

WILDLIFE LANDS AUSTRALIA

THE NEWSLETTER OF HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL'S WILDLIFE LAND TRUST

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Our Mission

Wildlife Land Trust Australia exists in order to protect wild animals by preserving their habitats and by providing them sanctuary within those habitats.

Our Goal

To see the protection of one million acres of wildlife habitat across Australia in the Wildlife Land Trust sanctuary network.

Corridors, Connectivity and Climate Change: THE ROLE OF SECURE REMNANTS

Dr Judy Lambert makes clear why, in the face of increasing habitat fragmentation and climate change, conservation on private land is so important for wildlife and habitat protection in Australian today:

While National Parks and other formally protected areas continue to play a vital role in conserving the rich diversity of species and ecosystems that make Australia special in a global context, these areas alone cannot address our 'extinction crisis'.

Despite decades of government investment and community effort to reverse Australia's loss of species, the 2006 national State of the Environment report made clear that the threats continue and threatened species' lists continue to grow.

The Australian Government has recently committed to expanding the area of our National Reserve System to at least 125 million hectares over the next five years. However this alone is not enough. Native

vegetation and the habitats it provides need to be managed across all landscapes. National Parks and other reserves should not continue to be islands of conservation in a sea of land uses unfriendly to conservation outcomes.

During the past decade or more, it has been increasingly recognised that in order to achieve conservation outcomes we must move from a landscape dotted with conservation 'islands' to one of conservation 'networks' linking both on- and off-reserve areas.

As the impacts of human-induced acceleration of climate change take hold, the vulnerability of our landscapes and the species that live in them is also increased and our recognition of the importance of connectivity across the landscape is sharpened.

Climate change has both direct and indirect effects on species and their habitats.



Image by Michael Bland.

To page 4...

Messages from WLT SANCTUARY OWNERS

As we go to print on the third edition of “Wildlife Lands Australia”, there are now 30 sanctuaries in the Wildlife Land Trust (WLT) network, with a further 3 property owners in various stages of joining.

The sanctuaries that range from operational farms with important habitats set aside, to those left to naturally regenerate, are both encouraging and representative of the importance of this movement to conserve and protect a diverse range of species and habitats. Since our last newsletter, the following sanctuaries have joined the WLT: *Carmel and Mat Fisher* and their 28 acre sanctuary north-west of Geelong in Victoria; *Lyn and David Grimes* and their 2068 acre “Jindawarra” located inland from Bundaberg in Queensland; *Roz and Kevin Holme* who own the 190 acre “Cedar Creek Wildlife Refuge” located near Cessnock in New South Wales; *Winston Guymner* who own the 55 acre “Rous” in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales; *Kerry Colmer and Sean Moffat* in South Australia, south-east of Adelaide, own the 120 acre “Monteith Sanctuary”; *James Badgery* owns a 4942 acre working farm and sanctuary near Tamworth in New South Wales; *Eileen Hogan* owns the 74 acre sanctuary “Woorinyani” near Boonah in Queensland; *Tony and Wendy Cole* own the 27 acre “Wamuran Nature Refuge” north of Caboolture in Queensland; *Aki Green and Marg Wetsteyn* are the owners of “Glen Eden”, a 2104 acre sanctuary near Glen Innes in New South Wales, and *Trevor Mitchell* is the owner of a 10 acre property near Innisfail in Queensland.

On the international front, we are very pleased to bring on board two sanctuaries that form a part of the *Nusa Penida Bird Sanctuary*, on Nusa Penida Island, just off the Bali coastline in Indonesia. The WLT has helped purchase one of these sanctuaries for the Friends of the National Parks Foundation. The other good news is that the 15,000 acre *SanWild Wildlife Sanctuary* in South Africa, has also agreed to join us all in this great venture.

We are very pleased indeed to welcome everyone to the WLT sanctuary network! Now let’s hear from some of our WLT members:



Trish Cunningham
New South Wales

It was my great fortune some two or so years ago to stumble across an HSI newsletter detailing the establishment of the WLT sanctuary program in Australia.

