



Newsletter of the Australasian Wildlife Management Society

Volume 24 Issue 2

November 2010

ISSN No. 1322-9028

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Endangered Species Finds New Home at Desert Park

The Alice Springs Desert Park has welcomed its first family group of the endangered Australian mammal species Greater Stick-nest Rat to their free range enclosure the Mulga Walk.

Greater Stick-nest Rats became extinct on the mainland of Australia in the 1930s however small populations occurred on East and West Franklin Island off the coast of South Australia.

Alice Springs Desert Park Specialist Keeper Mammals Clare Ciechanowicz said that Greater Stick-nest Rats have been successfully relocated to large predator proof enclosures in South Australia including Reevesby Island and the Arid Recovery Centre.

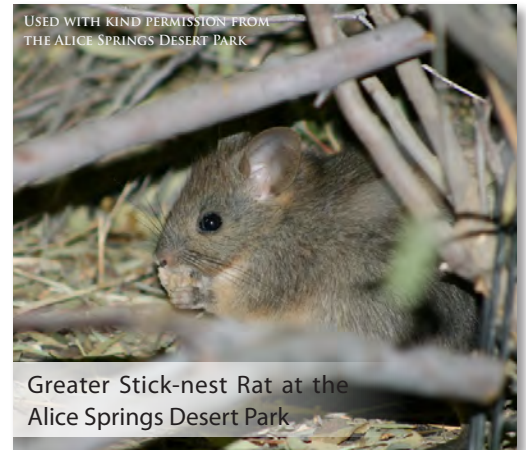
"The Desert Park were extremely fortunate to collect three adult pairs from the population at the Arid Recovery Centre and one pair of these have been released into our Mulga Walk," Ms Ciechanowicz said.

"Since this pair was collected in August 2009 they have successfully bred three times here at the Desert Park, producing one young on two occasions and a set of twins on the third occasion. "The adult female is now pregnant with her next litter and is due any day now, so it's been a great achievement to release the animals into the Mulga Walk."

Ms Ciechanowicz said there were two species of Stick-nest Rats - the Greater Stick-nest Rat (*Leporillus conditor*), which reach weights up to 450g and the Lesser Stick-nest Rat (*Leporillus apicalis*) which only reached weights up to 150g.

"The Lesser Stick-nest Rats are now extinct; they were last seen alive in 1933 and while both species used to be found across the southern half of mainland Australia we understand only the Lesser Stick-nest Rats used to occur in the Northern Territory," Ms Ciechanowicz said.

"The family of Greater Stick-nest Rats will join other local species including the Bilby, Mala, Echidna, Bandicoot and Bush-stone Curlew in the Mulga Walk, and visitors may catch a glimpse of them foraging on foliage and fruits of saltbush



Greater Stick-nest Rat at the Alice Springs Desert Park

around their nest site on our Nocturnal Tours.

"Once the new young are born the female may be spotted chewing down pieces of acacia browse and adding them to the nest while dragging her new offspring along behind her.

"We encourage locals and visitors to come to the Desert Park and check out the new arrivals, and learn more about many other rare and threatened Central Australian mammal species," Ms Ciechanowicz said.

The Desert Park's Nocturnal Tour, including a spotlight tour through the Mulga Walk, runs daily Monday through to Friday. Bookings are essential: phone 8951 8788.

Provided by Clare Ciechanowicz, Alice Springs Desert Park, Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport.



USED WITH KIND PERMISSION FROM THE ALICE SPRINGS DESERT PARK

AWMS President's Report

October 2010

Dear Members,

Our 2010 conference is drawing near, and Desley Whisson, the local organiser, reports a full contingent of papers. This is heartening and bodes well for our three days at Torquay on the southern Victorian coast, where conference tours are planned.

Desley has been working closely with Doreen Culliver from OnQ Conference Support to ensure our conference runs smoothly, something for which Doreen has an excellent reputation after so many years of working with the society. You can check out the details of the conference on the website and register before the end of October to take advantage of the cheaper early bird registration.

The society has recently initiated a relationship with the South African Wildlife Management Society, which is exciting.

Vice president Peter Fleming has paired with his counterpart in South Africa, Dr Brian Reilly to explore how the two southern hemisphere organisations can share knowledge, experiences and skill sets to mutually benefit both.

The AWMS committee has supported the process by allocating \$4000 to part sponsor a trip by Peter to attend and present a paper at the September 2010 South African Wildlife Management Society conference. The part sponsorship allocation will also cover a reciprocal trip by Brian Reilly to our Torquay conference in December where he will present a paper on management of wildlife in South Africa, and also hold discussions with the committee about formalising the relationship. Peter has a short report on his trip in this newsletter and will also speak in more detail on his experiences at the Torquay conference.

