



# AUSTRALIAN

# Wildlife

**SUMMER 1/2008**

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

\$10.00 (for non-members)

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A tribute to Lance Ferris

People who love wildlife

Members' tour to Kangaroo Island

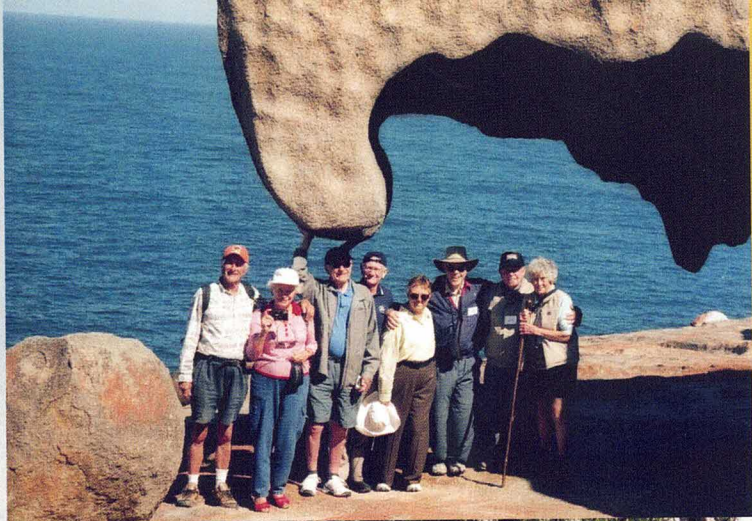
Dingo

Cover photo: Intermediate Egret (*Ardea intermedia*)

Photograph by Iain Stych - taken at Murwillumbah, NSW

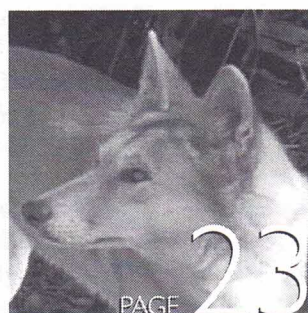
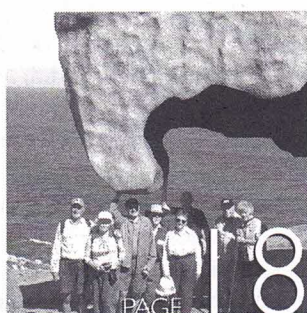
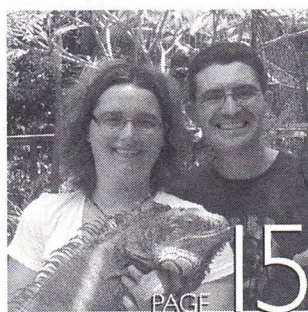


# Longwood Island



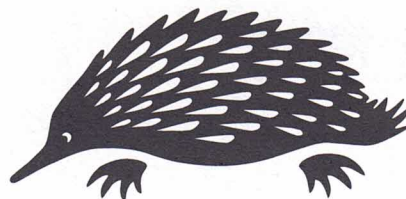


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# 'AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE'

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

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

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*All articles are written by  
Suzanne Medway unless stated otherwise.*



# From the President's Desk...

Since my last report we have lost two of our greatest wildlife warriors in Dr Vincent Serventy, our President of Honour, and Lance Ferris, the founder of Australian Seabird Rescue Service. We are saddened by their loss but more resolved than ever to our ongoing commitment to the preservation of Australian native wildlife in all its forms.

I well remember Vincent saying 'the protection of our native wildlife can only be secured when enshrined in legislation'. To that end we have all resolved to commit ourselves to continue Vincent's struggle to ensure that our native wildlife is fully preserved and protected by legislation for future generations of young Australians.

In the words of the renowned African Ecologist, Baba Dioum:

*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.*

Vincent Serventy and Lance Ferris taught us all so much and for that we will be forever grateful!

## **VALE – Vincent Noel Serventy and Lance Ferris**

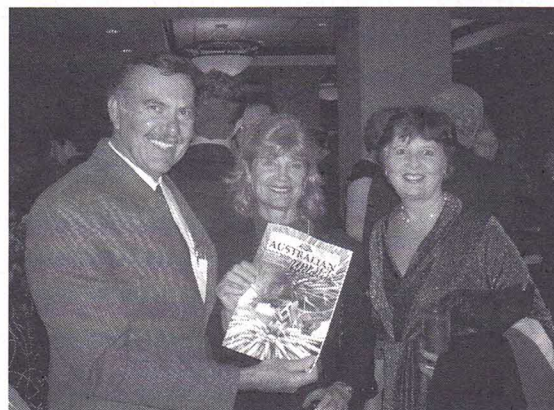
### ***Visit to the Sierra Club, California***

It was with a great deal of pleasure that I accepted the invitation to attend the 2007 Annual Conference and Presentation of Awards of the Sierra Club in San Francisco, California USA in October. Suzanne and I enjoyed the friendly contact with fellow conservationists and committed protectors of the environment. The Sierra Club was formed in 1892 to protect the pristine mountain range in northern California but has since gone on to become a national and international conservation organisation. With Chapters throughout every state of America, it is pro-active in conservation and wildlife preservation issues. At the 2007 Annual Presentation Dinner eighteen awards were presented, along with five major staff awards for outstanding work. At the top of the list was Al Gore receiving the famous John Muir Award for his distinguished record of achievement in national and international conservation causes. It was a pleasure to meet Tom Friedman, Editor, New York Times and Senator Mike Thompson of California, along with many other distinguished guests at the function. They were all very interested in conservation issues in Australia especially the pulp-mill issue in Tasmania.

The Sierra Club is the largest and oldest grass-roots environmental organisation in the world, with over 800,000 members, sixty five chapters and four hundred groups. The Club promotes conservation by influencing public policy through grass-roots activism, public education, lobbying and litigation.



*Senator Mike Thompson of California*




*Suzanne and I presented Michele Perrault (International Vice President for External Affairs, Sierra Club) with a copy of our Society's magazine*

I commend to you and your family the new **Centenary Membership Certificates** formally announced in *The Australian* magazine on Saturday 5 January 2008 and invite everyone to join the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia to mark our forthcoming centenary celebrations in 2009.

Patrick W Medway AM  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT





## ***Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia - Notice of Annual General Meeting***

Notice is hereby given that the 99th Annual General Meeting of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Incorporated will be held in a special room of Parliament House, Sydney on Wednesday 26 March 2008 commencing at 11:00am.

### ***Business:***

1. Welcome and recording of those present.
2. To receive apologies.
3. Minutes of the 98th Annual General Meeting.
4. President's and Executive Director's Report, and Treasurer's Report for 2007.
5. To receive and adopt the Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure of the Society for the year ending 31 December 2007 in accordance with our Constitution.
6. To elect and confirm
  - A) The Officers of the Society: President/Chairman, Two Vice Presidents, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Secretary (Executive Director) and;
  - B) 10 Councillors of the Society for the next twelve months in accordance with the Constitution. Nominations must be received in writing by 28 January 2008.
7. To appoint an Auditor for 2008.
8. General Business as submitted in writing by 28 January 2008.
  - 8.1 Motion - Increase membership fees to:
    - o Concession \$30 (pensioner, student, child)
    - o Individual Members \$40
    - o Family Members \$50 (being husband, wife and children jointly)
    - o Associate members \$60 (being schools or incorporated or unincorporated associations with a principal object related to conservation, nature study or education)
    - o Corporate Members \$100 (being incorporated or unincorporated associations not being associate members).
  - 8.2 Motion - That the Wildlife Preservation Society's existing Constitution is repealed and replaced by the Constitution set out in the document submitted to the meeting. (This new Constitution is recommended by our Solicitors, Prolegis, to enable the Society to obtain full benefits from the Australian Taxation Office and DGR endorsement and is fully supported by the Council of the Society.)

9. Closure.

## ***Annual Luncheon Wednesday 26 March 2008***

The Council extends a cordial invitation to members to attend our Annual Luncheon in the Parliamentary Dining Rooms on Wednesday 26 March 2008 commencing at 12 noon. The cost of the three-course Luncheon (including beer, soft drinks) will be \$70 for members and \$95 for non-members, which includes one introductory membership.

Bookings and prepayment essential. RSVP by Wednesday 19 March 2008 on [wildlifepreservation@optusnet.com.au](mailto:wildlifepreservation@optusnet.com.au).

### ***Guest Speaker: Ian Cohen MP NSW Legislative Council (The Greens)***

Ian is the Chair of General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5, which reports on any matter referred by the House. The portfolios covered by this committee are: Primary Industries and Fisheries; Development; Mineral Resources; Energy and Climate Change; Rural Affairs; Regional Development; Water and Environment; Housing; Tourism; Climate Change & Environment; and Water.

Ian Cohen has been a pioneering community environmental and social justice activist since 1970, working at local, state and national levels. He is a specialist exponent of non-violent direct action and community organisation for social change. He has fostered a specific interest in the connection between the theatre of the environment as an educational and community empowerment technique.

Ian has organised and participated in most major environmental campaigns in Eastern Australia during the 1980s: Nightcap rainforests in NSW, Franklin River, Daintree, South East Queensland, NSW, North Washpool and Chaelundi.

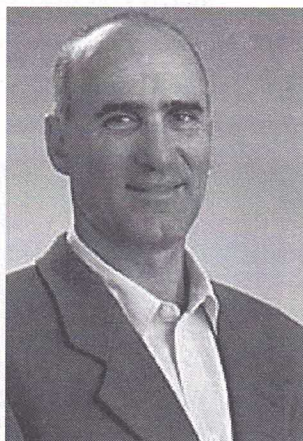
In March 2003, Ian was re-elected to the NSW Legislative Council for a second term.

Ian was a founder of the Sydney Peace Society and the Brisbane Peace and Environment Society and came to international attention in 1981 when photographed hanging onto the bow of the nuclear armed US warship in Sydney Harbour on a surfboard. As a keen surfer Ian was a founding member of Stop the Ocean Pollution and the Seas Coalition.



Ian is now entering his 12th year of office as a Parliamentarian. In that time Ian has been able to maintain his activist roots as seen by his support and attendance at SII and MI actions. Ian also has an ongoing interest in forest issues throughout New South Wales.

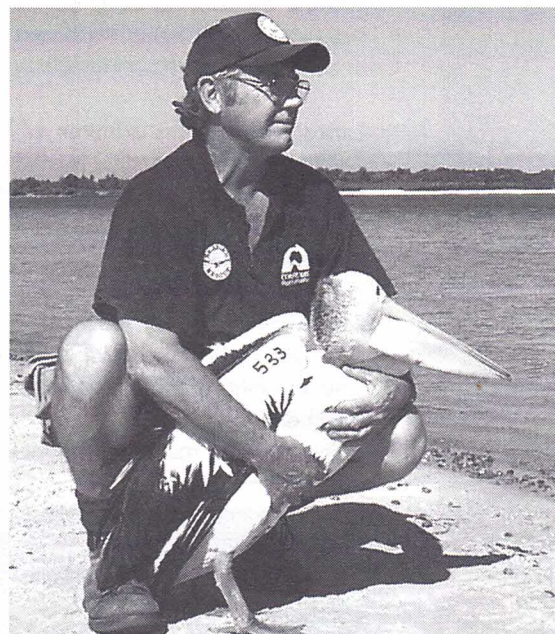
Ian has been involved, as a Member of the State Development Committee in Parliament, in enquiries into the Viability of Rural Towns, Sustainable Agriculture, and Fisheries, as well as looking into issues such as salinity.



