

TSN NEWS

The national newsletter for the Threatened Species Network

TSN Community Grants
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Threatened
Species
Network



Australian Government



WWF

winter 2008

The Threatened Species Network is a community-based program of the Australian Government and WWF-Australia.



Green and golden bell frog © Viewfinder

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Cover image: *Boronia granitica* © Ian Millanivoch

Boronia granitica listed as endangered by the Australian Government and is endemic to eastern Australia. It is found from the Stanthorpe district in southern Queensland to Parlour Mountain near Armidale in northern New South Wales.

what's on . . .

5th Northern Territory threatened species art and photography competition

The TSN is seeking artists and photographers to enter the annual Northern Territory Threatened Species Art & Photography Competition. The theme is 'threatened species, their habitats and their threats in the Northern Territory'. It is open to all ages and for all mediums. Individuals as well as community groups and schools are invited to submit works. Entries close 22nd August 2008. For more information contact the Northern Savannas TSN Coordinator, (08) 8941 7554, savannas@wwf.org.au.

Tree planting for the forty-spotted pardalote, June 16-27

Volunteers are needed for tree planting for the forty-spotted pardalote on North Bruny Island. Transport provided including free ferry fares. For more information contact the Tasmanian TSN Coordinator, (03) 6234 3552, tsntas@wwf.org.au.

The 2008 Kangaroo Island Planting Festival, July 4-6

Three days of fast and furious planting to help save some of Kangaroo Island's rarest plant life. For more information contact Heirich Klein or Dave Taylor, Department for Environment and Heritage, (08) 8553 2381, KLEIN.HEINRICH@saugov.sa.gov.au.

Mt Jackson malleefowl survey, June 1-7

Walk through the bush with other volunteers looking for malleefowl nests. Volunteers will need a good degree of fitness and self sufficiency in camping. For more information contact Malleefowl Preservation Group, (08) 9828 2083, sdennings@bigpond.com.

Orange-bellied parrot over-wintering surveys, June 26-July 27

Support the recovery program for the orange-bellied parrot by volunteering to be involved in the annual surveys of its over-wintering habitat. For more information contact Glenn Ehmke, Birds Australia, (03) 9347 0757, g.ehmke@birdsaustralia.com.au .

For more information on events and volunteer opportunities across Australia visit www.wwf.org.au/tsn.



national news

Getting creative for threatened species

By Kat Miller, TSN National Manager

The Threatened Species Network is pleased to have recently opened the 11th round of the Threatened Species Network's Community Grants Program, and we're encouraging community groups to get creative with their project ideas.

The program, funded by the Australian Government, has mobilised community action and partnerships for threatened species conservation across Australia since 1998. We hope that some of the stories in this newsletter will provide the inspiration for your community group to generate a project for this funding round.

competition and hybridisation with endemic hairy marron; and trialling bird scare techniques with orchardists to reduce illegal shooting of threatened black cockatoos.

So do some brainstorming and get creative for threatened species. Your local TSN Coordinator can help you turn innovative ideas into viable projects with meaningful conservation outcomes. I look forward to hearing your project ideas, and wish you the best of luck.



Cassowary © WWF-Cannon/Martin Harvey

Previous rounds of the TSN Community Grants program have provided for a diverse array of threatened species projects – sometimes quite unusual activities have been funded!

One recent project conducted DNA testing from cassowary scats collected by very dedicated volunteers in the Barron River Catchment.

We've funded the implementation of a cane toad risk management plan at Groote

Eylandt, a threatened species haven in the Northern Territory, which included building a toad-proof fence around the port yard which is a high risk area for toad invasion.

TSN funds also provided for the trialling of some unusual survey methods including a method for recognising individual western whipbirds from their calls, and a unique combination of radio and traditional tracking of bilbies in the Great Sandy Desert.

In Western Australia two unusual projects close to my heart are marron fishing in the Margaret River – fishing out smooth marron to reduce



© Kimberley Toad Busters Inc conduct weekly toadbusting www.canetoads.com.au

For more information about TSN Community Grants contact the TSN Grant Program Officer, (02) 8202 1233, tsngrants@wwf.org.au.

