

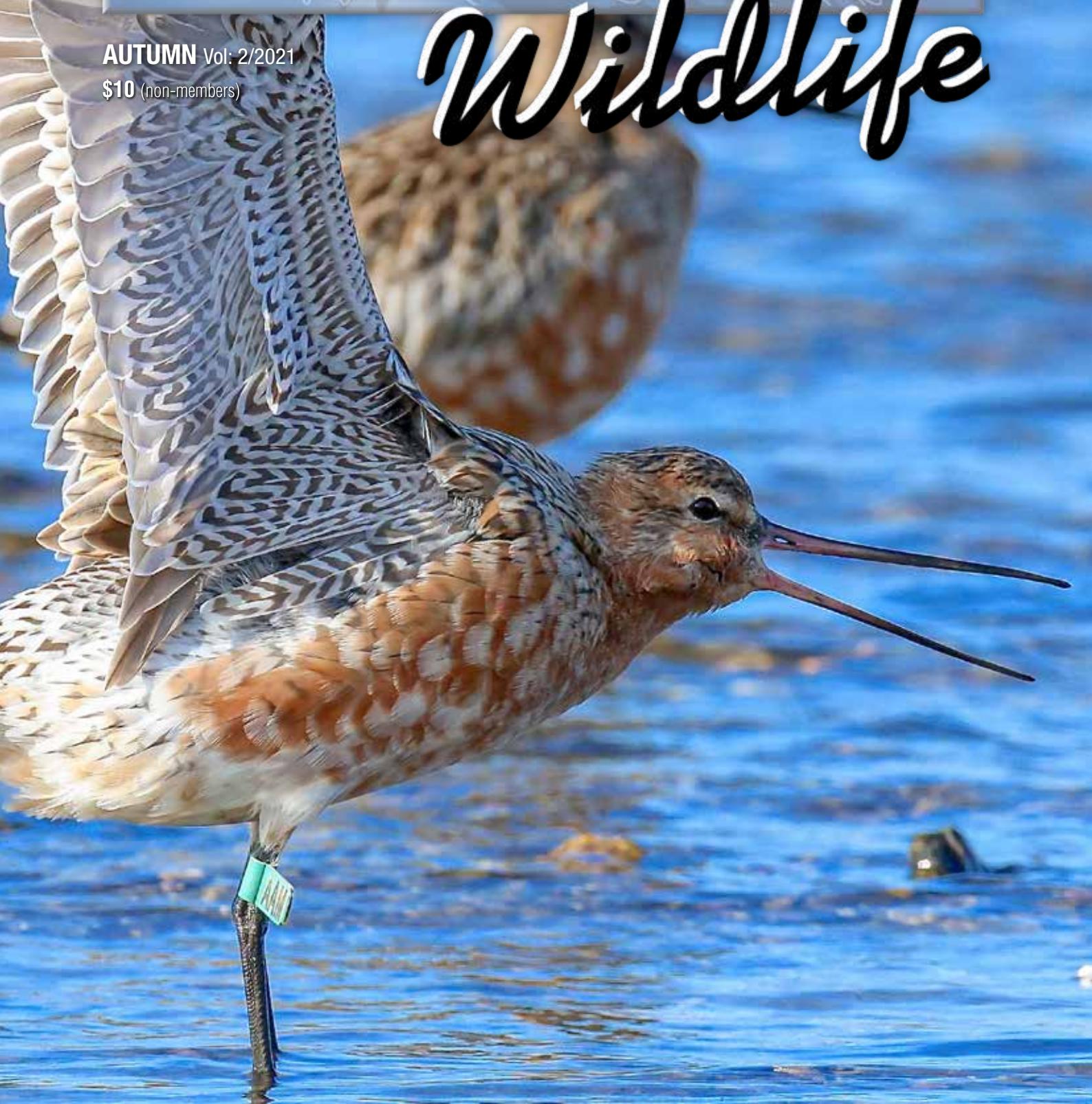


# AUSTRALIAN

# *Wildlife*

**AUTUMN** Vol: 2/2021

\$10 (non-members)



Celebrating a new century of wildlife preservation in Australia

Journal of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited

(Founded 1909)

# 112th Annual General Meeting



1. We were proud to be recognised in the Parliament of New South Wales for our outstanding work and commitment to wildlife conservation across Australia. Thank you, Mark Coure MP. Suzanne Medway AM, presented the Community Recognition Statement at the Society's Annual General Luncheon held on the 3 March 2021.

2. L to R: Suzanne Medway AM, Cate Faehrmann MP (Member of The Greens), and Patrick Medway AM.

3. Patrick Medway AM proposed a toast to 112 years of wildlife conservation by the Society and to celebrate Suzanne Medway AM's retirement and dedication to wildlife conservation over the past thirty years.

4. Minister Matthew Kean MP and Doctor Julie Old.

5. Minister Matthew Kean MP presenting a speech.

6. Rick and Lorraine Vass AM.

7. L to R: Margaret McGurgan and Sue Emmett.

8. L to R: David Edwards, Clive Williams OAM, and Professor Kevin Kenneally AM.

9. Charlie Cairncross presenting his speech supported by Noel Cislawski AM, Doctor Julie Old, and Patrick Medway AM.

10. L to R: Megan Fabian and Caitlin Gallagher.

11. L to R: Doctor Julie Old and Meg Churches.

12. L to R: Doctor Irene Ioannakis, Professor Kevin Kenneally AM, and Suzanne Medway AM.

13. L to R: Charlie Cairncross and his mum Sarah Jantos speaking with John Creighton from Wombat Care Bundanoon.

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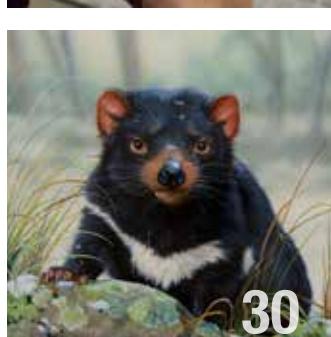


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## ON THE COVER:

### Front Cover:

Bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) is a large wader in the family Scolopacidae, which feeds on bristle-worms and shellfish on coastal mudflats and estuaries. It has distinctive red breeding plumage, long legs, and a long upturned bill. The bar-tailed godwit is listed as Vulnerable nationally. It is under threat from loss of high tide roosting and feeding habitat, which affects the birds' ability to build up the energy stores required for successful migration and breeding. Image: Robert Bush

### Back Cover:

The beach stone-curlew (*Esacus magnirostris*) is a large resident shorebird inhabiting undisturbed coastal foreshores where it feeds on crabs and other marine invertebrates. This species is Critically Endangered in New South Wales and Vulnerable in Queensland. In southeast Queensland, these birds are seen on Moreton Bay's islands and less often on the mainland. This bird was feeding on seagrass beds at Wellington Point on the Moreton Bay Ramsar wetlands. Image: Chris Walker

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**Megan Fabian**  
Editor, Australian Wildlife



## Australian Wildlife Society

Conserving Australia's Wildlife  
since 1909

## Membership

**Student Members: \$0** (Conditions apply)

**Individual Members: \$55**

**Family Members: \$70**

(being husband, wife, and children jointly)

**Concession Members: \$50**

(pensioner, student, child)

**E-mag Members: \$30**

(Australian Wildlife magazine will be distributed via email as a PDF document - no hard copy of the magazine will be sent)

**Associate Members: \$85**

(being schools or incorporated or unincorporated associations with a principal object related to conservation, nature study or education)

**Corporate Members: \$125**

(being incorporated or unincorporated associations not being associate members)

**Includes postage within Australia.**

**Add \$40 for overseas postage**

## Three Year Membership

**Individual Members: \$150**

**Family Members: \$190**

**Concession Members: \$135**

**E-mag Members: \$81**

**Associate Members: \$230**

**Corporate Members: \$340**

**Includes postage within Australia.**

**Add \$100 for overseas postage**

## Member Notice

The Australian Wildlife Society (Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited) is managed and controlled by an elected board of ten volunteer directors. The Society is a tax-deductible gift recipient and registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission. Its public fund is listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations under item 6.1.1 of subsection 30-55(1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

Any member who might like to consider serving as a director of the Society is invited to contact the national office for more details. The most important qualification to serving as a director is 'a commitment to and love of Australian wildlife'.

The Society holds regular monthly meetings on the first Wednesday of each month in Sydney.

The Editor would like to feature a member's profile in the fortnightly email newsletter and occasionally in our quarterly magazine. Members are invited to consider submitting a short article with a photograph for possible publication.

# Australian Wildlife

is the official journal of the Australian Wildlife Society (Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited).

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

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## Contact

**National Office**  
**Australian Wildlife Society**  
**(Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited)**

29B/17 Macmahon Street  
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220

**Tel:** 0424 287 297

**Email:** info@aws.org.au

**Accounts:** accounts@aws.org.au

**Editor Australian Wildlife:**

manager@aws.org.au

**Website:** aws.org.au

**Membership Hotline:**

**Mob: 0424 287 297**

**Correspondence to:**

**Hon Secretary:**

**Australian Wildlife Society**

PO Box 42, BRIGHTON LE SANDS NSW 2216

**Email:** secretary@aws.org.au



## Directors 2021

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Doctor Julie Old

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### Hon Secretary/Chief Executive Officer

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Patrick Medway AM

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wildlife management issues

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marine conservation

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biodiversity and wildlife

## Our Mission

The Australian Wildlife Society (Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited) is a national not-for-profit wildlife conservation organisation, formed in 1909, and is committed to the preservation of Australia's precious flora and fauna. We act as a watchdog and provide advice to government agencies and institutions regarding environmental and conservation issues concerning all aspects of wildlife preservation.

Our mission is to conserve Australia's fauna and flora through education and involvement of the community. We are dedicated to the conservation of our unique Australian wildlife in all its forms through national environmental education, advocacy, public awareness, community involvement, and hands-on conservation work.

Our Society has always known that a conservation battle is never really won until the victory is enshrined in legislation. We have always attempted to convince politicians of the necessity to include the preservation of Australia's precious wildlife and its vital habitat in all their planning, environmental issues, and discussions.

Articles and comments expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor, Society, or members. Articles contributed from outside sources are included for the reading enjoyment of members and to encourage discussion on different points of view.

Articles may be copied or quoted with appropriate attribution.

# From the President's desk

Doctor Julie Old - President

I am very proud to be the President of a Society that has been advocating and supporting the preservation of Australia's fauna and flora for well over one hundred years.



I am greatly honoured to be undertaking a new role in the Australian Wildlife Society as its 19th President, with Suzanne Medway AM's retirement. Suzanne was an inspirational President, and on behalf of myself and all members of the Society, I would like to wish Suzanne all the best in her well-earned retirement. President of the Australian Wildlife Society is a role I am proud to be undertaking and one I will be passionately dedicated to. As a long-standing member of the Society, I recognised the vital role the Society and its members played for more than one hundred years in preserving Australia's unique plants and animals. I am committed to continuing this great legacy for the next generation of young Australians.

Last year, Australia was on fire. We had millions of animals die either from the flames themselves or the associated lack of food availabilities for months after. We had wildlife carers in higher demand than ever for their skills in rehabilitation and emergency relief. They spent hours, days, and weeks of their time caring for sick, injured, and displaced native wildlife. The Australian Wildlife Society established a fire relief fund that supported wildlife rescue groups in New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria, and Western Australia in their efforts to care for injured and orphaned wildlife and provided much needed additional resources. More recently, we have seen fires in Western Australia, and we were again able to donate 100 percent of all donated funds directly to frontline carers to support their efforts in saving our precious wildlife and their habitat.

It will take decades for the habitat in many places to return to what it previously was. In some areas, little impacted by us, we may even have lost complete species we never even knew about. The devastation has been immense, but we all need to continue to move forward to ensure Australia's unique biodiversity is conserved for future generations.

Wildlife populations hard-hit by the bushfires and drought have been dealt another blow, with recent flooding in New South Wales likely to place

even more wildlife species at risk of extinction. Everything from bandicoots to tiny turtle hatchlings were found dead on the beaches of New South Wales. Wildlife groups fear that the populations already ravaged by prolonged drought and catastrophic bushfires will plummet even further. There are only so many extreme weather events that wildlife populations can take.

Action to protect and ensure native wildlife against increasingly frequent extreme weather is desperately needed. We must increase our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as utilising carbon-capture technology, planting more trees, integrating climate change measures into national policies, and reducing land clearing and deforestation.

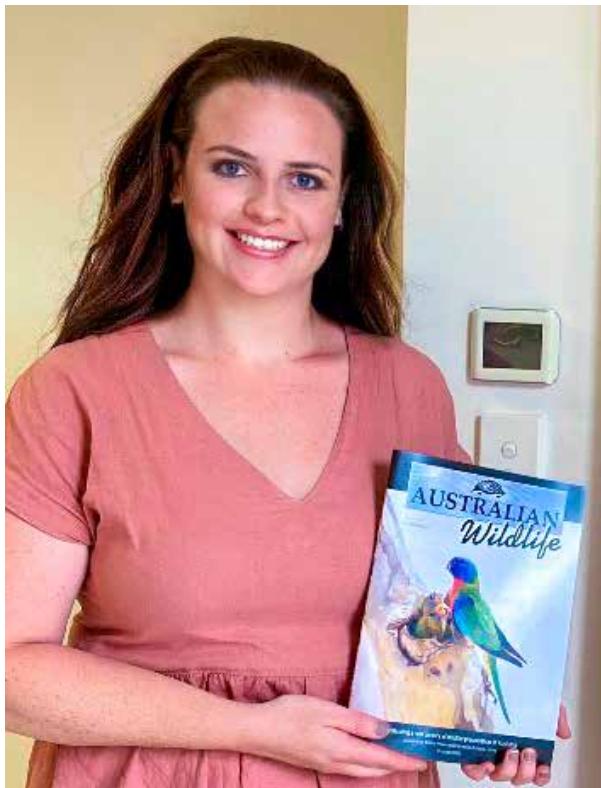
I am very proud to be the President of a Society that has been advocating and supporting the preservation of Australia's fauna and flora for well

over one hundred years. In my role as President, I will strive to continue the work of previous Presidents. I will work with the Society's members to ensure the Society continues to protect and conserve Australia's natural heritage by actively advocating for the preservation of our unique flora and fauna, whether it be supporting direct conservation efforts or educating the broader community about the importance of retaining our unique biodiversity.

I am incredibly passionate about increasing the education of children and youth because they are the environmental saviours of the future. The youth of Australia make significant contributions to the wildlife conservation movement through innovative projects and ideas. It is young people who can drive lasting and sustainable change, who will become the next ambassadors in wildlife conservation, and the successors to the Australian Wildlife Society's current board.



L to R: Suzanne Medway AM and Doctor Julie Old.



## The New Editor of Australian Wildlife is Announced

**Megan Fabian**

Suzanne Medway AM has been the Editor of the Australian Wildlife magazine for the past nineteen years. During this time, she has revamped the magazine and took it to new heights by using computer technology to help promote the importance of wildlife conservation right across Australia. The magazine's readership has spread across Australia and internationally, carrying a strong message of environmental education, wildlife conservation issues, and preservation of native wildlife. It is now the flagship of the Society.

I am honoured to be selected as the next Editor of the Australian Wildlife magazine, following Suzanne's retirement, which has a proud record and history. I want to thank Suzanne for her leadership, guidance, and support over the past six months, preparing me to become the magazine's next Editor. I am delighted to continue to promote the importance of wildlife conservation, provide a platform for students to convey their research, share the vital work of the Society, and educate the broader community about wildlife conservation issues across Australia.

The former President of the Australian Wildlife Society and Chief Editor of the Australian Wildlife magazine, Suzanne, said, "The board is thrilled to have a talented and passionate National Office Manager, Megan Fabian, move into the Editor role. During her time with the Society, Megan has authored some

of our most admired stories. She has shown not only editorial skills but a deep understanding of our audience. I have been impressed with her ability to create innovative content that our readers can connect with, and I look forward to seeing her build on what she has already achieved."

Suzanne has been an outstanding role model not only over the past six months but throughout my entire time as the National Office Manager of the Society. She has inspired me to reach my goals through her dedication and commitment to wildlife conservation action. She has always been encouraging and supportive and does not give up when confronted by obstacles such as inaction by governments or manufacturers. For example, Suzanne established the New South Wales Platypus and Turtle Alliance to advocate for a complete ban on enclosed yabby traps to help save semi-aquatic air-breathing wildlife from drowning in New South Wales rivers. Advocating for the prohibition of enclosed yabby traps and change in legislation has been an ongoing and labour-intensive process, and not once has Suzanne been deterred or discouraged.

Successfully, on 3 March 2021, the Society's and Suzanne Medway's efforts were recognised. The New South Wales Government is handing out 5,000 wildlife-friendly yabby nets to recreational anglers as part of a comprehensive program to phase out

the use of enclosed yabby traps in New South Wales from 30 April 2021.

We are indebted to the strong support from the New South Wales Platypus and Turtle Alliance members, all of whom are dedicated to preserving Australia's precious wildlife. Current Alliance supporters include Queensland Alliance for Platypus, Victorian Alliance for Platypus Safe Yabby Traps, Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, PlatypusSPOT, Queensland Conservation Council, Australian Platypus Conservancy, Nature Conservation Council, Greater Sydney Local Land Service, National Parks Association of New South Wales, University of New South Wales Sydney, Western Sydney University, University of Queensland, Centre for Ecosystem Science, Platypus Conservation Initiative, Recreational Fishing Alliance of New South Wales, Australian Ecosystems Foundation, Secret Creek Sanctuary, The Australian Mammal Society, Department of Primary Industry Fisheries New South Wales, New South Wales Council of Freshwater Anglers, Australian Conservation Foundation, Animals Australia, People for Ethical Treatment of Animals Australia, The International Humane Society Australia, Taronga Zoo, Camden Council, Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary, Zoo Victoria, Watergum PlatypusWatch, and Entangled Wildlife Australia.

**Above:** The National Office Manager, Megan Fabian, with a copy of the latest issue of Australian Wildlife.

The Victorian Government implemented a state-wide ban on enclosed yabby traps, effective from 1 July 2019. Tasmania, Western Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory have also introduced corresponding legislation. Early this year, the platypus was officially listed as Vulnerable in Victoria and is at risk of extinction. The Society is now asking the Queensland, South Australian, and Northern Territory Governments to follow the lead of other states in Australia and:

1. Implement legislation to ban enclosed yabby traps,
2. Prohibit the sale of enclosed yabby traps by retailers,
3. Implement a net exchange program, and
4. Provide a detailed timeline for the implementation of the ban.

If you come across entangled or entrapped native wildlife, please report your entrapment sighting at Entangled Wildlife Australia or email [entangledwildlifeaustralia@ihug.com.au](mailto:entangledwildlifeaustralia@ihug.com.au), especially if you come across an entangled platypus in Queensland. We are attempting to effect positive regulatory change in Queensland but need your help to do so.

I want to congratulate Suzanne on her achievements with the Australian Wildlife magazine and successful wildlife conservation outcomes during her time at the Australian Wildlife Society. I wish Suzanne the very best for the future.

I look forward to welcoming new articles and images for inclusion in the Australian Wildlife magazine. If you have any wildlife conservation topics for inclusion, please email [manager@aws.org.au](mailto:manager@aws.org.au)



Megan Fabian and Suzanne Medway AM at the 2019 Gala Ball.



