



AUSTRALIAN *Wildlife*

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

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Print Post Approval No. PP243459/00117

Annual General Meeting 2008

Flying-foxes

Rehabilitation Review

Wildside

Cover photo: Blue triangle butterfly (*Graphium sarpedon choreon*)
Photo supplied by Iain Stych



Hunter Koala Society members –
Jill Taylor and Heather Baldwin



Patrick Medway presents
Carol Serventy with her Centenary Membership



Nature Conservation Council of NSW members
Kate Faehrmann, Don White and Amy Hankinson

Annual General Meeting and Luncheon 2008



Back row L to R: Tony Cornell, Vanessa Wilson, Steve Wilson, Noel Cisowski, Dr Richard Mason, Judith Ma
Front row L to R: Suzanne Medway, Dr Clive Williams, Patrick Medway AM, Dr David Murray, Ralph Campbell



Patrick Medway, Dr Clive Williams,
Carol Serventy and Dr David Murray

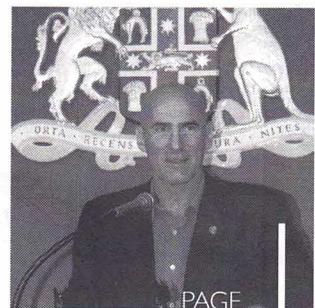


Patrick Medway presents
Joan Brandt with her
Centenary Membership



Ian Cohen MLC, Amy Hankinson, Patrick Medway

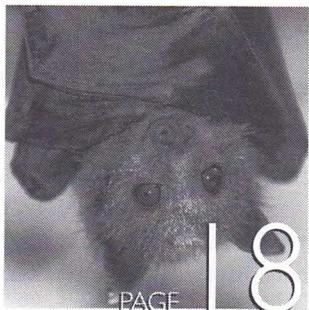
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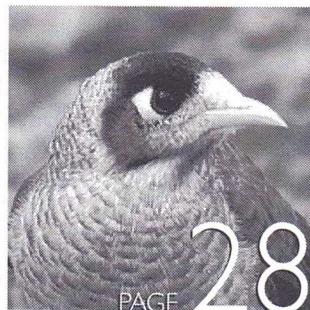
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Celebrating a centenary
1909 - 2009

'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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Price \$10.00 (for non-members)

MEMBERSHIP

Concession: \$30 (pensioner, student, child)

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children jointly)

Associate Members: \$60 (being schools or incorporated
or unincorporated associations with a principal object related
to conservation, nature study or education)

Corporate Members: \$100 (being incorporated or
unincorporated associations not being associate members)

NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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COUNCILLORS 2008

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Jeffery AC CVO MC (Retd)
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and Dr David Murray

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Suzanne Medway

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Tony Cornell, Judith May, Dr Richard Mason,
Colleen Murphy, Steve Wilson, Vanessa Wilson

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Dr David Murray – Botanical
Prof Richard Kingsford – Environmental Science
Geoffrey Ross – Wildlife management issues

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*All articles are written by
Suzanne Medway unless stated otherwise.
Articles and comments expressed in this magazine do not
necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor, Society or
members. Articles contributed from outside sources are
included for the reading enjoyment of members and to
encourage discussion on different points of view.*

From the President's Desk...

Help find our history

With the Centenary of the Society coming up fast, we are still searching for early historical records of the Society to help update our Centenary collection for display during 2009.

We recently found a beautifully coloured Life Member's Certificate issued to Mr Jack H Jones and signed off by our Founder, David G Stead, as President back in 1948. It depicts a wonderful collection of native animals and plants with the citation - *'These are some of the rare and beautiful fauna and flora it is our object to preserve from extinction'*. A worthy objective indeed and one that we are still completely committed to following for the conservation of Australia's native wildlife.

The Life Member's Certificate also contains a delightful quote by Henry Lawson:

*Australia! Australia! So fair to behold -
While the blue sky is arching above;
The stranger should never have need to be told
That the Wattle-bloom means that her heart is of gold
And the Waratah red blood of love.*

If any member or friend has a piece of early history of the Society, old photographs, magazines, published references to the work of the Society, or any item of interest about the Society, please contact our National Office.

Our Society has arranged for a beautiful wildlife book to be donated and issued to the person who can supply the oldest item associated with the history of the Society that dates back to its origin in Sydney on 11 May 1909.

We need to move fast as the Editor must have all copy for our updated history to the printer by 30 June 2008 for publication in time for our Centenary celebrations, which start on 1 January 2009.

Good hunting!

Clean up Australia Day 2008

Society members and friends once again participated this year, cleaning up the Bicentennial Park site at Rockdale. We were delighted that fifty six volunteers came along, collecting eleven bags of miscellaneous rubbish from the Brighton Ponds area. We enjoyed a delicious BBQ afterwards.

Across Australia, more than 800,000 volunteers took to their streets, parks, beaches and waterways, removing more than 7,000 tonnes of rubbish from 6,000 sites.



Outstanding Service to the Community (Individual)

Ku-ring-gai's Outstanding Service to the Community (Individual) award went to Berowra Heights resident Carol Nolder for her dedication to preserving Ku-ring-gai's plant life.

President of the Australian Plants Society - North Shore Group for eight years, Carol worked closely with the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden in St Ives in planning the hugely popular annual Festival of Wildflowers. We congratulate Carol for her wonderful commitment to conservation and acknowledge her tremendous contribution to our Society as a very active Councillor, until her retirement from the Council at the recent AGM. Well done Carol.

99th Annual General Meeting

We conducted the 99th Annual General Meeting of the Society on Wednesday 26 March 2008 and elected a new team of committed Councillors to promote the work of the Society for the next twelve months. We congratulate and extend our best wishes to the new Council as we move towards our Centenary Year in 2009.

Patrick W Medway AM
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Annual General Meeting 2008

The 99th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in the Waratah Room at NSW Parliament House, Sydney on Wednesday 26 March 2008. Over thirty members attended the meeting and elected the new Council for 2008.

The elected Executive Officers for the Society for 2008 are:

President and Chairman – Patrick W Medway AM
Vice President – Dr Clive Williams
Vice President – Dr David Murray
Secretary/Executive Director – Suzanne Medway
Honorary Treasurer – Ralph Campbell

The members of the Council are: Max Blanch, Bernie Clarke, Noel Cislowski, John Clarke, Tony Cornell, Judith May, Dr Richard Mason, Colleen Murphy, Vanessa and Steve Wilson.

President's report for 2007

The Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc has developed broad and diverse conservation projects and responsibilities in our mission of preserving Australia's unique wildlife, and this is evident in the range of our achievements over the last year. We deal with and support a broad spectrum of issues, deliver many different conservation projects and operate in a number of different and sometimes difficult locations across Australia. Some of our conservation projects focus on conserving a single species, while others deal with national problems on a continental or global scale - such as climate change. Our volunteers work in locations all around Australia, from remote areas to the capital cities – and all showing a commitment to conserving Australia's flora and fauna.

Annual General Meeting and Luncheon

These events, held in NSW Parliament House, Sydney have become a highlight of our Society's year. The Hon Bob Debus MP, Minister for the Environment, hosted our 2007 Annual Luncheon and gave a short address on his environmental achievements over the last decade. Peter Cundall (ABC TV) was our 2007 Guest of Honour. Peter gave a very moving and interesting address to the guests at the Luncheon and spoke "off the cuff". He said he never prepares a formal speech but just "rambles" on about his work.



Peter Cundall being presented with a Wollomi Pine by President Patrick W Medway

The Serventy Conservation Medal for 2006

This special award was inaugurated in 1999 to commemorate the conservation work by the members of the Serventy family – Dr Vincent Serventy, Dr Dominic Serventy and Lucy Serventy. Each member of the family gave a lifetime of commitment to the conservation and preservation of Australian wildlife.

The Serventy Conservation Medal for 2006 was awarded to Lindsay E Smith OAM of Unanderra in New South Wales for his outstanding wildlife conservation work involving seabirds.



Lindsay Smith being presented with the Serventy Conservation Medal for 2006 by The Hon Bob Debus MP, Minister for the Environment

Lindsay Smith has, through his devotion to wildlife conservation, become one of Australia's experts on seabirds, especially the albatross. Lindsay, with others, has been actively studying the seabirds visiting the coast near Wollongong for over fifty years. This represents the longest continuous albatross study in the world. He was involved in the foundation of the Southern Ocean Seabird Study Association in 1994. As a result of SOSSA's work, the plight of albatross and other seabirds was brought to the attention, not only of Australians, but of people throughout the world.



Members of SOSSA. L to R: Robert Thorne, Jackie Vrkic, Terrill Nordstrom, Lindsay Smith, Janice Jenkin-Smith, Carl Loves, John Boness

Community Wildlife Conservation Award for 2006

The Community Wildlife Service Award is made each year to recognise organisations that make a significant contribution to the preservation of Australian wildlife. The Community Wildlife Conservation Award for 2006 was awarded to the Friends of the Koala Inc from Lismore in New South Wales.



Peter Cundall presents Lorraine Vass, President of Friends of the Koala, with the 2006 Community Wildlife Conservation Award with L to R: Rick Vass, Margaret Russell, Clive Williams, Pat Barnidge, Karen Jennison and Barbara Dobner

Friends of the Koala is a non-profit community group run by volunteers dedicated to conserving koalas in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales. Volunteer rehabilitators operate a 24 hour rescue service for sick, injured and orphaned koalas. Friends of the Koala play an active role in promoting habitat restoration in the Northern Rivers Region. The group supports research, in particular in the prevalence of disease in koala populations and in mapping current koala populations and their distribution.

Strategic Planning Day on our Foundation Day

A special Strategic Planning Day was held on 11 May 2007 in Sydney to organise and plan the future work of the Society. Major changes were recommended to our constitution and legal advice suggested important improvements to comply with the new federal government legislation. For the Society to last it has to meet the needs of the next generation of Australians and be financially viable.

Wildlife rescue calls

We continue to receive numerous calls for help from members of the public about sick injured and stranded wildlife. With the advance of urban consolidation there is a great impact on native wildlife. Feral deer coming out of the Royal National park in southern Sydney are now being killed on the highways, koalas and possums are being injured by cars and dogs.

2007 - University Student Grants Scheme

Ten annual grants of \$1,000 each were awarded to honours or postgraduate students conducting research that will contribute to the conservation of Australian wildlife:

Graeme Armstrong, School for Environmental Research, Charles Darwin University, Darwin. Project - Environmental factors affecting the seed availability for granivorous birds in tropical savannas of Australia.

Jennifer Firn, School of Integrative Biology, University of Queensland. Project - Investigate the competitive nature (passive or aggressive) of *Eragrostis curvula* (African love grass).

Matthias Hagman, School of Biological Sciences, University of Sydney. Project - Evaluate the impact of habitat fragmentation on frog population persistence and assessment of their environmental requirements.

Alejandro Ortega-Arqueta, School of Natural and Rural Systems Management, University of Queensland. Project - Evaluating the conservation strategies for threatened species in Australia.

Danielle Shanahan, School of Integrative Biology, University of Queensland. Project - Understanding fragmentation for improved conservation: landscape genetics of a rainforest specialist, the yellow-throated scrub wren.



Brendan Taylor, School of Environment, Griffith University. Project - Understanding and mitigating the impact of roads on wildlife.

James Turner, Centre for Behavioural and Physiological Ecology, University of New England, Armidale. Project - The ecology and thermal biology of pygmy-possums.

Jamie Voyles, Amphibian Disease Ecology Group, James Cook University, Townsville. Project - Amphibian declines and extinctions occurring in Australia that are attributed to the disease chytridiomycosis.

Arian Wallach, Faculty of Sciences, School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Adelaide. Project - Persistence of endangered mammals: Is the dingo the key.

Paul Webala, School of Biological Sciences and Biotechnology, Murdoch University. Project - Bat community structure and habitat use across disturbance regimes in jarrah forests, South-western Australia.

