



# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2002



Over the past financial year, grants made by the Norman Wettenhall Foundation almost doubled to \$86,733, with a commitment of a further \$10,000 to upcoming programs in this financial year.

Since its establishment in 1996 the Norman Wettenhall Foundation has distributed \$325,463. Total assets continue to grow and were \$1,892,634 as of 30 June, 2002.

An environmental organisation, the Norman Wettenhall Foundation's objective is to support projects that enhance or maintain the vitality and diversity of the Australian natural living environment. Over the Foundation's formative years, we have had a particular emphasis on advancing the interests of native birds and the habitats upon which they depend. As I have said before, not only did Norman Wettenhall have a lifelong interest in birdwatching, but the Foundation's trustees also consider focusing on native fauna, in particular, as offering a clear organising principle.

Projects funded over the last year demonstrate that we are venturing into new territory. Tranceplant, for instance, involved an innovative (and fun) way of attracting hundreds of young urban people to take part in a tree planting project. Our contribution towards the Green Turtle Dreaming project seeks to engage indigenous people in saving this endangered species, and fits solidly within our community capacity building criterion. We believe unless organisers of environmental conservation or enhancement projects can demonstrate that the local community is behind their efforts, it is probably all to no avail.

Another criterion discussed at length over the past year was what I describe as the 'big picture' approach. There is a growing realisation among environmental organisations, such as catchment management authorities, Bushcare and the Trust for Nature, of the need for interest groups and landholders to work with each other across regions if we are to achieve sustainable land use. A number of our Trustees have an interest in pursuing such an integrated, holistic, catchment-based approach. We have written to catchment management authorities asking them to put forward projects for funding that are innovative, add to our knowledge and understanding, and could make a long term difference to the status of species of the environment.



The Foundation receives numerous requests to fund PhD students in their research. In making our decision in favour of a project, we pay particular attention to how widely the research results are to be disseminated. No matter how good the applicant or how useful his or her research, it would seem to us to add little to the sum of human knowledge where the intended research fails to either engage with key people at the regional level or moves only marginally beyond a file on the applicant's computer.

Another new Trustee joined the Foundation during the past year. A Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne, Dr Sarah Ewing gained her PhD by examining the Australian landcare movement. Other of her research areas that are of relevance to the Foundation include looking at participatory policies in natural resources management and the mechanisms for undertaking R & D in developing an integrated catchment management (ICM) approach.

Last year's inaugural Norman Wettenhall Memorial Lecture by evolutionary scientist Tim Flannery proved a great success, with a full house in attendance. As this annual report goes to print, we are about to hold the second Norman Wettenhall Memorial Lecture to be delivered by another outstanding scientist and environmentalist, Ian Lowe. This year we welcome Museum Victoria in joining us in hosting the lecture series along with Birds Australia and the Trust for Nature.

Projects funded in the past financial year are summarised in this report, along with updates on the progress of previously monitored projects. Feedback on a project's progress is requested as a condition of funding by the Foundation.

Once again, I would like to acknowledge the invaluable support and counsel of my fellow Trustees and the sterling back up provided by the Foundation's Administrator, Scott Anderson.

Donations to help us achieve even more are always gratefully received. All donations to the Norman Wettenhall Foundation are tax deductible.

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Gib Wettenhall Chairman Norman Wettenhall Foundation

# **REPORT ON DISTRIBUTIONS**

made by The Norman Wettenhall Foundation for the year ended June 30, 2002

## DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

#### School of Ecology and Environment, Ms. Rebecca Overeem

A grant of \$9,141 was paid towards the application of new identification and location techniques to determine critical factors affecting the breeding success of Little Penguins. The project will focus on the Little Penguin colony at Middle Island, Warrnambool and is integrated into the new management plan endorsed by the City Council. The study will utilise transponder technology in place of the traditional banding techniques for bird identification.



Penguins being studied to determine breeding success

## University of Melbourne

#### Zoology, Ms. A Rogers

A grant of \$2,000 was paid towards monitoring a population of Eastern Whipbirds through daily visits to map territories and record social interactions. Eastern Whipbirds are antiphonal duetters – the male and female of a pair sing alternately, but so precisely it sounds like the resulting song is produced by just one bird. Hypotheses on why birds may duet include: (a) maintaining the pair bond, (b) joint territorial defence, and (c) acoustic mate guarding. This project will undertake song recordings of each bird at different stages of the breeding cycle. The information garnered will be made widely available to the public, including use in Birds Australia HANZAB series. Knowledge of this species is very poor.

## BIRDS AUSTRALIA

#### Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic Birds,

#### VOLUME 5

A grant of \$20,000 was paid towards Volume 5 in a series of

The latest HANZAB is now available

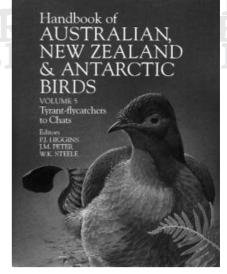
seven. The handbook when complete will provide a comprehensive summary of the biology, together with detailed illustrations of all 952 species of birds that occur in Australia, New Zealand and Antarctica. As this covers a significant proportion of the Earth's surface it will represent some 10% of all known bird species. The book covers an enormous amount of scientific research and includes paintings of each species and their sub-types which are created by some of Australia's foremost artists. For the latest information, see the Birds Australia website (www.birdsaustralia.com.au).