Tamielle Brunt

Australian platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*). The Platypus is now Vulnerable in Victoria. Image: Tamielle Brunt



Advocating for the preservation of Australia's precious platypus.

# 112th Annual General Meeting



**The 112th Annual General Meeting of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited, trading as the Australian Wildlife Society, was held on Wednesday 3 March, at New South Wales Parliament House, Sydney.**

Suzanne Medway AM tabled the Annual Report for 2020 and highlighted the Society's achievements in wildlife conservation over the past year. The full report is featured in this magazine.

The audited Treasurer's Report for 2020 showing a healthy financial balance was tabled and adopted by the meeting's attendees.

Peter J. Varley, Chartered Accountant, Registered Company Auditor, was confirmed as the Society's auditor for 2021.

The election of the directors to sit on the board for the coming year took place. Doctor Julie Old was elected as the new President of the Society, as Suzanne Medway AM stepped down from office after thirty years of active service to the Society, and Doctor Robin Crisman was elected to join the other eight directors remaining on the board. Suzanne and Julie were presented with a small gift and a bouquet of flowers from the board to celebrate their election and retirement.

## Annual President's Luncheon

The Annual President's Luncheon was held after the Annual General Meeting in the Members' Dining Room of Parliament House, Sydney, and attended by an enthusiastic group of supporters, members, family, and friends. We were joined by the New South Wales Environment Minister Matthew Kean MP, Stephen Kamper MP (Member for Rockdale), and Mark Coure MP (Member for Oatley).

Patrick Medway AM, Chief Executive Officer, welcomed the guests, proposed a toast to 112 years of wildlife conservation by the Society, and said a few words to celebrate Suzanne Medway's retirement and dedication to wildlife conservation over the past thirty years. Stephen Kamper was invited to speak and presented Suzanne with some chocolates, followed by Mark Coure, who also said a few words and presented Suzanne with a bouquet of native Australian flowers. Suzanne concluded the opening speeches with a short presentation of appreciation.

The Society was pleased to announce the winners of its prestigious annual awards for 2020 during the luncheon proceedings.

## 2020 Serventy Conservation Award

The prestigious Serventy Conservation Award was inaugurated in 1999 to commemorate the outstanding conservation work by the Serventy family members – Vincent Serventy, his brother Doctor Dominic Serventy and his sister Lucy Serventy. Each member of the Serventy family has given a lifetime of commitment to the conservation of Australia's wildlife. The award is intended to recognise those who labour in the field for a love of nature and a determination that it should be conserved. Often, these have been non-scientists who have earned their conservation skills through pure hard work.

The award for 2020 was presented to Professor Kevin Kenneally AM of Scarborough, Western Australia.

**Above:** 2021 Board of Directors. L to R: Stephen Grabowski, Brian Scarsbrick AM, Doctor Robin Crisman, Philip Sansom, Trevor Evans, Suzanne Medway AM, Wayne Greenwood, Doctor Julie Old, Patrick Medway AM, and Ken Mason.

As a young boy, Kevin was captivated by the natural world, and he knew he wanted to study and work in the environmental field. In 1964, Kevin moved to the University of Western Australia's Botany Department, where he worked under Professor and mentor Brian Grieve, who fostered Kevin's interest in Western Australia's botany.

In 1974, Kevin visited the Kimberley, where he spent a month there as part of a biological survey of Prince Regent River Nature Reserve, during which time he fell in love with the area. He has since taken part in every major biological survey of the Kimberley, and it was in the Kimberley that Kevin developed a deep appreciation for Western Australia's Indigenous cultures.

Kevin has been a true warrior for wildlife conservation over the past fifty years, promoting and advancing nature studies and wildlife conservation in Western Australia and Australia more broadly. His work has been a life of public service where he has gone far beyond his positions' requirements. He is an Adjunct Professor with The University of Western Australia, School of Agriculture and Environment, and The University of Notre Dame, Australia Nulungu Research Institute. Kevin has published numerous books on the botany and biology of Western Australia and over two hundred research papers. His research has focused on the Kimberley and Top End of Australia, documenting and advising the government on the region's wildlife.

Kevin is a past President (and Honorary Life Member) of the Western Australian Naturalists' Club and the Kimberley Society. He has also been the President of the Western Australian Gould League at the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre for over thirty-five years. Kevin was the inaugural scientific director of the multidisciplinary LANDSCOPE Expeditions program. The program provided volunteers with the opportunity to be involved in hands-on wildlife research led by Australian and overseas scientists. Over seventeen years, the citizen science program involved over 1,000 volunteers and raised two million dollars for wildlife research.

Kevin's interests are in collaborative projects that build long-term relationships that benefit communities. Kevin is a worthy recipient of the 2020 Serventy Conservation Award for such an outstanding lifelong contribution to wildlife conservation, science, and education.



Suzanne Medway AM and Minister Matthew Kean MP presenting Professor Kevin Kenneally AM the 2020 Serventy Conservation Award.

### Acceptance Speech from Professor Kevin Kenneally AM

I am deeply honoured to receive the prestigious 2020 Serventy Conservation Award, and I thank the Australian Wildlife Society for its recognition of my life-long work.

I suspect I am one of a small number of people who had the rare privilege of spending time with Dominic (referred to as Dom), Vincent, and Lucy Serventy. Dom was the eldest and Vincent the youngest of eight children born to Victor and Antica Serventy, who had come from Croatia early last century, met on the Kalgoorlie goldfields and moved to an orchard and vineyard at Bickley, outside Perth, Western Australia. It was here where young Dom began observing and recording the Darling Scarp and Swan Coastal Plain birds. Wherever he went, Dom maintained a meticulous journal, a notebook and pencil always in his pocket, a habit instilled in him by Ludwig Glauert of the Western Australian Museum while Dom was still a schoolboy. He would pass this valuable piece of advice to many a young naturalist.

Many people know of Vincent's fascinating and exciting life through his biographical memoir *An Australian Life: memoirs of a Naturalist, Conservationist, Traveller and Writer* published in 1999. However, less well known is the enormous contribution made to natural history and wildlife conservation made by his brother Dom. It has been said that Dom was one of the nation's greatest ornithologists and one of the last contacts with the pioneering

naturalists of the Australian Region. He was a stimulating person, inspiring later generations of naturalists, myself included, with the thrill of the natural world and the discoveries yet to be made.

I was first introduced to Dom at a Western Australian Naturalists' Club meeting in the mid-1960s. About the same time, Vincent had decided to pack up his family and move to the east coast. I only caught up with Vincent when he returned to Perth to visit family and friends. Lucy, their sister, was an accountant who worked for the Attorney Generals Department and served as the Western Australian Naturalists' Club treasurer, a position she held for thirty years. Dom, a Cambridge graduate, was an ornithologist who worked for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and became internationally recognised for his thirty-year study of the migration patterns and the biology of mutton birds (*Puffinus tenuirostris*).

The Perth Wildlife Show, first conceived by Vincent in the 1950s with the support of Harry Butler (long before his highly successful television wildlife program), was held at Perth Town Hall and was packed out by thousands of Western Australian school children and the general public wishing to see and learn about Australian wildlife. In those days, live exhibits were brought in from all over the state by train and bus. I remember going to the Perth railway station to collect buckets of wildflower specimens sent in by club members for display. Vincent and Harry would give lectures



Annual General Meeting attendees. L to R: David Edwards, Candice Bartlett, Stephen Grabowski, Caitlin Gallagher, Brian Scarsbrick AM, Clive Williams OAM, John Creighton, Doctor Robin Crisman, Qiu Xiaonan, Philip Sansom, Suzanne Medway AM, Trevor Evans, Wayne Greenwood, Doctor Julie Old, Patrick Medway AM, and Ken Mason.

and display animals to an appreciative audience, and Lucy would handle the finances. Remember, this was a time before the internet and when much of Australia's wildlife was unknown to the urban-dwelling population.

As a young man, visiting Dom at his Everett Street home in Nedlands was like walking into 'Aladdin's Cave' as he had an eclectic taste. Dom collected Australiana items, including rare first editions of explorer's books and

journals, antique silver and glassware, and English horse brasses. He also had a collection of prints of prominent Australians by the great artists featured in *Vanity Fair*, the title of a Victorian periodical published in England between 1838 and 1914 and became known as the cream of the period's society magazines. Dom was always eager to explain how these items came into his possession and their historical significance. Any visit was an amazing learning experience.



Cutting the 112th Anniversary cake. L to R: Philip Sansom, Mark Coure MP, Brian Scarsbrick AM, Ken Mason, Doctor Julie Old, Stephen Grabowski, Doctor Robin Crisman, Trevor Evans, Suzanne Medway AM, Stephen Kamper MP, Patrick Medway AM, Minister Matthew Kean MP.

Also of interest were the types of visitors you might encounter at Dom's house. Because of his international reputation and a wide circle of friends, Dom's guests included people such as naturalist, filmmaker, and author Sir David Attenborough, Australian landscape artist John Olsen, artist Sir Russell Drysdale, Professor of Zoology Alan John (Jock) Marshall, Professor James Allen Keast (who started the first natural history series on Australian television in 1958-1960), and one of the 20th century's leading evolutionary biologists Professor Ernst Mayer from Harvard University.

On one field trip, Dom was accompanied by Marshall and Drysdale, who described their adventures in *Journey Among Men* published in 1966. One of Dom's most distinguished visitors was General Sir Gerald Lathbury, a senior British military figure who had served as Aide-de-camp general to the Queen and was later Governor of Gibraltar. Lathbury was a keen ornithologist and served as Vice President of Sir Peter Scott's 'Wildlife Trust' at Slimbridge, England.

As a primary school student in the 1950s in Perth, I was greatly influenced by the radio talks on nature by Crosbie Morrison. His 'Along the track with Crosbie Morrison' led me into a career in botany and natural history. I joined the Council of the Western Australian Naturalists' Club in 1964 and was given two years leave-of-absence (1967-1968) when I was conscripted into the army during the Vietnam War. After my discharge, I re-joined the Council of the Western Australian Naturalists' Club and went on to serve in multiple roles, including convenor of the junior naturalist's (1975-1980), Honorary Editor of the club's scientific journal *The West Australian Naturalist* (1980-1990), Vice-President and President (1977-1978).

In 1973, I left the Botany Department at The University of Western Australia and joined the Western Australian Herbarium staff as a research botanist – the start of a forty-year study of the Kimberley and Top End of Australia's plants and vegetation. One project was to document the flora of the Dampier Peninsula north of Broome. With the assistance of the newly established Broome Botanical Society members and the willing cooperation of the local Aboriginal communities, *Broome and Beyond: Plants and People of the Dampier Peninsula, Kimberley, Western Australia* was published in 1996. The project and publication were awarded the 1996 Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation external medal for excellence in Australian research that benefits the nation.

Because of my interest in the Kimberley, I was a founding member of the Kimberley Society established in 1992. Based in Perth, the Society had a broad focus and brought together scientists,

Kimberley residents, and Aboriginal communities to encourage research on and disseminate information about the remote region. The distribution of information was achieved through lectures, conferences, expeditions, and monthly meetings. I was a member of the executive committee from the Society's inception in 1992, the scientific editor of the Society's occasional publications, and served as the President from 1997-2000.

One of my most rewarding experiences has been my involvement with the Western Australian Gould League, a not-for-profit independent environmental organisation that educates people to understand, appreciate, and protect the environment. The Western Australian Gould League was formed in 1939 with Charles Hadley as its first President, who was, at the time, the Director of Education. Membership rose quickly, and over 18,000 school students became members by 1955. Today, the Western Australian Gould League maintains a strong relationship with Catholic, Independent, and Department of Education schools, with annually some 7,500 students experiencing its environmental education programmes.

Vincent Serventy was a founding member of the Western Australian Gould League. In 1951, he participated in the first annual Gould League School Camp at Bickley, located on the Darling Scarp alongside the picturesque Bickley Reservoir, twenty-five kilometres from Perth. The school camp was a grand experiment in taking fifty primary school children from across the state for a fortnight schooling in the bush to participate in hands-on-learning nature studies'. I was involved in the school camp from the early 1970s, often sharing duties with Kevin Griffiths, a teacher with Vincent on the first Bickley adventure. In the 1990s, the removal of Education Department funding saw the Bickley School Camp's demise, a great shame. It was educational, fun, and greatly appreciated by the students who attended. It was, at the time, the longest-running school camp of its kind in Australia.

Herdsman Lake is the largest wetland in the inner metropolitan area located on the Swan Coastal Plain, six kilometres north-west of Perth and supports a diversity of wildlife. In 1984, the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, a purpose-built environmental education centre, funded by public donations coordinated by the World Wide Fund for Nature, was constructed on the lake's shores. The Indigenous program conducted at the Wildlife Centre, part-funded by Catholic Education, aims to provide a bridge of shared understanding between contemporary and traditional thinking about the importance of caring for our environment and using our natural resources responsibly. The teaching is achieved



Mark Coure MP presenting Suzanne Medway AM with a bouquet of flowers to celebrate her retirement.



Stephen Kamper MP presenting Suzanne Medway AM with a box of chocolates to celebrate her retirement.

by engaging students in traditional Noongar practices such as storytelling and traditional art and language. The students are immersed in local Wadjuk Noongar culture under the direction of Noongar leaders.

During my career, I have imparted the lessons that I learnt from the Serventys. There is always a need for scientists to

involve the community in natural history studies to conserve Australia's precious wildlife for future generations. I have had incredible support from my colleagues, friends, volunteers, and family in my life's journey. Furthermore, my wife, Doctor Irene Ioannakis, has provided the love, support, and encouragement that has allowed me to be the recipient of such a prestigious award. Thank you.



Retiring President, Suzanne Medway AM, with the newly elected President, Doctor Julie Old, accepting their flowers from the board at the Society's Annual General Meeting held on the 3 March 2021.



Suzanne Medway AM and Minister Matthew Kean MP presenting Queensland Wader Study Group the 2020 Community Conservation Award, accepted on behalf of David Edwards (Chairman).

## 2020 Community Wildlife Conservation Award

The Community Wildlife Conservation Award is awarded to a community group that is making a significant contribution to wildlife preservation in Australia.

The award for 2020 was presented to the Queensland Wader Study Group of Clayfield, Queensland.

The Queensland Wader Study Group is a dedicated community group. For about thirty years, volunteers have been conducting migratory shorebird surveys from Cape York, Queensland, to the New South Wales border. The migratory shorebird surveys are a citizen science project which has been remarkably successful over such a long period. The training and education which volunteers receive are also open to the public. The Queensland Wader Study Group has identified key habitat sites for shorebirds, educational signs have been erected, and educational programs are organised for the general public.

In addition to school programs, the group has developed a children's education mobile application – 'My Shorebird Watcher'. The mobile application is designed for children to study the shorebirds along Queensland's coastline and meet Australian education curriculum requirements. Queensland Wader Study Group has also involved local groups in building roost sites to protect the shorebirds.

The Queensland Wader Study Group has a massive data collection from its long-term observations. Some of the data has been used to produce scientific papers in collaboration with university research centers. The data has also helped identify threatened species and protect key habitat sites. The designation of RAMSAR sites on Queensland's coastline, including Moreton Bay, was primarily built on Queensland Wader Study Group's data.

The Queensland Wader Study Group is a real example of a community group. The group is an excellent example of what citizen science can achieve and is very worthy of the 2020 Community Wildlife Conservation Award.

### Acceptance Speech from Queensland Wader Study Group David Edwards, Chairman, Queensland Wader Study Group

I would like to thank the Australian Wildlife Society, the President, the Board, and members for bestowing the Community Wildlife Conservation Award to the Queensland Wader Study Group. We are both honoured and excited to receive this prestigious award.

The Queensland Wader Study Group was founded in 1992. Technically, we are a division of the Queensland Ornithological Society Incorporated. The best way to describe us is that we are a particular interest group of Birds Queensland. We are dedicated to the study and protection of waders (also called shorebirds) and their habitat. To that end, we are very much an activities-based group.

From the earliest days, volunteers have been out in nature splashing through mud in good and bad weather conditions, counting and recording shorebird numbers. The Queensland Wader Study Group has sampled shorebird numbers every month since 1992, collecting data from nearly ninety shorebird high-tide roost sites on the Queensland coast. We have also undertaken many surveys of shorebirds in the more remote areas of Queensland. These have included the Great Sandy Strait, the extended Mackay region, the lower Gulf of Carpentaria, the rivers of the western side of the York Peninsula, and Bowling Green Bay near Townsville.

Implementing our survey collection work means that we have a vast database of shorebird sightings used by governments for the appropriate management of wildlife and habitats. University students and researchers also use the data to publish scientific publications that measure shorebird population size and distribution changes.

We have also been very active in catching shorebirds, taking measurements, and using several tracking methods to track their movements. Initially, coloured flags were used to follow migratory shorebirds. However, in the late 1990s, we were one of the first groups to use satellite trackers. The Endangered far eastern curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*) of south-eastern Queensland was the first targeted shorebird to be satellite tracked – a world first to document its movements in the East Asian-Australasian flyway.

From those early days, we have kept up to date with new developments in tracking. Smaller and smaller satellite trackers, geolocators, and radio transmitters have all been used by the Queensland Wader Study Group to follow shorebirds locally and internationally. Using these methods, we have successfully tracked the far eastern curlew, Eurasian whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*), bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), Pacific golden plover (*Pluvialis fulva*) and grey-tailed tattler (*Tringa brevipes*). Today, the techniques are so sophisticated that you can use your mobile phone to see where the shorebirds are in real-time.

The Queensland Wader Study Group is also very mindful of the importance of education to inform and influence the public's wildlife conservation behaviour. We hold identification days in the field to explain the intricacies of shorebird identification to beginners and experts alike. Our shorebird courses are always well-attended, during which we provide a complete overview of shorebird identification, migration, and conservation. We have developed a mobile application to use as a teaching tool for children when they are out bird watching, which is proving very popular. Informing the broader community on Queensland's shorebirds also occurs through our website and Facebook page.

Like so many groups, we are passionate about our speciality, which is both a blessing and a curse. Knowing so much about each speciality is a blessing. However, the curse is that influential voices and messages are often lost in the modern world's cacophony.

The Queensland Wader Study Group has been informing governments (local, state, and federal) of the decline in shorebird numbers for approximately the last fifteen years. I am sure that this is the same for so many other community groups. To draw on today's reality: all state governments are looking to and relying on medical science to help them get through the COVID-19 pandemic. So, now is the time for them to listen to the science that citizen scientists give them to make wise decisions for the future.

I accept the 2020 Community Wildlife Conservation Award on behalf of all the hard-working volunteers of the Queensland Wader Study Group, but I would also like to extend it to the other community groups working hard to preserve Australia's wildlife.

## 2020 Wildlife Rehabilitation Award

The Wildlife Rehabilitation Award is awarded to an individual or a conservation group contributing to the preservation of Australia's wildlife. Many people find the experience of rehabilitating native wildlife rewarding; however, it is time-consuming and can be very expensive. The award is intended to acknowledge and commemorate the individuals or conservation groups working tirelessly to support, rehabilitate, and conserve Australia's native wildlife on behalf of the whole community.