2007 Conservation Group Grants

The Council of the Wildlife Preservation Society carefully considers all requests for grants from conservation groups and places special emphasis on wildlife conservation and the preservation of wildlife habitat. The Society makes contact with wildlife caring groups nationally on a regular basis to find out how they are faring, what their main projects are and how we can be of assistance to them. We lobby organisations and government bodies on their behalf and make donations to their special projects:

Australian Ecosystems Foundation, Lithgow - A donation was made to the Australian Ecosystems Foundation Incorporated to assist in the native animal breeding program at Secret Creek Sanctuary that contains the only black Eastern quolls on the mainland of Australia.



Eastern quolls

Australian Seabird Rescue Inc, Ballina - A donation was made to purchase an endoscope for ASR's marine sea turtle hospital, which is one of only four licensed facilities in New South Wales, and the only facility on the east coast staffed by volunteers.

Society of Frogs and Reptiles Inc, Newcastle - A donation was made to the Society of Frogs and Reptiles to assist in their rescue service. The disappearance of native frogs from our local environment has been a major problem for some time and identifying the reason is very important.

Inland Rivers Network, NSW - A donation was made to assist in the production of the Network's newsletters on the conservation of freshwater wildlife and their habitats. Inland Rivers Network is a coalition of environment groups and individuals concerned about the degradation of the rivers, wetlands and ground waters of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Hansen Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, Kangaroo Island, SA - A donation was made to Hansen Bay Wildlife Sanctuary that will be used to form a 'Wildlife Foundation' to save and protect all native wildlife on Kangaroo Island.

Desert Wildlife Services, NT - A donation was made towards a bilby conservation project on the southern edge of bilby distribution in the Northern Territory to conduct a bilby survey to locate a suitable bilby colony that requires protection from predators. Consultation with Traditional Owners about appropriate predator management around the bilby colony will hopefully lead to the establishment of some fox-specific bait dispensers at the site.

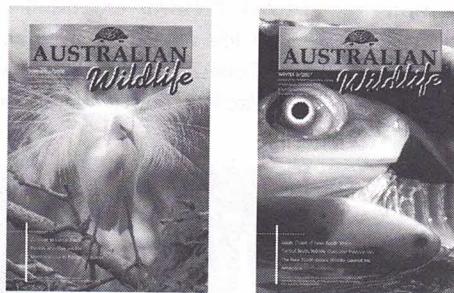
NSW Pest Animal Control Council

Patrick W Medway continues to act as the Society's representative on the NSW State Pest Animal Control Council and attends all meetings. Major feral eradication programs for all feral species are discussed, with strong management plans in place to lessen the impact of feral horses, donkeys, camels, goats, pigs, wild dogs, cane toads and introduced fish.

Australian Wildlife magazine

Our coloured cover magazine is the 'flagship' of the Society and has proved to be very popular amongst our members. We are indebted to the Editor, Suzanne Medway, for her continued dedication and commitment to a high standard of production of this magazine. She is continually challenged to find an outstanding photograph for the front cover and members are reminded that

they can always provide an input with photographs and articles to assist in making the magazine very readable.



Conferences and wildlife seminars

Councillors attended and contributed to a number of important wildlife conferences and meetings throughout the year. We actively initiated and sponsored some of these conferences and participated in others:

- ARAZPA Conference in Wellington NZ
- World Conservation NCC Dinner in Sydney
- Hunter Wetland Conference at Newcastle
- Australasian Mammal Society Conference in Armidale
- National Tree Day planting – Rockdale Wetlands
- Clean Up Australia Day at Bicentennial Park, Rockdale
- AWMS Conference in Canberra
- Wildlife Council Conference at Randwick, Sydney
- Nature Conservation Council Annual General Meeting in Sydney
- 2007 Wildlife Study Tour of Kangaroo Island

Environmental education

Our National Office continues to receive and answer hundreds of routine wildlife calls each week from school students wanting to find out more about our native wildlife and the conservation of its vital habitat. We provide a wide range of information brochures on native wildlife both on our website and in hard copy for posting. We have now developed a draft Environmental Education program for implementation in our new Environmental Education Centre.

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 the interest rates. We now look forward to continued strong growth in our investment portfolio.

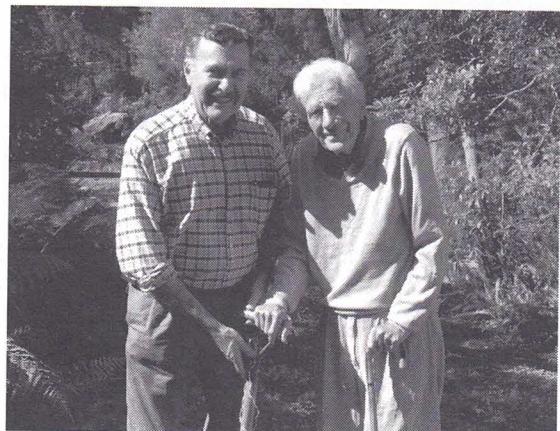
Donations, bequests and gifts

During the year we continued with our bequest program to encourage donors to support our work through advertising with the *Solicitors' Pro-Bono* publication and general publicity.

We are grateful to all our members for considering using the bequest program to help the Society with long term planning.

Dr Vincent Serventy AM BSc BEd DSc

Our President of Honour, Dr Vincent Noel Serventy AM, died on Saturday 8 September 2007, aged 91 years. Vincent will be sadly missed by several generations of Australians who were strongly influenced in their love of Australia and its unique wildlife. His persistence in writing to prime ministers, premiers and ministers continued right to the end. He was truly regarded as the 'Father of Conservation' in Australia and was greatly honoured as such for his tremendous contribution to wildlife preservation throughout his lifetime.



Patrick Medway and Vin Serventy planting a tree in Vin's garden

The future

Acting on sound legal and accounting advice, the Council has implemented a major sustainable program for the future work of the Society. With a new and modern constitution to cope with the administrative and structural changes necessary for the Society to receive Tax Deductible Status and to be registered as an Approved Environmental organisation with the Federal Government. Members and friends can make a tax deductible donation to the work of the Society, which is helping to establish our long term viable future.

Centenary celebrations in 2009

The Centenary Committee has developed a strong centenary program to celebrate one hundred years of wildlife preservation across Australia. It

is proposed to launch the program in January 2009 and proceed with monthly events across Australia. A highlight is expected to be the official opening of the Dr Vincent Serventy Memorial Classrooms as a focal point for our new environmental education program for primary and secondary students.

Ecoworld Gardens

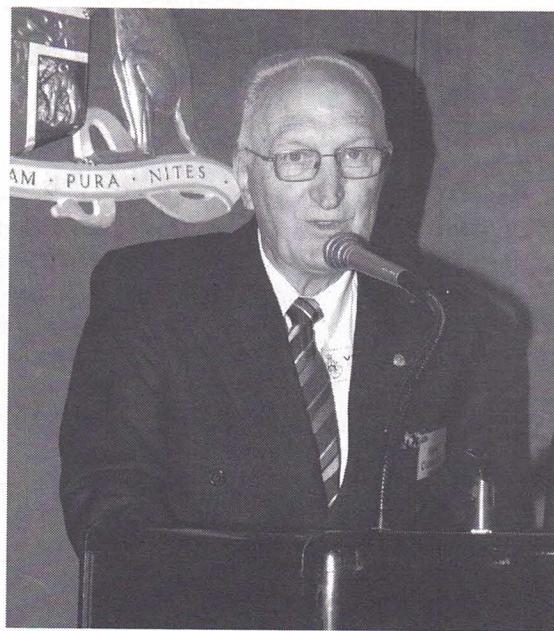
We progress with development plans for the establishment of our major Wetland Environmental Education Centre in the Rockdale Wetlands Sydney. The Rockdale City Council has given advice on how we should proceed and we expect to finalise all necessary approvals by March 2008. Once formal approval has been granted, we will develop Stage 1 of the project by building the double classrooms to commence the education program for local schools.

Patrick W Medway AM
NATIONAL PRESIDENT
31 December 2007

99th Annual Luncheon

At the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting members retired to the NSW Parliament House Dining Room for a very successful anniversary luncheon. Our Guest Speaker was Ian Cohen MLC (The Greens).

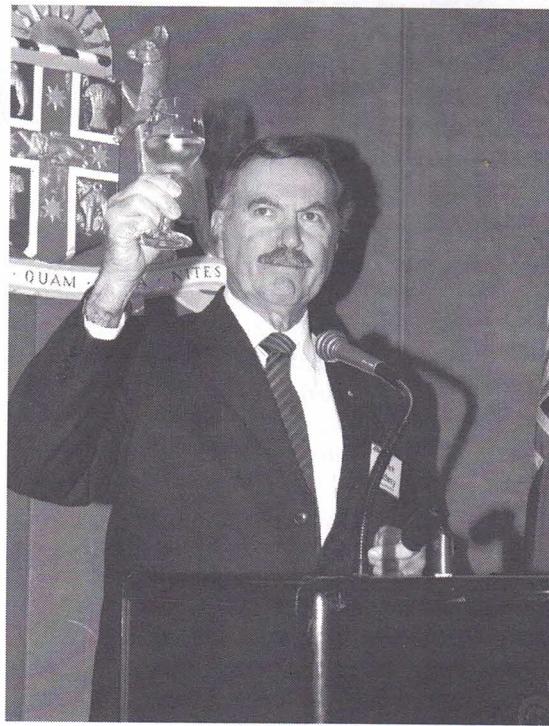
Master of Ceremonies, Noel Cislowski, opened the luncheon proceedings and invited the newly re-elected National President, Patrick W Medway AM, to officially welcome the guest speaker, members and guests to the 99th Anniversary Luncheon.



Noel Cislowski, Councillor

Address of welcome by National President

Patrick Medway extended a very warm welcome to all life members, members and special guests, Ian Cohen and Robert Brown - Members of the Legislative Council - and Caroline Serventy, OAM.



Patrick Medway AM, National President

Patrick then introduced Ian Cohen MLC. Ian has been a pioneering community-based environmental and social justice activist since 1980, working at local, state and national levels. He is a specialist exponent of non-violent direct actions and community organisation for social change. Ian has organised and participated in most major environmental campaigns in Eastern Australia during the 1980s: Nightcap rainforests in Northern NSW, Franklin River, Daintree, South East forests NSW, North Washpool and Chaelundi. As a keen surfer Ian was a founding member of Stop the Ocean Pollution and Clean Seas Coalition. In March 1995, Ian was elected to the NSW Legislative Council as its first Green member. In March 2003, Ian was re-elected to the NSW Legislative Council for a second term. Ian is now entering his twelfth year of office as a Parliamentarian. Ian also has an ongoing interest in forest issues throughout New South Wales. Ian is the author of the book *Green Fire*, an account of the Australian environmental movement, a movement that has transformed Australian politics.

Patrick thanked Ian for taking the time to speak to our members about saving Australia's national forests. Ian's speech is featured on the next page.

Ian Cohen MLC

Mr Chairman, Mr President, Parliamentary colleagues, Councillors, distinguished guests and members of the Society.

I acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation.

I am delighted to be here today and to have the opportunity to discuss what the Greens in this House are doing to help protect Australia's native wildlife and habitat.

I am pleased to tell you also that Senator Bob Brown of Tasmania has asked me to extend his congratulations to your Society on reaching its 99th year of operation, which makes the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia one of the oldest conservation societies in Australia. He has kindly donated a special book on **Tasmanian Forests** for the Silent Auction.

Let me begin by congratulating the Society on holding its 99th Annual General Meeting and to congratulate your National President - Patrick Medway - and the newly elected Councillors whose tireless efforts and work have greatly progressed the campaign to help save Australia's native wildlife in all its forms, for future generations of Australians.