Already an avid conservationist, I had no problem signing up my existing horse and wildlife sanctuary with WLT and I’m happy to say that I was the first person to respond to the call for landholders to become involved.

My sanctuary “Morningside” had functioned mainly as a refuge for abused horses for some years, during which time I planted some thousands of trees, grasses and shrubs as habitat for local wildlife. At the time of joining WLT as a sanctuary, I was also well involved with rescue and rehab of macropods, marsupials and raptors, and basically everything that local vets sent me with the exception of cats.

“Morningside” thrived as such until the all too sudden incursion of another form of life, humans. Unfortunately the local council decided to re-zone the area from rural to rural residential and soon my wonderful refuge was surrounded by one acre lots and became completely surrounded by houses and cats. This to me was an untenable situation and after much heartache at leaving all my hard work behind, I decided to relocate.

So here I am with sanctuary number two. “Andelaine” is a small area of six and a half acres located in the foothills

of Tintinhull, north of Tamworth. Whilst the house yard is beautifully landscaped with predominately natives, the paddocks are devoid of trees. Boundary fences are very close to old growth native forest and wallabies jump the fences into my bare paddocks where they happily graze. There is a profusion of mountain birds and I see a different species every day.

The job at hand now is to re-establish habitat, and I’m very lucky to have secured help from HSI to do so. At this stage, planning is well under way. Trees have been ordered and lines ripped and sprayed ready for planting this spring. Grasses and shrubs are being propagated from local progeny and will be ready for planting in winter next year. Two small paddocks will be completely given over to regeneration and a dam in one of these will provide welcome respite for travelling water birds. Triple lines have been ripped around fence lines in the larger paddocks which will have a dual purpose of creating wildlife corridors and allowing me room to still rescue abused horses.

It will be my very pleasant task to keep WLT members apprised of progress here at “Andelaine”. It is a challenge I didn’t expect to face again, having done it all before, but life is full of the unexpected and must be tackled head on.

Kerry Colmer and Sean Moffat
South Australia

We purchased this property in December 2007, originally hailing from Adelaide. It is located about an hour's drive (90km) from Adelaide, South Australia, only a couple of kilometres from the River Murray and is comprised mostly of mallee scrub. The property is 120 acres (49 ha) in size, and has some areas of relatively dense scrub, and some cleared and partly cleared areas. We intend to carry out some intensive re-vegetation in the medium term.

We are wildlife carers with a group called Fauna Rescue of South Australia and have set up part of the property as a wildlife sanctuary, caring for kangaroos and native birds. We also want to preserve the land as a sanctuary for all native animals and birds that live here or are passing through. There is a wealth of bird species, including rainbow bee eaters, whistling kites, red capped robins, mallee ringneck parrots and numerous "gangs" of white winged choughs. Our local magpies are

delighted to adopt any orphaned fledgling magpies we get into care and will immediately come over to feed the newcomers through the wire of the aviary. The locals adopt them once the babies are old enough to fly, and take their new parenting duties very seriously, swooping us for weeks afterwards if we dare get too close to their new baby and seeing off any ravens that get too close for comfort. The only native mammals we have spotted so far are hopping mice and western grey kangaroos, although euros, pygmy possums, wombats and red kangaroos are also indigenous to the area and we are eagerly keeping our eyes out. There are very large numbers of shingleback lizards and a resident monitor lizard.

When we moved in, the property had a real feral cat problem. We removed about 17 cats from the property within the first couple of months. There is also a very significant rabbit and fox



population which we are working hard to get under control (and losing that battle at the moment). We also have extensive weed control in front of us, especially bridal creeper and African boxthorn (which is also a refuge for rabbits). We are very much looking forward to our involvement with the Wildlife Land Trust and hoping to pick up some helpful tips for revegetation, feral species control and encouraging indigenous species.

Leonie Chester
Victoria

I first heard of Humane Society's Wildlife Land Trust when I was speaking to Michael Kennedy about another matter. When I read the literature, I was keen to sign up and was happy to sign the contract he sent me as I was already doing all the things asked of me.

