

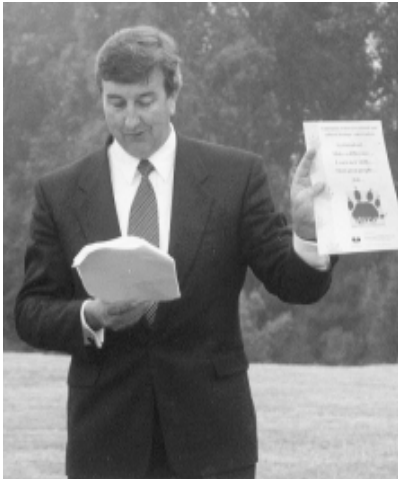
WildCARE — up and running

WildCARE was launched by the Minister Peter Hodgman on December 12th at the Springs on Mt Wellington. Max Kitchell, Director of Parks and Wildlife Service, described the day as an historic moment in the move to a Service that is inclusive of the community across all its responsibilities.

The highlight of the event was the hand over of \$10,000 by our first gold sponsor Paddy Pallin. Nigel Pearson (owner of the Hobart store) and Lars



Nigel Pearson (left) and Lars Windberg (centre) from Paddy Pallin hand over \$10,000 gold sponsorship to Max Kitchell (right) Director of Parks & Wildlife service.



Minister Peter Hodgman MHA launches *WildCARE*.

Windberg (owner of the Launceston store) handed the cheque to Max Kitchell beginning a mutually supportive partnership to develop and support *WildCARE*. Since the launch, membership has grown to 350, members have contributed over 1200 hours of volunteer work (about \$18000 in value), and there is \$18000 in the bank, with a promise of \$8000 in-kind labour from the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers. Members have rescued whales, removed birdhides, saved seastars, removed weeds, processed data from walking log books, attended training courses on whale rescue and environmental education and formed new support groups. There are planting days coming up at Dolphin Sands and Tunbridge and a training



Andrew Smith Manager Community Partnerships (and *WildCARE*), thanks Paddy Pallin and presents sponsor Certificates.

course in Facilitation Skills planned for July. All in all we have made a good start, on the ground and out there doing it. Keep up the good work!

In addition to *WildCARE*, the Community Partnership Section is managing the new Bushcare Tasmania extension team, with funding from the Natural Heritage Trust. Ian Marmion has been appointed State Co-ordinator of the program and 5 Community Extension

Officers will shortly begin work. The Extension Officers will be located in the Northwest with West/Northwest Councils at Burnie, in the North with the Tasmanian Landcare Association and Parks and Wildlife Service at Prospect, and with Greening Australia in Hobart. If you have any bushland protection work or are interested in registering your property under the Land for Wildlife program, or would just like more information, **contact Ian (6233 6345)**.

Andrew Smith
Manager Community Partnerships
Parks and Wildlife Service

IN THIS ISSUE

- Running Around Paddocks Playing Wierd Games
- Wedge-tailed Eagle
- Devil of a Time
- Whale Rescue, Again & Again
- Injured & Orphaned Wildlife
- Sea Star rescue
- Threatened Moth Discovery
- Frog on Hard Times
- And More...

A Wild Island Get-a-Way

Thirteen intrepid volunteers set sail for Schouten Island on the 30th March to attack the island's Gorse problem. The group included 9 international (Britain and Japan) and local volunteers from the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers, four WildCARE members and two Parks and Wildlife Rangers. The expedition lasted 5 days, including two days transporting everyone to and from the island.

Schouten Island is at the southern end of Freycinet Peninsula, across Schouten Passage. The island was first developed around a coal mining industry with a busy community existing on the island by the 1840's, including 60 convicts. Farming leases were taken out on the island beginning in the early 1800's and ending in the 1960's. During that time clearing occurred on the northern and western sides of the island. These clearings now contain the worst infestations of Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*). The Parks and Wildlife Service has had a continuing program of spraying over the last 10 years, with the aim of eradicating the weed from the island. It is now time to move in and attack the problem directly by physically removing the remaining plants.

Volunteers were transported (no convict chains required) to the island on the good ship *Geographe*. Camp was set up near the old graziers hut. Volunteers dug, cut and poisoned the dreaded gorse in small teams over three days. Although work was on occasions a slog, time was available for exploration of the rarely visited and very picturesque island. Between 18-20ha were cleared,

involving the removal of 10-15000 gorse plants, including areas which had not been tackled before because of rough terrain. Everyone had a great time camping, socialising and working. Transport back was provided by Mike Dicker on the *Kahala*, after the *Geographe* suffered minor damage in the rough seas.



“Running around in the paddock playing weird games”

That's what one participant was looking forward to at the beginning of the 2 day Environmental Education course led by Kim Willing (Coastcare) and Andrew Smith (PWS & WildCARE) and Ingrid Albion (PWS), conducted at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens on the 17th and 18th March. And there was plenty of that along with lots of magic, new perspectives, inspiring experiences and exciting adventures — all serious stuff about making a real effort to effectively educate about the environment and respond to the environmental crisis.



Sara Tassell takes time to scratch 'n' sniff.

Participants experienced practical sessions exploring key environmental concepts (using the model Earth Keepers program from the Institute of Earth Education), and theory sessions expanding on the objectives of environmental education.

Participants came from WildCARE, the Understorey Network, Parks and Wildlife Service and the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. These were some of the comments from participants at the end of the two days...

- Excellent, a lot of grass roots basics I have tended to overlook in the past, many valuable things I could implement in future.
- Excellent, plenty of breaks, friendly



Come back, its just a game!

easy style, and being involved in the activities was fantastic.

- Has inspired me to undertake more and go for a complete program.
- Very informative and inspirational.
- The presentation was diverse, interesting and appropriate.
- This course has given me a far greater insight into environmental education, its aims and how I can employ it in the future.
- “Live lightly on the earth”, encourage others to do so through discovering source of all life energy

Eaglehawk Neck Backpackers



Close by to: Cape Raoul, Cape Huoy and Cape Pillar (Highest sea cliffs in the southern hemisphere), walking tracks.

Eaglehawk Neck
Ph: (03) 6250 3248

through discovery, wonder, and solitude.

- Gained many ideas for future projects, it has given me a good idea of preparation needed, ways to cover topics — how to get the point across in a fun way. Good methods which will appeal to the kids.
- I'm really pleased I took part — this has benefited me immensely — given me renewed enthusiasm and lots of ideas for some great projects.



Slurp, Slurp ahh! A living tree.

- Thankyou, it was very good, enjoyable, informative, challenging and lots to take away and put into to practice.
- Learnt that I can start to do this — that there is support (resources/ people).
- Thankyou, it was great and I want more, and I want to find ways of getting it all into practice.

The course will be offered again — perhaps somewhere in the wilds next time. Keep an eye on the Newsletter.

Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers (ATCV) supports WildCARE

The ATCV and WildCARE have both contributed effort to a couple of projects (Moultng Lagoon birdhides and Schouten Island) since WildCARE's launch last year. Teams of ATCV volunteers, often from overseas, have been working in the wilds of Tasmania for some years now. The ATCV has decided to strengthen the relationship between the two organisations by

We will also notify, by direct mail, those WildCARE members who have registered for community and visitor education and once again will make an effort to include PWS staff and other community groups.

