

'Stories of Hope': perpetual optimism maintained by long-term commitment and collaboration - the recovery of Noisy Scrub-birds and Western Ground Parrots

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ABSTRACT

Noisy scrub-birds and western ground Parrots have continued to persist, despite facing significant threats including extensive fire and predation from introduced predators. These threats occur in the context of decades of drying and warming climatic conditions which exacerbate the risk and intensity of fire, leading to increased risk from predators. Since the early 1990's a dedicated recovery team has worked towards a long-term vision of ensuring these two species do not disappear, and this work has been supported by community and numerous volunteers. State and Commonwealth support has been essential, and formal arrangements are important, but how a recovery team works in practice (commitment, collaboration, vision) is what makes the difference.

The capacity of individuals involved to think in the long term and act collaboratively to engage others and ensure optimal outcomes, underpinned by robust science, has ensured that we have a solid (and improving) understanding of the ecology of each species, and this knowledge is used to underpin management actions. In the past 15 years the team has been focussed on advocating improved fire management of habitat for these species, integrating feral cat control into a landscape-scale program, and improving our understanding of the ecology and biology of these birds. Partnerships and collaborations with external research agencies and partners have been crucial, as has been the outstanding commitment of community groups, especially the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot.