

FEB 91

Wanted Alive

Endangered Species (WA) is hosted by the Conservation Council of WA Inc. and is a component of the
National Endangered Species Program

Newsletter

WESTERN AUSTRALIA
CONSERVATION
& LAND MANAGEMENT

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ENDANGERED SPECIES NETWORK ESTABLISHED

Western Australia has the highest rate of species decline in Australia - and Australia has the worst rate in the world.

Eighteen species of Australian mammals have become extinct since Europeans arrived here a little over 200 years ago. Facing extinction in this state are 41 species of native mammals, 36 species of native birds, 7 native reptile species, 2 native frog species and 2 native species of fish and some 230 species of plants.

Three mammal species, 7 bird species and 5 species of reptiles are in need of special protection. Probable causes of mammal de-

cline are the introduction of non-native herbivores - rabbits, sheep, cattle, goats, camels and donkeys; the introduction of non-native predators - the fox and feral cat; the clearing of habitat, and loss of regular patchwork-burning regime on vegetation once maintained by the Aborigines (especially in arid areas).

Following pressure from a number of conservation groups, the Federal Government has funded a National Endangered Species Program through the Endangered Species Advisory Committee. The National Threatened Species Network was launched in Sydney in May 1990 by the Honourable Ros Kelly, Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Envi-

ronment, Tourism and Territories.

The network is co-ordinated at a national level by the World Wide Fund for Nature and host organisations in each state or territory support a state co-ordinator. Here in Western Australia Peta Davies is the Endangered Species Network Co-ordinator and this position is hosted by the Conservation Council of Western Australia.

The aims of the network include the collection and dissemination of information on endangered species through the establishment of a database, increasing public awareness of the threats to our wildlife and working to strengthen the legislation for their protection at both State and Commonwealth level.

IUCN CONFERENCE HELD IN PERTH

The 18th General Assembly of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), held in Perth in December and attended by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prime Minister Mr Hawke, brought together some 1500 delegates from 140 countries of the world.

This was the biggest conference held to date to debate the environmental crisis the world is facing.

The conference provided a forum for discussion on the impacts on the environment of an increasing population, continued resource development, global warming, depletion of the ozone layer and other environmental catastrophes. It also sought to develop a conservation strategy

which would protect species numbers and diversity and promote sustainable development of resources.

Two days of talks by representatives of the Species Survival Commission groups shared both the progress achieved as well as the difficulties encountered in conserving endangered species throughout the world. (Such as cost and logistics of trapping elephants and dietary requirements of Western Swamp Tortoise).

The conference provided an invaluable opportunity for scientific, government and non-government representatives from many countries to exchange information and ideas on the key issue of development of a strategy for conservation of the environment, and emphasised the necessity of global co-operation in this matter.

For further information on the Endangered Species Network please contact Peta Davies at the Conservation Council at 79 Stirling St, Perth, Phone 09 220 0652.



Mitchell's Hopping-mouse
(*Notomys mitchelli*)
- Tonya Lea '90

Our Say

The wildlife of Western Australia is protected under the provisions of the Wildlife Conservation Act 1950, which gives specific protection to flora and fauna. It also provides the mechanisms to remove that protection through the issue of licences or declared open seasons.

All native flora is protected on all lands and waters throughout the state; this includes flowering plants, conifers, cycads, ferns and fern allies, mosses, liverworts, algae, fungi and lichens. The provisions for protection of flora bind the Crown.

All native fauna, except for that which is specifically listed as unprotected, is also protected throughout the state at all times. Unprotected species currently include all invertebrates, except the jewel beetles and ants of the genus *Nothomyrmecia*. Provisions in respect to the protection of fauna do not bind the Crown.

There is provision under the Act for the Minister to declare flora or fauna as rare or endangered or otherwise in need of special protection, and it is at the Minister's discretion that this protection can be removed.

Stronger legislation must be introduced to stem the rate of loss of species which we are currently experiencing. The Wildlife Conservation Act 1950 should bind the Crown in relation to the protection of fauna as it does for flora, and fauna should include the invertebrates. The legislation should include protection of habitat. We cannot adequately protect our native species if no provision is made to protect their habitats.

An independent scientific committee should be established to determine those species considered rare or otherwise endangered. This committee should be empowered to issue both interim and permanent conservation orders over habitats critical to the survival of endangered species.

WALLABY FIGHTS FOR HABITAT

The Endangered Species Network of Western Australia urges the Department of Conservation and Land Management to undertake a comprehensive wildlife survey of the Leda area.