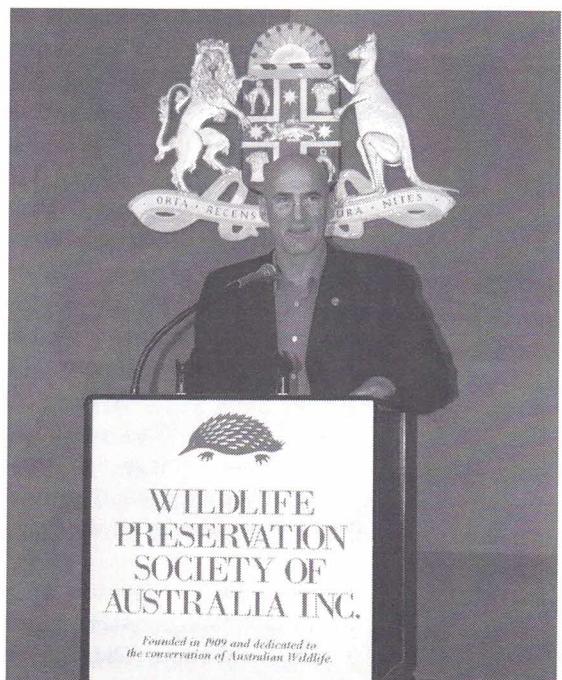
The Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia has been at the forefront of the wildlife conservation movement for almost, (virtually) a century. Living the adage 'think global, act local', the organisation was the first NGO to join the World Conservation Union, encouraged the declaration and listing of World Heritage Areas putting in place the necessary roadblock to the Tasmanian plans for the Franklin.

Not to forget other such milestone achievements, including the successful campaign to ban the use of wild bird plumage, particularly for women's hats, the successful lobbying of US President Hoover to ban the importation of marsupial and koala skins and the establishment of the World's first Conservation Day.

And to this very day, the Society does not rest on its laurels, continuing to pursue a Declaration of Environmental Rights to complement international instruments that secure basic Human Rights. The Society's unwavering commitment to conservation has ensured its continued relevance and inspirational legacy. Without detracting from the passion and radical environmentalist exuberance displayed by those in the younger ranks of the movement, the Society is of integral importance as a vast body of knowledge and invaluable experience in pushing the conservation movement.

I would like to congratulate the Society as you move towards celebrating a centenary of wildlife conservation in 2009. I know that we will all be extending our sincere congratulations on reaching such a milestone.

I acknowledge the great work done by your previous President and former President of Honour, the late Dr Vincent Serventy AM, who sadly died in 2007. I well remember Vincent and his dedication to conservation. His numerous books, photographs, movies and videos all helped educate several generations of Australians about native wildlife and we know he was looking forward to the Society celebrating its Centenary in 2009.



Ian Cohen MLC

Today, I want to briefly discuss saving our forests and its wildlife for future generations of Australians.

That phrase or that idea of saving and conserving natural habitat and biodiversity for our children's children, the future generations of Australians, is a sentiment often expressed by all political quarters but scarcely acted upon. This foundational principle expressed in Principle 3 of the 1992 *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* states that;

"The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations."

This principle is now more relevant than ever to the NSW Government. Planning regimes in NSW under the direction of Minister Sartor are unfortunately omitting this key principle and



Greens councillors at local levels are fighting on a daily basis for the basic right of ecologically sustainable development.

Governments may ascribe to this concept of intergenerational equity – the idea that our actions should not prejudice or impede the ability of future generations to meet their own needs – but actually living the notion of intergenerational equity is much harder for those tied to short term political expediencies.

Ignoring the need to secure biodiversity and native wildlife for future generations is becoming harder as citizens of this state, of this country and of the world are experiencing in very real terms, the tangible impacts of climate change. The link between development and environmental impact is finding new expression in climate change and people are developing a new awareness of the impact of human development on the environment.

The next challenge is to enhance the awareness of the connectivity of eco-systems and the independence of system. In the early years the fight to save our old-growth forests (which is still not over) was because we felt an intrinsic bond of respect for these ancient trees that had long been towering over the landscape before Europeans arrived. As the years passed and we all learned more about ecology and the connectedness of things, it became clear that the state of the forests has a direct impact on the health of our rivers.

Only in the last decade or so an even more important link between forests and water has become apparent. Older forests actually store water. They are like a huge living reservoir. The trees of an old growth forest are surrounded by a deep layer of mulch and leaf matter, usually moist and cool because of the shade and water catching qualities of the canopy above. Their root system moves water up and down through the soil as the climate requires.

Now science has been able to show that old growth forests feed water into our creeks even when there has been no rain. Young trees of course, take all that water to grow.

As our climate becomes more variable and we face longer, harsher dry times, it is worth remembering that old growth forests are one of the key elements of a secure water supply. The more of our forests we convert from a mature state to young regrowth, the less water we will have available. On the other hand, the more mature forest we allow to age and become old growth, the more water we will have.

Saving the unique and iconic landscapes, the native habitat and the biodiversity rich ecosystems of the river red gum wetland forests on the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers is a personal priority for me. These significant ecosystems have been out of sight and out of mind for a long time and the colour posters published by my office will hopefully put a public face to the river red gums campaign.

Saving our river red gums

The people of NSW have been endowed with a significant wetland system in south-western NSW. I use the word 'endowed' because it denotes both privilege and responsibility. People often talk about our natural resource endowment in relation to our reserves of natural gas, brown coal and uranium. When you consider the international recognition and importance of the existing red gum wetland forests, I think it is appropriate to see them as endowment of a very special gift to which a positive duty of protection and conservation attaches.

The red gum wetlands include 172,000 hectares of state forests along riverbanks and in important floodplain country, which are breeding grounds for threatened animals and birds such as the superb parrot, regent parrot, squirrel glider and Southern bell frog.

The red gum wetland forests have been recognised as internationally significant with three being listed under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The Riverina bioregion has been recognised by both the National Land and Water Resources Audit and the National Reserve System Report as one of the highest priority bioregions for consolidating the protected area system in Australia.



A male superb parrot



Nineteen migratory birds listed for protection under international agreements with Japan and China have been recorded in or adjacent to these forests.

The forests spanning the Murray River have also been identified as Red Gum Icon Sites in the Living Murray program and are listed on the Directory of Important Wetlands of Australia. They are home to ten endangered and thirty six vulnerable fauna species and twelve endangered and eleven vulnerable flora species.

A recent survey commissioned by the National Parks Association of NSW recorded information on the high conservation value of the red gum forests. The survey recorded ten regionally significant species including the rapidly declining woodlands birds such as the white-browed babbler, crested sheath tail-tit and Southern whiteface. These sightings were significant because the species had not been recorded in the red gum forests before.

Vast tracts of red gum forests are currently under severe stress as a result of changed water regimes, intensive logging and grazing. A recent study has shown that seventy five percent of red gums along the Murray are stressed and dying. The combined effect of all these practices is having a severe environmental impact on this irreplaceable natural system.

They are the last area in the State to have timber harvesting without a regional assessment or an environmental impact study of the effects of logging operations. These forests are currently being harvested at a totally unsustainable rate for low value products. More than ninety five percent of red gum that is logged is used only for extremely low value products such as firewood, fence posts and railway sleepers. I have pursued this with numerous questions in the parliament only to meet the coal face of the economics and politics of reductionism – the process of converting old growth forest to sleepers.

In this same period of time, Forest NSW introduced a timber harvesting technique called Australian Group Selection. This terminology translates as patch clear-felling. Areas of eighty metre diameter have been clear felled throughout these important ecosystems for the last five to seven years with no adequate assessment of the impacts.

Last year NPA took Forest NSW to court over the lack of compliance with the planning legislation that requires an EIS to be undertaken. Needless to say Forests NSW settled out of court and gave an undertaking to complete an EIS by June 2009.

The court settlement also saw logging rules strengthened by reducing by half the size of patch-clear fells and reducing the maximum diameter of red gum to be felled from 1.5 metres to 1.2 metres. I played a major role in negotiating this outcome with Minister for Primary Industries, Ian McDonald, and was able to secure significant concessions from the Minister.

Solutions and ways forward

Protecting the river red gums within a new National Park system along the Murray River is an essential step forward to securing and regenerating the ecological viability of this species. As an actor on the ecological stage of the Murray River, the river red gums play an integral role in housing the native wildlife.

Wildlife in Tasmania

I believe Patrick Medway was in Tasmania recently to look at the recovery program for the Tasmanian devil, which has been devastated by the terrible facial tumour disease. This insidious disease is clearly caused by the application of herbicides and other chemicals applied in forestry practices.

We are now hopeful that this recovery program will protect future generations of young Tasmanian devils and save them from extinction. Wonderful work is being done across Tasmania, especially around Bicheno where a recovery park has been constructed to provide a safe habitat for young 'devils'.

While Patrick was in Tasmania he also met with scientists from the University of Tasmania concerned with the protection of native freshwater fish and inspected the site chosen by the Government for the establishment of the new pulp mill on the shores of the Tamar River system. This new pulp mill will use up an enormous amount of native timber in a very un-sustainable way and destroy thousands of acres of wildlife habitat.

The Wilderness Society and other conservation groups are campaigning to stop this wanton destruction and we hope that it never gets off the ground.

I salute you the pioneers of conservation for all your enduring efforts so that future generations can appreciate our magnificent, iconic systems.

Thank you for inviting me to join you at your annual luncheon and I wish you and the Society well with your important wildlife conservation work.

The Serventy Conservation Award for 2007

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

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

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

Each year the Serventy Conservation 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 **Bev Smiles** for her outstanding wildlife conservation work. Bev has been active for many years in the Western Conservation Alliance and the Central West Environment Council. She was Chair of the Mudgee District Environment Group of which she was the founder. She was on the Steering Committee of the Inland Rivers Network for many years and also served on the Advisory Committee for Goulburn National Park. Bev has been well-known for her active efforts to save the Pilliga and the Brigalow Belt. If you want to know anything about these areas just ask Bev – she probably knows every tree in the district. As if all this isn't enough, Bev has also had a high profile as an advocate for protecting the Macquarie Marshes. Currently she is the Western Project Manager for the National Parks Association of NSW. For all her dedicated efforts on behalf of wildlife and habitat over so many years she has been chosen to receive the Serventy Medal. She is a very worthy recipient of that award.

Acceptance speech by Bev Smiles

It is a great and unexpected honour to be here today receiving a conservation award from the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia - an environment organisation about to celebrate one hundred years of work protecting our unique Australian fauna.

Dominic and Vincent Serventy were famous media personalities in my youth - the founders of

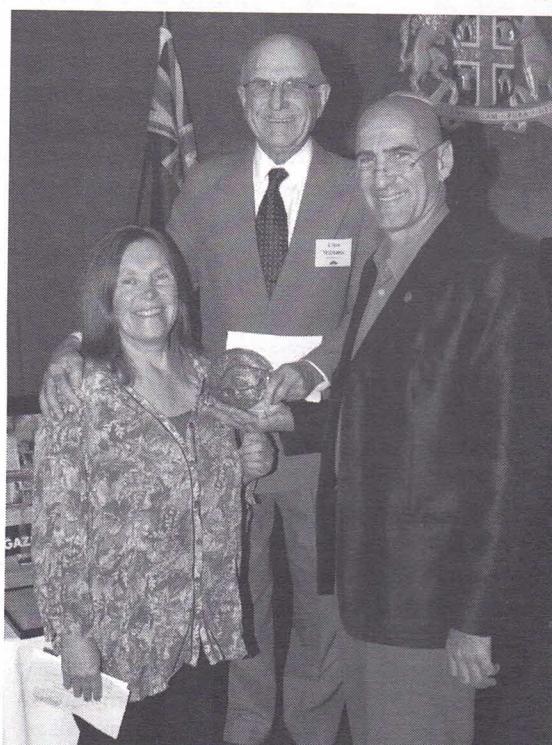
public education about the wonders of our natural environment. I still have my collection of Walkabout magazines and these have become very important records of how things used to be in this country.

To be receiving the Serventy Medal for Conservation is truly an exceptional highlight of my life.

At dinner last night with Suzanne and Patrick Medway, Peter Clements and John Clarke we talked about the commitment of young people in the major conservation groups. My response is, that I am one of those young people, I am one of those young people who was educated to care for and work towards preserving our environment. I don't want to keep passing the responsibilities down to the next generation - I think it is our duty to do something, do something now and do as much as possible.

The reality in Australia is that most of the major environmental damage has been done in my life time. The post war years, when technology improved, saw the massive increase of clearing and development expansion.

I can remember in the early 1970s around my area in Central West NSW, mile upon mile (yes, before metrics came in) of cleared paddocks with windrowed timber that was all burnt. A total crime. And most of those cleared paddocks contained the grassy box gum woodlands – now listed as endangered ecosystems and most of the fauna that depend on them for feeding and breeding is also listed as threatened with extinction.