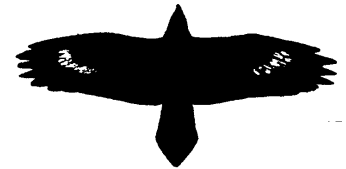


Wedge-tailed Eagles

Tasmania is home to two eagle species — the Wedge tailed eagle and the White bellied sea eagle. The Wedge tailed eagle is present in a variety of habitats, while the white bellied sea eagle mainly inhabits coastal areas. Both are massive birds weighing up to 5 kg with a wingspan of up to 2.2 metres. They are now wholly protected by law in all States of Australia. Tasmania's wedgetailed eagle has been separated from mainland populations for 10,000 years and is now considered a unique sub-species.

Predators such as eagles are important in nature. They...

- promote survival of the fittest by



Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax*



White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

selectively preying on weak or sick animals, meaning that they increase the likelihood of prey species surviving and make populations strong by culling weak individuals.

- help keep the bush clean by eating carrion
- help control numbers of prey, many of which would otherwise become pests and eventually through overpopulation face starvation and disease.
- are good indicators of environmental health. Because they are at the top of the food chain, in a similar position to people, they can act as an early warning system for chemicals and pollution in the food chain.



The impressive stare of a master predator.

- provide enjoyment for many people — and who wouldn't be impressed when encountering one of these majestic and beautiful birds?
- are a part of a complex and wonderful natural system and therefore have an intrinsic value and right to exist.

Wedge-tailed eagles vary their diet to suit what is available in their area. Studies have shown that in sheep grazing areas, eagles mainly eat rabbits, hares, possums and wallabies, but will also be happy enough with carrion, cormorants, echidnas and even snakes.

In 1970, the CSIRO published an analysis of the cause of death of over 12000 lambs in several States.



Young eagles are mottled brown like this one year old.

Although up to 34% of dead lambs had been at least partly eaten, only 2% of lambs born had been actually killed by predators, such as eagles. In addition it was found that only 2.7% of the dead lambs would have survived if a predator had not attacked. Exposure to weather and mis-mothering were the most important causes of death. Eagles have therefore been unfairly blamed for lamb deaths. This misunderstanding resulted in a number of Australian States paying bounties for dead eagles, with a total of about 20,000 being slaughtered each year during the 1960's! The other livestock that comes into conflict with eagles is free-range chooks. They are easy prey and should therefore be protected from eagle

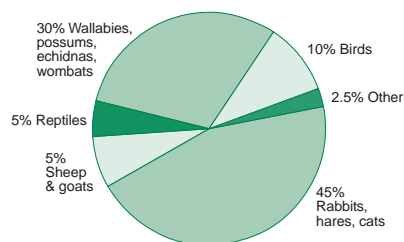
attack — remove the access to chooks rather than remove the eagles.

There are a number of problems facing eagles in Tasmania. One is habitat destruction for forestry and agricultural activities. Deliberate shooting, poisoning, trapping and accidental collisions with power lines also cause problems. About 8% of adult eagles are deliberately and illegally killed each year.



There are about 100 pairs of wedge tailed eagles breeding in Tasmania. They re-use traditional nests, almost always in large eucalypts sheltered from the wind. They are easily disturbed during breeding and nesting (August to December). Breeding eagles need 10ha of forest around the nest site.

In Tasmania about 40% of pairs are on private land, 40% in State Forest and only 20% on reserves and crown land.



EAGLE WATCH

Nick Mooney, Research Officer with the Nature Conservation Branch of Parks and Wildlife Service has asked for assistance in surveying wedge-tailed eagles in the State. Of particular interest is the proportion of young eagles to adults. Adult birds are dark to black in colour while young birds are mottled or light brown. Check the shape of the tail (it should be wedge-shaped and quite long) to make sure you are not looking at a young white-bellied sea eagle. They are also mottled brown.

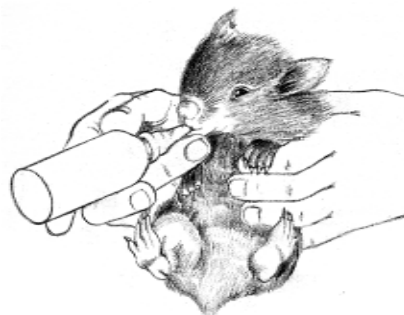
If you see wedge tailed eagles in your area, please complete the information table on the insert in *WildTIMES* and forward it to Nick Mooney, "WildCARE Eagle-watch project", GPO Box 44a Hobart 7001.

Caring for injured and orphaned animals

A reasonable number of *WildCARE* members have registered for caring for injured and orphaned animal care. These members have also registered with a Park Centre and will be "on call" for care through that centre, for animals in need in that area. Here's a bit of information that may be useful for anyone who finds an animal needing care.

To relieve the animal's stress and prevent further injury to the animal;

- Catch it with as little fuss as possible, and with as little risk to you as possible. Wear gloves or protect your hands with a towel or similar. Don't use nets as the animal will just become hopelessly tangled.
- Keep it in a dark, quiet place for several hours. An artificial woollen pouch or a petpak with padding inside is ideal.
- Provide water for drinking. Dishes should be shallow and stable.



- Ring either your nearest Parks and Wildlife Centre (in the phone book under Department of Environment and Land Management), or call **Parks and Wildlife Service head office in Hobart on 6233 6556 or Launceston on 6336 5312 for information.** Get a copy of the Wildlife notesheet "Caring for injured and orphaned wildlife" from your Park Centre. Unfortunately, the PWS has few funds for treating animals, so you may need to take the animal to a vet yourself for treatment.
- You will need a permit to keep the animal if it is rare or protected, or it may be best to pass the animal onto skilled carers. In other cases, it is worth remembering that caring for wildlife can sometimes be unsuccessful, but very rewarding when it works and animals are returned to the wild.



- If you end up caring for a young animal, remember it may require a long term commitment to get to an age where the animal should be released at a suitable release site. Wallabies will need to be about 8 months old to be capable of surviving independently, wombats about 6 months old and possums 3–4 months old.
- Always use clean equipment, feeding bottles and so on and keep the animal's box/cage or artificial pouch clean.
- Animals must be released once they are able to survive on their own. They are not toys and should not be thought of as pets. The **WildCARE** program is aimed at rehabilitating animals for release.

Release can be a complicated procedure especially if the animal has become bonded to you. This failure to recognise humans as a potential threat may place the animal at risk when it is released. Generally, if an animal has recovered from a minor injury, it can be simply released at a safe place, preferably close to the original



location. Wildlife which has been hand reared for an extended period will need to be gradually introduced to independence from a “halfway house”, where temporary food and shelter is provided. Generally, animals should not be released into National Parks. If you are in a position to provide halfway house care for animals in your area contact your local ranger to offer your services. No dogs, no busy roads and no hunters would be a good start.



Reincarnation of the Friends of Mt Field National Park as CAREs-Mt Field

A windy and cold night greeted those people who were able to make it to a meeting at Mt Field on Sunday 29th March to discuss the creation of CAREs (Community Action in Reserves) Mt Field National Park. People who attended included members from the original Friends of Mt Field, new members from WildCARE, locals and the Park Shop managers.

Many excellent ideas were discussed at the meeting. Those wildcarers who are registered with Mt Field will soon be notified by direct mail about the next meeting. Contact people at Mt Field are **Stuart Dudgeon and Shaun Bromfield 6288 1149.**



Saving sea stars at Pittwater

It was a cool but fine morning when volunteers turned up for a few hours of seastar rescue at the Midway Point causeway. The small orange seastar *Patiriella vivipara* is only found in Tasmania in 5 small populations including this one which is restricted to the old sandstone wall at the southern end of the causeway.

