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A Rocha Australia *ENEWS*

Spring, 2020

We are a Christian organisation engaging communities in nature conservation

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Chair's report...

Welcome to the spring 2020 issue of A Rocha Australia's ENews.

I'm very thankful to be able to celebrate with you A Rocha Australia's 5th anniversary, thanks to God's grace and our members and supporters who have walked with us on our journey in Creation care. To mark the occasion we produced a short [video](#), please enjoy.

As you will see from this ENews our work has continued during spring with our partners, in Covid-safe ways, particularly as good rains have boosted vegetation and wildlife following drought and bushfires...



AUSTRALIA

A ROCHA

Conservation and Hope

we are
celebrating our
5th birthday

December 2020

Chair's report continued...

...Projects include bird surveys, removing weeds and planting natives in a nature reserve and two Christian convention centres, removing plastic pollution, and wildlife surveys using a camera trap. Our volunteers and partners, supported by our hard-working executive officer Roger Jaensch, have observed some amazing flora and fauna including Peregrine Falcon, Greenhood Orchid, Lignum, Spotless Crake, Black Wallaby, Eastern Whipbird, Coral Fern and River Tea Tree.

We're planning to hold a conference in South Australia next year, likely in spring. If you would like to help organise, attend or contribute to the conference please keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for details. We are also providing [small grants](#) to members of Christian Venues Australia to support Creation care.

On 24 October our executive officer Roger Jaensch and I participated in a ceremony to formally commence the new A Rocha Worldwide Covenant and associated Resolution, along with representatives from across the A Rocha global family. Even over Zoom, the event was moving and satisfying to join with so many people to commit to working together in Creation care. Roger's detailed and thoughtful comments on drafts were singled out for specific mention.

The A Rocha International [Big Give Christmas Challenge 2020](#) is on! The Reed Foundation will match donations during the first week of December, with funds supporting A Rocha's environmental education work in equipping and empowering children and communities to live sustainably with the world around them.

I hope you enjoy this issue of ENews. As always, we encourage you to become a member, support us in prayer and financially, and to get involved in Creation care.

Dr Stuart Blanch
President (Chair, board of directors)

A Rocha Australia 5th birthday celebratory video



Global plastic cleanups in September

Caring for God's world through reducing plastic pollution

On Saturday 19 September we joined other countries in our global A Rocha family in holding International Coastal Cleanup events.

Cooks River, Sydney, NSW

For this year in Sydney, these locals focused on collecting rubbish on urban riverbanks.



Hart Rd wetland, Aldinga, South Australia

This first cleanup in South Australia went very well, with ten bags of rubbish collected from around the wetland area.

We thank all who came along to these events!

Revegetation program commended at Warrambui, NSW



[Warrambui Retreat and Conference Centre](#) near Murrumbateman NSW, north of Canberra is a 120 hectare property with bushland remnants and some harvested pine plantations that have been targeted for rehabilitation. It is a registered Wildlife Refuge.

Over the last year Warrambui has teamed with Greening Australia through their Yass Habitat Linkages project and have planted around 1300 native trees and shrubs so far.

A Rocha Australia may look to help with community planting days in the future.

As shown in the photos above, Warrambui already has some great native diversity. This project will improve the connectivity between habitats.

We congratulate Warrambui!



Capernwray planting in Cecil Hoskins Nature Reserve, NSW

At four years into A Rocha Australia's partnership with [Capernwray Australia](#), our plans to rehabilitate biodiversity within the degraded Wingecarribee River riparian zone have now expanded into Cecil Hoskins Nature Reserve. Up till this point weed control and indigenous tree and shrub plantings have taken place on adjacent Capernwray Australia land (October 2016 and June 2020).



This year A Rocha Australia initiated an informal partnership between NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), NSW Department of Planning, Industry and the Environment (DPIE) and Capernwray Australia to expand rehabilitation works into the Nature Reserve.

On 18 November, following treatment to remove infestations of blackberry and exotic grasses, 50 River Tea Tree *Leptospermum obovatum* were planted. This species would have been a major component of the riparian understorey prior to



being cleared by European settlers 200 years ago. A diversity of indigenous shrubs and trees will be progressively added to this initial planting.

Although funded and managed by A Rocha Australia, implementation was made possible with the support of Lauren Hook of DPIE, Chris Keyzer of NPWS, Matt Finlayson of Capernwray Australia, and the students who assisted with the planting.

Updated details of A Rocha Australia projects

We've updated and expanded the projects pages on our [website](#)! You're most welcome to take a look at what has been progressing.

