



# 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. 4

March 1994

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## The Role of the National Threatened Species Network in WA

— A word from the WA co-ordinator of the National Threatened Species Network

AT last *Wanted Alive* No.4 is out! This special 14-page issue covers a wide range of topics, from the conservation of WA endangered flora to reintroductions in the arid zone, from Malleefowl conservation to biodiversity and endangered species legislation. I have tried to include as many new and interesting snippets of information as possible. Some articles may seem challenging to some, but it is hoped that this may trigger some urgently needed action. It is becoming more evident that endangered species conservation is intimately related to the protection of our urban and rural environments, as well as social and economic decisions at all

levels of society. With declining government funding, the situation of endangered species can only become more critical and the extinction process is likely to continue. It is hoped here that the environment will get its share of the predicted economic recovery and will be at the top of state and federal government agendas.

There has been a rapid increase in the activities of the Network over the past two years. The WA Threatened Species Network is in regular contact with over 100 community groups, industry and professional bodies in Western Australia, and another 100 government organisations (local, state and federal) —

including universities, research bodies and state conservation agencies in WA and across the country.

The WA Network represents an important information resource for the community, as testified by the many enquiries received every week. The WA co-ordinator disseminates brochures, newsletters and information on endangered species and the progress of recovery plans, management programs and legislation. The Network contributes to building up support for the conservation of the state's threatened fauna and flora, providing an essential link

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 between government agencies, community groups and the public. This involves and raising public and government awareness when urgent issues need to be addressed and promoting an informed and constructive debate between various parties.

The Network is actively involved in supporting community groups involved in endangered species conservation. A prominent example is the Malleefowl Preservation Group, which grew from a handful of members in June 1992 to a group with its own part-time Project

Officer (funded by a grant of the National Landcare Program) and a mailing list of over 200 for its newsletter *Malleefowl Matters*.

The Network supports increased community participation in the recovery of endangered species in Western Australia ("Endangered Species conservation is everybody's business") and is seeking to play a more pro-active role in the recovery process.



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

## Red alert: 22% of WA flora is now threatened

— or what is the similarity between threatened flora lists and the Titanic?

THE situation of Western Australian flora is even more desperate than had been anticipated to date. At the last meeting of the Endangered Flora Consultative Committee (EFCC) on 25 February 1994, it was revealed that over 1900 species of flora are threatened or rare in Western Australia. This amounts to a staggering 22% of the estimated 8,500 plant species described in this state.

The number of critically endangered species is showing

a dramatic increase as well. Some species are so critically endangered that extinction in the wild is believed to be almost inevitable. Two extreme examples, the Wyalkatchem foxglove *Pytirodia scabra*, and the wheatbelt snakebush, *Hemiandra rutilans*, are known from only one individual in the wild. Fortunately Kings Park botanists have recently been successful in propagating the former species from seed.

Compared to last year's numbers, another 200 plant species have been added to the state's Priority List, an increase of 14%. This increase is mainly due to intensified and welcome efforts by the Department of Conservation and Land Management to survey rare flora in the species-rich Wheatbelt and South Coast regions. The botanically diverse

Greenough region has not yet been surveyed, and the list will undoubtedly grow.

In order to transfer a plant species from the Priority List to the Declared Rare Flora (DRF) list, extensive surveys are required to take place under CALM's guidelines, to ensure that the species has not been overlooked by scientists. However, lack of resources prevents adequate scientific survey of many of the 1,056 Priority 1 and 2 species. These species could well require urgent listing as DRF, as they are represented by a very small number of populations often outside the conservation estate. Unless these surveys are rapidly carried out, we may well witness a dramatic increase in the number of plant extinctions in the state.

Another source of concern is a lack of resources committed towards plant taxonomy, the science of describing and classifying plant taxa. Many new



*Eucalyptus rodantha*

## Declared Rare Flora and Priority Listed Flora in Western Australia

Data from CALM Wildlife Branch\*

CALM Region	Declared Rare Flora		Priority List Ranking				Total No. of Taxa
	Extinct**	Endangered	1	2	3	4	
South Coast	6	81	118	188	111	68	572
Greenough	9	70	147	105	103	45	479
Wheatbelt	12	89	101	108	77	45	432
Swan	5	39	55	48	49	40	236
Central Forest	0	24	37	31	29	33	154
Goldfields	1	10	54	27	23	12	127
Southern Forest	1	17	6	25	21	18	88
Gascoyne	0	5	29	27	15	6	82
Kimberley	0	4	26	30	15	3	78
Pilbara	0	2	26	25	20	5	78
<b>Total state (2/2/94)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>1901</b>
Total state (28/10/92) for comparison	43	271	488	463	295	152	1,712

\* Species may occur in more than one CALM region.

\*\* Some extinct species are from unknown geographic origin.

species have been discovered in the last 15 years in Western Australia and botanists estimate that there could be as many as two to three thousand species still to be described in this state. Adequate knowledge of flora is the prerequisite to

any comprehensive conservation effort. We cannot target a species for protection without knowing where it is, what its characteristics are, and what it requires. Taxonomy is the process that starts this gathering of knowledge.

The last meeting of the EFCC gave the distinct impression of a distinguished gathering of experts "busy rearranging the deck chairs on the sinking Titanic", to use a well-known image. The listing of a species does little for the protection of this species *per se*, if on-the-ground management is not implemented as a matter of urgency. Issues such as the protection of remnant vegetation on private land or the need for comprehensive monitoring of the eastern section of the Stirling Range National Park devastated by a prescribed burn in 1991 were ironically deemed to be outside the mission of the Committee, which concentrated mainly on species-specific issues.

