





WINTER 2024

# TALES FROM *the* WILD NEWSLETTER



## THE IMPACT *of* YOUR SUPPORT:

-  Platypus populations are thriving in the wild, because of you.
-  You are helping injured and sick wildlife receive critical care at Taronga Wildlife Hospital.
-  179 Bellinger River Turtles released into the wild, with your support.
-  Your generosity helps continue critical research for Koala conservation work.

**TARONGA**   
CONSERVATION SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

*For the Wild*

# THE AMAZING THINGS THAT YOU MAKE POSSIBLE!

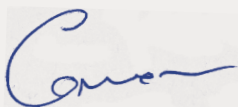
Each story in this newsletter is a story of your determination to create a world where animals and people can thrive together.

It's a story of your love of wildlife and the power of your generosity. And it's a story of triumph over adversity.

You are saving wildlife from the brink of extinction. You are rescuing and treating injured animals – and returning many to the wild.

You are strengthening and protecting entire species – not only in Australia, but across the world. You see the challenges: the extinctions, the habitat destruction, and the extreme weather, and you respond with determination, passion, and love.

It's your love for wildlife that makes these achievements possible. Thank you for caring so deeply about the beautiful animals who share our planet, and thank you for being with Taronga as we work together... *for the wild.*



**Cameron Kerr AO**  
Chief Executive



# THE IMPACT of YOUR SUPPORT IS INCALCULABLE!

Here's a summary of just some of your achievements:

**50,000**

More than 50,000 animals released back into the wild since Taronga's inception.



**6** Community conservation programs



**9** Conservation partnerships worldwide



**14**

Recovery programs, including breeding programs, husbandry, expertise and training.

## 7 SPECIES SAVED FROM EXTINCTION:



Greater Bilby (in NSW)



Chuditch (in NSW)



Yellow Spotted Frog



Booroolong Frog



Bellingher River Turtle



Blue-tailed Skink



Lister's Gecko

*Thank you for your incredible impact to wildlife and animal conservation*



**TARONGA  
WILDLIFE  
HOSPITAL**

## **THANKS TO YOU, THIS PEREGRINE FALCON TAKES TO THE SKIES ONCE AGAIN!**



The Peregrine Falcon is one of the fastest birds of prey, swooping down at speeds of up to 300 km/h.

Thanks to your support, the Taronga Wildlife Hospital often treat over 1500 injured wildlife each year.

**Your generous support means that injured animals like Swifty the Peregrine Falcon can be treated and returned to the wild.**

Thanks to you, Taronga Wildlife Hospital vets were able to care for a Peregrine Falcon who had lost flight at Accor Stadium in Sydney Olympic Park, sustaining some injuries. The Falcon, who was named Swifty in honour of his Taylor Swift stage diving skills!

This Peregrine Falcon is part of a family that lives amongst the trees in the area.

On the day of Taylor Swift's first Sydney concert, as organisers prepared for the gig, the falcon crashed to the ground, believed to have been caused by the

extreme heat and experiencing dehydration as temperatures reached 37.9 degrees that day.

Taronga Wildlife Hospital team flew into action with an X-ray, ultrasound and blood test to confirm that a concussion, soft tissue injury and a chest injury meant he'd have to miss all four concerts. The vet nurses fondly named him Swifty.

With your help, the team cared for him over five weeks utilising a specialist program of physiotherapy in the rehabilitation enclosure until he was strong enough to fly with ease.

Swifty was released back to the wild where he was found, where he lives with a family of Peregrine Falcons.



During his care at Taronga Wildlife Hospital, Swifty received vet care and physiotherapy to ensure he was fit and healthy before being released back to the wild.

**Your support helps  
Taronga Wildlife Hospital  
provide expert rescue,  
care and rehabilitation.**

# THE IMMENSE IMPACT *of* YOUR GENEROSITY

Once a species is extinct,  
it's gone forever.

Your support is ensuring the  
survival of two small, yet mighty  
native Australian species.

## CHUDITCH

We're deep into Chuditch breeding season right now, with **eight pairs already established** and observed so the team are hopeful to see some pouch young Chuditch within the next month!

The Chuditch are housed in aviaries within the Sanctuary and are observed only by night vision trail cameras, to ensure a completely hands off approach.

Over the next few months, the team will pouch check and if there are any young, they will be monitored through the cameras to ensure they are doing well as they grow.

