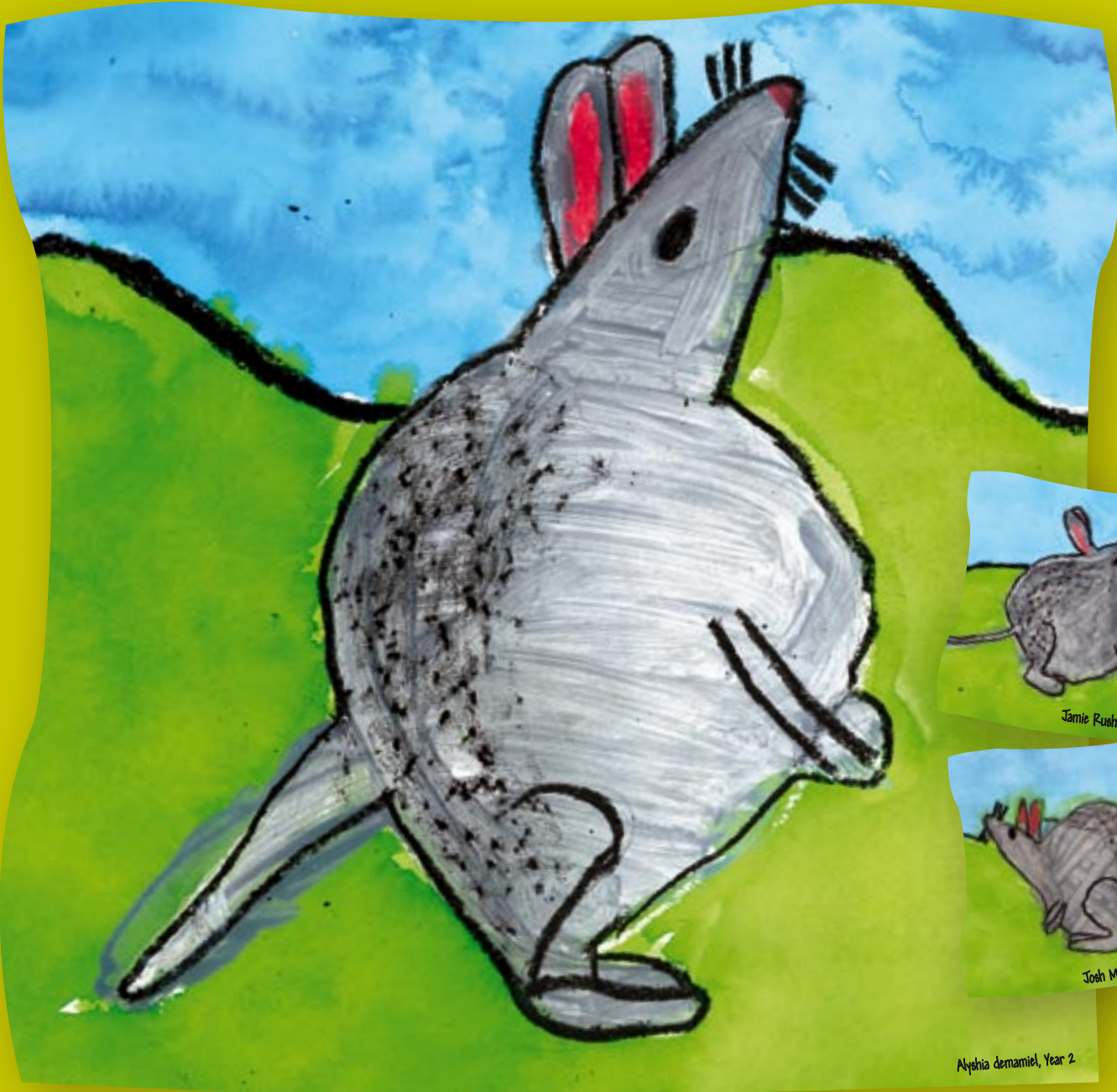


National Threatened Species Day

7 Sept



Alyshia demarniel, Year 2

Natural Heritage Trust
 Helping Communities
 Helping Australia
 An Australian Government Initiative



Greater Bilby
 Thornlie Primary School, WA
 National Lower Primary Winner

Hands on
 for Habitat
 Awards 2004

To find out how you can help protect Australia's threatened species
 freecall on 1800 803 772 www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened

Hands on for Habitat Awards 2004 Winners

State Winners

Queensland

Kallangur State School, LOWER PRIMARY WINNER

Year 3 students at Kallangur State School are keen environmentalists – they've made dioramas of different habitats, created posters on environmental issues and even made robots out of recycled materials! For their Hands on for Habitat drawings, the students decided to look at threatened Australian fish, such as the Mary River Cod, Trout Cod and Spotted Handfish.

