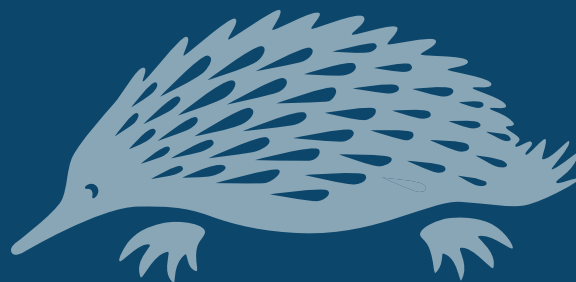


President's

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021



A Year in Review

The past year has been challenging, with the COVID-19 pandemic taking a toll on the economy again in 2021. However, the Society was fortunate to continue its work protecting Australia's native wildlife during these difficult times. I was honoured to be elected as President following the Annual General Meeting and am thrilled to be undertaking a new role in the Australian Wildlife Society as its 19th President. We were also delighted to welcome a new member to the Board – Dr Hayley Stannard, a wildlife researcher and lecturer on anatomy and physiology subjects at Charles Sturt University.

One of the highlights of the year was presenting our four annual awards – the **Serventy Conservation Award, Community Conservation Award, Wildlife Rehabilitation Award, and Youth Conservation Award**. This year, the Society was delighted to increase the sum of money for all four awards. We are aware of the wonderful work carried out by wildlife conservation organisations and volunteers across the country. 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 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 community.

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

E-newsletter

Our monthly e-newsletter received a new look and a name change from Manager's Messages to Wildlife Wisdom. We wanted the title of the newsletter to say less about us and more about our members – our wisdom of wildlife advocates! Consequently, we thought the name change would be suitable and reflect the wisdom shared by the Society and its members through the monthly e-newsletter. We encourage members to forward Wildlife Wisdom to their family, friends, and networks to help spread the important message of wildlife conservation across Australia.

Website

Our website received an updated look with an engaging home page, including video footage from beneath the sea and stunning native flora and fauna images. Our 2021 wildlife of the year, Australia's ground-dwelling parrots, was also featured. Changes to the structure and layout will be an ongoing process as we continue to update our website to make it more user-friendly.

Australian Wildlife Magazine

This year, we saw Ms Megan Fabian, National Office Manager, appointed as the Editor of *Australian Wildlife*.

The magazine has a proud record and history, and has proved extremely popular amongst all our members. 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. We invite members to distribute copies to family and friends and invite them to become members.



Social Media

We are active on 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; thank you for your support. We reached over 13,500 followers on Instagram and 12,200 followers on Facebook. A special thank you to Dr Jai Green-Barber (Instagram), Greg Dawson, Kate Dutton-Regester, Caitlin Gallagher, Karlee Putterill (Facebook Photography), Emma Harding and Nadya Sotnychuck (Twitter) for assisting the Society with its social media platforms.

Membership

As of 1 December 2021, we had 603 members in total. We had 143 Individual Members, 11 Family Members, 46 Concession Members, 13 Corporate Members, 40 E-Mag Members, 14 Associate Members, 23 Life Members, 21 Complimentary Members, and 292 Student Members. Please consider becoming a member of the Society to help protect Australia's native wildlife and natural habitats.

Our Mission

Australian Wildlife Society, founded in 1909, is a national not-for-profit wildlife conservation organisation. We are dedicated to protecting Australian wildlife (flora and fauna) through national environmental education, public awareness, advocacy, hands-on wildlife conservation work, and community involvement. To fulfil part of our mission, we introduced the University Research Grants Scheme in 2005. Since its inception, we have awarded over 165 grants to very worthy recipients. In the future, we 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 of Technology Sydney Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship** was awarded to UTS School of Life Sciences PhD student, Gwilym Price, for his research on 'The assessment and development of bioavailability-based guideline values for zinc in Australian and New Zealand freshwaters.'

The **University of New South Wales Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship** was awarded to UNSW School of Biological, Earth, and Environmental Sciences PhD student, Brittany Mitchell, for her research on 'The effects of the Anthropocene on Australian frog species.'