**Breed-for-release programs ensure populations in the wild can survive and thrive.**



### 4 FAST CHUDITCH FACTS:

- **They've lost 95% of their range**  
Chuditch were once thriving across mainland Australia, now they are reduced to just 5% of their former range.
- **Chuditch are one of the top 20 priority mammals**  
As listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) List of Threatened Fauna.
- **They're regarded as an indicator species**  
Their sensitive reactions to ecosystem processes provide warning signals on ecological changes.
- **Chuditch are a native predator**  
Chuditch help balance the ecosystem. By protecting the Chuditch, there is an umbrella effect that impacts on the survival of other native species.

## 4 FAST BILBY FACTS:

- **The Greater Bilby population has been reduced by 80%**  
Due to habitat loss and the introduction of non-native species.
- **They play a vital role in the ecosystem**  
One bilby turns over 20 tonnes of topsoil in a year, creating the perfect conditions for plants to germinate, which is vital in arid Australia.
- **They are of cultural importance to First Nations People**  
Bilbies feature in many dreamtime stories and cave art, showing their significance of tens of thousands of years.
- **Listed as Vulnerable**  
On the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) List of Threatened Fauna.



## GREATER BILBY

It's coming to the end of the peak bilby breeding season, and the team are happy to report the **sighting of a number of pouch young bilbies** at the start of May.

The team will shortly work overnight to assess each individual in the Sanctuary, checking its weight and health.

The Greater Bilbies continue to live independently within the Sanctuary, finding their own food and home, although teams are able to access the 19 trail cameras around the Sanctuary to check for bilby activity.

## *How your support helps the Chuditch and Bilby*

- You're helping continue critical breed-for-release programs based at the 110ha Sanctuary at Taronga Western Plains Zoo, Dubbo.
- The breeding of genetically robust Chuditch and Bilbies to reintroduce into the wild helps prevent extinction in areas where these numbers are low or at risk.

# It's a baby girl!

A win for conservation as Taronga teams were delighted to discover a **baby Platypus** at the Royal National Park in NSW.

Platypus had been locally extinct for over 50 years in the area. Together with conservation partners, and as a part of the Platypus Conservation Project, Taronga teams released 10 Platypus into the Royal National Park in May last year.

Six months on, reports indicated a 100% survival rate of the released Platypus. Teams were elated to find a juvenile female puggle during their field survey conducted a couple of months ago. This is a significant indication that the recently released Platypus are adapting, surviving and thriving at the Royal National Park.

The birth of the female puggle is the best possible sign that the Platypus are thriving and adapting beautifully to their new home. It means your support works!

Taronga has been working with conservation partners for a number of years to determine how to save the Platypus, which has seen a rapid decline in population in the past 200 years and is locally extinct in some regions.

The finding of a juvenile puggle at the Royal National Park is a huge win for conservation and brings forth a new hope for the future of this enigmatic and iconic species.





*Thank you!  
The success of the Platypus  
Conservation Project is  
only possible thanks to the  
generosity of people like you  
who are committed to saving  
Australian wildlife.*

"When everything was ready the platypus was brought out and weighed – just under 1kg which was a bit light for an adult. Suddenly the vet exclaimed 'It's a juvenile!'.

This was an amazing moment – actually a historic moment. It meant that two of the relocated platypuses had mated and increased the number of platypuses here. The future of the platypus is in good hands!."

- Dinah Beeston, a wonderful supporter who was there when the puggle was discovered.

Working with our conservation partners, your support is helping to develop further research to understanding the Platypus, a notoriously tricky breeder.



## UPDATE

# KOALA CONSERVATION PROJECT

The Taronga team were recently monitoring koalas in Kanangra-Boyd National Park in NSW and you'll never guess what they found...  
**21 female Koalas with joeys!**

The discovery of joeys is a wonderful sign of Koala populations thriving in the wild.

Using drone technology and field surveys, the team also located 72 Koalas – of those, 54 underwent complete health assessments and most were found in excellent health.

It's hard to imagine an Australia without this iconic species, and sadly they are at risk of being extinct by 2050 in NSW.

**Thanks to your support, Taronga has implemented a five-year Koala Conservation Project, together with key conservation partners to protect and save the Koala.**

A critical part of this research is to undertake field surveys across key sites in NSW.

The surveys use drone technology as well as teams hiking through the bush to track the locations of the Koalas in the wild, collect their scat samples, plant samples as well as the coordinates of the location.

This is vital information to help Taronga researchers understand the health, behaviours and movement of Koala populations.