It is an endangered species of particular interest as it is one of only a few sea stars that give birth to live young (about 6 each year). Roadworks were required on the seawall, meaning that the seastars and their habitat would be buried with new stone. The Department

of Transport discussed options with the Parks and Wildlife Service and following a number of site visits with Sally Bryant, zoologist from the Threatened Species Unit, it was decided to remove the seastars to a site closeby, do the roadworks including a new sandstone strip especially for the seastars, then return the seastars after the work is completed.

As a result, a team of volunteers and Parks and Wildlife Service staff spent the hours between half tides wading along the wall, turning over rocks, collecting the seastars into buckets (along with a few choice rocks), pushing some of the rocks out into the water beyond the proposed road widening, and transporting seastars and their best rocks to a new site under the nearby sandstone cliffs. A short distraction was created by the arrival of the media (a great turn-up and resultant exposure). The Minister for Parks and Wildlife Service, Peter Hodgman also visited to provide moral support for the workers and thank them for their dedication and help. By all accounts the morning was a success and despite the cold water, quite enjoyable — but this is often the case when being practical and productive, and contributing in a real and direct way to protecting wildlife. Thankyou to everyone who was able to attend and those members who were on the waiting list for the next day but in the end weren't required.

Thousands of seastars were relocated by volunteers and staff.



A Devil of a time in the wild

Danielle Wood — Parks and Wildlife Service

Inside the hide, we are trying to be silent. The crackle of our jackets as we shift position slightly, swallowing noises, breathing, sound terribly loud. Outside in the thick darkness, twigs and branches are snapping under the stout padded paws of Tasmanian devils who can smell the pongy roadkill wallaby we have staked down in front of the hide.

These shy nocturnal scavengers are torn between hunger and trepidation. We can only wonder what humans smell like to the precise nose of *Sarcophilus harrisii*, the largest marsupial carnivore in the world, found only in Tasmania. Strangely, once we have been silent for long enough and the devils feel confident to approach the carcass to feed, they become almost



Not a growl... just a nervous yawn.

and bullying mostly of a vocal nature. These predators with their dangerous jaws, can scarcely afford to damage each other in actual physical combat. The noises range from dog-like to almost human — champing of jaws, growling, wailing. But then there's a scream that's virtually supernatural. It's a spine-chilling noise that would have

re-described the species.

On the subject of how the name “devil” came about, Tasmania’s Parks and Wildlife Service biologist Nick Mooney writes; “It is easy to imagine an early settler timidly investigating, by candlelight, one of his traps and finding a very toothy, red-mouthed, purple-eared, black animal screaming in fear and pain. The name “devil” is therefore not really surprising.” Devil’s delicate ears, and its relatively hairless muzzle, become engorged with blood when the animals are stressed, or during social displays. Tasmanian aboriginal mythology has an appealing explanation for aspects of the devil’s appearance, including the burning ears. The devil, it is said, turned black after rolling in soot from a fire.

Because of the fire, the animal became terribly bad tempered and hence the other animals were constantly talking about it. The devil’s black coat, with a distinctive “henna” sheen is broken up by flashes of white on the chest and rump. This flash pattern works for the predator as it does for the orca — the white shapes momentarily distract prey from recognising the outline of their nemesis. It may give the devils a fraction of a second advantage over their quarry.

The devil is about the size of a small dog, with sloping haunches, a characteristic ambling gait and a moderate length stiff tail, sometimes held erect when animals are alarmed.

Young devils are particularly sleek and nimble, with the ability to climb.

These youngsters, being low on the pecking order for a place at large carcasses, dine on what ever they can find, and their tree-climbing ability adds flying insects and small arboreal animals to the menu.

As devils get older their heads and



This is a growl — go away I am REALLY hungry.

impervious to the human activity around them. While they munch and macerate, crunching bone and ripping flesh, it is possible to turn on lights, talk and move around — even the flash of a camera barely puts them off their feast. It is little wonder they often become secondary roadkill while tucking in to a juicy carcass left behind by a passing vehicle.

In Tasmania’s far north west, local naturalist Simon Plowright gave us the opportunity to literally dine with the devil. A dinner party of Tasmanian devils could hardly be described as a civilised affair, but surprisingly for an animal which is a solitary carnivore, the devil does have social occasions.

Devils on a given patch of turf will feed together in a noisy and cantankerous manner. The pecking order that determines who gets to eat first, or at all, is established by a ritual of bluff

spooked the early European settlers and may give a clue to the demonic naming of this unique animal.

Australia’s earliest European settlers responded to their need for the familiar when they began the task of naming this country’s vast array of bizarre creatures.

Quolls became “cats”, antechinus “mice”, the thylacine was named “wolf” or “tiger”. Indigenous Tasmanians already had their own name for the black and white creatures who howled in the night.

They called the devil “tardebar”. It is a pity we didn’t keep this appealing and less perjorative moniker. The first scientific name for the devil was *Didelphis ursinus*, the “possum bear”. This was to be superseded by *Sarcophilus harrisii*, literally “Harris’ flesh lover” after George Harris who

necks attain massive proportions as the animals develop the powerful jaws and neck muscles used for feeding on large carcasses. You can also pick an old devil by the wear and tear to their coat. One method for trying to barge in at feeding time is to back in, taking the brunt of bites from disgruntled rivals on the rump. Devils will hunt, but are predominantly scavengers. Very old devils, who are slow and cumbersome, are totally reliant on scavenging.

It could never be said that devils were picky eaters. In the wild they fancy wallaby and wombat, in rural settings they'll eat sheep and cows (as carrion). Hell, they'll even eat each other if the opportunity arises!

Between the two of them Nick Mooney and Tasmanian researcher Dr Menna Jones have found some extraordinary items within devil scats during their many years of experience with these animals:

- A wallaby foot complete with snare
- Part of a domestic pet collar
- Bits of rubber thongs
- A blue tea towel
- Undigested corn and carrots
- 27 whole echidna quills
- stock ear tags and rubber docking rings
- head of a tiger snake
- half a pencil
- dorsal spine from a leatherjacket fish
- cigarette butt
- aluminium foil, plastic and styrofoam
- part of a Steelo pot scraper

Both researchers have lost items from outside tents during the night — Menna left a pair of smelly woollen socks outside and found them minus soles in the morning and Nick had part of a leather boot eaten and the knee chewed out of a pair of fat-stained jeans. I had a leather camera case chewed by a captive devil.

And it's not just what the devil will eat, but how, and how much. Nick reports seeing a dead cow in a paddock and noticing an appearance of movement — a group of devils had disappeared inside its skin and were literally eating it inside out. Menna had a similar experience of seeing devils emerging, covered in viscera, from the body of a wombat.

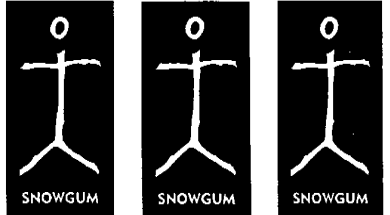
Over the years some wild yarns about the devil's feats have been spun — farm dogs eaten while on their chains at

night, a draught horse carcass disappearing overnight — only the metal shoes remaining. The reality of these huge carcasses "disappearing" is that they are usually dismembered and dispersed. Devils can eat nearly 40% of their body weight in just half an hour, bolting their food in large chunks they can later regurgitate and chew. As all good carnivores know — the safest place to have your food is inside you and carrying it around will only lead to conflict.

Devils will eat every part of a carcass except the very heaviest bones. Watching a young female devil tear apart a wallaby was an awe-inspiring visual and aural experience. Females with young are easily able to see off even older, experienced males with their "don't mess with me, I'm REALLY hungry" attitude. Undeterred by lights and whispering from the hide, this brassy young devil sniffed about the carcass — alone at this stage — trying to work out where to start.