The award for 2020 was presented to Meg Churches of Camperdown, New South Wales.

Inside Meg Churches' household in inner Sydney, New South Wales, there are many dummies, baby wipes, and colourful hand-sewn blankets. Meg Churches is a dedicated, eccentric wildlife rescuer who specialises in Australia's bats. Meg has been engaged with the rescue and rehabilitation of Australia's bats for the past fourteen years, especially the Vulnerable grey-headed flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*).

Meg is an active Wildlife Information, Rescue, and Education Service (WIRES) volunteer and is currently the bat coordinator for the inner-west branch. The inner-west branch is located in Sydney and covers approximately one hundred suburbs (some shared with other branches) and cares for more than four thousand native animals each year. Meg also joined the Wollie Creek



Suzanne Medway AM and Minister Matthew Kean MP presenting Meg Churches the 2020 Wildlife Rehabilitation Award.

Preservation Society to help count the flying-fox population (via fly-out counts) at Turrella and Wollie Creek and shared her knowledge and insights on these beautiful animals.

Meg carries out many and sometimes quite tricky rescues of injured bats or bats that are in trouble – both microbats and flying-foxes. She rescues both adults and juveniles (or pups). Meg will travel widely around Sydney in her car, at short notice, at various times, and in varied weather and traffic conditions to carry out these rescues. Meg is very skilled, calm, compassionate, and quite inventive when carrying out wildlife rescues. Furthermore, Meg films her rescues and posts the videos on her YouTube channel. She uses her YouTube channel as a creative way to educate and inform people about Australia's bats.

During flying-fox pup season, Meg is involved in many rescues of pups who have come to grief or whose mum has come to grief through entanglement, electrocution on powerlines, or injuries from feeding on introduced trees, to name a few. Meg cares for the pups at her home and may have multiple pups in care at any one time. Caring for pups is an around-the-clock task, and there is a significant commitment of time, energy, and resources involved. Meg will administer several bottle feeds per day when the pups require bottle feeding and will prepare fruit for them once they have been weaned.

The products she makes for flying-foxes and microbats include fabric pouches and wraps, latex dummies, and teats for bottles. Meg's personal parking space also doubles as a storage or transit area for more oversized items related to wildlife rescue and rehabilitation. For example, sometimes young juveniles or rescued adults may need extra acute care post-rescue, and Meg has two incubators to fulfil that need.

Wildlife rehabilitators such as Meg play a vital role in conserving Australia's native wildlife for future generations. The Society is delighted to present Meg with the prestigious Wildlife Rehabilitation Award for 2020.

## Acceptance Speech from Meg Churches

Thank you for the award and for acknowledging the wildlife rehabilitation work I have implemented for more than a decade of my life.

As with most positive things in my life, my fascination with bats came about quite accidentally. I was at the vet with one of my birds, and a wildlife carer arrived to collect a crested pigeon chick (*Ocyphaps lophotes*), and I thought that caring for native wildlife was something I could do. So, I decided to join Wildlife Information, Rescue, and Education Service to care for parrot chicks in the busy chick season. However, the vet said to me, "you do not want to rescue birds; your birds might get sick from wild birds. You should rescue possum joeys". This comment prompted me to change my

mind. I thought, “I’ll care for possum joeys instead. They will be cute, fluffy, cuddly, and they will love me.” I was slightly naive and unrealistic back then.

At the Wildlife Information, Rescue, and Education Service introductory wildlife rescue course, I was informed that you feed possums, change them, and put them back. You do not play with them or humanise them because they are solitary animals that need to remain solitary to survive in the wild. The next section of the course introduced Australia’s bats, an animal that never entered my mind as requiring rescue or care. With flying-foxes, I was informed that not only are you allowed to love them, but you need to love them. You have to be their mum, and you have to cuddle them, play with them, and interact with them because they are social animals that live in roosts (also known as a colony). Their mums are very tactile with them; therefore, they require hands-on love and care. They are intelligent, funny, and curious and need emotional and social stimulation. This information was music to my ears. I had a lot of love to give, and so I decided to become a bat carer.

Juvenile bats expect to be with their human mum as much as possible. They are pretty comfortable hanging on you and urinating on you, if possible. A clean shirt is always an invitation to be urinated on within seconds. If their biological mum was urinated on, they would lick it all up to clean themselves, but I draw the line at that. That is what baby wipes are for.

Although I instantly loved the juveniles, I learned to love the adults, who were a little more challenging. At first, I was scared of the adults, but now I am more than comfortable rescuing them. I often say, “Yes, I love your large wings, and you have very impressive teeth, but I am bigger and scarier than you are, and I have opposable thumbs, so yell all you like, but you are coming with me.”

I started rescuing bats because I wanted to raise the juveniles, but my reason for rescuing and rehabilitating them now is much different – I love and appreciate them as a species. I rescue bats because, unfortunately, they need rescuing in this day and age. More than two hundred bat species in sixty countries worldwide are considered threatened (Critically Endangered, Endangered, or Vulnerable), and there are so few bat rescuers overall – most wildlife rescuers are afraid of them.

Caring for bats is an enormously satisfying thing to do because you see the direct and immediate consequences of your work. For example, if you rescue a bat from a dire situation, and they are okay in a few days, you get to release them back into the colony. You get to watch them fly home, which is the best feeling ever. If I have a terrible week with

several injured bats coming into care that do not make it to the point of release, one successful release of a rehabilitated bat, back to its colony, keeps me going for weeks. I dance around with a silly grin on my face watching it power itself back up into the tree.

I love to do a tricky bat rescue. The more challenging the bat rescue is, the more satisfying it is. For example, I enjoy the challenge of lateral thinking and figuring out creative ways to rescue a bat that is seven metres up a tree and five metres out from the bank of a river, hanging from its wrist tangled in a fishing line. I am not afraid of acquiring the upper body strength of passing males to achieve things I cannot physically do or seeking the assistance of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service and their reliable equipment and resources. I have bought and made a lot of equipment over the years to fish injured or juvenile bats up to twelve metres high in the canopy of trees with poles and nets, and there is always duct tape to jury rig or tweak what I have to adapt to the situation. Duct tape is my go-to fix for pretty much everything. Needless to say, I am committed to obtaining my bat successfully.

Although I was aware that I had been nominated for the Wildlife Rehabilitation Award, I did not expect to receive this prestigious award. Upon receiving the letter informing me that I had been accorded this honour, it was a delightful surprise. The award acknowledges fourteen years of dedication and commitment to protecting Australia’s bats and gives profile and acknowledgement to the people I work with and the importance of preserving Australia’s precious bats for future generations.

Bats have a terrible reputation for being disease-ridden vermin or flying rats, but they are neither. With the onset of COVID-19, I cannot help but think that bats’ reputation has lost more ground with the general public. An encounter with bats is mostly purely and simply a result of human interference. Unfortunately, land clearing, habitat loss, and overdevelopment drive bats and other native wildlife into urban areas. They are losing their homes and food sources that they depend on for survival at an alarming rate. We need to ensure that we protect the natural spaces we have left and restore the areas that have been damaged.

In the tradition of good things in my life happening without conscious planning, accidentally created a YouTube channel when I was learning to edit a video during a course at the Apple Store, “So what do I do with it now?” I asked. When I had edited my first video, the trainer said, “you make a YouTube channel, of course,” and so I did. It took four years before I became an instant overnight success with a viral video, and since then, I have built up the most

successful bat YouTube channel in the world. I use video glasses to record the wildlife rescues from my point of view. I do hundreds of wildlife rescues per year which gives me plenty of footage for my YouTube channel. My YouTube channel reflects real life, and I publish the video whether or not the bat survives. People must know that Australia’s bats are not just cute and fluffy, but that rescues of bats are an uncompromising labour of love, with a variably low survival rate. Bat rescues are not for the fainthearted.

I have added a lot of education into my video descriptions, and I am available to my viewers if they ask questions. My YouTube channel has grown to 220,000 subscribers and ninety-three million views. Comfortingly, I have had many viewers commenting on my videos that I have changed their opinions about bats. The YouTube channel provides me with a platform to show people how adorable these animals are and how necessary they are for the environment and the health of our rainforest ecosystems. To visit my YouTube channel, please visit <https://www.youtube.com/c/Megabattie/videos>

I believe that the grey-headed flying-fox, the main species of flying-fox found in my area, will be functionally extinct in my lifetime, which is terrifying. They are currently listed as Vulnerable to extinction nationally, and therefore we must do what we can to protect them and secure a safe and successful future for them.

## 2020 Youth Conservation Award

The youth of Australia make significant contributions to the wildlife conservation movement through innovative projects and ideas. It is young people who can drive lasting and sustainable change, who will become the next ambassadors in wildlife conservation, and hopefully the successors to the current board of the Australian Wildlife Society. We aim to inspire young people to have a stake in wildlife conservation by rewarding and recognising their efforts.

The award for 2020 was presented to eight-year-old Charlie Cairncross of Fingal Head, New South Wales.

Charlie has been a wildlife carer from the day he was born. He has grown up in a home that cares for macropods, birds, and other native marsupials such as possums and gliders. Charlie spends much time searching for native food sources to feed these animals, cleans enclosures, and advocates for their privacy, safety, and successful release. Although naturally shy, these skills and knowledge have helped Charlie find a sense of purpose and structure, bringing him much joy.

Charlie has been an active Junior Wild Defender at Green Heroes since the age of five. Charlie contributes to the creation of meaningful conservation projects that engage young children in wildlife conservation action. In response to the bushfires, Charlie's idea was to travel into heavily affected areas and link children to orphaned and injured wildlife affected by the bushfires. As a result, Charlie was able to help create the Wildlife Adoption Program and a short film that inspired children and schools in every state of Australia to sponsor orphaned wildlife. Of the funds raised, 100 percent of proceeds went directly to wildlife carers for medical supplies needed to care for orphaned wildlife.

Charlie has begun to engage in public speaking at school assemblies and community gatherings to share his ideas with other children. Since its launch in December 2019, Charlie's Wildlife Adoption Program has raised over \$10,000 for the care of orphaned native wildlife by preschool and primary school children across Australia. Before this, Charlie focused on native bee conservation by promoting native beehives and habitats in schools, preserving native tree hollows for hollow-dwelling native wildlife, and promoting wildlife-friendly gardens.

Charlie is dedicated to preserving and protecting native Australian wildlife and is currently working on a second project and short film to be released in a few months. To view the current project and short film, please visit [www.greenheroes.org.au/adopt-a-joeys](http://www.greenheroes.org.au/adopt-a-joeys)

### Acceptance Speech from Charlie Cairncross

Thank you to the Australian Wildlife Society for choosing me to receive this award and honouring the little people's power in Australian Conservation.

My mum and I have always rescued, rehabilitated, and released native wildlife at our home in northern New South Wales, but last summer, as bushfires damaged the land, we volunteered to travel to the south coast of New South Wales to provide additional assistance to small wildlife shelters such as Majors Creek Wombat Refuge.

I will never forget it. When we arrived, there were lots of little fires still burning all around us. We met the wildlife carers who had tears in their eyes, sadness in their voices, and too many animals to look after. We helped as much as we could, but I knew more help was needed. With my family and friends' help, I made a short film to send to preschools across Australia, asking children, just like me, to help by sponsoring a bushfire-affected animal. Over 4,000 children in 170 preschools across Australia fundraised to



Patrick Medway AM presenting eight-year-old Charlie Cairncross the 2020 Youth Conservation Award.

sponsor an animal. Together, we raised over \$13,000. That is a significant amount of money raised by three- and four-year-olds.

In some ways, I receive the honour of this award on behalf of those children. But as children, we want to do more. We may be small, but our hearts are big. We worry about what is happening to our world. We understand the difference between token gestures and a true call to action. The race to protect Australia's native wildlife is real, and when we are given a real opportunity to be part of it, children will rise to the occasion.

This year, I will continue to promote the Wildlife Adoption Program to help wildlife carers and native animals. I will also be working with Green Heroes to give children more opportunities to protect and preserve native wildlife – before they suffer, before they are injured, and before it is too late. We may not be able to save the world before bedtime, but together we can change the world.

I am Charlie, and I am eight-years-old. Thank you for giving me a voice. I look forward to working with you now and in the future for the benefit of Australia's precious wildlife.

# Australian Wildlife Society University Research Grants

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

The Australian Wildlife Society University Research Grants are scholarships offered to honours or postgraduate students at Australian universities. Each year, ten \$1,500 grants are awarded.

**Applicants must be a member of the Society**, student membership is free and you can join through our website [www.aws.org.au](http://www.aws.org.au). Please send a copy of your student ID to [info@aws.org.au](mailto:info@aws.org.au)

Grants are available for research projects of direct relevance to the conservation of Australian wildlife - plant or animal. Grants may be used for the purchase of equipment and consumables, travel expenses related to field research, or attendance at conferences at which you are presenting your work. The grant is paid directly to the student.

## PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION FOR A GRANT

Applications should be a maximum of 3-4 pages (12 point font), including a brief CV and should be set out under the headings below (a reference list is not required).

**APPLICATIONS EXCEEDING FOUR PAGES WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**

**Introduction:** Briefly introduce the background to your research topic, specify the project's aims, and outline its importance to the conservation of wildlife.

**Methods:** Briefly outline your proposed methodology. We require only sufficient detail to demonstrate that your aims are achievable. Remember that the assessors may not be familiar with your field of research. You must also indicate that you have obtained (or at least applied for) any relevant research licences, permits or approvals (including animal ethics).

**Schedule:** Outline a proposed timeframe for the completion of your project, listing major milestones, including the submission of a final report to the AWS.

**Budget:** Itemise the expenses involved in conducting your research. Any funds already secured from other sources must also be declared. (This will not reduce your chances of success, provided there are necessary items in your budget that are not yet funded).

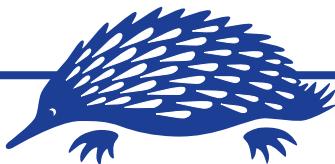
**Brief CV:** The final page of your application should consist of a short CV, which should demonstrate your ability to produce results of a high standard within a limited timeframe. Also include the details of two referees who can comment on the proposed project, one of whom should be your academic supervisor. A current postal address is to be provided.

Please prepare your application as a single 'Word' document, and submit it as an email attachment to [info@aws.org.au](mailto:info@aws.org.au). For convenience, it would be helpful to name your file according to the format: 'Your Name AWS Grant Year', e.g. 'Joe Bloggs AWS Grant 2021'.

**CLOSING DATE: APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY 31ST MAY EACH YEAR.  
APPLICANTS WILL BE NOTIFIED BY MAIL IN JULY.**

## CONDITIONS OF SPONSORSHIP

Recipients of Australian Wildlife Society grants will be requested to acknowledge the Society's contribution in all publications and presentations arising from their project. In addition, recipients will be required to submit a brief report on their project to the Society for use in the Society's magazine, Australian Wildlife.



## AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE SOCIETY

(ACN 134 808 790)

# PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020

### A Year in Review

The past year has been catastrophic, to say the least, with the brunt of the 2019-2020 summer bushfires, flash flooding, and COVID-19 pandemic devastating the country. The Society was extremely fortunate that we were still able to continue our work to protect Australia's precious wildlife during these difficult times. I was honoured to be elected as President following the Annual General Meeting. We were delighted to welcome two new members to the Board – Brian Scarsbrick AM, the former Chief Executive Officer of the National Trust of Australia New South Wales, and Doctor Robin Crisman, Head Veterinarian, Director, and Principal Owner of Somersby Animal Hospital. For the first time in over one hundred years, the board of the Society decided to establish a new National Office in Hurstville, New South Wales, to cope with its expanding wildlife conservation work across Australia. We also welcomed a new Clerical Assistant to our team – Sisilia Citrajaya.

One of the highlights of the year was the presentation of our four awards – the **Serventy Conservation Award**, **Community Wildlife Conservation Award**, **Wildlife Rehabilitation Award**, and **Youth Conservation Award**. We know that many organisations and thousands of volunteers are working tirelessly to save Australia's threatened wildlife, as well as the humble and more common species and the habitats in which they live. We are aware of the wonderful work being carried out by wildlife conservation organisations and volunteers across the country. We are very proud to acknowledge and reward these individuals and wildlife conservation groups and encourage them to continue their wildlife conservation work on behalf of the whole community.

Another highlight was the awarding of our ten University Scholarships offered to honours or postgraduate students at Australian universities. Each year, ten \$1,500 grants are awarded. Grants are available for research projects of direct relevance to the conservation of Australian wildlife – flora or fauna. We also awarded three special scholarships at the University of Technology Sydney, University of New South Wales, and Western Sydney University.

### E-newsletter

Our monthly e-newsletter, Manager's Messages, has also proven to be very popular with our members, and we encourage members to forward the newsletters to their family, friends, and associates to help spread the important message of wildlife conservation across Australia. We launched 'AusWildKids', a section in the newsletter dedicated to educating and engaging young people in wildlife conservation. We extend a big thank you to Linda Dennis, Editor of the E-news bulletin, for her valuable work in keeping us regularly informed on wildlife matters.

### Website

We continue to update our website to make it more user-friendly. Changes to the structure and layout will be an ongoing process. This year also saw the improvement and development of the 'Members' Resource Centre, the destination for member resources and materials on various animals and wildlife-related topics – the Australian Wildlife magazine, e-books, presentations, videos, forms, guides and so much more. The 'Members' Resource Centre contains resources for parents, teachers, university students and young adults, and children.

### Social Media

Social media is now a critical part of the way people in most walks of life communicate. We are now actively involved in five social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube). We aim to keep our followers up to date with important actions of the Society and the collective work being promoted nationally. Our followers continue to grow each month. We reached over a massive 11,000 followers on Facebook and 12,000 followers on Instagram. Thank you to all our volunteers for assisting us with managing our social media platforms. A special thank you to Dr Jai Green-Barber (Instagram), Linda Dennis and Kate Dutton-Register (Facebook), Nyssa Braid (Twitter), and Greg Dawson (Facebook photography).

### Australian Wildlife Magazine

The Australian Wildlife magazine, the flagship of the Society, has proved to be extremely popular amongst all our members. We invite members to distribute copies to family and friends and invite them to become members. A special thank you to our Sub-editor, Megan Fabian, for her valuable contribution in assisting with editing the magazine.



Summer Cover



Autumn Cover



Winter Cover



Spring Cover

## Annual General Meeting and President's Luncheon

The 111th Annual General Meeting of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited, trading as the Australian Wildlife Society, was held on Wednesday 4 March in Sydney. The Annual President's Luncheon was held after the Annual General Meeting, in Cello's Restaurant at Castlereagh Boutique Hotel in Sydney, and attended by an enthusiastic group of supporters. Megan Fabian, National Office Manager, welcomed the guests and introduced Suzanne Medway AM, President, who proposed a toast to 111 years of wildlife conservation by the Society. The Society was pleased to announce the winners of its prestigious awards for 2019 during the luncheon proceedings.



The Society's Board of Directors cut the 111th anniversary cake. L to R: Philip Sansom, Ken Mason, Suzanne Medway AM, Stephen Grabowski, Doctor Julie Old, Brian Scarsbrick AM, Alice Suwono, Trevor Evans, and Patrick Medway AM.



