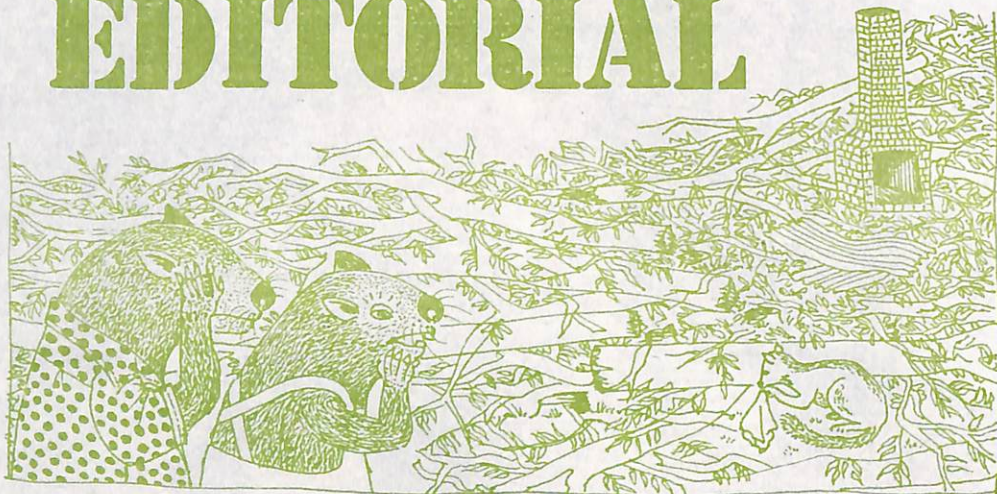




NATURE NOTES

EDITORIAL



WHAT'S INSIDE?

Editorial.....P.2

Wilbur and Wally
Waffle on..... P.3

Pandas.....P.4
What is
Conservation?....P.6

Hairy Bungler and the
Lowland Sisters..P.10

Let's Harp
on Carp.....P.12

Nature in the
News.....P.14

Puzzles.....P.16

ARTISTS THIS MONTH:

Thanks to Lynette
Portlock, Wilma
Prohasky and Cindy
Hunnam. COVER: Thanks
to "SAVE THE ANIMALS"
by B. Stonehouse, P.174

Hello there,

The story I have to tell you this month is a sad one indeed. Last weekend, Wally Wombat took his cousin Wilbur up to visit his holiday home in East Gippsland. They came home shocked and upset. The holiday home was gone - buried under a heap of fallen logs and branches. Many of his neighbours were wandering around homeless and hungry. "It's happening all over the place", they told him. "Those human beings sometimes don't seem to care what happens to us animals", they continued.

As soon as he came home, Wally was busy planning this month's issue. It's all about conservation. What does this mean to you? How can you help? Perhaps the articles in this month's issue will give you some ideas. Cheerio for now,
DEBRA BRYDON

NATURE NOTES...A RINGWOOD INSPECTORATE PUBLICATION



Wally visits Wilbur's East Gippsland Holiday Home:-

Wilbur: Well, here we are Wally, just around the corner.....

Wally: Looks a bit desolate to me, Wil!

Wilbur: Desolate! It's been destroyed! There's where my house used to be..... Over there where that great pile of wood chips are. Aaaargh!

Wally: What's been going on here, Wil?

Wilbur: Looks like the controversial wood chipping program has caught up with Wombat Resort!

Wally: What's wood chipping Wil?

Wilbur: It's when lots of trees are chopped down, and used for industry. They make them into tiny little pieces.

Wally: These trees, into tiny little pieces? Where will all the animals go?

Wilbur: Who knows Wal, who knows?

Wally: If all the trees are cut down, there may be serious erosion and silting problems in the rivers. Some scientists think it may cause all sorts of things to go wrong with the soil and plants and then with us animals!

Wilbur: Doesn't sound like a very bright prospect to me Wal.

Wally: No, it doesn't Wil. Wombats along with other animals need the trees to live. I don't want to live in a desert!

Wilbur: But won't they plant other trees, Wal, to replace the ones they've cut down?

Wally: I certainly hope so, Wil.

Wilbur: Yes Wal, so do I. In the meantime, we'd best head off to another resort, hopefully a tranquil, unspoilt one.

