of their time moving with agility above the forest floor on logs or in trees.

The spotted-tailed quoll is a capable hunter that, like the Eastern quoll, kills its prey by biting on or behind the head. Prey taken by the spotted-tailed quoll includes bandicoots, rabbits, rats, gliding possums, small or injured wallabies, reptiles and insects. Birds and eggs are also taken from time to time. Carrion is frequently eaten by spotted-tailed quolls and even tip scavenging and beachcombing occur. Large spotted-tailed quolls compete directly with Tasmanian devils for food - one female has even been seen to chase a Tasmanian devil away from a carcass!

Breeding

Breeding is similar to the Eastern quoll. Females breed only once a year unless they fail to find a mate or lose their litter early, at which time they will try to breed again. Breeding occurs in early winter with females giving birth to up to six young after a gestation period of 21 days. After about ten weeks the young are left in grass-lined dens located in burrows or hollow logs leaving the female free to hunt and forage. If the female needs to move to a different den she carries the young along on her back. Towards the end of November, when the young are 18 to 20 weeks old, they are weaned (stop suckling) and become independent of the female. Sexual maturity is reached at one year.



Two baby quolls playing outside their maternal den, captured by remote photography (photo by Brendan Cowled)

1080 and quolls

Sodium monofluoroacetate or 1080 poison is widely used in Australia to control vertebrate pest species, such as wild dogs, foxes, feral pigs and rabbits.

In July 2002 our Society wrote to the Director-General of New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) requesting input into the process of the Environmental Impact Assessment for aerial baiting of wild dogs in the Northern Directorate of NPWS. We were concerned that aerial baiting for wild dogs and foxes would have an impact on native species such as the tiger quoll

and asked whether it was possible to demonstrate to our Society that such aerial baiting would not impact on native species. We were specifically concerned about the specificity of 1080 poison and its impact on non-target native species, including the risk of secondary poisoning. Some land managers argued that individual tiger quolls may be poisoned but there is a net benefit to the quoll population from a reduction in the numbers of introduced predators such as foxes and wild dogs.

As a result of ongoing discussions with NPWS our Society offered financial support for research related to the question of impacts of baiting on quolls and awarded an ongoing research grant to Al Glen, a PhD student under Dr Chris Dickman at the University of Sydney. Al studied the interactions between foxes and spotted-tailed quolls and his project was closely linked to the objectives of the New South Wales Fox Threat Abatement Plan.

In September 2003 NPWS established the Aerial Baiting and Quolls Research Steering Committee to provide general oversight of the research and our Society's President, Patrick Medway, was invited to be a representative on the committee.

Quoll research

Al Glen is currently studying the effects of introduced predators on native quoll. There is an urgent need to learn more about the status and long term survival of our native quoll and this research work is part of a wider research program to protect the species from the impacts of foxes, feral cats and wild dogs.

The project entails volunteers joining scientists in a silent hunt for one of Australia's most elusive creatures - the endangered spotted-tailed quoll. Backed with our grant funds, volunteers and Sydney University scientists trace quolls in their natural habitat to research the species' ecology and to investigate the reasons for the decline of the species.

While there have been a small number of studies in the past, much is still unknown about this native marsupial carnivore, which belongs to the same family as the Tasmanian devil. It was once found across much of eastern Australia, but has declined dramatically in abundance and distribution. The destruction of habitat is likely to have caused much of the decline, however, competition from introduced species such as foxes, feral cats and wild dogs may also have contributed.



Al Glen weighing a captured quoll (photo by Bobby Tamayo)

Competition with foxes

Over a period of two years the survey will investigate diet, home range and habitat use of foxes and quolls living in close proximity. It will also look at the reproductive success and causes of mortality in quoll populations and finally population genetics of quolls. The study may provide evidence for the belief that foxes are partly responsible for the species' dramatic decline over the past decades. Foxes and wild dogs may impose both competitive and predatory pressure on quolls as they utilise similar prey and habitat and den in similar locations.

Paternity tests for quolls

Scientists and volunteers trap quolls and take DNA samples from young while they are still in the mother's pouch. These samples will help assess the genetic diversity within the population and enable paternity tests to determine whether some males are more successful at fathering offspring than others.



A female quoll just after being released from a trap



Radio tracking

Quolls, foxes and feral cats in the area are also being monitored by radio-tracking to see whether quolls are excluded from areas of preferred habitat by their introduced rivals. Predators may compete for space as well as for prey, and assessing the diets of quolls, foxes and wild dogs will help to determine the degree of overlap. Preliminary results show that small to medium-sized mammals such as rodents, bandicoots, rabbits and wallabies are important prey for all three species.