It is time now to recognise that clearing and grazing of bushland, the spread of dieback, inappropriate fire regimes, uncontrolled wildflower picking, to mention only a few of the most pressing problems, and the lack of adequate funding for wildlife research and management, could be the last nails in the coffin of WA's endangered flora. Urgent government action is desperately needed.

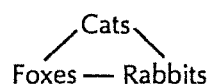
## Fauna reintroductions in the Australian arid zone: recent update

THE arid zone of Australia has lost about a third of its original native mammal fauna. Amongst the remaining fauna, 90% of the medium-sized mammals are currently threatened with extinction. Reintroduction of native mammals to the arid zone has been attempted over recent years. However, several recent setbacks have forced a reassessment of fauna reintroduction programs in arid areas. One of the major difficulties facing reintroduction of fauna in the arid zone is that there is very limited knowledge of what the original habitat of these species may have been.

Extinctions often occurred at early stages of the occupation of

Australia by Europeans (see table next page). The factors believed to be involved in the extinction process are amongst others: the impact of domestic stock (cattle, sheep), feral predation (cats, foxes), feral herbivores (rabbits, goats, donkeys, horses, camels), and the disappearance of local Aboriginal people and subsequent changes in fire regimes and traditional management of the land.

### The feral triangle



All the projects attempting to reintroduce native mammals to arid mainland Australia have

experienced major difficulties with introduced feral predators, *ie* foxes and cats. The effect of rabbits does not seem to have been evaluated in most instances. These reintroduction attempts have highlighted our lack of knowledge on the ecology of ferals.

In particular, it has become clear that the *interactions* between feral cats, foxes, rabbits, dingoes and other native predators cannot be ignored. Attempts to control foxes (and at the same time dingoes) have often led to an explosion in cat numbers. Control of cats is very likely to result in a large increase in rabbits, which constitute the largest component

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**Australia's Extinct Vertebrate Species\***

*Last recorded sighting*

**MAMMALS**

Darling Downs Hopping-mouse	1840s	Desert Bandicoot	1931
Big-eared Hopping-mouse	1843	Lesser Bilby	1931
White-footed Rabbit-rat	1870s	Central Hare-wallaby	1932
Broad-faced Potoroo	1875	Lesser Stick-nest Rat	1933
Alice Springs Mouse	1890s	Desert Rat-kangaroo	1935
Eastern Hare-wallaby	1891	Thylacine (Tasmanian Tiger)	1936
Short-tailed Hopping-mouse	1896		
Gilbert's Potoroo	1900s	<b>BIRDS</b>	
Long-tailed Hopping-mouse	1901	King Island Emu	1805
Pig-footed Bandicoot	1907	Kangaroo Island Emu	1827
Toolache Wallaby	1924	Emu (Tasmanian subspecies)	1850s
Gould's Mouse	1930	Rufous Bristlebird (Western Race)	1906
Crescent Nailtail Wallaby	1930s	Paradise Parrot	1927
		Lewin's Rail (Western Race)	1930s

\* This list does not include extinct species from Australia's Territories (Macquarie, Norfolk, Lord Howe and Christmas Is.).

of the feral cat's diet. Eradication of rabbits may lead to increased feral predator pressure on native fauna as the staple diet of feral cats is removed. Some researchers in the arid zone have come to the conclusion that the "no feral control" option could be a more efficient way of keeping feral species in check than an active feral control program.

*Note:* These remarks do not seem to apply to the more humid South-West of the state, where fox control had shown some spectacular results in bringing back endangered fauna such as the Woylie and the Numbat.

**Current situation with reintroduction attempts**

Cats have been a major cause of predation in all the recent

reintroduction attempts on mainland arid Australia (see list below).

There is no effective method at present for controlling cats, even in small areas, such as Heirisson Prong peninsula in Shark Bay, despite intensive efforts to test various control methods. Fox (and dingo) baiting has often compounded the cat problem. The death of most of the eighty Burrowing Bettongs and Golden Bandicoots released in the Gibson Desert has led to the termination of this program last year. Numbats reintroduced into the Karroun Hill Nature Reserve east of Southern Cross are believed to have been heavily predated by cats.

The Bilby and the Mala programs are currently under review. Current suggestions are (1) to concentrate on the study of remaining wild Bilby populations and (2) to attempt to secure the Central Australian Mala subspecies by re-introducing it to a predator-free island, possibly in Western Australia. A small number of captive bred Malas released in the Tanami desert have been surviving in the wild for two years, but their long term future is uncertain.

**What is being done?**

The newly established Feral Pests Program (see further in this issue) is funding various projects on the impact and control of feral pests in Australia. The federally-funded Co-operative Research Centre for Biological Control of Vertebrate Pest Populations (CSIRO, ANU, CALM, APB) is investigating possible biological control of feral pests in Australia. The Endangered Species Program is funding Recovery Plans for the Bilby, Mala and Numbat.

National and West Australian draft guidelines recommend that a Translocation Plan should be drafted for each program, with external peer review and public comment. This is an essential step to ensure that optimum use of scarce government resources is achieved.