Bev Smiles, Dr Clive Williams (Vice President) and Ian Cohen MLC



In the 70s Mudgee was famous for its yellow box honey, there were over seventy honey producers in the district. Now there are only three, selling blended honey and the yellow box has been listed as part of a critically endangered ecological community under the Federal Environment Act.

So I am very keen to stop the ongoing depletion of the habitat that our beautiful native animals rely on. All remnants of native vegetation in the landscape and their connections are now critical for future recruitment - especially the western woodland species.

It has been a great opportunity to work with NPA on western NSW campaigns. In that role I have organised a conference on the conservation significance of the Travelling Stock Routes and Reserves of NSW and Queensland - the biodiversity highways of the eastern inland.

The other major campaign I am working on is the Red Gum National Park campaign. Ian Cohen has given you the details about this issue. The red gum forests of the Murray and Murrumbidgee are the largest remnants of vegetation left in one of the most heavily cleared landscapes in Australia. They form an important east - west corridor linking the Alps to the South Australian border.

It is critical for many woodland and wetland animals that these areas are protected. Species such as the superb parrot, the barking owl, the koala, grey-crowned babblers, and the Southern bell frog.

We have given you the wonderful poster that Ian Cohen's office funded, the brochure and the lobby letter to write. Please support this campaign in whatever way you can. It is only through a coalition of groups and dedicated individuals that we can achieve these important outcomes for the future and to lead by example, as Vincent, Dominic and Lucy Serventy did.

For more information, please look up our website at www.redgum.org.au

Community Wildlife Conservation Award for 2007

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

Dr Clive Williams announced that the Community Wildlife Conservation Award for 2007 was awarded to the Natural History Society of South Australia Inc. It is always exciting when reviewing applications for these awards to see how much

community activity is abroad in our country. The successful nominee for our Community Conservation Award this year is a typical example of this. The Natural History Society of South Australia has been operating since 1960 and was formed as a non-profit organisation to campaign for the protection of endangered native fauna and flora and their habitats. The Society now manages four wildlife conservation properties in South Australia and all with volunteer support. They acquired their first property, Cullen Reserve near Lake Fellmongery, as a gift in 1968. Since then the land has been rehabilitated and recently patches of a rare and endangered spider orchid have been discovered.

The Moorunde Wildlife Reserve near Blanchetown on the Murray River was purchased in 1968-69 with the aid of a public appeal. This purchase of part of a degraded sheep property was for the purpose of saving the endangered Southern hairy-nosed wombat. The removal of sheep has seen a remarkable regeneration of many plant species and a survey in 1995 showed that over two hundred species were present. The wombat numbers have trebled. In recognition of the work done by the Society, the SA Department of Lands in 1992 gave them another parcel of land near Moorunde to be managed as a wildlife reserve.

The fourth reserve is Lake Short, also near Blanchetown. The Society took this over in 1993 to manage as a wildlife reserve and sanctuary. Again when taken over the property was almost bare of vegetation but through careful management now has over 2,000 trees of local species. This is a fantastic record for a completely volunteer organisation and a true example of community activity. It is not difficult to see why the Society was considered to be a worthy recipient of our Community Conservation Award.



Peter Clements, Dr Clive Williams (Vice President) and Ian Cohen MLC

Acceptance speech by Peter Clements, President of the Natural History Society of South Australia

I am very honoured to accept this award on behalf of the Natural History Society of South Australia. The Society, which was re-established in 1960 after having a brief twelve month existence in 1857, has maintained a goal of practical conservation in that all of our efforts go towards the establishment and maintenance of wildlife reserves of which we now have five. As a result of a fundraising campaign in 1967/68, after a severe drought hit South Australia, the Society was able to purchase 2,000 hectares of Habitat of the Southern hairy-nosed wombat near Blanchetown. This became Moorunde Wildlife Reserve, which has been maintained through a purely volunteer effort ever since. We estimate that in 1968 there were approximately two hundred wombats; and the latest count is around six hundred on Moorunde. In 2006 we were offered the chance to extend the reserve with the sale of an adjacent sheep property, which had significant numbers of wombats on it. We were keen to protect the habitat since the wombats depend on limestone shelves under which they build their up to one hundred metre-length burrows. The purchase was made possible by many generous donations, including one from the Wildlife Preservation Society and we have now been able to extend the reserve to a size of 6,900 hectares or nearly seventy square kilometres and we estimate that there are nearly 2,000 wombats on the new combined reserve. The generosity of donors has been extraordinary and the support from many like-minded societies such as yours has been invaluable in achieving this wonderful goal for the protection of wildlife habitat.

We thank the Wildlife Preservation Society for this national recognition of the work of a lot of supporters in bringing this about.



Triumph for koala woman

After twenty years fighting for the conservation of the wild koala and its habitat, Deborah Tabart, 'koala woman', has been recognised by the Queen's representative, Governor General Michael Jeffery, in one of Australia's most prestigious award ceremonies. Ms Tabart was selected for an Order of Australia Medal because of her inspirational and unyielding commitment to protecting Australia's wild koalas and their natural habitat.

Announced on Australia Day, 26 January 2008 these Honours are one of Australia's highest levels of recognition, giving praise for outstanding service to the nation and humanity.

As CEO of the Australian Koala Foundation, Ms Tabart is seeing this as a great opportunity.

"There is a change in the air for conservation efforts. This recognition shows the increasing importance of protecting our koalas and the world's natural environment. I plan to use the honour to raise the profile of our cause further and encourage the community, the government and businesses to do everything they can to lend a hand," Ms Tabart said.

Ms Tabart joined the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) in 1988 and has built it from a tiny organisation to Australia's principle group dedicated to the conservation and effective management of the wild koala and its habitat.

The award focused on Ms Tabart's commitment to mapping koala habitat through the Koala Habitat Atlas, wherein Ms Tabart and her team of scientists and volunteers mapped over four million hectares of land.

As a result, the AKF has generated one of the largest bodies of conservation research for any one species in the world.

To find out ways to help the Australian Koala Foundation save our koalas, visit the website at www.savethekoala.com.au



Deborah Tabart

Hunted koalas still to recover

by Sophia Walter, Public Relations & Media Officer, Australian Koala Foundation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Over eighty per cent of remaining koala habitat is on private land and what is traditionally the koala's most abundant region in south east Queensland and north east New South Wales is also prime real estate for Australia's booming development industry. The relentless fragmentation of their habitat and irresponsible urbanisation (resulting in threats such as dog attacks and car accidents) are proving devastating for koalas. Local extinctions and the isolation of populations are reducing

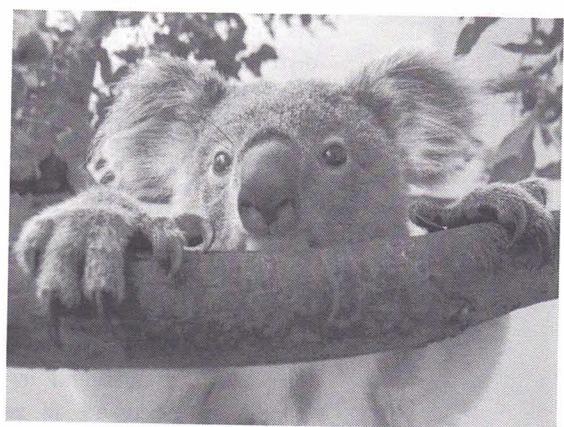
genetic diversity and therefore drastically reducing the long term viability of the species.

Koalas have a long history, probably evolving on the Australian continent some forty five million years ago, but since European settlement, the numbers have declined so severely that extinction may be imminent. Koalas are a flagship for the plight of Australia's wildlife and the need to change the direction of the way we impact the land.

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



Cute pair



Peering



Flying-foxes

People have a habit of seeing flying-foxes themselves as the problem, rather than the mess or the noise or the damage that they cause. For this reason, those same people see that the only solution is to get rid of the animals. This is quite a primitive way of looking at things, and not particularly useful when it comes to effective wildlife management.

Some of the key facts about flying-foxes to keep in mind when coming up against all the myths being perpetuated by the media and certain other community members are as follows:

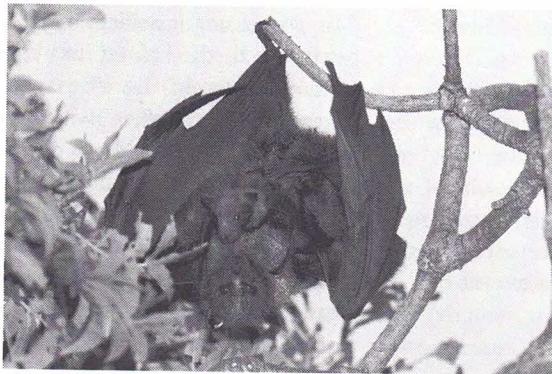
- Grey-headed flying-foxes are a threatened species, listed as vulnerable under both NSW state and federal legislation. Many people think that because they see them in such large numbers, this must be a mistake. However the species is eligible for this listing because their population has reduced by about thirty percent over a period of ten years and is continuing to decline at a rapid rate. Some researchers now believe that if this decline continues at the current rate, the species may be extinct in less than sixty years. The species is under huge pressure through loss of both feeding and roosting habitat, as well as through conflicts with people in urban, residential and agricultural areas.
- Black flying-foxes are also currently listed as vulnerable under state legislation although the NSW Scientific Committee is currently proposing their de-listing from their threatened status due to population increases in certain areas. Some people disagree with this decision because they believe that the black flying-foxes' distribution is actually shifting southwards rather than expanding southwards. They also feel that some of the points used to make the decision are inaccurate because they are based on certain camp sites that increased in flying fox numbers prior to the decision being made, and then have subsequently been vacated entirely.
- There are three types of flying-fox camp: permanent, annual and irregular. Permanent camps are occupied all year round. Annual camps are occupied at the same time each year. Irregular camps are occupied on an irregular basis. The current theory of flying-fox (mainly grey-headed) roosting behaviour is that within a permanent camp there is generally a small group of 'resident' bats that occupy the site all year round, having high site fidelity, and coming back to the same branch of the same tree every day to roost. The majority of the colony, however, are nomadic – flying from camp to

camp up and down the coast – following their food sources. This makes camps very difficult to manage, as you are not dealing with one single group of animals, but essentially with almost the whole population in a constant state of dynamic movement. This is why camp numbers often fluctuate so dramatically – the numbers will be highest when the local food sources are plentiful, and then when the food resources deplete, many of the flying-foxes will move on.

- Flying-foxes are often known as fruit bats, and they do eat fruit. However their preferred food is eucalypt blossoms (mainly nectar), followed by other native blossoms of trees such as melaleuca (paper-barks) and banksias. Their preferred fruits are rainforest fruits such as figs and lilli pillis, however they will eat exotic fruits if the other foods are not readily available.
- The only guaranteed way of protecting fruit crops from damage by flying-foxes (and birds for that matter) is full exclusion netting. Unfortunately this is not suitable for all crops as it is either not economical (low value crops versus expensive netting) or it is not logically possible (crops grown on steep slopes). This is why licences are sometimes granted by DECC for shooting flying foxes in certain orchards, where they cannot offer any other alternatives for protecting the crops. However, shooting does not solve such problems, as although it may scare some animals away and kill others (so that they can't come back), it is labour intensive, as flying foxes may arrive at any time during the night to feed, and are usually only feeding on such crops because their native food resources are low. If they had a choice, they would be elsewhere feeding on native blossoms, rather than risking being shot to get some food they don't really like that much. But when they are facing starvation, they will do what they have to do.