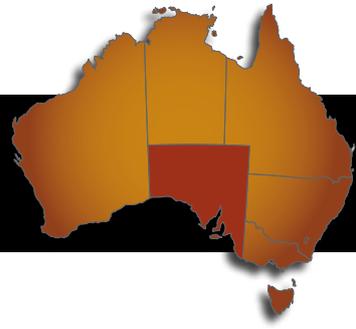


Hairy marron © Simon Visser



Greater bilby © WWF-Cannon/Martin Harvey

south australia



Community giving a helping hand

By Dominic Nicholls, TSN Coordinator

The Fleurieu Peninsula is home to some of South Australia's unique flora and fauna, but many of these species are now threatened. Fortunately there are groups like the Hindmarsh Tiers Biodiversity Group that are giving these species a much needed helping hand.

The Hindmarsh Tiers Biodiversity Project, a restoration and management project, commenced in July 2004 with the goal of restoring and managing critical habitat for the endangered Hindmarsh Valley green-hood orchid, the vulnerable Hindmarsh correa, the southern brown bandicoot and two fish species - the climbing and mountain galaxias.

After successfully applying for a TSN Community Grant in 2005 and securing support of other funding agencies, the project has reduced threatening processes to allow the survival of threatened species and ecological communities.

This has included 7,000 meters of fencing to protect 33 hectares of remnant habitat, 10,000 native tube stock planted and maintained, and significant reduction in weed threats. This has been a real success story, demonstrating how effective a cooperative community effort can be.

But the group are not stopping there. Determined to expand their work, they have applied for and received further funding from TSN, which will help this impressive project continue.

The project is currently focused on larger patches of remnant vegetation and adjacent areas, which include Mount Billy Conservation Park, Hindmarsh Falls Reserve, South Australia Water land, roadsides and private land. The group is working with 10 private landholders and aim to engage many more.

Core to the ongoing success of this project is the collaborative partnership between nine Natural Resource Management organisations, local and state government, and local landholders. These partners are working together to implement on-ground actions.

For more information about TSN Community Grants contact the South Australian TSN Coordinator, (08) 8223 5155, tsnsa@wwf.org.au.



Hindmarsh Valley greenhood orchid © J. Quarmby DEH



new south wales

Protecting the endangered Macquarie perch

By Di Bott and Su Wild-River, Friends of the Mongarlowe River

Macquarie perch are a nationally endangered fish. In the past they were fare to fishers throughout southern and eastern Australia and sustained farmers and families early last century.

There are at least three genetically distinct subspecies, the largest of which is native to the Murray Darling Basin. This subspecies was translocated to the Mongarlowe River in the 1910s.

The TSN is supporting Friends of Mongarlowe River with a TSN Community Grant to protect the Macquarie perch in the Mongarlowe River. This ambitious project has several elements, with the primary goal to learn more about the local Macquarie perch population.

Macquarie perch are extremely susceptible to a virus associated with redfin perch and entire populations have been wiped out by the introduction of redfin perch into Macquarie perch habitat. Land clearing and associated siltation of waterways and housing subdivisions along the river and its tributaries are also threatening these fish. Introduced fish such as gambusia (mosquito fish), trout and carp are also associated with population decline.

Friends of Mongarlowe River are using three main methods to assess this important population – fyke netting, spotlighting and networking. Fyke netting has been carried out by leading Macquarie perch expert Mark Lintermans. His catch was

disappointing, with only three young caught this year. The extended drought is the likely cause of low breeding rates.

Signposting popular fishing spots and talking with local fishing groups has been successful with reports of four healthy, mature Macquarie perch being caught and released.

Assessing the threats to Macquarie perch is being conducted via an audit of riparian habitat and water quality down the length of the Mongarlowe River, from the highest point where they have been observed to the junction with the Shoalhaven. Training from the Catchment Management Authority and Department of Primary Industries helped with the assessments and the group has identified some new weeds along the river. In general the quality of the river is extremely high, which is good news for Macquarie perch. The next stage of the project is to send information packages to all landholders that have riparian habitat on their properties so that they can also get involved in the conservation effort.