**Recent or current reintroduction programs to the arid mainland Australia**

<i>Species</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Status of project</i>	<i>Recovery Team</i>
Burrowing Bettong (Boodie)	Heirisson Prong Peninsula Shark Bay (WA)	CSIRO	current	No
Burrowing Bettong, Golden Bandicoot	Gibson Desert Nat. Res. (WA)	CALM	terminated May 1993	No
Rufous Hare-wallaby (Mala)	Tanami Desert (NT)	CCNT Alice Springs	under review	Yes
Bilby	Tanami Desert (NT)	CCNT Alice Springs	under review	Yes
Numbat	Karroun Hill Nat. Res. (WA)	CALM	current	Yes

# Malleefowl conservation news

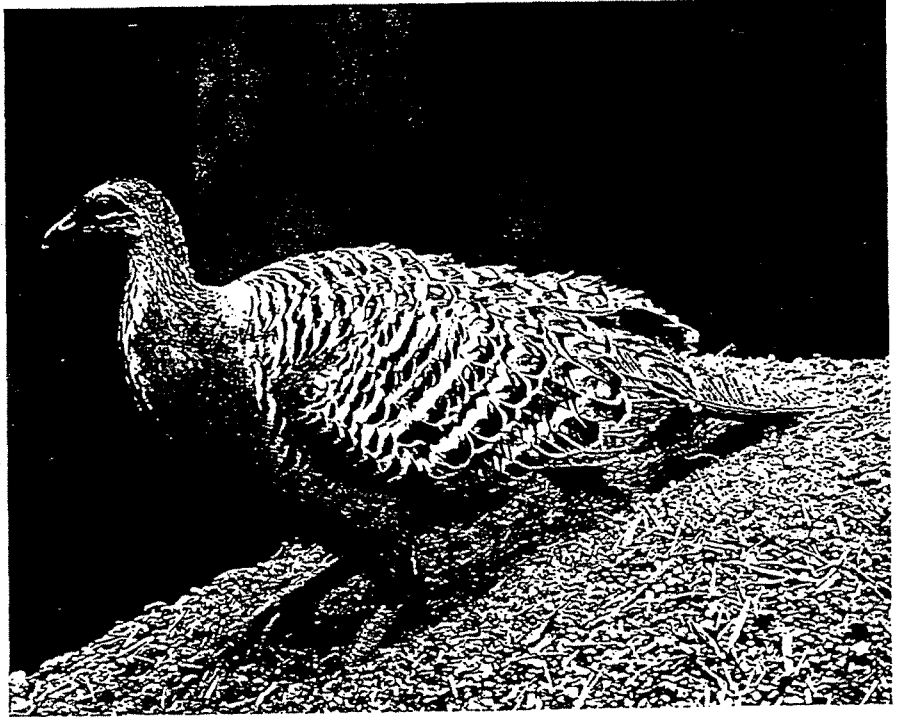
## A new Malleefowl Preservation group in the Wheatbelt

ON the 2nd of March 1994 was held the inaugural meeting of the North Central Malleefowl Preservation Group at Wubin, 300 km north of Perth. Twenty local residents attended the meeting, some had travelled 60 km from surrounding localities (Mayo, Kalannie, Buntine, Dalwallinu). Malleefowl preservation is attracting a lot of local interest in the area, with some of the land-owners still having breeding birds on their properties.

The Gnowangerup Malleefowl Preservation Group sent a message of support to the new group. Jean-Paul Orsini gave a talk at the meeting on the conservation status of the Malleefowl in the Wheatbelt and presented the recently completed Community Action Plan for the Gnowangerup/Ongerup/Borden area, which outlines many practical activities that can be undertaken to promote the conservation of this endangered species. Jean-Paul gave a talk, presented a video to around 130 school children at the Wubin and Dalwallinu Schools and got an enthusiastic response from the audience.

## News from the Gnowangerup Malleefowl Preservation Group

A 300 ha Malleefowl survey was carried out in September 1993 in a nature reserve near the Stirling Range National Park. A permanent grid was set up and swept by a line of volunteers. Five active mounds and 28 inactive ones were positioned on the grid. The week spent in the field was most enjoyable, and we were lucky enough to get a blizzard only on the day of departure. A total of 45 people



from the local area, Perth and other towns of the South-West joined in. Field work was co-ordinated by the National Threatened Species Network and the Endangered Species Centre (Perth Zoo).

A crew from GWN Television who came to film the group's activities during the survey was treated to the rare sight of a bird working on his mound in full view. Good timing, we thought, although this had not been planned beforehand! As a consequence, there is now excellent footage of the species on video.

The Gnowangerup Malleefowl Preservation Group was successful in obtaining a three-year grant from the National Landcare Program (Save the Bush) and has appointed a part-time Project Officer, who will continue Malleefowl habitat studies and develop a fox control program. The second issue of 'Malleefowl Matters' was sent to over 200 people around Western

Australia. Most schools in the district have had a lively presentation on the Malleefowl.

Interest in Malleefowl preservation is spreading around the state, with information coming from pastoral stations in Shark Bay, Meekatharra, Perenjori, Paynes Find, and many areas of the Wheatbelt (Morawa, Mullewa, Mukinbudin, Koorda, Cadoux, Southern Cross, Lake Grace, Hopetoun, etc).

Two new documents have been recently written by the WA NTSN co-ordinator:

- *A Malleefowl Research Plan for the Gnowangerup/Ongerup/Borden area* (Dec 1993). NTSN/CALM. Funded by the WA Threatened Species and Communities Unit, CALM.

- *A Malleefowl Community Action Plan for the Gnowangerup/Ongerup/Borden area* (March 1994). Malleefowl Preservation Group, Ongerup. Funded by the Gordon Reid Foundation.

### "Father and Mother Malleefowl" — a children's story for all ages

A Malleefowl children's book has been recently written, illustrated and published by Jane Irving, from Moorine Rock in the Eastern Wheatbelt. Already 400 copies have been sold in Western Australia. You can obtain your copy from the NTSN, the Conservation Council of WA or from Jane directly, (090) 41 8015.

# Australia's Draft Biological Diversity Strategy running out of steam

By Michael Kennedy — Senior Policy Adviser, WWF

THE Federal Government's draft "National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity" is slowly succumbing to conservative political pressures. Instigated by the Minister for the Environment in early 1991, the Biological Diversity Advisory Committee (BDAC) was established to draft a strategy by September 1992. BDAC duly completed its task by this date, after extensive public consultation and a national conference. Despite the late addition of four industry representatives, BDAC produced a very laudable draft, a strategy designed to help meet Australia's obligations under the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity.

