

wildlife matters

saving australia's threatened wildlife



Numbats

Australian Wildlife Conservancy sanctuaries now protect 16 of Australia's nationally threatened mammals and at least 10 of our nationally threatened birds.



Black-flanked Rock Wallaby Photo: Guy Magowan

Please give generously to our annual appeal.

The proceeds will help fund projects such as:

- The translocation of the Banded Hare Wallaby and the Greater Stick-nest Rat to Faure Island.
- The implementation of a fire management plan to protect the Gouldian Finch and the Purple-crowned Fairy Wren at Mornington in the Central Kimberley.
- The acquisition of additional, biodiversity-rich land.

Each threatened bird and mammal is an ambassador for the broader ecosystem which it shares with a range of other species. Please help us protect Australia's threatened species and their habitats.

See insert for details of how to donate to our annual appeal.



Purple-crowned Fairy-wren

Australia's wildlife is in trouble. Incredibly, one third of the world's mammals that have become extinct over the last 400 years are Australian. The future for our birds is potentially disastrous, with one in six bird species listed as threatened with extinction and many other species declining rapidly. Australia also has more threatened reptiles than any other nation on earth.

Australian Wildlife Conservancy is taking action to address this extinction crisis. Our 10 sanctuaries protect 575,000 hectares (1.3 million acres) of diverse habitat ranging from rainforest and tropical savanna to semi-arid grasslands and mangrove-lined lagoons. Often working in remote and difficult conditions, our field staff are implementing practical, on-ground programs designed to defeat those forces that threaten our wildlife - feral animals, invasive weeds, inappropriate fire management and habitat fragmentation.

However, we need your support if we are to continue making a difference. The more support you can provide, the more wildlife we can protect.

AWC seeks to protect the full range of biodiversity at each of our sanctuaries. Within this ecosystem approach, we can also focus on priority species and habitats. As a result, AWC is now protecting at least 26 nationally threatened birds and mammals. We are also protecting a range of species and habitats that are listed as rare or threatened under State legislation - Mt Zero and Mt Gibson contain nearly 20 threatened ecosystems between them.

We think this is a remarkable achievement for a non-profit organisation and its supporters. However, there is so much more to do. AWC needs your support to protect additional threatened species and their habitat.



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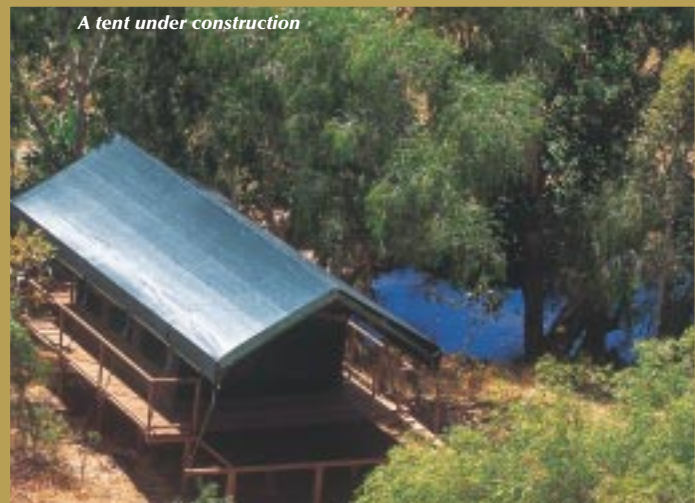
Fitzroy River Photo: Richard Woldendorp

new bushcamp at mornington wildlife sanctuary **Discover the wildlife of the Central Kimberley**

AWC supporters, and other travellers, will soon be able to enjoy a little comfort in the heart of the rugged Central Kimberley wilderness. In June 2003, AWC expects to open its bushcamp in the Mornington wildlife sanctuary. The bushcamp will provide a base from which to explore over 3,000 square kilometres of spectacular gorges and tropical savanna. Mornington is a naturalist's paradise with prolific birdlife and a diversity of other fauna.

Visitors will be able to relax in the secluded bushcamp in new safari-style tents, each with ensuite, or stay at the creekside camping ground. In the evening, you can enjoy a homestyle meal and a few drinks at the bushcamp's licensed bar.

A tent under construction



Activities at the Mornington wildlife sanctuary will include:

- Swimming and canoeing in the impressive Dimond Gorge.
- Birdwatching: Mornington is home to around 180 bird species including nationally threatened species such as the Purple-crowned Fairy-wren and the Gouldian Finch.
- Nature walks and self-guided nature drives.