Wally: Yes, Wil. Let's hope we can find one!



What can you find out about the woodchip industry? What kinds of trees are used and where do they come from? Where do the woodchips go? What are they used for?.....

NOBODY OUTSIDE CHINA KNEW THIS ANIMAL EXISTED UNTIL IT WAS DISCOVERED BY A FRENCH PRIEST IN 1869



PANDAS

THAT IT WAS 1937 BEFORE A PANDA WAS CAPTURED - AND IN NEW YORK BECAME AS FAMOUS AS A FILM STAR



ITS RUGGED HABITAT IN WESTERN CHINA WAS SO HARD TO VISIT...



PANDAS MAY LOOK CUDDLY TO HUMANS, BUT THEY ARE RARELY AFFECTIONATE AMONG EACH OTHER



THEY ARE HAPPIEST WHEN PLAYING BY THEMSELVES WITH A SIMPLE TOY -



OR WHEN SAVING ENERGY!



AFTER MONTHS OF COOLNESS, THE ONLY GESTURE THE FEMALE MADE WAS A SWIPE AT HER VISITOR'S HEAD!



GREAT EFFORTS WERE MADE TO MATE A MALE PANDA FROM THE MOSCOW ZOO WITH A PARTNER IN LONDON



SCIENTISTS DISAGREE WHETHER THE GIANT PANDA IS RELATED TO THE BEAR OR THE RACCOON



THE CHINESE BELIEVE THE CREATURE FORMS AN EXCLUSIVE FAMILY OF ITS OWN. CERTAINLY, NO OTHER ANIMAL WOULD EAT SO MANY BAMBOO LEAVES - AND REJECT ANY THAT HAVE BEEN WASHED!

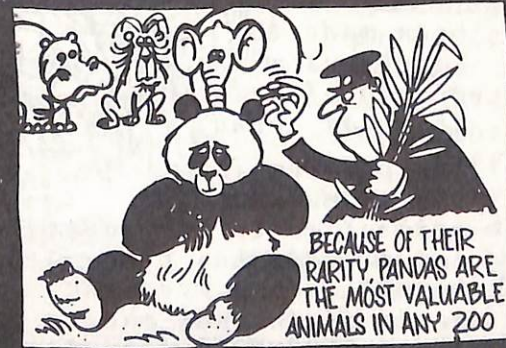


THANKS TO STOCKWELL PRESS FOR PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS ARTICLE FROM "Wonders of Wildlife" by Haddon and Trengrove



ALTHOUGH PANDAS IN ZOOS LIVE LARGELY ON BAMBOO SHOOTS AND RICE GRUEL,

THEY ARE BY NATURE MEAT EATERS



BECAUSE OF THEIR RARITY, PANDAS ARE THE MOST VALUABLE ANIMALS IN ANY ZOO

A FLESHY PAD COVERING A VERY LONG WRISTBONE GIVES EACH FOREPAW THE ABILITY TO GRASP



THE CHINESE HAVE EMPLOYED THEM AS AIDS TO DIPLOMACY BY PRESENTING THEM AS GIFTS TO FOREIGN LEADERS

A PAIR GIVEN TO PRESIDENT NIXON INCREASED WASHINGTON ZOO ATTENDANCES BY 63%



Long ago, our ancestors began altering the world so that their lives would be happier, easier and safer. As the years passed by, they discovered how to grow wheat and other crops. They learnt how to raise big herds of grass-eating animals so that wool, meat and other products could be obtained. Mines and quarries were dug into the ground to get minerals for making tools and machines. Dams, reservoirs and pipelines have

WHAT IS CONSERVATION?

been made to supply us with plenty of water all year round.

The problem is that sometimes the natural world of plants and animals has been sacrificed to meet the needs of the man-made world. RESOURCES like land, rivers and forests have often been destroyed by the thoughtless way we use them. We have been so busy taking things from nature that often we have not had the time to stop and think about what we have been doing...or is it that we don't really care?

Many CONSERVATIONISTS are

deeply worried about the destruction or alteration of our natural environment. Many animals today are heading faster and faster towards EXTINCTION as their home territory is destroyed or altered by mining, logging, flooding or erosion. The unlucky Indian tiger has been both pushed out of his home by the spread of agriculture AND hunted by those who thought shooting animals was a 'fun' sport! It's really no wonder there are

very few left.