L to R: Suzanne Medway AM, Malinda Ly, Justine Pacampara, Hollie Deste, Michael Manahan, and Patrick Medway AM.



L to R: Doctor Robin Crisman, Katerina Skarbek, Doctor Julie Old, Roz Holme, and Kev Holme.

## Membership

This year saw the launch of Australian Wildlife Week. Australian Wildlife Week is commemorated across the country during the first week of October, each year, to encourage a positive relationship between humanity and nature. To celebrate this inaugural event, we offered 50 percent off membership in the hope of raising awareness of wildlife conservation issues across Australia and inspire all Australians to develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues, gain the necessary skills to make informed decisions, and take action to improve the environment.

## Our Mission

Part of our Mission Statement reads: **“Our mission is to conserve Australia’s fauna and flora through education and involvement of the community. We are dedicated to the conservation of our unique Australian wildlife in all its forms through national environmental education programs, political lobbying, advocacy, and hands-on conservation work.”** To fulfil this goal, we introduced the University Student Grants Scheme in 2005 and since its inception, we have awarded over 155 grants to very worthy recipients. In 2016, we increased the grant from \$1,000 to \$1,500 and, in the future, plan to steadily increase the dollar amount of the grants subject to further donations, which are always welcome.

## Wildlife Science Ecology Research Scholarships

The **University Technology Sydney Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship** was awarded to UTS Centre for Compassionate Conservation PhD student Chris Hasselerharm for his research on ‘Provenance detection using novel real-time forensics and its application in the illegal wildlife trade.’

The **University of New South Wales Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship** was awarded to UNSW School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences PhD student Ben Stepkovich for his research on ‘Ecosystem effects of western quolls (*Dasyurus geoffroii*) reintroduction on prey species inside a fenced reserve.’

The **Western Sydney University Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship** was awarded to WSU Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment PhD student Ivan Kotzur for his research on ‘Understanding and mapping how thermal and dietary constraints combine to restrict koala habitat and determine refugia.’

## Life Members

Life members play a significant role in the conservation of Australia’s wildlife. We recognise and award their efforts and commitment to protecting Australian wildlife.



Ken Mason being presented with his Life Member's certificate by Patrick Medway AM.

## Wildlife Conservation Awards

The winner of the **Serventy Conservation Award** was Alexandra Seddon of Merimbula, New South Wales. Alexandra has devoted her life to the protection of Australia's wildlife. Since she and her husband bought their first property, in Crowsnest in Candelo New South Wales in 1975, Alexandra has acquired three other properties, all devoted to wildlife conservation. In 2001, Alexandra purchased the Batty Towers Flying Fox Sanctuary to protect local flying foxes. Batty Towers Flying Fox Sanctuary became the main roosting site on the South Coast of New South Wales for the vulnerable grey-headed flying fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*). In 2006, Alexandra used an inheritance to purchase Potoroo Palace at Yellow Pinch, New South Wales. Alexandra established Potoroo Palace as an environmental education centre, a charity, and handed the rights of the property to the local community so that it can never be sold. Today, Potoroo Palace is an active educational centre where people visit to learn about native wildlife.

The winner of the **Community Wildlife Conservation Award** was Belgian Gardens State School of Belgian Gardens, Townsville. This school, for several years, has been an active participant in the conservation of the black-throated finch (*Poephila cincta*). It has an active partnership with the Northern Queensland Dry Tropics and black-throated finch recovery program. The school has a specially designed enquiry unit for year four students. Under this program, the students learn about the life cycle of the finch, the threats it faces, and the actions taken by science to help it. Learning is not just theoretical but also practical. The school maintains its own aviary and students are involved in the care of the birds and make regular observations. Learning is not confined to the students, as the school informs the community through its school newsletter. Furthermore, an open day was held to educate the community about the program. The event attracted four hundred people.

The winner of the **Wildlife Rehabilitation Award** was John Creighton of Bundanoon, New South Wales. John cares for orphaned, injured, and mangled wombats and educates the community about the common wombat or bare-nosed wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*). In the field, John follows wombats and installs medicated burrow flaps. Wombats are treated for mange when they enter or leave their burrows. John is the founder of Wombat Care Bundanoon (WCB) and is dedicated to looking after wombat populations in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales. John runs community workshops, attends conferences, and manages volunteers. A group of sixteen university students, and their teacher, were inspired by John's work and flew over from California to volunteer their time at WCB. John has an in-depth understanding of the implications of mange for wombat populations on a broader ecological scale. He educates children about wombat care and biology at local schools and engages with and encourages the wider community to take action in wombat conservation hoping to preserve the Australian icon for future generations.

The winner of the **Youth Conservation Award** was Caitlin Gallagher of Bundanoon, New South Wales. Caitlin has been focusing on supporting efforts to reduce the incidence of sarcoptic mange in bare-nosed wombat populations. Furthermore, she has shown a commitment to wombat conservation in the field by setting-up and monitoring burrow flaps to treat wombats, as well as being heavily involved in fundraising and educating the public more broadly regarding wombat conservation and sarcoptic mange. Caitlin volunteers her time every Saturday morning at Wombat Care Bundanoon, assisting John Creighton to treat wombats for mange. Caitlin also regularly checks roadkilled wombats for in-pouch joeys. Caitlin collects recyclable bottles and returns them for 10 cents each and has raised over \$1,200 which purchases 15 litres of cydectin, a medication that is used to treat wombats for mange. Fifteen litres can treat up to thirty-five mange-affected wombats. Caitlin also presents at conferences and local schools to help raise awareness of the plight of the bare-nosed wombat and encourage wildlife conservation action.



Brian Scarsbrick AM presenting Alexandra Seddon with the Serventy Conservation Award.



Toby Salmon, Keira West, and Jarrah Walker accepting the Community Conservation Award on behalf of Belgian Gardens State School.



Suzanne Medway AM presenting John Creighton with the Wildlife Rehabilitation Award.



Doctor Julie Old presenting Caitlin Gallagher with the Youth Conservation Award.

## Wildlife Photographic Competition

The annual judge's prize of \$1,000 was won by Wes Read for his photo of a golden-eyed gecko (*Strophurus trux*) which was only recently described in 2015 and is not yet classified. The annual people's choice prize of \$500 was won by Tiffany Naylor for her photo of a dingo (*Canis lupus dingo*), an apex predator contributing to the control of many feral species that threaten Australia's wildlife and plays a very important role within the environment, keeping natural systems in balance.



Golden-eyed gecko (*Strophurus trux*). Image: Wes Read



Dingo (*Canis lupus dingo*). Image: Tiffany Naylor

## University Students Grants Scheme

The Australian Wildlife Society's University Research Grants are offered to honours or postgraduate students at Australian universities. Each year, ten grants of \$1,500 are awarded. Grants are available for research projects of direct relevance to the conservation of Australian wildlife – flora or fauna. The winners for 2020 were:



### Angela Rana

School of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Sydney  
Project Title: Assessing the success of the rewilding of small mammals into North Head.



### Emily Jarvis

School of Biological Sciences, Monash University  
Project Title: Artificial microhabitat use of the agile antechinus (*Antechinus agilis*) in wet-forest environments.



### Bali Lee

Faculty of Biology, Medicine, and Health, University of Tasmania  
Project Title: Are microplastics causing inflammation in seabirds?



### Joshua Zimmerman

School of Environmental and Rural Science, University of New England  
Project Title: Next-generation sequencing of *Felis catus* in Australia: Helping to elucidate feral cat population dynamics and interaction with domestic cats.



### Ben Stepkovich

School of Biological, Earth, and Environmental Sciences, University of New South Wales  
Project Title: Ecosystem effects of western quoll (*Dasyurus geoffroii*) reintroduction on prey species inside a fenced reserve.



### Julianna Santos

School of Ecosystem & Forest Sciences, University of Melbourne  
Project Title: Mammals on the move in fire-driven mosaics.



### Carolyn Wheeler

ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, James Cook University  
Project Title: A novel approach to investigate reproduction in a model shark species threatened by ocean warming.



### Moses Omogbeme

School of Veterinary & Life Sciences, Murdoch University  
Project Title: Dingoes and trophic interactions in landscape-scale cell fencing.



### Christine Mauger

School of Biological Sciences, University of Queensland  
Project Title: The effect of fire regimes on habitat structure, demography and predator avoidance in northern brown bandicoots (*Isoodon macrourus*) and northern quolls (*Dasyurus hallucatus*).



### Kelly Williams

School of Life Sciences, La Trobe University  
Project Title: Surviving predators: Assessing antipredator behaviours in an endangered wallaby to improve threatened species conservation.

## Conservation Group Grants

The Society carefully considers all requests for grants from conservation groups that places special emphasis on wildlife and the preservation of wildlife habitat.

This year, we were fortunate to be able to offer two Conservation Group Grants:

### Invasive Species Council

Funds provided, \$5,000, assisted the Invasive Species Council to take politicians and media representatives to Kosciusko National Park to help raise awareness about the impacts of feral horses on native wildlife and their habitat. It is now more important than ever that the government effectively controls feral horses and other invasive species in Kosciuszko National Park.

### Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting (RVOTDS Inc.)

A coalition of forty-three wildlife conservation groups, including the Australian Wildlife Society, called on the state government to honor its commitment to review the state's annual duck-shooting season. Funds provided, \$1,000, assisted RVOTDS to promote and publicise the campaign against duck-shooting.

## Key Projects

### Kinder Partnership

The Australian Wildlife Society accepted a significant sponsorship from family-owned confectionery brand, Ferrero Australia, as part of their new Kinder Natoons series. The contribution is part of the Society's ongoing partnership with Ferrero which has delivered more than \$100,000 in vital funds to support wildlife conservation projects across Australia and New Zealand. The Society selected five wildlife conservation programs, in Australia, as recipients of conservation funding under this program.

#### 1. Cedar Creek Wombat Rescue Inc. and Hospital

Through the support of the Australian Wildlife Society, as part of the Kinder project, Cedar Creek Wombat Rescue Inc. and Hospital was able to expand and upgrade its hospital, adding additional intensive care unit pens, to ensure that Australia's native wildlife receives superior treatment and support.



#### 2. Tasmanian Wildlife Rehabilitation Council

Through the support of the Australian Wildlife Society, as part of the Kinder project, a purpose-built microbat rehabilitation flight aviary was built enabling Tasmania's wild and injured microbats to develop flight fitness. Furthermore, resources such as flight surveillance night cameras and Intensive Care Unit humidity cribs were also purchased.

#### 3. Save the Bilby Fund

Through the support of the Australian Wildlife Society, as part of the Kinder project, Save the Bilby Fund were able to upgrade their bilby captive breeding facilities, build new crèche-ing pens, and make enclosure improvements, including new feral-proof fencing. Save the Bilby Fund has already witnessed several births with more on the way! Great news for the conservation of this species.

#### 4. Friends of the Western Ground Parrot

Through the support of the Australian Wildlife Society, as part of the Kinder project, Friends of the Western Ground Parrot mounted camera traps in prospective translocation

sites. The camera traps are required to undertake predator surveillance (foxes and feral cats) to guide predator control management actions.

### 5. Australian Ecosystems Foundation Inc.

Through the support of the Australian Wildlife Society, as part of the Kinder project, a new breeding facility was established to assist in the preservation of the mountain pygmy-possum and help save this species from a changing climate and possible extinction.

### Snip Rings for Wildlife campaign

The Society initiated a new campaign called #SnipRingsforWildlife. The campaign aimed to raise awareness and encourage individuals to protect Australia's wildlife, by cutting through plastic rings, rubber bands, hair ties, the loops of facemasks, and plastic dome-shaped lids before disposing of them. Each year, thousands of birds and air-breathing semi-aquatic wildlife such as platypus, turtles, and water dragons become entrapped, obtain significant injuries, and often die horrific and preventable deaths from these discarded ring-shaped items. These ring-shaped items wrap around an animal's beak, bill, or muzzle, preventing it from eating. These items can also tangle up their feet, wings, or fins, limiting their movement. Young animals can become entrapped in these items and as they grow, these items cut into their flesh, sometimes amputating limbs, or killing the animal. Other animals mistake these items for food and ingest them. The Society contacted numerous manufacturers, informing them of the threat that ring-shaped items pose to native wildlife and encouraged them to take action to improve their products, however most companies did not respond.

We ask you to implement the small action of signing our ePetition to help protect Australia's wildlife  
<https://www.change.org/SnipRingsForWildlife>

### New South Wales Platypus and Turtle Alliance

In 2019, the Environment Minister, Matt Kean, expressed his strong support for our new Alliance and promised to give us a 'timeline' for the implementation of the ban on the use of opera house nets, to help save platypus and other air-breathing semi-aquatic wildlife from drowning in New South Wales rivers. However, the announcement on the ban was not made in 2020. With continued pressure, we are hopeful that the announcement will be made in 2021. Furthermore, there was increased pressure from the Alliance to have the platypus listed as Vulnerable on a national scale. Land clearing, drought, and bushfires, accelerated by climate change, are destroying critical platypus habitat, with research indicating that platypus habitat has reduced 22 percent in the last thirty years.

## Conferences and Wildlife Webinars

Due to the impact of COVID-19, the Society became actively involved in attending and contributing to several important wildlife conservation online conferences, webinars, events, and meetings throughout the year. We attended the Nature Conservation Council Conference and Australian Wildlife Management Society Conference to network and discuss important issues with key stakeholders in the field of wildlife conservation. We attended the Invasive Species Council yearly

update, Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting monthly meetings, Wildlife Preservation Society Queensland Protecting the Platypus webinar featuring Tamielle Brunt, and Melbourne Water's Urban Platypuses: threat and challenges webinar featuring Josh Griffiths, to name a few. The Society also strives for continuous improvement, consequently the National Office Manager attended several online courses, hosted by Western Sydney Business Centre, to learn how to develop and improve our impact on wildlife conservation outcomes.

## Donations, Bequests, and Gifts

During the year, we continued with our bequest program to encourage donors to support our wildlife conservation work across Australia – through the website and general publicity. We developed a new Bequest Information Pack to make the donation and bequest process clearer and easier to follow. We are very grateful to all our members for considering using the bequest program to help the Society with its long-term planning. Please contact the National Office for more details on the bequest program and how to join Friends of Australian Wildlife Society to make a regular monthly donation to support our national wildlife conservation programs. We are a tax-deductible gift recipient and registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission. Our public fund is listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations under item 6.1.1 of subsection 30-55(1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

## Financial Report Summary

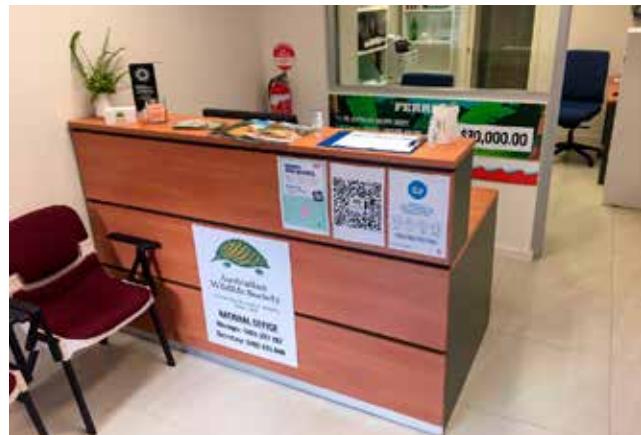
The Society's directors, Finance and Investment Committee, and the Public Fund Committee continue to exercise tight and effective control over our finances, reviewing and adjusting the investment portfolio as required during the year. Although slightly impacted by COVID-19, the investment funds of the Society have continued to grow. The board will conduct a review of our investments in line with ethical issues.

## A Special Thank you to all Our Members

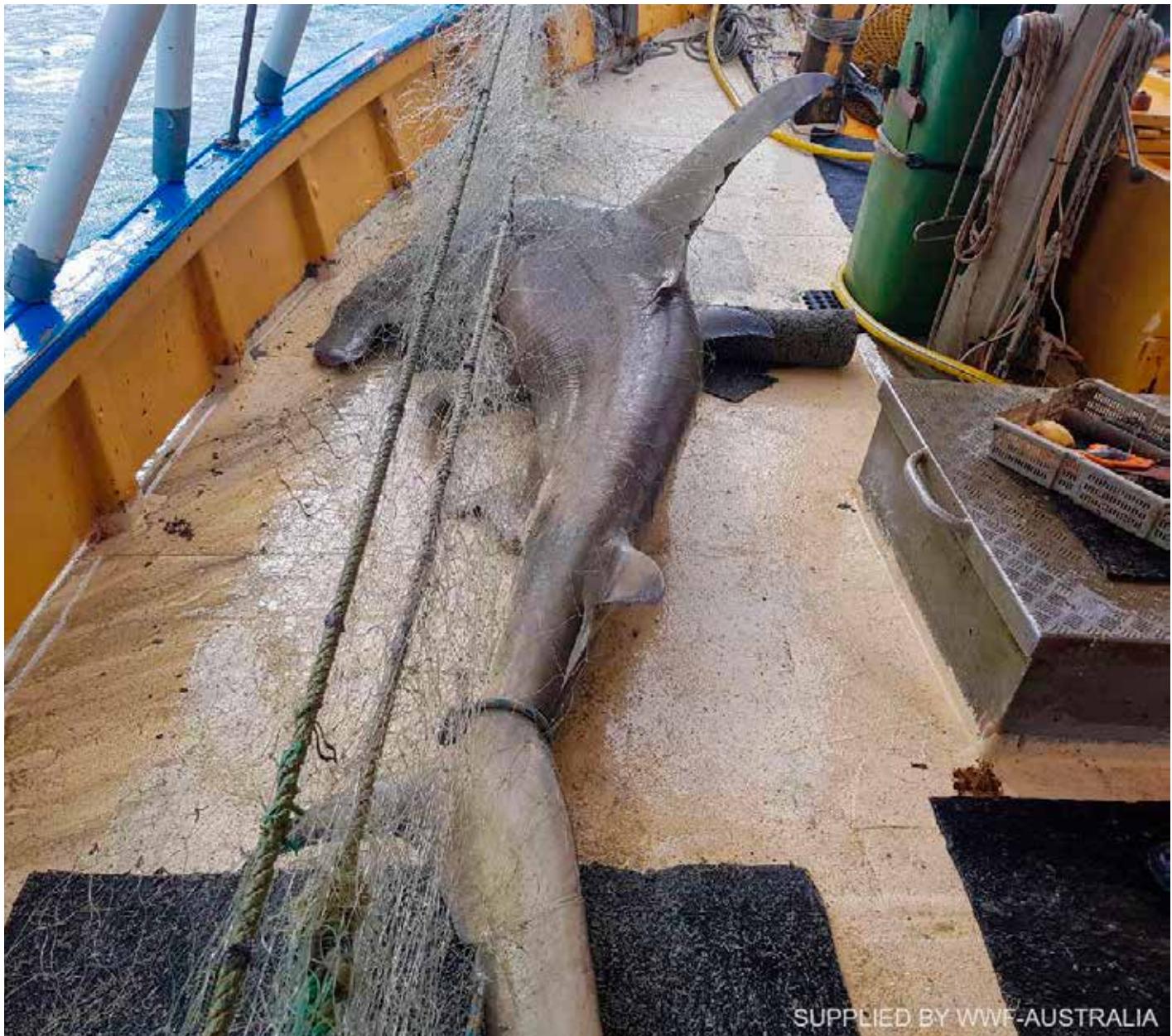
I wish every member of the Society a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2021. This will mark our 112th anniversary. We thank you all most sincerely for your tremendous support and continued dedication and commitment in helping the Society to preserve and protect Australia's native wildlife for future generations.