Each visit to the bushcamp will help fund AWC's conservation programs at Mornington. These conservation programs are designed to protect the tremendous diversity of wildlife and habitat types on Mornington. However, they are particularly focussed on protecting the small mammals and seed-eating birds which appear to be declining rapidly across northern Australia. Conservation of species such as the Gouldian Finch will therefore be a priority for AWC at Mornington sanctuary.



Short-eared Rock Wallaby



Gouldian Finch

For further information about staying at Mornington sanctuary:

Phone: 1800 631 946 or (08) 9191 7406
Email: mornington@australianwildlife.org
Website: www.australianwildlife.org



Canoeing at Dimond Gorge

new sanctuaries boost protection for threatened wildlife and ecosystems

Calendar year 2002 has been a year of expansion and consolidation for AWC. Our network of wildlife sanctuaries has grown from 5 sanctuaries in Western Australia to 10 sanctuaries covering a total of 575,000 hectares (1.3 million acres) across Australia.

Our new sanctuaries in Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia are home to a number of threatened species and an incredible diversity of habitats. Each sanctuary also brings with it a unique set of management priorities and challenges. We will need your continued support to effectively address these issues.

Mt Zero

AWC received a tremendous response to our Mt Zero campaign, enabling us to complete the purchase of Mt Zero in mid-2002. Thank you again to everyone who contributed to this stunning acquisition. A special acknowledgement must go to the Federal Government, for its financial assistance under the Natural Heritage Trust, and to the Wind Over Water Foundation for its pivotal support.

AWC expects to have a full-time manager living on Mt Zero by February 2003 and to complete the removal of the previous owner's cattle by April. Priority management tasks will include developing and implementing a fire management regime, putting in place necessary infrastructure and conducting baseline surveys and habitat mapping.

During 2002, AWC conducted some additional, preliminary surveys in conjunction with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. The results were tremendous:

- The known range of the endangered Northern Bettong was extended deeper into Mt Zero's diverse sclerophyll forests.
- The rare Tube-nosed Insectivorous Bat was captured on Mt Zero. This species has been captured in Australia on less than 25 occasions.
- Several specimens of one of Queensland's rarest trees – *Corymbia leptoloma* – were recorded on the property.



Research on the Pebble-mound Mouse

Photo: Pictograph



Mala at Scotia

Scotia is home to around 150 bird species including three nationally threatened birds - the Regent Parrot, Malleefowl and Black-eared Miner (hybrid).

Our priority at Scotia is to complete the establishment of an initial 8,000 hectare (20,000 acre) feral-free area. Woylies and Bridled Nailtail Wallabies are likely to be the first mammals released into this large feral-free area.

AWC is also hoping to conduct a biodiversity assessment of the entire property to properly catalogue its range of fauna and flora species. There is no doubt there are some hidden treasures waiting to be identified amongst the old growth woodlands at Scotia.

Yookamurra

Yookamurra, along with Scotia, Buckaringa and Dakalanta, was acquired by AWC in July 2002. Previously owned by Earth Sanctuaries Ltd, Yookamurra is a magnificent 5,000 hectares dominated by 500 year old mallee forest, myoporum woodlands and callitris (native pine). In all, Yookamurra protects 10 ecosystems.

Yookamurra is particularly famous for its Numbats. However, the property is also home to other threatened mammals, such as the Bilby and Boodie, and to nearly 100 bird species. Declining and regionally endangered bird species such as the Hooded Robin find refuge at Yookamurra, only 90 minutes from Adelaide.

A feature of Yookamurra is its healthy population of Southern Hairy-nosed Wombats. Almost all of the wombats occur in the 4000 hectare unfenced portion of the sanctuary. They are an impressive sight as they emerge from their burrows to soak up the afternoon sun.

Buckaringa

Buckaringa, located in the Flinders Ranges in South Australia, is home to an important population of Yellow-footed Rock Wallabies. The priority management issues at Buckaringa include the control of foxes and goats, the management of weeds and the regulation of access to the sanctuary.

Dakalanta

Little is known about this 13,000 hectare property on the Eyre Peninsula. It is home to Southern Hairy-nosed Wombats and the nationally threatened Malleefowl but the property's biodiversity values have otherwise not been assessed and documented. As it constitutes a large area of remnant vegetation, including sheoak and mallee woodland, Dakalanta is likely to contain a range of conservation values of regional and State significance.