Friends of Mongarlowe River hope to build on the initial work from this project - expand conservation areas and see improvements to degraded areas on the river. The result will hopefully see an increased number of Macquarie perch, which can once more become a local gastronomic affair!

For more information about TSN Community Grants contact the NSW TSN Coordinator, (02) 8202 1221, tsnsw@wwf.org.au.



Macquarie Perch young of the year, caught and released unharmed © Mark Lintermans



Saving Legless Lizards

By Natalie Holland, TSN Coordinator

In April the McCallums Creek Landcare Group undertook a successful survey for the nationally vulnerable striped legless lizard on two properties near Talbot in central Victoria – finding signs of 31 lizards!

Although long-time resident Doug Youren remembers playing with legless lizards as a child, the groups' interest was only sparked in 2004 when there were indications of the legless lizards still occurring in the district. Over the following months, the group started to hear about legless lizards from a variety of sources, and ended up contacting Department of Sustainability and Environment Project Officer, Cath Grant, to find out more.

As a result, the group was involved in placing more than 500 roof tiles across properties in the district to learn about the distribution and abundance of striped legless lizards. The use of roof tiles is a survey technique for cryptic species such as legless lizards, which involves observers returning to discover what is sheltering beneath them.

The first survey in 2006 led to the discovery of more than 30 striped legless lizard skins, and two juvenile lizards. According to group member Chris Pollock, this generated much excitement and led to the group applying for and receiving a TSN Community Grant. The grant has enabled two landholders to fence areas of their properties and develop management plans. Chris emphasised that it is important for people to understand that stock grazing and conserving the lizards are compatible with management plans guiding suitable grazing regimes for the lizards.

In the short space of four years, the McCallums Creek Landcare Group has gone from having little knowledge of striped legless lizards to being actively involved in their conservation!

For more information about TSN Community Grants contact the Victorian TSN Coordinator, (03) 9669 1304, tsnvc@wwf.org.au.



Striped legless lizard © Nick Clemann, Arthur Rylah Institute, DSE

Have your say on Victoria's biodiversity policy

The Victorian Government has released the 'Land and biodiversity at a time of climate change' Green Paper - the second stage of the development of a Land Health and Biodiversity White Paper.

The White Paper process is intended to set the direction for Victorian Government policy and investment priorities in natural resource management, land health and biodiversity for the next 20-50 years.

This is an important opportunity to have your say and we encourage all community groups working on environmental and conservation issues to consider making a submission.

Submissions are being sought until 30 June 2008. A series of regional community workshops are also being held.

For more information visit www.dse.vic.gov.au/landwhitepaper.



The Stanthorpe Rare Wildflower Consortium

By Liz Bourne, Stanthorpe Rare Wildflower Consortium

The Stanthorpe Rare Wildflower Consortium was formed in 2004 by local groups and individuals with a mutual interest in conserving threatened plants on Queensland's Granite Belt.

The Stanthorpe Plateau, part of the New England Tableland Bioregion, contains a rich diversity of flowering plants, with more than 700 species recorded. Because of its high altitude, cool climate, topography and soils, the region supports a number of species which are unique to the state, including many spectacular wildflowers.

Using funding provided by the Queensland Murray Darling Committee in 2005, a Recovery Plan for nine threatened species on the Stanthorpe Plateau was prepared and formed the basis for on-going projects by the Consortium. Survey work by Consortium members and consultants over the last few years has contributed to increased knowledge on the distribution of many threatened species and provided a greater understanding of their ecological requirements.

A TSN Community Grant has helped to implement a number of the recommendations of the Recovery Plan. Projects undertaken include fire and biodiversity workshops involving local landholders and the production of a photographic guide to some of the diverse wildflower species you may encounter in Stanthorpe's Granite Belt region.