Wombats and wallabies have quite thick skin, so devils sometimes have a challenge to gain access their meals. The pouch of females is a good spot to go for. The young devil nosed a hind leg of the wallaby corpse into the air, latched onto a mouthful of skin and yanked at it with considerable force. After eating at the rear of the wallaby

Call for people interested in trackwork at
Cradle Mountain
contact
Eddie Firth
on
6492 1133



SNOWGUM
Specialists in Adventure Equipment
Packs, Tents, Boots, Clothing
Sleeping Bags, Climbing Gear
Stoves, Maps, Food, Cookware
Torches, Compasses
Kayaks & Accessories
Expert Advice
104 Elizabeth Street Hobart, ph 03 6234 7877
Mail order welcome. Ring for catalogue.

FACT

Why do we need devils?

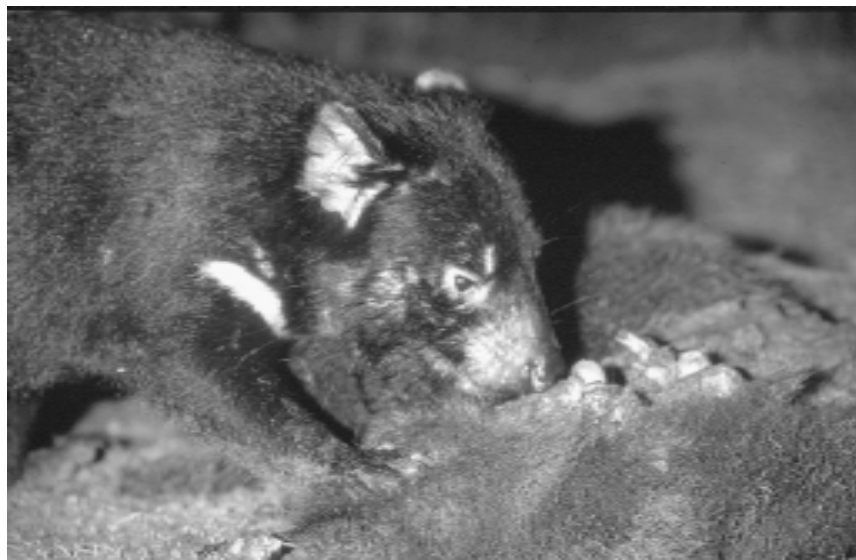
- Top carnivores like the devil are essential for bush hygiene. They clean up carcasses and prey on weak and sick animals. Some farmers thank the devil for cleaning up carcasses which would otherwise cause fly problems.
- Populations of prey, such as wallaby and possum, fluctuate wildly without predation. The Tasmanian devil helps stabilise populations, preventing the extremes of a cycle of boom to starvation.
- Prey species need predators for successful evolution. Devils provide a natural selection pressure keeping a population moving towards greater fitness, speed and alertness.
- It is possible the Tasmanian devil may have thwarted (extremely irresponsible) attempts to introduce the fox to Tasmania. Devils would provide feisty competition and predate on the young of that noxious pest.
- Tasmanian tourism benefits from the uniqueness of the Tasmanian devil.
- As the largest marsupial carnivore in the world, the Tasmanian devil is an important subject for international scientific study.

for a time, the devil seemed to tire of the effort, sniff around to the head and chew off one ear. But the piece of resistance was still to come when the devil bit off the wallaby's upper jaw clean in one definitive crunch.

The devil continued to eat into the face of the wallaby, licking and crunching — the gruesome eating sounds clarified for us by a microphone hidden on a nearby tree. Devils eat rather like dogs, with the rip, tear and crunch mechanisms but devils differ by using their dexterous front paws to get a good grip on their food. Nick Mooney says it's probably because the devil's pouch is small and rear-facing and because their pouch young are rarely seen that most people don't realise the devil is every bit the marsupial the kangaroo is.

The Tasmanian devil mate in late February and March during vicious interludes about as romantic as a having a pit bull terrier latch onto your ear.

Devils may not have civilised mating or eating habits, but they are pregnant for only 21 days! When the devils are born in March, they are so small that four can be fitted onto a five cent piece. Young devils come into contact with the trials of Darwinism very early in life. Like other dasyurids (marsupial carnivores) many young are produced, but there are only four nipples inside



Looking for a soft spot to start.

the pouch. These minuscule new born devils face a climb through their mother's dense hair from the birth canal to the entrance of the pouch.

Those that successfully find their way, and latch onto a nipple when they get there, will live in the pouch for four months before being weaned at about nine months of age. Nick Mooney is a big fan of marsupialism as a lifestyle, pointing out the advantage the marsupial system has over eutherians like us who gestate our young for long periods. In sudden drought conditions, tiny marsupial young will simply die in the pouch, giving females a second

chance to survive and breed again next season whereas eutherian mothers as well as young are likely to be lost in the same conditions.

The Tasmanian devil has not always been the largest marsupial carnivore in the world. At the time of white invasion there was also the larger thylacine, another Tasmanian endemic now presumed extinct with no confirmed sightings in over 60 years. Before that, up to 10,000 years ago, there existed a range of marsupial megafauna. Thylacoleo, a leopard-like possum and a giant devil twice the size of ours roamed Australia.

Both the thylacine and devil were once widespread on mainland Australia, but were pushed south by the immigration of the dingo which came from Indochina along with humans. When Bass Strait was created, about 8000 years ago, Tasmania was sealed off as a sanctuary before dingoes, which had the advantage in competition because they hunted in packs, moved that far south.

The thylacine however, was not to survive a subsequent threat. Europeans — with their precious sheep — hunted the thylacine mercilessly. A bounty approved by Tasmania's parliament by just one vote sealed the animals fate. The last captive thylacine died in Beaumaris Zoo in Hobart on September 7, 1936. One would hope that Tasmania had learned its lesson in extinction from the thylacine's sad history.

But the reality is that although devil populations are currently regarded as secure, a calamity could occur if this animal were not actively protected and carefully managed.

FACT

About the Tasmanian Devil

Order	Marsupialia
Family	Dasyuridae
Species	<i>Sarcophilus harrisii</i>
Role	Top carnivore.
Markings	Predominantly black with white chest and rump flashes.
Size	Males up to 100cm total length and about 10 kg, females to 85cm and 7kg.
Lifespan	Average 6 years.
Breeding	One litter annually of up to four young. Gestation period of 21 days. Young live in pouch for four months then in the den under the care of mother for six months.
Habitat	Endemic to Tasmania. Found almost anywhere away from dense housing.
Habits	Nocturnal, dwells in underground burrows, hollow logs and suitable looking places of human construction!
Status	Wholly protected, common and secure at present.

A disease in the wrong place at the wrong time, the continual encroachment of urban sprawl and rural land clearing, the introduction to Tasmania of a competitor and predator like the fox — could all place dangerous pressure on Tasmania's most important wildlife asset. Possibly the most endangering factor the Tasmanian devil has to contend with is its own bad reputation. Even today there are farmers who would be just as happy to see the "little black b*****" extinct and public sympathy for the animal has been eroded by years of bad press. The devil has been so much maligned that many people cannot separate this magnificent and important carnivore from the image of a nasty, noisy, smelly, bloodthirsty beast. It's possibly a fear



The safest place for this is inside me, but how?

of the predator inherited from early settlers which makes the occasional visitor to a wildlife park shudder and cringe when they see these animals, which could scarcely be seen as dangerous to humans.

