

Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications Inquiry into the effectiveness of threatened species and ecological communities' protection in Australia

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I am writing this submission as Senior Editor of *Queensland's Threatened Animals* published by CSIRO publishing in February 2012. This project was carried out on a volunteer basis by five editors and over 200 volunteer contributors, all experts in their field and all people who believed that this resource guide was WAY overdue. Unfortunately, as valuable as it has proven to be, it is already out of date.

One practical and economical approach to dealing with threatened species recovery and management is to set up an updatable web site of all our threatened animals. This web site will be a one-stop shop – a hub from which people can access myriad resources and which will facilitate communication, networking and information sharing between *all* people involved in threatened animal recovery and management.

I propose forming a threatened animals web site task force made up of members from all three levels of government, relevant government agencies, NGOs, universities, NRMs and community groups. All members will be required to participate *actively* on one or more levels.

The task force will convert the book to an updatable web site. Each species profile will have active links (**highlighted in yellow**) to the latest information on the species.

Each species profile will feature sections dedicated to:

- Species description and photos
- Conservation status
- Distribution
- **Links to available maps – ecosystem, distribution, catchment, fire, etc.)**
- Habitat
- Ecology
- Reason for decline and current threats

Current recovery efforts

- **Recovery (and/or other) plans**
- *Conservation actions* (recently carried out or in the process of being carried out)

Future recovery efforts

- *What you can do:* Practical suggestions about what the reader can do as an individual to facilitate the recovery of a threatened species.
- **Links to specific orgs involved with this species.**

- *Conservation needs*: Actions that government organisations, NGOs and/or community groups need to carry out to improve species recovery and management.
- *Research directions*: Suggestions for studies and research, unanswered questions and suggestions for the next steps for more effective recovery efforts.

Each profile will link to species specific:

- Jobs, research positions and volunteer opportunities
- Uni departments, government departments and research facilities currently working on the species.
- Papers published on the species (including grey papers).
- Organisations involved in the recovery and management of Australia's threatened fauna.
- Professional photography/videography sources
- Additional resources
- Blogs, networks, discussion groups, social media groups
- Webcams/Podcasts/Videos

Other site sections to include:

- A comprehensive definition of what a threatened species is, how and why they are listed and what it takes to get them off the list.
- A list of threat categories with definitions
- A history of threatened species in Australia
- How certain species became extinct
- An enlightening chapter on threatened animals and regional ecosystems
- A guide on how to use the web site
- A substantial threatened species glossary.
- A list of key state, national and international, private and public organisations involved in the recovery and management of threatened species.
- A list of threatened animals cross-referenced with a list of organisations currently involved in their recovery and management.
- Instructions on how to report a sighting and to whom.
- A bibliography with links to published and unpublished articles or sites from which they can be obtained.

The web site will be linked to relevant components of the SEWPaCand individual state and territory web sites, the Atlas of Living Australia, Species Profile and Threats Database (SPRAT), the EPBC Act List of Threatened Fauna as well as University, NGO, NRM, community group and private enterprise threatened animal project web pages.

This comprehensive updatable resource will enable all those involved in threatened animal recovery and management to access *current* information about who is doing what, when, where, and how why with any given species.

This very project will save all governments untold amounts of money and valuable time and will help to ensure the wellbeing of our nation's precious biodiversity.

This comprehensive electronic resource guide will place Australia at the forefront of threatened species recovery and management worldwide.

We must begin to take our natural environment seriously and admit that:

A healthy biodiversity = healthy people = healthy economy.

A healthy biodiversity is not a Greenie obsession anymore. It is a necessity for every bloke and sheila in this country.

I will be happy to give evidence should the Committee wish for me to do so.

Lee K. Curtis