Since its formation, the Consortium has been conducting wildflower walks every spring on public lands and private properties. The walks have proven very popular, with hundreds of local people and visitors attending every year, helping to raise awareness and public support for conservation efforts.

For more information about TSN Community Grants contact the Queensland TSN Coordinator, (07) 3012 7574, tsnqld@wwf.org.au.



Melaleuca williamsonii © Jo McLellan

The Stanthorpe Nine – Are they in your backyard?

By Rebecca Richardson, TSN Coordinator

Nine of Queensland's wildflower jewels are being showcased in a new publication. A TSN Community Grant helped produce a colourful booklet titled "The Stanthorpe Nine".

This booklet focuses on nine species of wildflowers from the Stanthorpe Plateau Rare Flora Recovery Program. It is aimed to show landholders how they can contribute to conserving the species.

The booklet provides information on what ecosystems the nine species can be found in. It also provides strategies for managing some of the issues associated with protecting the wildflowers such as fire, weeds, stock grazing and monitoring.

For more information about the booklet or the Rare Wildflower Consortium and their walks contact Jeanette Davis at the Southern Downs Regional Council, (07) 4681 5535.

northern savannas



Island sanctuary saves endangered species

By Jarrad Holmes, TSN Coordinator

In 2003 the Gumurr Marthakal Rangers and their partners conducted a quoll relocation project, partly funded by TSN. Recent surveys show the quolls are flourishing in their new homes.

Sixty-five endangered northern quolls were moved, from the mainland to two islands in northeast Arnhem Land, to protect them from the devastating impacts of the cane toad. The population has done astoundingly well; with regular monitoring indicating that there are now 8000 individuals.

The project has succeeded in facilitating extensive collaboration between Traditional Owners, Marthakal Homelands Centre, Northern Land Council, Department of Natural Resources and The Arts scientists, Territory Wildlife Park, and Parks Australia North.

The endangered golden bandicoot has also benefited from the experience gained by the Gumurr Marthakal Rangers through the quoll relocation project. Twelve bandicoots were relocated to another island refuge in northeast Arnhem Land in 2007 with funding from TSN. It is hoped monitoring in 2008 will mirror the amazing results recorded for the quolls.

The work undertaken over the last few years by the Gumurr Marthakal Rangers and partners highlight the important role that the community and islands can play in conserving Australia's threatened species.



Northern quoll © Jamie Williams Photography

For more information about TSN Community Grants contact the Northern Savannas TSN Coordinator, (08) 8941 7554, savannas@wwf.org.au.

Legislation and threatened species in the NT

In 2006 WWF-Australia prepared and circulated a discussion paper entitled 'Reviewing the Threatened Species Provisions within Northern Territory Legislation'. This document was prepared to initiate discussion on the Northern Territory's legislative framework to manage and recover threatened species and ecological communities prior to the proposed review of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 2000*.

WWF has subsequently produced a summary entitled 'Recommendations for improving threatened species provisions within legislation in the Northern Territory'. WWF believes that these recommended changes would result in improvements for threatened species, and that the recommendations outlined are both affordable and workable within the Northern Territory's context.

The recommendations in the summary fact sheet are mostly taken from a report commissioned by WWF and conducted by Stephen Garnett, Gill Ainsworth and Rachel Carey from Charles Darwin University titled 'Analysis of Northern Territory Legislation for the Protection of Threatened Species'. The discussion paper, recommendations fact sheet, and the Charles Darwin University analysis are all available for download from the WWF website using the following links:

Discussion Paper 2006 <http://wwf.org.au/publications/nt-threatened-species-discussion-paper-2006>

Recommendations summary fact sheet February 2008 <http://wwf.org.au/publications/nt-threatened-species-recommendations>

CDU analysis October 2007 <http://wwf.org.au/publications/nt-threatened-species-analysis>

WWF encourages all interested people to submit their comments and suggestions on any matters relating to these documents to the Threatened Species Network coordinators based in the Northern Territory.