And in the case of the attitude of landholders, the devils' role in destroying stock is usually vastly over-rated. The sight of sheep carcasses very obviously eaten by devils often masks the reality of a problem with stock management. To become devil food sheep are usually already dead, sick or malnourished. Some farmers, however, are grateful to the devils who patrol their property. Devils are no threat to healthy, well-organised flocks of sheep, but by picking off the weak, sick and very old the devil keeps stock healthy and by cleaning up stinking carcasses, reduces problems with flies.

The traditional image we see of the Tasmanian devil in published photography shows the animal with its mouth open — a chasm of red fringed with monolithic teeth in a jaw more powerful than that of a pitbull terrier. The reality of this iconic gesture is that while the devil naturally displays its awesome mouth as a threat to other devils, it has in its repertoire a gesture like a yawn which is a sign of stress. This "yawn", described by scientists as a displacement activity much like us humans scratching our heads when we aren't sure what to do, when captured on film only serves to reinforce perceptions of aggression.

The devil is an utterly uncompromising animal. It is utterly and thoroughly wild, almost impossible to tame to any degree. But for this, it deserves our respect, not our condemnation. In Tasmania we are quick to use the devil icon for our own ends — knowing that this rambunctious-seeming little character of ours is a magnet for tourism.

It's important that we do not take for granted our most unique and important wildlife asset.



Botanical Guardians Bagot Point Weekend in June

Coming up on the 6th to the 8th of June, (a long weekend) we are planning a *WildCARE* day to help Peter Lingard, the Ranger at Swansea, plant up to 6000 plants to revegetate a 1996 fire site at Bagot Point near Dolphin Sands on the east coast.

This project involves planting a variety of native plant species (ground covers to trees).

Bagot Point is a small coastal reserve at the eastern end of the Dolphin Sands spit (sand peninsula) located at the northern end of Great Oyster Bay and adjacent to the mouth of the Swan River (Moulting Lagoon).

In November 1996, a wildfire swept across the Bogot Point area destroying 3 houses and other property. The fire intensity killed many adult plants/trees and since then grazing pressures have held back much of the natural regeneration.

This project, sponsored by Hydro Tasmania, aims to rehabilitate/

revegetate the public land at Bagot Point. The objectives will be to plant a variety of appropriate native species grown from local provenance seed.

The project has been drawn together with the interest of the:

- Local community (through the Dolphin Sands Progress Association),
- Parks and Wildlife Service (being the land managers),
- Hydro Tasmania
- Volunteer energy of the "WildCARE" program,
- Understorey Network and the
- Local Coastcare group
- ATCV volunteers.

Together it is hoped a large number of people (anyone is welcome) will assist in the careful planting of initially 3000–4000 mixed plant/tree species grown by local residents and Pulchella Nursery.

What Else

A BBQ lunch will be provided for all volunteers by the Dolphin Sands Progress Association

Accommodation is available at no charge to volunteers at the Swansea YHA, Franklin St, Swansea. This covers Fri, Sat, and Sun nights. Costs are being covered by the Hydro.

Camping at Bagot Point is available although there are **no facilities** (ie water, toilets, firewood).

**RSVP IS ESSENTIAL FOR
CATERING AND
ACCOMODATION PURPOSES**

Contact **Pete Lingard Ph: 6257 8844**
fax: 6257 8845 (messages can be left on these numbers.)

Launceston Walking Club

will be working with
Rangers in the
Scott Kilvert Hut
20–21 June at
Lake Rodway.

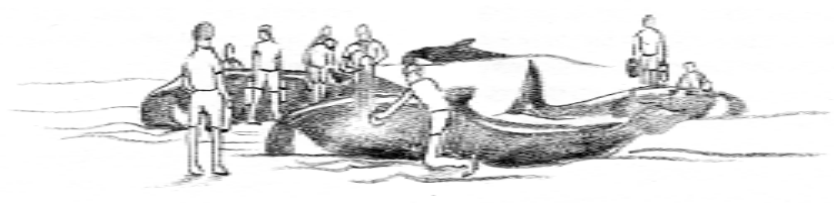
If **Wildcarers** would like
to assist please contact
Eddie Firth on
6492 1133

Wildcarers to the rescue

On the night of the 3rd February the Rangers at Strahan received a call about whales on Ocean beach This beach has been the site of a number of strandings in the past — but previous experience didn't really prepare the rangers for what they were presented with. Around 70 sperm whales lay stranded sick and dying on the beach. Sperm whales are big — very big and consequently have never really been successfully rescued in the past. The Rangers at Strahan, specialists in the Hobart Office and Wildcare went into action. Four Wildcarers travelled from Hobart, and one from Deloraine to join a dozen Greencorps trainees who luckily were working in the area on a weed removal project (and who had undertaken whale rescue training little more than a week earlier). Parks and Wildlife had local staff on the scene well before daybreak and experienced officers from around the State arrived early in the morning. The Director of the Service also attended and took his turn as Critical Incident Team leader and dealt with a barrage of media enquiries throughout the rescue.

The situation was an unusual one. So

many and so big. The technique used was also unusual, with perhaps the only precedent being the rescue of a Blue Whale on a beach in North America. It was decided to call in heavy machinery to attempt to dig a canal and gently push and shove the whales, one at a painstaking time, back into the water. Rough seas held up operations on a number of occasions and volunteers found they were hurrying up and waiting a good deal of the time. Although everyone is desperate to get in there and do something,, safety of volunteers and staff is paramount, planning is essential, co-ordination a must. After many harrowing hours of work, including a long night vigil, three whales were returned to the water. Perhaps a small number considering the size of the pod, but more than had ever been achieved for this species in the past and the volunteers and staff are to be congratulated on their sterling effort.



A bit about Cetaceans

There are 80 species of cetaceans worldwide, with 43 species occurring in Australian waters.

The toothed whales consist of around 70 species while there are 10 species of baleen whales. Toothed whales tend to live in large pods, sometimes of several hundred individuals, while baleen whales spend much of their time alone or in small family groups. This means that toothed whale strandings often involve large numbers of whales. The Sperm whale is the largest toothed whale. The Blue whale, a baleen whale, is the largest thing to ever live on the planet, reaching a staggering 30 metres in length.



Threats to whales survival

Whale numbers have dramatically decreased since whaling began. Once clearly the king of the seas and present in large numbers, several hundred thousand in the case of the Fin whales, many are now precariously balanced on the edge of the extinction abyss. Whaling has now all but disappeared as a mjr threat to species survival but whales are by no means safe.

Whales are shot in the belief that they eat commercial species of fish.

They become entangled in fishing nets and hooked up on long lines. Between 1981 and 1985 it is estimated that 14000 dolphins were taken by Taiwanese driftnets in the Arafura and Timor Seas. An unknown number die in ghost nets — nets discarded or lost at sea and left to drift, snaring anything in their path.

They are struck by ships — with as many as 20% of northern Right whales washed onto beaches having been killed by ship stikes.

Their prey is fished out or dramatically

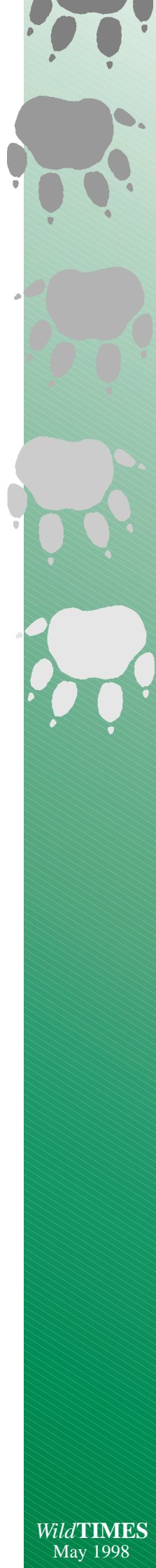
FACT

Why do whales strand?