A second **University of New South Wales Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship** was awarded to UNSW Centre for Ecosystem Science PhD Candidate, Jana Stewart, for her research on 'Soil microbial responses to reintroduced semi-fossorial mammals: a temporal comparison of soil biodiversity and ecosystem function.'

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.'

Annual General Meeting and President's Luncheon

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 2021, in Sydney. The Annual President's Luncheon was held after the Annual General Meeting at New South Wales Parliament House in Sydney and attended by an enthusiastic group of supporters. Patrick Medway AM welcomed the guests, proposed a toast to 112 years of wildlife conservation, and marked Suzanne Medway AM's retirement as she stepped down from office after thirty years of active service to the Society. The Society was pleased to announce the winners of its prestigious awards for 2020 during the luncheon proceedings.



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



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



Suzanne Medway AM with the New South Wales Environment Minister cutting the 112th Anniversary cake. L to R: Philip Sansom, Mark Coure MP, Brian Scarsbrick AM, Ken Mason, Dr Julie Old, Stephen Grabowski, Dr Robin Crisman, Trevor Evans, Suzanne Medway AM, Stephen Kamper MP, Patrick Medway AM, and Minister Matthew Kean MP.

Wildlife Conservation Awards

The winner of the **Serventy Conservation Award** was Professor Kevin Kenneally AM of Scarborough, Western Australia. Kevin has been a true warrior for wildlife conservation for over fifty years, promoting and advancing nature studies and wildlife conservation in Western Australia and Australia more broadly. His contribution to education and science is considerable. Kevin was the founder and scientific director of the multidisciplinary LANDSCOPE Expeditions that provided Australian and overseas scientists with research opportunities. Over seventeen years, the program involved over 1,000 volunteers and raised two million dollars for wildlife research. It also involved close collaboration with indigenous communities.

The winner of the **Community Wildlife Conservation Award** was the Queensland Wader Study Group of Clayfield, Queensland. 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 that has been remarkably successful over a long period. The training and education which volunteers receive are also open to the public. Queensland Wader Study Group has identified important habitat sites for the shorebirds and has involved local groups in building roost sites to protect the birds. Queensland Wader Study Group has extensive data collection from its long-term observations. Some of the data has been used to produce scientific papers in collaboration with university research centres. The data has also helped identify threatened species and protect critical habitat sites. The designation of Ramsar areas on the Queensland coast, including Moreton Bay, was primarily built on Queensland Wader Study Group data.

The winner of the **Wildlife Rehabilitation Award** was Megan Churches of Camperdown, New South Wales. Meg has been engaged with the rescue and rehabilitation of bats, especially grey-headed flying-foxes (*Pteropus poliocephalus*), for the past fourteen years. Meg has been involved in WIRES as a volunteer and is currently the Bat Co-ordinator for the Inner West Branch of WIRES. Meg carries out many and sometimes quite tricky rescues of bats – both microbats and flying-foxes. She rescues both adults and juveniles. Meg will travel widely around Sydney in her car, at short notice, at various times, in varied weather and traffic conditions, carrying out these rescues in response to public reports to WIRES of bats that are in trouble or injured. She is very skilled, calm, compassionate, and inventive when carrying out wildlife rescues. She also films the rescues and posts the videos on her YouTube channel.

The winner of the **Youth Conservation Award** was Charlie Cairncross of Fingal Head, New South Wales. 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. 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. One hundred per cent of the funds raised went directly to wildlife carers for medical supplies needed to care for orphaned wildlife. Charlie has also begun to speak 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 children across Australia.



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



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



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



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

Conservation Group Grants

The Board of the Society carefully considers all requests for grants from Conservation Groups dedicated to the preservation of native wildlife and wildlife habitat. This year, we were fortunate to be able to offer five Conservation Group Grants:

Green Heroes

Funds assisted Green Heroes in purchasing a turtle incubation chamber to aid the research and development of artificial incubation of marine turtle eggs and conserve marine turtle species for future generations.

Reclaim Kosci

Funds assisted Reclaim Kosci to develop the success of the Reclaim Kosci Campaign in 2021 and to continue raising awareness about the impacts of feral horses on our precious native wildlife in Kosciuszko National Park.

