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Wanted Alive

The National Threatened Species Network (WA) is hosted by the Conservation Council of WA with the assistance of the Worldwide Fund for Nature. It is a component of the National Endangered Species Program.

NEWSLETTER No. 3

AUGUST 1992

WA THREATENED SPECIES NETWORK UPDATE

- A word from the WA Threatened Species Network Co-ordinator Jean-Paul Orsini

THE WA Threatened Species Network is alive and well! My time over the first few months has been taken up establishing links and contacts with individuals and organisations who have a keen interest in endangered species.

The aim of the Threatened Species Network in WA, like in other states, is to promote the conservation of endangered species by raising community awareness for endangered species and nature conservation as a whole.

The Network promotes the conservation of endangered species by reaching out to a wide crosssection of the community through the use of the media, the distribution of this newsletter to over 300 members and regular contacts with conservation groups and government organisations involved in wildlife research, management and conservation.

I have had an extremely positive



response to the Network from people from all walks of life: government agencies, research scientists, academics, environmental groups, students, etc. The many enquiries and mail received every day are a measure of the success of the Network and the interest of the community for endangered species.

However, the task of having to cover a state that is a third of Australia is quite daunting, and I wish to express my appreciation to all the individuals who are contributing to the activities of the Network (the list is definitely too long to be included here!).

For further information on the WA Threatened Species Network, please contact Jean-Paul Orsini, (09) 384 3756.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: A key area for the conservation of endangered species

AS an indication of the importance of Western Australia for the conservation of endangered species, this state contains over 40% of the total number of the endangered flora and endangered mammal species found over the whole of Australia.

The south-west of Western Australia is recognised as one of the key centres of plant biodiversity worldwide, with 75% of the plant species found nowhere else in the world.

Several species of mammals, such as the numbat and the chuditch, used to be distributed across the whole continent and are only represented now by small, often isolated populations within the state. Other species, such as the Western Barred Bandicoot, the Burrowing Bettong, the Banded Hare-wallaby and the Shark Bay Mouse, have become extinct from the mainland and are now restricted to small off-shore islands of the north-west coast of Western Australia.

The impact of European settlement on Australian ecosystems has been devastating and often sudden. Western Australia, despite having the lowest population density in the country, has experienced and is continuing to experience enormous pressure on native habitats, without which native species cannot survive.

It is our responsibility to ensure that all species can remain in the wild in their natural habitats without threats to their survival, and that species that have been endangered by human actions are restored to a secure state in their original habitat.

One of the major problems facing us with the survival of endangered species is how to identify and eliminate the current factors that still threaten these species, in order to make remaining populations more secure. This is a costly process involving first research, then management programs costing large sums of money. The conservation of healthy ecosystems is clearly the most cost-effective way of ensuring that all species can survive in the future.

SAVING THE MALLEEFOWL IN THE WHEATBELT: A LOCAL COMMUNITY PROJECT

WHEN members of the Gnowangerup Land Conservation District contacted the WA Threatened Species Network coordinator, their concern was that the Malleefowl had been declining so much in recent vears in their area that it may soon become locally extinct. The bird is of particular significance to the Gnowangerup Shire, as Gnowangerup takes its name after the word "Gnow", the name of the Malleefowl in the local Nungvar Aboriginal language. The bird features in the Shire's crest.

With the assistance of the Threatened Species Network, the local community has initiated a conservation project for the Malleefowl that will include survey of mounds and the drafting of a Community Action Plan. Application for funding is currently being made and one thousand dollars have already been allocated to the project from funds raised by Artburst, a Perth-based business, and the network.



A Malleefowl mound (from Frith, 1962)

Very little knowledge of the Malleefowl is available in WA, despite the endangered status of the species and its rapid decline. The species has already disappeared from many areas of the wheatbelt. Causes for decline include clearing of the bird's native habitat, fire, disappearance of the understorey due to rabbits and domestic stock, predation by foxes and road kills. The species is in the process of being added to the state list of threatened fauna.