Young orphan grey headed flying fox in care



Female grey headed flying fox and dependant young in Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens

- In residential areas, people often become concerned when flying-foxes are feeding in their backyards. They may be concerned about the mess they leave behind from urinating and defecating, they are usually either worried about it being smelly, a slip hazard, or a disease risk. Flying-foxes have a very fast metabolism, so most of the mess occurs where they feed. The best way to deal with these issues is to inform people that the flying-foxes will only be there for as long as the tree is fruiting/flowering and that there is no known diseases that can be caught through exposure to flying-fox droppings/urine. It is only a temporary problem, and the best solution is to get permission from the council (where water restrictions exist) to hose down the affected areas each morning. If people are worried about mess on their washing, then the best solution is to bring their washing in at night. Or put another line under some sort of shelter (eg pergola) to dry overnight. The only other things that can be considered is removing the tree if it is on their property and not protected by the local council. If they are concerned about noise, the best solution is ear plugs for the time they are there. Or if they want a more permanent solution, they may want to consider soundproofing their home, which is not a bad idea if they are particularly sensitive to noises anyway. The only known disease risk that has been known to be transmitted directly to humans from bats in Australia is the Australian Bat Lyssavirus. This is related to the rabies virus and can only be caught through a bite or a scratch from an infected bat. It is quite rare in flying-foxes and most insectivorous bats. Only one species of bat is known to have a high incidence (around sixty percent) within its population – a microbat (insectivorous bat) called the yellow-bellied sheathtail bat. Pre-exposure vaccinations are available to anyone likely to handle bats, and post-exposure vaccinations are available to anyone who may have been exposed. These vaccinations are actually rabies vaccinations

– exactly the same treatment given to anyone bitten by a monkey or a rabid dog overseas. The virus is lethal to both humans and flying-foxes, however only two people have ever been known to die from the disease. Only one of these was bitten by a flying-fox (there was no knowledge of the needed vaccinations at that time), the other was bitten by a yellow-bellied sheathtail bat. Prior to knowledge of this disease, hundreds of people have worked with flying-foxes (and other bats), unvaccinated and with bare hands, in the context of research and wildlife rescue and care – none have ever been known to catch anything from such contact (even when bitten or scratched). Despite the low chances of catching anything, the recommendation is to not handle bats unless vaccinated against rabies. Call your local wildlife rescue organisation instead.

- DECC has recently released a policy on flying-fox camp management in NSW (Queensland have something similar). One of the main points in this policy is that education is often the best way to deal with the problem. It is often a case of people fearing what they don't understand.
- Culling is not likely to solve anything in a flying-fox camp any more than it will in an orchard – for exactly the same reasons. Permanent camps seem to be located in convenient locations in relation to reliable food sources (more and more now in urban areas, where street trees and garden trees are regularly watered). If flying-foxes are facing starvation (due to food trees being cleared), they will get food wherever they can, and camp nearby to conserve as much energy as possible. If some are shot, more will eventually return and the problem will be as it was before. If culling continues, that site will become a 'sink' for the whole population.
- Flying-foxes cannot generally take off from the ground – they need the wind under their wings to get lift. Occasionally flying-foxes have been accused of 'attacking' people, when all they have actually done is accidentally 'crash-landed' onto a person after becoming disorientated, or possibly a young one learning to fly. If the person then panics trying to shake it off, it will hang on because its life depends on getting up high to escape. Flying-foxes are naturally placid animals, and if the person were to keep still, the bat would most likely climb up to chest or shoulder height, then simply take off. You run a much higher risk of injury by trying to shake it off.

- Councils often make the mistake of allowing development too close to known camps. They may approve it when flying fox numbers are low or even absent, but when the numbers increase, they end up right up to the back fences of people's brand new homes, which obviously causes conflict. Councils should always allow development buffer zones of at least fifty metres from the maximum extent of known camps.
- Flying-foxes are probably the most effective pollinators of Australian eucalypts and rainforests – if we want to keep our forests, we need to look after our flying-foxes.
- Flying-foxes are extremely intelligent, curious and social creatures. Mothers may fly around for days calling for a lost pup (baby flying-fox).



Female grey headed flying fox and dependant young in Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens

Land clearing

Every year hundreds of thousands of hectares of Australian bushland are bulldozed, chained or poisoned to 'improve' land for agriculture. This is the greatest single threat to biodiversity in the nation, and a major campaign focus for our Society.

It is worth emphasising the lesser-realised impacts of land clearing, such as the apparent impacts on climate change. However, the potential impact of land clearing on Australia's climate has been largely ignored in current climate change projections and policies and there has been little research on the question of whether Australia's regional climate is sensitive to land cover change. Limited research has indicated that replacing the native woody vegetation with crops and grazing in southwest Western Australia and eastern Australia has resulted in significant changes in regional climate, with a shift to warmer and drier conditions, especially in southeast Australia, the nation's major agricultural region. The severity of recent droughts has impacted on Australia's already stressed natural resources and agriculture.

The increasing conflicts with wildlife in urban areas due to the habitat loss causes native wildlife to take refuge in the cities. For example, flying-foxes are in conflict with people more now than ever before. Many people think they are seeing more of them because their numbers are increasing, but in fact the truth is the opposite. Their numbers are declining at a rapid rate, mainly due to loss of feeding and roosting habitat. Grey-headed flying-foxes (listed as vulnerable under both NSW state and federal legislation) feed primarily on the blossoms of native woodland trees such as eucalypts, and melaleucas, as well as rainforest fruits such as lilli pillis and figs. They play a major role in the pollination and seed dispersal of these precious native trees, particularly as they can fly very long distances (hundreds of kilometres) as they follow the flowering patterns of their food trees. Flying-foxes will eat exotic (non-native) fruits if they cannot find enough of their preferred native foods. This is happening now more and more, and flying-foxes are being shot for raiding orchards, which they are only doing in order to survive, because we have cleared the eucalypts, melaleucas and rainforests that they prefer. Rainforests may not be popular habitat to clear nowadays, but it can take hundreds of years to recover, and meanwhile, we are busy cutting down our eucalypts for more agricultural land and our melaleuca swamps for new canal-based housing estates.

The problem of conflict is not restricted to the rural areas. All over the east coast of Australia, flying-foxes are setting up camp near houses and in suburban parks where they become more and more hated by the general public because the only contact they have with these amazing animals is with the noise and smell of their camps, the mess they leave behind after feeding on backyard fruit trees and street trees, and the damage that their camps do to heritage trees in parks and gardens. It is a tragedy that such an intelligent, docile, social, and important animal is hated so much because it has been forced into urban areas where, despite the conflict, they are safe from shooters and have a reliable food source with regularly watered street trees and garden trees.



Grey headed flying foxes roosting in the Parramatta Park colony

Wildlife managers are struggling to find answers to such problems, but really the only true solution is to give the flying-foxes back the habitat that we took off them so that they can return to where they are meant to be and no longer have to face these less than adequate conditions in order to avoid starvation. It is not just one species at risk here, if we lose the flying-foxes we are in danger of also losing our beloved rainforests and even our valuable native hardwood plantations. We need to start realising the far-reaching consequences of our actions. We are only just beginning to realise the intricacies of the ecology of our country and our planet.

Photos by Nick Edards. For more of Nick's photos visit his website www.etech.smugmug.com



New species of spinifex from the Kimberley

by Graeme Armstrong

There are currently sixty five recognised species in the genus *Triodia*, commonly known as 'spinifex'. *Triodia* are not related to the true spinifex, which is a plant of coastal dunes. Although mostly found in arid and semi-arid regions across Australia, there are populations of *Triodia* on the east and west coast, as far south as Portland, Victoria and in the monsoonal tropics of north western Australia. Such a large distribution exposes members of the *Triodia* to a wide variety of climatic, soil and fire regimes. This has led to a diversity of species in the genus, more of which are still waiting to be discovered.

Whilst undertaking research into the reproductive strategies of *Triodia* in the Kimberley, I was surprised to find two currently undescribed species. Both species are locally widespread in my research area. However, it may be the case they have restricted ranges and only occur in the central Kimberley.

It is very difficult to recognise different species of *Triodia* when they are not flowering, which occurs during the wet season when most roads are closed due to turning to mud and rivers swelling. It is probably the case that no botanist with an interest in *Triodia* has happened to be in this part of the world at the right time. I am writing this in late February 2008 and it has not been possible to drive in or out of the property since early December. So unless you live here, as I do, or

fly in, it is not possible to enter the area. So this discovery is simply good luck on my part that my research is taking place here.

As a recipient of the Society's University Grant in 2007 Society members can be proud that they have contributed to the discovery of a new plant species in Australia. I am currently writing the description and assigning a name to the first species, which will hopefully be published in 2008.

The research is being conducted to guide fire management in northern Australia for the conservation of granivorous birds such as the Gouldian finch. Without this most basic knowledge conservation planning is very difficult.



Spikelets



The danger of plastic rings for wildlife

by Vanessa Wilson (Councillor)

It is a well known fact that plastic can be lethal to our wildlife. There are plenty of campaigns already aiming to reduce our use of plastic bags, at least partially because they kill our wildlife through entanglement and ingestion. Campaigns have also ramped up in recent times to prevent the mass release of helium balloons for the same reason. These are both worthwhile causes, but there is one 'plastic' problem that seems to have a simple solution, yet it remains largely ignored.

Jars and bottles with plastic lids often now come with a plastic ring that snaps apart from the lid upon opening. If this ring is not cut open prior to disposal by a particularly environmentally aware person (of which there are very few that would even think of this), then it enters our waste system as a whole ring that has the potential to cause a slow and painful death to any one of a variety of our native fauna through strangulation, starvation, deformation, or infection.

The simple solution

Our Society is lobbying soft drink and bottled water manufacturers to change the design of such rings so that they not only snap free from the lid upon opening, but also snap open, so that they no longer form a complete ring. A similar design could also be implemented for the plastic rings that hold six-packs together, so that there is no way for any of these rings to stay intact when the bottles are removed. Such a slight modification would surely not be too much of a burden upon manufacturers for the sake of saving the agonising deaths of thousands of innocent wildlife.

A few examples are shown below of just some of the victims of these rings. Some wildlife is more prone than others due to their particular habits. For example, the satin bower bird is particularly vulnerable to the blue plastic rings commonly found on milk or juice bottles, as their habit of collecting blue items to attract females means that this rubbish is quite commonly seen as desirable decoration for their bowers. If the ring happens to flip over its head when the bird is holding it in its beak, it can get stuck as shown in the picture of the magpie below. This then prevents the bird from eating or drinking until it either starves to death, or is lucky enough to be rescued by someone.

We need two things to prevent this needless suffering of our precious wildlife:

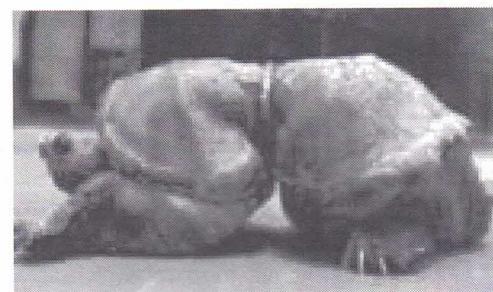
1. A clever design to enable the rings to snap open upon opening of plastic lids or removal of bottles from a six-pack.
2. Legislation to ensure that products with plastic rings that remain intact after opening can no longer be sold in this country.



This magpie was lucky, it was found before starving to death, many do not fare so well, and they succumb silently, in agony and out of sight



This platypus entangled in a plastic ring from a food jar was carrying the item bandolier-fashion from in front of the right shoulder to behind the left foreleg. The rough edge of the ring had cut deeply into the skin just behind the leg and the left front foot was badly swollen, affecting the animal's posture and movement



This turtle has been horribly deformed as it has grown after getting this ring caught around its middle



Rehabilitation Review

by Lorraine Vass, Media Officer, NSW Wildlife Council, Inc

Welcome to a new segment of *Australian Wildlife* that will report on the activity of the Australian Wildlife Council (AWC) and matters relating to the voluntary wildlife rehabilitation sector. The AWC is the peak body for the state



4,700 licensed rehabilitators. Those of you with retentive memories may recall the piece I wrote on its formation and progress for the Winter 3/2007 issue - *The New South Wales Wildlife Council, Inc - a new force in wildlife management in New South Wales* (pp.16-18).

National perspective

There are individuals and groups in each Australian state and territory dedicated to rehabilitating native animals. You may be a rehabber yourself. At the very least, you will probably know one. They work within the legislative framework of their particular jurisdiction. These various regulatory conventions ensure that wildlife rehabilitation organisation and practices differ across the nation.