Scotia landscape

Scotia

Scotia occupies a vast 65,000 hectares (162,500 acres) in the far west of New South Wales. Impressive sand dunes are covered by majestic old growth mallee with a rich spinifex understory. There are a range of other habitat types including belah (casuarina) woodlands, native grasslands, diverse shrublands and ephemeral salt lakes.

Scotia is a true hotspot for the threatened species of the mallee region. Nationally threatened mammals at Scotia include Numbat, Bilby, Mala (Rufous Hare Wallaby), Boodie and Bridled Nailtail Wallaby. Other rare mammals include Woylie, Southern Ningau and Bolam's Mouse.

world heritage island welcome



Monitoring the Faure Island Boodie population



Boodie warren on Faure Island

On Friday 21st of June, AWC and its partners took a critical step forward in the battle to save two of Australia's threatened mammal species. On that Friday evening, after two years of preparation, 17 Boodies (also called Burrowing Bettongs) were released by AWC staff on the world heritage listed Faure Island. Two days later, 86 Shark Bay Mice were transported from a captive breeding facility at Perth Zoo to join the Boodies on Faure Island.

The establishment on Faure Island of new populations of the Boodie and the Shark Bay Mouse, both listed as threatened species, is a project of national significance. The Boodie was once widespread over much of Australia but foxes and feral cats decimated the Boodie population. The Boodie now occurs naturally on only a small number of offshore islands. The Shark Bay Mouse was also once widespread on mainland Australia, occurring from Shark Bay right across to Alice Springs and down to the Nullabor coastline. However, it is now one of Australia's most restricted mammal species, occurring naturally on Dorre Island and having been reintroduced on two other islands. If new populations of Boodie and Shark Bay Mice can be established on Faure Island it will significantly increase the chances of survival for both species.

Faure Island was purchased by AWC in 1999. During 2000-2001, AWC and the WA Department of Conservation and Land Management (DCLM) joined forces to eradicate cats on the island. It is the second largest island in the world from which cats have been eradicated. Located on the edge of the Southwestern Australian biodiversity hotspot, the island is dominated by acacia shrubland and succulent saline flats and saltbush communities. Other features of the island include majestic red sand dunes as well as shallow mangrove-lined lagoons, tidal inlets and mud flats that support large numbers of wading birds. Its feral predator-free status and its habitat values mean Faure is an ideal place to establish new populations of Boodie, Shark Bay Mouse and other threatened mammals native to the region.

The task of safely transporting the initial 17 Boodies to Faure Island was, however, a significant logistical challenge. The Boodies that are now settled on Faure were sourced from Heirisson Prong, a peninsula on the mainland south of Shark Bay, where the CSIRO and the Useless Loop Community have managed a population of Boodie for 10 years. Our first challenge was to capture at Heirisson Prong a sufficient number of Boodies (with an appropriate male:female ratio) to form a founder population on Faure Island.

To our relief, the cage traps set by CSIRO scientists and Earthwatch volunteers produced 9 male and 8 female Boodies that were suitable for translocation. We were on our way.

The next challenge was to transport the animals to Faure Island. We enlisted the help of the local pilot and by mid-morning the 17 Boodies had been airlifted from Heirisson Prong to an airstrip at Monkey Mia in the heart of the Shark Bay World Heritage Area. The Boodies were then transferred from the airstrip to the boat ramp before making the hour long sea journey to their new home on Faure Island.

On Faure, all of the Boodies had to be weighed and eight of them were fitted with radio collars. Then, as the sun dipped below the horizon, the animals were released into purpose built burrows at a specially selected site on the island. The burrows, constructed by AWC staff on previous trips to Faure Island, were necessary because the Boodie is the only member of the kangaroo family to use a permanent burrow system, similar to a rabbit warren.

Within a few days of their release, Boodie tracks could be seen within the deep red sands of Faure Island. Radio-tracking of the eight collared Boodies also helped AWC staff to monitor the critical early days of this new population. Boodies initially used the artificial burrows but soon built warren systems of their own, primarily under calcrete ledges that occur on the eastern side of the island. Three months after the release, no Boodie mortalities had occurred. In fact, significant weight gains were recorded indicating that winter rains had produced adequate food resources. Boodies are also breeding on Faure, with records of both pouch-young as well as 'young at heel'. This gives us great hope for the future of Boodies on Faure Island.