Monitoring of active Malleefowl mounds will start soon. Aerial and ground surveys will provide more information on the distribution of the species in the area. Two work-experience students from Edith Cowan University will spend two weeks in Gnowangerup in September contributing to the project.

This project illustrates many of the important land conservation issues in rural Australia (conservation of remnant vegetation, decline of wildlife, effect of stock grazing on native vegetation, fire management, control of ferals).



STATE LISTS OF ENDANGERED FLORA AND FAUNA: WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

THE jargon used to describe endangered or threatened species can be extremely confusing to many people and an attempt is made here to describe briefly the mechanisms involved in the listing process.

HOT OFF THE PRESS! (1)

The May-September 1992 issue of The Web, newsletter of the National Threatened Species Network, is out. It contains 12 pages of precious info on endangered species Australia-wide and is available on request from the WA coordinator — (09) 384 3756. The listing of a taxon (species or subspecies) as 'Declared Rare Flora' or 'Threatened' or 'Specially Protected Fauna' under the Wildlife Conservation Act confers legal protection to this taxon under the Act.

The Endangered Flora Consultative Committee and the Threatened Fauna Advisory Committee meet at least once a year to make recommendations that a taxon be listed or delisted.

CALM has developed criteria for the listing or delisting of Declared Rare Flora or Threatened Fauna. These criteria, described in CALM Policy Statement No. 9 (flora) and No. 33 (fauna), are available from the Wildlife Branch, 50 Hayman Road, Como WA 6152.

You can nominate a species for listing (or delisting) by filling out a form containing new evidence to be presented to the relevant committee. If you wish to do so, please contact the WA Threatened Species Network coordinator or CALM.

FAUNA

There are currently two lists used to assess the threat posed to a plant taxon: the 'Declared Rare Flora' (DRF) list and the 'Priority Flora' list.

Only the 'Declared Rare Flora' list has a legal status under

the Act. It includes taxa that have been adequately surveyed and are rare or in danger of extinction, as well as taxa presumed to be extinct. About 280 taxa (species and subspecies) are listed in this category.

The 'Priority Flora' list contains taxa that are poorly known or rare and that are being researched or monitored for possible addition to the 'Declared Rare Flora' list in the future. This list contains over 1,200 taxa and the number is on the increase as the knowledge of many plants is improved.

Both lists can be obtained from CALM Wildlife Branch at Como.

FAUNA

There are two lists of fauna declared under the Act: the 'Threatened' and the 'Specially protected' lists. The 'Threatened' list contains taxa that are rare and/or at risk of becoming extinct and require protection; it includes species presumed to be extinct.

The 'Specially protected' list contains species that have a high commercial value or can cause perceived damage to a commercial or hobby enterprise, and are at risk to be taken for these reasons, which may lead to the taxon being threatened.

In addition, the 'Reserve' list contains species or taxa which, while not being at risk at present, may become threatened in the near future if the causes for their decline continue to apply. This list is not declared under the Act and does not provide any special protection to these species, although attention is or should be directed to these species to ensure that they do not to join the 'Threatened' list in the near future.

The 'Threatened', 'Specially protected' and 'Reserve' lists can be obtained from CALM Wildlife Branch at Como. The latest changes to these lists, recommended at the November 1991 meeting of the Threatened Fauna Advisory Committee, are awaiting ministerial approval. These are as follows:

Mammals

The Brush Wallaby is to be added to the Reserve List because of its decline in range, particularly in the metropolitan region and the wheatbelt.

The Ghost Bat is to be added to the 'Reserve' list, as being an uncommon species in WA (it has suffered a dramatic decline in the Northern Territory). The Orange-shoe Bat is to be added to the 'Threatened' list (only two known breeding sites in WA).

Reptiles

The skink *Cnenotus nigrilineatus* and eight species of the genus *Lerista* are to be added to the 'Reserve' list. The Woma Python SW population, the Pilbara Olive Python and the Loggerhead Turtle are to be listed as 'Threatened'.

Birds

The Malleefowl is to be listed as 'Threatened' due to a sharp decline over most of its range in WA.