The future for one of Australia's most elusive creatures

Al Glen hopes that this research will lead to a more secure future for this unique species. A basic understanding of the quoll's ecology, and of the processes which have led to its decline, is essential to its conservation, and Al's survey is a first vital step in the right direction.

A blueprint for the future of quolls

Our Society recommends that all existing populations of quolls be located to determine the relevant threatening processes. In all cases, the primary aim to protect endangered wildlife should be to reduce habitat loss and control feral pests. We also should endeavour to reduce quoll deaths due to '1080'-type dingo baits. The education of people is essential to ensure quolls are protected on private land.

Recovery plans

A draft recovery plan for the spotted-tailed quoll has been prepared under the Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, and an Action Statement has been prepared in Victoria under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. A recovery plan has not yet been prepared for this species in New South Wales.

Queensland

Clearing has removed over 70% of the forests and woodlands in the former range of the Southern tiger quoll in south-eastern Queensland.

Research

Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage research suggests adult Southern tiger quolls may have a 'territory' of up to 500 hectares. There are few areas where such territories exist without quolls encountering the effects of humans.

These effects include habitat loss and fragmentation, disease, competition with foxes and feral cats, poisoning by dingo baits and cane toads and death by shotguns.

Wildside

by Lance Ferris, Australian Seabird Rescue

Rugged journey for young muttonbirds

Summer is the time for the annual Shearwater migration. Literally thousands of young birds have left the nest and are on their way to the Northern Hemisphere. Shearwaters (muttonbirds) are a small brownish bird, about the size of a seagull. Tube nostrils and a hooked beak also help identify the species. Oddly enough, the parent birds leave on migration prior to the young being ready to fly. This leaves the chicks in the nest, using all their body resources to generate feathers. As a result, thousands of the birds are in a weakened state when it's their turn to leave and often don't make the distance. Some years ago, it was estimated that there were a million dead and dying shearwaters on beaches along the east coast. Nature at its worst, one might say, but it is a natural event, and regulates the numbers of the species. Even though these events appear to be a great loss, there are still more muttonbirds on the planet than any other species.



One of the muttonbirds found stranded on a local beach

Robots released in Southern Oceans

According to the Australian Government publication, 'Environment News', Robots will be released in the Southern Ocean this summer to collect vital information to help scientists detect changes in ocean properties and more accurately identify long-term climate change trends. The 17 free-floating robots, known as Argo floats, will be released during a 10-week scientific expedition by the Aurora Australis. Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell, said the Argo floats would greatly assist oceanographic research in remote and hostile regions such as

the Southern Ocean. "Such research is critical to our understanding of climate change," Senator Campbell said.

Skewered seagull

Gulls often bear the brunt of abuse as they leave their messages on boats, wharves and verandahs around the estuaries, but we have encroached into their habitat and in turn, must pay the token penalty. Nuisance value they may be, but I doubt there is one riverside resident who could ignore any suffering creature. Such was the case when silver lure was seen hanging from the face of one of the birds. A brief search located the gull and our net captured the bird in a matter of minutes. A large, silver fishing lure had indeed lodged in the bird's beak and neck, and was removed without any serious damage. Again, prompt reporting of the sighting of an injured animal paid off, and after some minor medical treatment, the gull was returned to the wild.



Prompt reporting of this badly hooked gull, certainly meant the difference between life and death

Don't kill the wolf

As evil as they may appear to some, wolf spiders are not known to go out of their way to savagely attack humans. However, information from the Queensland museum reveals that these huge, hairy, not-so-harmless spiders are indeed venomous with varying degrees of reaction in humans, usually restricted to local pain or itchiness. The Latin name, 'Lycosa dingosa' (species pictured), refers to their predatory hunting methods, resembling that of a wolf. These arachnids are quite welcome on the North Coast – they are known to kill cane toads.



These large wolf spiders can despatch a cane toad within an hour

Marathon effort for tiny turtle

When hatchling turtles make the dash to the ocean, they are at the mercy of pollution, predators and the inevitable pounding of heavy seas. Oft times, these little mariners are thrown onto North Coast beaches, in their journey down the coast of Australia from Queensland waters. 312 days ago, one such turtle was stranded on Patches Beach, south of Ballina. At first glance, the wound in its flipper was thought to be fatal. The perseverance of ASR volunteers in bringing the little fella through its ordeal was well rewarded. Sea conditions were perfect for the journey to Byron Bay in our NSW Fisheries-sponsored offshore vessel. At his release site near Julian Rocks, the turtle weighed in at 3.7 kilograms – a far cry from the palm-sized youngster of nearly a year ago. The little Loggerhead won many hearts during his year in care.