Some endangered mammals



Preparing for translocation



A Boodie is released on Faure Island



Shark Bay Mouse

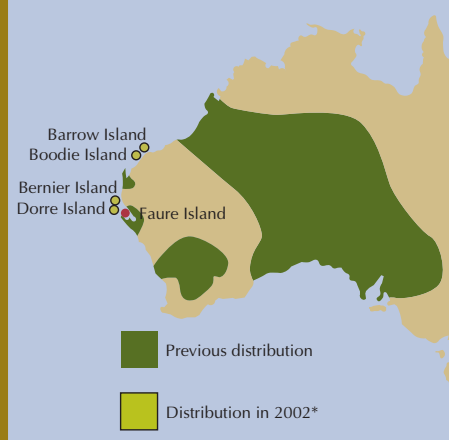


Boodie pouch young

Shark Bay Mouse Distribution



Boodie Distribution



Early results for the Shark Bay Mouse population on Faure are also encouraging. Eighty-six Shark Bay Mice, bred in captivity in an AWC-sponsored program at Perth Zoo, were released on the island only two days after the Boodies. The Shark Bay Mice appear to be settling into their new home amongst the expansive fields of coastal spinifex that surround the island. An extensive monitoring program was implemented immediately after the release of the mice, with AWC staff spending 3 weeks radio-tracking twenty collared mice. Three months after the release, trapping of mice was also carried out across the island to assess population size and breeding condition. This monitoring program has revealed vital ecological information on matters such as habitat use, home range size, and mortality factors. For example, we know that the mice are putting on weight, they're breeding and producing young, and they're dispersing widely whilst staying within their preferred coastal habitats.

However, the monitoring program has shown that life is tough for a Shark Bay Mouse even on a cat-free island such as Faure. Boobook Owl predation of Shark Bay Mice was a significant factor immediately following the winter release. As the weather warmed up, Goannas have been recorded preying on mice. If a reasonable number of mice can evade these native predators and survive into the winter breeding season next year, we hope the Shark Bay Mouse will have a secure future on Faure Island.

AWC would like to thank all of our supporters who contributed to the Faure Island campaign as well as CSIRO, the Useless Loop Community, Perth Zoo and DCLM. In the next phase of our translocation program, we hope to return the Banded Hare Wallaby and the Greater Stick-nest Rat to Faure Island. Please help us continue this important work by giving to our annual appeal - details are included with this newsletter.

* The Boodie has also been translocated to Scotia, Yookamurra, Heirisson Prong and the Arid Recovery Project, Roxby Downs.

Cormorant rookery on Faure Island



awc conservation programs in action

Australian Wildlife Conservancy understands that the mere acquisition of a property is not sufficient to ensure the conservation and, where necessary, the restoration of its conservation values. For this reason, AWC is committed to the implementation of practical, on-ground conservation programs. These programs are carried out by AWC's dedicated and experienced field staff. Often we work with State Government agencies, particularly the National Parks Service in each State, on joint projects. We appreciate the assistance they have provided to AWC during 2002. Here are some of the highlights from the last few months.



Rescue Operation for Western Ringtail Possums

The Western Ringtail Possum was once common in the forests of southwestern Australia but its range and population have declined sharply due to fox predation and clearing of habitat. It is now listed as a nationally threatened species under Federal biodiversity legislation.

AWC, the WA Department of Conservation and Land Management and Ringtail expert, Barbara Jones, have recently joined forces to rescue a small population of the Western Ringtail Possum. The Possums had been surviving in an area of habitat near Busselton. However, approval was given for the site to be cleared for development. Thirteen possums, captured on the site before the bulldozers moved in, were translocated to AWC's Karakamia sanctuary in the northern Jarrah forest near Perth. Unfortunately, three of the possums died within the first week of arriving at the 250 hectare sanctuary, possibly due to the stress associated with the translocation. AWC continues to monitor the remaining animals. There have now been several translocations of Western Ringtails to Karakamia, which is enclosed by a feral proof fence and so offers an environment safe from foxes, feral cats and bulldozers. While it is at the northern extent of the Ringtail's former range, our objective is to establish a viable population of this nationally threatened possum at Karakamia.