*Ian Cohen MLC*



## *A tribute to Lance Ferris*



Patrick Medway (National President) and I first met Lance in September 2002 in a seaside park in Ballina. Patrick had heard about a retired police officer who jumped into the water to rescue injured pelicans. We were travelling north from Sydney and decided to stop in at Ballina to find and meet Lance, who had just returned from rescuing a young osprey that had fallen from its nest. Right from the start, we realised that here was an enthusiastic and committed wildlife conservationist. This was the beginning of a special friendship. I came to admire Lance more and more, and often turned to him for advice and inspiration.

In 2003 our Society was very proud to award Lance the Serventy Conservation Medal. Lance accepted his award very humbly and throughout the years made a special effort to attend our Society's Annual Luncheon and meet with fellow Serventy Conservation Medal recipients.

We invited Lance down to Sydney in early 2007 to meet some of the project officers of the Nature Conservation Council to work on some joint projects to reduce the amount of plastic bags being dumped in the environment. We then went to the National Parks Association and spoke to the officers there seeking their help in a campaign for a reduction in the distribution and use of plastic bags. Lance was very grateful for the combined offers of support and was encouraged by these other conservationists.

I spoke to Lance a few days before he became ill and it was very evident that he was feeling the pressure and frustration of the huge project



in which he was involved. He was particularly distressed about the plight of marine sea turtles and the devastation being inflicted on them by the mass release of helium balloons and plastic litter in our oceans.

Lance was a great admirer of Vincent Serventy and in writing this article it is very hard to believe that two such inspirational men died within a few weeks of each other. We greatly feel their loss and sadness in their passing.

Lance has left a truly great legacy to the people of Australia and, in particular, the wildlife of Australia. The organisation he founded, Australian Seabird Rescue, will stand as a fitting tribute to one individual who made a difference.



*Lance Ferris was presented with the Serventy Conservation Medal for 2003 by The Hon Bob Debus MP, Minister for the Environment and Dr Vincent Serventy AM*



*Patrick Medway and Lance Ferris*



*Lance on the far right at the Society's Annual Luncheon*

## ***Australian Seabird Rescue***

Australian Seabird Rescue (ASR) is a group of marine wildlife rescue specialists licensed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to rescue and rehabilitate seabirds, shorebirds, and marine turtles throughout coastal New South Wales and marine turtles on the Far North Coast.

It started in 1992, when Ballina resident, Lance Ferris, noticed a pelican with a fishhook embedded in its leg. He captured the bird and treated the injury. Seeing another pelican injured with a





fishhook the same day, Lance's curiosity prompted him to survey Ballina's pelican population. Of 108 pelicans, 37 were injured. Investigations further afield commenced to ascertain the extent of fishing tackle injuries caused to pelicans and seabirds along the east coast of NSW and southern Queensland. It was found that in every human-populated estuary, there were up to one-in-five pelicans entangled or hooked by fishing tackle at any one time. In the Richmond River at Ballina, 100 pelicans were rescued in the first year of operation - from a resident maximum population of 108 pelicans! Injuries ranged from moderate to grossly horrendous.

From meager beginnings in 1992, the Australian Seabird Rescue Team at Ballina has been conducting awareness campaigns warning of the dangers to wildlife caused by fishing tackle, plastic bags and other pollutants. ASR has achieved advances on medical and rehab techniques that has prompted requests for information from researchers/rehabilitators across Australia and worldwide. ASR was the first volunteer organisation in Australia to embrace marine turtle rehabilitation. Trained members have also assisted in whale and seal strandings at the request of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

Along with members of the public, surfers, kayakers, waterfront walkers, recreational and commercial fishermen have now become 'deputies', reporting and rescuing a host of injured marine species. From the fishermen's attitude of 'shoot them' encountered in the early days of the group's activities, the very same fishermen have now become one of ASR's most valuable assets. Not only does the team rescue seabirds, but is now licensed to rescue and rehabilitate marine turtles.

From meager beginnings, operating from a converted dairy in 1992, the group embarked on an awareness raising program of public speaking and primary school talks, reaching many thousands all over the state. ASR has since also conducted training workshops with almost every coastal wildlife group from the south coast of NSW to central Queensland. In 2003, Lance and his mission was the subject of ABC TV's 'Australian Story'. Following the broadcast of "A Bird in the Hand", many requests for workshops were received from other states.

Since 1997, the ASR facility has included rehabilitation facilities for marine turtles, such as green, loggerhead and hawksbill species, all of which are listed as endangered, vulnerable or threatened species. In 2004, ASR attracted the attention, and assistance of the Tony and Lisette Lewis Foundation. Under its 'WildlifeLink' project, the Foundation secured a waterfront property to enable ASR to upgrade facilities and

accommodate visiting school groups. The purpose-built 'WildlifeLink Turtle Hospital' was established, complementing the saltwater and freshwater lake facilities and larger, improved enclosures for rehabilitation of seabirds and waterbirds.

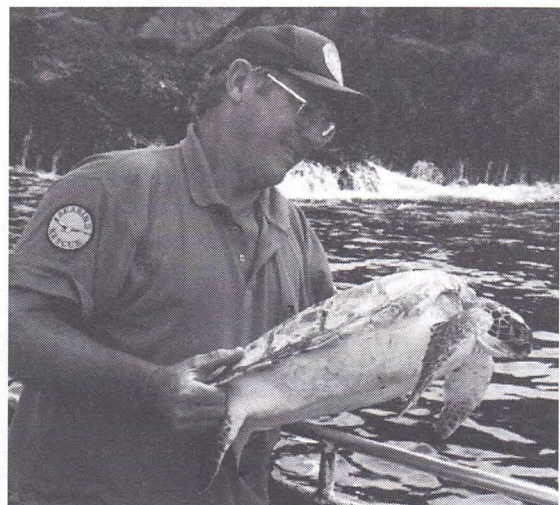
The members of ASR are all unpaid but well-trained volunteers. In an emergency or disaster situation, around thirty volunteers can be called at short notice to assist National Parks and Wildlife Service with marine mammal strandings.

Over fifteen years of travelling the country's estuaries, ASR has found that, wherever there are pelicans, there are almost always injured pelicans. The plight of the pelicans, in particular, requires focused people.

It was Lance's dream to establish pelican and seabird rescue teams, with appropriate facilities and resources, in every major estuary in Australia that is populated by pelicans. With teams already established in WA (WASR), SA (SASR), Victoria (VSR), plus two NSW branches at the Central Coast and South Coast, his dream is becoming a reality.



*Leap at Hastings*

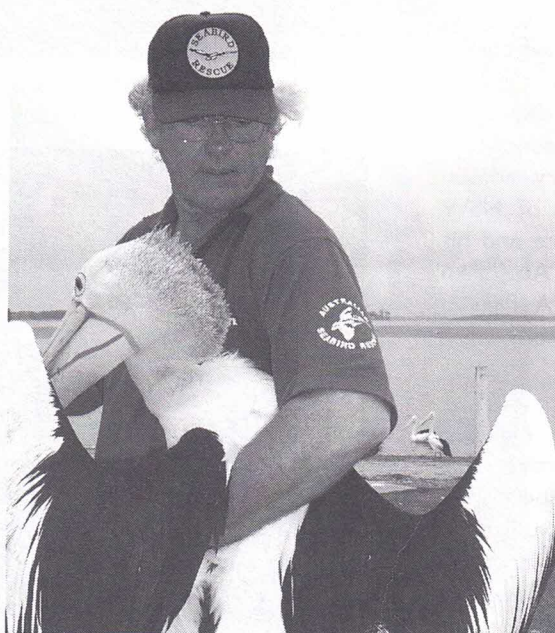


*Andy's release*





*Feeding turtle*



## ***The Pelican Man – gone but definitely not forgotten***

*by Linda Dennis, Fourth Crossing Wildlife*

It is with much pride that I write this tribute to Lance Ferris who died on Sunday 14 October 2007 after suffering a major stroke.

After issuing instructions about the pelican that needed Ivomec, the turtle that needed squid and the two turtles that were tagged and ready for release, Lance - dedicated wildlife conservationist - passed away in the arms of Marny Bonner, his long time partner and co-founder of Australian Seabird Rescue.

Lance was an inspiration to me and many others involved in the conservation of Australian native animals. As a wildlife activist he paved the way for many of us who hope to follow in his footsteps - he was a true Wildlife Warrior.

The sea creatures surely are crying - the passing of Lance is a huge loss for the critters and for the wildlife community who will keenly feel his absence, especially those who were lucky enough to be his friend. However, no one will be feeling the loss more than his family - my thoughts and deepest sympathy go to Marny and to Rochelle and Jason, Lance's daughter and son.

This tribute to such an amazing man is a very personal one. Lance was my friend for one short year but I will treasure his friendship forever.

And so, the moment of Lance I choose to remember is that of a pelican release that he and I did at his home in Ballina not long before he left for Pelican Utopia. With a gulp of sea water and a wiggle of his tail the pelican sailed into the estuary - the final farewell.

Good-bye Lance.



## ***Wildside***

*by Marny Bonner, Australian Seabird Rescue*

### ***His work continues***

When I first met Lance Ferris, our conversation was, of course, all about pelicans. "We've got a big problem out there," he said. "I've rescued sixteen so far." His boyish passion and determination overflowed as he added, "and there's another



twenty one to go! We have to get to the media!"

Now, fifteen years and over a thousand pelican rescues later, it is my honour to continue this column.

### *At rest*

Lance's curiosity about pelicans began when he was in a riverside park one day and noticed a pelican with a hook in the right leg. Soon he noticed another with a hook in the left leg, on the same day. Seeing that dozens of them were roosting on the sand cay in the Richmond River, he borrowed a boat, grabbed his binoculars and went to investigate.

He counted 108 pelicans and 37 of them were either hooked, entangled or disabled. It was the dawning of his mission, which soon became a vision, a shining light.

It was Lance's final wish that his ashes be scattered on that same sand cay, "the island", and that we all adjourn to the Shaws Bay pub to celebrate, just as we used to in those early days after every successful rescue.

Although many of us feel as though we've lost our bearing, the path ahead is well lit. Lance is at one with the river he loved so much, his final resting place a beacon. We have only to look to the one and only determined mangrove there for inspiration if we feel lost.

### *Satisfying the soul*

Back in early 1993, a young pelican languished in a paddock at Rosebank, unable to complete her migration to the Richmond River from inland breeding grounds. She was one of the first pelicans Lance and I rescued together, and we named her Rosie. After a week's TLC, she rallied and together we released her at the Richmond River Sailing Club.

In those last difficult hours of Lance's life, he found the strength to tell me about the "little girl" in care that he'd rescued days earlier. "She's a dear little thing, just like Rosie," he said.

I released the last pelican rescued by Lance, "Rosie 2", with the support of friend and ASR colleague, Kathy Southwell. She bears an R on her right wing and an L on her left, and it was a source of great joy for us both.



*"Soul in the Sky". Kathy Southwell and Marny Bonner release the last pelican rescued by Lance, Rosie 2*

### *Morale booster*


As tributes, cards and messages of support continue to flow in from Australia and the world, Lance's family and I were delighted to hear the news that Ballina Mayor, Phil Silver, had moved to rename the new riverside Fawcett Park, 'Lance Ferris Park'. This is very close to where the story began and Lance spent many hours at this park monitoring and catching pelicans over the past fifteen years, so it is a fitting tribute indeed.

With extensive support both from the wider community, and within ASR, operational volunteers are gradually regaining their balance. Their ongoing dedication to "business as usual" would have made Lance proud. At this critical time, however, donations are especially welcome and may be forwarded to ASR, 264 North Creek Road, Ballina 2478.