This is still a bit of a mystery, with no one reason being identified for strandings. That is why after the rescue had been completed at Strahan, vets spent time taking tissue and blood samples from the dead whales.

Perhaps the animals were sick, or affected by parasites, or even undernourished? Reasons which tend to re-occur include:

- Illness in a number of animals — this sometimes involves excessive parasites in the ear and gut, and in some oceans of the world water pollution is taking its toll.
- Extremely strong social ties within a pod can often turn a single animal stranding into a mass stranding, as others respond to calls of distress.
- Narrow mouth bays can sometimes trick sonar messages, concealing the exit route, and causing confusion.
- Long shallow beach flats can also trick the sonar messages and hide the fact that the water is getting gradually shallower, until its too late.
- Rough seas, strong winds, and fast tides compound the problems.



Whale first aid and rescue training courses

WildCARE has been conducting whale first aid and rescue courses around the State, particularly for Greencorps trainees.

There have been 3 courses conducted in the north of the State and two in the south. There will soon be a course offered at Strahan to develop a first response volunteer team for that area. **WildCARE** members who registered their interest in Whale Rescue will be notified of courses as they come up.

diminished by commercial fishing operations.

They fall victim to oil spills — 79 whales were found dead as a result of oil spills during the Gulf war and high numbers of whales died as a result of the Exxon Valdez disaster.

They are harrassed and disturbed by boats and people in their breeding grounds.

Introduced marine weeds and other species degrade the nursery grounds of prey species.

Water pollution by various chemicals affects prey and then the whales who feed on them.

Plastic debris in the oceans kills whales by choking or by causing starvation (plastic “krill” has no nutritional value but prevents the whales eating the real thing)

Although whaling was stopped in 1978 with most countries signing a treaty to protect whales, a number of countries still continue to hunt whales for “scientific” reasons.

Some populations of whales have become so small they may no longer

have sufficient genetic variation to breed successfully.

The extra UV reaching the surface of the Southern Ocean may detrimentally affect phytoplankton populations and therefore also the krill, fish and whales that depend on them.

It is sometimes remarked that we shouldn't bother rescuing whales because strandings are a natural event. With whale populations severely reduced, and so many threats still existing, whale survival is no longer a natural process and can no longer be left to Mother Nature. Even a few survivors from a whale stranding such as that on the west coast at Strahan is an important helping hand to ensuring whales continue to exist.



Whales ashore again!

Shortly after another whale rescue training course for Greencorps trainees (we must stop doing this) there was another sperm whale stranding at Marrawah in the northwest.

This time 35 mothers and calves were aground on Greens Beach (Six Mile Sand). Two **WildCARE** members attended this stranding and information on whale rescue registrants was faxed to the Rangers on-site, but because the weather conditions were so appalling with on-shore gales preventing any attempt at rescue, other volunteers were not called on. Sadly, all the whales at this stranding died. This brought the total of stranded Sperm whales to over 100, with three being returned to the sea.



Out-with-the-old on the lagoon

The Minister, Peter Hodgman asked that unlicenced shooters hides on Moulting Lagoon be removed prior to the opening of the duck season in March. These shooter's hides were old hides that no longer had a registered owner and were in varying states of disrepair.

Wildcarers responded to a call for assistance from the Freycinet National Park Rangers and Stewart Blackhall — Wetlands Research Officer with the Parks and Wildlife Service. and a

working bee was organised for February 28th. Despite expectations of being muddy to the eyeballs, the day was very pleasant with the work being completed under a sunny east coast kind of a sky, and with gentle breezes. Thirteen volunteers turned up, including students from Hobart College, plus PWS staff from Hobart and the local Rangers. We had five canoes between us which made getting to the hides easy (although it is a long paddle from one side of the lagoon to the other). Unregistered hides were demolished. Thankyou to everybody who attended, including those who weren't members of **WildCARE** — we hope to see you signed up soon.



Whales again!

Just when people were wondering how many Sperm Whales could possibly be gliding along the west coast, 11 more stranded at the mouth of the Black River on the north coast on the 28th February. Once again information about **WildCARE** volunteers was faxed to the Ranger on site to enable quick call-up if help was required. Local people gave a hand and one male whale was successfully returned to the sea — but only for a short time as he soon turned up aground again at Stanley. The locals did a great job once again and managed to get him afloat again and he was last seen well out into Bass Strait heading north.

THEORY

There is a theory that El Nino may be to blame for this terrible number of stranded and dead whales. A change of currents and water temperature seems to have resulted in large numbers of small squid close to shore. This may be attracting the whales closer to shore than is usual, making them more vulnerable to stranding. The stomachs of a number of autopsied whales showed that they had been feeding on small squid.

Saving threatened plant species

Let's leave the troubled waters of the west coast and elsewhere to talk a bit about a threatened plant species project where wildcarers gave a hand.

Last year the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, the PWS and TEMCO at Georgetown got involved in rescuing two plant species from extinction. The project involved TEMCO establishing a plant nursery on their factory site to propagate threatened plant species for planting around a wetland they had created as part of their waste water control system. At the end of that process, they

had a few thousand *Phebalium daviesii* (Davies waxflower) and even more *Ranunculus prasinus* (Tunbridge buttercup) left over.

On threatened Species day in 1997 several hundred *Phebaliums* were planted at St Helens by the local community (including the local Landcare group), botanical guardian volunteers, PWS staff and TEMCO staff.

This is spectacular stuff! Why? There are just 35 *Phebalium daviesii* plants surviving in the wild, along the riverbank near St Helens. This is as about as critically endangered as a plant can get without being extinct.

TEMCO has continued to care for and propagate the two species. The PWS, *WildCARERS*, TEMCO and the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens

undertook a second plant out (for the Tunbridge Buttercup) on Saturday May 2nd at Township Lagoon Nature Reserve. Six *WildCARE* volunteers attended and planted 500 plants around the lagoon.



Setting Directions at Mt Direction

WildCARE has been working with the the Hillwood community developing a Strategic Plan for community involvement and activities associated with the restoration of the semaphore station at Mt Direction, and possibly across the network of northern Semaphore station sites.

The group is very keen to work co-operatively with the PWS to undertake appropriate development, restoration and management of the site. The Mt Direction group is working towards being the first CAREs (Community Action in Reserves) group for an historic site under the *WildCARE* program. Planning has involved a preliminary meeting, followed by a facilitated workshop to determine a 5 year vision for the site, followed by a workshop to develop strategic actions for the next twelve months. Staff from Community Partnerships and Cultural Heritage Branch, and northern PWS office have been involved in the process and an on-going relationship between the northern office and the group will ensure mutual support and appropriate management — a true partnership for cultural heritage conservation.



Notes from a volunteer whalerescuer

High emotional drama or down to earth pragmatism?

This summer I have been closely involved with the whale strandings occurring off the West Coast of Tasmania. The strandings involved a total of 111 sperm whales and 4 were returned to the sea, 3 subsequently found dead and 1 whereabouts unknown...

Landcare Education Calendar 1998

Up and coming events

JUNE

5 World Environment Day.

JULY

11/7-20/9 Environment — What can you do to help exhibition, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. Contact: TMAG 6235 0777

SEPTEMBER

7 Threatened Species Day.
Contact: Peter McGlone 6234 3552.

OCTOBER

3 World Animal Day.

5-9 Arbor Week.
Contact: Roberta Poynter 6233 7725.