However, industry, State and Territory Governments, and Federal resource departments, are highly suspicious of all Commonwealth biodiversity programs, and have actively sought to delay and/or abort the strategy process. Under the banner of Ecologically

Sustainable Development (ESD), industry particularly has tried to stymie biodiversity initiatives. For example, industry groups jointly wrote to the Prime Minister opposing the Federal Government's Endangered Species Protection Act, claiming that it was against the principles of ESD, and also attempted to promote ESD as the goal of biodiversity strategy, rather the maintenance of ecosystems and species.

Almost a year since the the completed strategy was given to the Minister, it is still locked into an endless round of negotiation and consultation with the States and numerous Federal bureaucraties. Now that Australia has ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity, the pressure is on to complete the document, and to obtain national agreement. Despite the Federal Minister's wish to complete the strategy by the end of 1993, the strategy still has not been finalised.

The States have already removed a critical recommendation from the strategy which called for federal legislation to implement the biodiversity strategy itself and to fulfill obligations under the Convention (virtually a Biodiversity Act), and worse is likely to come in terms of weakening amendments from Commonwealth resource bureaucraties.

Australia has been flaunting its draft strategy at a number of preparatory meetings for the biodiversity convention, and the document has received great praise from many quarters. However, unless the Federal Environment Minister and the Prime Minister take a strong hold of the strategy development process, and demand the strongest conservation provisions, then Australia will be hard put to boast at future treaty meetings of its progressive implementation mechanisms, and conservation at home will be a very hard slog indeed.

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## Captive breeding

Three main captive breeding programs are currently conducted at the Perth Zoo:

**Western Swamp Tortoise** (in collaboration with CALM and the University of Western Australia). Over 100 tortoises have been bred in captivity. The first release of tortoises to the wild (Twin Swamp Nature Reserve) is scheduled for the middle of 1994.

**Chuditch:** the captive breeding program is going well and 44 zoo-born chuditch have been released into the wild.

**Numbat:** After some initial difficulties, the numbats are now breeding successfully. Over 20 young have been produced last year from six females.



# Fauna Translocations

ALL translocations are being carried out by the Department of Conservation and Land Management, except for the Heirisson Prong Program (CSIRO). For a summary of the 1993 annual reports of CALM programs, see *WATSNU* No. 2, the newsletter of the WA Threatened Species and Communities Unit, CALM.

## Numbat

Fifteen numbats from Dryandra Forest were released in November-December 1993 into Yookamurra, a private 1,100 ha sanctuary in South Australia. The translocation is being carefully monitored as six individuals have died in the first two months after release. Numbats have been successfully translocated from Dryandra state forest to Boyagin Nature Reserve near Brookton. Release to Batalling forest near Collie in 1993 is still being monitored.

Fox baiting has proved successful to boost the two naturally existing numbat populations of Perup Nature Reserve and Dryandra forest. There has been a four-fold increase in numbat sightings in the latter; however, a recent decrease in numbat numbers in 1993 is cause for concern.

## Chuditch

Chuditch have been released into Julimar Conservation Park near Bindoon in 1992 where

they have established territories and are breeding. There are plans to reintroduce the chuditch to some Wheatbelt nature reserves.



## Shark Bay Mouse

Forty-three individuals were released from Bernier Island (Shark Bay), to Doole Island (Gulf of Exmouth) in 1993. The mice have occupied the entire island and some breeding has occurred.

## Burrowing Bettong (Shark Bay)

Over 40 burrowing bettongs were translocated by CSIRO from Dorre Island to Heirisson Prong, Shark Bay, in 1992-93. Heirisson Prong is a 12km<sup>2</sup> peninsula protected from feral predators by an electrified fence at its base. Despite intensive fox and cat control over the last three years, the peninsula still holds

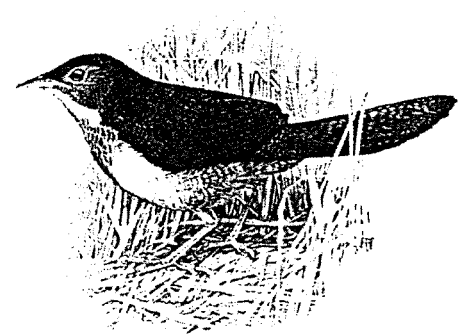
a number of feral predators. The bettongs are reproducing well in the holding enclosures within the Prong. Some bettongs which were released from the holding enclosures into the peninsula survived no more than four months because of predation by ferals.

## Burrowing Bettong and Golden Bandicoot (Gibson Desert)

Forty individuals of each species were translocated from Barrow Island to the Gibson Desert in 1992. Further translocation was suspended when the high mortality of the released animals became apparent.

## Noisy Scrub-bird

Seven males and two females were translocated from Two Peoples Bay to Bald Island in 1992-93. Other translocations include five males to Mermaid in 1992-93, and releases to Mt Many Peaks, where there has been a dramatic increase, to Mt Taylor where the birds are now breeding, and to Nuyts Wilderness and Quarram, west of Albany (probably unsuccessful).



## Draft Management Plans and Policies

- *Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve Draft Management Plan*, May 1993. About 200 public submissions were received by CALM. Analysis of submissions and final review of the Plan are in progress.
- *Translocating plants and animals*, draft revised CALM

Policy Statement No. 29, May 1993; will be released for public comments.

- *Translocations of vertebrate animals in Australia*, draft ESAC Policy, April 1993, for the consideration of ANZECC (Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council).

## Conferences and other events

This section features some of the events that have had or will have an impact on endangered species conservation in Western Australia.