**Suzanne Medway AM | PRESIDENT | 31 December 2020**

## New National Office Opens in Hurstville



L to R: Ken Mason, Wayne Greenwood, Suzanne Medway AM, Councilor Kevin Greene, Doctor Julie Old, Patrick Medway AM, Philip Sansom, and Stephen Grabowski.



SUPPLIED BY WWF-AUSTRALIA

## Why We Should be Giving 'Flake' a Break

**Doctor Leonardo Guida**, Shark Scientist, Australian Marine Conservation Society and  
**Lawrence Chlebeck**, Marine Biologist, Humane Society International

Can you imagine eating a Vulnerable koala or platypus? Of course not; it just would not happen. But when we choose 'flake' in the good old Aussie fish and chip shop on a Friday night, we might unwittingly be eating an endangered shark – and that is horrifying. Most Australians, including fish and chip shop owners themselves, do not realise that endangered sharks are being killed in our waters and then sold onto us as 'flake'. In fact, a recent survey found that one in three Australians do not know that 'flake' is shark meat. That is why the Australian Marine Conservation Society launched its #GiveFlakeABreak campaign earlier this year. The campaign encourages Australians to pledge not to eat shark

and support initiatives that improve outcomes for endangered sharks and ultimately sustainable fisheries. So far, over 4,700 people have committed to #GiveFlakeABreak.

### How Are Endangered Sharks Ending up on Our Plates?

There is a loophole in Australia's environmental laws. The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act allows threatened fish, including the Critically Endangered scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) and school shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*), to be caught for their meat and fins and served as seafood in shops, restaurants, or exported overseas.

However, 'flake' should only refer to shark meat from gummy and rig sharks – two non-endangered species. However, there is no legal obligation in Australia to do so, meaning 'flake' continues to be a catch-all term for all shark meat, regardless of what species it is or where it is located. The system is broken somewhere between the boat and the plate because fishers record the species they catch. But by the time they end up in fish and chip paper, the information on sharks has often been lost, or at the very least, challenging to obtain.

**Above:** A Critically Endangered scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) caught in a gillnet on the Great Barrier Reef, Queensland. Image: World Wildlife Fund For Nature Australia

Furthermore, not knowing the source of shark meat means that you could be causing environmental damage elsewhere. For example, an unsustainable shark fishery in South Africa, which is overfishing Critically Endangered school sharks (also known as 'tope' or 'soupfin'), exports these and other shark meats to Australia. The unsustainable shark fishery in South Africa is possibly responsible for the disappearance of the famous 'flying' great white sharks of False Bay, South Africa.

There are other reasons we should be avoiding 'flake'. Shark fisheries can be destructive if poorly managed. Gillnets over a kilometer long are used in places like the Great Barrier Reef, Queensland, and throughout southern Australia to harvest sharks. Gillnets are an indiscriminate fishing method in terms of the wildlife they catch, resulting in the death of many threatened species such as turtles, dolphins, dugongs, seals, and the Critically Endangered grey nurse shark (*Carcharias taurus*). Would you like a side of dugong with your 'flake' and chips?

By giving 'flake' a break, we provide Australia's endangered sharks with some breathing space by sending a loud and clear signal that these species need better protection and deserve better seafood labelling laws.

#### Why Are Sharks so Important?

Sharks are typically apex predators and are critical to keeping marine food webs in balance. Without sharks, food webs can potentially become unstable and collapse, compromising the future of the seafood we enjoy.

Australia's waters are also home to one-quarter of the world's sharks and rays. More than 320 species live in our oceans and seas. Half of these species are not found anywhere else in the world. These unique and precious species are undoubtedly a source of Australian pride and deserving of our protection.

Australian shark species are considered to be in a relatively healthy space when compared to most countries. But this does not mean there are no

significant issues in our backyard. Six species of shark are declining, and eighteen species are overfished, and then, of course, there are the laws (or lack thereof) that allow the harvest of endangered and critically endangered sharks.

#### How Can We Make Our Fisheries Better and Protect Endangered Sharks?

First, we must address the root cause by improving the current laws and fishing practices that allow endangered sharks to be harvested from the water in the first place. By giving 'flake' a break and supporting wildlife conservation initiatives, you are joining the Australian Marine Conservation Society's and Humane Society International's fight to:

1. Improve the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act so that critically endangered species such as the scalloped hammerhead shark and school shark cannot be legally harvested,



A Critically Endangered school shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*). Image: Clinton Duffy

2. Make sure the recovery plans for endangered marine species are mandated and enforced, leading to better outcomes, and
3. Remove gillnets that fish for sharks in the Great Barrier Reef, Queensland, which can be up to 1.2 kilometers long.

Second, we can make every-day sustainable choices. As consumers, we can vote using our dollar in shops and restaurants, a powerful way to influence how our fisheries operate. Using the Australian Marine Conservation Society's *GoodFish: Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide*, you will be able to identify sustainable alternatives to 'flake'. *GoodFish* is entirely independent and features a wealth of information about sustainable seafood that can be purchased in Australia.

Third, accurate labelling laws must be mandated. However, as is the nature of changing national laws, this is likely to take some time – time

some species may not have. Until we can be assured of what is being sold and where it is from, choosing sustainable alternatives can reduce the demand for unidentifiable shark meat. Furthermore, selecting sustainable options will also lead to better fishing practices that stop endangered sharks from being caught in the first place.

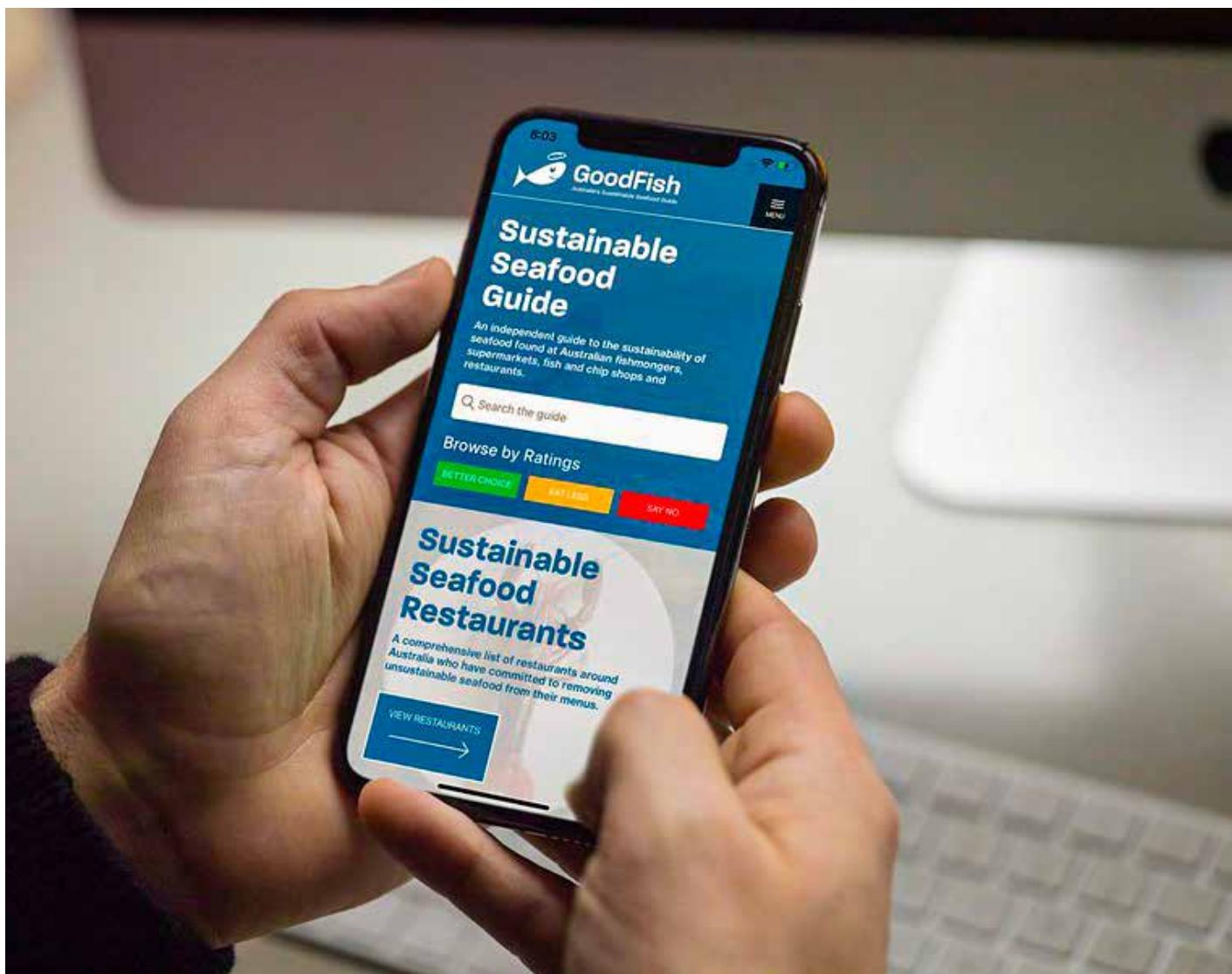
#### **Giving 'Flake' a Break Still Supports Fishers and Retailers**

The good news is many Australian fish and chip shops do sell sustainable alternatives such as King George whiting (*Sillaginodes punctatus*), farmed barramundi (*Lates calcarifer*), sea mullet (*Mugil cephalus*), wild-caught Australian salmon (*Arripis trutta*), and luderick (*Girella tricuspidata*). Australian Marine Conservation Society surveyed seventy fish and chip shops across Australia that sold shark meat (ten in each state or territory), finding that sustainable alternatives are accessible in at least 40 percent of the shops. Not all shops label what their fish was or where their fish was caught.

Consequently, you are encouraged to ask what your fish is and where it comes from so you can best determine its sustainability – with the help of the *GoodFish* guide, which comes in a handy app. On average, across Australia, \$2 is the difference between a sustainable choice or possibly eating an endangered shark.

#### **Will You Give 'Flake' a Break?**

For years, the Australian Marine Conservation Society and Humane Society International have led the movement for safe and sustainable fishing and the protection of Australia's threatened wildlife. They have helped protect iconic animals like sea lions and dolphins from being caught in commercial fishing nets. We now need to stand up for Australia's sharks. Humans are their single most significant threat, but also their only hope. You can sign the pledge to #GiveFlakeABreak at [sharkchampions.org.au/flake](http://sharkchampions.org.au/flake) or commit to reducing your overall consumption of seafood to help protect and restore the balance of our precious oceans.



GoodFish: Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide.

# Australian Wildlife Society

## Threatened Wildlife Photographic Competition

This is a national competition that awards and promotes the conservation of threatened or endangered Australian wildlife through the medium of photography.

The Australian Wildlife Society invites photographers to raise the plight of threatened or endangered wildlife across Australia. Our Society aims to encourage the production of photographs taken in Australia, by Australians, which reflects the diversity and uniqueness of threatened or endangered Australian wildlife.

**An annual judge's prize of \$1,000 will be awarded**  
**An annual people's choice prize of \$500 will be awarded**

### Rules of entry:

1. The subject of each entry must be a threatened or endangered Australian species of wildlife – fauna or flora
2. The entry must be the work of the entrant
3. The photograph must have been taken within the twelve months prior to the date of entry
4. The name of the threatened or endangered species, photographer and date taken must be in the 'file name' of each photograph submitted
5. Entrants retain the copyright to their entries but accord the Australian Wildlife Society (AWS) the right to use them in any of its publications or any reprint arising therefrom
6. Entries to be submitted by electronic means to – [photo@aws.org.au](mailto:photo@aws.org.au)
7. All entries must be accompanied by a short paragraph (maximum 150 words) describing the status of the endangered species, the location of the photograph and the reasons and circumstances for choosing to photograph it
8. Directors of AWS or their families are ineligible to submit entries
9. There shall be no charge for entry and entrants may submit more than one entry
10. The final result is at the discretion of the Directors and will be announced in August each year.

**CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES: 30 JUNE**

**ONLINE VOTING FOR THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE  
WILL BE OPEN FROM 1 JULY TO 30 JULY**



# Honouring Suzanne Medway AM

## and her Dedication and Commitment to Wildlife Conservation

Megan Fabian

Suzanne Medway AM was born in Allawah, Sydney, and educated at Kingsgrove High School and St George TAFE NSW. She has had considerable experience in middle and senior management positions in commercial business and holds an Associate Diploma in Business (Office Administration).

Suzanne has had prior board experience serving as a director on the Business Enterprise Development Agency board in Mascot, Sydney, and the Business Enterprise Centre board in Southern Sydney. She also served as Secretary and then Vice President of the Central Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce and board member of the Brighton Le Sands Chamber of Commerce.

Suzanne was awarded Environmental Volunteer for 2010 in the prestigious NRMA Helping Hands Award and was the recipient of the 2012 New South Wales Seniors Week Achievement Award for outstanding achievement in Environment, Science, and Agriculture. Suzanne was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 2013 for her distinguished service to wildlife conservation and environmental education across Australia and was named Rockdale's 2019 Local Woman of the Year.

Suzanne has been a member of the Australian Wildlife Society since 1988 and was elected as Secretary/Executive Director in 2002. She was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the Society in February 2009 to recognise her outstanding and distinguished service to the Society. Suzanne has also edited three books for the Society – *Conserving Australia's Wildlife*, *Conservation Victories, and Battles Yet to Win*, and *100 Years of Saving Australia's Wildlife*.

Suzanne has served in the role of President of the Society for the past twelve years and has performed countless hours of voluntary work for wildlife conservation. During this time, Suzanne has modernised the office administration, created and maintained the website, increased the membership base, and raised the Australian Wildlife magazine's standard to a very professional level, along with the Society's newsletter, to name a few. Suzanne has overseen several significant achievements during her tenure.



Suzanne has also been the Chief Editor of the Australian Wildlife magazine for the past nineteen years. She revamped the magazine and took it to new heights by using computer technology to promote the importance of wildlife conservation right across Australia. Today, the magazine's readership has spread across Australia and internationally, carrying a strong message of environmental education, wildlife conservation issues, and preservation of native Australian wildlife. It is now the flagship of the Society.

Suzanne has always been a strong advocate against single-use plastics, as they have a deadly impact on native wildlife through entanglement and additional harm. In 2020, she oversaw the establishment of a new campaign called *Snip Rings for Wildlife*. The campaign aims to raise awareness and encourage individuals to protect Australia's wildlife, by cutting through plastic rings, rubber bands, hair ties, the loops of facemasks, and dome-shaped plastic lids, in their entirety, before disposing of them.

She also oversaw the establishment of Australian Wildlife Week, which is commemorated across the country during the first week of October each year to encourage a positive relationship between humanity and nature.

Suzanne is a role model and a fantastic motivator. She has inspired me to reach my goals, as the National Office Manager of the Society, through her dedication and commitment to wildlife conservation

action. She is always encouraging and supportive, implements 100 percent effort to ensure desired results are achieved, and does not give up when confronted by obstacles such as inaction by governments or manufacturers. For example, Suzanne established the New South Wales Platypus and Turtle Alliance to advocate for a complete ban on enclosed yabby traps to help save platypus and other air-breathing semi-aquatic wildlife (birds, water dragons, turtles, rakali) from preventable deaths. Advocating for the ban and change in legislation has been an ongoing and labour-intensive process, and not once has she been deterred or discouraged.

Suzanne is exceptionally proud of guiding the Society through its centenary celebrations and onto a very sound financial footing. For the first time

in over one hundred years, driven by Suzanne, the board established a new National Office to cope with the expanding work of the Society in wildlife conservation – one of its most outstanding achievements. The National Head Office of the Society is located at 29B/17 Macmahon Street Hurstville, New South Wales.

Over the years, Suzanne has had the privilege of supporting her 'heroes', the rescuers and rehabilitators who do the hands-on wildlife conservation work and educating the community on just how precious and unique Australia's wildlife is. Her overall responsibility has been nurturing, growing, and making the Society more relevant in today's harsh environmental climate. After many years of succession planning, the time has come for Suzanne to hand the 'reigns' over to a younger generation with new and exciting ideas to move the Society forward.

With the support of a dynamic board of directors, the Australian Wildlife Society has continued its position, held since 1909, as a peak environmental and wildlife conservation Society, recognised not only in Australia but internationally.

Over the page is a two-page spread honouring Suzanne's dedication to wildlife conservation over many years. The Society's directors would like to thank Suzanne for her leadership and wish her all the best in the future.

**Above:** Suzanne Medway AM at the Society's Annual General Meeting in 2003.

# Honouring Suzanne



Patrick and Suzanne nursing a rehabilitating wombat joey at Cedar Creek Wombat Hospital in 2019.



Suzanne with a dingo (*Canis lupus dingo*) at Secret Creek Sanctuary in 2005.



Suzanne celebrating the opening of the New Na...



Suzanne with two Kangaroo Island western grey kangaroos (*Macropus fuliginosus fuliginosus*) and some emu chicks (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*).



Suzanne with a southern hairy-nosed wombat (*Lasiorhinus latifrons*) in 2012.



Suzanne at the VET Expo in Sydney in...



Suzanne with a Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*).



Suzanne standing in front of one of the Society's earlier banners.



Suzanne with a koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*).

# Suzanne Medway AM



at the Society's National Office in Hurstville, NSW, in 2019.



Suzanne with a spotted-tail quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*) at Secret Creek Sanctuary in 2005.



Patrick and Suzanne at the New South Wales Woman of the Year Awards in 2019.



2003.



Suzanne at the VET Expo in Sydney in 2004.



Suzanne at National Tree Day, which the Society held in 2010.



at the Society's Gala Ball in 2019.



Suzanne presenting at a Wombat Conference in Albury, NSW, in 2011.



Suzanne with a bare-nosed wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*) in 2011.



# A Brush with Wildlife

Natalie Jane Parker

I have been a wildlife artist focusing on Australian fauna and flora since 1996. My home is nestled on fifty acres of land in the Hunter Valley region of New South Wales. The land on which my home is situated provides daily inspiration for my paintings. I use soft-bodied acrylic paint on claybord, which allows me to achieve the intricate details of native wildlife's fur, feathers, skin, and scales – the subjects of my artwork.

Taking the time to immerse myself in the bush and natural surroundings is just as important as spending time in the art studio. I take my camera everywhere I go, spending countless hours in nature reserves, wildlife parks, and visiting local people who rescue orphaned and injured native wildlife. Much of my work depicts the interactions between different Australian wildlife species, such as the arboreal herbivorous marsupial – the koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) and the charismatic bright-plumed wren – the superb fairywren (*Malurus cyaneus*).

I like to create a story through my artwork that the viewer can appreciate. I also aim to develop a sense of harmony, which I feel is of benefit to live by. A trademark touch to almost all my paintings is an ant or two or more. Furthermore, I have supported several wildlife organisations throughout my career. I have recently formed a long-term partnership with Cedar Creek Wombat Hospital to raise awareness and funds

for sick, injured, and orphaned wombats. I feel it is essential to use my artwork to give back to these incredible people, organisations, and the wildlife that they rescue, rehabilitate, and aim to release back to the wild.

