

President's

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

A Year in Review

The past year has been another important period for the Australian Wildlife Society as we continued our mission to protect and conserve Australia's unique wildlife and natural habitats through education, advocacy, and community engagement. Throughout the year the Society remained active in promoting wildlife conservation issues, strengthening partnerships with government and environmental organisations, and raising awareness about the threats facing Australia's native species.

A significant focus of the Society's work during the year has been the continued development of our Education Centre in Campbelltown, which aims to educate young Australians about wildlife conservation and environmental responsibility. This initiative represents a long-term commitment to ensuring future generations understand the importance of protecting Australia's biodiversity.

Community Engagement and Government Relations

The Society has continued to strengthen relationships with government representatives and key stakeholders involved in environmental protection.

During the year, representatives from the Australian Wildlife Society met with **Minister Penny Sharpe** and **Greg Warren MP** at our Campbelltown head office to discuss wildlife conservation initiatives, including the Education Centre and the ongoing *Homes for Koalas* project.

These discussions highlighted the importance of expanding environmental education programs within schools and raising awareness about protecting koala populations and their habitats. The Society remains committed to working collaboratively with government representatives and community organisations to achieve meaningful conservation outcomes.

The Society also engaged with members of Parliament to discuss wildlife conservation challenges including habitat destruction, urban development pressures, and the importance of maintaining wildlife corridors.



Environmental Advocacy

Throughout the year the Society continued to advocate for policies and actions that protect Australia's wildlife and ecosystems.

One major conservation milestone was the approval of the **Great Koala National Park** in New South Wales. This proposed park between Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie represents a major step forward in protecting koala populations and preserving critical forest habitats.

The Society has also continued to highlight concerns around ongoing environmental threats including:

- Logging of old-growth forests such as **Mountain Ash forests in Victoria**, which provide essential habitat for many native species.
- The environmental impact of plastic pollution on marine wildlife and ecosystems.
- The ecological consequences of shark nets, which unintentionally kill large numbers of non-target marine species including dolphins, turtles and whales.

Through our communications and public outreach, the Society continues to raise awareness of these issues and encourage responsible environmental stewardship.



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.

Protecting Koalas and Their Habitat



One of the Society's most important initiatives continues to be the **Homes for Koalas Project**, which focuses on protecting and restoring koala habitat across Australia.

Koala populations are under increasing pressure due to habitat loss, urban expansion, climate change, bushfires, and disease. The Society is working to address these threats by raising funds to purchase land, restore koala corridors, and plant eucalyptus trees to support sustainable populations of this iconic species.

Through community support and donations, the Society aims to expand these habitat corridors and contribute to long-term conservation efforts that will benefit both koalas and the broader ecosystem.

Marine and Coastal Conservation

Marine ecosystems remain a critical area of concern for wildlife conservation.

During the year attention was drawn to several marine conservation issues including harmful algal blooms affecting coastal waters in South Australia. These blooms have caused significant mortality among marine animals across hundreds of species and highlight the growing challenges facing marine environments.

The Society has also continued to promote greater understanding of ocean biodiversity and the importance of protecting marine habitats. Healthy oceans support a vast diversity of life and are essential to global environmental stability.

Australian Wildlife Magazine

The magazine has a proud record and history and has proved extremely popular among all our members. Its readership has spread across Australia and internationally, carrying a strong message of environmental education, wildlife conservation issues and the preservation of native wildlife. We invite members to distribute copies to family and friends and invite them to become members. You can now pick up a copy in Qantas Lounge locations at domestic airports in every Australian capital city.



Community and Conservation Partnerships



The Australian Wildlife Society remains proud to work alongside many organisations and individuals dedicated to wildlife conservation.

During the year the Society attended the **20th Anniversary celebration of the NSW Wildlife Council**, recognising the extraordinary work of volunteer wildlife rehabilitators across the state. The Council represents thousands of volunteers who provide rescue, rehabilitation and care for injured and orphaned native animals. We also celebrated the **20th Anniversary of the Sydney Institute of Marine Science**, NSW's leading marine research collaboration, uniting UNSW, UTS, and the University of Sydney with state and federal agencies. The **Nature Conservation Council** celebrated its remarkable **70th birthday** and the event reflected on seven decades of dedicated environmental advocacy, collaboration and community action across New South Wales.

