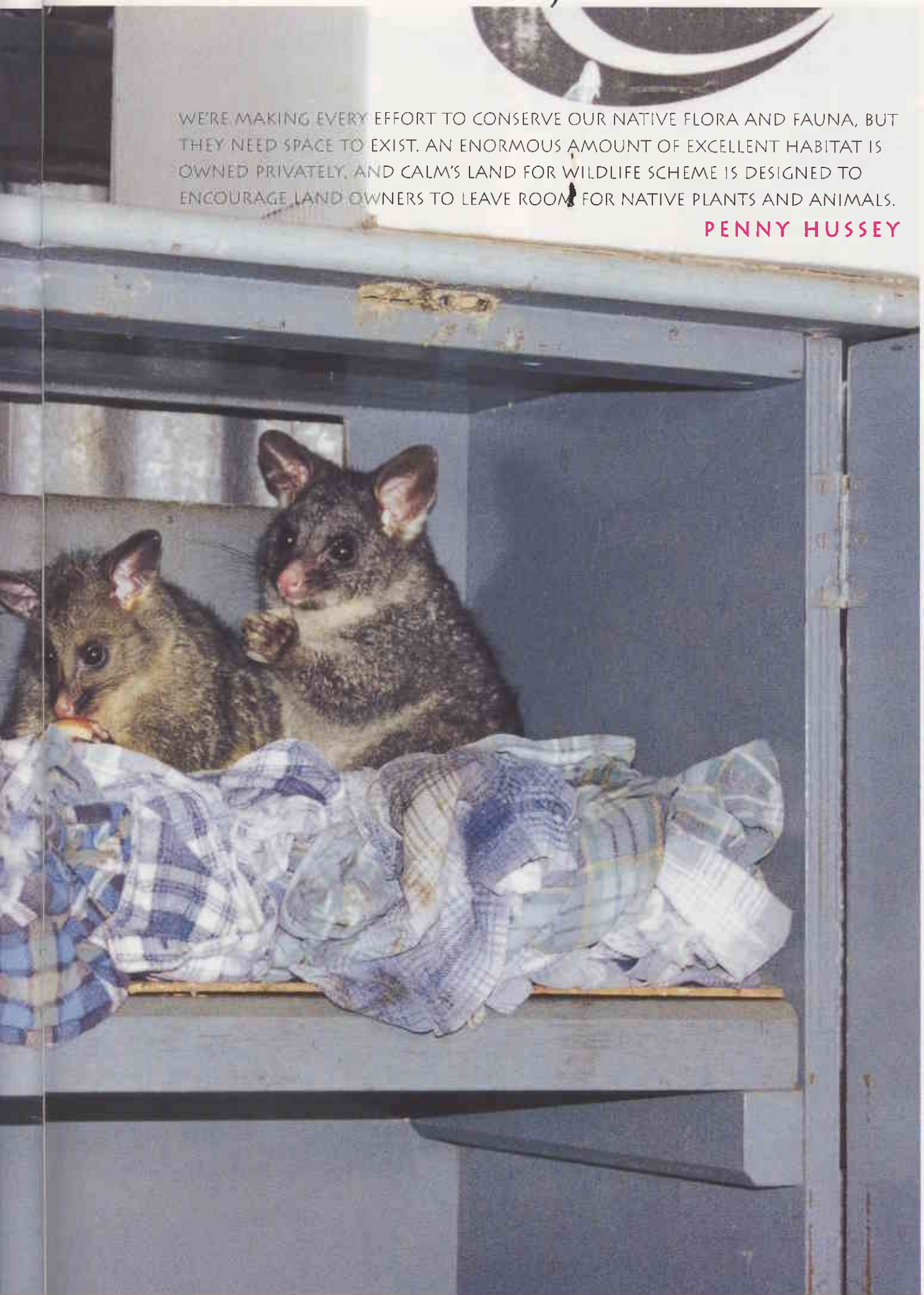
making room for nature

THE LAND FOR WILDLIFE SCHEME

WE'RE MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO CONSERVE OUR NATIVE FLORA AND FAUNA, BUT THEY NEED SPACE TO EXIST. AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF EXCELLENT HABITAT IS OWNED PRIVATELY, AND CALM'S LAND FOR WILDLIFE SCHEME IS DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE LAND OWNERS TO LEAVE ROOM FOR NATIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS.