Projects



Capernwray Australia



Cassinia
Environmental
collaboration



Hart Road Wetlands



Tahlee Centre for
Creation Care

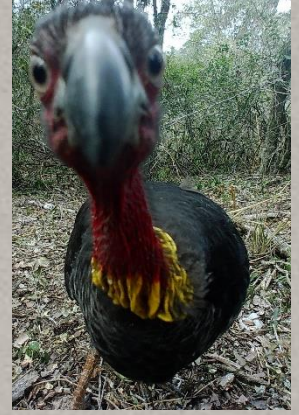


Toowoomba
escarpment parks

Outdoor cameras reveal inhabitants of Redwood Park, QLD

As part of an effort to document animals that inhabit bushland in which A Rocha Australia's [Toowoomba team](#) is weeding, an outdoor camera was set up and run at the site for several weeks in September–October 2020.

Nocturnal residents often captured in the camera images included Black Wallaby and Short-eared Possum. By day, an Australian Brush-turkey showed plenty of interest in the camera, while passers-by comprised a large monitor lizard as well as Grey Shrike-thrush, Eastern Whipbird, Double-barred Finch, White-browed Scrubwren and Red-browed Finch.



Although these creatures are all common in the semi-evergreen vine-thicket ('dry rainforest') of Redwood Park, we hope that removing cat's claw creeper will render the forest floor more suitable for rarer species such as button-quails, pittas and emerald doves. Most importantly, the weeding is saving mature trees and seedlings from being smothered and eventually killed by this exotic creeper.



Spring flowers after a long dry – Katoomba, NSW

On the [Katoomba Christian Convention](#) centre site where we have held some working bees, plants are responding well to wetter seasons. This time last year was bleak with dried ferns and the high risk of bushfires. Many Spring flowers including orchids are now blooming. Unfortunately weeds including broom and blackberry are as well.



Pterostylis sp. –greenhood orchid



Caladenia sp. –lady's finger orchid



Coral fern in the peat swamp areas slowly recovering

Recommended reading from A Rocha International

A Rocha International has a wealth of resources on Creation Care and publishes [a blog site](#) with some excellent and thought-provoking contributions from a range of Christian authors. Below are some recent blogs (click on each picture to click through to the article).

The A Rocha Blog

19th October 2020 | [Richard Bauckham](#) | 1 comments

Lockdown, Genesis & our need for nature

Do you remember the early weeks of lockdown, the 'great pause' when there was no road traffic and very little human noise? Taking a walk along a usually busy road. I felt like I was walking back in time to the days before motorized vehicles.



16th September 2020 | [Dave Bookless](#) | 4 comments

'Extinction: The Facts' – A Rocha responds in hope & action

David Attenborough's latest BBC documentary, 'Extinction: the facts' makes shocking but deeply compulsive watching. Viewers have spoken of being so overwhelmed as to switch off and return later, and being moved to anger and sleeplessness. I wasn't as depressed as many, and will come back to why.



2nd June 2020 | [Dave Bookless](#) | 2 comments

Please Build Back Better!

Our mobility, freedom and security put on hold... Our health and our lives threatened... Our wealth plummeted... Our temples of consumerism closed. All because of an almost invisible virus. Amidst very real fear and grief, this gives us an opportunity to rethink 'flourishing', and how our economic systems can be regenerative and restorative rather than unstable, unjust, and unsustainable.



If you have some spare time over the Christmas period and would like some recommendations for books on Creation Theology, here is [a list](#) compiled by Dave Bookless, Director of Theology for A Rocha International.

Results of 2020 bird watching at Hart Rd wetland, SA

The [Hart Road Wetlands](#) at Aldinga Beach is a system of artificial wetlands to treat urban stormwater. Habitats include open water and beds of cumbungi *Typha* sp., reed *Phragmites australis*, sedges (e.g. *Juncus* sp.) swards of nardoo *Marsilea* sp., tussocks of cutting grass *Gahnia filum* and clumps of lignum *Duma florulenta*. A few old gum trees and dead trunks occur. Dry land has been planted with mixed woodland including mallee species or is mowed grassland.

Surveys were conducted in six sites (plots), each of 2.0 hectares, of irregular shape but designed to include distinct wetland and/or woodland units, to inform property management. The '2.0 ha, 20 minute' method of BirdLife Australia was applied.



There were six survey efforts in 2020, with 36 standardised surveys and 2 incidental surveys. There were 593 bird records in total, with 66 species identified. Seven of these are introduced species. Six native species were found breeding.



Purple Swamphen with chicks

Species of ornithological interest due to occurrence at margins of known range, unusual in this habitat, or secretive behaviour (not commonly detected) are Peregrine Falcon, Baillon's Crake, Spotless Crake and Crescent Honeyeater.



Black-fronted Dotterel, Eurasian Coot with chicks, Crested Pigeon, White-faced Heron

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Send feedback and suggested articles for the Summer ENews by 10 Feb 21 to australia.comms@arocha.org