Turtles dash for the open sea

Some months ago, under cover of darkness, a giant Loggerhead turtle sneaked up the beach near the Byron Surf Club, and deposited its precious eggs, successfully making its getaway before any humans noticed. In the early hours, the sands of Byron Bay stirred. From 60 centimetres below the surface, hundreds of tiny turtles clawed and scrambled their way towards the light. So small are they at hatching, that they are able to breathe the air between the grains of sand. The little turtles scurried en masse, down the beach towards the ocean, amidst a bombardment of seabirds. Beachwalkers rushed to help some of the hatchlings avoid the birds' onslaught and another hundred or more endangered creatures survived their first encounter with the world. Nestings of sea turtles are relatively rare on the North Coast and are more prevalent on the Queensland beaches, however, the local trend appears to be on the increase. Loggerhead turtles are a critically endangered species, with researchers estimating around 20 years to extinction.



All going well, this tiny Loggerhead will reach over 100 kilograms in weight and live for 100 years

150 stitches saves pelican

Disease, two fish-hooks and major injuries could not deter the will to survive of pelican No.684. Several months ago in Lismore Lake, the pelican was found in a comatose state suffering from Botulism. After making an amazing recovery and returning to the wild, it had to be captured on two more occasions, for the removal of embedded fishing hooks. All seemed well, until we received a call from beachgoers at Lennox Head, who reported a pelican with a huge hole in its beak-pouch. A faded number on its wing revealed its identity – pelican 684. Always ready for a challenge, Vet Evan Kosack seemed unmoved at the sight of the gaping chasm in the bird's face. Two hours and 150 stitches later, the pelican was almost new again. Many thanks to all those who made the call. Our old friend 'Bot-bird' the pelican, would not have survived for more than a few days.

Swan off course

Leg banding is often used to track and identify bird movements and migratory patterns. Banded terns and gulls are often found thousands of kilometres from their home territory. In Coffs Harbour WIRES volunteers took a lost black swan into care. All efforts so far have failed to locate the owner or research organisation responsible for placing the leg-band on the bird. The prefix 'WAZO' could belong to a West Australian zoological organisation, indicating that the bird may have flown across the entire continent. While enquiries continue, the swan will take up residence at ASR's WildlifeLink sanctuary.

Tumbling tortises

Since time immemorial, the term 'tortoise' generally referred to the freshwater or the land-based species, while the name, 'turtle' belonged to the marine equivalent. Convention now seems to accept all species as 'turtles', with the exception, perhaps, of the giant land tortoises of the Galapagos Islands. On occasions, newly hatched freshwater turtles, often referred to as 'penny-turtles', are found wandering on roads and in backyards. One such incident occurred at East Ballina, where the little amphibians were found tumbling like pebbles, into a backyard swimming pool. How the tiny creatures managed to scale a brick wall to access the pool remains a mystery. And why? A natural lagoon was only metres away.



Piecing it together: ASR volunteer Marny (right), and vet nurse Jamie assist while Dr Kosack prepares to insert the first of 150 stitches in this injured pelican

Fair go, fisherfolk

Twenty-two years ago, at Corner Inlet on Victoria's Great Ocean Road, researchers banded a fluffy seabird chick. The Caspian Tern roamed the coastline of Australia, finally making it's way to the North Coast. After surviving for two decades and thousands of kilometres, circumstances dealt a fatal blow to the feathered traveller. At Yamba, an un-attended, set line hung ominously from the riverbank. The bird became hopelessly entangled in the line as it foraged near the shore. Despite the valiant efforts of Clarence Valley WIRES members, the bird's injuries were ultimately fatal – a sad end indeed. Un-attended, set lines are responsible for a large number of wildlife entanglements. Given that fishing is referred to as a sport, I fail to see how setting a fishing-line, and leaving it, falls into that category.

Having witnessed 12 years of murderous mayhem caused by this method of fishing, I continue to question why the practice is still legal. As much as we appreciate the support of fisherfolk in reporting sick and injured creatures, I have to say to those who use set lines; fair go, fisherfolk! Your set line is a trap.