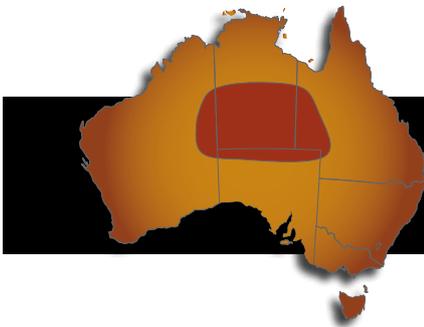


Recommendations for improving threatened species provisions within legislation in the Northern Territory



WWF-Australia

The principal legislative protection for threatened species in the Northern Territory is contained within the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act (TPWCA)*. In the NT there are currently 162 species classified as Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable (collectively known and referred to under the Act as 'threatened'), with an additional 15 species classified as Extinct.



arid rangelands

Lost in the desert for 135 years – and found alive!

By Andy Vinter, TSN Coordinator and Tim Collins, Department of Natural Resources, Environment and The Arts

A botanical survey of one of the Northern Territory's most poorly known bioregions, the Central Ranges Bioregion, has located a population of *Olearia arida*, a daisy bush not seen in the Territory since 1873.

The survey, funded by the TSN and Northern Territory government, was undertaken to collect information on particular plant species which are poorly known and that may be at conservation risk. These plants are known as 'data deficient' plants, and there are currently 271 plant species considered as data deficient within the arid region of the Northern Territory.

The Central Ranges Bioregion occupies approximately 22,000 square kilometres of the far southwestern corner of the Northern Territory and includes the eastern Petermann and Bloods Ranges, as well as the northern extremities of the Mann and Musgrave Ranges. These ranges act as important refuges from the large fires that sweep through the southwest corner of the state.

The survey found 50 new plant species for the Central Ranges Bioregion, and two new species for the Northern Territory, *Acacia tenuior* and *Austrostipa plumigera*. Enough information was collected on data deficient species to recommend reclassification of 15 of these species.

The survey failed to find a rare Teatree, *Melaleuca fulgens*, despite searching for it in its last recorded location. It is presumed to have been destroyed by wild fires. Five species

were recommended for reclassification as near threatened because of their small and restricted populations and the potential threat from wildfire.

Some plant species were found to occur in large populations, such as *Acacia pachyacra* and *Leiocarpa tomentosa*, woolly plover daisy, indicating that their data deficient status may only be due to the lack of previous surveys in the region. A total of 10 species were recommended for downgrading from their data deficient status as a result of the survey.

The survey saw numerous examples of the selective grazing of trees by wild camels. Large numbers of camels were a common sight as were the impacts that they are having on the ecosystems. Tree species such as desert poplar, *Codonocarpus cotinifolius*, native apricot, *Pittosporum angustifolium* and bush plum, *Santalum lanceolatum* are suffering from serious over-browsing. The survey team also expected to find the quandong tree, *Santalum acuminatum*, but none were found suggesting that camels are having a significant impact on this species. Camels are also utilising waterholes and rock-holes further increasing the pressure on native animals dependant on these water sources for survival.

For more information about TSN Community Grants contact the Arid Rangelands TSN Coordinator, (08) 8952 1541, rangelands@wwf.org.au.



Yellow Popflower © Tim Collins

western australia



Saving the endangered Kingo

By Danielle Perrie, Wagin Woodanilling Landcare Zone

The red-tailed phascogale, known by the Nyoongar people as the Kingo, was once found across Australia from the southwest of Western Australia to the Great Sandy Desert and across to the eastern states. Sadly it disappeared from the eastern states in the late 1800s and is now found in small, scattered populations across the Western Australian wheatbelt and considered endangered.

The red-tailed phascogale is threatened by feral cats, loss of habitat and inappropriate fire regimes. It is an insectivorous and carnivorous species, spending most of its time in trees. Breeding occurs once a year in winter, and it is usual for the male to die soon after mating.

The Friends of the Wagin Lakes is a community group dedicated to the conservation of the ecosystem and environment surrounding the Wagin Lakes. The Wagin Lakes are an important local and regional asset, providing habitat for the phascogale and a number of water birds. The lakes and their surrounds are now under threat from salinity, changes in flow regime, waterlogging, sedimentation and feral animal pressure.