### *Time versus money*

There are less than ten turtle rehabilitation teams operating throughout Australia. Some, such as SeaWorld and various zoos, have the benefit of guaranteed ongoing financial support, although time spent by paid staff is limited by those budgets. On the other hand, the volunteer organisations strive to do the best they can with available funds but their unpaid time is not restricted by budgets. A number of sea turtle specialists in Australia have begun discussing the merit of an Australian email and web-based network, much like the larger world-wide group, "CTurtle". To this end, I was pleased to meet with the president of Cairns Sea Turtle Rehabilitation group, Jenny Gilbert, recently.





A practicing vet specialising in wildlife rehabilitation, Jenny was inspired to commence turtle rehabilitation after learning about ASR's program in 1999.

Turtle Rehabilitation in Australia is a relatively new art and, frustrated by the lack of information available, Jenny sought permission from the Queensland authorities to collect blood samples from healthy wild turtles around Green Island.

Having blood samples of healthy wild turtles, or "standards", to compare with her sick turtles has enabled Jenny to diagnose their problems much faster. This has not only shortened their time in rehab, but also substantially improved her rehabilitation success rate.

"The idea of an 'ozturtle' network is very exciting," Jenny said. "We're in a race against time, and the sooner we all start sharing our information, the better it will be, for us and for the turtles."

### *The domino effect*

If there's one quote that sums up the inspiration driving all community organisations, it's that of American anthropologist, Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

In 1992, the Ballina-based Australian Seabird Rescue (ASR) movement began solely in response to the impact of recreational fishing on pelicans. From a converted dairy in West Ballina, the vision of ASR's late founder, Lance Ferris, was soon inspiring wildlife conservationists throughout Australia regarding the big-picture issues of marine pollutants, especially plastics, their impact on all marine creatures and the need to raise awareness. Today, the domino effect of ASR's developments is being felt throughout the world.

On the other side of the Pacific Ocean, Marc and Rachel Ward also have a passion for sea turtle conservation. In 2001, they formed their community-based 'SeaTurtles Forever' organisation, primarily to protect sea turtle nests in Costa Rica from poachers.

Since then, they have been active participants in the world-wide 'CTurtle' network, where they became familiar with ASR and Lance's mission to raise awareness about the impacts on turtles of plastic pollutants, a major contributor to turtle mortality.

Marc and Rachel have decided to honour Lance's work by rising to the challenge. They have launched the "Lance Ferris Memorial Marine

Plastics Database" and are seeking sponsorships to reward the most effective organisation.

The projects aims to raise awareness by scientifically documenting the types, quantities and origins of plastic pollutants. As the database builds over time, it will provide an important resource for raising awareness and lobbying for changes to litter legislation.

"This would make Lance very happy I think," Marc Ward explained. "That's what we want, to honour a great man by pitching in some time and effort to improve our environment."

"We do not have a sponsor yet or any kind of prize, but we will work on that. We need to get started so let's just get going and worry about sponsorship later. The only prize I need is to honour someone whom I am going to miss very much - Lance."

Within two weeks, the domino effect gains pace.

In Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, Ariel Lopez is also excited. As the Wildlife Program Co-ordinator of 'Wild Travellers', focusing on global volunteer eco adventure projects, Ariel is keen to put his organisation behind the idea.

"Don't worry about sponsorship," Ariel urges; "I'm sure the price of honouring Mr Ferris and seeing our oceans cleaner will be more than enough for all of us, and maybe we will win because here in Mexico there is a lot of debris!"

In the past week, similar groups in Florida, Texas and Costa Rica have joined the campaign. The database will be managed by the global 'Sea-turtle.org', which is also set to establish a virtual 'Hall of Fame' in which to honour our own Lance Ferris and other sea turtle defenders.

### *The front line*

Surfers, fishers and waterfront walkers all have one thing in common. They are front line scouts. Between them all, the estuaries, beaches and coastal waters are under surveillance from sunrise to sunset and these wildlife ambassadors have saved many lives by promptly reporting distressed marine life.

Australian Seabird Rescue (ASR) received a call from a Ballina surfer recently about two dolphins and a calf. One of the big ones was entangled in an old crab trap - netting and rope, trailing a plastic bottle.

ASR dolphin specialist, Christine Fury, has been studying the bottle-nosed dolphin populations of the Richmond and Clarence Rivers for the past



three years for her PhD project. She estimates the Ballina population to be eighty to one hundred dolphins, comprising sixty percent residents and forty percent "tourists".

"With a youngster in tow, these will be resident dolphins," Christine advised. "Their range is pretty limited and you should easily find them near where they were reported."

After liaising with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, ASR rescuers were mobilised at first light the next day. As they looked around, they saw a big school of bait fish, so they slipped the boat into neutral and waited about thirty metres from the fish. Within ten minutes the entangled dolphin appeared, swimming alongside the boat within arm's reach. The rescuers reached out and grabbed the bright orange rope and, with a couple of flicks of its tail against the resistance, the dolphin shook the line free.

From a photo of the dorsal fin, Christine identified the entangled dolphin as "Nicky", a sub-adult female with a distinctive V-shaped nick in her fin. The dolphin with her was an adult mother, 'Nip'. Nip's youngster is two years old. "Nicky and Nip are always together," she explained. "Nicky helps to protect Nip and her calf and is probably related. This is typical of bottle-nosed dolphins."

With a home range coinciding with dense human populations, the main threats to dolphins are no surprise: entanglement in nets, boat strikes, pollution and harassment.



*Dolphin duo. 'Nicky' (left), the sub-adult female dolphin with the distinctive v-shaped nick in her dorsal fin, companion of adult mother, 'Nip', inseparable residents of Ballina waters*

### ***Sensible sharing***

While the majority of "boaties" are sensible, an increasing number of dolphins are injured by boat-strike, usually the result of excessive speed and/or erratic boat movement.

Maritime law stipulates that boats must remain more than fifty metres behind dolphins and circling them is illegal. By travelling in one steady line, preferably ten knots or less, boaties can give dolphins the opportunity to get out of the way and stay safe.

### ***Dolphins, porpoises – what's the difference?***

The terms dolphin and porpoise are often used interchangeably but there is a difference and it's all about the teeth. Dolphins usually have a distinct beak and many small pointed teeth. Porpoises have spade-shaped teeth but you don't have to get that close to work it out. They have no distinct beak and there are none in Australian waters.

### ***Master and commander***



*Paul Watson and Marny Bonner*


Paul Watson is an impressive man. His life-long commitment to the protection and conservation of marine life conveys a quiet, courageous dignity that befits his ship's captain status.

Captain Watson recently launched his whale defence project, "Operation Migaloo". He is passionate about defending marine wildlife of course, but this founder and president of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society for the past three decades is no reckless pirate.

Sea Shepherd operates under the United Nations World Charter for Nature, thus legally sanctioned to enforce international conservation laws on the high seas.

The Japanese Government, in violation of the global moratorium on commercial whaling, is about to kill over a thousand whales in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary this year.





In dismissing an application by the Humane Society International to have the whale hunt declared illegal, Federal Court judge, Justice Allsop, claimed that legal action against the company could jeopardise Australia's national interests.

With Australia refusing to assert its sovereignty over Antarctic waters in fear of an "international dispute", the Japanese whaling ship, *Nisshin Maru*, is now on its way to fulfill their quota. This includes fifty humpbacks and fifty fin whales, both endangered species, as well as 935 Minke whales. Last year, the Japanese Government reported that sixty percent of the whales they killed were pregnant.

If it wasn't for Paul Watson and his team, nothing would stand between the real pirates and their plunder.

"We don't go down to the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary to break laws; we go there to enforce the laws," Captain Watson explained.

### *Spot the difference*

In one week, Australian Customs Service (ACS) patrol vessels have intercepted twelve Indonesian boats suspected of fishing illegally in our northern waters. The 118 crew members were apprehended, whilst all the boats were declared unseaworthy and destroyed.

Their target was "sea cucumber", a bottom dwelling relative of the starfish, and they had harvested 3.3 tonnes of it. One sea cucumber weighs approximately half a kilogram.

Sea cucumbers are described more exotically for restaurant use as "beche-de-mer". In plain English, these "sea slugs" are sold mostly to the Asian market. The industry is estimated to be worth \$20 million annually to Australia.

"The security of Australian trade and economic interests is critically important to the future prosperity of the Australian economy," stated Mr. Neil Mann, ACS Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

For the past forty years, humpbacks have learned that they do not need to be afraid of boats, enabling an Australian whale watching industry to now generate \$300 million annually. To Japan, this year's quota represents 10,000 tonnes of whale meat. A pattie-sized slice sells for about \$5.

"What Australia and New Zealand should do is send their navies down to the Southern Oceans to uphold the laws we are trying to enforce," said Captain Watson, "and if they do that, we need not do so."

One wonders how it is that, whilst illegal slaughter of sea cucumber and other marine life is actively defended by our Customs Service, the abhorrent and illegal slaughter of whales continues to be ignored by our government, the authorities, and the majority of Australians.

### *Sounds of summer*

The transition from spring to summer is seamless, that is until we hear that first crescendo of cicadas signaling the heat of summer. We really know it's summer. From the chirping and nagging of baby birds and hopeful warblers to the haunting call of the migratory koel, the sounds of summer are as rich as the colors as they are varied. Each species of bird and insect occupies a different frequency. Birds communicate to issue a warning, defend their territory or simply stay connected with their members, frogs and toads only call to attract a mate.

How do you tell a male frog from a female? No, it's not a joke or trick question; it's a croak. As most of them desperately try to croak each other in order to attract a mate, the odd smart one outdoes them all by giving a long drain-pipe to amplify its call.

### *Cicadas*

Their deafening drone signals summer. Cicadas are the most efficient sound producers in existence. Some species have a pitch that their noise is beyond the range of human hearing, which is just as well since their noise intensity in excess of 120 decibels is well above the pain threshold of the human ear. For most of them, again the males, do the singing. They have quite a repertoire though. Once a male has attracted a female, they then adopt a much quieter courtship call. When threatened, the male will turn into a distress warning tone, which is broken and erratic. What follows is a period of silence.

Birds, however, produce more complex sounds than any other animal. Song-birds have a well-barrelled voice box, enabling them to sing many tunes simultaneously. A further adaptation enables them to alter the pitch of their notes independently, a talent especially exploited by the magpie's melodies.

### *Wildlife at risk*

The holiday season is a very dangerous time for wildlife. Inexperienced young are on the move and large numbers of fisherfolk will be out fishing within range of foraging waterbirds.



in vehicle traffic at this critical time will take its toll on native animals, especially during their most active times at dawn and dusk. On the roads, please be watchful for wildlife, and take the time to check any roadkill animals. Some are bound to have young in pouches. At the rivers and beaches, keep an eye out for the many birds that will fall victim to entanglement and hooking.

We are only a phone call away.

For shore birds and sea turtles, ph: 66 862 852.

Koalas: 6622 1233.

Other species: 6628 1898 or 0500 88 2626



## *People who love wildlife*

*by Colleen Murphy, Councillor (and hubby, Brett)*

Tony Greenwood and his wife Narelle are passionate about animals. For twenty five years Tony has owned and operated businesses that have cared and nurtured animals, while also educating and advising the general public on how to care for animals and birds across a wide range of species. He has experience with operating bird aviaries, wildlife parks and large pet shops. Tony was also a regular contributor to radio shows and magazines. Narelle brings marketing and management skills to the partnership along with her own love of animals. In the space of one year with nothing but a vision and a dedication to achieve their vision they created Peel Zoo in Mandurah Western Australia.