PENNY HUSSEY



This year, Western Australians can look back with pride on our achievements and look forward with excitement to our future. But will it be a future in which all the native plants and animals survive as well?

Yes! say the 550-plus landholders who have registered with the 'Land for Wildlife' scheme run by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). All have land that they are managing so that wildlife will have the best possible chance of maintaining healthy populations, together with whatever else the block is being used for.

Land for Wildlife is a scheme that aims to encourage and assist private landholders to provide habitats for wildlife on their property. It originated in Victoria in 1981 and was started in WA, after discussions with many community groups, in 1997. Queensland and Tasmania have also recently started the scheme, with New South Wales and South Australia expected to follow suit.

The distinguishing feature of Land for Wildlife is that it provides individual landholders with ecological advice, to balance the production advice available through traditional landcare sources. Land for Wildlife officers throughout the south-west provide one-to-one, site-specific information and suggestions about all aspects of wildlife and its management.

No matter whether you live in city or country, everyone can benefit from encouraging native flora and fauna to share their lifestyle. Participation in Land for Wildlife is completely voluntary and registration with the scheme does not change the legal status of the property in any way.

MAKING A START

What do you need to be part of Land for Wildlife in Western Australia? Firstly, land with some habitat on it. Usually this would be a patch of bushland, but it could be an area you wish to create, such as a paddock being replanted or a dam made more attractive for water birds. And secondly, you must want the native plants and animals on your place at least to survive, and preferably to increase in abundance.

Managing wildlife, like any other form of management, does not mean sitting back and doing nothing. It means

Previous page
Main: Even in a working shed, brush-tailed possums can make a snug home! Ron and Helen Tuckett, Tonebridge.
Photo – Kingsley Miller/CALM
Insets: (top to Bottom) Where shall I put the sign? Bruce Ivers, Kojonup.
Photo – Avril Baxter/CALM
Frogs are an important part of the ecosystem. Pern Reserve, Dunsborough.
Photo – May Hughes
To observe waterbirds easily, build a boardwalk. Connie Jones, Gingin.
Photo – Penny Hussey/CALM

Above: Fox control is vital for native mammal survival. Warren Tucker, Harvey.
Photo – Penny Hussey/CALM

Left: Now where's that echidna got to? John Young, Wyening.
Photo – Penny Hussey/CALM

taking positive steps to achieve the outcome you want. This might involve using fire for regeneration, controlling numbers of problem animals or plants, collecting understorey seed, chuditch-proofing the chook run or installing nesting boxes for pardalotes. No matter what size or type of land is under management—from broadacre wheat and sheep property, to golf course, to bush block—everyone can do something. But how do you determine just what is best for you? This is where Land for Wildlife comes in.

Every piece of bushland, every property, is different. Every landholder has different priorities. So how you manage, what you can do, and in what order, will be different too. That is why the core of Land for Wildlife is the 'property visit', an on-site discussion of priorities and solutions.

Together, the Land for Wildlife officer and the landholders inspect the site, and discuss what the long-term goals are. How might you encourage splendid fairy-wrens up to the house, for example, or put understorey back into a grazed woodland? How might you create a windbreak, help control the water table and also provide extra habitat for honeyeaters? How might you protect that rare plant? Might quendas be reintroduced into a neighbouring reserve, and spread from there onto your block? If so, what do you need to do to ensure the habitat is right for them? Are there any grants that could help? What about commercial options?

Taking into account as many factors as possible, the Land for Wildlife officer will produce a report that is tailored to your needs. It will answer your questions (if the answers are known!), list the actions you can do, and provide reference information together with a network of specialist contacts who may be able to help.

You will receive a folder containing relevant literature, and will be put on the mailing list for Land for Wildlife's quarterly magazine, *Western Wildlife*. You will also be informed of seminars, workshops and field days that might be of interest. If at any time you have any queries about native flora and fauna and its management, ring your Land for Wildlife officer for help and he or she will get back to you as soon as possible.

Above left: Malleefowl 'Charlie' has chosen to build on the edge of a paddock, so every year Frank Gould collects a ute-laod of leaf litter for him. Narembeen.
Photo – Penny Hussey/CALM

Above right: You can direct-seed an area for multiple use as a windbreak, bush corridor or for water management.
Barbara Morrell, Pingrup.
Photo – Anne Rick

Right: Lorraine and Brian Piercey decided not to clear their last piece of bushland. Instead, they created nature trails and an information shed, and its now a popular tourist attraction. Esperance.
Photo – Sylvia Leighton/CALM

Below right: Rediscover an 'extinct' plant. Alison and John Doley did! Coorow.
Photo – Greening Western Australia

WHO PAYS?