My work has been published in many formats over the years, including prints, greeting cards, calendars, homewares, and fabrics. I have also had over thirty children's picture books published; most are nature-based. I am particularly proud of illustrating a reference book for school-aged children on Australia's endangered wildlife. I believe that educating children, the leaders of tomorrow, will be a robust approach for safeguarding Australia's wildlife into the future.

I am a member of 'Artists for Conservation', the world's leading wildlife artists group dedicated to supporting the environment. I hope that I will encourage greater awareness of how unique Australia's wildlife is through my artwork. We have such a diverse array of mammals, reptiles, fish, amphibians, insects, and birds. Some are dangerous, and some are tiny and seemingly insignificant, but all are just as important as each other.

I believe that we all have a responsibility to take care of Australia's fauna and flora, and through my artwork, I feel that I can help highlight how important it is to preserve the wildlife we have left. For further information

and to see more paintings, please visit [www.natalieparkers.com.au](http://natalieparkers.com.au) or follow me on Facebook (njpwildlifeart) or Instagram (natalie\_jane\_parker).

**Top left:** A juvenile Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo (*Dendrolagus lumholtzi*) with a white-lipped tree frog (*Litoria infrafrenata*).

**Top right:** A Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*).

**Bottom left:** An echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) with a long-tailed finch (*Poephila acuticauda*).

**Bottom right:** A dingo (*Canis lupus dingo*) lost in thought.



Natalie Jane Parker in her studio in Hunter Valley, NSW.



A bilby (*Macrotis lagotis*) with a spinifex hopping mouse (*Notomys alexis*).



A bare-nosed wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*) with an eastern blue-tongued lizard (*Tiliqua scincoides scincoides*).



A juvenile koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) with a male superb fairywren (*Malurus cyaneus*).



A male electus parrot (*Eclectus roratus*), ulysses butterfly (*Papilio Ulysses*), and green ant (*Rhytidoponera metallica*).



# Working for Waders

**David Edwards**, Chairman, Queensland Wader Study Group

The Queensland Wader Study Group, founded in 1992, thought that better outcomes could be achieved for shorebirds by forming a special interest group of dedicated wader watchers. Rather than go it alone, the Queensland Wader Study Group decided to link with the Queensland Ornithological Society. Queensland Wader Study Group are now a division within Queensland Ornithological Society, better known as Birds Queensland.

From the very start, Queensland Wader Study Group has been an activities-based group, surveying and studying waders (also called shorebirds). The group's core business is monthly surveys of high-tide roosts within Queensland, usually over ninety sites, from Cairns to the Tweed River. Shorebirds are counted on the high-tide, which concentrates the shorebirds close to the shore and enables a more accurate measurement of abundance

and diversity. During these surveys, not only are numbers of various shorebird species recorded, but other water birds and raptors, weather conditions, and disturbances are also recorded.

In addition, to the Cairns through to the Tweed River regions, the Queensland Wader Study Group complete surveys in the broader Queensland regions to obtain a more comprehensive dataset. The group have regularly surveyed the Great Sandy Strait and the greater Mackay region, showing how vital these areas are to shorebirds. The group have also surveyed the lower end of the Gulf of Carpentaria, around Kurumba, using light aircraft and, more recently, chartered vessels, in conjunction with Griffith University and Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

The Flinders, Gilbert, and Mitchell Rivers flow into the Gulf of Carpentaria, supporting healthy

ecosystems and nationally significant wetlands, hence the importance of surveying shorebirds in the region. Queensland Wader Study Group work with marine ecologists and indigenous rangers to learn about the relationship between shorebird diversity and abundance and the food sources of shorebirds in these rivers' estuarine mouths. Furthermore, the group have also just completed a new major shorebird survey of the Townsville region, adding to the wealth of information the Queensland Wader Study Group has in its database.

Queensland Wader Study Group's monthly surveys have been implemented for the past thirty years. The duration and intensity of their surveys are unique in Australia, and the information has been made available to university staff, students,

**Above:** A far eastern curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*). Image: Robert Bush

and governments, resulting in many published papers and informed decisions about shorebirds and their environment. Unfortunately, the data has accurately shown a sad decline in shorebird numbers throughout the East Asian-Australasian flyway.

The group is very proactive in banding and tracking shorebirds under an appropriate license. The shorebirds are weighed and measured and have previously had an Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme band applied to one of their legs – which contains an individual number unique to that bird. However, unless you have ‘Superman’ vision or are very lucky, the number is hardly ever read. As a result, this led to the placement of a coloured flag to the leg of shorebirds as an alternate tracking method, and different colours for different regions are used. The change in tracking strategy helped to show the shorebirds’ flight paths as birders recorded the flags. The subsequent development was the etching of alpha-numerics onto the flags so that an individual could be tracked. Even with these advances, the information gained was reliant on observers on the ground, usually in populated shorebird areas. However, more detailed information was required, which meant adapting to modern technology – electronic and satellite tags.

In the 1990s, the group started using satellite transmitters or Platform Transmitter Terminals. However, the



A grey-tailed tattler (*Tringa brevipes*) with Geolocator. Image: Jon Coleman

initial transmitters were relatively heavy and could only be allocated to the largest shorebirds, such as the Endangered far eastern curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*), which weighed over one kilogram. Over time, the group have seen the size and weight of the transmitters reduce, so they have been able to use them in a broader selection of shorebirds. For example, the group have been able to use these new smaller transmitters on the Eurasian whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*), bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), Pacific golden plover (*Pluvialis fulva*), and grey-tailed tattler (*Tringa brevipes*). Now, the group can follow

a wider variety of shorebirds up and down the East Asian-Australasian flyway and obtain results such as flight paths, speed in the air, and the duration of a stop-over at a ‘refuelling’ site.

The tracking results have shown that shorebirds use habitats in the East Asian-Australasian flyway entirely different from those used here in Australia. The group have also seen shorebirds driven way off-course due to bad weather conditions. However, after the bad weather conditions have passed, the shorebirds have managed to recalibrate their flight path and head to



A bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) flock. Image: Jon Coleman



Canon-net firing. Cannon-netting is a technique that has been used for over thirty-five years to catch shorebirds (and other birds) as part of research programs conducted across Australia and internationally. Images: Mavis Choi

their destination or point of origin. As equally important, the data has provided invaluable information on a local scale, where shorebirds will spend up to six months in the non-breeding season in Moreton Bay.

Tracking shorebirds is an enriching activity and is vital to local, national, and international efforts to understand shorebird behaviour. Understanding seasonal and tidal habitat usage are essential to guide wildlife conservation efforts. Furthermore, the data collected can help to inform and reduce the current decline in shorebird numbers.

The Queensland Wader Study Group is aware of the importance of education. Shorebirds are not easy to identify, not brightly coloured, and often live in inhospitable and remote environments. To overcome these barriers to shorebird identification, the group run 'identification days' for individuals, community groups, and government officials to learn how to identify shorebirds. Identifying shorebirds is not always the most straightforward task, but most attendees leave the day feeling more confident in their observation skills. The group also run a 'one-day wader course' for those who wish to learn more about the magic and plight of shorebirds. The course covers shorebird taxonomy and diversity, their epic global migrations, their unique feeding requirements, breeding behaviour, and conservation requirements. It is an intense course but is a great way to obtain a deeper understanding of shorebirds. These courses are attended by birders – enthusiasts and beginners – national park rangers, indigenous rangers, plus local council representatives.

The Queensland Wader Study Group is also committed to educating primary school children. In collaboration with the Moreton Bay Environmental Education Centre, the group take students to the Port of Brisbane, which has shorebird viewing hides that facilitate studying shorebirds at close quarters. Talks and education materials are provided by both Moreton Bay Environmental Education Centre and Queensland Wader Study Group. Furthermore, the group has developed a children's education mobile application – 'My Shorebird Watcher' – specifically created for learning about

Queensland's shorebirds. The mobile application is available in Android and Apple formats.

Queensland Wader Study Group's biggest job is to work with all government levels to achieve effective outcomes that benefit shorebirds. Although the group's data on population estimates, habitat usage, sources of disturbance, and mortality can guide local, national, and international wildlife conservation efforts, when decisions are made across different jurisdictions, not every decision leads to a beneficial outcome for all shorebirds. It must be understood that Australia has international migrant shorebirds on our shores, and decisions made overseas have a significant impact on Australia's shorebirds. To facilitate a beneficial outcome for all shorebirds across different jurisdictions, the Queensland Wader Study Group collaborate with Australasian Wader Study Group, BirdLife Australia, and Healthy Land and Water to influence decisions across the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and beyond.

The future of shorebirds is precarious, with so many factors impacting their survival. However, the Queensland Wader Study Group will continue to survey and monitor shorebird populations to provide valuable information to local, national, and international groups and regulators and advocate for shorebird conservation to ensure their survival.

**For further information and to become a member of the Queensland Wader Study Group, please visit [www.waders.org.au](http://www.waders.org.au) or follow the group on Facebook (@QueenslandWaderStudyGroup).**



A bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) with a satellite aerial. Image: Jon Coleman.



The Endangered far eastern curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*) with satellite pack, aerial, and flag. Image: Jon Coleman



Queensland Wader Study Group's shorebird identification day held at Manly Wader Roost, Queensland. Image: Sheryl Keates



A far eastern curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*). Image: Jon Coleman



# Saving the Bilby, One Step at a Time

**Kevin Bradley**

Bilbies have been an intrinsic part of the unique Australian landscape for a very long time, with fossilised remains of their ancestors' carbon-dated to be more than fifteen million years old. Before Europeans arrived in Australia, greater bilbies (*Macrotis lagotis*) roamed across 70 percent of Australia's mainland and stretched from the Great Dividing Range in Queensland to Western Australia's beaches.

Yet, in the last one hundred years, they have been pushed to the brink of extinction as a direct result of colonisation and change of land use, population growth, and the introduction of non-native species, particularly invasive predators such as the European red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) and the feral cat (*Catus cattus*).

The bilby is of significant cultural importance to Australia's First Peoples as a 'creation animal' present in their Dreamtime stories, songs, and art – spanning across many Indigenous Nations and language groups across Australia.

Bilbies are a 'flagship' species, meaning that their protection is even more critical because their survival will

increase the chances of survival of other threatened species and countless wildlife that share the same habitats and face the same threatening processes.

## Bilbies Love to Dig

They are one of nature's ecosystem engineers and play an essential part in the restoration of soil and rejuvenation of vegetation in arid Australia. Bilbies use their strong front paws to dig deep burrows that spiral down into the ground for over two metres. In doing so, they facilitate water penetration deep into the ground. In contrast, hard-hoofed animals that have been introduced to Australia compact the soil surface so when the rain comes, instead of soaking in, it runs straight across the soil, causing erosion and disrupting the balanced ecosystem of arid Australia.

When bilbies feed, they scratch many smaller holes in the soil (feed scrapes) that collect seed and plant material and water while aerating the soil to support seed germination. Bilbies essentially create numerous compost pits and native market gardens every night, which is why bilbies are so crucial to our harsh but fragile arid environment and the balance of our natural ecosystems.

The overall bilby population in the wild has suffered a catastrophic decline, primarily due to the introduction of invasive predators to Australia and changes in land management practices, including fire and intensive agriculture. Over 80 percent of Australia's remaining wild bilby populations occur on 'Indigenous Protected Areas'. However, other bilbies are safe from feral predators behind large predator exclusion fences or in captivity for breeding to support a National Recovery Plan for the species. Consequently, it is scarce for anyone ever to see a bilby in the wild.

The greater bilby is a nocturnal, omnivorous marsupial in the order Peramelemophia (bandicoots). It is also commonly referred to as a dalgite, pinkie, or rabbit-eared bandicoot. Strictly speaking, they are not a bandicoot; they are a family of their own – Thylacomyidae.

Bilbies, none-the-less, are the last of our bandicoot line in arid Australia. There were thought to be six species in the

**Above:** Opal, the bilby, being released into Currawinya Sanctuary.

early 1800s, but sadly the greater bilby is the only remaining one. The lesser bilby (*Macrotis leucura*) became extinct in the 1950s; the greater bilby survives but remains Endangered.

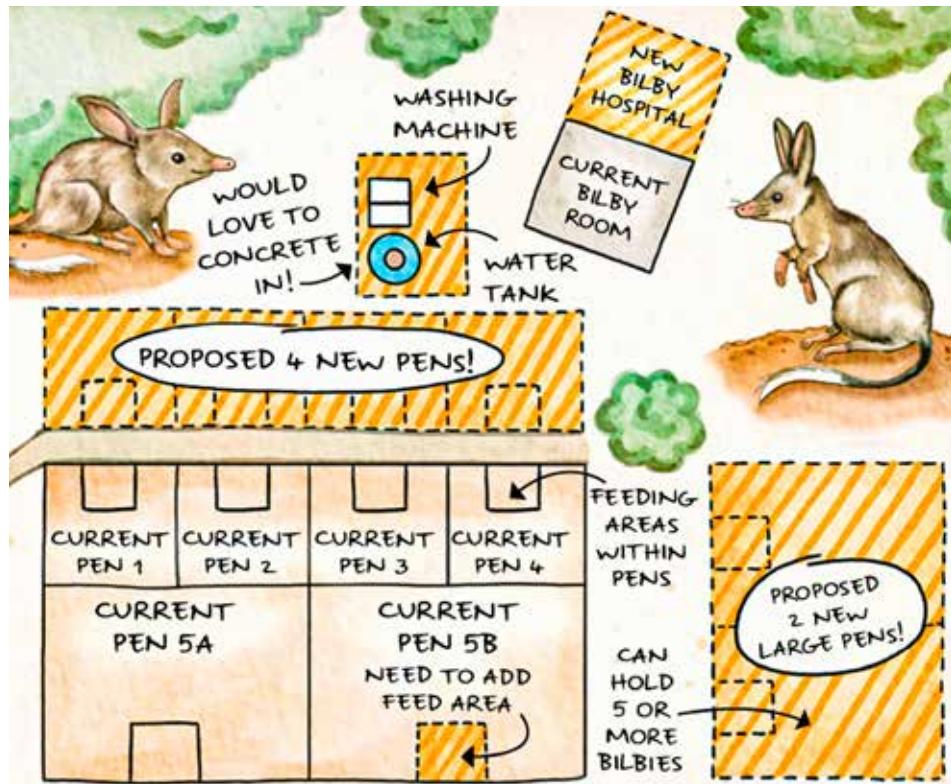
Save the Bilby Fund is a small charity doing a mighty job to ensure that the bilby does not join the appalling list of thirty-four mammal species that Australia has lost forever. With just one full-time employee – the Chief Executive Officer, Kevin Bradley, aided by three part-time staff, Save the Bilby Fund plays a lead role in national recovery efforts for the species.

Save the Bilby Fund was co-founded by the late scientist, Peter McRae, and the late Frank Manthey OAM – known fondly as ‘the bilby brothers’. Save the Bilby Fund launched in 1999 as a national appeal to build a predator exclusion fence on Currawinya National Park and re-establish bilbies after a seventy-year absence from the landscape. They chose Currawinya as having suitable habitat. It is close to the centre of the area where bilbies used to occur in eastern Australia and the last remnant wild populations in Far West Queensland, between Birdsville and Boulia.

In March 2015, Save the Bilby Fund hosted the Greater Bilby Recovery Summit. It brought together thirty-nine experts who represented twenty-nine stakeholder groups involved in bilby conservation nationally. These groups openly discussed the challenges to bilby recovery and forged a consensus on a plan for this species’ future in the Australian landscape.

The event was an initiative of Save the Bilby Fund, in partnership with the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, the Taronga Conservation Society Australia, Dreamworld Wildlife Foundation, and the Australian Government Department of the Environment. The workshop was designed and facilitated by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Species Survival Commission Conservation Breeding Specialist Group.

Since the Greater Bilby Recovery Summit in 2015, Save the Bilby Fund Chief Executive Officer, Kevin Bradley, has been the Greater Bilby National Recovery Team’s chair. Kevin works with stakeholders from all over Australia, and members include Indigenous ranger groups, state and federal government agencies, non-governmental organisations, landholders and



Save the Bilby Fund breeding facility.



Bilbies love to dig.



Inside the bilby fence at Currawinya Sanctuary.

managers, researchers, and participants of the Australasian Species Management Program that assist with a nationally coordinated breeding program.

Save the Bilby Fund is committed to delivering on the Greater Bilby Recovery Summit 2015 Report and Interim Conservation Plan. Save the Bilby Fund is working with all stakeholders to develop a new Greater Bilby National Recovery Plan that has been based on the essential outcomes of the Summit. It is a tremendous task that Save the Bilby Fund cannot do alone.

Save the Bilby Fund receives no current government funding and must fundraise from the public to complete every single step towards achieving its immediate (and attainable) goals. Save the Bilby Fund aim to create a safe population of four hundred bilbies at Currawinya Sanctuary and 10,000 bilbies across Australia to provide appropriate genetic insurance against extinction in the wild for the next one hundred

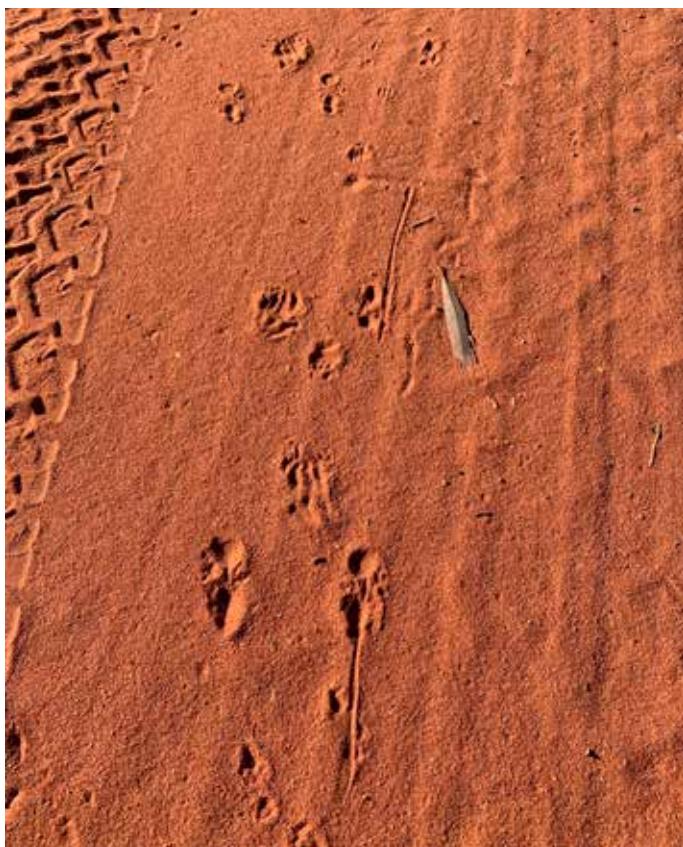


Kevin Bradley, Chief Executive Officer of Save the Bilby Fund.

years. Save the Bilby Fund are working to understand and protect Australia's few remaining wild bilby populations facing increasing threats. Managing threatening processes to establish bilbies back to areas where they have disappeared remains an important focus for Save the Bilby Fund.

