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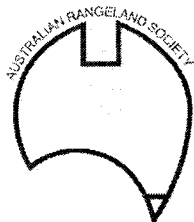
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# **WE'RE ALL IN THIS ARK OUT OF THE SEMI-DARK TOGETHER: KEY MANAGEMENT ISSUES FOR OUR WILDLIFE IN THE OUTBACK RANGELANDS AND ABORIGINAL LANDS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

1. The *South Australian Rangelands and Aboriginal Lands Wildlife Management Manual* is a detailed interim synthesis of current knowledge. It allows enlightened holistic management of Outback biodiversity enterprises by Pastoralists and Aboriginal Lands peoples as the foremost partners in wildlife management.
2. Acceptance and ownership of recommendations by stakeholders at all stages of any wildlife management initiative is essential for success.
3. The time scales of natural Outback wildlife cycles can be long (50+ years) and very variable in time and outcomes. Drivers include the interplay of weather, floods, and stochastic events.
4. The conservation status of Outback vertebrates is better than for the whole of the State.
5. Rabbits and Foxes have probably caused range collapses and demises of several Outback animal species. Native animals that become un-naturally abundant can be a similar threat.
6. The conservation status and outlook for the fish of Outback SA is precarious. The same applies to the other animals and plants dependent on natural wetlands, waterholes, intermittent watercourses and mound springs. These are precious and rare ecosystems needing our rapid response to reverse further declines.
7. Stock watering points and fencing relocations (but not proliferation) can benefit both stock management and wildlife conservation. The thrival (=continued healthy survival) of some species may depend on relocating some watering points to lower impact sites.
8. Wildlife ecotourism and management are potentially significant income generators for pastoralists and Aboriginal Lands peoples.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The production of the *South Australian Rangelands and Aboriginal Lands Wildlife Management Manual* brings together a wealth of information that is diffusely spread in many diverse publications, various data bases and in corporate and private knowledge. This detailed and comprehensive synthesis needs to be seen as an interim one that will be improved as further knowledge is won. The manual allows enlightened re-evaluations of the issues and directions for the management of Outback enterprises involving biodiversity and specifically wildlife. It provides holistic overviews and syntheses of many important issues for wildlife and its management and sustainability.

See the companion poster and display **GOOD NEWS FOR PASTORALISTS AND WILDLIFE: THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RANGELANDS AND ABORIGINAL LANDS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT MANUAL** for an overview of the manual's production and content.

The stakeholders and target audience for the manual are pastoralists, traditional land owners, land managers, outback residents, eco-tourists, Outback travellers, natural resource managers, researchers and students.

## **SOME KEY MANAGEMENT FACTORS, GUIDELINES AND DIRECTIONS**

1. Pastoralists and Aboriginal Lands peoples are clearly identified as the primary and foremost partners in the management of Outback wildlife. Their commitments to the land and remote-area lifestyles are important factors to secure their involvement in sustainable practices and Natural Resource Management.
2. Acceptance and ownership of recommendations for the management of Outback wildlife by Pastoralists and Aboriginal Lands peoples is essential for success. This imperative needs to be facilitated throughout all stages of any wildlife management initiatives, including from the earliest planning and design stages.
3. The time scales of natural Outback wildlife cycles are long and very variable in time and outcomes, such that the same outcomes in any one area may not re-occur in over 50+ years. Outcomes are predominantly driven by the interplay of rainfall events, flooding, and the inevitable dry conditions, with lesser but highly significant impacts from events like fire, storm winds, severe food feasts and famines, disease pulses and predator diversity and abundance variations.
4. The conservation status of vertebrate animals is significantly better in the South Australian Rangelands and Aboriginal Lands than in the State as a whole.
5. The introduced Rabbit and Fox have in the past had many dramatic peaks in abundance and their combined impacts probably resulted in range collapses and demises and of several Outback animal species. Some native animals that have become un-naturally abundant have and can threaten some other less adaptable species. Management and control actions for feral animals, un-naturally abundant native animals as well as plants (both introduced and possibly some natives) need to be both sustainable and effective in the long term also from the perspective of wildlife thrival (=continued healthy survival).
6. The conservation status and outlook for the fish of Outback SA is as serious if not more precarious than the mammals and this situation reflects the pressures on the scarce and threatened natural surface waters (including wetlands, waterholes, intermittent watercourses and mound springs). These precious, precarious and relatively rare ecosystems are equally threatened and need our rapid engagement and response to reverse their further declines.
7. Stock watering points and fencing relocations (but not proliferation) can be carried out to benefit both stock management and wildlife conservation. To ensure the continued survival of some species of animals at the regional level, some watering points may need to be relocated to less-critical habitats and lower impact sites to foster vulnerable and rare habitats and to increase the wildlife dispersal corridor characteristics in an integrated total landscape.
8. Wildlife ecotourism and management are potentially significant income generators for pastoralists and Aboriginal Lands peoples.

## **SOME KEY OUTCOMES THAT CAN FLOW FROM THIS PROJECT**

1. Significantly more informed decision making and management for Outback enterprises that involve biodiversity generally and wildlife in particular.
2. The thrival (=enhanced survival) of biodiversity and threatened wildlife in the vast parts of the State that are outside the reserve system.
3. The further augmentation of the SA Natural Resource Management Act 2004.
4. The further integration of stock, ferals and wildlife management.
5. More sustainable use of Outback natural resources and biodiversity.
6. The greater empowerment of landholders.

## **WHERE TO FROM HERE?**

As we are all in the same ark Earth together and as already-won information becomes available to inform management decisions, the only rational thing to do is work together to better maintain and foster our biodiversity and our environment in the light of improved knowledge. The best management decisions that may impact on biodiversity and specifically wildlife will be those that are well informed. Such best-practice decisions will greatly benefit us, future generations, and our biodiversity on which we are all dependent.

The eight points outlined above are key factors, guidelines and directions that are recommended to you. The manual provides much additional information to achieve best-practice wildlife management with current available knowledge.

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## **REFERENCE**

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