ENDANGERED SPECIES NEED YOUR SUPPORT

A range of stunning T-shirts made from original artwork by four of WA's most talented artists are available for sale at the cost of \$20 for adult sizes and \$17 for children sizes. The proceeds will go towards community projects on endangered species. More details can be obtained from the Threatened Species Network coordinator, (09) 384 3756 (see colour leaflet inside).



The Stone Curlew or Thicknee and the Spotted Nightjar are to join the 'Reserve' list (they appear to be declining in the south of the state).

The Australian Bustard was not added to the 'Reserve' list despite its decline in numbers in the south of the state.

MONITORING OF RARE FLORA BY LOCAL VOLUNTEERS IN RURAL AREAS

A volunteer-based program for monitoring populations of endangered flora in the wheatbelt has been established by CALM. This program should enhance the sense of pride and owner-ship of the rural community for rare and endangered plants present on private land. The Threatened Species Network is providing assistance to members of the scheme in the Moora-Eneabba area.

What you can do If you have some rare and endangered flora on your property or in your neighbourhood and you wish to participate in the Rare Flora Monitoring Scheme, please contact CALM Wildlife Branch in Como or the Threatened Species Network co-ordinator.

RESEARCH NEWS

CALM is currently conducting research on the following threatened fauna:

Mammals

Chuditch or Western Quoll Red-tailed Phascogale Numbat Southern Brown Bandicoot or Quenda Brush-tailed Bettong or Woylie Western Barred Bandicoot Black-footed Rock-Wallaby Shark Bay Mouse Western Mouse Greater Stick-nest Rat



Marine mammals

New Zealand Fur-seal Australian Sea-lion Dugong

Birds

Lesser Noddy Freckled Duck Ground Parrot Nullabor Quail-thrush

Tortoises, frogs Western Swamp Tortoise Orange-bellied Frog White-bellied Frog

For more information on these programs, contact the Wildlife Research Centre at Woodvale, phone (09) 405 5100.

Several pest control programs relate directly to the conservation of endangered species:

Dieback control

A large research program to control dieback (*Phytophthora* spp.) has been recently funded under the Endangered Species Program. Dieback is now present throughout the southwest of the state and widespread along the humid south coast where it threatens the survival of many rare and endangered plant species, such as *Banksia brownii* of which all but one known populations are infected by the disease.

Fox control

A widespread baiting program will aim at eradicating the fox from 20% of the south-west forests (CALM/Agricultural Protection Board). Fox control is an important part of most management and reintroduction programs for endangered species (Numbat, Western Swamp Tortoise, Black-footed Rock-Wallaby, Burrowing Bettong, to name but a few). Biological control of foxes and rabbits is currently being investigated jointly by the CSIRO, the Australian National University, CALM and the APB.

THE Endangered Species Program, funded by the federal government and administered by the Australian National Park and Wildlife Service (ANPWS), is currently funding recovery plans for threatened species in Western Australia.

FLORA

Recovery Plans (Management Phase) Wongan Trigger-plant Rose Mallee



Rose Mallee

RECOVERY PLANS

Surveys and Management Programs for Threatened and Priority Flora

Four CALM regions are currently being covered: the Perth Metropolitan, Merredin, Albany and Esperance Regions.

Recovery Plan for a Threatened Ecological Community

Lake Toolibin and surrounding nature reserves (SE of WA).

Research funded by the ANPWS on five species of orchids, including the rare Underground Orchid, has been completed.

Many more research and management programs are being carried out by other organisations. It is not possible to list them all here and more information on these programs would be most welcome for the next issue of *Wanted Alive* (please write to the Editor).

FAUNA

Recovery Plans (Management Phase) Chuditch or Western Quoll Shark Bay Mouse Black-footed Rock-Wallaby Tammar Wallaby Brush-tailed Bettong or Woylie Orange-bellied Frog White-bellied Frog

Preparation of Conservation Research Statements Western Bristlebird, Western Whipbird and Ground Parrot

Recovery Plans submitted for 1992/93 Western Swamp Tortoise Numbat Noisy Scrub-bird

HOT OFF THE PRESS! (2)

Three major publications have just been released.