5 Tree Dressing.
Contact: Roberta Poynter 6233 7725.

7 Arborfest, Botanical Gardens (Hobart).
Contact: Jean Gray RTBG 6234 6191.

18-20 Tasmanian Junior Landcare Conference, Molesworth Environment Centre and Derwent Water Watch organisers.
Contact: Robyn Freeman, MEC 6261 1323.

NOVEMBER

27 Buy Nothing Day.

29/11-6/12 Coast Care Week.
Contact: Kim Willing 62336 6427 or
Anna Wind 6437 2332.

DECEMBER

7 Ocean Care Day.

29 Biodiversity Day.

A number of issues relating to these events have struck me, and I will relate some of them.

Emotions!

Almost everyone I met during or after the whale encounters commented on "how terribly emotional" this whole experience must have been for me. The media feed this emotive atmosphere, by writing about "desperate whales with huge eyes"... I did not see any such eyes. Yes, I was overwhelmed by the size of these creatures, by the mystery of their behaviour. I was struck by the suffering that must occur while the animals are trying to survive, needing both water and air.

But, it is the practical realities of how to deal with the calamity that needs to be addressed, and this needs to happen very quickly. As the majority of whales died within 8 hours, there really is no time to be emotional!

Practicalities...

What I became involved with included the watering down of whales, the assisting of vets with taking samples of blood and other scientific tests or measurements, such as blubber, stomach contents (squidbeaks), DNA samples. I assisted with the re-floating of several whales, which included walking into deep waters, during heavy seas as well as in an idyllic sunset in unusually warm waters. I took many photographs/slides to record positioning, repositioning of whales, as well as the use of equipment, and sequences of attempting to tow whales back to sea, as well as details of specific lesions, squid marks or other significant marking, such as blistering skin, jaws, teeth, genitals, or organs from exploded whales (a common occurrence, once the whale "heats up") and barnacles, shell like creatures, "stuck" on the whale, which can indicate where the whale came from.

Public Interest, Education and the Media

Very quickly I became aware of the public interest in the events. After an initial period of 'information gathering' for myself in the areas of whale anatomy, possible reasons for stranding, management of the incident, safety issues, possible reasons to euthanase and dispelling of myths (e.g. the suicide myth, which I came across numerous times), I was then able to answer questions the public came up

to ask me. People in general are very keen to KNOW more about the animals, their behaviour and possible reasons for strandings.

If the public were aware of the fact that they can actually prevent a stranding by making noise or taking boats out, then this may prove to be the most powerful control yet. However, I have not read anywhere of such information, nor have I heard or seen on TV background information to educate the public. I very strongly suggest that an education strategy is implemented by the Department to raise the awareness of the public, to involve the public, to create pockets of volunteers in high risk locations. I would be happy to assist to get such a program going. (*Editor: see other information about whale rescue training coming up*)

The next stranding...

After 3 consecutive strandings I still live in slight concern that the next phone call could mean another stranding. The next stranding however is symbolic for the collected knowledge I have gained and can now put confidently to use. I have learnt much in a short and intensive way. I hope that all the data that I helped gather will be put to use so that the next stranding will result in less emotion and fast action.

Last word...

The big lesson I have learnt is that it is almost impossible to save whales of

that dimension. That many conditions need to be very favorable before an attempt is successful, e.g. the weather, the tides, the equipment, the number of volunteers, the location, the time, available light etc. etc.

It is far more often than not the case that many of these conditions just cannot be met. Therefore we cannot save as many whales as we would want to. This is where the emotions creep in again. People start to feel guilty, pressure authorities to spend thousands of dollars on an almost predictable failure. We need to put these conditions down, and then together realize that we can do so much, and no more. And that is OK. No one has to feel guilty. Nature will take care of the animals.

I thank you for the opportunity to be part of the rescues and will certainly do so again!!

Lucia Ikin
WildCARE member



Rediscovery of Extinct Daisy

Thanks to the conscientious efforts of a Longley landholder, a daisy, presumed to be extinct, has been rediscovered.

First discovered in 1867, the daisy, referred to as Spicer's everlasting *Argentipallium Spiceri*, has always been rare and only ever found in the

Facilitation Skills Training Course

Calling expressions of interest

This course is designed for people who wish to build their skills in community/organisation leadership including:

- Enabling individual and group ownership of decisions and actions.
- Creating and maintaining constructive partnerships with others.
- Knowing essential dynamics of group interaction.
- Designing events.
- Helping groups plan strategically.

This course is residential and will be conducted in 2 three day modules:

- Module 1, Tue 14 July–Thur 16 July
- Module 2, Tue 29 Sept–Thur 1 Oct

There are a limited number of places available free to WildCARE members.

For more information contact:

Kim Willing, Coastcare, Ph: 6233 6427

Huonville district. It is a small, spreading, multi-stemmed shrub which usually grows to about 0.5m or less with grey foliage and white flowers with pink highlights.

The plant was found at the edge of a property within a significant area of native vegetation which also contains several other threatened plants such as small-leaf *Pomaderris* and Duncan's sheoak.

The landholder has a keen interest in native vegetation and often sends samples of plants to the Tasmanian Herbarium in Sandy Bay for identification. This find highlights the importance of trying to maintain patches of native vegetation in rural and urban areas and significant role landholders can play in conserving our precious native plants.

On this occasion, one of the Herbarium's botanists, Alex Buchanan, recognised the plant as an exciting discovery. Careful study of the plant in bud and in flower, and comparison with the type specimens archived at the Herbarium of Victoria in Melbourne and at the Tasmanian Herbarium confirmed that it was indeed *Argentipallium Spicieri*.

The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens are currently propagating the rediscovered plant as part of a strategy to conserve this species.



Public Comment on Threatened Species Strategy

The Threatened Species Strategy is almost ready for public comment. Required under the Threatened Species Protection Act 1995, the strategy lays down the principles and direction for the conservation of threatened species and communities in Tasmania over the next five years and beyond.

Objectives of the strategy are taken from the Australian National Strategy for the Conservation of Australian Species and Communities Threatened with Extinction. This provides for continuity and cooperation in approach between the state and national threatened species management programs.

The strategy has been compiled by a team of people from the Parks and

Wildlife Service in consultation with major stakeholders such as the Farmers and Graziers Association. It addresses the major threatening processes and outlines ways the community can become involved in conservation.

Community input to the strategy is invaluable in making it practical and workable so pick up a copy and have your say.

Copies of the strategy will be available from the **Threatened Species Unit on (03) 6233 6556** and at the Hobart and Launceston PWS offices.



New Colonies of Threatened Moth Discovered

Parks and Wildlife Service project officer Phil Bell, who hit the headlines with his discovery of new colonies of the Ptunarra brown butterfly has come up trumps again, this time finding new colonies of the threatened pencil pine moth.

Funded by a World Heritage (WHA) fauna program, Phil is conducting a two month survey of potential areas of habitat of the pencil pine moth *Dirce aesiadora* listed as vulnerable under the Threatened Protection Act 1995.

The pencil pine moth only occurs in Tasmania where it has been collected from four locations: Mount Doris, Cradle Mountain, Lake Ada and Lake Seal. All locations are associated with pencil pine strands in alpine and sub-alpine areas. The pencil pine moth is a small moth with a wingspan of 2-3 cm, its forewings are black and white and the hindwings black with large bright orange patches. The forewings provide camouflage when the moths are at rest and the flash of colour of the hindwings may confuse predators.