James Cook University

Funds assisted Dr Conrad Hoskins from the School of Marine and Tropical Biology, University of Queensland, to monitor armoured mist frog (*Litoria lorica*) populations and implement a translocation program to protect this species from the risk of extinction.

Broad-toothed Rat Project

Funds assisted Aussie Ark in building a broad-toothed rat (*Mastacomys fuscus*) captive breeding facility to protect this threatened species from feral predation and ensure its survival in the future by maximising its genetic diversity.

Invasive Species Council

Funds assisted the Invasive Species Council to employ a full-time national deer campaigner and help raise awareness about the impact of feral deer in Tasmania and nationally.

Webinars, Conferences, and Presentations

The Society attended and contributed to several important wildlife conservation conferences, webinars, and meetings throughout the year. We participated in Regional and Annual Conferences held by the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales and discussed important wildlife conservation issues with key stakeholders in the field. We attended a special webinar hosted by Reclaim Kosci, which addressed the impacts of feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park and the actions that must be implemented to help protect native species from feral horses. We also took part in the Australian Wildlife Management Society and Australian Mammal Society Conferences which had a diverse range of topics and speakers. Furthermore, the Society strives for continuous improvement. Consequently, the National Office Manager participated in a few online courses hosted by Western Sydney Business Centre to develop and improve the Society's impact on wildlife conservation outcomes. We also visited Little Ark Preschool to speak about the importance of conserving Australia's native wildlife for future generations. The children were engaged and asked lots of questions.



Little Ark Preschool students and teachers.

Threatened Wildlife Photographic Competition

The annual judge's prize of \$1,000 was won by Bruno Bell for his photograph of a black-tipped spider orchid (*Caladenia anthracina*). Listed as Endangered under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the *Tasmanian Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*, the black-tipped spider orchid is extremely rare. The annual people's choice prize of \$500 was won by Chris Theobald for his photograph of a squirrel glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*). Listed as Endangered in South Australia and Vulnerable in New South Wales, this image was photographed in the Wolgan Valley, New South Wales.



Black-tipped spider orchid (*Caladenia anthracina*). Image: Bruno Bell.



Squirrel glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*). Image: Chris Theobald.

University Research Grants Scheme

The Australian Wildlife Society's University Research Grants are offered to honours or postgraduate students at Australian universities. Grants are available for research projects of direct relevance to the conservation of Australian wildlife (flora or fauna). Each year, ten grants of \$1,500 are awarded. The winners for 2021 were:



Gracie Liu

School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of New South Wales

Project Title: How can we improve frog conservation in fragmented landscapes? Closing the gap with a novel genetic approach



Grant Linley

Institute for Land, Water and Society, Charles Sturt University

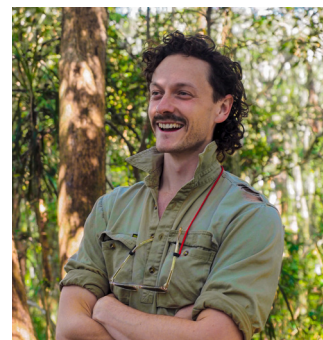
Project Title: The influence of landscape-scale fire refuges and pyrodiversity on mammal communities following an unprecedented megafire



Kyle Brewer

Clinical and Health Sciences, University of South Australia

Project Title: pH-Responsive 1080 implants for the mitigation of the catastrophic predation of native animal populations



Patrick Finnerty

School of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Sydney

Project Title: Strategically exploiting plant odours to manipulate mammalian herbivore foraging behaviours as a conservational tool



Bethany Nordstrom

School of Biological Sciences, University of Western Australia

Project Title: Assisted colonisation of the western swamp turtle



Erica Durante

Future Industries Institute, University of South Australia

Project Title: Investigating the age and growth of an endemic octopus species



Jenna Draper

School of Biological Sciences, University of Adelaide

Project Title: Conservation utility of *Pimelea microcephala* subsp. *microcephala* to arid zone frugivores and pollinators



God'spower Okoh

Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences, James Cook University

Project Title: Investigating herpesvirus infections in Australian wildlife



Shae Jones

School of Earth, Atmospheric and Life Sciences, University of Wollongong

Project Title: Do arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi help grasses in heat waves?