*Tony and Narelle Greenwood*

At the beginning of 2005 the Greenwoods had a vision to create a Zoo like no other. They wanted to create a Zoo that would share with people the feeling of joy that animals bring. They opened the Zoo as an interactive wildlife park so visitors could feed, cuddle and view. The Zoo houses animals like koalas, kangaroos, deer, foxes, baby alpacas, and baby goats. This is reflected in their company message; "Peel Zoo -Where People and Animals Say G'day". To achieve their goal they took over a neglected and overgrown bird park and dedicated their lives to transforming it into a thriving regional tourist attraction. In April 2006 Peel Zoo opened its doors. Now just eighteen months later Peel Zoo is looking to expand by acquiring another five acres, which will allow it to expand its collection of animals and offer visitors a unique experience. At Peel Zoo visitors experience a different and innovative approach to zoos. Cages, wherever possible, have been removed and visitors can interact with the animals in all areas of the park. From the moment you enter the Zoo you may be holding a snake, playing with ferrets or rabbits, feeding birds, patting deer, feeding a kangaroo or even a tame fox.

Peel Zoo has an extensive collection of some of the most colourful and interesting native and exotic birds in Western Australia, and fascinating snakes and reptiles: black headed pythons, Western Stimson's pythons and ridged tailed monitors. You can even cuddle "Chase" the Peel Zoo dog. Peel Zoo is first and foremost committed to the animals. They have formed a partnership with the Mandurah Wildlife Rescue and Peel Zoo now acts as a holding area for sick and injured animals and also helps to rehabilitate and release them back into the wild. When the animals are not strong enough to be released they find a new home at the Zoo. This gives them a safe place to live whilst helping people to interact and learn from them.



*Colleen Murphy at Bali Zoo*

Tony cannot even switch off his desire to help animals on holidays. During a family trip to Ubud, Bali in November 2006 the Greenwood's visited Bali Zoo. The Zoo is not just home to the animals,



it is a family run business that supports the seventy four staff and their families that rely on those jobs to survive. Mr Agung, the Zoo's owner started it with the same passion to help animals as that of Tony Greenwood. He was just overwhelmed by circumstance and lack of knowledge, especially in marketing and promoting the Zoo. The Zoo had been severely affected by the downturn in tourism after the terrorist bombings and it was struggling with debts of \$500,000. "You could see and smell and feel something was sick," Mr Greenwood said. "The female Sumatran tiger had a bacterial infection caused by filthy water. We had her operated on very quickly. The staff didn't even know how to administer a drip to treat the animals."

The visit left Tony appalled at the small and dirty cages, which housed distressed animals including the sick Sumatran tiger, as well as white tigers, lions and leopards. Basically Bali Zoo was in trouble and they did not know whom to turn to for help. They had reached out to many people but no one had been brave enough or experienced enough to take it on. Tony, however, was different. He approached the management and together they have begun a crusade to save Bali Zoo.



*Treating the sick Sumatran tiger*

Tony believed that it would take more than money to save the Zoo. "We have something far more treasured," he says, "knowledge and the ability to share it and teach these guys what they don't yet know, how to really care for these animals and how to run a hygienic and professional Zoo. They have done their best, and they have done a great job because the staff and owners are passionate about the Zoo and the animals, but they lacked the experience to run and market the Zoo at the best level. We've made the decision to go to Bali and get the Zoo back on its feet," he said. "If we don't do it, no one else will. The Bali Zoo will die." Tony is transforming his life to save Bali Zoo. He is in the process of looking for managers to take over Peel Zoo so he can focus on saving Bali Zoo. "The Balinese people are so gentle and loving and they are passionate about their wildlife – the lack of

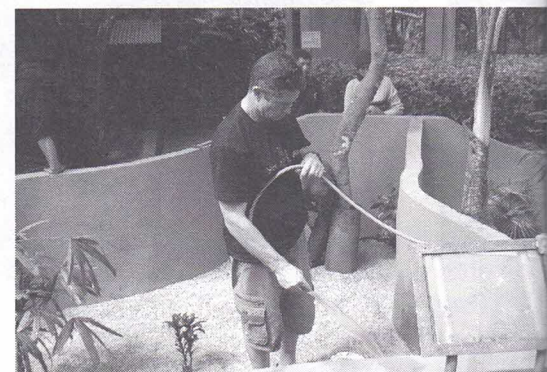
tourism after December 2005 meant that the Zoo was looking to close – so I decided to help out".

"Help out" is a nice way of saying that Tony has spent numerous trips at the Zoo and put some of his own money to pay off the debts of the Zoo. He has been in constant touch to suggest some ways to help the Bali Zoo raise money – such as donation boxes – all the money from the donation boxes goes to new enclosures for the animals. Visitors can now participate in a "Feed the animals" experience, where for a small donation you can feed the animals, but watch out for the gibbons they might give it back to you! Now the latest venture is to "Sponsor an animal", for a little as \$40 you can adopt an animal at the Zoo. On the marketing side – new brochures have been printed, new advertisements are placed on main roads in Bali and tourist guides have been enlisted to help promote the Zoo.



*Tony and the Balinese keepers*

During a recent trip to Bali I got to experience the improvements to Bali Zoo first hand. In just twelve months Tony has helped to transform Bali Zoo from facing certain closure to a beautiful place to visit where life is looking up for the animal inhabitants and their carers. Sitting in the restaurant of Bali Zoo overlooking the magnificent gardens, eating some great Indonesian food, I listened to the quietly spoken Putu, Marketing Manager for Bali Zoo, "Mr Tony has taught us many things, like the donation boxes that have allowed us to build new exhibits for our animals."



*Fitting out a new enclosure*



The beauty of Tony's help is that he is educating the staff on all aspects of animal care, enclosure size and internal environment and marketing. The pride the staff has in the Zoo, the animals and the improvements made over the last twelve months is evident in everyone you talk to. The grounds are now worth a visit for themselves, they are beautiful. Also, the staff with the guidance of Tony has used the donations to build a new enclosure for the tigers that is much larger with glass viewing areas. They have also tripled the size of the lion's and leopard's cages. Natural habitat features have also been added to the other enclosures and improved the hygiene for the feed out systems. The next project to benefit from the donations will be the enclosure of "Jackie" the orang-u-tan.

Bali Zoo is an "experience". It aims to involve visitors, to allow them to touch, to interact, and to conserve – and the Zoo achieves just that. You can hold an iguana, have a horn-billed toucan sit on your shoulder or even see by CCTV the three new-born African lions. "We are very alike, Balinese and Australians – laid back, kind and helpful", Putu said. "We SMS with Mr Tony everyday with ideas". Tony has allowed the Balinese people to take control of their Zoo - they grow and the Balinese prosper – as a true friend should. So I welcome you to take the chance to visit Bali Zoo – I think you will be surprised by the beauty, experience and engagement of the Balinese to the flora and fauna. Oh, and if you wish to take part to sponsor an animal at Bali Zoo then please email [info@balizoo.com](mailto:info@balizoo.com)



*Colleen and Brett Murphy at Bali Zoo*



## ***Global warming***

Reading all the information on global warming and climate change can be confusing. But, if you want to do something personally to save the earth, figuring out which are the must-dos amid the

multitude of opinions and information can be very confusing. One thing you can do is to decrease your impact of the earth – otherwise known as reducing your carbon (or ecological) footprint.

A carbon footprint is really a visual metaphor for what kind of energy and resources each of us uses as we go through our day. If you have a large footprint, it means you require a large number of environmental resources to sustain your place on this planet. The smaller the footprint, the more sustainable your lifestyle is.

To put it more scientifically, a carbon footprint measures the impact human activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced, measured in units of carbon dioxide.

Most environmental agencies aim for an eighty percent reduction in overall carbon emissions by 2050.

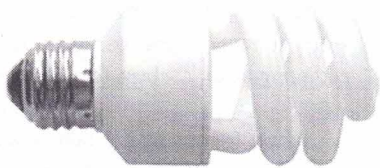
To do your part, consider "treading lightly" on the earth.

## ***Tread lightly***

- First, take a carbon footprint checkup of your own life to see where – and how heavily – you stand on the earth. Online head to [www.MyFootprint.org](http://www.MyFootprint.org) or [www.SafeClimate.net/](http://www.SafeClimate.net/) calculator to play the numbers game. I checked up on my footprint and the results weren't good. My footprint was 8.2. In comparison, the average ecological footprint in Australia is 8.7 global hectares per person. Worldwide, there exist 1.8 biologically productive global hectares per person. If everyone lived like me, we would need 4.6 planets. Obviously, I need to make some changes.
- Replace your incandescent lightbulbs for compact fluorescent bulbs. They use less energy and they last longer.

Compact fluorescent lightbulbs last six to ten times longer and are more energy efficient than conventional ones. These lightbulbs will save eighty percent in electricity use and costs. In early 2007, Tamworth replaced 85,000 incandescent lightbulbs with compact fluorescent lightbulbs in approximately 14,500 homes – for free. This change will save an equivalent of 141 eighteen-wheelers' worth of coal from being burned. The Australian Government passed legislation to phase out incandescent bulbs and replace them with CFLs, which will reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by four millions tons by 2012 and cut household power bills by up to sixty percent.





- Recycle – recycling just one aluminium can saves the same amount of energy it would take to run a TV for three full hours.
- Stop junk mail and catalogues (as much as possible). Reducing the unwanted, intrusive advertising cluttering your life can be as simple as following these steps:
  - Stop unsolicited sales calls at home - put your home phone number on the Federal Government managed 'Do not Call register' – [www.donotcall.gov.au](http://www.donotcall.gov.au)
  - Stop junk mail hitting your letterbox - get a 'No Junk Mail' sticker or sign (from your local hardware store) and put it on your letterbox. If you continue to receive junk mail despite the 'No Junk Mail' sign or sticker, contact and complain to the Distribution Standards Board within The Australian Catalogue Association site or call them on 1800 676 136.
  - Contact the Australian Direct Marketing Authority on 02 9277 5400, and ask them to put your name onto their 'Do not Call, Do not Mail' list. Your name will then be circulated to list brokers, who take your name off their list. After approximately six weeks your unsolicited addressed promotional mail will start decreasing.
- Paper or plastic? Go fabric instead and you could keep up to six billion plastic bags per year from making their way into landfills. It takes one thousand years for plastic bags to biodegrade. Australians use approximately ten million plastic bags a day. Australians throw away approximately 7,200 recyclable plastic bags every minute. Approximately 430,000 recyclable plastic bags are dumped in landfill every hour. Less than one percent of plastic bags in Australia are actually reused. Four shopping trips by the average Australian family will accumulate approximately sixty plastic bags. An estimated fifty million plastic shopping bags end up as litter in Australia every year.
- We live in one of the most beautiful climates in the world, so it is absolutely crazy that many Australians rely on twenty four hour air conditioning for twelve months of the year. If you drop your thermostat by a couple of

degrees in summer, not only do you drop a lot of greenhouse gases but you save heaps of money.

- Give power cords a tug. There's still a little something surging through all those electric cords around your house after your turn off your appliances. Between ten and forty percent of energy used is actually used when the appliance is turned off but still plugged in.
- Take public transportation whenever you can. A family sedan emits 7.7 tons of greenhouse gases and uses 14.3 barrels of petroleum annually.
- Lend your voice to the earth by encouraging your local representatives to support a science-based solution to global warming.