My 10 acre property is a little different to the others registered with the Wildlife Land Trust as I graze horses and the property is largely cleared. Having said that, it is still an astounding little sanctuary. "Corringle Cottage" is nestled between the Snowy River to the east and the Tasman Sea to the south. The properties immediately surrounding me are grazing properties. However this is a relatively small amount of the surrounding land which is all State Forest and National Park. I have owned horses all my life and it is superb riding country.

Grazing horses and having a wildlife sanctuary are not mutually exclusive, and kangaroos regularly graze alongside the horses. However the pride of my property is the large spring fed dam that I

fenced off upon buying the place. Almost immediately the native grasses began to cover the eroded banks and an abundance of native plants now grow in and around the dam, including native water lilies. As a consequence of locking out the horses, the water is crystal clear and of drinking quality, which is useful in these times of low rainfall. The dam is full of long necked tortoises, yabbies and native fish.

My plans for "Corringle Cottage" are simply to plant more trees on the cleared land, and more bird-attracting shrubs in my extensive native garden. It is quite astonishing the number of different birds that regularly visit. When my horses get old and die, I suspect I will rescue some others from the sales who would otherwise be slaughtered. I have had horses for so long that I can never imagine a time when there aren't horses



in the paddock, even if they are just to look at. Oh, and I forgot to mention my cow, Daisy May. She was given to me at a day old and would have gone to the slaughter house if I hadn't taken her. She is a beautiful animal and very affectionate and cuddly, if not boisterous. Naturally I won't get her in calf, as if I did, at some stage someone will be eaten. Daisy May is therefore a lifelong pet.

"Corringle Cottage" may be different to the other sanctuaries, but it nevertheless is a place of refuge for me, my animals and any native birds and animals that care to take up residence.

Messages from WLT SANCTUARY OWNERS

Kathy Isherwood *New South Wales*



'Dianella' in Martins Creek, NSW, is an 80 acre property lying across a steep hill with a history of grazing and clearing. Over the last eight years, Kathy has transformed the farm into an animal sanctuary and natural bushland reserve not to mention veggie and citrus garden. Most of the property has been fenced off and is slowly being cleared of a vast amount of lantana that has taken over. Kathy hopes to make this a beautiful area of remnant bushland and remnant rainforest gully that can one day become a wildlife reserve or refuge. The area boasts a large natural stand of slaty red gum (Eucalyptus glaucina), a highly endemic eucalypt native only to the Gresford area as well as Drosera sp. and terrestrial orchids.

From page 1...

All species have evolved so that their life cycles are best suited to a particular set of conditions. As temperature, water availability, light and nutrient availability change, the tolerance of each species to its current niche changes. Photosynthesis and nutrient cycles are also vulnerable to changes in climate, as are our fire regimes. Given enough time, ecosystems will change and adapt to changed temperature, moisture and availability of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. But as human impacts accelerate climate change, the ability of individual species and whole ecosystems to adapt becomes more stressed.

When climate change is combined with the impacts of habitat loss and fragmentation, introduction of invasive species, over-harvesting of wildlife, and the changes to water resources and fire regimes that come both from direct human impacts and from climate change, the stresses are magnified.

For a decade or more we have focused on the importance of relatively narrow corridors to provide connections between existing areas of native vegetation. However improved understanding of the ecological needs of both plants and animals has brought us to a point where the emphasis is now on providing for movement and

dispersal of species at whatever scale is important to their life cycles and survival. Obviously a small ground-hugging plant that grows from seed will require a very different connected space from that required by a powerful owl or large bird of prey, yet both are integral parts of many landscapes. With this recognition also comes an understanding that in addition to "corridors", "stepping stones" and "stop-over points" in the landscape will be increasingly important to species survival of and adaptation to climate change.

Landscape-wide planning and management is needed, and it is at the landscape scale that small but relatively undisturbed remnants, securely protected and managed for conservation outcomes in a farm back paddock or a lifestyle block, become increasingly important. These privately owned and managed patches will play a critical role as the "stepping stones" and "stop-over points" for species moving across a changing landscape. Covenanted areas on private land play a critical role in connecting up the landscape in ways that will maximise the likelihood of reducing the impacts of climate change on Australia's rich biodiversity.