Threatened and Extinct Birds of Australia (RAOU/ANPWS) and The Action Plan for Australian Birds (ANPWS), both by Stephen Garnett. They can be obtained from the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, 21 Gladstone Street, Moonee Ponds, Vic 3039.

Plant Invasions: The incidence of environmental weeds in Australia, ANPWS, Canberra.

REINTRODUCTIONS OF FAUNA

Burrowing Bettong — Twelve individuals from Dorre Island were established in small enclosures within Heirisson Prong, Shark Bay, in May this year. Twelve more will be added in September. The release of the bettongs into the fox and cat free 12 square km peninsula protected by an electrified fence is scheduled for May next year. For more details, contact the CSIRO, Division of Wildlife and Ecology, phone (09) 252 0111.

Greater Stick-nest Rat — Successfully introduced to

CAPTIVE BREEDING PROGRAMS

Three main captive breeding programs are currently conducted by the Perth Zoo.

Western Swamp Tortoise — (in collaboration with CALM and the Department of Zoology of the University of Western Australia). Twelve young a year are currently produced on average; the total captive population is larger than the estimated population in the wild. The first release of tortoises to the wild is planned for 1993-94.

Chuditch — the captive breeding program has been quite successful and 26 individuals will be released to the wild soon.



Western Swamp Tortoise — illustration by Guunde Kuchling-Fesser

Numbat — the captive breeding program has experienced some difficulties last year and most of the captive numbats have been transferred from the Zoo to the Woodvale Wildlife Research Centre this year. Salutation Island, Shark Bay from Franklin Island, South Australia. For more information, contact CALM Wildlife Research Centre, phone (09) 405 5100.

OPENING OF THE BYFORD ENDANGERED SPECIES CENTRE

The new Endangered Species Centre at Byford was opened on 24 May 1992 by the Hon. R. Pearce. The Centre is the responsibility of the Perth Zoo and will include a Sanctuary for wildlife, a Research Facility and a Conservation Biology Training Centre.

MEDIA CAMPAIGN FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES

A TV Community Service Announcement to raise public awareness on endangered species is being prepared by Media Associates and the Endangered Species Unit of the ANPWS. It should be launched in August this year.

A media kit on endangered species will be distributed at a later date to 200 media outlets throughout Australia. Keep an eye or an ear out for them!

AUSTRALASIAN SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Mission Statement: "To contribute to conservation, regionally and internationally, by assisting in the preservation of biodiversity and the prevention of species extinctions through the cooperative management of wildlife in the Australasian region."

This collaborative initiative by Australian and New Zealand zoos directs priority to the conservation of species which are rare in the wild, and seeks a pro-active role in the support of wild populations through captive breeding programs. Whilst the program focuses on wildlife of the Australasian region, its member institutions also contribute to coordinated international efforts to support endangered species from other regions.

The ASMP is funded by contributions from member zoos, and its resources are allocated according conservation potential (status in the wild, availability of appropriate founders, adaptability to captive husbandry and breeding, potential for successful reintroduction), biogeographical significance for Australasia, educational and cultural significance, regional resources and articulation with other regional or international action plans.

For additional information, please contact the ASMP, PO Box 44, Mt Helena WA 6082, phone (09) 574 7273.

THE "THREAT-LINK WA" DATABASE: YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS NEEDED!

It was encouraging to discover that there are numerous projects dealing with endangered species in this state. However, although some of these projects have a high profile and attract a lot of public attention, many others are not quite so well known.

Many programs on endangered species of flora, small mammals, reptiles and invertebrates are often overlooked despite their ecological or evolutionary significance. The idea naturally arose to try to gather all this information into a database that would be available to everyone, public and scientists alike.

The database, named 'Threat-Link WA', is a first attempt to fill this gap. Researchers or managers can fill out a one-page description of their project. This page will contain information on the fauna or flora species, the location of the project, the major contributors, a summary of the content of the project and a few selected references.