Alexandria Pearman, Year 3 Mary River Cod (*Maccullochella peelii marieiensis*)



The endangered Mary River Cod looks very similar to the Eastern Cod and the Murray Cod. The Mary River Cod was once common in the Mary River system of coastal southeast Queensland, but it is now estimated that it is found in less than 30% of its former known range.

Saint Anthony's School (Dimbulah) UPPER PRIMARY WINNER

Saint Anthony's students in Year 6/7 learnt about a variety of unusual threatened Australian plants and animals. They used collages as well as illustrations to depict species like the Grassland Earless Dragon and the Darwin Palm, with some students using natural materials such as bark and dried leaves to create 'trees'.

Nicholas Maggs, Year 6 Christmas Island Blind Snake (*Ramphotyphlops exocoetli*)



As its name might suggest, the Christmas Island Blind Snake is only found on Christmas Island, located far off the coast of Western Australia. While the movements, feeding and reproduction of this mysterious species are not well-known, the loss of its habitat has been caused by problems such as erosion and compaction of soil.

New South Wales

Tamworth South Public School LOWER PRIMARY WINNER

'Threatened species in the night' was the theme chosen by the Year 3 class of Tamworth South Public School. Each student adopted a threatened species found in the New England Tablelands and northern slopes of New South Wales, and drew a picture using oil pastel on black cardboard to create a 'night time' image. The students are now armed with more knowledge about their native residents.

Jessica Waters, Year 3 Small Snake Orchid (*Diuris pendunculata*)



The slender Small Snake Orchid grows to around 25cm high and flowers between August and October. As Jessica Waters discovered, the species was once widespread in NSW but is now considered extinct from most of its historical locations. Major threats to its habitat include grazing and competition from weeds.

Forster Public School, UPPER PRIMARY WINNER

Forster Public School students in the Year 4, 5 and 6 classes put in a mammoth effort again this year with their entry on Australian butterflies. They researched and illustrated individual species, created a beautiful 'Save Butterflies' mural, made mini-movies, and even formed a band called 'The Butterflies'!

Year 4/5/6 'Save Butterflies' mural



This stunning mural urges us to help save our Australian butterflies by dealing with introduced species, raising money for research, and educating the next generation to value and protect the environment. Some butterfly species, such as the Bathurst Copper (*Paraculia spinifera*), are restricted to very small areas with special 'host' plants.

Australian Capital Territory

Chapman Primary School, LOWER PRIMARY WINNER

Year 1 students at Chapman Primary School made colourful collages depicting local species, including the Striped Legless Lizard, Smoky Mouse and the Brush-tailed Rook Walkaby. The school would like to build a bush garden to attract more native wildlife to the area.

Ashley Whalan, Year 1 Golden Sun Moth (*Synmona plana*)



The critically endangered Golden Sun Moth used to be widespread in the grasslands of southeastern Australia, but urbanisation, grazing and introduced species have resulted in the loss of much of its native habitat. The female Golden Sun Moth rarely flies, preferring to walk from plant to plant to lay its eggs.

Mount Rogers Community School (Melba) UPPER PRIMARY WINNER

Mount Rogers Community School students learnt about species such as the Orange-bellied Parrot, False Water Rat and the Broad-headed Snake. Their individual research projects included pictures of their chosen species, a map of where it was located, and a collage or drawing. The collages were made of hundreds of tiny squares of coloured paper.

Rhiannon Hart, Year 6 Mountain Pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvus*)



The endangered Mountain Pygmy-possum lives in high alpine alpine areas and likes to hibernate during the cold winter months. Its habitat has come under threat from development and predation by foxes. It is now only found in two populations in New South Wales and Victoria.