Increasing cohesion in the sector has been brought about in no small part by the annual national wildlife rehabilitation conferences held over the past five years. These conferences have served to disseminate the latest scientific and practical information about the three 'r's - rescue, rehabilitation and release. Wildlife rehabbers across the country are gaining a better understanding of the diversity of issues and practices that exist. They are realising too that there is a national perspective to wildlife rehabilitation and conservation. The progress in state and territory peak bodies will eventually provide the basis for a national body.

Queensland - first cab off the rank

The Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council, Inc (QWRC) was the first state body to get off the ground in August 2004. The Council consists of up to sixteen members, eleven of whom are wildlife rehabilitation permit holders drawn from eleven districts across the state. The others are representatives from the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria [Qld], the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F), the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and the RSPCA.

In November 2005 QWRC and QPWS signed a Memorandum of Understanding. In 2006 the Environmental Protection Agency [Qld] published a *Code of Practice - care and rehabilitation of orphaned, sick or injured protected animals by wildlife care volunteers* in consultation with DPI&F and QWRC.

Read more about QWRC's work at www.qwrc.org.au. The Code can be downloaded at http://bats.org.au/downloads/code_of_practice.pdf

Victoria - getting close

Victoria's progress in forming a council is gathering pace. The initial working group dissolved in mid 2007 to make way for a steering committee. Elections to select representatives were held and the first meeting took place in October 2007. A second meeting was held on 18 November 2007 and a third on 17 February 2008.

Membership of the steering committee comprises one representative each of the two state-wide groups, Wildlife Victoria and Help for Wildlife, and regions that are based on the Department of Sustainability and Environment's regions* of Barwon South West, Grampians, Loddon Mallee, Hume, Gippsland, and Metropolitan. Each region has two representatives and one alternate. The exception is Metropolitan, which, due to its high membership, has four representatives and one alternate. All regional positions are elected from candidates within each region. The Department has observer status on the committee.

Progress is heartening. The committee has really got the bit between its teeth and the constitution, mission statement, objectives, etc, are coming along quickly. After developing a code of conduct, it will formalise the process for and conduct state-wide elections for Council membership.

New South Wales - planned approach

Entering its third year and armed with a recently developed strategic plan, the NWC is steadily strengthening its position. Priorities for 2008 include adoption by member groups of conflict management guidelines prepared by the Council, development of state-wide minimum standards for all aspects of wildlife rehabilitation, and communicating its role and activities through a quarterly newsletter, *Wildlife Watch*.

The NSW Wildlife Council members are:

- Australian Seabird Rescue, Inc. (ASR)
- Cudgegong Wildlife Carers For Australian Wildlife Needing Aid (FAWNA)
- Friends of the Koala, Inc. (FOK)
- Hunter Koala Preservation Society, Inc.
- Independent General Licencees
- Koala Preservation Society of New South Wales, Inc.
- Koalas in Care, Inc.
- Looking After Our Kosciuszko Orphans, Inc. (LAOKO)
- Native Animal Network Association, Inc. (NANA)
- Native Animal Rescue Group (NARG)
- Native Animal Trust Fund, Inc. (NATF)



- New South Wales Wildlife Information and Rescue Service, Inc. (WIRES)
- Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers, Inc.
- Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers, Inc.
- Organisation for the Rescue and Research of Cetaceans (ORRCA)
- Rescue and Rehabilitation of Australian Native Animals (RRANA)
- Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife Services, Inc. (Sydney Wildlife)
- Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers, Inc.
- Wildcare Queanbeyan, Inc. (Wildcare)
- Wildlife Aid
- Wildlife Animal Rescue & Care Society, Inc. (Wildlife ARC)
- Wildlife Carers Network - Central West, Inc.

To find out more about the Council's work and to download *Wildlife Watch* visit www.nwc.org.au



Chair: Audrey Koosmen (NATF)



Vic Chair: Stan Wood (WIRES)



Secretary: Sonja Elwood (Sydney Wildlife)



Treasurer: Julia McConnell (Independent General Licences)



Media Officer: Lorraine Vass (FOK)

Wildside

by Marny Bonner, Australian Seabird Rescue

Terns return

Migratory seabirds make the best of both worlds. Every September, they escape the northern hemisphere's winter, flying to Australian beaches and estuaries in order to breed. They arrive exhausted and hungry.

The endangered little tern is one such species and throughout coastal hotspots, conservationists are actively striving to reverse the threatening processes. The recreational activities of people and their uncontrolled dogs, as well as predators by cats, rats and foxes, all take their toll. Little terns' eggs are especially vulnerable because they are laid on the bare sand. Where once the camouflage colouring of the eggs and chicks protected them from aerial predators, it now renders them more vulnerable to being crushed by beach-walkers and four wheel drive vehicles. Protective measures include fencing and, in some cases, regular patrols by wardens.

The Illawarra Shorebird Recovery group recently celebrated the success of their project at Winda Beach, where a specially designed 'bird island' was constructed to encourage the terns back to the area. After a forty one year absence, the summer of 2003 saw the return of the terns.

This year thirteen out of twenty chicks surviving, with another nine eggs still to hatch, has been the best breeding season yet! We can bring back the lost species but such dedication goes a long way towards truly embracing diversity as well as the Aussie concept of "a fair go for all" that includes our unique and irreplaceable wildlife.



*Little tern (*Sterna albifrons sinensis*)*

Marine turtles

Light at the end of the tunnel

The *Global Ecology and Biogeography* had encouraging news for green turtles. A study of reliable nesting data recorded over twenty five years on six of the world's major nesting beaches, including Queensland's Heron and Raine Islands, has found that the number of nests has increased by four to fourteen percent each year.

These results should be celebrated as they demonstrate that green turtle populations can be recovered in spite of drastic declines in the past. For hard-working sea turtle conservationists, this analysis shines a welcome light of hope on their efforts. Ambitious strategies such as habitat protection are working, and endangered species can be recovered.



Green turtles: making a comeback (Photo courtesy Tim Hochgrebe - Planula Divers Retreat, Byron Bay)

Itchy and scratchy

How do you scratch when you only have flippers and your body is mostly shell? That turtles get itchy at all is surprising enough, but when they do, they manage to solve the problem rather nicely.

If their top shell (carapace) is itchy, they find an overhanging rock ledge close to the sea floor and, perching on all four flippers, scrape backwards and forwards until the itch is satisfied. An itchy tummy shell (plastron) can be scratched on any flat rock, where the turtle uses its flippers to push and pull back and forth to satisfy the itch.

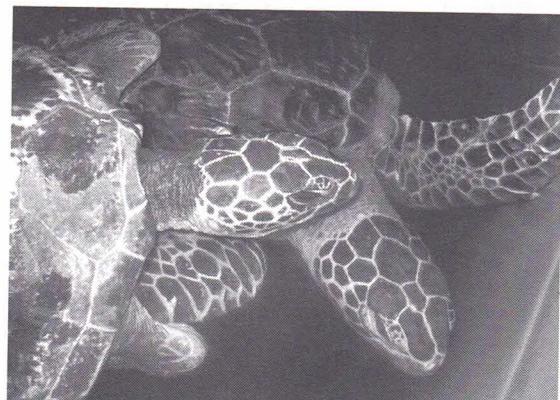
Reptiles are not generally renowned for their personality, but sea turtle patients being rehabilitated by Australian Seabird Rescue (ASR) make it clear when they want a back scratch. It's a mutually enjoyable activity for both the patients and their attendants at ASR's WildlifeLink Turtle Hospital.

Turtle rescue

When sea turtles have beached, they require urgent specialist attention, even if they appear to be dead. They should be carefully removed from the water's edge, shielded from the sun and guarded from dogs and gulls until help arrives.

"Angel" no angel

She is graceful, pretty and innocent looking, yes, but that's where the similarities end. Angel is a young green sea turtle, so named because she was found on Angels Beach in Ballina. She is definitely graceful and pretty, but not as innocent as her carers have discovered.



Sibling rivalry: turtle personalities revealed as Stinky (left) gives way to bossy Angel (right)

Wildlife rescuers generally try not to give their patients a name; it helps to avoid getting attached. However, for Australian Seabird Rescue (ASR), marine turtles are a valuable part of their primary school education program and if the turtles have names, the young students relate better to them. Also, for both the carers and the people who rescue stranded turtles, it's easier for everyone to recognise individuals by their name rather than a number as they are mostly the same species. Usually the name assigned to them tells its own story.

Unable to dive for food and emaciated, Angel was floating around off the Ballina coast and very vulnerable to shark attack. She opted for the safety of the beach and, being discovered by a beach walker, was admitted to the WildlifeLink Turtle Hospital.

Angel shares the rehabilitation pool there with Stinky, also a young green turtle, in care since late December. Stinky stranded because he had a badly infected wound on his neck, so putrid that his name was aptly conferred.

Both Angel and Stinky are teenagers of similar age but their personalities are as different as their



colouring. Angel's the boss and likes to get her own way while Stinky is timid and would rather swim away than stand up for himself.

During a routine weigh-in last weekend, Angel's secret sin was revealed. With a weight gain equal to Stinky's loss, clearly she is as greedy as she is bossy, not a good combination for Stinky.

Turtle treasure

When tiny turtles emerge from their sand nest and scamper to the ocean, a wonder of nature is occurring and it's not just a desperate bid for survival. Their tiny brains are registering their geographical location. It will be twenty to forty years before the surviving adult females make their way back in order to continue the cycle. Every now and then one will nest locally and that is because she hatched right here on our north coast beaches.

Australian Seabird Rescue (ASR) was recently called for assistance when thirty tiny heart-shaped turtles were found scampering down the beach, but appeared to be weak. When a volunteer from ASR arrived he found that the nest had been exposed prematurely by a king tide, but all was not lost. There were some survivors and fifteen viable eggs were taken to the ASR WildlifeLink Turtle Rehabilitation Centre to complete their incubation. Twelve newly emerged hatchlings were also taken into care for stabilisation. Under the ever watchful eye of turtle foster mother (and ASR President), Rochelle Ferris, ten eggs successfully hatched over the following twenty four hours.

Guard of honour

Coinciding with calmer seas and an outgoing tide, ASR volunteers delivered twenty two tiny survivors to the beach. One by one, they were placed gently on the sand to make their all important journey of orientation to the ocean's edge. Beach-walkers joined the guard of honour and surfers provided an escort through the breakers.

"After a hard summer of running the centre without Dad, it was an incredibly uplifting experience," Rochelle said. "These are the magical moments that make it all so worthwhile."

Marine turtles usually nest several times throughout the summer so one or more nests may still hatch out on Casuarina Beach. Nests have also been recorded at other north coast beaches with hatchlings emerging mainly in February and March. On one occasion, a nest emerged on a Byron Bay beach as late as Anzac Day.

It is vitally important that nests and hatchlings not be interfered with in any way, other than to assist their survival by warding off bird predators. With loggerhead turtles on the brink of extinction, every hatchling is precious.



Turtle treasure: a precious bundle of endangered turtle eggs rescued from certain death



Sunset release: thrilled onlookers form a Guard of Honour for turtle hatchlings



Tiny survivor: every loggerhead baby is important to the survival of this endangered species. A Keith Williams holds a tiny turtle survivor

Stint in Siberia

The red-necked stint looks like a sparrow on stilts. When I first saw one close up, it was difficult to comprehend how this puffball on match sticks could possibly fly from here to Siberia, and back, every year. At twenty two grams it could fit into a teacup, and yet throughout its life this tiny fragile bird will fly further than the distance between the earth and the moon.

The stint is the smallest of fifty five species that bird nerds call a migratory wader. Most forage on the inter-tidal zones of beaches and sand cays, feeding on small crabs and other invertebrates that live beneath the surface. The length and shape of their beaks vary, so different species can access a range of food sources but they all have only the six hour period of low tide in which to feed.

Whether or not waders migrate depends on how much body fat they can store while they are here. Some, like the red-necked stint, need to double their weight and its longer legs will make all the difference since, funnily enough, waders don't like to get their feathers wet.

Most waders forage on the inter-tidal zones of beaches, sand cays and mudflats where they feed on small crabs and other invertebrates that live beneath the surface. This means that they have only the six hour period of low tide in which to feed.