Tiny Tim prior to the turtle's release at Julian Rocks

Wildlife Walkabout

*by Dr Vincent Serventy AM,
President of Honour*

International

Nairobi - a feel good story

A baby hippopotamus that survived the tsunami waves on the Kenyan coast has formed a strong bond with a giant male century-old tortoise, in an animal facility in the Port city of Mombasa. The hippopotamus, nicknamed Owen and weighing about 300 kilograms, was swept down the Sabaki River into the Indian Ocean, and then forced back to shore when the tsunami struck the Kenyan coast on December 26, before rangers rescued him. It is incredible.

A-less-than-a-year-old hippo has adopted a male tortoise, about a century old, and the tortoise seems to be very happy with being a mother. After it was swept away and lost its mother, the hippo was traumatised. It had to look for a surrogate mother. It landed with the tortoise and established a strong bond. They swim, eat and sleep together. The hippo follows the tortoise exactly the way it follows its mother. If somebody approaches the tortoise, then it becomes aggressive.



Owen and his surrogate mother

Ernst Mayr

Ernst, a world authority on evolution, has died at the age of one hundred. As a young member of our Society I entertained him at dinner. He told me in the Montebello Islands off our coast we had 'test tubes of evolution'; and should treasure them. Not realising the national government had overriding powers in military matters, I told him they were state nature reserves, so were safe. Then we heard Prime Minister Menzies had handed one over to the British Government, not as a test tube of evolution, but for testing the first British atom bomb. We protested, with the director of the WA Museum, the most important conservationist in

WA. Kim Beazley senior told Menzies we were only a bunch of communists; a comment which infuriated the director, a staunch conservative.

Also later we heard how in the British Parliament a ship's doctor who went with the bomb to Australia stated there was nothing on the island except 'a hawk on a stick'. At the age of ninety three we heard Ernst had written a second book on evolution with new information. We wrote to him in the United States to assure him though one island was gone forever in terms of land wildlife; the rest were still safe. Also environmental opinion was now strong enough in the West to insure none of the islands were being handed over for military use. He was a great conservationist.



The 'hawk on a stick' almost certainly an osprey

National

May Gibbs

In the twenties this inspired creator of fairy stories for Australian children stared at the magnificent bull banksia which led to her creating the image of the 'bad banksia men'. Walking in the same bushland sixty years ago, I created Kumar! the Possum for nature broadcasts over many years. The ABC told me that 95 percent of all schools in Australia listened to the broadcasts where Joan and Jim met many bush creatures; always described with natural history accuracy. I like to think they inspired the child who sent a donation to the 'save the tortoise fund', described in our new book, with a letter stating 'I hope he keeps on living like the fairies'.

Fantasy does no harm to children. Certainly our Society's Council thought so, at the height of the appeal sending twenty pounds to the fund. A worthy donation in those far-off days. My last broadcast was of a bush trial with Joan and Jim in the box, representing all humans. Then came a list of environmental disasters. The verdict - Guilty; the punishment - 'nature will punish you if you forget the ecological rules!'



Kumarl the Possum and Joan drawn by a member of my staff, Olive Seymour, when I was director of the Nature Advisory Service

Our new book

We urge all members to buy a copy of 'Conservation Victories and Battles Yet to Win'. We urge all our members to work on the national government for the vital need to carry out the last chapters feature 'Battles Yet to Win'. The chair of the proposed Bill of Environmental Rights told us this was the world's most urgent need. Today it is even more urgent, though greedy corporations as well as special interest groups have prevented it even being discussed at the United Nations. Today with terrorism spawned by over population, plus climatic disasters caused by global warming, the need is even more urgent. To celebrate our Society's centenary in 2009, nothing could be of greater importance than for our government to take the Bill to the United Nations!



Fresh water

Professor Ian Lowe, the new head of ACF and our first Earth 2000 lecturer, has a warning in New Scientist. 'Australia's National Action Plan appears to be in crisis.' He mentions years of spending under budget.

Editor's note: The National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) tackles two major natural resource management issues facing Australia's rural industries, regional communities and our unique environment. Australian and State and Territory Governments work with people in communities to find local solutions for local problems. Regional planning and investment at a regional level is the principal delivery mechanism

for the NAP. At this level the NAP is jointly delivered with the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT). To find out more about how the NAP and the NHT are jointly delivered at the regional level visit the website <http://www.nrm.gov.au/index.html>

Curing salination

Why not try our Society's idea to employ a task force of farmers and officials who have actually solved the problem on their own properties? We suggest the Fentons of Western Victoria, the Ive's of Yass in NSW; also the Potter Foundation of Victoria, CALM of WA, with Professor Syd Shea who masterminded the State scheme to hold seminars in all farming districts affected by salinity. Nothing more effective as an opening statement than 'we have solved the problem on our farm; becoming prosperous as a result.'