A recent study, conducted by the department in the southwest has revealed seriously diminished numbers of black-gloved wallabies in those areas. The importance of this population in Leda cannot be overlooked. The serious depletion in its numbers in other areas could mean that it is already rare or endangered.

However it cannot be granted the same protection as rare or endangered species until its need for greater protection is recognised by the Dept of Conservation and Land Management, and its status gazetted by them as such.

Lyn Hancock of the Om Shanti Marsupial Hospital has urged the Minister for Planning not to grant approval for the subdivision at Leda until the status of the black-gloved wallaby is determined, and continued survival of the species is guaranteed.

Here is a good example of the need for the current legislation which protects our wildlife to be amended to include protection of wildlife habitat.

Zoning for part of the area of Leda is to be reprocessed. Landcorp have commissioned a private consultant to prepare an environmental report on the area which will incorporate input from

local conservation groups. This will help determine the boundary for the 500 ha to be set aside for conservation purposes. The process may take 1-2 years. In the meantime the area remains unprotected and the wallabies are exposed to bushwalkers, dogs, trail bikes and 4-wheel drive vehicles.

HELP REBUILD THEIR HABITAT

Foxes, feral cats and the loss of habitat are the major causes of mammal species decline in Western Australia. And while you mightn't be able to get out there and get rid of a few foxes and cats yourself, you can help with restoring natural habitat.

There are several groups dedicated to greening the State - Greening Australia, Men of the Trees and Australian Conservation Volunteers are three which spring to mind. Planting local native trees and understorey plants is crucial to saving our wildlife. Without a place to live, they can't hope to survive.

The creation of bush corridors to allow the movement of wildlife, the preservation of native vegetation, the creation of nature reserves and the protection of wilderness and natural areas - are all vital.

The above organisations can be contacted by phoning:
Greening Australia 227 5771
Men of the Trees 291 6619
Aust. Cons. Volunteers 335 5508

WILDLIFE WALKABOUT SAFARIS

Available for charter

Rob and Chris Breeden
9 Estuary View Drive
Wonnerup
Ph. 097 52 4262
Also agent at Exmouth
Ph. 099 491625



Greater Stick-necked Rat (*Leporillus conditor*)
- Tonya Lee '90 -

WHAT'S BEING DONE TO SAVE OUR WILDLIFE?

CALM is the major government agency researching our native wildlife. Perhaps the most well known endangered animal research program the department runs is on the numbat. Other animals CALM researches are the chuditch, golden bandicoot, woylie, tamar wallaby, greater stick-nest rat, humpback and southern right whale, noisy scrub-bird, ground parrot, spectacled hare-wallaby and dibbler.

Together with the Perth Zoo, CALM is working to establish an endangered species centre for the captive breeding of several endangered species. The Western Swamp Tortoise is a success story at the zoo. It is sadly reported that captive-bred numbat young housed at the zoo died. New numbat enclosures have been provided and it is hoped that the next breeding cycle will be more successful.

All this work is encouraging. But the State Government has cut departmental budgets, and it is reasonable

to believe that these cuts will affect vital research work on endangered species. Less will be accomplished by CALM, surely, with less funds available. There is also a freeze on public service employment. Vacancies won't be filled. All this is extremely bad news for research progress on endangered species.

CALM baits selected areas under its control to eradicate foxes - an introduced predator which has been one major cause of mammal species

decline. It must be an expensive exercise to protect native wildlife against such foes. Will reduced funding affect vital roles such as this?

The State Government must realise the importance of giving adequate funding for these vital roles. And agencies like CALM and the Zoo must be closely monitored to make sure they are being as effective as possible and acting ethically in their research.

ENDANGERED SEA LION SHOT

Investigations are presently underway into the alleged deliberate shooting of a protected Australian sea lion off Western Australia's south coast.

The animal was found with gunshot wounds. The event sickened conservationists, even more so when an advertisement subsequently appeared in the Albany Advertiser thanking the person/s responsible.

CALM publicly denounced both the killing and the advertisement, while conservation groups were publicly quiet on the matter.

The local fishermen had been publicly outspoken against a particular sea lion they claimed had been affecting their catches and therefore their livelihood. It was the same fishermen who placed the advertisement.

The Australian sea lion is an

endangered species. The fact that an animal which is endangered has been murdered, and that there are people around who condone that, shows that there is still a long way to go to change attitudes. And it is vital that we do. Sure, it was an isolated incident. But if people accept it, and similar incidents occur - where do you draw the line? We support the government wildlife officers in their important work, and hope their investigations will prove fruitful.