Other animals have not been as 'lucky' as the tiger. When the first voyagers

landed on the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius (the DODO's only home), they killed the slow moving, flightless and defenceless bird for food. The few dodos who managed to escape from their hungry jaws were forced to compete with the pigs, cats, dogs and goats who soon overran the island. By 1693, the dodo was completely extinct.

All five species of the rhinoceros-Indian, white, black, Javanese and

and Sumatran-are thought to be endangered. In the last couple of years, the black rhino has suffered the most severe losses. Ten years ago there were twenty thousand in the wild but today the population has shrunk to only two thousand. Not only was there less space for them to live in but poachers also broke the law to hunt them for their valuable horns. These are either ground up into a \$5000 a kilo love potion sold in Asia, or made into six thousand dollar dagger and sword handles for sale to wealthy Arabs.

Today, efforts are being made to put as many of the remaining black rhinos as possible into the protection of Kenya's national parks. Maybe there is still time to save them from extinction.

There are many other animals whose future on this planet is uncertain. The Snow Leopard is an almost mythical creature. It has been seen by only two

Westerners in its native habitat high in the mountains of central Asia. Desire for its beautiful pelt has been the main cause for the Snow Leopard's dropping numbers. Today, however, fewer people wear animal furs because they are concerned about the bad effect hunting has on some types of animals and the often cruel way they are trapped.

Another sad story is that of the Southern Bald Eagle of Canada and the U.S.A.

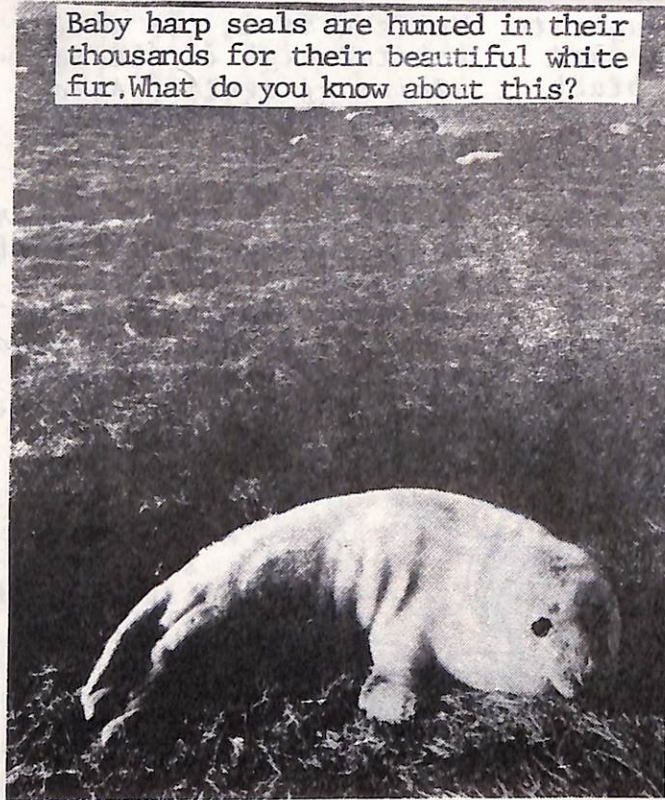
Although protected by law since 1940, its numbers have still continued to drop. There are many reasons why this has happened.

As well as human invasion of its nesting grounds, the use of insect pesticides by farmers has caused the bird to lay fewer eggs. Even when the eggs are laid, the egg shells are so thin they will not support the weight of the parents and crack. YET SAVING ANIMAL SPECIES IS ONLY ONE PART OF THE CONSERVATION STORY. CAN YOU THINK OF ANY OTHER PARTS OF THE NATURAL WORLD THAT NEED PROTECTION?

ARTIST: L. Portlock



Baby harp seals are hunted in their thousands for their beautiful white fur. What do you know about this?



Tiger hunting was a favourite sport in the 1880's.



PHOTOS: Thanks to "SAVING THE ANIMALS" by Bernard Stonehouse

BELOW: Small crocodiles in South America are hunted for their meat and skins and are often sold to tourists as souvenirs.



Many elephants are slaughtered by poachers so that people can have ivory ornaments, piano keys and chess sets.



