

RESOURCES FOR CRITICALLY ENDANGERED SPECIES

The Minister for the Environment, Peter Foss, has announced the immediate allocation of \$300 000 for the first year of a program to conserve critically endangered Western Australian plants and animals. The allocation of this money was in response to a review of the conservation status of Western Australia's threatened species carried out by a panel of experienced scientists, which was chaired by Dr Andrew Burbidge,

Director of CALM's WA Threatened Species and Communities Unit.

Mr Foss said that the funding came from payments to CALM's bio-prospecting program by Victorian company AMRAD for the right to use one of WA's native plants in its search for a cure for AIDS.

The panel assessed 375 threatened species and identified 38 plants, three mammals, two birds, one reptile and two spiders,

totalling 46 species, as being critically endangered, and a further 78 species as endangered.

This was the first time the new World Conservation Union (IUCN) category of 'critically endangered' had been used in ranking WA wildlife. The rest of the species were classed as vulnerable, except the woylie, which was classed as conservation dependent.

The results indicate that

while many species are not immediately threatened, urgent action is needed to prevent the small number of critically endangered species from imminent extinction. We can then concentrate on the 'endangered' category.

By carefully reviewing priorities and ensuring that research and management resources are allocated first to those species most at risk of extinction, CALM scientists can minimise the chance of additional extinctions in Western Australia, where too many have occurred in the past. Twelve species of mammal, one species of bird and 37 species of flowering plant are presumed to have become extinct in the State during the past 150 years.



Three of WA's endangered species to benefit from funding.

Left: Western swamp tortoise

Below left: Rose mallee

Below: Chuditch

Photos - Babs & Bert Wells/CALM





Visitors can walk in the treetops along a series of walkways, platforms and stairways at the new Forest Heritage Centre in Dwellingup. (See page 10.)



A major survey of the Carnarvon Basin has recently been completed by staff from CALM, the WA Museum and the University of WA. What did they find? (See page 15.)

LANDSCOPE

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It was a very good year in the Wildflower State. Find out just how good in our story on page 38.



Australia has its own families of songbirds that are very different from their European namesakes. See 'True Blue Birds' on page 45.



Quokkas were once widespread on WA's mainland, but the most visible populations are now found on just two islands. 'Where Have All the Quokkas Gone?' (See page 49.)

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COVER

Western black-footed rock-wallabies are on the increase in Yardie Creek, thanks to a CALM fox-baiting program. Their numbers are being monitored by local tour operators Neil and Rhonda McGregor. See our story on page 36.

Illustration by Philippa Nikulinsky



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