Such partnerships are essential in strengthening conservation outcomes and ensuring wildlife receives the protection and care it needs.

Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship

The University of Technology Sydney Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship was awarded to UTS researcher for her research on "Exploring Wildfire Effects on Reptiles".

The University of New South Wales Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship was awarded to UNSW PhD candidate Samantha Ordóñez Flores for her research on "Sounding the alarm": Using frog calling phenology to monitor ecosystem health.

2025 Wildlife of the Year:



medium-sized parrots, such as the endangered gang-gang cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*), rainbow lorikeet (*Trichoglossus moluccanus*), which has been impacted by Lorikeet Paralysis Syndrome, and critically endangered swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*). Unfortunately, many of our parrot species are threatened with extinction.

Wildlife Conservation Awards



Serventy Conservation Award

The winner of the Serventy Conservation Award is Kymberly Robinson of Rockhampton, Queensland.

The Fitzroy Catchment in Queensland is home to six freshwater turtle species including the endangered Fitzroy River turtle (*Rheodytes leukops*) endemic to the catchment and the critically endangered white-

throated snapping turtle (*Elseya albagula*). One of the largest threats to these threatened species is the destruction of nests soon after they are laid. For eight months of the year, Kymberly monitors 20 km of the Fitzroy River during the nesting season monitoring nesting banks and protecting clutches of eggs. Both species nest in aggregations at traditional nesting areas. The white-throated snapping turtle nests during winter laying a single clutch with an average of 10 eggs and the Fitzroy River turtle nests during spring laying one to two clutches with an average of 18 eggs. The clutches of eggs are relocated to a predator proof cage installed on the riverbank to ensure safe incubation until they hatch. The mesh is large enough to allow the hatchlings to run unassisted to the water as they emerge.



Community Wildlife Conservation Award

The winner of the Community Wildlife Conservation Award is the Capricorn Conservation Council of Rockhampton, Queensland.

The Capricorn Conservation Council (CCC) has been actively engaged in wildlife conservation activities for over 50 years, demonstrating a longstanding commitment to preserving biodiversity of the Central Queensland. The CCC was founded in 1973, protecting Mount Etna from invasive limestone mining which destroyed Ghost Bat habitats and nurseries. To this day, the CCC works alongside other organisations.

Wildlife Awareness and Public Education

Public education continues to play a vital role in wildlife conservation.

Through our newsletters and outreach programs, the Society has highlighted numerous wildlife and environmental topics including:

- Australia's unique ecosystems such as the **Noosa Everglades**, which support rich biodiversity and demonstrate the importance of responsible tourism and conservation.
- The importance of protecting lesser-known species such as rakali, ghost bats, and desert skinks, which are often overlooked but play critical roles in Australia's ecosystems.
- The environmental impacts of plastic pollution and the need to reduce single-use plastics to protect marine life.

These educational initiatives help foster a deeper understanding of Australia's natural heritage and encourage communities to act in protecting wildlife.

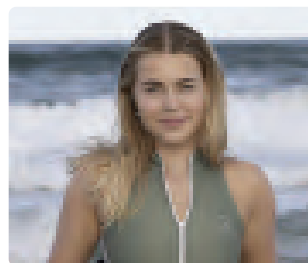


Wildlife Rehabilitation Award

The winner of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Award is Mandy Watson from Kangaroo Haven Wildlife Rescue of Kununurra, Western Australia.

Mandy Watson's journey in wildlife rescue began over two decades ago with a single rescued red

kangaroo named Midnight. Today, she operates Kangaroo Haven Wildlife Rescue, where she has single-handedly rescued, rehabilitated and released over 800 kangaroos and wallabies. Kangaroo Haven has grown from its modest origins in a small unit in Kununurra to a fully functional 10-acre sanctuary, providing Mandy with the space and resources to care for a large number of animals. Stakeholders, such as the community, local Council, and developers, to ensure the conservation of native wildlife.



Youth Conservation Award

The winner of the Youth Conservation Award is Taylor Ladd-Hudson from Sunrise Beach, Sunshine Coast Queensland.

Since her first shark encounter on the Great Barrier Reef at the age of 12, Taylor has been heavily involved in

shark conservation efforts for the past 4 years. Taylor has dedicated hundreds of hours to studying sharks' behaviour, advocating for their protection and countless hours speaking to students raising awareness about the critical role they play in our ocean ecosystems. In 2024, Taylor spoke directly and inspired over 3,000 school students across more than 50 schools in South-East Queensland. Additionally, Taylor's use of social media platforms has brought shark conservation into the global spotlight.

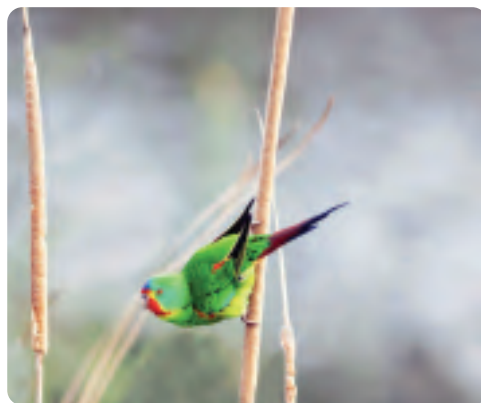
Wildlife Photographic Competition



Beth Walker won the annual Judge's Choice prize of \$1,000 for her photograph of mum and baby koala photograph.

Danny Henenberg won the annual People's choice prize of \$500 for his photograph of the critically endangered swift parrot as it briefly visited the Yalukit Willam nature reserve (YWNR) in Elsternwick, Victoria - which until

a few years ago was a suburban golf course and is now a wetland with an environmental and habitat focus. This is the only report in recent years of the swift parrot visiting here, possibly having a drink before continuing its journey to Tasmania.



University Research Grants

The Australian Wildlife Society's University Research Grants are offered to honours or postgraduate students at Australian universities conducting research that contributes to the conservation of Australian wildlife (flora or fauna). Ten grants are awarded each year: one \$5,000 scholarship and nine \$3,000 grants. The Society is proud to have awarded our first Dr Clive Williams OAM Memorial.

Wildlife Conservation Scholarship in honour of former Director Dr Clive Williams. The scholarship is awarded to the highest-ranked applicant of all our University Research Grants. Grants may be used to purchase equipment and consumables; travel expenses related to field research or attend a conference where the student presents their research. We are delighted to announce the winners for 2025:



Jessica Buckman
(Dr Clive Williams OAM Memorial Wildlife Conservation Scholarship Recipient)

School of Science, Technology and Engineering,
University of the Sunshine Coast

Project Title: Eyes in the Sky: Using Drone-Based Photogrammetry to Assess the Health of Coastal Dolphins in South East Queensland



Lukian Adams

School of BioScience, University of Melbourne

Project Title: Understanding the use of thermal refuge habitats by freshwater fish



Danielle Blackfield

School of Life and Environmental Sciences,
University of Sydney

Project Title: Can odour misinformation reduce browsing of a threatened plant species by mammalian herbivores?