Throughout March, migratory waders ready themselves for their incredible journeys to their breeding grounds, already sporting their colourful new breeding plumage. Most will navigate some twelve thousand kilometres to the edges of the Arctic Circle where they will mate and raise young throughout the northern summer. At the end of the season they set off south again, traversing twenty countries along the way.



Red-necked stint. Photo credit: David Simpson

It's all in the name

Swamps: they were once considered rubbish land, best filled or drained and 'better' utilised, but the worthless swamps of yesterday are now the highly valued wetlands of today.

The United Nations even proclaimed an annual international World Wetlands Day in February to celebrate them. It's a significant anniversary, especially in Iran. It was on this day in 1971 that Iran's north coast town of Ramsar hosted the very first global treaty on the conservation of natural resources. Deemed the 'Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat', it's no wonder that it became known simply as the Ramsar Convention.

Today, one hundred and fifty five member countries have designated 1,675 wetlands for special protection as 'Ramsar sites', including twenty two in Iran and sixty five in Australia. A Ramsar listed wetland receives global recognition for its value as an important habitat, especially for conserving the pathways of migratory birds.

These days wetlands, by definition, are so much more than swamps. They include floodplains, rivers, creeks, springs, dams, mudflats and even subterranean caves and rocky shores. Just as well, since World Swamp Day wouldn't have much going for it.

An art to wetlands

It is now well accepted that healthy wetlands mean healthy rivers. Draining and clearing floodplains, degradation of creek banks by cattle and the loss of native grasses, have all robbed the ecosystem of its natural resilience. Wetlands help control flood waters by absorbing water during heavy rainfall and then slowly releasing it back into the ecosystem. They also enhance water quality, which is why they're sometimes likened to giant kidneys, filtering and processing nutrients, suspended materials and other pollutants.

Secret life of swans

In the animal kingdom, survival as a species is paramount. There are all sorts of strategies, most around mating systems. None resonates more with the hearts of humans than the romantic notion of an animal mating for life. Although only a handful of mammals make the lifelong commitment, many bird species do. Swans spring to mind. Their beauty, grace and fidelity make them the ultimate symbol of romance in folklore throughout the world. The Greek Goddess of Love, Aphrodite, was depicted with a swan-drawn chariot and in Celtic culture; swans represent love, purity and the soul.



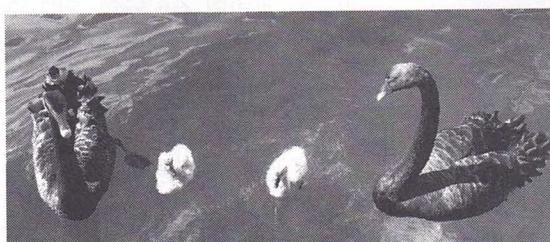
Science on the other hand is concerned only with cold, hard facts. With magnified precision, curious scientific minds love to challenge myths. Since the advent of DNA fingerprinting in the mid 1980s, romantic notions about bird fidelity have fallen like dominos. Biologists have discovered what is really going on right under the birdwatchers' binoculars and there's nothing romantic about it.

Over ninety percent of bird species are considered socially monogamous; that is, forming pair-bonds to raise offspring, either for a breeding season or for life. Social monogamy, however, does not necessarily mean faithfulness. DNA analyses of parents and their offspring has revealed that eight out of ten birds that mate for life are regularly promiscuous, including that veritable icon of devotion and fidelity, the swan. Monogamously paired female waterfowl are sometimes subjected to mating attempts by males other than their mates. The culprits are unpaired males who have little to lose and everything to gain by either forcing themselves on a female or physically challenging her mate. Even female swans with cygnets have been known to leave their defeated mate and sail off with the victor.

Why is it so?

A bonded couple can not only defend its territory more effectively, but also better protect and provide for offspring, which is especially important when the young are very dependant. This arrangement maximises survival. Also, they minimise the amount of valuable energy they expend on courtship by going through it just once. However, when individuals invest their entire reproductive potential on a single mate, they are not maximising the number of their offspring. With Mother Nature urging them to serve the greater good, males endeavour to spread their genes and females seek to ensure their own fertilisation.

The myth crumbling continues. The romantic illusion that birds that mate for life will remain alone if their mate dies also fails the reality check. A bereft bird will usually find another partner within days or weeks. After all, survival of the species, not romance, is the key.



Black swan with chicks



Mynas

Do you know the difference between the native noisy miner and the feral Indian myna, or flying cane toad, as they are sometimes called?

The Indian myna is a different species to the native noisy miner.

Indian mynas originated in India and were introduced to Australia between 1862 and 1872. They are now a common sight in most metropolitan areas and, unfortunately, are quickly establishing in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales.

The common Indian myna is a medium sized chocolate brown bird, about twelve centimetres tall, with a black head and neck, and a yellow beak, eye patch, feet and legs. White wing patches are obvious when the birds are flying. Mynas are distinctive because, unlike most other birds, they walk rather than hop. They can be confused with the noisy miner, a native species that is also quite aggressive and moves around in groups, just like common mynas. The Indian myna feeds on the ground in small family groups, eating almost anything. At night they congregate to sleep in noisy communal roosts.

Indian mynas are extremely aggressive and destroy eggs and chicks of other birds and can compete with native animals for tree hollows such as the squirrel gliders. They are also known to damage fruit and grain crops.

Although listed by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) as one of the world's one hundred worst invasive species, control options for this species are very limited.

Trapping is most effective in open clear areas, such as a grass paddock. The Indian mynas appear to move up to one kilometre between roost sites and so suitable open areas near roost sites are sought after as trap sites. Other ways to discourage Indian mynas from establishing are outlined in a brochure issued by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The good

Like many animals the common myna can mean different things to different people. In its native India the common myna is called the "Farmer's Friend" because it eats insects that damage crop plants. Common mynas were brought to Melbourne in 1862 to reduce insect pests in the market gardens and they were then taken to many other places in Australia, including northern Queensland, where it was thought they would control insect pests of sugar-cane. Cane toads

were introduced to Australia for the same reason. In some countries people keep mynas as pets and they have been taken to many parts of the world by people who like their jaunty "attitude" and clear, striking calls. Common mynas are not very good at learning to imitate human speech, unlike the Indian hill myna (*Gracula religiosa*), which is an accomplished mimic.

The bad

Common mynas are an economic problem in some places because they damage fruit and grain crops and their noise and smell can be annoying to people in the suburbs. But their most serious "crime" is that they reduce biodiversity. For this reason mynas have been called "flying cane toads", "flying rats" and "garbage birds".

Common mynas nest in tree hollows, but tree hollows are in short supply over much of Australia because of clearing for agriculture. Mynas reduce biodiversity by fighting for hollows with birds like rosellas, destroying their eggs and chicks and stopping them from breeding. They also evict small mammals like sugar gliders from hollows - which commonly means a death sentence for the gliders because they have nowhere else to go.

Common mynas are now recognised as a biodiversity problem in Australia and in many other countries where they have become feral. Free-living populations are now established over much of the eastern seaboard. In Australia they compete aggressively with native mammals and birds, like sugar gliders and rosellas, for hollows and they appear capable of colonizing most woodland in eastern Australia.

Common mynas are slow to spread, compared to many other invasive species, but like the tortoise, slow and steady wins the race. Colonies establish in urban centres, or in other places where there is plenty of food, and from there surplus animals invade the surrounding countryside to the detriment of the native fauna.

In the ACT and some other places mynas have invaded woodland habitats. There is not much woodland left in Australia and this additional threat to native wildlife can be a serious problem.

Common mynas are a serious problem for biodiversity conservation in many other countries of the world where they have become feral.



Indian myna

A creeping menace

Our Society questions whether the time has come to see if common mynas can be reduced in numbers by simple, cost-effective and humane methods. This will result in an increase in numbers of native species. Preliminary trials indicate that the species can be controlled at flock level by manipulating communal roosts and "mop-up" control can be implemented by trapping mynas in nest-boxes and at feeding areas.

Patrick Medway, National President, has represented our Society on the Pest and Feral Animal Council for eight years. At their last meeting he proposed that action be taken to remove or eliminate these feral pests. Unfortunately the agencies have placed a low priority on the common myna.

There is a recent surge in interest to control common mynas (a bird native to India). Our Society would prefer that non-native animals like foxes and mynas had not escaped and become established in the wild. The sad fact is that many have. It is unlikely that any of these well-established exotics will be permanently eradicated, at least not with current technology. Australians have been trying to get rid of pests for over one hundred and fifty years, but those that were common one hundred years ago are still common and widespread, despite extensive effort and hundreds of millions of dollars.

In the past, tactics to reduce feral pests have included legislating them from existence by declaring them noxious and requiring land managers to control or face severe fines; introducing bounties – none of which has worked. All bounties are easily defrauded and bounty hunters take pests where it is easy to catch them, not necessarily where they are causing most damage. Pests eventually recover their numbers; erecting fences, poisoning, trapping, shooting, and mustering and applying biological control.



It is sobering to reflect that no established pest has ever been eradicated from the Australian mainland. There are good reasons, not least because we do not have the techniques and strategies to locate and kill the last few animals. Even if we thought that we had located and killed the last few pairs of rabbits in Australia, how could we be sure that they were the last? Most pest animals are well suited to the human disturbed habitats that predominate in Australia and most have the potential to quickly recover their numbers even after severe knockdowns.

There are some key questions that need to be considered before embarking on control of pest animals:

1. Is the pest causing real damage? Just because a pest animal is present or is observed to evict, fight with or kill native animals does not necessarily mean that it is threatening the survival of the species. Most animals produce far more offspring than they require to replace themselves. Poor survival of young is normal and mortality from various causes is rarely additive. For example, approximately eighty percent of magpies do not survive their first year. If they aren't killed on the roads or by predators, they are likely to starve. The question that should be asked is "Is the pest causing a significant decline in a native wildlife population?"
2. What is the relationship between the density of the pest and the level of damage? Since the pest cannot be eradicated, managers must aim for sustainable control of the damage it causes. However, if we do not know the relationship between the density of the pest and the level of damage it causes, how do we know how much effort to use to lessen the damage and when do we stop - what level of damage is acceptable?
3. Can the pest be reduced to levels where the damage is acceptable given the available techniques and restrictions on their use, and is there sufficient resources and long-term commitment? There is only a limited range of techniques available and some cannot be used in some areas because they kill domestic pets, rare native wildlife or they are unacceptable on animal welfare grounds.
4. Can reinvasion be prevented? For some pests the rate of reinvasion from surrounding areas is so great that the effectiveness of any control program is quickly negated. Also, some people like non-native animals and will try to reintroduce them.

For mynas, what are the answers to these questions?

1. Do mynas cause significant damage? While they are known to be aggressive to other birds and occupy nest holes that might be used by native hole-nesting birds such as eastern and crimson rosellas, it has not been conclusively proven that these native species have declined despite the presence of mynas. Most hole-nesters are still common and many have increased or at least maintained their local abundance over the last twenty years. For example, surveys by the Canberra Ornithologists Group show that eastern rosellas have not declined over this period and crimson rosellas have doubled in abundance. It may be that nest holes are not limiting or that the establishment of native vegetation in urban Canberra has increased the resources available to native birds. On the other side, the introduced starling, which seems to lose out in battles with mynas, has declined to half its 1981 density.

2. Has the relationship been determined between the density of mynas and the damage that they are alleged to cause? We are not aware of any surveys or data being produced on this subject.
3. Can the density of mynas be reduced to an acceptable level with the techniques currently available? This is doubtful. Given the density of mynas and their annual potential recruitment, they could rapidly replace any numbers that are removed by trapping. Rapid removal of huge numbers of mynas, such as destroying flocks in their winter roosts, would be necessary before trapping could have any impact on numbers.
4. Can re-invasion be prevented? Unlikely. Mynas are common throughout most urban areas and it is likely that any local removal of mynas will create a void that will quickly be filled by surrounding areas. Before embarking on control, we need to be sure that we do not unfairly blame pests such as mynas for a problem when other factors such as habitat clearance, habitat alteration or inappropriate fire management may be the real cause. At the end of the day, but not least, mynas are mainly denizens of the city and suburbs.