### *Carbon footprint*

A carbon footprint is made up of the sum of two parts, the direct/primary footprint and the indirect/secondary footprint.

Our primary foot is a measure of our direct CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the burning of fossil fuels, including transportation and domestic energy consumption.



### *WPSA members' tour to Kangaroo Island – October 2007*

*by Carol Nolder, Councillor*

Alarm clocks ringing about 4am set the members based in the Sydney area heading towards the Airport and the 6.50 plane to Adelaide. Five members had driven down from Wellington earlier in the week, with the others having chosen to spend a few days around the city of Adelaide before meeting up to drive down the Great South road. Guided by Mike Augée driving the coach, and with two back-up vehicles, we travelled down to Willunga for lunch and on to Cape Jervis to board the huge ferry that took us across to Penneshaw and Kangaroo Island. In Kingscote, in the only supermarket on the Island, we purchased most of the provisions for the holiday and some preordered cooked chickens for tea that evening, before driving about one hundred kilometres to our destination at the furthest point on the south-west of the Island.



I must say that we were really saddened by the roadkill, mainly 'roos and possums, and when I got up to twenty two, I stopped counting! We arrived at Cape du Couedic on a wonderfully warm evening, just as the light was fading, giving a brilliant sunset. After a very tasty meal, we settled down to investigate our new surroundings. The three lighthouse keepers' cottages were named Karetta, Troubridge and Parndana, after ships that had visited the Island. All with the same layout, they were well equipped and comfortable. Every evening that week we gathered in Karetta, shared in the cooking arrangements and then sat round sipping South Australian wines and nibbles, while we chatted, played various pencil and paper games and talked over the day's events.



*Cape du Couedic*

On our second day, we woke up to a beautiful morning, with Dick Mason out first, noting all the birds he saw (identifying a total of twenty three during the holiday) while walking down through the low scrub to the Cape du Couedic Lighthouse and beyond, where there was continual activity with the colony of fur seals and their pups. Needing to register our group at the Flinders Chase Ranger Station & Visitor Centre, we set off after breakfast for our first port of call. The Centre had most attractive and informative signage both inside and out and we walked along the Rocky River area, watching the large breeding colony of Cape Barren geese, creeping past a sleeping black tiger snake with some trepidation and catching glimpses of platypus in the pools, while listening to the frogs calling across the water. It is always a thrill to catch sight of an echidna and we saw a couple snuffling through the undergrowth and extracting ants from tree stumps with their long tongues. After lunch we toured round the Remarkable Rocks and the incredible formation of the Admiral's Arch, studying the seals and the myriad of tiny wildflowers on the low bushes. By

this time, the wind had really got up again and the maze of shrubby trees and bushes around our holiday cottages were lying almost horizontal – at the end of our holiday we were quite certain that this was the windiest place on this earth!

On the Saturday, a walk along Sea Lion Beach had been arranged. The Ranger was a great character and fielded the many questions put to him with knowledge and humour. The huge sea lion males, with their yellow lion-like manes, three times larger than the females, were continually on the prowl and had to be treated with respect, while the young pups lay in the sand dunes either suckling from their mother or waiting for her to return from a lengthy fishing trip. The gestation period of these wonderful creatures is about seventeen to eighteen months, so that they only produce one pup in two years. Not surprisingly, the numbers in the colony stay very steady, with sharks taking about the same number as are bred in each season. After a picnic lunch, we were conducted by a Ranger around the famous Kelly Hill Caves, with their fascinating rock formations and colours being enhanced by the strategically placed lighting.

Clambering up and down all those steps gave a few of us some tired leg muscles next day!

On the Sunday, we set out across the Island, heading north on the dusty roads to Cape Borda. A much colder day, we were well wrapped up and had to battle against the strong winds. Although there were many grass trees, *Xanthorrea* species, on the Island, in this area they were huge and positively towered over the other vegetation. We spent a most interesting morning listening to stories of the lighthouses on the Island, the many shipwrecks that occurred around the treacherous coastline and the illness brought about by vapour from the mercury on which the huge revolving reflectors were set – the effect of this mercury vapour in the hot weather was devastating for the health of the early lighthouse keepers. Our stalwart walkers had set off to do the challenging Ravine de Casoars Walk during this time. They had taken their lunch with them, but suffered a real downpour and came back feeling wet and cold.

A hot drink and a tour of the light station soon revived their spirits before we headed home to hot showers and the gas fires of the cottages. However, we did have one special port of call on the way home, a privately owned estate at Hanson's Bay, going right down to the beach on the south side of the Island. It had been promoted in Sydney as having quality accommodation units, and also as a wildlife rescue sanctuary. Calling in to investigate, we found about nineteen or more koalas and young, all in excellent condition, mainly



in a long avenue of manna gums, with plenty of photo opportunities, so well worth the visit. In fact, they were not able to deal with injured wildlife, but were willing to take them to the nearest vet whenever necessary.



*Ravine des Casoars Walk*

Realising that our drivers would have a long, hard drive on the Tuesday, we opted for a quieter day on the Monday, intending to spend the day bird watching, identifying plants and looking for platypus. However, the wind got up during the day and by the afternoon it was so strong that one could hardly stand up. The seas got increasingly wild, with the huge waves crashing on to the rocks below us, hurtling the returning seals back into the broiling sea before they finally struggled back up onto the rocks to lie down, dry off and sleep.



*Tamar wallaby: The pale green bush, which is a common under story to the sugar gum trees, is wallaby bush (*Choretrum glomeratum* var. *glomeratum*)*

### ***The flying fox at Weirs Cove***

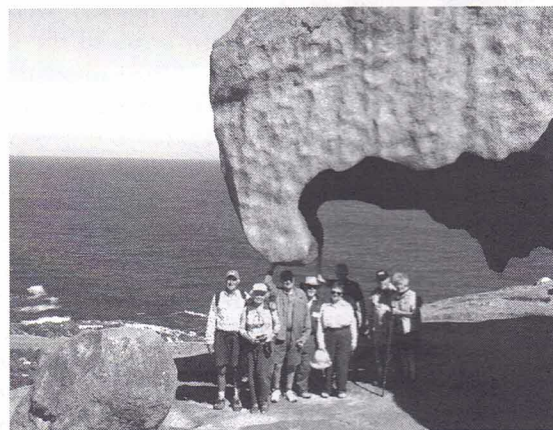
The look-out from Weirs Cove, about one mile north of the Cap du Couedic lighthouse, provides a spectacular view of some of the south coast of Kangaroo Island. It is at Weirs Cove that the remains of a jetty, water tank and a storeroom are located. Building materials and other supplies were sent by flying fox from supply ships to the

top of the cliff. Originally a pair of horses used on a jimm powered the flying fox but these were later replaced by a motorised winch. Steps were also carved into the cutting from the rocks below to the top to give access by foot.

The day to go home came all too soon! Leaving Cape du Couedic at 7am, we drove steadily across the Island, noting with relief that the seas had calmed right down in the night – we had been dreading the thought of a really rough crossing back to the mainland! We drove across to Victor Harbour, a most attractive little town, renowned for its colony of fairy penguins, but at that time of day they would all have been asleep. After a very nice lunch, with a wide variety of fish dishes, we commenced on our journey northwards and back to Adelaide, noting the many huge hay bales in the fields which would see the sheep and cattle through next winter. An uneventful flight brought us back to Sydney on a beautiful clear evening, with the lights below us looking like fairyland, but all the conversation centred around what we would do and where we would go next year! Watch this space!



*Echidna - another sitting on the Platypus Waterholes Walk. He was just too shy!!*



*Remarkable rocks and remarkable people*





*The look-out from Weirs Cove, about one mile north of the Cap du Couedic lighthouse, provides a spectacular view of some of the south coast of Kangaroo Island. It is at Weirs Cove that the remains of a jetty, water tank and a storeroom are located. Building materials and other supplies were sent by flying fox from supply ships to the top of the cliff*

#### **Editor's note:**

Our Society members on a recent visit to Kangaroo Island had the pleasure of visiting the Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. They were particularly delighted to learn that a fully fenced feral-free area of 250 acres has been set aside to protect native animals from extinction. To encourage and help Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary in their conservation work of protecting Australia's precious native wildlife, our Society made a donation.

We were delighted to receive the following thank you note from Evelyn and Greg Keyes:

Dear Carol and members

It was with great excitement we read your most welcome letter and the donation from your Society, which we can assure you will go directly into the care of injured or orphaned wildlife on this Sanctuary, such as Joey who we have in our care at the moment and is pictured. Joey's mother was unfortunately killed on the road outside our Sanctuary and Joey was found in her pouch with a broken leg. He is now a little over eight months old and bounding around, looking every bit like the famous boxing kangaroo of Australia, full of life and want for advancement into the future.

It is gestures such as yours that truly make our lives in our current position an absolute joy. To see others who love the animals as much, shared with others and going further by directly contributing to the welfare of these fabulous creatures of our Country and Earth is a blessing.

We and all at the Hanson Bay Company, who operate as a great team looking after the Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary THANKYOU sincerely.

Evelyn and Greg Keyes

### ***Bush fires***

We were devastated to learn of the bush fires on Kangaroo Island in December 2007 and received a telephone call from Greg alerting us to the latest situation:

Greg Keys, Manager of the Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary said that the bushfires caused much devastation to the native wildlife across the Island.

Greg stated how grateful they were for the donation received from the Wildlife Preservation Society following the recent visit by the Members of the Society on their annual wildlife study tour. He wanted to also advise us that the donated funds were now being used to form a 'Wildlife Foundation' to save and protect all native wildlife on Kangaroo Island. Donations are always very welcome from anyone interested in wanting to help save the native wildlife on Kangaroo Island.

The wildfires burnt out thousands of hectares of Flinders Chase National Park, as well as private farm land, and devastated the local wildlife. Those animals not killed by the fires have sought refuge around the coastal areas, including the Hanson Bay area and the Wildlife Sanctuary. The staff is feeding a wider range of wildlife made homeless by the bushfires than ever before.

The Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary and its staff are now stretched to the limits in trying to feed and care for all local native animals coming into the Sanctuary.

With the formation of the Wildlife Foundation, donations are very welcome to assist in meeting the costs of feeding and caring for the native wildlife across Kangaroo Island.



*Evelyn with a now fully healthy Joey at HBWS*





*Evelyn with male Kangaroo Island koala at HBWS*



*Pygmy possum being relocated to safer area*



*Evelyn and injured Joey with broken leg at HBWS*



*Greg and Evelyn with koala*



*Evelyn, Joey and Greg*





## Dingo

by Nic Papalia

The Australian dingo (*Canis Lupus Dingo*), or as Charles Darwin termed it, *canis dingo*, is not a dog breed but a species of wolf. The dingo is a descendant of the first domestic dog, who was a direct descendant of the Indian grey wolf (*Canis Lupus Pallipes*). The Indian wolf is believed to be removed from other wolf species by a period of approximately 400,000 years. The dog (*Canis Lupus Familiaris*) was first domesticated in South East Asia around 14,000 - 16,000 years ago; it was taken across the Bering Strait from South East Asia into Alaska and North America by man when there was a big migration of people. This dog was the ancestor of all Siberian dogs and all native Indian dogs descended from these. So, it was the domestic dog that went from South East Asia to Europe - not the other way around as was originally thought. We know this through mitochondrial DNA analysis and carbon dating. This technology has allowed a lot of theories to be either proved or disproved. The oldest dog bones that were very dingo-like were found in Israel on the West Bank, carbon dated at 14,000 years old. The earliest known dingo skull was found in Vietnam and is 5,500 years old and the earliest in Australia, between 3,500 and 4,000 years old. That is four centuries and a long time in anyone's mind. In fact before the great pyramids were built or the use of the wheel. Certainly a long time before the arrival of Europeans in Australia with sheep some two hundred years ago. In fact, because of the vast period of time the dingo has been in Australia, there are different classifications for the dingo, eg desert, alpine, tropical and Fraser Island - all appear somewhat different in characteristics and disposition but ALL share the same DNA. Due to locality over thousands of years the dingo classifications resulted through evolution and environment.