Dr Judy Lambert
Principal, Community Solutions

WHAT WLT MEMBERS *are getting up to...*

The Wildlife Land Trust members are a diverse and interesting group of people who undertake a range of important activities related to the protection and conservation of Australia's flora and fauna species. Scattered, at present, across the east coast of Australia, from Queensland through to South Australia, of the current 30 members:

Fourteen are revegetators and have been actively working to make their sanctuary a more biologically diverse and wildlife friendly habitat through the planting of native species indigenous to their local area. Weed control is also an important part of this process and most members strive to achieve their goals without or with minimal use of herbicides, favouring hand pulling and slashing of weeds. While a small number of members have achieved their revegetation aims with the help of grants from places such as Landcare and Greening Australia, most have funded the works themselves.

Ten are involved in the rehabilitation and rearing of injured and orphaned wildlife. Members specialise in animals as diverse as macropods, wombats and flying foxes, yet all of them are actively involved in caring for a number of different animals and are always

taking on additional animals. This time consuming work is costly yet the rewards carers see with the successful repatriation of the animals and the benefit they contribute to protecting Australia's biodiversity are priceless.

Eleven have some form of binding conversation agreement on their property. With perpetually binding agreements signed with the relevant state government bodies, of which there are 7, the protection of the property runs with the title, thus ensuring that even if the property is on-sold, the new owners are bound to protect the property's conservation values. Other forms of protection are found in Wildlife Refuges which are binding during the present term of ownership of which there are 4, council or CMA (Catchment Management Authority) zoning that limit or forbid development, clearing or subdividing cover 8, and 6 members are also part of Land for Wildlife, a voluntary scheme that doesn't alter the legal status of a property.

We have recently established a Google chat room for WLT members with access to the internet, to exchange views and news on managing their sanctuaries. We hope that once people get used to this process, it will provide an effective communication tool.



Brindabella Wildlife and Wilderness Reserve *joins the WLT*

Images courtesy of Robbie Swan

The Brindabella Wildlife and Wilderness reserve is part of a corporate rural venture, designed to locate and preserve the rapidly diminishing qualities of wild space and silence within the Australian landscape. Ideally situated on the eastern boundary of the Kosciusko National Park, the reserve rises to over 1000 metres and affords expansive views of the southern end of the Great Dividing Range.

From the outset, the directors have endeavoured to develop the property in a way that ensures maximum protection for the environment but also allows for maximum protection of the owners and shareholders from fire, drought, bureaucratic vandalism and other adverse conditions. The regenerative and creative power of wilderness is one of the least understood natural cures for society's ills. Wilderness has the power to nourish the growth of higher consciousness and cure cancer. It can stop wars and shatter religious

dogma. The protection of the natural wilderness in and around the reserve is paramount to the success of the development and one of its greatest attributes.

Investing in the reserve is available in a number of ways and the directors are always open to new and exciting ideas. The aim in setting up the Brindabella Wildlife and Wilderness reserve was not based on making money for a living or for making large profits. It is based on the need to conserve and care for the rapidly diminishing stocks of genuine wilderness that are left in Australia and in getting people to understand wilderness. However the directors believe that, like other diminishing resources, their value rises with their scarcity and if, in years to come, the business of introducing and educating people to the value of wilderness becomes profitable, then so be it.

Robbie Swan





Bringing rainforest **BACK TO LIFE**

When Winston Guymer bought his sanctuary two hours south of Brisbane in the Northern Rivers of NSW about three and a half years ago, the former potato/commune farm was in bad shape.

"The property is on 60 acres and had been abandoned for about 5 years. There was an incredible amount of rubbish, old cars and caravans on the place and for the first 6 months, we concentrated on getting rid of these. From this time, we have been rehabilitating the forest back into rainforest. When we took over, there were large areas where Camphor Laurel trees had invaded and completely dominated the remnant forest. Once these were removed, the natives just powered along. There is also on the property 700 meters of creek which is important habitat for fish, birds of prey, crustaceans and other wildlife. This area is particularly well preserved and our bush regeneration efforts have tended to focus on this.