In the last three years, the predator exclusion fence at Currawinya Sanctuary has been significantly upgraded. Consequently, Save the Bilby Fund has had the joy of welcoming forty-six newborn bilbies in its breeding facility in Charleville and has released twenty-six bilbies into the fenced sanctuary to live freely.

Save the Bilby Fund is working with PhD Candidate Cass Arkinstall from the University of Queensland, who is researching and monitoring the health and movements of re-introduced bilbies at the sanctuary. Save the Bilby Fund believe that it is safe to say that there may be over one hundred bilbies at Currawinya Sanctuary already.



Bilby (*Macrotis lagotis*) tracks.



PhD student, Cass Arkinstall, measuring bilby tracks.

## Support Bilby Conservation

Save the Bilby Fund relies on everyday Australians who want to save the bilby from extinction and can afford to make a financial contribution. Small or large, every little bit helps, and they are incredibly grateful for everyone who has supported the project so far.

There is still a tremendous amount of work ahead. Save the Bilby Fund need to re-survey the last remaining wild bilby population between Birdsville and Boulia that has not been extensively surveyed since the late 1990s when Peter McRae undertook the work. They also need to manage threats to the bilbies beyond the fence at Currawinya Sanctuary. Generating ongoing funding and support is critical to saving the bilby and Save the Bilby Fund's vital work.

Please help ensure our children and grandchildren can continue to have bilbies in their world and that we do not lose these precious battlers of the outback on our watch. All donations greater than \$2 are tax-deductible. If you would like to donate, you can easily do so via the Save the Bilby Fund website [www.savethebilbyfund.org](http://www.savethebilbyfund.org)

### **Key outcome and impact of the funding provided:**

Save the Bilby Fund have been able to upgrade their bilby captive breeding facilities, built new crèche-ing pens, and make enclosure improvements, including new feral-proof fencing. Save the Bilby Fund has already witnessed several births, with more on the way! Great news for the conservation of this species.



Excavation of the bilby creche.



A completed bilby pen.

## Kinder Natoons sponsorship helps save Australia's threatened native wildlife

The Australian Wildlife Society continued its significant sponsorship program with family-owned confectionery brand, Ferrero, for a second year.

Ferrero's Kinder brand created the Kinder Natoons collection which aims to help families *play, learn, and protect* endangered wildlife across Australia and around the world. Kinder's support has helped five wildlife conservation initiatives in 2020, including Save the Bilby Fund.





# Crazy for Curlews: The Masters of Disguise

Doctor Julie Old

*Burhinus grallarius*, the bush stone-curlew, or bush thick-knee, is classified as a shorebird. However, unlike many shorebirds, they do not migrate but rather stay in one central location. Bush stone-curlews have long, thin legs and stand around 55 centimetres in height, a feature that is likely to be surprising if you have not seen one before. Their overall appearance is not unlike their cousin, the beach stone-curlew (*Esacus magnirostris*), however, their bill is smaller, and the markings on their face are not as prominent. Furthermore, bush stone-curlews have little to no black streaks in their plumage like those of beach stone-curlews.

Another feature of bush stone-curlews, which is perhaps surprising, is how difficult it is to locate them. They are nocturnal and most active at night; hence, they can be found standing or squatting amongst leaf litter during the day. When resting in leaf litter, it makes them extremely difficult to detect unless they move. They are,

therefore, 'Masters of Disguise' or the 'Houdini of the Bird World'! When you locate them, if you are not watching carefully, they can quickly disappear again because of their mainly grey and brown plumage that matches their woodland habitat.

Furthermore, being ground-nesting birds, when they detect a potential predator, they lower their heads and flatten themselves over their eggs, making it even more challenging to locate them amongst the leaf litter and fallen wood. If they are unable to remain hidden, and all else fails, they will emphasise their size by spreading their wings high and wide and making it obvious to any intruder that it is their territory by hissing loudly. This threat is very effective given their nearly one metre wingspan.

Bush stone-curlews are listed as Least Concern on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species and can be found

throughout most eastern Australia regions. They are regularly seen in cities including Cairns, Darwin, and Brisbane. In 2019, I attended a conference at the University of Queensland, where I saw two bush stone-curlews and another two in a park in the middle of Brisbane. Having conducted a project on bush stone-curlews on the Central Coast of New South Wales, it was an absolute thrill to see them there, apparently quite easily!

However, bush stone-curlews are listed as Endangered, Vulnerable, and threatened in New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria. Their conservation status is likely partly due to their ground-nesting behaviour, making them particularly vulnerable to the introduced European red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) and cats.

**Above:** A bush stone-curlew (*Burhinus grallarius*) with a lowered head and a flattened body attempting to disguise itself.

Clearing of woodland for agriculture and development has also had significant impacts on curlews. Woodlands with leaf litter, grassy ground covers, and associated areas with fallen timber provide a refuge for them during the day and support an abundance of arthropods, one of their main dietary requirements. Therefore, it is imperative not to remove leaf litter and fallen timber in areas where curlews are present, to ensure that these key habitat locations remain as refuge sites and continue to act as suitable sites for feeding and nesting.

As mentioned before, curlews are nocturnal. They have a unique call that sounds like a high-pitched wail, often described as eerie or creepy. It is worth listening to it. The eBird website (ebird.org) has some great examples if you have not heard one before.

There are some important things that we can do to conserve these amazing birds. Like other shorebirds and ground-nesting birds, it is important to give them their space and not disturb them, particularly when they are nesting. Removal of adults away from the nest poses threats to the chicks and eggs. It is also important to ensure domestic animals are kept under control. Cats will prey on chicks and potentially adults.

Curlew eggs, approximately 5 centimetres in length, make ideal eating for the introduced European red fox. Thus, foxes pose a significant threat to the curlew's survival by predating live birds and their eggs. We had camera traps placed to observe curlews' nests during our studies on the Central Coast of New South Wales. The parents took turns incubating the eggs, and it was not too long before the chick hatched and started moving away from the nest with its parents. At the time, one of our collaborators captured an image of a fox stealing an egg from a pair of curlews.

For a bird at risk, the loss of even one egg can have devastating consequences on small populations. Thus, reducing the numbers of feral predators will aid curlews' long-term survival and support breeding success. Limiting domestic cat interactions by keeping them indoors and dog interactions by keeping them on a leash in areas with curlews and other ground-nesting birds is ideal for the curlews' long-term survival. Furthermore, ensuring that we do not alter their habitats, such as retaining fallen branches and leaf litter where they are found, will secure curlews for generations to come.



A beach stone-curlew (*Esacus magnirostris*). Image: Chris Walker



A bush stone-curlew (*Burhinus grallarius*) showing its long legs.



# Bringing Life Back Into our Bays and Estuaries: A National Reef Building Project for Australia

Doctor Chris Gillies, Oceans Program Director, The Nature Conservancy Australia

When Chris met southern Victoria's Port Phillip Bay resident Bob Pearce a few years ago, he had just started The Nature Conservancy's Oceans Program in Australia and was investigating how they could establish Australia's first shellfish (or oyster) reef restoration project. Bob has been a passionate recreational fisher for over sixty years and grew up in Albert Park near the docks of Port Melbourne, Victoria.

He is also passionate about the marine environment. Bob's childhood memories of selling mussels and oysters that had washed up on Port Melbourne's beaches, by the bucketful, was just the sort of information Chris was looking for to help piece together a story that has been largely lost from living memory.

## The Engineers of the Underwater World

Shellfish reefs of temperate Australia once fringed the bays and estuaries of Australia's fifteen thousand kilometres southern coastline from Perth, Western Australia, around to Noosa, Queensland, including Tasmania. These reefs provided a wide array of ecosystem services, including a

phenomenal ability to filter and clean water, guard coastlines from storm erosion, and boost fish stocks. These ecosystem services are thanks to one small animal that we tend to think of as a palate delicacy rather than the architect of a complex ecosystem – the oyster. More precisely, the Australian flat oyster (*Ostrea angasi*) and Sydney rock oyster (*Sacostrea glomerata*).

Oysters are the true engineers of shellfish reefs. A single oyster can filter the equivalent of a bathtub of seawater a day, removing sediment, phytoplankton, and other organic matter from the water. A direct result of their filtering activity is that the water is more transparent and allows more light in, improving the health of seagrass and other plant life. Cleaner water and increased biodiversity can also prevent toxic algal blooms and keep waters safe for swimming. The matter oysters filter from the water is consumed as food and expelled as faeces. The faeces sink to the bottom of the sea and provides a feast for other animals such as shrimps, crabs, and invertebrates. As oyster populations grow, they attract more and larger marine species. Shellfish

reefs can also protect shorelines from more frequent storms, erosion, and rising sea levels, which sustain coastal wetlands and mangroves that support greater biodiversity and sequester carbon.

## The Collapse of an Ecosystem

Shellfish reefs used to be a biodiversity hotspot, but today, they are almost entirely gone.

In 2018, Doctor Chris Gillies led a study that examined the true extent of shellfish reef decline in southern Australia. Piecing together information from old newspaper reports, fisheries records, and historical accounts from people like Bob, he found that, on average, 90 percent of Australia's shellfish reefs had disappeared by the turn of the century. The shocking statistic is even worse than the global average of 85 percent, making shellfish reefs a critically endangered marine ecosystem. Only 1 percent of reefs dominated by Australian flat oysters

**Above:** Southern hulafish (*Trachinops caudimaculatus*) have returned to the reef in Port Phillip Bay, Victoria. Image: John Van Vuuren

have survived, with one single functioning reef remaining today at Georges Bay in St Helens, Tasmania.

Between the 1850s and 1960s, dredging to mine the reefs for lime production, overfishing, water pollution, and disease led to the reefs' catastrophic decline. The decline contributed to the loss of juvenile fish and other marine life, which bred, hid, and fed on the reefs. Water quality also declined. Where once there were thriving, complex marine ecosystems, only desolate sandy seafloors remained.

### Bringing Back the Reefs

But there is hope! The Nature Conservancy has worked for decades on re-establishing lost shellfish reefs in places like the United States. In 2015, they joined forces with Bob, the Albert Park Yachting and Angling Club, and the Victorian Government to establish Australia's first shellfish reef restoration project. Since then, they have started and completed shellfish reef restoration projects in another thirteen locations and launched an ambitious plan to restore shellfish reefs in sixty locations around Australia.

Have you ever wondered how to build a shellfish reef? It is all about supporting oysters and letting them do the work. The Nature Conservancy use



Eight months after starting reef construction in Windara, South Australia, southern pygmy leatherjackets (*Brachaluterus jacksonianus*) were spotted feeding on the reef. Image: Anita Nedosyko

field surveys, science, and historical and contemporary knowledge provided by anglers, boaters, and divers to identify suitable sites for shellfish reef restoration. They also consult with local communities. The

reefs are constructed, starting with hundreds of tonnes of limestone rocks and/or recycled seafood shells acquired as part of their 'Shuck Don't Chuck' project. They then scatter the reef base with millions of baby



A blue swimmer crab (*Portunus pelagicus*). One of the many residents of The Nature Conservancy's shellfish reef in Windara, South Australia. Image: Anita Nedosyko

native oysters and/or mussels grown in nearby hatcheries in partnership with shellfish farmers.

The young shellfish will settle and continue to grow and will eventually establish themselves in their new homes and attract all the other species to create a fully functioning shellfish reef. It will take about seven years for the reef to become self-sustaining. With the help of partner scientists and the community, The Nature Conservancy monitor the new reefs for several years after construction. The reefs are monitored for threats such as predators and disease, and they also adjust how the reef is constructed to make sure it grows and thrives into a natural, self-sustaining ecosystem.

### A Thriving Ecosystem

New shellfish reefs attract marine life almost immediately. Within the first few months, The Nature Conservancy started seeing weedy algae and sponges growing on the reef. Reefs take two to three years to start producing fish and seven to ten years to become a fully functioning natural reef.

Every square meter of the shellfish reefs can host more than a thousand individual invertebrates from different biological groups, which provides

essential food for fish. Research shows that each year, every hectare of a rebuilt reef creates 375 kilograms of new fish stocks (including snapper, flathead, and whiting), filters 2.7 billion litres of seawater, and removes 225 kilograms of dissolved nutrient pollution (nitrogen and phosphorus). Each hectare of the restored reef also recycles 7,000 cubic meters of mollusc shells that would have otherwise gone to landfill.

Since 2015, The Nature Conservancy has restored six hectares of shellfish reef in Port Phillip Bay and about thirty hectares of shellfish reef around Australia, the equivalent of fifteen Melbourne Cricket Grounds. Up to 85 percent of the seed oysters are surviving on the reefs. In Port Phillip Bay, marine life has quickly returned to the reef. The Nature Conservancy has seen schools of pinky and baby snapper (*Pagrus auratus*), little reef fish like the southern pygmy leatherjackets (*Brachaluteres jacksonianus*), and southern hulafish (*Trachinops caudimaculatus*) return. Other invertebrates that sit at the bottom of the food chain, such as sea stars and urchins, have also returned. They have also seen octopus, cuttlefish, and even seals return to the reefs. These reef ecosystems are the foundations for life. They are bringing

back new life into our bays and estuaries. Watching them grow from bare rocks and oysters the size of a pinhead is one of life's most fulfilling experiences.

### It is Only the Beginning

With the Australian Federal Government's support under the Reef Builder initiative, the construction of shellfish reefs has been fast-tracked to support communities recovering from last year's bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic. Rebuilding shellfish reefs can create more jobs than traditional infrastructure investments across diverse industries, including maritime construction, aquaculture, and natural resource management. Once the reefs are completed, cleaner water and more fish will attract more visitors supporting eco-tourism, hospitality, and the fishing sector.

However, it is only the beginning. The Nature Conservancy is leading an effort to rebuild and protect sixty reefs across Australia alongside communities who need them most. If they succeed, Australia will become the first nation in the world to recover a critically endangered marine ecosystem. To read more about The Nature Conservancy's National Reef Building Project, please visit [natureaustralia.org.au/shellfishreefs](http://natureaustralia.org.au/shellfishreefs)



Life returns in its many forms on the Port Phillip Bay reef, Victoria, with orange anemone colonising parts of the reef. Image: Jarrod Boord



## How Australian Wildlife Facilitated a New Scientific Collaboration on Seabird Health

Associate Professor Sophie 'Topa' Petit

It was January 2017, and the latest issue of Australian Wildlife had just been released. I read with interest an article by Doctor Lauren Roman from the University of Tasmania. At the time, Lauren was researching the effects of plastic ingestion in seabirds, and her research had been sponsored in part by the Australian Wildlife Society.

I was interested in the effects of pollutants on bats but saw the relevance of integrating another indicator species foraging at sea to evaluate the whole-of-environment impacts of pollution. I reached out to Lauren, and she responded to my e-mail. Following some ongoing correspondence, Lauren proceeded to drag me into a laboratory adventure that had little to do with bats and a lot to do with seabirds.

The following year, Lauren was in Professor Albert Juhasz's laboratory at the University of South Australia,

learning and applying new metal analysis methods to examine the links between plastic ingestion and metal contamination in seabirds. The lab was filled with seabird organs extracted from dead seabirds and competently handled by Lauren, Rina Aleman, Farzana Kastury, and Victoria Zawko.

The first publication from this collaboration, between Lauren and the University of South Australia, came out late last year in *Scientific Reports*. The paper, titled 'Plastic, nutrition and pollution; relationships between ingested plastic and metal concentrations in the livers of two *Pachyptila* seabirds', is an essential step toward evaluating plastic impacts on wild seabirds. It links the presence of metals and metalloids with plastic ingestion and suggests nutritional effects on fairy prions (*Pachyptila turtur*) and slender-billed prions (*Pachyptila belcheri*).

The study was the first to show a relationship between plastic pollution, which is increasingly ubiquitous in our oceans, and the concentration of mineral nutrients in the liver of seabirds. While further research is needed to better understand the link between plastic in the gut and seabird nutrition, it is a concern to find that millions of seabirds have plastic in their stomach. The research was sponsored by BirdLife Australia's Australian Bird Environment Fund, Sea World Research and Rescue Foundation, and the Lirabenda Endowment Fund.

Plastic pollution has a direct and deadly effect on Australia's wildlife through entanglement, strangulation, and suffocation. Therefore, we must

**Above:** Doctor Lauren Roman in the science lab processing and examining seabird liver samples. Image: Associate Professor Sophie 'Topa' Petit



Doctor Lauren Roman holding a fairy prion (*Pachyptila turtur*), which was found dead. Image: Lara van Raay

be more mindful of our actions and buying choices on the environment and our precious wildlife. The Queensland government recently passed laws to ban single-use plastic and polystyrene takeaway items from 1 September 2021, which is very welcome news.

The Australian Marine Conservation Society has created a key on the ban of single-use plastic by each state and territory updated on 10 March 2021.

From this key, we can see that most state governments are committed to reducing our impact on the environment and wildlife. However, some states and one territory still have a long way to go, specifically New South Wales, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory.

Overall, it was an unlikely collaboration. After all, I specialise in mammals and pollination, and the chance of Lauren and I meeting at a

**Australian State / Territory Commitments**

**Ban on Single-Use Plastics**

Last Updated: 10 March 2021

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Lightweight plastic bags	✓	✓ Banned 2020	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Straws	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
Drink stirrers	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
Cutlery	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
Polystyrene food + drink containers	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
Plates + bowls				✓			✓	✓
Cotton bud sticks							✓	
Fruit + veggie bags	✓						✓	✓
Heavyweight plastic bags								✓

KEY: ✓ = Banned    ✓ = Ban starts within 2 years    ✓ = Over 2 years away

[marineconservation.org.au](http://marineconservation.org.au)

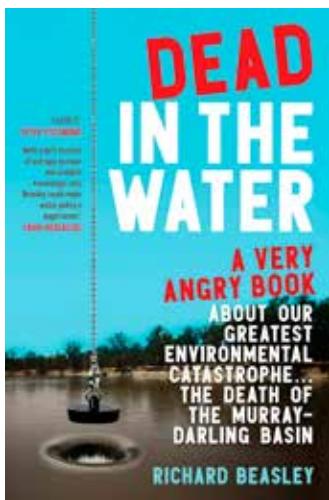
The Australian Marine Conservation Society's key on the ban of single-use plastic by each state and territory. Image: Australian Marine Conservation Society

conference was slim. As we celebrate Suzanne Medway's achievement as Chief Editor of the Australian Wildlife magazine, upon her retirement, and the Society's significance in informing the general community about the magic and plight of Australia's wildlife, let us remember the magazine's role in fostering new research collaborations. When people ask me where I met Lauren, I respond, "through the Australian Wildlife magazine published by the Australian Wildlife Society."