### Past events

- International Conference on *Reintroduction Biology of Australasian Fauna*, Healesville Sanctuary, Victoria, 19–21 April 1993. This conference, attended by over 100 participants, provided an overview on the increasingly important field of reintroduction biology in Australia and New Zealand. The proceedings of the conference will be published as a book.
- Seminar on *Feral Animals Control in the South-West of WA*, 28–29 November 1993. This event, organised by the Conservation Council of WA and held at Edith Cowan University, was attended by over

220 people from community groups, government agencies and the public. Ten workshops took place, including one on endangered species. The proceedings will be released shortly.

### Events to come

- Seminar *Plant diseases in Ecosystems: threats and impacts in south-western Australia*, organised by the Ecological Society of Australia and the Royal Society of Western Australia, Saturday 16 April 1994, 8.30am–5.30pm. Enquiries: Dr R. Wills, WA Herbarium, (09) 334 0500 or Dr W. Cowling, Dept of Agriculture, (09) 368 3528. This seminar will address the impact of plant diseases, including 'dieback' (*Phytophthora*, *Armillaria*, cankers) on south west ecosystems.
- Public meeting: *The future of WA's old growth native*

*forests*, Fremantle Town Hall, 22 April, 7.30pm, organised by the Greens (WA). The proposed South-West pulpmill and logging of three major areas of old growth forests will be debated at the meeting. Enquiries: (09) 220 0652.

- *York EarthCare Festival*, Sunday 24 April 1994, York. "A day of fun and entertainment for the whole family". Proceeds to benefit WA's native endangered species. Enquiries: Yvonne Dols, (096) 411 541.
- International conference *Nature Conservation: the Role of Networks*, Geraldton, 15–20 May 1994. Enquiries: Dr D. Saunders, CSIRO, (09) 290 8111. This conference aims to demonstrate how community linkages between landholders and other individuals, groups, conservation agencies and conservation biologists are essential to achieve effective nature conservation.

## Recent publications on threatened species

### Newsletters and brochures

- *On the Brink!*, newsletter of the Endangered Species Program, No. 3 and 4.
- *The Web*, NTSN national newsletter: No. 4 to 8 (No. 7 has a focus on WA).
- *WATSNU*, newsletter of the WA Threatened Species and Communities Unit, CALM, Nos. 1 & 2.
- New brochures produced by ANCA: "Green Consumer Guide to Endangered Species", "Feral Animals Information Kit", "Endangered Species Information Kit", "Australian Threatened Plants".

### Reports, books, strategies

Five Action Plans have been released over the past eighteen months (see *On the Brink!*, No. 4, p.6, for details):

- Australian Reptiles (ANCA, Dec 1993),
  - Australian Freshwater Fishes (ANCA, June 1993),
  - Australian Birds (ANPWS, May 1992),
  - Australasian Marsupials and Monotremes (IUCN, 1992),
  - Old World Fruit Bats (IUCN, 1992).
- In addition, the following reviews on endangered species in Australia are available in selected bookshops:
- M. Kennedy (ed), 1990. *Australia's Endangered Species*. Simon Shuster, Sydney.
  - R.T. Hoser, 1991. *Endangered Animals of Australia*. Pierson, Sydney.
  - S. Garnett (ed), 1992. *Threatened and extinct Birds of Australia*, RAOU/ANPWS, also

available from the RAOU, Moonee Ponds (Vic).

The following documents are also available:

- *An Australian National Strategy for the Conservation of Australian Species and Communities threatened with extinction* (ESAC-ANPWS, 1992).
- *The Introduction and Translocation of Fish, Crustaceans and Molluscs in Western Australia*, by C. Lawrence. Fisheries Management Paper No.58. Fisheries Dept of WA (Oct 1993).
- *Threatened Species in Australia: a Select Bibliography*, by K. Slattery and R. Wallis (Jan 1993), followed recently by a Supplement (late 1993). Enquiries K. Slattery, (03) 542 7293.



# What is the Commonwealth Endangered Species Protection Act 1992?

THE Commonwealth *Endangered Species Protection Act* came into force in April 1993. The Act, although not as strong as conservationists hoped it would be (due to some intense lobbying from industry and influential Cabinet Ministers), covers all Commonwealth (not State) land and waters, and Commonwealth actions and decisions.

The legislation aims to conserve endangered and vulnerable animals, plants and endangered ecological communities. These objectives will be met by:

- identifying endangered and vulnerable species and communities and key threatening processes in the lists under the Act. In listing these groups they are identified for action.
- preparing and implementing recovery plans (for listed species and communities) and threat abatement plans

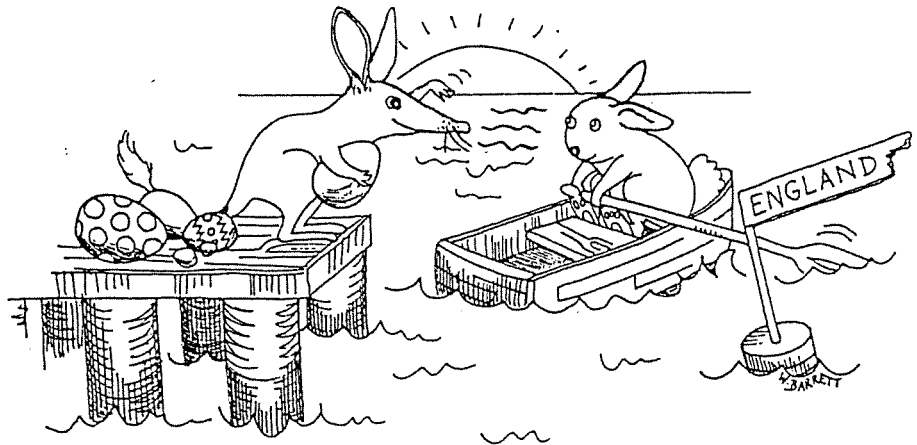
(for listed key threatening processes).