A further initiative of the society this year has been the organisation of the symposium "Research and Policy - Spanning the Divide", where the topical and ever present issue of turning research into meaningful policy was discussed on 20-21 October. The organising committee, comprising Sue Briggs, John Parkes and myself managed to pull together an impressive group of speakers. This worked as the symposium was over subscribed. One of the policy speakers (Deputy Director General level) intends to use the "politics and science" talk by Mark Aarons as a training tool for his staff once it is posted on our website. All talks were recorded as were power point presentations. Both will be posted on the website.

Not knowing how attractive this topic would be, we decided to book a venue with a maximum comfortable capacity of 60 registrants. In hindsight we undersold the importance of this issue, but it is heartening to see such a good response from members and many non members to the event which was sponsored by the NSW Department of Climate Change and Water, New Zealand Land Care Research and The Invasive Animals CRC.

Many people with an interest in wildlife management in the Murray Darling Basin will be now assessing what the recently released Basin Plan Guide means for wildlife and its management in the longer term.

Will the politicians bite the bullet and set sustainable diversion limits as recommended by Murray Darling Basin Authority for improved river health, or will they resort to a more pragmatic approach where greater weight is placed on socio-economic elements of the equation? If they settle for the latter how far will they go and will it mean that they are ignoring a hard decision that will inevitably have to be made by a future government. In the meantime wetlands, floodplains, associated ecosystem services and wildlife will continue to suffer, making wildlife management decisions more difficult and complex. A soft decision by government will also mean that those who elect to stay in irrigated agriculture will not have the water security they deserve and require for business decisions because the system will still be over allocated.

Finally, membership of the society has increased by 15 percent over the last 12 months. This is heartening, but at 243 is still far lower than I would like to see. I thank those members who have encouraged friends or colleagues to join and ask that all other members convince a friend or colleague to join as well. The society requires a critical membership mass to cover its fixed operating costs, which have traditionally been subsidised by conference profits. I do not believe this is a sound way to manage the society and will be recommending to the committee at our October meeting that we increase fees for all categories of membership. I would prefer to see conference profits used for initiatives such as special symposia or students rather than the operating costs of the society.

Terry Korn, President

*Are you a member of
AWMS yet?*

If not, why don't you join NOW!
You can join through the website

www.awms.org.au

Join a group of people with similar interests.

The new registration process through the website allows members to access the site with their personal access code, renew memberships and modify demographic details (including email addresses).

If you are having any problems with your membership, please contact the AWMS Secretariat on (02) 6288 3998 or by emailing awms@onqconferences.com.au

Connecting Conservation Policy makers, Researchers and Practitioners

An interesting monthly magazine to take a closer look at is Decision Point, produced by the Applied Environmental Decision Analysis group (AEDA).

Decision Point is a monthly magazine presenting news, views and ideas on environmental decision making, biodiversity, conservation planning and monitoring.

The AEDA hub is funded by the Australian Government's Commonwealth Environment Research Facility (CERF) program.

The CERF program is a \$100 million initiative of the Australian Government to improve Australia's capacity to understand and respond to priority environmental concerns, and is administered by the Australian Government Department of Environment Water Heritage and the Arts.

The AEDA research hub brings together many of the world's best quantitatively-orientated conservation ecologists. AEDA will enable these researchers to better collaborate on a range of our most pressing conservation issues. The majority of the stories included in the publication relate to biodiversity, and some specifically to wildlife issues.


AEDA members are split between universities in Brisbane, Canberra and Melbourne. As a group it holds a proud record in both research and its application.

In funding AEDA, the Commonwealth Government has provided the people involved with resources to increase the volume and quality of their research, improve interactions between the group's members and between the group and the outside world (through workshops, newsletters and a variety of products), and enhance interactions with environmental managers and policy-makers.

AEDA is advised by an Advisory Board with representatives from conservation science and the Australian Government Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

For more information and examples of AEDA's work, please see the [Mid Term Review](#), created to showcase how AEDA is making a difference. To keep up-to-date with AEDA's work, please take a look at the [research](#) AEDA is involved in. If you have any trouble with downloading these files, please email [Karen Gillow](#) and a copy can be sent to you.

If you like to be kept up to date on AEDA activities please provide your details [HERE](#) and you will be added to the AEDA newsletter list.

AEDA would be delighted if you wanted to share this information throughout your networks:  SHARE

For more information on Decision Point, or AEDA, visit the website at www.aeda.edu.au

THE 7th National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference was held in Adelaide, 22 to 24 June

Around 200 delegates attended from all states and territories of Australia experiencing three informative days of presentations from leading wildlife organisations, carers, researchers, government representatives and veterinarians.