What is the cost to landholder members? Nothing.

Land for Wildlife is funded by CALM (two-thirds) and the Natural Heritage Trust through Bushcare (one-third). There are eight Land for Wildlife officers who work two days per week and two

Left: Banksias are essential for the survival of honeyeaters and honey possums. Brian and Tony White, Miling.
Photo – Penny Hussey/CALM

Below: In safe hands! Joyce Hall of Wellstead holds a grey-bellied dunnart.
Photo – Steve Hall

full-time staff at CALM Kensington (see table for contact details). Each officer is knowledgeable about the ecological and landcare issues in his or her area.

If you make any interesting observations—from possums at Pithara to remnant grasslands at Grass Patch—phone your local officer to tell them about it. Managing the environment, in its current fragmented state, is like assembling a huge jigsaw. The picture isn't complete because we seem to have lost some of the bits, and some of those we have are so cryptic it's difficult to see where they fit.

But it might well be that you have vital pieces of information. As you are living on the land and seeing it day by day, you may, for example, have observed the environmental trigger that stimulates a particular mallee to regenerate, or noticed when birds start nesting in revegetated saltland, or seen a native bee pollinating one special flower, and so on. Because it's familiar to you, you may not realise that other people do not have your knowledge—you could have a vital piece of the jigsaw!

Only if the community wants native flora and fauna to survive will there be enough effort for it to really happen. It is quite clear that the necessary goodwill and enthusiasm are abundant. At the end of December 1999, 559 landholders had registered their interest with Land for Wildlife, and 385 had received property visits. Altogether, these 385 landholders manage 348,143

hectares of land, with 68,956 hectares of that having the primary purpose of nature conservation (that's bigger than the areas of Lesueur, Avon Valley, John Forrest, Leeuwin-Naturaliste and Walpole-Nornalup national parks combined!). This shows how much ordinary people in the community care about the survival of native plants and animals. They are looking after their piece of bushland because they want to. Most do not receive any grants to help with this mammoth task. Land for Wildlife is able to help with advice, information and networking, and sometimes willing hands too!

Together we can really make a difference, so get in touch. We can't help you if you don't ask!

Above: Not a single weed in this very open wandoo woodland! Lynne and Jody White, Darkan.
Photo – Penny Hussey/CALM

Top right: Learn from the experts. Eric McCrum leads a 'Plants and Pollinators Picnic'. Mukinbudin.
Photo – Heather Adamson/CALM

Right: Build a nest box and then watch it being used. Wattle Grove.
Photo – Carole Sutton

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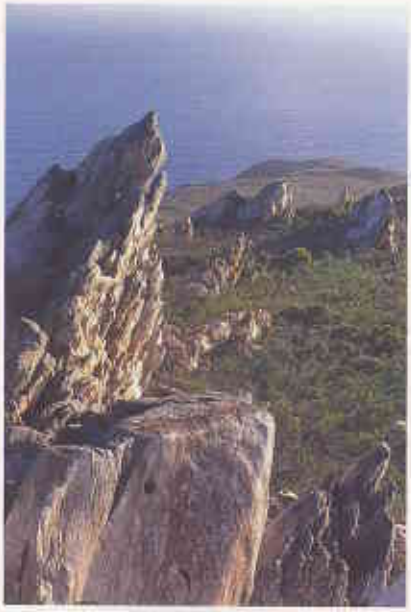

One of the best selling books from CALM has recently been fully revised. See 'The Best of the South-West' on page 10.

A new weapon against the scourge of feral cats was recently tested on Hermite Island. See 'Isle of Cats' on page 18.

In the far north of WA, there is evidence of not one, but two cosmic impacts. See 'Cosmic Impacts in the Kimberley' on page 28.

Satelite imagery is helking us to fight maritime polution. See 'Looking Through the Surface' on page 41.

A unique network links volunteer groups and regional herbaria with the CALM flora database. See 'Name That Plant' on page 35.

FEATURES

REGULARS

COVER

Western Australia is aptly described as the Wildflower State. Some 12,500 different species are known from the wild, with a huge range of colours, shapes and characters. But many species once found are lost again, and it's always an event when a species thought to be extinct is rediscovered. See 'Lost Jewels in the Bush' on page 23.

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