Victoria

Sacred Heart Primary School (Yarrowwonga) LOWER PRIMARY WINNER

Year 2/3 students at Sacred Heart Primary School in Yarrowwonga chose to study 'local icons' including the Murray Cod and the Brolga. The students formed groups to learn about the history of native species living in the area and the threats to their habitats. They also painted beautiful pictures of their chosen species.

Jedda Nolan and Dan Howe, Year 3 Murray Cod (*Maccullochella peelii peyii*)



The Murray Cod is the largest freshwater fish in Australia, and lives in the waterways of the Murray-Darling Basin. It is highly aggressive and will vigorously defend its territory from intruders! As Jedda and Dan learnt, Murray Cod populations have dropped due to changes in river flow and general disturbance to habitat.

Boneo Primary School, UPPER PRIMARY WINNER

Boneo Primary School students focused their attention on the Swamp Skink, which is listed as a vulnerable species in Victoria. Each student made clay/plastiline models of the Swamp Skink and had it photographed in its 'natural habitat'. The school is helping to conserve the local area through revegetation and the creation of a wetland.

Jake Parker, Year 5 Swamp Skink (*Egernia coventryi*)



The Swamp Skink has vibrant stripes down its back and a very long tail. It lives in wetland areas such as the Tooleroo park and Boneo swamps. Its habitat is thought to have come under threat from clearance of grasslands and draining of swamps.

National Winners

Thornlie Primary School, Western Australia LOWER PRIMARY WINNER

Did you know that the Lesser Bilby is now considered extinct? Its 'cousin', the Greater Bilby, is also under threat from predation by foxes and feral cats. That's why the Year 1/2 students at Thornlie Primary School, WA, chose to learn more about this shy, desert-dwelling mammal.

Alyshia demamiel, Year 2 Greater Bilby (*Macrotis lagotis*)



The Greater Bilby is easy to recognise with its soft grey fur and large, delicate pink ears. It likes to munch on termites, plant roots, vegetative parts and seeds. Population numbers have been greatly reduced by disease, rabbit baiting and the arrival of the European Red Fox.

Wellers Hill State School, Wellers Hill, Queensland UPPER PRIMARY WINNER

Wellers Hill State School students created vibrant drawings of their favourite threatened species, focusing on plants and animals located in the walmul heathland of northern NSW. They learnt about species such as the Honey Blue Eye, which has distinctive black markings, and the Banded Cuckoo-shrike, which is listed as vulnerable in NSW.

Tamara Jones, Year 5 Honey Blue-eye (*Pseudomugil melis*)



This tiny fish lives in freshwater ponds and small streams with dense, aquatic vegetation. It can tolerate wide fluctuations in stream temperature, from 14°C in winter to a scorching 38°C in summer! Its habitat has come under threat from urbanisation, water pollution and the introduction of the exotic Mosquitofish *Gambusia*.

Tasmania

Huonville Primary School, LOWER PRIMARY WINNER

Students at Huonville Primary School in Tasmania studied the endangered Swift Parrot. The Year 3 and 4 classes learnt that the Swift Parrot has bright green feathers with red and yellow markings, and sometimes gets confused with a lorikeet! Along with their illustrations, the students sent in a Swift Parrot kite and an endangered wildlife word search.

Ylia Zolina-Hayde, Year 3 Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)



The Swift Parrot only breeds in Tasmania, though it migrates to the mainland during the autumn months. It nests and forages in eucalypt forests and woodlands, and is particularly fond of the Tasmanian Blue Gum. Swift Parrots are nationally listed as an endangered species due to habitat loss through urbanisation, and competition with introduced species for nest hollows.

Launceston Christian School, UPPER PRIMARY WINNER

Launceston Christian School students in Year 5/6 formed groups to research common Tasmanian habitats, including woodlands, wetlands, heathlands and rivers and lakes. Each group created a powerpoint presentation and presented it to the class, as well as producing artworks of species such as the critically endangered Windowspotted Spider-orchid and the Green and Golden Bell Frog.

