



Improving habitat

We need to focus our efforts if we are to bring our threatened animals and plants back from the brink. The Australian Government's Threatened Species Strategy identifies improving habitat as one of its priorities for action.

All animals and plants need suitable and high quality habitat. We can help our threatened species by protecting healthy ecosystems, weeding, replanting and restoring areas where damage has been done, and reconnecting fragmented habitat to restore natural pathways.

Improving habitat supports threatened species recovery and everyone has a role to play—including governments, non-government organisations, landholders, the community and industry. Australian Government programmes such as 20 Million Trees and the Green Army help create, improve, revegetate and rehabilitate habitat critical to threatened species. Improving the quality of Australia's reserve system can ensure it provides maximum refuge and protection of critical habitat for threatened species. Especially important here are partnerships with Indigenous peoples, given that Indigenous Protected Areas make up more than one third of the National Reserve System.



Photo: Graeme Chapman

Restoring desert water places—NT

Using Indigenous knowledge, the project will restore four biodiversity-rich spring sites (Running Waters, Amerle Atwatye, Ilpili springs and Petermann Ranges springs) damaged by feral animals such as camels and horses. The project will involve training local land managers in wetland restoration and developing guidelines on these techniques for use in other arid regions. An inventory of flora and fauna at each site will be taken before and after it is restored. The project will help the vulnerable red cabbage palm, crest-tailed mulgara and black-footed rock-wallaby and the endangered Slater's skink.

Funding

\$320 000

Partners

NT Territory Government, the Central Land Council, the University of Canberra and local pastoralists

Helping threatened species hotspots—QLD

Mt Lewis, Mt Spurgeon and Mt Windsor national parks in far north Queensland are known hotspots for threatened species, particularly mammals. This project will intensively manage the parks to protect and recover at least 16 threatened species. The focus will be on managing fire to counter the loss of wet sclerophyll habitat. However, the project will also involve feral animal and weed control, biological surveys and scientific research. It will help species including the endangered northern bettong, northern quoll, spotted-tail quoll and southern cassowary.

Funding

\$200 000

Partners

Australian Wildlife Conservancy and Queensland Government

Mapping the movements and genetics of the hooded plover—NSW

This project will study two subpopulations of the vulnerable hooded plover between Wollongong and Bateman's Bay. While there are only about 60 adult hooded plovers left across New South Wales, their south coast population has more than doubled in the last five years under the current management regime which is designed to improve the security of their habitat. This project will build on that success, banding the shorebirds, tracking their movements and analysing their genetics to help us better understand how the groups share habitat and how best to conserve them in the wild.

Funding

\$40 000

Partner

NSW Government

Eradicating feral goats on Kangaroo Island—SA

The Kangaroo Island community is close to its goal of eradicating feral goats, and this project will help remove its last remaining feral goats. Feral goats trample and graze on native plant species, including the drooping sheoak that the endangered glossy black cockatoo feeds on. The goats also damage water holes, spread weeds and disease, and erode and compact fragile coastal soils. The project will use innovative approaches such as 'judas' goats to lead control officers to the remaining animals, drones with infra-red technology to map where the goats are, cameras to monitor known feral goat camps and watering points, a helicopter to flush the goats out, and prescribed burning to open up small areas where they can be spotted.

Funding

\$92 500

Partners

Kangaroo Island Natural Resource Management Board and SA Government

Improving Canberra's native grasslands —ACT

This project builds on existing investments to improve the condition of the endangered native temperate grasslands in the ACT's open space network by trialling 'disturbance' approaches such as fire, grazing, slashing and planting tube stock. It will also control for weeds and pest animals. The project will help the critically endangered golden sun moth, the endangered grassland earless dragon and the vulnerable striped legless lizard and pink-tailed worm-lizard.

Funding

\$4651

Partners

ACT Government and Landcare

Green Army

The Australian Government is investing more than \$700 million over four years in the Green Army Programme, building to 1500 teams of young people by 2018 undertaking conservation activities. Habitat restoration and protection is core business for Green Army teams which have a strong focus on practical land management. The Green Army Programme has already supplied over 270 projects directly supporting threatened species.

These numbers are set to increase, with the Threatened Species Strategy setting a goal of ensuring at least 80 per cent of Green Army projects support threatened species by providing suitable habitat. The upcoming Green Army Round 4 will have a priority theme of threatened species. Projects will be encouraged that directly support the protection and recovery of threatened species, particularly actions for improving habitat.

20 Million Trees

The Australian Government has committed to plant 20 million trees by 2020 to improve native vegetation and habitat that supports native species while contributing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It has committed \$50 million over four years to deliver the programme. The Threatened Species Strategy has a target of ensuring at least 80 per cent of 20 Million Trees projects support threatened species by providing suitable habitat.

More than \$30 million is being directed towards tree planting projects that have a direct threatened species outcome by restoring and improving the extent, connectivity and condition of native habitat. Under the first round of small grants, 95 per cent of successful projects contributed to the conservation of threatened species or ecological communities. So too will a further 22 projects in the large scale delivery programme, by planting 6.75 million trees to the value of \$16.3 million. This funding includes \$1.89 million for recovery of the helmeted honeyeater and Leadbeater's possum through three projects delivered by grant recipients and service providers north east of Melbourne.

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