Historic Moment for Private Sector Conservation

In late October, 40 Woylies (also called Brush-tailed Bettongs) were translocated from AWC's Karakamia sanctuary to the Avon Valley National Park, 70 kilometres north east of Perth. This represents an historic moment for private sector conservation in Australia – it is not often that a non-profit organisation helps to 'restock' a national park.

The Woylie was once widespread throughout southern Australia but has declined dramatically, primarily as a result of fox predation. In 1995, a small number of Woylies were reintroduced to Karakamia from Dryandra woodland. The Woylie conservation program at Karakamia has been so successful that AWC is now able to return some animals to the national park estate. This is an achievement that all of our supporters should be proud of. Our aim is to repeat this success with a range of other threatened species around Australia.

AWC Protects Endangered Rock Wallaby

The Black-flanked Rock Wallaby is one of Australia's most beautiful mammals. It was once widespread across Australia but is now restricted to small, isolated populations. The primary causes of the species' decline have been fox predation and habitat destruction. Where effective fox control measures are in place, the few remaining populations of the Black-flanked Rock Wallaby are stable and, in many cases, increasing. However, the future for this rare wallaby is highly dependent upon the continued implementation of fox control measures.

In 2001, AWC and the WA Department of Conservation and Land Management began the process of returning the Black-flanked Rock Wallaby to the Avon Valley in southwestern Australia. As part of this project, twelve Rock Wallabies were translocated to AWC's 2,000 hectare Paruna sanctuary.

In August 2002, Paruna's Rock Wallaby population was supplemented by a further 12 wallabies from "The Granites", a reserve in the Western Australian wheatbelt. Monitoring by AWC field staff, including radiotracking, and the presence of scats indicates the wallabies have taken up residence in a magnificent granite outcrop above the Avon River, feeding on a range of grasses and forbes. There has also been some breeding success, with at least one of the original females producing a joey. While predation by resident Wedge-tailed Eagles has been recorded, AWC is hopeful that Paruna will soon be home to a stable population of Black-flanked Rock Wallabies.



Malleefowl Conservation at Yookamurra

The beautiful Murray Mallee was once a stronghold for the Malleefowl. However, predation by feral animals and the fragmentation of habitat means the Malleefowl is now threatened in the Murray Mallee as it is in the rest of its range. AWC is committed to developing a Malleefowl conservation program that, subject to raising the necessary funds, can be implemented at both Yookamurra and Scotia in co-operation with NSW and SA National Parks agencies.

An initial step has been taken with the translocation to Yookamurra of a pair of Malleefowl from Whimpey Reichart's Little Desert Lodge. The male and female birds were received by AWC in exchange for the single Malleefowl that has been at Yookamurra since 2001. Yookamurra's newest residents are currently protected in the purpose-built Malleefowl enclosure constructed by volunteers from the Earth Sanctuaries Foundation.

visiting an awc sanctuary

Woylie in the spotlight



Visiting an AWC sanctuary is a unique experience. Visitors have the opportunity to see some of Australia's rarest animals in the wild. Our sanctuaries also offer an incredible diversity of birdlife, spectacular scenery and, in springtime, magnificent wildflowers. On guided walks, such as those at Karakamia, our experienced guides offer detailed information about the relevant sanctuary, its wildlife and AWC's management techniques.

The primary objective of our visitor programs is to raise public awareness of our threatened wildlife and the ecosystems to which they belong. This goal of public education is particularly important at places like Yookamurra, which is visited by many schoolchildren each year. Our visitor programs also allow AWC donors, and the general public, to experience first hand the on-ground work of AWC.

AWC supporters can experience the particular satisfaction of seeing how their generous donations are being used to build a more secure future for our wildlife.

Consistent with our status as a registered non-profit organisation, all of the proceeds raised by AWC visitor programs are applied to the management of our sanctuaries.



The next generation discover our wildlife

Paruna Sanctuary

There are a number of high quality walk trails at Paruna sanctuary. The trails vary in length and difficulty from the 2.5km Possum Loop to the 13km Numbat Trail. Visitors can enjoy spectacular scenery as well as wildflowers and waterfalls in winter and spring. Please note the longer trails are closed during the bushfire season (1st December - 31st March) and the sanctuary is closed on days of extreme fire danger. The walks cost \$5 per person and bookings are essential.