- enabling land owners in Commonwealth areas to enter into voluntary agreements with the Commonwealth government.
- enabling the Environment Minister to make interim, permanent and impact assessment orders under certain circumstances.
- providing appropriate administrative and enforcement

powers to the Director of the Australian Nature Conservation Agency (ANCA) and other appropriate Commonwealth officers.

- establishing an Endangered Species Advisory Committee (ESAC) and an Endangered Species Scientific Sub-committee (ESSS) to assist the Minister and ANCA to implement the Act.

[Reprinted from *Threatened Species Alert*, the NTSN newsletter in New South Wales, No.4, Aug 1993].



## New state legislation for the use of WA flora in need of review

A recent Amendment to the CALM Act (Dec. 1993) gives extensive powers to the Executive Director of CALM and the Minister for the Environment to enter into preferential or exclusive agreements with private commercial interests for the use of the state's flora for pharmaceutical, scientific or horticultural purposes.

After views were expressed that the legislation was not adequately covering the range

of issues involved in the commercial use of genetic resources, the legislation was sent to a Legislative Council Review Committee which recommended that the legislation be passed, but subject to a review in 1994. Fears were expressed to the Committee that no tender process was included in the legislation and that public input was not considered in the sale of the state's valuable plant genetic resources.

## Update of the state Threatened Fauna list imminent

The new updated state list of Threatened Fauna is finally before the Parliamentary Drafting Committee after two years of delays. It is hoped that it will be processed with diligence. The next meeting of the Threatened Fauna Scientific Advisory Committee is scheduled for later this year. CALM Wildlife Branch, phone (09) 334 0420, will provide submission forms for nominations of threatened fauna for consideration at the coming meeting.

## Recovery Plans and Recovery Teams: more community input sought

It is widely recognised that support from the wider community is essential for the recovery of endangered species. Education and community awareness are an important component of the Endangered Species Program and the National Threatened Species Network plays an important role.

Even though a number of Recovery Teams include some community representation, community conservation interests are not represented in most of them. At present, community participation in recovery efforts is not actively promoted or encouraged. Only one team has developed a Communication Plan that includes public information,

and, even in this case, progress has been slow. Community information and involvement should become part of every Recovery Plan with an allocated budget. Draft Recovery Plans should be available for public comment before they are published in their final form.

Information on the progress of the recovery of various species occasionally comes out in the press and nature magazines. However, there is a need for a regular information channel. Newsletters, such as the *Heirisson Prong Biosphere Project Newsletter* (CSIRO) on the Burrowing Bettong reintroduction program, or the *NSB (Noisy Scrub-bird) Newsletter* (CALM/Two Peoples

Bay) fulfill this role and could easily become a standard inexpensive feature of all recovery plans.

The success and rapid expansion of the Malleefowl Preservation Group shows that there is much to gain from the involvement of local communities and conservation groups in endangered species conservation. Some valuable support can be gained from community groups. Research and monitoring can be carried out at a fraction of the cost of salaried scientists. Volunteers involved in Malleefowl surveys and Noisy Scrub-bird translocation efforts are making a major contribution to the recovery of these species.

### The Feral Pests Program (FPP)

A budget of \$2 million has been allocated by the federal government to the research and control of ferals in Australia for 1993/94. The projects funded in WA are:

- Methods of broadscale control of feral cats and fox control at a Numbat reintroduction site (ongoing).
- Assessment of the effect of fox control on the Red-tailed Phascogale (ongoing).
- Methods for conventional control and research on ecology of foxes (ongoing).
- Predator control for the benefit of the Western Swamp Tortoise (ongoing).
- Eradication of feral goats and sheep: Peron Peninsula (new).

## The WA Marine and Coastal Community Network: good news for coastal conservation

The Marine and Coastal Community Network is a recent initiative of the Federal Government, under the *Ocean Rescue 2000* program. The primary aim of the Network is to foster community support for the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of Australian's marine and coastal environments.

The network produces a bi-monthly newsletter which is distributed free of charge.

Contributions are most welcome. If you would like more information or would like to get involved in the Network, contact Ms Giz

Watson (WA Regional Coordinator), 79 Stirling St, Perth WA 6000. Phone (09) 220 0662, fax (09) 220 0653.



## Feedback

*This space has been allocated to your letters and correspondence. Please write to the editor with any stories or anecdotes you would like to share.*

*Dear Jean-Paul,*

This story started, or we thought it started, in February or March 1992 at Ruabon opposite some native bush. Bethwyn, the part owner of the farm is a member of FAWNA (Fostering and Assistance for Wildlife Needing Aid), and has a keen interest in threatened species.

She kept a small number of chooks for eggs, and something started getting in at night and terrorising them. This 'something' tried to pull a chook through a small hole ... without success, so just ate the head and left the body inside.

Needless to say the "fox" became No. 1 suspect. The chooks became paranoid to such an extent that one night one very nervous chook decided it could stand the terror no longer inside the house, hid under the car and could not be located at lock up time.

The perpetrator of course found this poor nervous chook, and made a fine meal of its head and viscera. It opened the chest cavity with surgical precision.

Next night again the stillness was shattered by absolute confusion and noise from the hens. By now the owners were ready, leapt out of bed, grabbed the gun and headed for the chook house to dispatch "that fox".

Can you imagine their absolute amazement when their gaze fell upon a small chuditch, who was busily sending chooks in all directions as he chose his nightly meal. The gun was smartly put away and next day Bethwyn "chuditch proofed" the hen house.

The little bloke is still around, but now frequents the hay shed where there are mice, rats and some medium size black lizards.

Looking back now, all sorts of animals were blamed for the chuditch's forays, and he/she has probably been around for up to two years. Something used to get into the incinerator and the crows got blamed for that, but Beth thinks now it was the chuditch.