ABOVE: A cormorant smothered with heavy fuel oil from a leaking tanker. Very few birds survive this treatment.
BELOW: A rainforest in Sumatra after 'clear felling'.



Hairy Bungler and the Lowland Sisters

BY D. BRYDON.....ARTIST: Cindy Humman

IT'S A CRY FROM THE HEART, HAIRY
IT ALMOST MAKES MY SCALES CURL AT THE EDGES

In the cabin, the girls re-read the worrying letter...

Dear Lucy and Lilly, On my recent rafting trip down the Franklin river in Tasmania, I noticed hundreds of animals engaged in the strange sport of tree climbing. - Even wombats! What I thought was even more odd was that they insisted on staying up there. I'm worried they will starve. Can you help? Yours sincerely Rafting, Ronnie.

AFTER DAYS OF PADDLING THROUGH DANGEROUS RAPIDS.....



WELL GUYS, IT'S TRUE THAT PART OF YOUR RIVER HOME MIGHT BE FLOODED TO BUILD ANOTHER HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME, BUT IT'S FAR FROM CERTAIN YET.... SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT TASMANIA NEEDS THE EXTRA ELECTRICITY TO FUEL MORE FACTORIES AND CREATE MORE JOBS.....



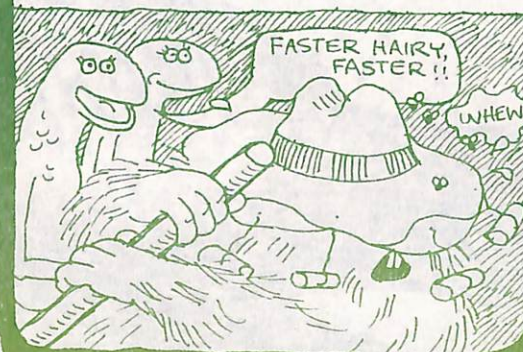
DOESN'T ANYONE CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO US AND OUR BEAUTIFUL HOME?

YES MATE, MANY PEOPLE ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE RAPID DIS-APPEARANCE OF ONE OF THE LAST 3 TEMPERATE WILDERNESS AREAS IN THE WORLD. OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS 45% OF THE SOUTH-WEST WILDERNESS HAS BEEN DESTROYED...

TREKKING ACROSS THE COUNTRYSIDE, OUR FAMOUS AUSTRALIAN NATURALIST HAIRY BUNGLER, JOINS THOSE OTHER FAMOUS AUSTRALIAN NATURALISTS THE LOWLAND SISTERS IN AN UNENDING QUEST TO SOLVE THE MANY MYSTERIES OF NATURE.... THIS WEEK....

THE LOWLAND SISTERS RECEIVE AN URGENT LETTER FROM THE WILDERNESS IN TASMANIA....

THE TRIO HIRE A CANOE AND BEGIN THEIR BRAVE JOURNEY.....



BUT MY HUM NEVER TAUGHT ME HOW TO SWIM...

COME ON HAIRY - UP THE GANGPLANK WE HAVE TO GET GOING.

FERRY



HAIRY AMAZES THE LOWLAND SISTERS BY CLIMBING THE ENORMOUS HUON PINE TO CONDUCT A FACE TO FACE CHAT



YOU'D BETTER EXPLAIN TO THEM WHAT'S GOING ON HAIRY.

LUCY SAVES THE DAY!!

...BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SAVE YOURSELVES BY SITTING UP THERE FELLAS, - I'VE GOT AN IDEA THAT MIGHT HELP.... HERE IT IS....



HAIRY AND THE GIRLS LEAVE THE WILDERNESS ANIMALS BUSY WRITING A LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER!!

Dear Mal, Can you tell us what's going on? Will the new dam really create more jobs? Why can't we all try to save energy instead of making other ways of making electricity? Please help us save our wilderness. It's too beautiful to lose. Yours truly,

Let's Harp on CARP



Carp can survive in all temperatures of water, even those that would kill native fish!

by A. Carmichael

The European Carp has literally burst onto the environmentalist's scene. It is thought to be ruining the waters of the Murray and its tributaries through its unusual breeding and behaviour patterns. The carp's numbers have increased dramatically over the last ten years and the places it can now be found are amazing. They have been sighted as far afield as the mouth of the Murray in South Australia, right up to some parts of Southern Queensland. The carp is thought to destroy water plants by stirring up the bottom and leaving it muddy. The carp can also survive in water with a very low oxygen content. Some fishermen believe carp eat the eggs of some of our native fish, but this has not been proven. The carp are even thought to provide food for some of our Aussie fish!