Álvaro Conca

School of Biology, Australian National University

Project Title: Preparing for the return home of the World's Rarest Insect Genetic Conservation of the Lord Howe Island Stick Insect (*Dryococelus australis*)



Lise Fournier-Carnoy

School of Biological Science University of
Western Australia

Project Title: Ni Djildjit Kaatijin: Recalibrating what 'normal' nearshore fish abundance should be with a culturally-informed survey on Wadandi Country



Aaron Hasenei

College of Science and Engineering,
James Cook University

Project Title: Blueprints of Survival: Genetic Foundation for Thermal Resilience in a Coral Reef Shark



Camille Kynoch

School of Biological Sciences, Monash University

Project Title: Too Few Males, Too Little Time: Protecting Flatback Sea Turtles from Climate Change



Caitlin Nicholls

College of Science and Engineering,
Flinders University

Project Title: Dolphin Social Networks and the Spread of Disease: Understanding How Social Lives Might Fuel Epidemics



Karina Sorrell

School of Biological Sciences, Monash University

Project Title: From Browse Island to the Banda Sea: Tracking Bridled Terns to Inform Island Conservation



Jasmine Towle

School of Biological Science,
The University of Adelaide

Project Title: Perish or persist? Temperate intertidal marine invertebrate responses to climate change impacts

Annual General Meeting



The 116th Annual General Meeting of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited, trading as the Australian Wildlife Society, was held on Wednesday, 12 March 2025, at the Koala Conference Room, 8/121 Queen Street, Campbelltown.

Conservation Group Grants

The Society carefully considers all requests for grants from conservation groups emphasising wildlife and habitat preservation. This year, we were fortunate to be able to offer eight Conservation Group Grants:

Australian Ecosystems Foundation Inc. (AEFI)

Funds assisted AEFI with operational expenses for their mountain pygmy possum adaptation project at Secret Creek Sanctuary.

Australians for Animals New South Wales Inc.

Funds assisted with legal expenses to challenge helicopter shooting of over 1,000 koalas in Budj Bim National Park authorized by the Victorian government. The organization has launched a legal challenge in the Victorian Supreme Court to ensure that this method of killing is never used again.

Wombat Wisdom Wildlife Incorporated

Funds enabled the organization to purchase a trinocular microscope, allowing for detailed faecal examinations of wombats and other native wildlife. This equipment helps identify internal parasites, fungal spores, and bacterial issues. Early detection supports targeted treatment, promotes faster recovery, and helps prevent the spread of disease to other animals in care.

Yaccallilla Community Group

Funds assisted with a revegetation project adjacent to a South Australian Fleurieu Swamp (listed as threatened ecological community), aiming to expand the distribution and abundance of floristic resources and habitat for pygmy possums and other threatened species, such as Mount Compass oak bush and Bassian thrush.

Lilly Pilly Supervised Children's Contact Centre

Funds assisted the organization to purchase field monitoring equipment (wildlife cameras, binoculars), habitat restoration materials (native plants, nesting boxes and fencing materials), as well as predator management resources (predator deterrents and humane traps) to care for and protect their 10-acre property in Gold Coast region.

Seaworks

Funds assisted Seaworks to conserve oceanic wildlife.

The Threatened Species Conservation

Funds assisted the organization to conserve the pink-tailed worm-lizard and Norfolk island green parrot.

The Wide Bay Sea Snake

Funds assisted the organization with conservation efforts for their sea snake project.

AWS Met with Dr Mike Freeland MP to Advance Koala Protection



On Friday 8 August, members of the AWS committee met with Dr Mike Freeland MP to discuss protecting koalas in South Western Sydney, following a \$300,000 federal funding commitment. We highlighted the threats posed by land development and habitat loss, and the urgent need for stronger conservation action. We also shared plans for our proposed Education Centre in Campbelltown, aimed at inspiring young Australians to value and protect native wildlife. Dr Freeland expressed strong support for our work and recognised the importance of education and collaboration. Together, we reaffirmed our commitment to safeguarding koalas through community engagement, awareness, and long-term conservation efforts.

Looking Forward

As we look ahead, the challenges facing Australia's wildlife remain significant. Habitat loss, climate change, pollution and environmental degradation continue to threaten many species.

However, through education, community involvement, and strong conservation advocacy, the Australian Wildlife Society remains committed to protecting Australia's natural environment.

By inspiring future generations, strengthening partnerships, and continuing to advocate for wildlife protection, we can ensure that Australia's extraordinary biodiversity is preserved for generations to come.

Stephen Grabowski

PRESIDENT, Australian Wildlife Society