A blank form is included with this newsletter. Please feel free

to ring the network coordinator, (09) 384 3756, if you have any queries about filling out the form or the content of the database itself.

What you can do If you are involved with a project on an endangered species, please take the time to fill out the 'Threat-Link WA' information sheet included with this Newsletter. You will make your project known to others and have a chance to find out what others are doing.

NEW LEGISLATION, STRATEGIES, MANAGEMENT PLANS

Over the past eight months, many important initiatives have been put out for feedback or public comment. These initiatives will have a major impact on the conservation of endangered species in this state and in Australia.

LEGISLATION

- Commonwealth legislation on Endangered Species (Federal).
- Threatened Species Bill-(Democrats).
- Changes to the WA Wildlife Conservation Act.
- Environmental Protection Act (WA): current review.

STRATEGIES

 National Endangered Species Strategy. Planned release: August 1992.

- Draft National Strategy on Biodiversity.
- Draft Nature Conservation Strategy (CALM/WA).
- Draft Management Strategies for the South-West Forests of Western Australia (CALM/WA).

MANAGEMENT PLANS

• Environmental Review and Management Plan for the Marandoo Iron Mine and Central Pilbara Railway (Hamersley Iron Pty Ltd).

THE PEBBLE-MOUND MOUSE

The Marandoo mining proposal is likely to have a significant impact on a population of the endangered Pebble-mound Mouse in an area which, until recently, was part of the Karajini (Hamersley Range) National Park.

Very little scientific information is available on this species, that was described only 12 years ago. Given the restricted range of the species and its listing as 'Threatened' under the WA Wildlife Conservation Act, it was legitimate to expect the Marandoo ERMP to include a detailed survey of the Pebble-mound Mouse within the project area and a specific management program designed to reduce the impact of the project on the Marandoo mouse population.

The Environmental Protection Authority is currently reviewing the ERMP and it is hoped that the preservation of the Pebble-mound Mouse will be taken into account in its final recommendations.



This section will feature some of the conferences, workshops or meetings that have had or will have an impact on Endangered Species Conservation.

PAST EVENTS

• Fenner Conference on Biodiversity

Canberra, 10-13 March 1992.

The conference was a forum to discuss the Draft Australian Biodiversity Strategy and was attended by representatives of Commonwealth and state government organisations, the Primary Industry sector and non-government conservation groups.

The outcome of the conference was that more consultation was

CONFERENCES

needed before a final draft of the strategy could be produced. This strategy is a key element in the conservation of Australian wildlife and habitats and it is essential that a final draft be released before the end of the year.

EVENTS TO COME

• National Conference of the Australian Association for Environmental Education

Perth

28 September-2 October 1992. Theme: Linking the Community. Enquiries: AAEE National Conference, c/-Debrett's Conventions, (09) 474 1556, Fax (09) 474 2030. The Threatened Species Network will present a workshop on the role of education on the conservation of endangered species.

• Conference on Reintroduction Biology of Australasian Fauna Healesville, Victoria 19–21 April 1993.

Theme: animal reintroductions and translocations. Enquiries: Healesville Sanctuary, PO Box 248, Healesville Vic 3777.

• Seminar on feral animals and exotic plants, organised jointly by the Conservation Council of WA and the WA Threatened Species Network, to be held later this year.

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 Jean-Paul,

Living in the area between Mindarie Keys and Ocean Reef in a newly built house has its drawbacks. I am one of the people who are pursuing the Great Australian Dream, but am frightened by the hectic pace of development and suburban sprawl occurring here.



Banksia woodlands and wetlands have become an increasingly endangered habitat, and developers and councils don't seem to be keeping enough of the interesting and beautiful little valleys and pockets of bushland. I think it's time developers looked at the beauty of the natural environment instead of flattening it all and then going to the expense of planting trees again in a lunar like landscape.

> Philippa D'Arcy Kinross, Perth

Dear Jean-Paul,

We would like to contribute to your newsletter if we can do something worthwhile. We are adding another 180ha to our Murchison River remnant, giving a total of around 800ha, mostly linked up with the double river frontage.