We joined Wildlife Land Trust because we thought it would be a good way to advertise more widely the importance of preserving and rehabilitating the bush up here. Many of the neighbours still run cattle and are not very inclined towards conservation and this is something that we hope to gradually change."

While the adjoining properties are predominantly forested, some areas have been cleared for cattle grazing. However

Winston's sanctuary is part of a larger habitat area, with the southern boundary forming a continual vegetation corridor linking it to Victoria Park Nature Reserve, which features one of the last remnants of the 'big scrub,' a lowland rainforest that once covered northern NSW.

As mentioned above, along the western boundary of the property lies Youngmans Creek, a permanent water course that provides a habitat for mammals, including potaroos and wallabies, reptiles, including snakes, lizards and monitors, and thousands of birds, with the local bird watching group compiling a list of 60 birds in the space of one morning.

Winston is currently managing two government grants to fund his efforts to expand the rainforested areas and improve existing high quality rainforest remnants. His bush regeneration efforts include signing clearing exclusions for the sanctuary, controlling weed infestations and planting over 1000 rainforest trees to revegetate the 15 acres of the property that were cleared in the past. The local CMA (Catchment Management Authority) has assessed his property for conservation values and has determined that he is eligible to sign a voluntary conservation covenant. This is currently being processed and will ensure this important sanctuary gains protection in perpetuity.

NEW INDONESIAN SANCTUARY

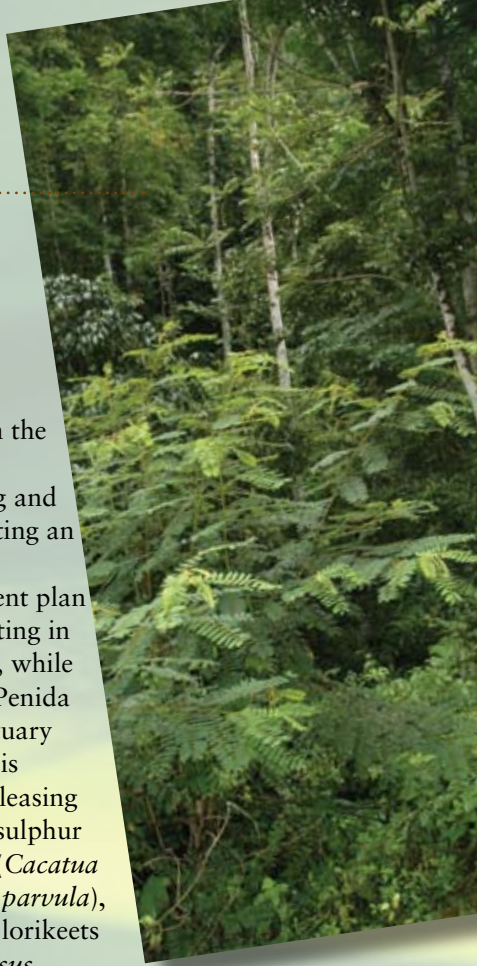
In our first WLT newsletter, we brought you news of one of our partner organisations in Indonesia, the Friends of the National Parks Foundation (FNPF) and the launch of their Bali starling release program on Nusa Penida. The story showed the Indonesian Minister for Forests handling a new-born chick at the Nusa Penida Bird Sanctuary. We are very pleased to report that two new properties have since joined the WLT fold.

Nusa Penida is a small island just off the south east coast of Bali, Indonesia, where two small rainforest blocks, owned by Drh I.G.N. Bayu Wirayudha and FNPF respectively (16 acres in total) comprise part of the Nusa Penida Bird Sanctuary area. This coastal land adjoins hundreds of acres of rainforest owned by the local community and local government, and which is all protected land. The WLT and HSI are extremely happy that we have been able to purchase 13 acres of this important rainforest habitat, to be managed by FNPF.

The sanctuary has a rich array of wildlife and rainforest dwelling species which enjoy total

protection. This includes the green junglefowl, white browed crane, pied imperial pigeon, Asia kestrel, House swift, rainbow bee-eater, common iora, black-naped oriole, black-winged starling, olive-backed sunbird, little spiderhunter, Javan munia, edible-nest swiftlets, lesser frigate bird, crown-billed drongo, grey-tailed tattler and many, many other bird species. The sanctuary is also thick with a rich diversity of invertebrate, amphibian and reptile fauna, including two species of python, three viper species (*Ahaetula* sp), a cobra (*Naja sputatrix*) and the monitor lizard (*Veranus salator*). The most notable mammal inhabitant of the area is the long-tailed macaque.