Doctor Joan Webb

The author of our own history; whom we consider the greatest scientific biographer in Australia. Joan is to be been honoured in Thailand with an honorary doctorate of science; awarded by the crown prince for scientific work in his country and Australia. Joan also sent us an extract from a pen sketch she had of Edward J Sievers in 1906, as a preface to Du Fauls translations of the 'Odes of Horace'. It deals with that long problem of farmers and conservationists, the feral rabbit. In 1887 his old Sydney friend Dr Carl Fischer, suggested to Sievers the possibility of developing bacteriologically a virus fatal to rabbits. They did more than talk and tested the virus on a farm near Berlin. They brought the virus back to Australia but sadly 'every attempt of these gentlemen to obtain permission to renew their experiment - subject to every restriction for public safety- was blocked'. The virus was impounded and destroyed by the authorities.

Our founder David Stead wrote a book about the rabbit problem but it took many years before the CSIRO, a scientific arm we helped form, achieved success with myxomatosis. Joan should make sure all these details are stored in some archive since this is important historically in one of Australia's greatest conservation successes.



Western Australia

Both Ray and John Oldham, those greatest of the state's conservation workers and the first landscape architects in Australia who came to the West to help the conservation cause, are now dead. They were courageous fighters, our good friends, making sure as planners of school grounds all the bush, except those areas needed for building and sport, was left untouched so teachers could create nature study areas. They did the same for our house block. We have written to the Conservation Council and Tree Society in the West suggesting they create an Oldham Conservation bequest in similar fashion to the Serventy Conservation Award and Medal. There is already a Serventy Memorial Lecture created by the Naturalists Club in honour of my brother, a famous bird man and a conservation leader. There is also a Serventy Island on the Abrolhos, named by the government to honour my sister Lucy, who until her death a few years ago was our oldest member and a leader in conservation work in that state.

Northern Territory

Kakadu

Sad news from the Ranger Uranium Mine. Birds lured by the water in tailing dams; often these contain dangerous chemicals which causes death to the birds. We suggest there is no need for great research. Do what the orchardists do in many eastern states do, unroll a nylon net to cover the attractive target, in their case fruit, in Darwin water, so the birds or bats in the eastern case cannot reach the target. Once the danger is over the nets can be rolled back ready for their next use. These covers may last many years so are not expensive. We have sent the suggestion to Ian Campbell, the controller of the mine.



Fruit bat feeding

Native title over reserves

From the Minister for Indigenous Affairs in Darwin a booklet showing guidelines to handle the new position of parks and reserves; where native title rights have changed the ownership. Members interested should write to the Minister in Darwin for copies of the booklet.

Queensland

Although State government estimates put koala numbers at between 100,000 to 300,000 that is no comfort to Noosa residents. The once strong colony in that region has dropped because of dog attacks, fatal since these animals must travel along the ground to reach new trees.



A warning to car drivers of koalas on the ground



Fires also kill. A fire damaged animal

New South Wales

Goat Island

This Island has been described as a dangerous place for Ecotourists because of attacks by silver gulls. I have been among thousands of gulls and tens of thousands of sooty terns without fearing for my life. Of course all birds will use whatever weapons they have to defend themselves or their nests. With some it is by defecating on intruders. Gulls in too great numbers can be a conservation problem. The reason for their huge numbers is human encouragement. Uneaten food gulls relish, and they relish even more the uncovered rubbish dumps of Councils. If these were abandoned in favour of the new waste disposal centres proposed by the State government the problems would disappear.



Silver gulls in crowds may be frightening but never dangerous

Tasmania

Tasmanian devils

Plans to conserve this fascinating marsupial are in full swing. It is believed the cancer is spread through a diseased animal biting another. The plan includes setting up populations in approved zoos around the Island. A significant devil population on Forestier and the Tasman Peninsula will be isolated by a devil proof grid. Also the Narawntapu on the State's north coast with water on three sides and unsuitable devil habitat to the south will make an ideal site to quarantine the animals.