Bianca Keys (L) and Karli Mylius (R)

Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies, University of Tasmania

Project Title: Assessing microplastic exposure through non-invasive examination of guano in resident Tasmanian shorebirds



Key Projects

Snip Rings for Wildlife campaign

The #SnipRingsforWildlife campaign continued in 2021 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 before disposing of them. Our petition received over 500 responses, and petitions signed by 500 or more persons require a response from the government. The response acknowledged the importance of the campaign and stated that the Plastic Reduction and Circular Economy Bill 2021 might provide a framework to address ring-shaped items in the future. The response highlighted that the New South Wales Plastics Action Plan outlines a commitment to review other plastic items for a future phase-out, including plastic cups and their lids (including dome-shaped lids), in three years to determine whether a phase-out is appropriate at that time. The Society will continue its campaign to raise awareness and protect native wildlife from the threat of ring-shaped items. We encourage our members and supporters to reduce their reliance on single-use plastics. South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, Western Australia, and Victoria have also made commitments to ban single-use plastics. Nationally, Australia's National Packaging Targets set a goal to phase out single-use plastics by 2025.

Platypus Alliance

Not only is the platypus listed as Endangered in South Australia, but early this year, the platypus was officially listed as Vulnerable in Victoria and is being considered for listing as a threatened species under Australia's and New South Wales environmental legislation. Protecting one of the world's most iconic animals and the rivers it relies on must be a national priority. Consequently, the Society wrote to the New South Wales, South Australian and Federal Environment Minister, and the New South Wales Shadow Minister to encourage the government to implement further action to protect the iconic platypus and expedite the threatened species listing for the platypus.

Enclosed yabby traps are now banned in Victoria, Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania, and Western Australia. In 2020 we met with the New South Wales Environment Minister regarding the need for enclosed yabby traps to be banned. Our voice was heard, and it resulted in the New South Wales Government giving 5,000 open-top pyramid 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. The Queensland Freshwater Fisheries Working Group and South Australian Minister's Recreational Fishing Advisory Council are also considering implementing a ban on enclosed yabby traps. We will continue to advocate for this change. The Federal Environment Minister supports a coordinated and nationally consistent approach to using alternate trapping methods to opera house nets to minimise impacts on native wildlife such as platypus, rakali, turtles, and waterbirds.

Australian Wildlife Week

The Society established Australian Wildlife Week to raise awareness of wildlife conservation matters across Australia and inspire all Australians to implement wildlife conservation action where possible. The Society hosted an online webinar on Tuesday, 5 October 2021, from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm to celebrate Australian Wildlife Week. The theme was 'Connecting with Nature'. We were joined by five keynote speakers and six of the Society's 2021 University Research Grant winners, who showcased their wildlife research and conservation projects across Australia. The speakers addressed the importance of protecting Australian wildlife (flora and fauna) and highlighted the actions that can be implemented to prevent our precious wildlife from becoming extinct. A recording of the webinar is available on our website and YouTube channel.

Colouring-in Competition

The Australian Wildlife Society colouring-in competition is designed to inspire the younger generation to learn about Australia's native wildlife via visual art and creativity. We hope that the experience provides participants with the opportunity to explore and develop a deeper understanding of environmental and wildlife-related issues. A big thank you to Dr Jai Green-Barber for drawing our beautiful 2021 Wildlife of the Year – Australia's grass parrot. Thank you to Wildcard-Sue for contributing additional drawings for our colouring-in competition. There were three colouring-in sheets to choose from.

Donations, Bequests, and Gifts

We continued with our bequest program during the year to encourage donors to support our wildlife conservation work across Australia. We are very grateful to all our members for considering using the bequest program to help the Society with its long-term planning. Do not hesitate to contact the National Office for more details on the bequest program and how to join 'Friends of the Australian Wildlife Society' to make a regular monthly donation to support our national wildlife conservation efforts and 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 the Society's finances, reviewing and adjusting the investment portfolio as required throughout the year.

A Special Thank You to all Members

This will mark our 113th anniversary. We thank you all most sincerely for your tremendous support and continued dedication and commitment to helping the Society preserve and protect Australia's native wildlife and natural ecosystems for future generations. I wish every member of the Society a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2022.

Dr Julie Old
PRESIDENT
31 December 2021