With the return to the wild of the Atlantis Marine Park sea lions at around the same time as the killing, there is not enough that can be said, or done to ensure that the Australian sea lion is fully protected and that people who dare to harm such a beautiful creature get the maximum penalty.

Have your say:

Voice your concern, write to:

Premier Carmen Lawrence
Capita Building,
197 St Georges Tce,
Perth 6000

Minister for the Environment,
Mr Bob Pearce,
77 St Georges Tce,
Perth 6000

Leader of the Opposition,
Mr B. McKinnon,
Parliament House
Perth 6000

Ask for:

- more money allocated directly to saving endangered species
- greater priority for saving/preserving natural areas (habitat)
- increased funding/resources for control of feral animals
- increase in public education about the need for conservation and environmentally sound activities
- stronger legislation to protect endangered species.

SHARK BAY

A film by Australian Screen Associates
in association with Ace Films.

The story of the late Alice 'Ninny' Watts, who started the remarkable interaction between humans and wild dolphins at Monkey Mia. Also features the Shark Bay mouse, burrowing sandhill frog and dugongs.

For information phone 09 227 7515

FEEDBACK

This space has been allocated to your letters and correspondence. Write to us with any stories or anecdotes you would like to share.

Dear Peta,

Over the many years I have roamed around the bush, I have seen many oddities and unusual happenings. Below are a few recent happenings:

Brush Wallaby - 2 adults (one with joey in pouch) together near the Quillergup bush airstrip on 27th October. On Oct 30th, a large adult seen near the Wilga timbermill. Earlier this year I saw 2 brush adults and one joey in Quillergup area. These are the only ones I've seen this year - unfortunately, some roo shooting does occur in this area and I am concerned for this small pocket of brush. I have alerted CALM about this illegal brush shooting and hope they take some notice. I am also an Honorary Wildlife Officer (since 1969) and do catch some-one occasionally.

Carpet Snake - My son John removed one of about 1.5 metres off the road near the Harvey River (Oct). I personally haven't seen one in lower south-west for years. Occasionally I hear of the Children's Python around our coastal areas.

Quenders (short nose bandicoots) - Seem to be on the increase again - a number of sightings and road victims are observed and reported to me.

Native Cats - Since my radio talk and local newspaper article, have received a number of reports of them being in various areas - Collie, Capel, Nanga Brook, Nannup, Cundinup areas. Not in large numbers but small colonies keeping the species going.

Ringtail Possums - These appear to be on the increase again around Busselton area (especially the town and residential areas) which has always been a popular area. Recently noted 7 or 8 nests around the Meekadarrabie waterfall - near the Ellensbrook homestead (Margaret River). Nests are often seen in the White Point area (Scott River south of Nannup).

Wambengers - These appeared on the increase from about 12 months ago in many south-west areas.

Many of my sightings are while I'm on my various tours around the southwest and outback or various bush walks.

Forestry Spring Burning - I receive many complaints about this practice from locals who are appalled at the vast areas in "one block". Larger roos may

escape but smaller species (wallaby, quokka, woylie) who rely on plenty of scrub cover, do not possibly survive. Emus with chicks have little chance. Nesting birds, spring wildflowers which have not matured or set their seed are great casualties. Also, one has to look at a burnt and blackened bush for 6-8 months until the autumn rains. An autumn burn - whilst fiercer, doesn't upset wildflowers and wildlife nearly as much. The CALM mob seem only concerned about burning for the forestry side of their operations and not as concerned about the "C" in CALM (conservation).

I feel certain the Aboriginals would have observed the weather and burnt areas just before rain - so as it (rain) would have put out or dampened the fire and new grass coming up only a week or two on.

Unfortunately, I feel there are too many well meaning academics in city offices who maintain "they know best" because of the letters after their name. There is only one place to learn about the bush and

wildlife - and that is IN the bush - observing, caring, noting and remembering that spring burning is NOT in the best interests of all facets of their name of CONSERVATION and Land Management.

Smaller "blocks should be burnt and less frequently. Smog, ozone, greenhouse etc has more than ever, today, to be on their minds.

**Rob Breeden,
Wildlife Walkabout Safaris
Busselton**

KIDS CORNER;
In future we hope to fill this space with your letters.

Please write to us and tell us about the wildlife in your area and any projects you are involved in at school.



*Chuditch
Western Quoll
- Tanya Lea -*