Dingoes come in tan and white, white and black and tan. In the time the dingo has been in this country it has evolved to be the top bush cop or our "Lion-King" that holds all of ecology in balance. It is easy for even a child to understand the Lion King concept, that example is direct and real. When the dingo is exterminated through aerial baiting with 1080, ecological destruction takes place with a total imbalance and kangaroos abound in plague proportions as do feral cats, foxes, pigs and goats. Defoliation is also a result of this catastrophe.

In Australia some politicians have been very vocal about the whaling by Japan and Iceland - and rightly so - but they have been silent when it comes to demanding a stop to the extermination of our dingo which holds everything in balance. This has been due to a powerful farmers' lobby.

On 17 September, World Endangered Species Day was held. Lyn Watson from the Dingo Discovery Centre outside of Melbourne marched with many hundreds of people in protest of the extermination of the dingo - this our forgotten Icon. The dingoes were painted as thylacines to draw attention and awaken an apathetic public into the realisation that we have a duty to save these magnificent creatures.



Thousands of people wrote to minister Martin O'Brien to urge the Minister to take action and recognise the dingo for what it is as our top land predator and equilibrium modulator. The call from the public sector came to ask that the dingo be listed as an endangered species and not vermin. So far the politicians have remained vocal on the slaughter of whaling by other countries but gone silent on the important issue of the Australian dingo. This silence is as good as condoning the extermination. Australia has a deplorable record when it comes to extinction of birds and animals.

In November 2006 Bob Debus, NSW Minister for the Environment, authorised the aerial baiting of the Kosciuszko National Park - where the last bastion of Alpine dingoes live in the wild (estimated to be about 130 in number). Many died as a result of the 1080 sodiummonofluoroacetate.

The WA Dingo Association has given talks in schools and education programs to inform a public unaware that most of their national parks are aerial baited with 1080, which works on metabolism and kills raptors, reptiles and dingoes, as well as killing many other birds and animals with secondary poisoning. There is incorrect rhetoric issued to the public about 1080 being a natural poison. There is nothing natural about 1080, which is man-made in a laboratory where the sense of taste and smell is removed and the toxin levels magnified. One teaspoon will kill one hundred humans and there is no antidote.



It was this first domestic dog that was moved around by man that today's Australian dingo originates from. This dog was the ancestor of all pariah breeds. The word pariah means outcasts and refers to the habit of these dogs to live on the outskirts of human settlements. Pariah breeds consist of the Jindos of Korea (a dingo look alike), the Hokkaido Inu, or Ainu of Japan that belonged to the Ainu people who were the true Aborigines of Japan. The Canaan dog of Israel and in the Middle East was the dog of the Bedouin tribes, people of the Negev desert. The Basenji is the pariah of Africa; it is thought to have descended from the dogs of the Middle East due to curly tailed dogs featured in hieroglyphics. All pariah dogs have a similar phenotype which is easily recognised



The dingo is now known to be a primitive form of domestic dog just locked in a certain time warp. It is found in Australia, Burma, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. This research was conducted by scientist L. Corbett.

The dingo was first brought to Australia by Asian seafarers, and arrived about 35,000 years after the Aborigines first came to Australia. It is thought to have arrived in the last 5,000 years, however it was definitely within the last 11,000 years as this is when the land bridge to Tasmania was cut off and the dingo is absent from this part of Australia.

The dingo is nature's creation, they are not bred by man's so called aesthetic lines, and they are a classic example of Darwinian's theory of survival of the fittest, where the weaker members are eliminated from the gene pool. The dingo is lithe, extremely athletic and has superior eyesight, hearing and scenting abilities.

It is interesting to note that all dingoes in Australia are thought to descend from one breeding pair, or even one pregnant bitch - all have similar DNA with only one single mutation of DNA difference. This has been documented by Dr Alan Wilton of the University of NSW from over two hundred samples taken from all around Australia.

A parasite that originated on marsupials in Australia is now found on wild dogs in Asia, showing there was a two-way movement of dogs between Australia and Asia, probably from dogs that were brought here to hunt and then returned with their owners to Indonesia.

The dingo was quickly adopted by Aborigines. There are rock art paintings that depict the dingo and the close association of the aboriginal people and this wolf. Some of the purest dingoes are found in Thailand.

The dingo only has one breeding season a year, like wolves and also Basenjis; whereas today's domestic dogs have two. The dingo has a structured hierarchy and only the alpha pair breed, however, all pack members assist with raising the litter.

There are three types of dingo in Australia, possibly four. They are the desert dingo, with a short, single coat; the alpine dingo, with a longer double coat; the tropical dingo, with a coat in between that of the desert and the alpine. Lastly is the Fraser Island dingo that is very similar to the desert types.



*Fraser Island dingo*



*Desert dingo*

Dingoes come in many various colour morphs, ranging from a sandy yellow, ginger, red, white/cream, black and tan and solid black with white points. They all generally have white tips on their tails, and can have white markings on their chest, legs and face.

The dingo has earned its place as the top mammalian land predator of Australia - a keystone species.



This means that the dingo plays an important role in the eco-system and as a controller/modulator. He keeps the marsupial levels stable, as populations tend to explode in its absence. Dingoes also control feral cats and foxes that tend to decimate marsupial populations. It does this through competition and indeed by killing its opposition. The dingo is sometimes taken by crocodiles and loses pups to predation by wedge tailed eagles occasionally. But the dingo's biggest killer is man and its biggest threat is crossbreeding (hybridisation) by domestic dogs.

Chris Johnson from James Cook University in Townsville researched dingoes and found where dingoes were absent, introduced predators are rife and up to sixty five percent of ground dwelling mammals have disappeared. Domestic stock only makes up one to seven percent of a dingo's diet. Kangaroos and wallabies account for over fifty percent, the remainder consists of rabbits, possums, rats and marsupial mice.

However dingoes and sheep do not go together as dingoes will kill them for fun and just to decimate them. Donkeys introduced into flocks of sheep will kill any dog, wolf, fox or dingo and protect sheep from attack.

There is a fence that runs from Jimbar in Queensland to the Eyre Peninsula at the Great Australia Bite in South Australia. This is the longest fence in the world at a distance of 5,321 kilometres; it is known as the dingo fence and is 2.4 metres high and buried thirty centimetres underground to stop digging underneath. Cattle are kept north of the fence where marsupial populations are stable. South of the fence is sheep country and dingoes are exterminated, marsupial numbers are very high and compete with domestic stock for grazing. Because of the imbalance in these areas, defoliation has and does occur once the dingo is removed from being the "bush cop".

The dingo is a vital part of the Australian eco-system, and like all eco-systems if you upset one part it can change the balance for the rest of the chain.



Dingoes being a predatory animal will hunt and kill so this places them at loggerheads with farmers and pastoralists. They can live quite happily amongst cattle, and inflict no or minimal losses to the herd. Occasionally they will slaughter young calves for no reason, when this happens there is no other option but to exterminate these offenders.

On small acreage farms, livestock guardians such as donkeys, alpacas and llamas, as well as protection dogs such as Maremma sheep dogs and Anatolian shepherds, can be used quite effectively to protect stock. However these are of no use on the big runs, as it is impossible to protect such large numbers of sheep and cattle. So these suggestions are in effect not practical and not feasible. Electric fencing is also suggested by some to keep dingoes from stock, this is feasible on small acreage but not the very large farms that may be one million acres.

### *So, what do we need to do to ensure the dingo's survival?*

Firstly, we all need to agree that it is truly Australian and not an alien species. It has been here for 5,000 years (fifty centuries) for the theologist that is 3000BC - white man has been here two centuries.

Secondly, we need to name the Australian dingo as a threatened species nationally, this is currently being considered by the Victorian Government. Politicians can waiver and wimp out on important issues such as this one and the farmers' lobby has a mighty strength and swaying capability so that the results of what has happened already in this land is very evident.

The dingo is listed as vulnerable by the World Conservation Union on their IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

We should have taken the lead from other countries. The Korean Government named their Jindo (dingo look-alike) a natural treasure in 1938, and it's the fifty third natural monument of Korea. The Japanese named their Aboriginal dog the Hokkaido Inu, or Ainu dog, a national monument in 1937. The dog in Bali is called the Bali local dog and the government has banned all other dogs from being kept on the island in order to preserve the breed.

We need to surrender ourselves to the fact that pure dingoes will become extinct in the wild, but whilst there are pure ones left, we need to lobby the government, and raise funds to allocate large areas of land with suitable fencing to contain dingoes, then put DNA tested pure dingoes in so we can preserve them.



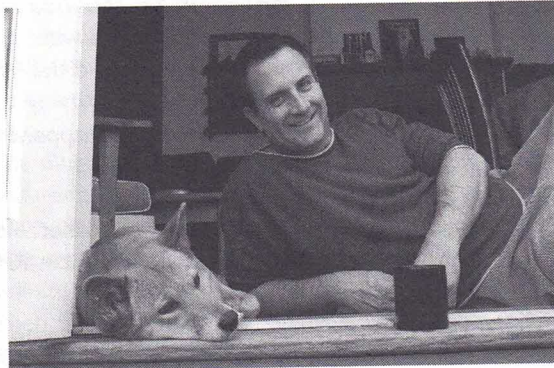
We need to stop baiting our national parks, without these - where is the dingo safe?

If the dingo goes onto pastoral land and offends, then control is warranted. Reiterating the fact that the national parks are a treasure that belongs to all Australians - NOT a bunch of pastoralists that have no right to control and poison this locality. There should be no sheep on or in our parks! Aerial baiting with 1080 or any super toxin is a great evil and is destroying the ecosystem. The dingo along with raptors and reptiles are being exterminated through this ecovandalism.

There have only been a handful of dingo attacks in two hundred years upon humans, but every year in Australia there are between 10,000 and 15,000 domestic dog attacks.

The WA Dingo Association was created to spread the education message to the community round the dingo so we can save these remarkable treasures that have been the brunt of much maligning and vilification through ignorance. We are a group of people who love our Australian dingo and wish to alter the great injustice that has been busy exterminating this amazing LION KING.

The WA Dingo Association  
President: Nic Papalia  
Email: [dingo1@iprimus.com.au](mailto:dingo1@iprimus.com.au)  
Website: [www.wadingo.com](http://www.wadingo.com)



*Nic Papalia and dingo*



## *Translocations to save a species, the northern quoll*

*by Maria Cardoso*

Quolls are members of the family *Dasyuridae*, which is represented by over seventy species of carnivorous marsupials. There are four quoll species in Australia, with the northern quoll (*Dasyurus hallucatus*) being the smallest. It has a largely insectivorous diet, but can also consume small mammals, reptiles, amphibians and plants. As a predator and opportunistic scavenger, it plays a pivotal role in all the ecosystems it inhabits. Aspects of the species' biology, such as short life spans, male semelparity (post-breeding male die-off), large home ranges and low density distributions often result in seasonal fluctuations in population size. These fluctuations may render the species more susceptible to local extinctions in the face of unprecedented environmental change.