Speakers also represented all states and territories, and covered a wide array of topics. An international perspective was provided by Dr Ian Robinson, Emergency Relief Program Director, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), who opened the conference.

As well as topics specifically pertaining to wildlife rehabilitation, rescue and treatment techniques, there were presentations covering legal standards, information sharing systems, fundraising, statistics and record keeping.

Recurring themes of building relationship networks and working collaboratively to promote wildlife welfare were very evident.

Delegates enjoyed the valuable opportunity to network and share information at the conference, as well as at various social functions and tours. The forum also provided an opportunity for those involved or interested in State Wildlife Councils to meet with agreement to form a National Wildlife Rehabilitation Council in the near future.



The conference was generously sponsored by IFAW and the Humane Society International / Wildlife Land Trust.

The next conference will take place in Townsville, QLD in 2012.

Information generously supplied by Alicia Hosking, STEERING COMMITTEE, National Rehabilitation Conference, SA, 2010

For further details and information take a look at www.nwrc.com.au

AWMS Annual General Meeting

To be held at the AWMS Conference in Torquay.

Zeally Room 1,

Crowne Plaza Torquay

5pm, Thursday 2nd December 2010

Southern Hemisphere Wildlife Management Societies in September talks

Peter Fleming

Australasian Wildlife Management Society (AWMS) Vice President Peter Fleming, and incoming President the Southern African Wildlife Management Association (SAWMA) Brian Reilly, are investigating the potential of an official understanding between the two societies.

To expedite the development of that relationship, the SAWMA council invited Peter to their recent 40th Annual Symposium held at Marikana, near Pretoria.

Delegates were mainly from South Africa, but there was a strong contingent from Namibia and one or two from other African countries, as well as from Europe and Brazil. Julian Fennessy of the Giraffe Conservation Foundation provided a welcome Australian accent.

SAWMA gave Peter the honour of being first keynote speaker and provided him with a great welcome - barbeques (braais), beer and good wines are great favourites of South Africans too. There were many opportunities to discuss a cooperative relationship between the organisations.

The Symposium had a packed three-day schedule, which tested the bladder and concentration after each evening's "welcome", and 30 poster presentations adorned the walls of the thatch-roofed venue, Buffelspoort Holiday Resort. With SAWMA's strong emphasis on exposing students to public speaking experiences, about 40 percent of the talks were presented by Masters or PhD candidates, and the overall quality was excellent.

In his address to the SAWMA AGM Peter said it had occurred to both himself and Brian that some great opportunities exist for synergies between the two organisations.

"The societies have similar visions and emphases on scientific management and students. The management of wildlife in both regions tends to be at the population level.

"Although our faunas are vastly different, we are in the same hemisphere and we have similarities in weather patterns and vegetation structures," Peter said.



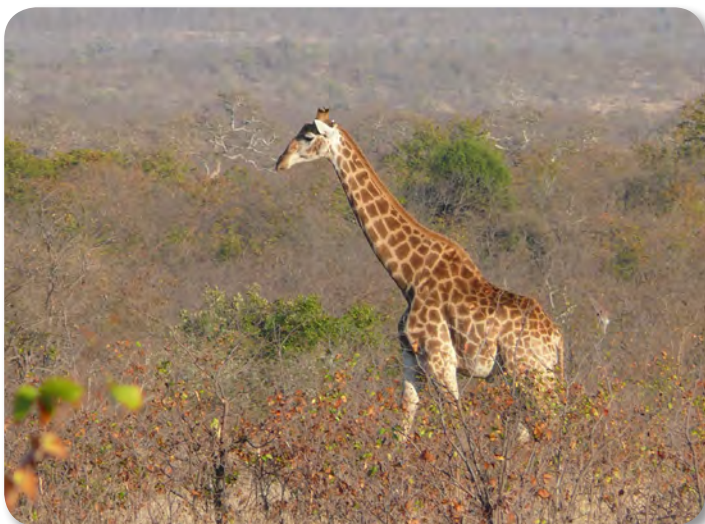
It was very apparent to Peter that there were many potential opportunities for exchanges of ideas and experiences that would benefit wildlife management in Southern Africa and Australasia.

"There are many things we can learn from each other, and there are international and regional issues where we could provide mutual support."

Professor Reilly will be attending the AWMS December conference in Torquay as guest of the AWMS committee. Brian will present a keynote address in the symposium on Conservation of wildlife across landscapes and a paper on rabbit control on the iconic Robben Island. He will also be attending the AWMS AGM.

This will be an opportunity for AWMS members to participate in discussions about building and maintaining links between the two organisations.