Adult pencil pine moths are active around the canopy of pencil pines on calm sunny days in January, and have been seen feeding on the trees pollen. The major threat to the moth is the loss of pencil pines, through fire and disease. About 40 per cent of pencil pine rainforest has been destroyed by recent fires, particularly on the Central Plateau. Pencil pines show no immunity to the plant disease *Phytophthora cinnamomi* which is killing many of Tasmania's native plants.

On his first field trip in January to look for the moth, Phil Bell, accompanied by WHA zoologist Mike Driessen found a new colony near Pine Lake. They caught several but spotted many more and this discovery more than doubled the number known to be recorded. Phil and invertebrate specialist Dr Peter McQuillan of the University of Tasmania later found more pencil pine moths on Tarn Shelf and at Lake Seal in the Mount Field National Park and close to areas where they had been previously recorded, near Mount Rufus in the cradle Mountain-Lake St. Clair National Park, Lake Skinner on the Snowy Range, the Central Plateau and Walls of Jerusalem National Park.

Female moths were collected and eggs have been laid in the laboratory. These will be cultured on potted pencil pines to determine the life history of the moth. Caterpillars which may be of this species have also been collected from pencil pines. One older caterpillar was so well camouflaged that it looked almost identical to the leaves of pencil pine. Could this be the reason why they are so closely linked to the pencil pine and ignore other pines such as the King Billy pine?

When his field surveys are complete, Phil will write a report on the distribution and status of the moth and the management actions needed to secure a future for the species. It may now be a candidate for delisting.



Hard Times for the Green and Gold Frog

As if the green and gold frog did not have enough problems to contend with, the current drought facing Tasmania is pushing it to new limits.

One of the State's most eye catching threatened species, the colourful green and gold frog, already leads a precarious existence because of threats such as loss of habitat through land drainage for agriculture.

The frog, listed as vulnerable on the Threatened Species Protection Act 1995, is the only amphibian listed in the Act. It relies on water for its food supply, preying on other frogs and insects, and inhabits well vegetated swamps, dams and coastal wetlands.

North-east Tasmania is a stronghold for the frog but it has suffered a dramatic decline in population and was badly hit by the drought of the 1970's and 80s. However, John Ashworth, who is conducting a master's degree on the frog, believes if the frog can find a suitable refuge or burrow deep in the ground it can survive the drought for a year or two.

John recently visited Blackman's Lagoon in the Waterhouse Protection Area, a prime habitat area, to find the water level had dropped by one metre and saw no evidence of breeding activity (the frog will not breed unless there is permanent water). John believes the frog can hold out in the area, as long as no other difficulties arise at the site.

Problems occur on private land when a farm dam dries up and the farmer decides to plough the area to provide an extra paddock, destroying frog habitat.

Consultant zoologist David Horner recently conducted a distribution survey of the green and gold frog in the Longford area of the Department of Transport and is currently compiling a database aimed at protecting habitat areas and monitoring sites from herbicide spraying. Data will be collected over the next few months from both government and private organisations to help determine 'no spray zones' for environmentally sensitive areas.



The Regional Forest Agreement — what it means for conservation

There can be very few people who have not heard about the Regional Forest Agreement or RFA as it is perhaps better known but many do not know its outcomes and implications.

The aim of the RFA process was to adequately preserve important forest values on Crown Land in Tasmania, at the same time providing certainty for the forest industry for the future. Whether this has been, or will be achieved, is arguable. What has occurred is that through an elaborate, and at times, very difficult process, the important natural values have been

identified and through negotiation, a percentage of those values, be they forest communities, threatened species or others, have been set aside in reserves which will not be logged. An agreement has been reached on the areas to be preserved which meets both Commonwealth and State requirements and the RFA is signed by the Premier and Prime Minister.

As not all of the important values can be preserved on Crown Land to meet the conservation needs, ways of meeting the additional requirements on private land are being sought. The Commonwealth has set aside \$20 million from the Natural Heritage Trust to achieve the necessary conservation requirements on private land. This is to be carried out on a purely voluntary basis. In some cases, it may involve land acquisitions but more likely outcomes will be conservation management or stewardship agreements.

Threatened Species Education Kit

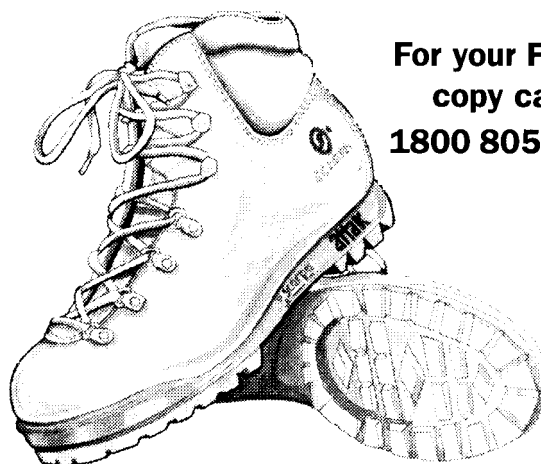
Demand is still high for the Threatened Species education package produced last year by Parks and Wildlife Service Education Officer Ingrid Albion.

The kit, comprising a folder of threatened species factsheets, puzzles, wordsearches, case studies of individual species and ideas for games, makes a lively and informative study aid. The information has been designed for use across the curriculum and the kit comes with a colourful poster highlighting some of Tasmania's threatened plants and animals from birds of prey to frogs and insects. The kit may be used in conjunction with the threatened species internet site at <http://www.del.mtas.gov.au/esl>

Copies of the kit are available by calling (03) 6233 3807.

Wildcare is on the net at:
<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/tpws.html> — and hit the wildcare button.

The NEW 1998 Paddy Pallin Catalogue is out now!



For your FREE copy call 1800 805 398

Hobart: 76 Elizabeth Street • Launceston: 110 George Street
Sydney • Miranda • Parramatta • Katoomba • Canberra
Jindabyne • Melbourne • Ringwood • Box Hill • Adelaide
Fortitude Valley • Mail Order: 1800 805 398



Thankyou!

Wildcare wishes to thank the following sponsors for their support of the *WildCARE* Fund

Gold Sponsors (\$10,000 plus)

Paddy Pallin Adventure Equipment stores

Category 2 sponsors (\$5000–\$9999)

Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers (in kind)

Category 3 sponsors (\$1000–\$4999)

Malcolm Murchison

And the following *WildCARE* member-discount sponsors

Snowgum equipment 10% discount

Par Avion Wilderness Flights 10% discount

Eaglehawk Neck Backpackers (\$1 discount on a \$12 night)

(To claim your discount, simply present your *WildCARE* member card.)

We are looking for other sponsors, both for the *WildCARE* Fund and as discounters. Know someone who you think might be interested? Why not have a chat to them and suggest they contact **Andrew Smith at Parks and Wildlife Service** for more details (**Ph 6233 2185 — GPO Box 44a Hobart 7001**).

Tasmanian Trail Guidebook — **Tasmanian Trail**

This essential guide will give walkers, bicyclists and horse riders all the information needed to travel all or part of the unique **Tasmanian Trail**.

Detailed trail notes cover each stage of the journey, providing concise directions and information on access, campsites and facilities. Distances are given for trips in either direction, while each stage is supplemented with detailed maps.

Planning, safety and environmental issues are all thoroughly covered.

Fascinating snippets of information on the natural and cultural features you will discover along the trail are liberally spread throughout the book.

If you are contemplating a full traverse of the state or just a day trip, this book is a must.

Recommended Retail Price: \$15.00. Order through the *WildCARE* Office, GPO Box 44A Hobart 7001. Please make cheques payable to The Tasmanian Trail Association.

ISBN 9 318923 009651