*Northern quoll (Dasyurus hallucatus)*

Northern quolls still occur naturally on some Australian islands. On the mainland, they occur in fragmented landscapes ranging from Western Australia to Queensland. Once common across most of northern Australia, the northern quoll suffered a seventy five percent reduction in range during the 1990s through a combination of land degradation and competition with introduced herbivores. Current threats to northern quoll populations include frequent unmanaged fires, predation following fire and more recently, poisoning by the introduced cane toad (*Bufo marinus*).

The northern quoll is currently classified as 'critically endangered' under Northern Territory legislation. Recent local extinctions of northern quolls in areas of Kakadu National Park, due to the arrival of cane toads in the region, clearly demonstrate that natural refuges for northern quolls are now severely under threat. These rapid population declines highlight the urgent need to successfully implement effective management strategies for the conservation of the species.



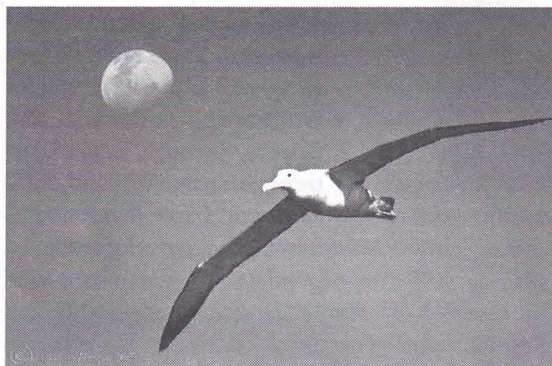
In 2003, to increase the probability of the species' survival, northern quolls captured from wild Northern Territory mainland populations were translocated to two offshore islands. These populations have been monitored each year since the translocations took place and although the number of animals is increasing, genetic data shows a decline in their genetic diversity compared to the mainland populations from which they were originally sourced. It is therefore important that genetic management of these populations continues into the future if a high level of genetic variation is to be maintained. This will maximise the long-term persistence of northern quolls on these islands in the hope that they may one day be used to supplement those populations that are currently threatened with extinction on the mainland.

Editor's note: Maria was a recipient of our Society's University Grant in 2006.



## Wandering albatross

This image was taken by Graham Morgan, and is of a juvenile wandering albatross up on a feeding run from one of the sub Antarctic islands. That's a round trip of about 7,000 kilometres, which takes about two weeks. These birds have thrived for fifty million years in the harshest marine environment in the world, the Southern Ocean. However, this bird is unlikely to survive to old age. Long line fishing kills 100,000 albatross each year. Graeme finds it tragic that at this rate of demise, they will be all but gone in a couple of decades.

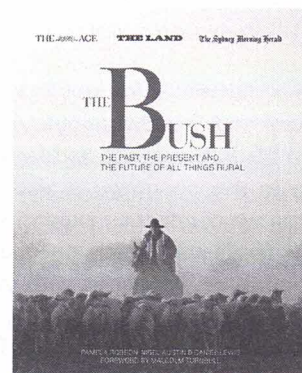


## Book reviews

### *The Bush*

by Pamela Robson, Nigel Austin and Daniel Lewis - with a foreword by Malcolm Turnbull  
RRP \$69.95

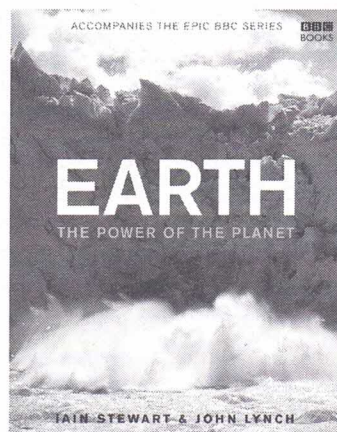
Why do we have such a profound attachment to the bush? Being Australian means being intrinsically linked to life on the land. There is a mystery and a beauty about the bush that captivates us all. This beautifully presented book celebrates our fascination with all things country. The chapter on The Natural Balance highlights the fact that Australia's ecosystem is vulnerable to pests because its native plants and animals were isolated for many millions of years and can put up little resistance to new species, almost all introduced since European settlement.



### *Earth - The Biography*

by Ian Stewart and John Lynch  
RRP \$59.95

Renowned science writers Ian Stewart and John Lynch use ground breaking imagery and the latest scientific discoveries to explain how our unique and remarkable planet functions. This lavishly illustrated book tells the epic story of the birth, life and future end of our amazing planet. This book is a must for viewers of the epic BBC series of the same name.





## *Australia: invaded by foreign plants and animals*

Australia is being invaded. Our continent is being besieged and 'eaten from within' by swarms of foreign plants, animals and diseases, collectively known as 'invasive species'. They're now one of the top three threats to biodiversity in Australia, and also cost agricultural industries dearly.

Many people are well aware of such things as foxes, rabbits and Patterson's curse, and probably much more besides. A lot of hard work happens every day to try to control these scourges, particularly by LandCare and 'friends' groups. But relatively few people, especially those outside of these circles, are aware that *new invasive species are still being allowed to establish in Australia every year!* Fewer still are actively involved in lobbying the government to take meaningful action to cut off this flow of new invasive species.

This is a disaster – for our environment, for the economy and for the people volunteering their time to battle the weeds and feral animals that are already in this country. It also makes no sense. How can we conduct an expensive fight to control existing ferals and weeds on one hand, and open the door to new invasives with the other?

The Invasive Species Council of Australia (ISC), a non-government, not-for-profit organisation, is working to prevent the spread of new weeds and feral animals in this country, and to raise awareness of the problem.



*A fox carrying an Eastern barred bandicoot*

### *What are invasive species?*

There are many definitions, but the best is probably the simplest one: A species inhabiting living space outside of its normal range. This applies to species of all kinds, including plants, animals and diseases.

However, these foreign plants and animals, weeds and diseases don't just confine themselves to little patches; they expand into whatever ecological niche

is available to them. Hence the term 'invasives', as these are aggressive species, which are invading the continent, and impacting on biodiversity. This is the reason they are sometimes also known as 'invader' species.

Australian plants and animals are unique because the continent developed in isolation for millions of years, but that also means they are particularly at risk from invasive species.

However, not all threats are from external sources; native species can become invasive as well - Australia is such a massive continent that a species indigenous to one region can be completely foreign to another.

### *Why worry about the impact invasives have on biodiversity?*

Put most simply, biodiversity is the range of all living things on earth. It is now universally accepted that the greater the number of species and the greater the overall health of those species, the better. Australian governments at all levels (federal, state/territory and local) have committed to biodiversity protection in various official documents, including the 'National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity'.

Preserving Australia's native plants and animals is critically important for many reasons:

- Species form part of natural systems, upon which we all depend for the basics of life. They provide oxygen, make topsoil, and regulate water supplies and so on. Native species do this best of all
- Many Australians want to conserve the plants and animals of our land and waters because of pride in our natural heritage. Our biodiversity is unique, and it is a blight on us that so many Australian species are in danger of extinction – or already gone. An Australia without Australian species would hardly be Australia at all
- Biodiversity underpins the economy, both directly, through eco-tourism, and indirectly through such things as protecting the natural resource base (land and water) on which farming systems depend.

### *Why do foreign species do so well here?*

It seems strange to many people that exotic species often fare so well in Australia. Why is that? Exotics do well because:

- Many species are deliberately and systematically selected for their invasive potential, such as pasture grasses



- They've left behind the predators and diseases that control them in their home territory. This knowledge sometimes leads to the importation of those predators, but the predators themselves can become invasive
- Foreign weeds often thrive on disturbance. There is a lot of opportunity for this, with logging, road building, clearing for housing estates and agriculture, cattle grazing and many other activities disrupting natural systems
- There are ecological niches available in Australia, due to past total or local extinctions, and new kinds of habitats being created by human action.

### *How are they a problem?*

'Invaders' have the potential to do great damage in several main ways:

- Competition. Invasives compete with indigenous species for resources. For example, weeds compete for light, nutrients and space with locals; grazing animals and birds compete for food and living space
- Predation. Invasive animals eat indigenous species (plants and animals), even to the point of extinction
- Ecosystem change. Some exotic species can change fundamental ecosystem processes such as water flows in rivers, leading to damaged local environments, creating a blanket of weeds. Again, this can lead to extinction of native species
- Diseases. Introduced pathogens (bacteria, viruses, moulds etc), perhaps carried by invasive animals, can have severe impacts on native species that have few natural defences against them.

### *How big is the problem?*

Enormous. The invasion of native ecosystems worldwide by exotic organisms is now widely regarded as one of the three critical threats to biological diversity, alongside climate change and land clearing.

The CSIRO estimates that, in terms of lost agricultural production and direct expenditure by governments and private individuals, weeds cost more than \$4 billion per year. This actually underplays the immense impact to Australia of invasives as a whole. It doesn't factor in the immeasurable cost of invasive species to the Australian environment, as well as the massive cost to volunteers giving their time to battle the menace and the impacts of feral animals and diseases.

Weeds alone have been implicated in the extinction of four plant species, while invasive animals, particularly the fox, rabbit and rat, are thought to have contributed to the demise of many of Australia's now extinct mammal and bird species.

### *What are the worst weeds?*

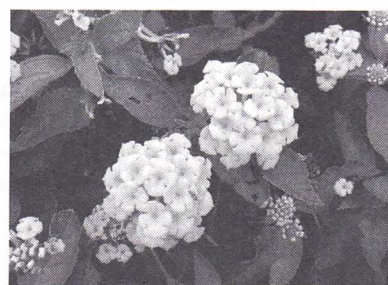
There are too many to list, as there are hundreds stalking the landscape, and new ones are regularly establishing themselves. However two lists of note do give an idea of the very worst of all those currently in the country:

The federal government's 'Weeds of National Significance' of 1999:

Alligator weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*), athel pine (*Tamarix aphylla*), bitou bush/boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*), blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*), bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*), cabomba (*Cabomba caroliniana*), Chilean needle grass (*Nasella neesiana*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), hymenachne (*Hymenachne amplexicaulis*), lantana (*Lantana camara*), mesquite (*Prosopis species*), mimosa (*Mimosa pigra*), parkinsonia (*Parkinsonia aculeata*), parthenium weed (*Parthenium hysterophorus*), pond apple (*Annona glabra*), prickly acacia (*Acacia nilotica ssp. Indica*), rubber vine (*Cryptostegia grandiflora*), salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*), serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) and willows (*Saix species*) except weeping willows and pussy willow.

Australia's Worst Environmental Weeds', 1991:

Prickly acacia, bridal creeper, para Grass (*Brachiaria mutica*), buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*), bitou bush/boneseed, rubber vine, water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), aleman grass (*Echinochloa polystachya*), reed sweetgrass (*Glyceria maxima*), hymenachne, mimosa bush, Jerusalem thorn (*Parkinsonia aculeata*), mission grass (*Pennisetum polystachion*), mesquite, salvinia, athel pine, blue thunbergia (*Thunbergia grandiflora*), japanese kelp (*Undaria pinnatifida*).



*Lantana (Lantana camara)*

### *What are the worst feral animals?*

There is no definitive list of the worst imported feral animals, but there are many candidates (the fox, rabbit and cat for example). At least 49



naturalised non-native species are known to have a direct impact on threatened native species in Australia.

The sole amphibian is the dreaded cane toad, which was deliberately imported in 1935 and became a voracious threat to our ecology virtually immediately. It is also poisonous, and is a direct threat to snakes and other animals that would normally see frogs as easy meals.