Jesse Petrusma, Year 6 Broad-toothed Stag Beetle (*Lissotes latidens*)



The Broad-toothed Stag Beetle is only found in Tasmania, but not much is known about its population. This wingless beetle species, which likes to live in wet eucalypt forest, is under threat from clearing, firewood collecting and the illegal collection of insects. Jesse learnt that it's important not to disturb decaying logs in case they have life inside.

South Australia

Goodwood Primary School, LOWER PRIMARY WINNER

The Year 2/3 class at Goodwood Primary School learnt about lots of threatened Australian species, including the Fin Whale, Greater Stick-nest Rat and the Burrowing Bettong. Their unusual collages were made out of small pieces of patterned, coloured paper. The school would like to create a local grassland by planting native grasses, shrubs and bushes.

Iris Rad, Year 2 Leadbeater's Possum (*Gymnobelideus leadbeateri*)



The endangered Leadbeater's Possum has a long tail and a bright pink nose. It only lives in a small area in the central highlands of Victoria, feeding mostly on Acacia gums, nectar and honeydew. Clearing and fire are the main threats to its habitat.

St Mary's College (Adelaide), UPPER PRIMARY WINNER

St Mary's College students in Year 4-5 painted a huge mural of threatened species for their Hands on for Habitat entry. Their chosen species included the Eastern Bristlebird, Bayonet Spider-orchid and the Hastings River Mouse. The school is keen to help protect local species by expanding a recently built frog pond.

Year 4-5 Downy Star-bush (*Asterolepis phaeobotrya*) is also featured in this beautifully painted mural. This colourful shrub grows to around 1 metre high and produces yellow flowers in the spring. It is considered threatened due to its rarity, only occurring in Victoria and South Australia.



What is habitat?

A habitat is where something lives and grows – it's the combination of food, water and shelter that plants and animals need to stay alive.

Australia is made up of a wide range of climates from the hot, wet tropics to the dry, flat interior to the cool alpine areas. As a result, the country has an immense variety of habitats including swamps, grasslands, mangroves, forests, rainforests, woodlands and deserts.

Each of these habitats provide the right conditions for different types of plants and animals to survive and flourish. In their own habitat, our native animals find everything they need to survive – in particular food and water, but also hollow logs, boulders, caverns, loose bark and tree hollows which they need to shelter and breed.

For example, a desert might be perfect for a Greater Bilby but a Loggerhead Turtle couldn't find the right sort of food there to survive.

So what can damage habitat?

Many factors, including clearing for agriculture and urban development, can damage habitat. Other threats include competition and predation by introduced pests such as foxes and rabbits, which have had disastrous effects on many native animals such as the Eastern Barred Bandicoot. Weeds also pose a serious threat to native bushland by replacing valuable native plants with unsuitable exotic species.

Some habitats – such as native grasslands – have been extensively cleared, as they were not considered to be important. However, we now know they are vital to the survival of many species. There is so little native grassland now remaining that very few people realise just how much of this once biodiversity-rich habitat Australia has lost.

Habitat protection is one of the key environmental issues facing Australia today.

How you can help

All Australians can join in helping to protect threatened species. You can:

- Join a local conservation group, such as Landcare, to help plant trees and create habitat
- Take part in awareness activities such as National Threatened Species Day and the Hands on for Habitat Awards
- Encourage your school to get involved in a local conservation program
- Grow native plants in your garden and ensure weeds don't spread into surrounding bush
- Be a responsible pet owner: keep cats in at night and don't dump unwanted animals in the bush
- Logs have life inside! Leave hollow logs on the ground, and buy your firewood from a sustainable source
- Be aware about how to cause minimal damage to the environment when you go walking or camping out in the bush
- There are many more ways to help – get in touch with your local conservation group to find out more.

What can we do?

Some of the ways that Australians are currently working together to protect habitats and the native animals and plants that live there, are by establishing wildlife corridors, fencing off waterways and remnant bushland, and replanting native vegetation on public and private land.

For more information on helping threatened species in your area, contact the Threatened Species Network on freecall 1800 251 573, go to the website at www.wvn.org.au/tsn or contact your local coordinator on the details below

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"Old Hartley St School"
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DARWIN NT 0801
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The Threatened Species Network is a community based program of the Australian Government's National Heritage Trust & WWF Australia.