Mount Gibson Station

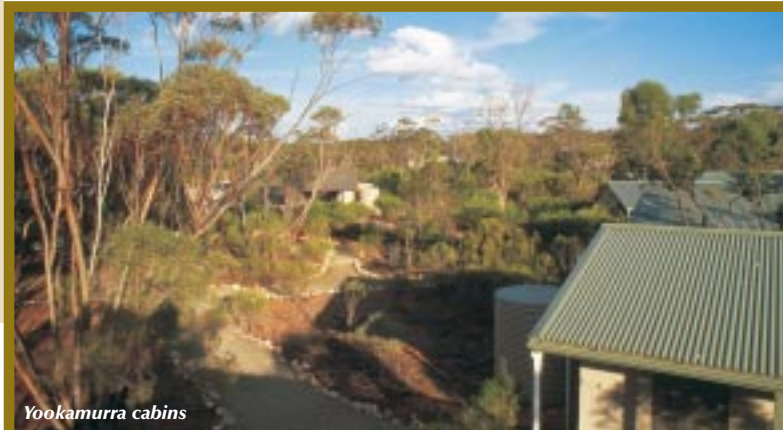
Mount Gibson is a hotspot for biodiversity with an estimated 500 plant species and a range of eucalypt woodlands and shrublands. Visitors can enjoy spectacular wildflowers during winter and spring and, for the birdwatchers, a tremendous diversity of birds. Mt Gibson is open to visitors for basic camping at \$5 per person per night. Toilets and fresh water are available. A 5km nature trail called the Homestead Ridge Walk has been established near the main Quartz Hill campsite. This walk takes visitors through a range of habitats with some spectacular views over the 130,000 hectares protected by AWC.

Karakamia Sanctuary

Visitors can experience the magic of the 250 hectare (600 acre) Karakamia sanctuary by participating in a guided dusk walk which takes about 2 hours. Setting off along a bush track just before sunset, you are likely to see a number of nocturnal animals including Woylies, Tamar Wallabies and Quenda (Southern Brown Bandicoot). This is truly a special experience – many of the animals you will see at Karakamia cannot be readily seen in a national park. A minimum of 8 and a maximum of 20 people participate in each walk. Children must be over the age of 7. The cost is \$15 for adults and \$10 for children. Bookings are essential.

Mornington Sanctuary

Mornington sanctuary is set to become the hottest visitor destination in the Kimberley with our bushcamp, featuring 10 safari-style tents (each with ensuite), expected to open in June 2003. See page 2 of this newsletter for more details.



Yookamurra cabins

Scotia and Yookamurra Sanctuaries

Scotia (western NSW) and Yookamurra (between the Barossa Valley and the Murray River in SA) offer visitors the rare opportunity to see endangered species such as the Bilby, the Burrowing Bettong, Bridled Nailtail Wallabies and Numbat. Details of the visitor programs offered at Scotia and Yookamurra will be provided in the next AWC newsletter and on our new website in early 2003.

For further information and bookings, please call the WA booking office on (08) 9572 3169 or email sanctuaries@australianwildlife.org

2002 annual appeal

saving australia's threatened wildlife



I want to help Australian Wildlife Conservancy:

- Continue to protect the 26 threatened birds and mammals living on existing AWC sanctuaries;
- Implement exciting new conservation projects such as the translocation of Banded Hare Wallaby to Faure Island; and
- Establish new sanctuaries which protect habitat for more of Australia's threatened wildlife.

Name: Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms

Address:

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I wish to become a regular supporter and give a tax deductible gift each month of:

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I wish to pay by:

Direct debit from my bank account (AWC will send you the bank authorisation form)

Credit card - please fill in the details below or ring (08) 9226 0340

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I am unable to give monthly but would like to make a single tax deductible donation of:

\$100 \$250 \$500 \$ other

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Cheque/money order payable to Australian Wildlife Conservancy Fund.

Credit card - please fill in the details below or ring (08) 9226 0340

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Commemorative Plaque

I have donated \$250 or more or made a monthly pledge of \$25 or more. Please commemorate my name on a plaque at the next AWC sanctuary.

Bequests

I am interested in making a bequest in my will. Please send information.

PLEASE SEND DONATIONS TO:

Australian Wildlife Conservancy

Reply Paid 1897 West Perth WA 6872

Ph: (08) 9226 0340 www.australianwildlife.org

Or donate via the AWC website. Secure online facilities are available at www.australianwildlife.org

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