So, it appears even though we have HUGE numbers of carp in our rivers, there has not been a thorough enough study into their behaviour to decide whether they are noxious or not! Some fishermen in Victoria and New South Wales are using electric stunners to catch up to five tonnes a day of the carp. Some people say they are good to eat, others say they taste awful. There seems to be divided opinion over whether the carp should be allowed in our rivers or not. Carp were first brought into Australia in 1890, and put into a dam in New South Wales. Apparently during a flood the dam overflowed and the fish escaped into the Darling River. In 1969 the first carp was caught in South Australia. Now they are classed as a noxious fish in that state! What can YOU find out about the carp? Write in and tell us!



By PETER ROBERTS,
science reporter

Extinction is forever, the saying goes. Occasionally it is possible to reverse a trend and bring back to their traditional homes birds and animals that man has driven away.

When Victoria's Fisheries and Wildlife Division bought the Lara homestead, Serendip, in 1959, researchers began trying to breed the magnificent bustards, brolgas, magpie geese and Cape Barren geese that had all but disappeared from the State.

Cape Barren geese, graceful grey birds which pair for life, defied the division's aims of breeding them in captivity and reintroducing them in the wild. Mr Syd Cowling, an assistant director of wildlife, said efforts have now been concentrated on consolidating remnant populations of the birds in South Gippsland.

"As for brolgas, we still haven't

cracked their breeding," Mr Cowling said on an inspection tour of Serendip yesterday. "We have yet to get successful breeding in here."

But with bustards and magpie geese the division has an embarrassment of riches. More than 100 magpie geese chicks are reared each year and the birds have been reestablished at Tower Hill, Kerang and Sale.

But mortality in the field is high and there are probably only 200 of the birds in the State. Some of the Serendip magpie geese were sent to San Diego Zo where breeding proved virtually impossible. San Diego's

Serendip aims to end the flight to extinction



ABOVE: Magpie geese strut about at Serendip. BELOW: A day-old bustard chick, straight out of the incubator.



hard water meant the geese laid eggs with very thick shells — chicks could not break their way out.

The division is negotiating with Western District farmers on the release next year of the first bustards bred at Serendip. Groups of farmers are being asked to manage their properties jointly to allow reintroduction of the birds, which feed on insects and mice.

Serendip, which is to be opened to the public every Thursday and Friday from next Thursday, is proof of the compatibility of wildlife and farming. The property still operates as a farm, but supports a wide variety of rare Victorian waterbirds.

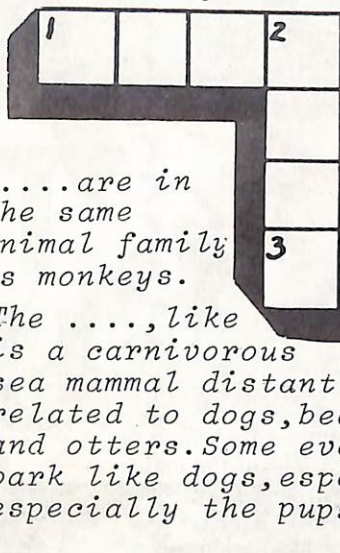
Word Stairways

Fill in the word stairways with the help of the clues.



Stairway 1

CLUES



1. The seal is one of the most numerous of sea mammals but many conservationists feel that the annual cull is too great.

2. The is an American member of the cat family.

3. The continent of has 3 species of dark brown to black bears found nowhere else in the world.

4. are in the same animal family as monkeys.

5. The, like is a carnivorous sea mammal distantly related to dogs, bears and otters. Some even bark like dogs, especially the pups.



* * * * *

CLUES

Stairway 2



1. "As dead as a" is a well known saying.

2. An Australian gem stone, often green and blue in colour.

3. Animals and plants often die when the they are living on is used for other purposes by human beings.

4. When a type of animal is extinct it means that every animal of that type is

5. Feral have been introduced into Australia by those who enjoy hunting and venison.