Devils at play

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Wildlife Study Tour

Waterfall Springs Wildlife Sanctuary

Thursday 9 June 2005

Join us on this exciting self drive day tour to Waterfall Springs Wildlife Sanctuary on the NSW Central Coast and see some of Australia's most endearing but vulnerable native wildlife

Waterfall Springs is home to four endangered species of wallabies - brush-tailed rock wallaby, yellow-footed rock wallaby, bridled nail-tailed wallaby, and tamar wallaby.

Experience a unique behind-the-scenes tour of the Sanctuary and enjoy morning tea and lunch afterwards with the manager and volunteer staff of Waterfall Springs. **Free to members, non-members \$10.**

The Sanctuary is blooming with Autumn flowers and the grass is luscious, green and plentiful. There is birdlife in abundance currently busy feeding on the flowering natives surrounding the house area; even the reptiles are grabbing the last of the warm sun before the onslaught of winter. Friendly kangaroos and wallabies will make you welcome, although they would like a little treat for their politeness. The notorious, elusive brush-tailed rock wallabies will even make their presence noticed, sitting quietly in the branch of a stringy bark tree in their enclosure, they make an awesome sight to the unsuspecting visitor. The beautifully marked yellow footed rock wallabies will gladly accept a treat and hop all over your clean clothes to inspect the visitors. The Sanctuary offers unbelievably rare opportunities and experiences for visitors; the interaction with the animals will create fond memories, not to mention a photographer's dream close at hand.

When: Thursday 9 June 2005
– meet at Waterfall Springs Sanctuary at 10.30am

Where: Waterfall Springs Wildlife Sanctuary, Kyola Road, Kulnura

Getting there: Directions from Sydney - Travel along the F3 heading north, go past the Mount White Truck Weighing Station, take next exit (big sign says Tourist Route # 33) which is the Peats Ridge exit, keep left during the exit and follow the Old Pacific Hwy for 15kms to Peats Ridge, exit left into George Downs Drive and follow, going straight through Central Mangrove cross roads, past Kulnura Store and past Kulnura One Stop Service Station. At 28.5kms, turn left into Kyola Road (sign says to Mangrove Creek Dam). At 31.2kms, turn left at a green bus stop shelter, go 200 metres, turn right at "T" junction, go 250 metres to end of road and big black entrance gates on left.

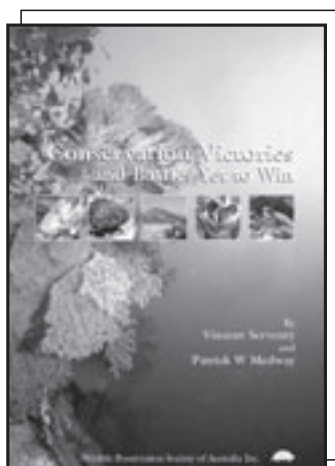
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Phone: 9556 1537

or email

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Books from WPSA - Order Now!



This new book chronicles many successful conservation battles to protect and save the Australian environment across a wide range of controversial issues.

Written by prominent conservation and environmental activist, Dr Vincent Serventy AM, and the current National President of the Wildlife Preservation Society, Patrick W Medway AM, this book covers conservation battles ranging from the campaign to extend the protection zone of the Great Barrier Reef to the restoration of the Towra Beach RAMSAR site. Examples of conservation victories achieved by some of the actual people who were on the ground at the time of these conservation battles are faithfully recorded in great personal detail.

Price: \$20.00

including GST

(Plus \$5 postage & handling)



A book detailing the history of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia since its inception in 1909. You will be able to read in this book the history of our Society over almost a hundred years.

Price: \$15.00

including GST

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	Quantity	Total
Conservation Victories and Battles Yet to Win By Vincent Serventy and Patrick W Medway Price: \$20.00 each	_____	_____
Conserving Australia's Wildlife By Dr Joan Webb Price: \$15.00 each	_____	_____
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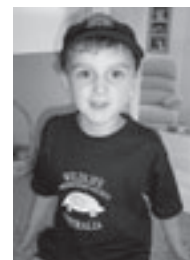
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Many of our members have expressed interest in purchasing gift merchandise for friends and family (or even themselves)! This is a great way to support WPS, so we have responded below with a mail order system. Simply send your cheque or credit card 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: \$25.00
(navy with white logo/ white with navy logo)



Cap: \$10.00
(navy with white logo)



WPS ceramic mug: \$5.00
(white with blue logo)



Kids T-shirts: \$10.00
(navy with white logo/ white with navy logo)



Drink bottle bag: \$10.00
(navy with white logo, bottle not included)

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Consider - A Bequest

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

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

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.”

PATRICK MEDWAY AM
National President