



WILDLIFE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA INC.

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SOCIETY POLICIES

Habitat preservation

Control of feral animals and feral plants

Use of native species for human needs

Feeding native animals

National Parks

Prevention of road kills

Keeping native animals in captivity

Marine Sanctuaries

Climate change

Preamble

1. There are certain broad positions that are fundamental to the aims and purpose of the Society. We propose these should be termed "policies", should be acceptable to all members of Council and should be considered binding on people speaking on behalf of the Society (such as NCC delegates). Such policies should have sound scientific and ethical foundations.

2. There are also more specific items, often of immediate interest but likely to be relatively short lived, related to these policies on which the Society could have a position. However such positions may need to be more flexible. These are included as "guidelines".

3. Brief supporting rationales are supplied when necessary.

Patrick W Medway AM
National President



Policy 1: Habitat preservation

1. The Society gives high priority to all measures to protect wildlife habitat.

rationale: Loss of wildlife habitat presents the greatest threat at the present time to the preservation of biodiversity in Australia.

2. The Society supports measures to encourage and ensure proper management of lands outside parks and reserves, including ecologically sustainable management of agricultural lands.

rationale: The vast majority of endangered plant and animals are located outside National Parks and Reserves, and governments do not have the resources to set aside adequate areas to protect these species.



Restored wetland habitat at Kurnell Shorebird Lagoon



Rainforest near Great Ocean Road, Victoria

Policy 2: Control of feral animals and feral plants

The Society supports efforts to control introduced weeds and feral pest animal species.

Guidelines:

The use of 1080 as a control measure against foxes and cats is supported provided that:

- In eastern Australia, where the resistance of native animal species to 1080 is much less than in Western Australia, 1080 is not broadcast, as for example by aerial baiting, but is buried.
- Such baits are placed in sand plots or in such places where it is possible to determine the presence of non-target species.
- Such baits are removed after the controlled baiting regime is completed.



A feral kitten



A feral fox

Policy 3: Use of native species for human needs

The Society has no objection to the use of native plant or animal species for human needs provided:

- That harvesting is at sustainable levels.
- That the decision to allow such use is made on the basis of scientific evidence.
- That levels of exploitation are checked frequently and such levels revised on the basis of sound management practices which are themselves based on hard scientific data.
- That in the case of animal species harvesting is carried out in a humane manner, by licensed operators under the control of relevant wildlife authorities.

Guidelines:

1. Native animal species should not be hunted or farmed for the purpose of supplying human ornament or dress.

rationale: There are adequate sources of such materials from plant, domesticated animal or manufactured sources.

2. Where species such as kangaroos are killed for other reasons, such as pest control, meat and skins should not be wasted but should be available for commercial use.

rationale: If carcasses have a monetary value which can only be realised through proper channels, there is even greater incentive to remain within a licensed system.

3. Farming of suitable species, such as crocodiles and turtles, should be encouraged as an alternative to taking of individuals or eggs from the wild.

rationale: Farming is a means of ensuring that there is no depletion of wildlife populations. Farming of some species has already been carried out successfully for a number of years under control of the NT and Queensland wildlife authorities.



A baby koala



A kangaroo



Crocodiles in crocodile farm



Waratah (Telopea speciosissima), a native flower now grown commercially

Policy 4: Feeding native animals

The Society discourages the artificial feeding of native wildlife in the bush or in backyards, except under conditions of severe environmental stress, such as bushfire or drought.

rationale:

- **Predation:** feeding stations can be magnets for predators, especially cats and dogs. Native animal that lose their natural instincts of predator awareness become easy prey.
- **Dependency** – animals may become dependent upon artificial sources of food and become less inclined to forage naturally.
- **Poor nutrition** - many people do not provide appropriate food or sufficient variety to cover the bird and animals dietary needs. In the case of birds, parental birds may take poor foods back to the nest, which may affect the healthy development of young native birds. In the case of juvenile native mammals (joeys) cows milk may be inappropriate for prolonged feeding, leading to diarrhoea and possibly death.
- **Nuisance** – hand feeding of native animals can make them aggressive and they can become a nuisance by stealing food from unaware humans.