Peter has a copy of the SAWMA 2010 Symposium abstracts, which he will be taking to the AWMS conference, to provide members with a taste of wildlife management issues in Southern Africa. The SAWMA website is: <http://www.sawma.co.za>



AWMS Conference 2010

Torquay Victoria

Have you registered yet?

Still opportunities available for trade - contact awms@onqconferences.com.au

Full information on the website
www.awms.org.au

Over 100 presenters - three full days of sessions.

Native mammals of northern Australia disappearing into oblivion

A new wave of extinctions is now threatening Australian mammals, this time in northern Australia.

These are the findings presented in a new report, released in early September, on the severe and rapid decline of many mammal species in Northern Australia's tropical savannas.

The report, entitled *Into Oblivion? The disappearing native mammals of northern Australia*, was compiled by four scientists (John Woinarski, James Fitzsimons, Sarah Legge and Barry Trill) and brings together published information, unpublished data and expert opinion to document the extent of the decline across northern Australia for the first time. The issue is not widely known and the publication seeks to alert scientists, decision makers and the Australian community to this urgent issue.

Of particular concern is that the species which appear to be declining in northern Australia are from the same groups of species as those that proved most likely to become extinct elsewhere in Australia: the bandicoots, possums, smaller wallabies, quolls, and larger rodents.

The report presents current trends (where known) for all species and detailed information for selected species. The main drivers of mammal decline include inappropriate fire regimes, predation by feral cats, vegetation changes associated with the pastoral industry, Cane Toads, and potentially disease.

Targeted management of known threats is urgently required to ensure the survival of mammals, but there is also a need to strengthen the safeguards on islands off northern Australia, as a temporary refuge for 'at risk' species until a more comprehensive solution can be reached on the mainland.

The full report is available from The Nature Conservancy's website www.nature.org/Australia (or direct link at <http://www.nature.org/wherework/asiapacific/australia/files/ausmammals.pdf>).

Hardcopies of the report can be obtained by contacting The Nature Conservancy on Australia@tnc.org or phone (03) 8346 8604.

For further information on the report contact Dr James Fitzsimons, Director of Conservation, The Nature Conservancy, on jfitzsimons@tnc.org

AWMS is a Partner for the International Year of Biodiversity

To celebrate and promote 2010 as the United Nations International Year of Biodiversity, AWMS has become a partner organisation. This allows us to use the above snazzy logo and post messages about our biodiversity celebrations on their website. In return, we have to;

- Name a focal point who can brief the world on our activities (Peter Fleming);
- Provide an outline of our activities for 2010, for publication on the UN Convention on Biological Diversity website;
- Contribute success stories to their website
- Make our information products available to the world for distribution and dissemination.

This is a great opportunity to promote the society worldwide. To see what celebrations and activities are proposed for the rest of the year, take a look at:

<http://www.cbd.int/2010/welcome/>

A list of Year partners can be found at:

<http://www.cbd.int/2010/partners/>

We have listed 2 major biodiversity activities for the Year

1. Research and policy - Spanning the divide: How Researchers Can Influence Decision Makers.

This symposium (20-21 October, 2010) is especially relevant for those working in wildlife management or other natural resource management.

http://www.awms.org.au/files/Research_and_Policy_symposium.pdf

2. AWMS Annual Conference. This year, the conference (1-3 December 2010) is at Torquay, Victoria and has symposia on:

- Conservation of wildlife across landscapes,
- Human dimensions of wildlife management
- Sustainable use of wildlife in the South Pacific: where to from here?
- Ecology and management of coastal wildlife.

There are also open and student sessions, a photo competition and poster presentations. You should register now:

<http://www.onqconferences.com.au/events/awms10/>



Conference Update

Only 3.5 weeks to go until the AWMS Conference 2010.

Have you registered yet? Register Online here

Keynote speaker

Tim Low will be the Conference Keynote Speaker. Tim is an environmental consultant, conservationist and prize-winning author of six books, including the internationally published *Feral Future*. Tim's presentation is entitled 'How climate change will change wildlife management'.

Dinner

The Conference Dinner will be held on Thursday night. The theme is 'Beach Party'. Wear your favourite beach outfit but please... no budgie smugglers!

Photo competition

All amateur photographers are invited to show off their best shots. Entry is FREE. Bring along an 8" x 10" copy and a digital version of your entries to the conference. The categories and rules are available on the conference website.

Post-conference field trips

Register for one or both post-conference field trips:

- Serendip Sanctuary and Mt Rothwell with a guided tour and BBQ at Mt Rothwell. Friday night, \$80 per person
- The Otway Coast and Twelve Apostles. Saturday/Sunday, \$300 per person

Detailed information on the website - www.awms.org.au

We thank our sponsors and exhibitors ...



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