All of these animals cause environmental damage, but some animals are unofficially 'protected' because they are favourites of some sections of society. Species such as deer and wild brumbies are considered 'cute' by some, and have an economic or recreational value to others, and are allowed to breed and spread further for that reason.

No one knows how many foreign invertebrates are in the country, but a relatively recent arrival, the fire ant, is cause for particular concern. This South American species has had a huge economic and ecological impact in the US since it was accidentally imported in the 1930s, and it is beginning to do the same here.



*Cane toad*

### ***What about diseases?***

Of all the invasives actively eroding the environmental values of Australia, diseases are probably the least recognised, as they are less visible – they can't be seen hopping about or sprouting in the bush. Nevertheless, they have a severe impact.

Phytophthora may be the worst. A group of diseases that includes cinnamon fungus (also known as dieback), but also potato blight and other agricultural diseases, this fungus attacks many native plants, severely damaging many types of bushland.

Exotic disease is also strongly suspected as a cause of the disappearance of many frog species

in Australia, and may well have been at work in earlier extinctions, such as that of the thylacine – the Tasmanian tiger.

There are likely to be other diseases affecting the Australian bush and our waterways, and more are waiting in the wings for an opportunity to cross the waters and enter the continent.

### ***Is the problem confined to land only?***

No. Australian coastal waters, and inland rivers and streams, have been invaded, with the Northern Pacific sea star one of the worst invaders of all. It probably arrived in ballast water from a cargo ship, and since 1986 it has swarmed across the southern sea floor, devouring virtually everything in its path.

Japanese kelp is another of the at least fifty marine animals and plants known to have arrived here in ballast water. This plant is also now rampant in southern waters, creating vast underwater weed forests, displacing native plants and animals in the process. Riverine ecosystems are also besieged. Fish such as carp, trout and tilapia are three of the worst imports, turning rivers into 'wet deserts' as they displace native species, and even frogs where they once thrived.

Escaped aquarium fish are also having an impact - millions of fish are imported every year with inadequate controls in place, and some manage to find their way into Australian waters when dumped or their ponds overflow. Fish diseases, snails and aquarium plants can also escape, with disastrous effects.



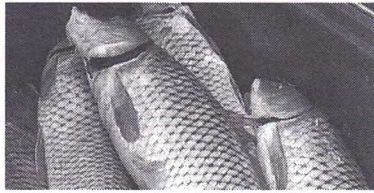
*Northern Pacific sea star*

### ***How do they become a problem?***

Most of our worst weeds and feral animals have been deliberately and legally imported, in some cases by government agencies themselves.

A large proportion of introductions fit this category, including mammals (such as the rabbit, fox and feral pig), birds (like the starling, myna, sparrow), fish (mosquito fish, carp), our ugly amphibian (the cane toad), and many weeds (for example lantana and Patterson's curse, and pasture plants such as buffel grass).





*Introduced to Australia in the 1850's Carp is now the most common fish found in the Murray-Darling Basin*

The garden industry is the source of many new weeds, as 'domestic' plants escape into the wild. Plants now thriving in Australian gardens are predicted to be at the forefront of the next wave of weeds.

Some are accidental arrivals, hitching a free ride on goods pouring into the country or across state lines on ships, aircraft and other transport. Invasives can even come in as seeds carried in the mud on the shoes of people returning from holidays.

Other banned species are illegally smuggled into the country by people displaying ignorance and sometimes greed. This is why quarantine screening services at airports are so vital.

Surely we're not still deliberately introducing weeds ... are we? Amazingly, and unfortunately, we are indeed still making 'cane toad' mistakes - over and over again, particularly with regard to plants.

Many plants, imported for domestic gardens, are weed time bombs. An average of ten new weeds establish in Australia each year, and most of these are escaped garden plants.

At last count, included in the approximately 8,720 plants for sale in Australia were over 1,130 known weeds, including at least 62 agricultural weeds. Some of the worst invasive plants currently being sold in Australian nurseries are asparagus fern, broom, fountain grass, gazania, and glory lily, hybrid mother of millions, Japanese honeysuckle, pepper tree, periwinkle and sweet pittosporum.

These plants and others already residing in Australian gardens represent the 'next wave' of garden escapes and problem weeds for Australia.

### ***What about potential new feral animals?***

There will always be a risk of new feral animals entering the country accidentally, or being smuggled in, particularly aquarium fish. More amazing is that the deliberate import of potential invasive animals hasn't stopped.

The continued call for the importation of the European bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*) to Australia is the latest case.

Feral bumblebees were discovered in Hobart in 1992, and they have since spread to all corners of Tasmania, demonstrating their great adaptability. Mainland quarantine services are alert to any sign of them crossing the water, but at least one industry group wants to import them legally. The horticulture industry has in the past applied to import bumblebees to assist greenhouse tomato production, and is believed to still favour such an approach.

The Invasive Species Council opposes any such introduction.



*European bumblebee*

### ***What is the Invasive Species Council?***

Outside the ranks of those fighting invasions in the field, few people gave much thought to the fact that new invasive species were continuing to arrive in Australia, and other earlier imports were managing to establish themselves and become chronic problems. This changed with the ground-breaking 1999 book 'Feral Future' by Tim Low.


Low made the startling point that at the same time that land managers and many community groups were working hard trying to control existing weeds, new ones were constantly being introduced into the country - with government approval - and others were being allowed to escape into the wild from 'captivity'. The government was doing little to stop this flow, and generally little attention was paid to environmental weeds as distinct from agricultural ones.

The Invasive Species Council of Australia (ISC) was subsequently formed through the efforts of Low, the environmentalist Dr Barry Truill, and other far-sighted people. It is a non-profit, non-government organisation solely dedicated to the problem of invasives, and it is now working hard to make governments, industries and individuals aware of what must be done to prevent the problem getting worse.

### ***How can we create an invasive free future?***

Federal, state and territory governments must prevent the introduction of new invasive species.





We need to close loopholes that continue to allow the legal importation of known and potential invasives, for industries such as the nursery, pastoral and aquarium trades.

This will require a range of new measures, including the introduction of 'permitted lists', at national and state/territory level. This ensures that any species imported into Australia have passed a thorough 'weed risk assessment' (WRA) and are not known weeds. This is instead of the current 'prohibited list' system, which bans some species, but allows the legal import of many thousands of known weeds. No species should be imported without passing a weed test.

#### *What else should be done?*

Improve 'rapid response' systems - even with a 'permitted list' and very strong quarantine checks at our borders, we will still have illegal and accidental imports, and some of the imported species in gardens today will inevitably escape tomorrow. Thus we will continue to have new outbreaks, but our 'early warning' identification and eradication system isn't adequate. If a potential weed or invasive animal gets through, there's a fair chance of it establishing and spreading unhindered by attempts to get rid of it.

Needed are 'rapid response' teams to quickly locate, identify and eradicate outbreaks of new invasive species. Currently, these rapid response systems vary across states, and have responsibilities scattered across different departments and levels of government. They're often under funded, and are involved in programs which don't target the most threatening new weeds.

We need a detailed national plan, co-ordinated by the Australian Government and replicated across the states and territories, to eradicate or contain new invasions. This is what the Australian Government promised in 1997 in the National Weeds Strategy. Systems and people must be properly equipped to quickly identify, assess and eradicate newly established invasive species, sometimes responding to alerts from the public, and working towards binding, measurable targets.

Mandatory labeling - we need a plant labelling system for the nursery industry. It must be mandatory, as voluntary systems are inequitable and do not work. This would comprise a range of measures including a requirement for all those selling plants to advise customers of a plant's 'weediness'.

#### *Will this save the bush and save money?*

Yes. Stopping invasives will save money, and lots of it, and also preserve many species. We know that weeds and feral animals cost many millions both in lost agricultural production and direct government

and private expenditure. We know of the wasted volunteer time and environmental degradation.

We know of the impact invasives have on native species. We also know that without doubt the best - and most cost effective - way of dealing with a problem is to not let it become a problem in the first place.

An example: Rubber vine, a Weed of National Significance, cost Queensland an estimated \$27 million in 1995, money that could have been saved if it had not been imported in the first place.

The examples of Chilean needle grass and serrated tussock are also telling: in both cases government was too slow to respond to warnings from the public when they escaped into the wild, and they are now chronic problems, requiring expensive public control programs - serrated tussock alone cost \$45 million in 1997 in NSW and Victoria

#### *What can I do to help?*

Plenty! If you're concerned about the survival of our continent's unique flora and fauna you need to make a stand against the onslaught of invasives!

The New Year is a time for action. ISC is determined to raise the profile on the issue, and to lobby governments and industry to make changes that will make a real difference in the fight against new invasives - particularly stopping the flow of new weeds. This presents a wonderful opportunity for you and/or your organisation to get involved, to provide an effective lobbying focus to complement on-ground work to control existing invasive species. There are several things that will greatly help the Invasive Species Council's efforts:

- Send a letter calling for action from the Australian Government. The more people and groups get involved, the better the chance that the government will listen
- Join ISC at [www.invasives.org.au](http://www.invasives.org.au). Your support will aid our lobbying efforts
- Invite an ISC representative to be a guest speaker
- Make a donation to ISC. Every dollar helps
- Help raise awareness. Call talkback radio; write letters to the editor of your local and state newspapers.

All Australians need to begin a new wave of action, to ensure that our governments and industries take appropriate steps to deal with what is one of the worst threats this country has ever faced. With enough support, we can make a very big difference on a hugely important issue!





# WPSA MERCHANDISE

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



**Polo shirts: \$25.00**  
(white with navy logo)



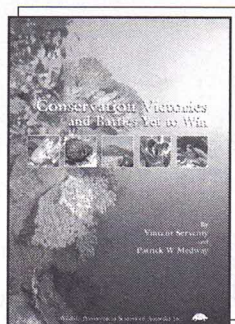
**Kids T-shirts: \$10.00**  
(navy with white logo/ white with navy logo)



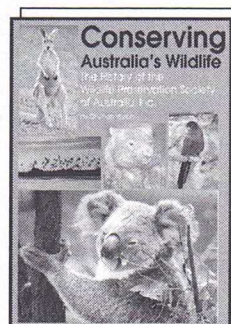
**Cap: \$10.00**  
(navy with white logo)



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



**Conservation  
Victories and Battles  
Yet to Win**  
By Vincent Serventy and  
Patrick W. Medway  
**Price: \$20.00**



**Conserving Australia's  
Wildlife**  
By Dr Joan Webb  
**Price: \$15.00**

Product	Quantity	Size	Cost per item	Total
Polo shirts	_____	M, L	\$25.00	_____
Children's T shirts	_____	4-6, 8, 10	\$10.00	_____
Caps	_____	n/a	\$10.00	_____
Drink bottle bag	_____	n/a	\$10.00	_____
Conservation Victories	_____	n/a	\$20.00	_____
Conserving Australia	_____	n/a	\$15.00	_____

Add \$5 Postage & Handling within Australia :

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

## Delivery Details

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

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

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

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

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Send this order by MAIL:  
PO Box 42,  
Brighton Le Sands NSW 2216  
or for CREDIT CARD payments  
by fax to: 02 9599 0000





*Why not become a member of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc?*  
Simply fill out this form.

Email: .....

Individual: \$35      Family: \$45      Concession (pensioner/student/child): \$25  
Associate (library, school, conservation groups): \$55      Corporate: \$65  
(Includes GST and postage within Australia. Add \$10 for overseas postage)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ **Total** \$ .....

PATRICK W MEDWAY AM  
National President





*Parndana Lodge*