*Thank you for making this research possible!*



*GPS collars might look out of place in the middle of the bush, but they're an amazing research tool to understand where Koalas go and what they need to thrive in the changing environment.*



*On-the-ground field work involves long nights, lots of Koala scat – and moments of pure joy. The team was there to perform health checks, collect samples for further research, and place tracking devices such as ear tags, GPS collar and microchips.*



*Your eyes in the sky! You helped fund these high-tech drones to help find Koalas in the wild – which can be quite tricky to do!*

# YOU'RE SAVING SPECIES LIKE THE BELLINGER RIVER TURTLE FROM EXTINCTION!

Thanks to you, conservation interventions like the breed-for-release program are ensuring this species is thriving in the wild.

Without your support, this snapping turtle would likely become extinct in the wild.



The turtles are monitored following each release so we can find out even more about what they need to survive and thrive in the wild.

**Thanks to your support, 97 Bellinger River Turtles were released back into the wild – the 5th and largest release to date!**

This brings the total of Bellinger River snapping turtles released into the wild to 179 – a huge achievement for a new breed-for-release program.

The release is part of a collaboration involving the NSW Government's Saving our Species program, Symbio Wildlife Park, the Taronga team – and you!

And it's all to ensure the survival of this critically endangered species which was devastated by a virus back in 2015.

The Bellinger River Virus caused a mass mortality event which wiped out an estimated 90 per cent of the population in just six weeks.

**But thanks to your support, Taronga has led a highly successful breeding program, ensuring the survival of this species.**

# YOUR LOVE *of* WILDLIFE CAN LIVE ON

Meet two people who share your passion for animals, who have chosen to create a better future for the wildlife they love.

They've decided to leave a gift in their Will to Taronga so that their love for wildlife can live on for generations to come.

A small percentage – even as little as 1% – of your estate can make an enormous difference to wildlife conservation.

## Janelle's story:

### Securing a future for wildlife and people

"I have loved animals my whole life. My first memory of visiting Taronga Zoo was when I was three or four years old. The zoo was then a place to go and view exotic animals but it has evolved into a major centre for conservation, breeding and research and they share information with similar institutions worldwide in a cooperative program.

I have chosen to leave a gift to Taronga Conservation Society Australia in my Will. It's very comforting to know that my gift will go towards continuing and expanding Taronga's



work to save important species in need overseas like the Sumatran Tiger, as well as so many Australian animals.

I really want the gift I am leaving in my Will to help further the ideals that Taronga stands for: securing a future for wildlife and people."

**Janelle Foster Kittrell**

## Robert's story:

### For the future of many animals

"I've been a Zoo Friend and supporter of Taronga for about 20 years.

In this time I've learned a lot about all the work that is happening behind the scenes.

There is so much great work happening to help animals in the wild through Taronga's conservation, research and education programs. The wildlife hospital also provides a wonderful service not only for the zoo animals but also for injured wildlife.



I've decided to leave a gift in my Will because I think Taronga's work is really important for the future of many animals."

**Robert J. Aernout JP**

A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt and blue patterned shorts, stands in a shallow stream. He is holding a small green frog in his open palms, looking directly at the camera with a gentle smile. The background shows a rocky stream bed with water flowing over it, and lush green foliage on the banks. In the distance, other people can be seen walking along the stream.

# AN ABIDING LOVE *for* ANIMALS

*Your passion and commitment  
for the future of wildlife.*

**Many of our supporters want to make sure the wildlife they love, will live on into the future.**

Some want to make sure their grandchildren and great grandchildren can experience the awe and wonder of our beautiful wildlife. Others can't bear the thought that critical species may be gone forever.

While others want to make sure that their love, their passion and their values are reflected. The most powerful way to do this is by leaving a gift in your Will to Taronga.

Leaving a legacy through your Will helps fund critical conservation work in Australia and around the globe. In other words, it gives wildlife a fighting chance.

A gift in your Will has a profoundly powerful impact. Even as little as 1%, after your family and loved ones are cared for, helps save wildlife from extinction.

To find out more, please email Gifts in Wills Relationship Manager [Victoria.bradd@taronga.org.au](mailto:Victoria.bradd@taronga.org.au), tick the box on the donation form to request more information or call **1300 369 116** for a chat.

RESCUE | RESTORE | REWILD | RESEARCH

Thank you for your passion and support for the conservation  
of critically endangered species.

**You are helping make a real difference to protect wildlife.**



*Thank you for  
caring so deeply for  
precious wildlife!*

**Taronga Conservation Society Australia**

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