Campers hand feeding Cockatoos



Feeding wild birds can make them dependant on humans

Policy 5: National Parks

1. Control of National Parks should never be vested in any organisation or group other than the state or federal National Parks authorities.

rationale: Conservation may not be a high priority with special interest groups. Organisations or groups other than National Park Authorities are much more likely to be susceptible to commercial pressures.

Guidelines:

1. While Aboriginal involvement in management of National Parks and the selective hiring of Aborigines as rangers and other park officials should be encouraged, the ultimate control and ownership of national parks must remain with the community as a whole.

2. Commercial developments in National Parks should be kept at a bare minimum.

3. No further development within the Snowy Mountains National Parks should be allowed; development of accommodation and related facilities for the ski fields should be outside the Park with access to the ski fields being by public transport such as the ski tube.

rationale: The alpine environment is exceptionally fragile and supports a specialised flora and fauna, such as the mountain possum (*Burramys*). Fast moving traffic to ski fields such as Perisher has lead to an unacceptable level of road kills.



Kalbarri National Park

Policy 6: Prevention of roadkills

The Society supports continued research into ways of reducing roadkills of native wildlife.

rationale: Current research indicates that some 7,000 native animals are killed on the roads across Australia every day. This is a terrible waste of our native wildlife and a high cost to the motorist and insurance companies involved in smash repairs.



Thousands of native animals are killed on our roads every year



Raptors are killed when they feed on dead insects and rodents they find on the road



Wedge tailed eagle puts itself in danger feeding on roadkill

Policy 7: Keeping native animals in captivity

The Society is opposed to taking native terrestrial vertebrates from the wild into captivity except as necessary for educational display and research purposes.

Guidelines:

1. Wherever possible zoo specimens should be obtained from captive breeding programs. Repeated capture of a species from the wild for display purposes is unacceptable under this policy.

rationale: The Society recognises that many Australians keep native birds and native fish as a hobby. It is important that no native wildlife be taken from the wild to satisfy this hobby, but rather captive bred specimens should continue to be used.



Eastern Quoll (Dasyurus viverrinus). Some people would like to keep a "native cat" as a pet



A "life sentence" behind bars. Beak and Feather Disease was diagnosed in this domestically raised White Cockatoo (Cacatua alba)

Policy 8: Marine Sanctuaries

The Wildlife Preservation Society believes that an integrated system of marine sanctuaries is essential for the maintenance of marine biodiversity within the marine environment. The Society believes:

- all states should have a comprehensive network of marine sanctuaries to protect our marine wildlife.
- there should be no "take" of any kind in a marine sanctuary.
- 50% of marine parks should become marine sanctuaries.

Guidelines:

1. Marine Parks are not the same as marine sanctuaries. Currently, marine sanctuaries comprise as little as 3% to 6% of marine parks. The vast majority of marine parks are zoned "general use" which means in many circumstances there is very little difference in the activities permitted inside the marine park and those permitted outside.

2. Marine sanctuaries are coastal, estuarine or oceanic areas managed to conserve biodiversity. They range from small, highly protected areas that focus on species or community protection, to large multiple areas that include complex linkages of ecosystems and habitats.

3. Marine sanctuaries should be one of a number of tools for the protection of biodiversity.

Others are:

Management strategies, estuary and catchment management plans, conservation agreements, water quality protection plans, threatened species recovery plans, and habitat protection plans.

4. Studies from around the world show that when you declare 30-50% of a marine area as a marine sanctuary not only do the benefits to biodiversity abound, but fisheries and tourism also reap the rewards. This occurs over time due to the improvements in ecosystem resilience and the large increase in the numbers of big, more productive, fish that spill-over into fishing grounds.



Diver with whale shark



Fur seal pup



Green sea turtle. Photo by Dr. Nicole Duplaix



Hermit crab (diogenidae sp.) Northern Territory

Policy 9: Climate change

The WPSA recognises that human intervention has had a significant effect on the health and well-being of native fauna and flora. We accept that there is now ample evidence to demonstrate the long term effects on climate patterns of industrial and population pollution, particularly the release of greenhouse gases. The WPSA supports all efforts by governments, industries and individuals to introduce policies and behaviours that will reduce climate change and maintain a supportive environment for our fauna and flora.

rationale: The greatest single detrimental effect of human activity on the environment has been the destruction of eco-systems and habitat. Climate change is now threatening to accelerate this process and since scientists now accept that human activity is responsible, we must do all in our power to change human behaviour.