Even if mynas were shown to be harming native species, is their control the most pressing conservation issue in the local bushlands?

Dr Chris Tidemann, Fenner School of Environment and Society, The Australian National University, has been undertaking research on common native birds for a number of years <http://fennerscholarship.associated.anu.edu.au//myna/index.htm>

This has involved research on the ecology of the species as well as methods of control. Dr Tidemann's latest research is focussing on developing methods for broadscale control of mynas.

Wanted: flying cane toads (Indian mynas)

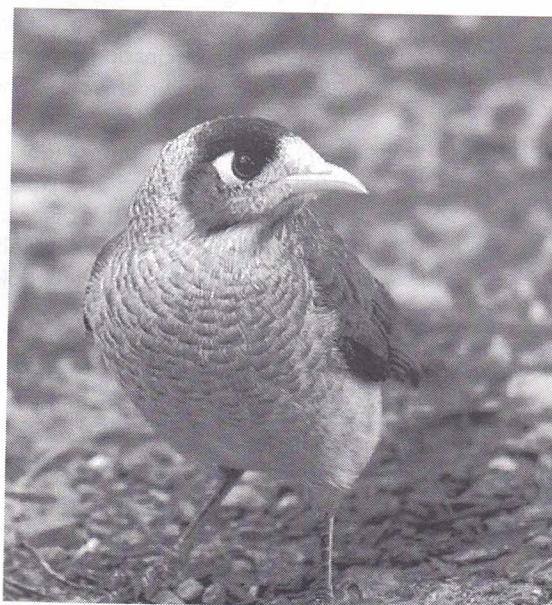
In response to increasing enquiries on how to identify Indian mynas, a brochure has been produced by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Lismore, Byron, Clarence Valley and Tweed Councils.

To request a copy of the brochure or to report Indian myna colonies, roost sites or suitable trap site locations please contact your local Council as follows: Byron Shire Council 66267126, Lismore Shire Council 6625 0500, Tweed Shire Council 6670 2400, Kyogle (Upper Clarence Combined Landcare) 6665 3133, Clarence Valley Council 6643 0200.

To report Indian mynas in national parks or nature reserves please contact your local NPWS office.

A native Australian - the noisy miner

The noisy miner is a bold and curious bird. It is identified by its mostly grey body and black crown and cheeks. The bill is yellow, as are the legs and the naked skin behind the eye. The name is well suited as the common calls - loud 'pwee pwee pwee' and a piping 'pee pee pee' when alarmed - are uttered repeatedly by the members of the colony.



Noisy miner

Despite their moderate size (twenty eight centimetres), noisy miners aggressively attack larger birds such as hawks and kookaburras. These attacks may be so vigorous that most other birds are excluded from an area occupied by noisy miners.

The similar yellow-throated miner, *M. flavigula*, has a grey crown, white rump, and a line of bare yellow skin on the sides of the throat.

Noisy miners range from northern Queensland along the eastern coast to South Australia and Tasmania. They are found in woodlands and open forests. They have also become well adapted to suburban situations and are a common sight in parks and gardens.

The noisy miner feeds on nectar, fruits and insects. Very occasionally they will eat small reptiles and amphibians. Food is either taken from trees or on the ground. In keeping with its highly social nature, the noisy miner usually feeds in large groups.

Noisy miners breed in small to large colonies. The season extends from July to December and several broods may be reared in this time. The female constructs the nest and incubates the eggs alone, but both sexes will care for and feed the young birds. Additional 'helpers' usually also feed the young. Interestingly, these helpers are almost always male birds.



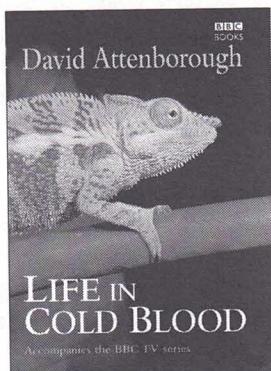
Yellow-throated miners



Book review

Life in Cold Blood by Sir David Attenborough

This book represents the final chapter of David Attenborough's epic overview of life on earth. Beautifully illustrated, this book is published to accompany David Attenborough's eagerly-anticipated new five-part series due to be broadcast in 2008.

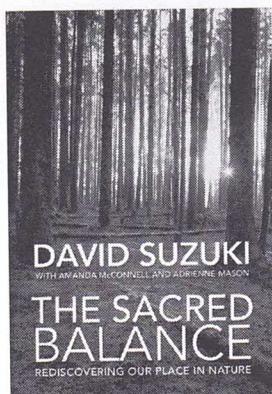


Earth – The Power of the Planet by Iain Stewart & John Lynch

This book accompanies the Epic BBC television series where Dr Iain Stewart tells the story of how Earth works and how, over the course of 4.6 billion years, it came to be the remarkable place it is today.

The Sacred Balance – Rediscovering our Place in Nature by David Suzuki

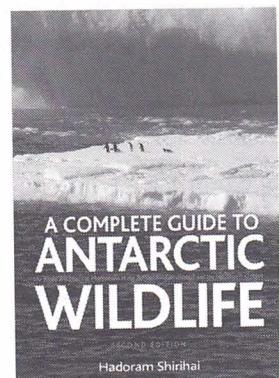
This powerful, deeply felt book gives concrete suggestions on how we can meet our basic needs and create a way of life that is ecologically sustainable, fulfilling and just. It offers the seeds of a new direction for us all, one in which we can rediscover our place in nature and live in balance with our surroundings.



A Complete Guide to Antarctic Wildlife

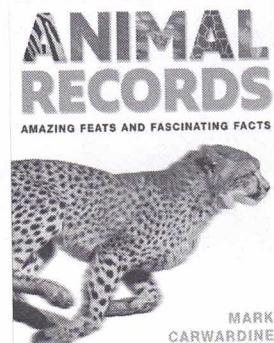
– Second Edition
by Hadoram Shirihai

A complete guide to the natural history and wildlife of this vast region, this book covers the sub Antarctic islands, the Southern Ocean and the Antarctic Continent. All the region's breeding birds and marine mammals are illustrated, using colour plates, distribution maps and photographs of each species, and the species accounts are highly systematic with full reference to the many recent advances in taxonomy that have affected several species groups.



Animal Records - Amazing Feats and Fascinating Facts By Mark Carwardine

Did you know that Australia has the unenviable distinction of being home to no fewer than six of the top ten most venomous snakes in the world? Or that a swarm of desert locusts can eat in a single day roughly the same amount of food that would sustain four hundred people a year? This fascinating fact book explores the wonders of the animal world. The book is broken down by animal type – mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes and invertebrates. Each section contains lots of weird and wonderful facts about the creatures that inhabit our earth. With its large format and colourful photographs, this is sure to be a favourite book for the whole family.



W P S A M E R C H A N D I S E

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.



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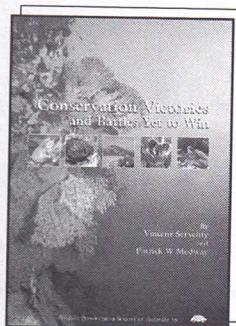
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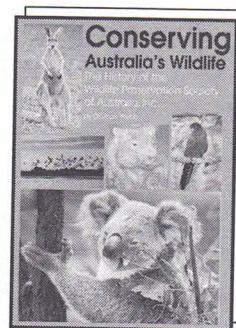
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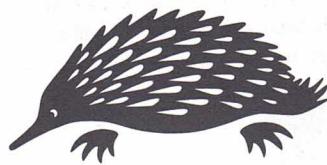
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Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia, Inc. (Founded 1909)

PO Box 42 Brighton Le Sands NSW 2216

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

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

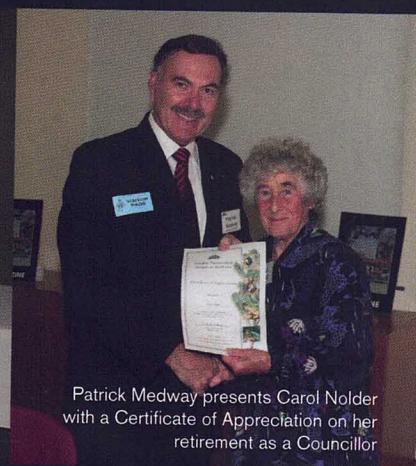
I bequeath the sum of \$ to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc. shall be complete discharge to my Executors in respect of any sum paid to the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

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

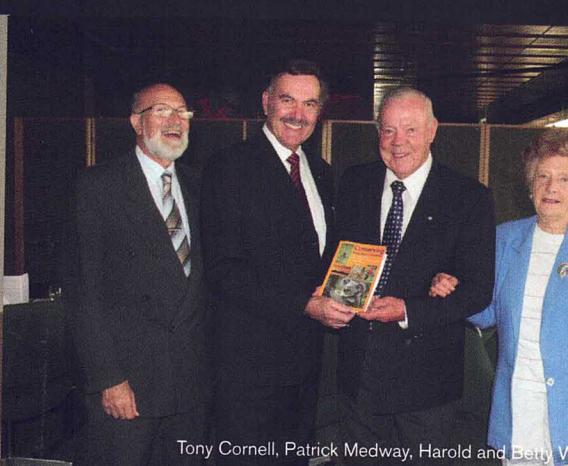
PATRICK W MEDWAY AM
National President



Dorothy Lawson, Peter Stock,
John Clarke, Geoff and Jill Hedge



Patrick Medway presents Carol Nolder
with a Certificate of Appreciation on her
retirement as a Councillor



Tony Cornell, Patrick Medway, Harold and Betty V

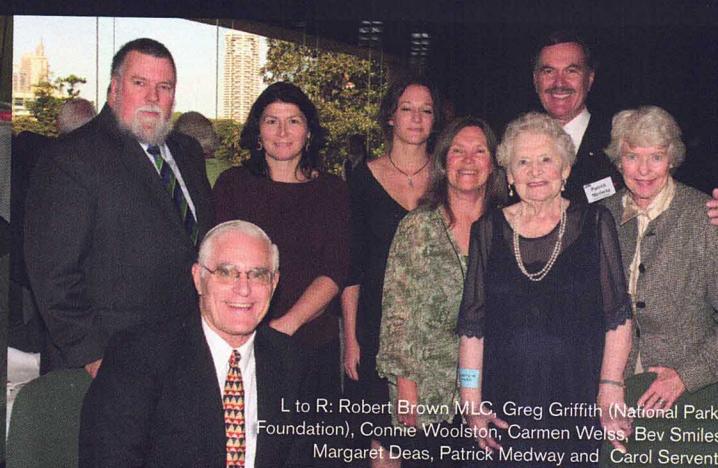
Annual General Meeting and Luncheon 2008



Back row L to R: Margaret McGurgan, Stephen Grabowski, Deidre Greenhill, Julie Up
Front row L to R: Suzanne Medway, Margaret Deas, Joan K



Councillors: Vanessa and Steve Wilson, Richard and Carolyn
Kator, Lisa & John Sunnen, Gary Anderson, Dr Raymond C Nias



L to R: Robert Brown MLC, Greg Griffith (National Park
Foundation), Connie Woolston, Carmen Weiss, Bev Smiles,
Margaret Deas, Patrick Medway and Carol Servent



Cover photo: Blue triangle butterfly (Graphium sarpedon choredon)
The blue triangle is an active butterfly moving quickly from flower to flower. Commonly seen in Sydney gardens, its triangular-shaped wings are vibrant turquoise-blue with black around the margins.

Although preferring moist rainforest habitats, this species has survived well in Sydney's suburbs. The caterpillars have adapted to feed on a variety of plants including the introduced camphor laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*). The green larvae rest on the upperside of the leaves and can be difficult to see. If the plant is disturbed, you are more likely to smell them before you see them. Many caterpillars in this family (Papilionidae) have an 'osmeterium', which looks like a fleshy horn that pops up from a slit behind their head and emits a strong smell. In this species the osmeterium is yellow, but in other species it may be red.

Their distribution is Eastern Australia, from Torres Strait and Cape York in Queensland to about 160 km south of Sydney. Their habitat is urban areas, forests and woodlands. Their status is common.