FNPF is in the process of developing and implementing an extensive management plan for replanting in the refuge, while the Nusa Penida Bird Sanctuary operation is steadily releasing the lesser sulphur cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea parvula*), Mitchell's lorikeets (*Tricoglossus haematodus mitchellii*) and of course the Bali starling (*Leucosar rothschildi*). We hope to bring you regular news from this WLT sanctuary.



SOUTH AFRICAN WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



The 15,000 acre SanWild Wildlife Sanctuary is a new international member of the Wildlife Land Trust network.

SanWild's objectives are to acquire habitat, save and rehabilitate wild animals in need of help. All animals rescued, treated or hand raised at SanWild are released onto the sanctuary and may never be sold, traded or hunted. Both the wild animals and the land are protected in perpetuity under the SanWild Wildlife Trust. SanWild's goal is to establish a 25,000 acre sanctuary and to ultimately incorporate all available adjoining farmlands to form an ecologically viable wildlife reserve.

The sanctuary has introduced numerous rescued and rehabilitated wild animals including impala, kudu, blue wildebeest, red hartebeest, waterbuck, common and mountain reedbuck, grey duiker, nyala, giraffes,

zebras, steenbok, bush pigs, rhinos, hippos, banded mongoose, vervet monkeys and elephants. Some very elusive and rare creatures like pangolin and aardvark have also chosen to make the reserve their home. Wild leopard and cheetahs roam freely and a pack of rescued African wild dogs are to be released shortly. Three rescued cheetah will also be released in due course. Many small predators like serval, caracal and civets can also be seen in the reserve and the sanctuary's large predator Cats' Rescue Centre is home to 19 rescued lions. A variety of bird life, invertebrate, amphibian and reptiles are also present on the sanctuary.

HSI has been very privileged to support some of the great work at the SanWild Sanctuary, and the WLT wholeheartedly welcomes them aboard our global sanctuary system.

AN INVITATION *to join us*

As we all know, size and shape don't matter. If you have a "bit of bush" you intend to protect for wildlife conservation, the Wildlife Land Trust (WLT) wants to hear from you. With sanctuaries that range in size from six to almost 5000 acres covering an increasingly diverse range of habitats, there is room for everyone to become a part of this international network of sanctuaries.

While the WLT began as a program of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in 1993, the continued expansion overseas, covering eight countries and protecting more than 1.8 million acres, reflects the growing importance of this initiative and the shared goals of protecting and preserving natural habitats and the wildlife that inhabit them. Established in Australia in 2006, there are already 30 members throughout New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia, and we are especially keen to hear from potential WLT members with properties in the west and north of Australia.



Warriwillah

WHAT CAN *you do now?*

The WLT site at www.wlt.org provides details of the Trust's international activities, while the HSI's own recently revamped site www.hsi.org.au provides some more local flavour to the WLT program. If you would like to register your property with the WLT, more information about us is available from both websites, along with a downloadable PDF application that can be sent directly to us in Sydney.

Joining the WLT starts with a 'letter of agreement' which spells out our

joint commitment to protecting wildlife and is followed by a certificate of membership, regular newsletters, access to our WLT group website, signs for your property and further advice on stronger protection methods for your property. Your property will also be featured on the members page of the WLT section of HSI's website and in the Australian WLT newsletters, enabling you to share with a like-minded network of worldwide sanctuary owners the important conservation work you are

undertaking for wildlife and habitats in Australia.

Joining the WLT is entirely voluntary, with no legal obligations or costs implied. It is designed to complement any existing or future agreements you might enter into to protect your land and we very much hope that this new initiative will be attractive to you.

If you would like to talk about this invitation directly, please call Michael Kennedy on 1800 333 737 or email him at michael@hsi.org.au



Image by Michael Bland



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