With help from a TSN Community Grant the group hopes to conserve habitat surrounding the Quarbing Lake for the red-tailed phascogale. The project aims to develop better understanding of phascogale ecology, improve corridors of high quality habitat with the help of landholders and local government, and link with other projects to identify the behaviour and critical habitat of this endangered species.



Members of the Friends of the Wagin Lakes checking a trap

Over 5000 endemic native trees have been planted, primarily *Casuarina obesa* and *Eucalyptus wandoo*, and corridors have been fenced to assist with regeneration.

Knowledge of the species is still limited so the Friends of the Wagin Lakes will continue to work with Southwest Catchments Council, local government, Wagin Woodanilling Landcare Zone and community partners to improve the environment and community awareness of this unique ecosystem and special animal.

For more information about TSN Community Grants contact the Western Australian TSN Coordinator, (08) 9387 6444, tsnwa@wwf.org.au.



Red-Tailed Phascogale © Andrew D. King



Swift parrot breeding season in review

By Janneke Webb, Tasmanian Conservation Trust

The TSN Community Grant project 'Swift parrot nest site identification project' has come to an end along with the 2007-2008 swift parrot breeding season. This has been a collaborative project of Tasmanian Conservation Trust, TSN, Birds Tasmania, Department of Primary Industries and Water (DPIW) and numerous volunteers around the state.

For the past four breeding seasons, Matthew Webb from DPIW has been surveying swift parrots in Tasmania and identifying breeding and foraging habitat. This proved to be a difficult task as the birds bred in different areas each year, with very little over-lap during the four years. In addition, the Tasmanian Conservation Trust attracted and trained volunteers to assist DPIW with its survey work for this season and hopefully future seasons.

This season the majority of nest sites found were in wet forests in an area between Huonville and Dover, south of Hobart, where there were no previous records. Previously the importance of wet forests as suitable foraging and nesting habitat for the endangered swift parrot has been underestimated; however, this season has shown it may be critical to the species' survival.

Surveys this season have resulted in a range of new information. Locations of foraging records, heavy blue

gum flowering, breeding activity and nest sites have been forwarded to DPIW to contribute to the ongoing monitoring and management of the species. All new information is currently being incorporated into a new management plan for swift parrots in the southern region by DPIW, the Forest Practices Authority and Forestry Tasmania.

About fifty people attended training sessions during the project resulting in twenty volunteers helping over the breeding season using their new found knowledge of different swift parrot calls and breeding behaviour.

With funding from the TSN, a 'Swift Parrot Information and Identification Kit' is being completed that will include a DVD and other information to help volunteers recognise swift parrot behaviour while foraging and near the nests. The DVD will include the most important calls to identify the species, including the first known recording of the very distinctive female begging call – a clear indication nesting is occurring.

Thank you to all the people who helped throughout the season. For information about volunteering or for a copy of the kit contact Janneke Webb, Tasmanian Conservation Trust, (03) 6234 3552, tct@southcom.com.au.

For more information about TSN Community Grants contact the Tasmanian TSN Coordinator, (03) 6234 3552, tsntas@wwf.org.au.



Swift parrots in flight © Aleks Terauds

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THREATENED SPECIES NETWORK COMMUNITY GRANTS

Applications are invited from community groups for funding of up to \$50,000 for projects to conserve nationally threatened species and ecological communities.

Guidelines and application forms can be obtained from: wwf.org.au/tsn or by calling 1800 032 551.

Applications close 5pm Friday 30 May 2008.

Send completed applications to:
TSN Community Grants, WWF-Australia,
GPO Box 528, Sydney NSW 2001



The Threatened Species Network is a community-based program of the Australian Government and WWF-Australia.

Seeding Planting Team at Paruna © ALCOA



TSN CONTACTS • visit: wwf.org.au/tsn • mail: GPO Box 528, Sydney, NSW, 2001 • call: 1800 032 551 • email: tsn@wwf.org.au