CALM were notified of the presence of this little animal, and a field officer visited the farm. Presumably he was used to complaints about these animals eating the farmer's chooks, and he promptly offered to trap and relocate the little fellow.

Bethwyn assured him that she would not consider that, he belonged to the farm, and she was quite prepared to share the chooks with him, at least when they get cold. We only hope he doesn't have to wait too long for his next meal.

*Isabelle Devoy, Busselton  
November 1992*

*Dear Jean-Paul,*

For over 20 years the Departments of Agriculture and Land Administration have been collecting plant specimens in the outback. Although most turn out to be common species, we occasionally find new species or extend substantially the known distribution of other species.

The support of CALM staff at the Western Australian Herbarium — Ray Cranfield in particular — has been invaluable. When new species are identified, CALM personnel can develop nature conservation management plans to ensure the species are preserved.

During the survey of the Murchison River catchment area, the low shrub *Prostanthera tysoniana* (Lamiaceae) was redis-

covered. It had not been collected since the early years of this century and nothing was known other than it occurred in the Mt Narryer area. 'Murchison mint', named for the aroma of its crushed leaves, was subsequently found at several sites along the gradation between sandplains and Permian sedimentary rock outcrops.

Another particularly interesting find was *Apatophyllum magillivrayii* (Celastraceae), representing the first recording of the genus in Western Australia. This compact low shrub was found on one type of land surface most closely associated with interesting botanical finds: plateaux above breakaways, adding weight to the idea of a once more extensively distributed flora now restricted in the arid zone to the older land surfaces.

An equally important outcome of rangeland surveys involves the extension of known distributions of species previously thought to be rare and endangered. Examples of these include *Ptilotus beardii*, found to be widespread on duplex soils in the northern two thirds of the Murchison River catchment. It is a key species preventing soil erosion on fragile footslopes.

Rangeland surveys improve our knowledge of phytogeography. This rangeland survey program has an excellent record of success in interdepartmental cooperation towards common goals of nature conservation and ecologically sustainable land use.

*Hugh Pringle, Adviser  
WA Dept of Agriculture*

# The Federal Endangered Species Program (ESP)

This program is funded by the Commonwealth government and administered by the Australian Nature Conservation Agency (ANCA ex ANPWS Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service), Canberra.

The \$4 million ESP budget provides funding for the writing and implementation of a total of 43 new Recovery and Research Plans, writing of another 15, and continued action on a further 63 plans Australia wide. In addition, the budget provides for the continuation of education, publicity and community support functions.

The sponsorship of the National Threatened Species Network is an important part of the ESP and provides a key link between government agencies, scientists and a wide range of interest groups and individuals on endangered species conservation.

## Recovery and Management Plans in WA

The ESP makes a major contribution to the funding of 10 Recovery Plans in WA for 1993/94:

- Conservation biology and management of endangered *Lambertia* species.
- Merredin District Flora Management Program (implementation).
- Threatened Flora Manage-

ment Plans for CALM's Central Forest, Southern Forest and Geraldton districts (writing).

- Endangered fauna data records.
- Lancelin Island Skink interim management and research.
- Thevenard Island Mouse Research and Recovery Plan (partial).
- Western Bristlebird Research Plan.
- Malleefowl Recovery Plan (partial), co-ordinated from Victoria.
- Lake Toolibin Recovery Plan.

The 14 ongoing projects funded in WA by the ESP are:

- Biology and ecology of endangered *Daviesia* species.
- Matchstick Banksia Recovery Plan.
- Population dynamics and conservation genetics of *Banksia brownii* and *B. verticillata*.
- Population dynamics and seed biology of endangered *Eremophila* species.
- Rose Mallee Recovery Plan.
- Wongan Trigger Plant Recovery Plan.
- *Phytophthora* and *Diplodina* canker control in WA.
- Woylie Recovery Plan.
- Chuditch Recovery Plan.
- Shark Bay Mouse Recovery Plan.
- Noisy Scrub-bird Recovery Plan.
- White-bellied frog Recovery Plan.

- Yellow-bellied frog Recovery Plan.
- Western Swamp Tortoise Recovery Plan.

## The Endangered Species Advisory Committee (ESAC)

The inaugural meeting of the new Endangered Species Advisory Committee was held in Canberra on 17 August 1993 (for an account of the meeting see *On the Brink!*, No.4, p.14). The second meeting took place on 21 December 1993.

The function of ESAC is to provide advice to the federal Environment Minister on (i) the application of the Federal Endangered Species Protection Act 1992, (ii) issues relevant to the ESP, in particular the preparation and implementation of Recovery Plans and Threat Abatement Plans. The range of Commonwealth actions and decisions that might trigger action under the ESP Act is still the object of discussions and will be examined by ESAC.

The Endangered Species Scientific Subcommittee is in charge of the listing of endangered species in Australia. It can receive nominations for the listing of endangered species from members of the public. For more information, contact the Endangered Species Unit, ANCA, (06) 250 0287.

## The "Bilby Beat", rock 'n' roll for endangered species

The Endangered Species Program (ESP) has recently released a rock music CD and video clip. It is part of a national program to increase awareness of and support for endangered species conservation. Proceeds of the sale of "The Bilby Beat" will contribute to recovery programs for endangered species.



## The Endangered species board game

"On the Brink" is the name of a new board game designed to be fun, stimulating, informative and educational. It has been produced by the Endangered Species Program (ESP) in conjunction with Brent Howard Games and Kaye Kessing.

## What is WATSCU?

WATSCU is the WA Threatened Species and Communities Unit, a Branch within the Nature Conservation Division of the Department of Conservation and Land Management. Its role is to coordinate, assist with and promote the conservation of Western Australia's threatened animals, plants and ecological communities.