A lot of this bush is ideally suited for all aspects of protecting the environment. Among several things, we noticed that some kurrajong and sandalwood trees have not been regenerating, probably due to sheep, goats and rabbits. As these areas can now start to recover, more information will be gleaned. The river is running at present and it should be an excellent spring to observe wildlife and birds.

> Bob and Dawn Porter Riverside Ajana Murchison River

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3/88 Heytesbury Road, Subiaco
WA 6008.

--- Illustrations reproduced by permission of the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management, except for the Malleefowl mound and the cartoon.

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— WA Threatened Species Network co-ordinator and editor of Wanted Alive, Jean-Paul Orsini, c/-Conservation Council of WA, 79 Stirling Street, Perth WA 6000.

WANTED ALIVE Kids corner 00°000 Dear Jean-Paul, Across: We have started feeding O 1. Kermit's double the native birds - the 2 6. Sturt's desert ... twenty-eight parrots, 3. I have stripes on my back. magpies and galahs. Mon Senior, our cat, is 4. A tropical plant. a problem as he is a natural hunter, like most cats. 2 Now Mum keeps him Down: 6 inside as much as These help fish possible, and makes to swim. sure he is always well 2. A reptile with sharp claws. fed. He now has a 4. A nocturnal marsupial. 5. I "see" with a type of radar. pretty bell that "tinkles" on his collar. When he moves, this warns the birds that he's coming. Only one problem: if he has a scratching frenzy in the middle of the At last, some decent night he wakes us all laws to protect the up! crime Chantelle (10) Cartoon by Duane D'Arcy Across: 1. frog, 3. numbat, 4. palm, 6. pea Down: 1. fin, 2. goanna, 4. possum, 5. bat SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD \mathcal{D}_{C}

If undelivered please return to: WA Threatened Species Network c/- Conservation Council of WA 79 Stirling Street Perth WA 6000

THREAT-LINK WA (Information database for projects on WA Endangered Species)

r		
Species/Taxon: Scientific name		Record no.
Common name		Entry date
Family		
Group		
Threatened status		
Project: Title		
(20 words)		
Keywords		
Location		
Nearest town(s)		
Duration (yrs)		
Start (mth, yr)		
Principal contact: Name		
Position		
Organisation		
Street/PO Box		
Town/State/PCode		
Telephone	-	
Fax		
Other contacts		
(name, organisation, tel.)		
Project summary		
(150 words)		

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References		
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Please return to the WA Threatened Species Network co-ordinator.

Four of W.A.'s most celebrated artists have lent their support and talents to the endangered species cause. Their paintings have been translated to a fantastic range of t-shirts.

The artists talk about their work . . .

1. Robert Juniper

"The Great Palm Cockatoo, one of the world's rarest cockatoos, is found at the tip of Cape York Peninsula. It has a red cheek patch that changes colour with the bird's moods. Attempts have already been made to save this bird from extinction by successfully hatching chicks in captivity.

2. Leon Pericles

"The chain in the painting is symbolic of the linking between many species. The xray patterned honey possum is a reference to the aboriginal idea of animals and the land having a spiritual link which is timeless. In contrast the real banksia and honey possum may not have any time left".

3. Sally Morgan

"I feel very strongly about the issue of endangered species in Australia. Many of our species are unique and we need to cherish and value them. I think we are responsible for the kind of environment we hand on to our children".

4. Sieglinde Battley

"The Leatherback Turtle is the largest in the world, growing up to 3 metres in length. It is threatened worldwide by taking eggs for human consumption, disturbing of nesting grounds and entanglement with fishing nets".

3

ENDANGERED AUSTRALIA 2







Australia has the worst record of any country in the world for extinction of its native species. In W.A. alone around 100 species of native fauna and 250 native plant species are endangered.

Endangered Species in W.A. need everyone's support.

By purchasing these garments you are contributing to valuable endangered species research funds and in return receiving a quality garment that displays clearly your support and concern for the diminishing numbers of our endangered flora and fauna.