A fairy prion (*Pachyptila turtur*) in flight across the ocean. Image: Doctor Lauren Roman

# Book Reviews

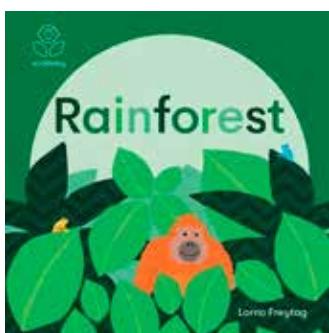


## Dead in the Water – *Richard Beasley*

*Dead in the Water* sheds some light on the mismanagement driving the environmental degradation of many of the Murray-Darling Basin rivers. The author, Richard Beasley, is fed up. He is fed up with the weakness and neglect that has allowed irrigators to destroy a river system that can sustain the natural environment, including native wildlife that depends on it for survival. Richard is fed up that a noble plan to save the Murray-Darling Basin, based

on the best scientific knowledge, has instead been corroded by lies, the denial of climate change, pseudoscience, and political expediency. Richard is provocative, outrageous, and points the finger without shame as he conveys and highlights the importance of restoring biodiversity and ecological systems to their most natural state so they can flourish.

**Publisher:** Allen & Unwin | **RRP:** \$29.99

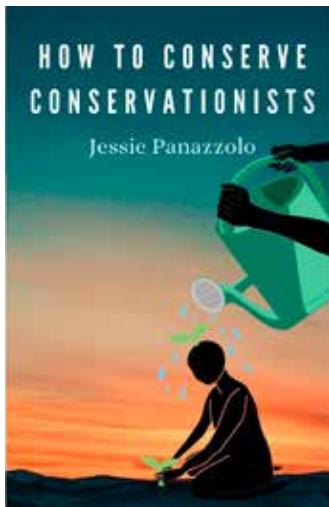


## Rainforest – *Lorna Freytag*

Find out why rainforests matter, how they are under threat, and different ways to protect them. With bright, bold illustrations and simple text, *Eco Baby: Rainforests* is a perfect book for little ones. From wildlife such as frogs and snakes to ladybirds and snails, we are never too young to start caring about

and protecting the world's rainforests. *Eco Baby* is a series of bright, bold board books introducing the very youngest of children to environmental issues.

**Publisher:** Allen & Unwin | **RRP:** \$14.99

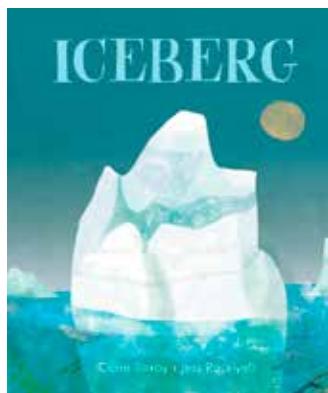


## How to Conserve Conservationists – *Jessie Panazzolo*

*How to Conserve Conservationists* is an autobiographical journey through Jessie Panazzolo's experience in founding a global community of budding and burnt-out conservationists. Sharing her personal stories, research, and observations, she shares some care instructions with readers to help them look after the conservationists in their lives. A thought-provoking read about language, relationships, and mental health and how these

topics impact the people that conserve our natural world.

**Publisher:** Tablo Pty Ltd | **RRP:** \$22.50

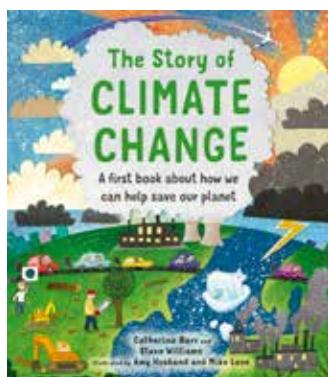


## Iceberg – *Claire Saxby and Jess Racklyeft*

*Iceberg* is a beautifully illustrated lyrical story about an iceberg's life cycle and its travel through the seasons. In the freeze of an Antarctic winter, penguins trek across the ice to their winter homes. As the temperature warms, birds fly above on their long migrations. And with the advent of summer, beneath the iceberg, the sea

is teeming with marine life. From leopard seals (*Hydrurga leptonyx*) to short-tailed shearwaters (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) and humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) to Antarctic krill (*Euphausia superba*) this cold environment is teeming with life. The author explains the impact of global warming on Antarctica and the wildlife that live there – an environment like no other that needs our protection.

**Publisher:** Allen & Unwin | **RRP:** \$24.99

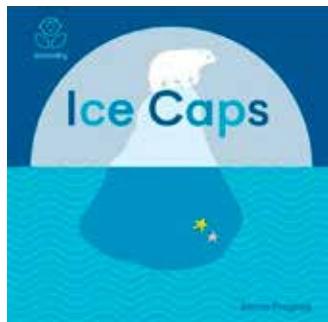


## The Story of Climate Change – *Catherine Barr, Steve Williams, and Amy Husband*

*The Story of Climate Change* introduces one of the most critical issues facing our world today and will inspire you to help make a change to fight the climate emergency. Combining history with science, this book charts the changes in the earth's climate, from the beginnings of the planet and

its atmosphere to the industrial revolution and the dawn of machinery. You will learn about the causes of climate change, such as factory farming and pollution, and the impact that climate change has on humans and wildlife across the world. Furthermore, you will also discover practical ways to reduce your impact on the natural world, from using renewable energy to swapping meat for vegetables in your diet.

**Publisher:** Allen & Unwin | **RRP:** \$24.99



## Ice Caps – *Lorna Freytag*

*Find out why the polar ice caps matter, how they are under threat, and different ways of protecting them. With bright, bold illustrations and simple text, *Eco Baby: Ice Caps* is a perfect book for little ones. From wildlife such as penguins and seals to fish and polar bears, we are never too*

young to start caring about and protecting some of the planet's coldest environments. *Eco Baby* is a series of bright, bold board books introducing the very youngest of children to environmental issues.

**Publisher:** Allen & Unwin | **RRP:** \$14.99



# Wildlife Ecology

## Research Scholarship

The Australian Wildlife Society Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship is open to postgraduate research students from three Australian Universities undertaking a research project that is of direct relevance to the conservation of Australia's native wildlife.

Scholarships are valued at \$5,000 for one year.

### HOW TO APPLY

[aws.org.au/scholarships/](http://aws.org.au/scholarships/)

### APPLICATIONS CLOSE

31 May each year

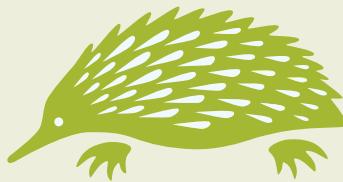


**UNSW**  
SYDNEY

**UTS**  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

**WESTERN SYDNEY**  
UNIVERSITY





**WILDLIFE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED  
TRADING AS AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE SOCIETY**

## **YOUR LEGACY FOR AUSTRALIA'S WILDLIFE**

The Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia was founded in 1909 by a group of enthusiastic bushwalkers. Our founders suggested the need for such a group in a talk with the Naturalists' Society of New South Wales. The Swedish Consul-General for Australia, Count Birger Mörner, organised the first preliminary discussion in the Consulate on 11 May 1909. As an outcome of this discussion, it was decided to call a public meeting for the formation of the Society. Fifty people attended and were enrolled as the first members of the Society. Within one week, the newly formed Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia had grown to more than one hundred members.

The Provisional Committee worked hard and in the same year, the inaugural meeting adopted a constitution and elected the first chairman, the Hon. F E Winchcombe MLC, head of a large firm of woolbrokers, skin and hide merchants. There were six women on the first council of twenty-five people, and some who were later to become famous as naturalists.

Our Society pioneered the recognition of the need for legal protection for Australia's animals and plants.

Today we are known as the Australian Wildlife Society (AWS). We are a national not-for-profit



wildlife conservation organisation. Our mission is to conserve Australia's wildlife (flora and fauna) through national environmental education, public awareness, advocacy, hands-on conservation work and community involvement. AWS is a tax-deductible gift recipient and registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission. Its public fund is listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations under item 6.1.1 of subsection 30-55(1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. AWS is funded through membership fees, sponsorships, partnerships,

donations, and bequests. The Society is managed and controlled by an elected board of ten volunteer directors. We hold regular monthly meetings, on the first Wednesday of each month in Sydney, to discuss important wildlife conservation matters and make a number of significant decisions.

Furthermore, we act as a watchdog and provide advice to government agencies and institutions regarding environmental and conservation issues concerning all aspects of wildlife preservation. Our Society has always known that a battle is never really won until the victory is enshrined in legislation. We have always tried to convince politicians of the necessity to include the preservation of Australia's wildlife and the conservation of its vital habitat in all their planning, policies and discussions.

**YOUR BEQUEST WILL HELP US TO CONTINUE TO PRESERVE  
AUSTRALIA'S WILDLIFE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

## HOW YOUR BEQUEST WILL BE USED

By remembering AWS with a bequest in your will, you are making a unique commitment. Your bequest to AWS will help us continue to preserve Australia's wildlife for future generations.

We rely on our supporters' generosity to enable us to continue working towards the conservation of Australian wildlife (flora and fauna) in all its forms through national environmental education and advocacy. Without you, our work would simply not be possible. Whatever the



amount you bequeath to AWS, your contribution is invaluable.

A bequest is one of the most effective and long-lasting ways you can help AWS. Your promise of future support is deeply appreciated. If you have included a bequest to AWS in your will, please let us know. We thank you personally for this bequest of support. At all times your privacy will be fully respected and the information you provide will remain strictly confidential.

### Your bequest will go directly to wildlife and/or wildlife conservation projects across Australia. Some examples of our projects are listed below:

- Supporting wildlife rescue groups that are rehabilitating injured wildlife
- Active involvement in national environmental education
- Lobbying and advocating for the protection of Australia's wildlife and its habitats
- Offering university grants and scholarships to honours or postgraduate students at Australian universities
- Offering conservation group grants
- Offering free membership to all students in Australia
- Founding Australian Wildlife Week
- Presentation of our four annual prestigious awards
- Founding the NSW Platypus and Turtle Alliance
- Kinder Program – the Society has selected a number of wildlife conservation programs in each state of Australia and one in New Zealand to receiving conservation funding under this new program
- Holding an annual threatened wildlife photographic competition that rewards and promotes the conservation of threatened or endangered Australian wildlife through the medium of photography



# HOW TO MAKE A BEQUEST

If you already have a will but would like to leave a bequest to AWS, you can do so by making a simple addition to your existing will. This is called a codicil. If you do not have a will at the moment, you can simply include a bequest when you write a new will. Whatever your circumstances, we would advise you to see a solicitor to ensure that your wishes will be followed.

When catastrophic events occur and our immediate action is required, it is essential that all our programs continue without interruption. Financial flexibility is crucial to our ability to respond to priority needs, so we ask that you do not designate your gift to a particular project or region.

## Types of bequests:

1. A **residuary bequest** is the most effective way to leave a bequest to AWS. It is a gift of what remains after you have made provisions for your loved ones. A residuary gift will keep up with inflation. It will mean your bequest will achieve as much in our projects in the future as you would like it to now.
2. Leaving a **percentage of your estate** allows you to decide what proportion of your total estate you would like to give to AWS. A percentage gift will also keep up with inflation.
3. A **pecuniary bequest** is a fixed sum of money to be left to AWS. This type of gift will not keep up with inflation.

## Recommended bequest wording

Please take this information with you when you visit your solicitor to draft or update your will. We suggest the following wording:

“I give and bequeath

- the residue, or
- [.....] percentage of my whole estate, or
- [.....] percentage of the residue, or
- the specific sum of \$[.....]

to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited, for its general purposes, and declare that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited shall be a complete discharge to my Executors in respect of any sum paid to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited.”

Your solicitor may also require the following detail:

ABN: 13 817 470 816

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## What is a bequest?

A bequest is a gift left in your will. It's also known as a legacy. You can leave a bequest by writing a new will, or by adding a codicil (an addition) to your existing will. We recommend you consult a solicitor who can help you write your will.

## What is the best way to leave a bequest in my will to AWS?

The best way to leave a bequest to AWS is to leave a monetary bequest (i.e. not property, shares, etc.) and a residuary bequest. This is a gift of what remains after all your other provisions have been made, enabling you to put your loved ones first. A residuary bequest also keeps up with inflation, this is the most effective way to provide a gift to AWS. You can also leave a percentage of your estate or pecuniary bequest, which is a fixed sum of money to be left to AWS.

## I want to leave a bequest to a specific project. Can I do this?

Having flexible funds is essential to our ability to respond rapidly and where the need is greatest. Leaving a bequest for the Society's general use is the most effective as it means that your gift will definitely be used where it is needed most. Leaving a bequest to a specific type of work or location might mean that it cannot be used. This can occur if we are no longer

working there or doing the kind of work specified in the future. As such, we ask that you do not designate your gift to a particular project or region.

## Can AWS help me write my will?

No, we don't have that kind of legal expertise. We recommend you consult a solicitor who can help you write your will. There is also a public trustee in every state of Australia that offers will-writing services.

## Can I make AWS the Executor of my will?

No, we appreciate your trust in the Society but we do not have the necessary resources. We try to keep administration costs low so that the maximum amount can go towards our projects in the field. As such, we choose not to take the role of Executor of a will as this can often be a lengthy and involved legal process.

## Can I leave you my house, other property or shares?

Yes, but monetary gifts are preferred as AWS would need to convert any property or shares into cash to be able to use them. This means additional time and resources spent trying to get the best price and sell these items before we can put your bequest to use.



L to R: Stephen Grabowski, Brian Scarsbrick AM, Doctor Robin Crisman, Philip Sansom, Trevor Evans, Suzanne Medway AM, Wayne Greenwood, Doctor Julie Old, Patrick Medway AM, and Ken Mason.

### My relative has passed away and left a bequest in their will for AWS. What do I need to do?

We very much appreciate bequests left to us from generous supporters. Please ask the Executor to notify us in writing of the bequest by sending a letter to the National Office Manager, 29B/17 Macmahon Street, Hurstville NSW 2220 or via email [manager@aws.org.au](mailto:manager@aws.org.au) and we can start the process of transferring the bequest to AWS.

### Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited Trading as Australian Wildlife Society

**Address:** 29B/17 Macmahon Street, Hurstville NSW 2220, Australia

**Tel:** (61) (4) 24 287 297

**Email:** [manager@aws.org.au](mailto:manager@aws.org.au)

**ABN:** 13 817 470 816

**Web:** [aws.org.au/bequest](http://aws.org.au/bequest)

### Why is having a will so important?

If you do not have a will when you die, state laws will determine how your assets will be distributed. Leaving clear instructions and sharing your decisions with your family and friends can give you the peace of mind that your final wishes will be understood and respected after you are gone. We recognise that writing a will is one of the most significant decisions you'll ever make. That's why we know it's important to take your time and have all of the information you need to help you make up your mind.



# Membership Form

## Membership

### Become a member of the Australian Wildlife Society

Simply fill out this form.

Name:.....

Address:.....

City/Suburb:..... Postcode:.....

Telephone:..... Fax:.....

..... Email:.....



#### Membership category (please tick)

- Student: \$0 (Conditions apply)
- Individual: \$55
- Family: \$70
- Concession (pensioner/student/child): \$50
- E-mag (emailed as PDF, no hardcopy will be sent): \$30
- Associate (library, school, conservation groups): \$85
- Corporate: \$125
- Life: \$2,000

(Includes postage within Australia. Add \$40 for overseas postage)

#### Three year membership (please tick)

- Individual: \$150
- Family: \$190
- Concession (pensioner/student/child): \$135
- E-mag (emailed as PDF, no hardcopy will be sent): \$81
- Associate (library, school, conservation groups): \$230
- Corporate: \$340

(Includes postage within Australia. Add \$60 for overseas postage)

#### Payment details (please tick)

Direct Debit  Cheque  Money Order  Mastercard  Visa

Card Security Code (CSC) \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number:

Amount \$ .....

Name on Card: ..... Expiry: .....

Donation \$ .....

Signature:.....

Total \$ .....

**Mail to the:** Australian Wildlife Society  
29B/17 Macmahon St, HURSTVILLE NSW 2220  
Email: [accounts@aws.org.au](mailto:accounts@aws.org.au)  
Website: [www.aws.org.au](http://www.aws.org.au)

**Direct debit:** BSB: 062 235  
Account No: 1069 6157  
Account Name: Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia trading as the Australian Wildlife Society

**Membership Hotline: Mob: 0424 287 297**

**Note: All cheques to be made out to the Australian Wildlife Society**

#### Consider A Bequest

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

If you would like to make a bequest, add the following codicil to your Will:

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

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

# Be a Part of the Australian Wildlife Society's Conservation Future



**To commit to being a part of our future, please complete this form. You may cancel your donation subscription at any time by notifying the national office.**

Australian Wildlife Society  
29B/17 Macmahon St  
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220

Email: accounts@aws.org.au  
Telephone enquiries to: 0424 287 297

You may also commit by visiting [www.aws.org.au](http://www.aws.org.au) and registering online

**All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.**



**Australian Wildlife Society**  
Conserving Australia's Wildlife since 1909



## Your Details

Name: Dr / Mr / Ms / Mrs / Miss

Address:

State:

Postcode:

Phone: Home

Work

Email:

I want to join the Friends of AWS and give by automatic deduction each month to help protect our unique native wildlife and its important habitat

I will give via: Credit Card (please complete authority form below)

## Credit Card Payments

I am paying by:  Visa  MasterCard Card Security Code (CSC) \_\_\_\_\_

Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card

Signature

## Regular Payment can be made by EFT

**BSB:** 062 235

**Account No:** 1069 6157

**Account Name:**

Australian Wildlife Society

## I will give:

\$10 per month  \$15 per month  \$25 per month  \$50 per month

My choice of \$ per month \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date

This authorisation is to remain in force until cancelled by the donor and in accordance with the terms described in the Agreement below.

Deduction will be made on 15th of each month.

## CREDIT CARD AUTHORITY

1. The Donor will be advised 14 days in advance of any changes to the Credit Card Authority arrangements. 2. For all arrangements relating to the Credit Card Authority arrangements, the Donor will need to write to 29B/17 Macmahon St, HURSTVILLE NSW 2220 or email [accounts@aws.org.au](mailto:accounts@aws.org.au). 3. Account details should be checked against a recent statement from your Financial Institution. 4. It is the donor's responsibility to ensure sufficient funds are available when the payments are due to be drawn. 5. If the due date for payment falls on a non-working day or public holiday, the payment will be processed on the next working day. 6. For returned unpaid transactions, the following procedure will apply: AWS will advise the Donor of the unpaid transaction and request alternative arrangements to be made for payment if possible. 7. All Donor records and account details will be kept private and confidential to be disclosed only at the request of the donor or Financial Institution in connection with a claim made to an alleged incorrect or wrongful debit. 8. This authorisation is to remain in force until cancelled by the Donor.

# 112th Annual General Meeting

1. Sarah Jantos and Charlie Cairncross with the Australian Wildlife Society banner.



2. Luncheon attendees in the Member's Dining Room at New South Wales Parliament House.



3. L to R: Candice Bartlett, John Creighton, Caitlin Gallagher, and Kim Gallagher.



4. L to R: Vanessa Wilson, Suzanne Medway AM, and Doctor Robin Crisman.



6. Brian and Joanne Scarsbrick.



7. L to R: Stuart Henderson PSM, Craig Henderson, John Old, Doctor Julie Old, and Nid Henderson.



10. L to R: Patrick Medway AM with Colin and Judy Wilson.



11. L to R: Megan Fabian and Candice Bartlett.



12. L to R: Suzanne and Patrick Medway AM, Sisilia Citrajaya, Mark Coure MP, and Stephen Kamper MP.