WATSCU is a small unit, consisting of three, half-time specialist staff and two administrative support staff. Its Director, Andrew Burbidge, specialises in threatened animals. Andrew Brown concentrates on threatened plants and John Blyth is pioneering the conservation of threatened communities. Hugh Clift, Executive Officer, and Jill Pryde, Secretary, complete the Unit. Some of the important functions of the Unit at present are:

- Developing and implementing a system that ensures that scarce resources are allocated to the most threatened taxa and communities.

- Coordinating the preparation and implementation of Recovery Plans.

- Coordinating applications and contracts for external funding, including funds from the National Endangered Species Program.

- Preparing and distributing information on threatened species and communities.

- Liaising with other Government agencies and non-Government conservation groups.

- Developing a CALM Policy Statement on the conservation of the most threatened ecological communities.

- Developing a data directory that will enable those needing information on threatened species and communities to find it quickly.

One of the most important mechanisms for conserving threatened species and communities is to prepare and implement Recovery Plans. Recovery Plans clearly state the conservation problems involved, list necessary recovery actions, provide a written prescription and works program with total costs over a

### PLEASE HELP....

If you enjoyed this newsletter, please make a donation to the "WA Threatened Species Network". This donation will assist with the production of the next issue of *Wanted Alive*.

ten year period. Recovery Plans are usually written by a Recovery Team, including scientists with relevant expertise, CALM operations staff, funding agencies, land owners or land managers and people from the local community. Recovery Plans cannot be implemented unless the necessary staff and money are available, and a major function of WATSCU is to find these resources.

In addition to the Recovery Plans listed in the following section, CALM staff are also members of Recovery Teams set up by the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory for the Gouldian Finch, Mala and Bilby, and of a Recovery Team set up by the South Australian Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for the Greater Stick-nest Rat.

## Eagle-eyed customs foil bird smuggler

**Adelaide:** A bird breeder from Birdwood who tried to smuggle birds into Australia by stuffing them down his underpants was fined \$22,500 yesterday. The District Court was told eagle-eyed customs officers swooped on the man at Adelaide International Airport last March after being alerted by bird noises coming from his trousers.

The court heard that Leli Ellul, 35, of Birdwood in the

Adelaide Hills, was found to have four Thai baby Moustache parrots worth up to \$18,000 on the black market in his underpants. Ellul, a carpenter who breeds birds, pleaded guilty to breaching the Wildlife Protection Act and the Quarantine Act. Judge Neil Lowrie also placed Ellul on a two-year good behaviour bond.

[*The West Australian*, 20 November 1993]

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The many people who provided information and assistance for the production of this newsletter are gratefully acknowledged here.

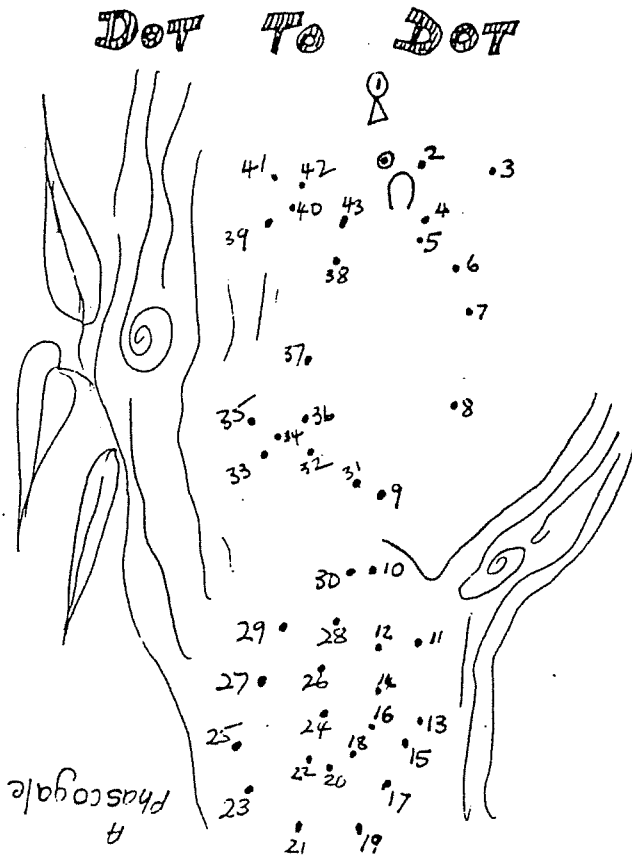
- Layout by Salli Vaughan, 3/88 Heytesbury Rd, Subiaco WA 6008

- Funding provided by the National Threatened Species Network, a component of the Endangered Species Program

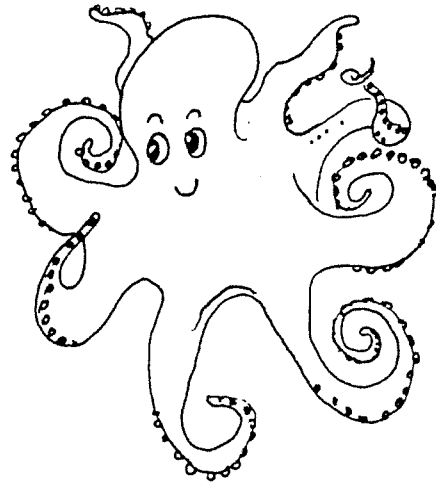
- WA Co-ordinator National Threatened Species Network and editor of *Wanted Alive*, Jean-Paul Orsini, c/- Conservation Council of WA, 79 Stirling St, Perth WA 6009

- The material in *Wanted Alive* does not necessarily represent the views of the National Threatened Species Network, WWF or the Endangered Species Program.

# Kid's Corner



Ollie the Octopus  
Lives in the sea  
That is his home  
where he has to be  
We need to keep his habitat  
clean,  
So take home your rubbish  
and don't be mean!



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

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