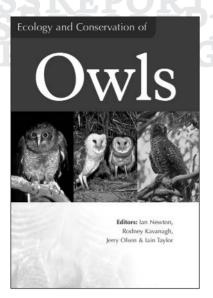
### TRUST FOR NATURE FLORA AND FAUNA SURVEY PROGRAM

A grant of \$5,000 was paid towards the Flora and Fauna Survey Group program. The surveys provide landowners who have covenanted remnant native habitat with vital information for preserving flora and fauna on their properties. Led by volunteers qualified to conduct surveys of indigenous plant and animal life, the survey team also includes students undertaking some form of relevant study, as well as field naturalists and other interested conservationists. Once completed, changes to biodiversity can be monitored by the landowner, and the surveys enable Trust for Nature to further advise landowners on any technical issues that might need addressing. See the Trust for Nature website for further information (www.tfn.org.au)



Volunteers at work on the Flora and Fauna Survey





The soon to be released Owls 2000 proceedings

## Australasian Raptor Association

#### publication costs of the Owls 2000 proceedings

A grant of \$7,500 was paid towards the publication of the proceedings from the Owls 2000 conference, titled 'Owls: Biology and Conservation in the 21st Century'. Over 30 papers from the conference have been edited by Ian Newton, Rodney Kavanagh, Jerry Olsen and Iain Taylor to bring together findings from a wide range of research.

## Ilfracombe Shire Council

#### viewing platform for Wetland

#### HABITAT

A grant of \$2,700 was paid towards the construction of a viewing platform on the recycled water ponds on the outskirts of Ilfracombe. The project will provide an opportunity for residents to see what type of trees and shrubs attract different birds into their gardens as well as raise the awareness of people to the diversity of the region. While not a sanctuary, the habitat will provide a degree of security from the ravages of foxes and cats, as well as offer a year round supply of water to the birds.



Transplant volunteers planting trees at the Wright Retarding Basin. Photo courtesy of Melbourne Water

## TRANCEPLANT

#### treeplanting with 'attitude' project

A grant of \$5,000 was paid towards a treeplanting project that was aimed at attracting youth to become involved. After planting along the Moonee Pond Creek at the back of Broadmeadows in a location known as 'Wright Retarding Basin', the volunteers were treated to a dance party at a location in South Melbourne. The Foundation provided support to allow the purchase of plants for the day. For information regarding Tranceplant, see their website at www.tranceplant.org.



Woori Yallock Farm School using the binoculars - part of the equipment purchased with support of the Foundation.

### Pembroke Secondary College

#### to establish the Environmental Education Centre at the Woori Yallock Farm School

A grant of \$4,600 was paid for the purchase of equipment to establish this school. Funds will cover an aquarium, TV and flexicam, 25 pairs of binoculars, as well as various other items for Birdsland – a program based on the theme of biodiversity conservation allowing 12 new students from nine secondary schools an intensive personal development program.

# JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

#### TROPICAL BIOLOGY, MS. LEONIE VALENTINE

A grant of \$3,792 was paid towards the "immediate impacts of controlled burning on bird communities in grazed open woodlands of the Burdekin River Catchment area." The CSIRO will be lighting three small controlled fires in grazed open woodlands south of Charters Towers during the spring of 2002. The fieldwork would involve recording bird species' richness and abundance before and after the fire. The information gathered will provide vital information that will be published in peer journals and distributed to various community groups.



An example of the controlled burn of woodlands

## GREEN TURTLE FOUNDATION, INC.

#### Green Turtle Dreaming project

A grant of \$7,000 went towards helping explore the little known migration of the Green Turtle between Australia and Indonesia through documenting the diverse relationships between the indigenous communities and this important and endangered creature. It will cover issues of biodiversity, indigenous rights, and traditional relationships with endangered species between the two countries. Six communities in eastern Indonesia and the top of Australia will form a giant pictorial scroll that maps and records each region's fragile relationship with the Green Turtle. Once completed, the enormous collaborative artwork will tour museums and galleries across Australia and Indonesia and then be shared by the communities involved.



A volunteer recording for the New Atlas of Australian Birds

## BIRDS AUSTRALIA

#### New Atlas of Australian Birds

A grant of \$20,000 was paid to assist in the publication of the *New Atlas of Australian Birds*, the only continental zoological atlas of its type in the world. Completed between 1998 and 2002, the database for this project involved 8,000 volunteers and covered some four million records. A hard cover single volume, the book will display distribution maps for over 750 species, highlighting habitat preferences, migratory status, breeding and foraging characteristics as well as changes in abundance over the last 20 years. For more information, see Birds Australia website at www.birdsaustralia.com.au

TOTAL GRANTS \$86,733

# ProgressReport

on projects previously supported by the Foundation

# Australian Science Archives Project, Melbourne, Vic

#### James Willis Botanic Archival project

The James Willis Botanic Archival project is now complete and operational. For the complete guide to this renowned botanist, view his website at http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/guides/will/will.htm

## Birds Australia, Melbourne, Vic

#### Red Tailed Black Cockatoo Education Kit

Now operational, the Red Tailed Black Cockatoo Education Kit website has received approximately 9,000 hits and is available in CD-ROM format for a small cost. For more information visit the Birds Australia website (http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au) and look for the link to the Red Tailed Black Cockatoo Education Kit.

## **BIRDS AUSTRALIA**

#### Oral History project

The Oral History project has led to the publishing of a book entitled *The Flight of the Emu – A Hundred Years of Australian Ornithology 1901-2001* by Libby Robin. The Emu is the journal of the former Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union (now known as Birds Australia) and this book looks at the achievements and importance of ornithology in Australia – both amateur and professional. It was published by Melbourne University Press and is available in selected stores.



### TRUSTEES

Mr. Gibb Wettenhall, Chairman Dr. Sarah Ewing Miss Patricia Feilman, AM Mr. Geoff Park Mr. Ian Sinclair, FCA Mr. Bill Weatherley

# CONTACT DETAILS

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