



**HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL**
AUSTRALIA

HSI AUSTRALIA'S SUPPORTER NEWSLETTER

STANDING **for** **ANIMALS**

MARCH 2021



Making a Splash

A strong voice for
our marine world

INSIDE: Threatened species protection | Feature: standing up for marine life | Bushfire disaster recovery story | National protection for wildlife | Updates: support for African lion protection | Animal welfare reforms | Better Wool Guide | Dog meat farm closures



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Share your stories of creating a more humane world by using the hashtag **#standingforanimals** on social media.

Cover image

The Australian sea lion's status has been upgraded to Endangered (see story page 5).

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CEO Message

Welcome to our first edition under your brand-new newsletter name—*Standing for Animals*. In these pages we are delighted to feature some of the incredible work that you help us do to protect the creatures that live beneath the waves.

You're familiar with our long history protecting marine life, whether it is taking Japanese whalers to court or getting the very first shark species protected under a UN Convention. I know that many of you are just as passionate about finned species as you are furred or feathered so I really hope you will enjoy hearing from Larry, our Marine Biologist, about some recent victories you've helped us achieve in this space.

You've also been on the long journey with us to build government support for better environment laws to actually save our threatened species, not push more over the brink! Here you can read the latest news on this challenging campaign which requires us to stay optimistic and nimble as we negotiate for the best possible outcomes for animals.

We are happy to share some more stories of the bushfire disaster recovery from the wildlife carers you have helped support and the many animals that will benefit from your generosity for years to come.

The bushfires also meant that the government opened up the timeline for threatened species nominations which are a critical part of our work to reverse the extinction crisis. So we have nominated some iconic species as well as some lesser known geckos which are in urgent need of help.

Thanks to you we have also been able to continue supporting all our international project partners throughout the COVID-19 crisis. This means that vital anti-poaching work did not stop and animals in sanctuaries continued to get the care and nourishment they needed.

I hope reading *Standing for Animals* fills you with satisfaction with what you have achieved—thank you!



Erica Martin
Chief Executive Officer



.....
**WITH
YOUR
SUPPORT**
.....

Protecting our most vulnerable iconic wildlife

2020 saw serious threats to many species increase, making their protection even more critical.

Koalas Koala populations have been heavily impacted by land clearing and the devastating bushfires of last summer. Which is why we were one of three groups that put forward a nomination for the combined koala populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the ACT to be considered Endangered. The good news is that the Federal Environment Minister has prioritised our nomination for assessment by the independent Threatened Species Scientific Committee which will report back in October this year.

Platypus We acted swiftly after new research released late last year showed platypus are also teetering on the brink. In partnership with the Australian Conservation Foundation, we have jointly nominated the platypus for protection as a nationally Vulnerable species. The research, conducted by the University of New South Wales and commissioned by the Australian Conservation Foundation, shows their range has declined by at least 22% nationwide over the last 30 years (most severely in NSW with a 32% reduction, followed by Queensland with 27%), amounting to a massive 200,000km² loss of habitat area (approximately three times the area of Tasmania).

Geckos And, in a first for us, we have nominated four species of geckos for increased protection under Queensland law, which will also lead to federal protection. The Arcadia Velvet Gecko, Long-necked Northern Leaf-tailed Gecko, Pinnacles Leaf-tailed Gecko and Cape Melville Leaf-tailed Gecko are all in a perilous state and at high risk of extinction in the event of bushfires.



IMAGE: CONRAD HOSKIN

Queensland, NSW and ACT koalas (top) and Cape Melville Leaf-tailed Gecko (bottom) nominated for increased protection.

THANKS TO YOU, we have managed to get more than 70 species listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* as well as an incredible 7 million hectares of wildlife habitat.

Making a splash

Our marine life needs our voice and protection. Here HSI's Larry Chlebeck talks about our key campaigns and the importance of your support.

Targeting major threats to sharks: culling, finning and flake

My work at HSI is focused on shark conservation and HSI's commitment to the humane treatment and protection of these much-maligned creatures. In this quest, some of you have already joined me to become 'Shark Champions', a joint campaign program with the Australian Marine Conservation Society supported through the Shark Conservation Fund.

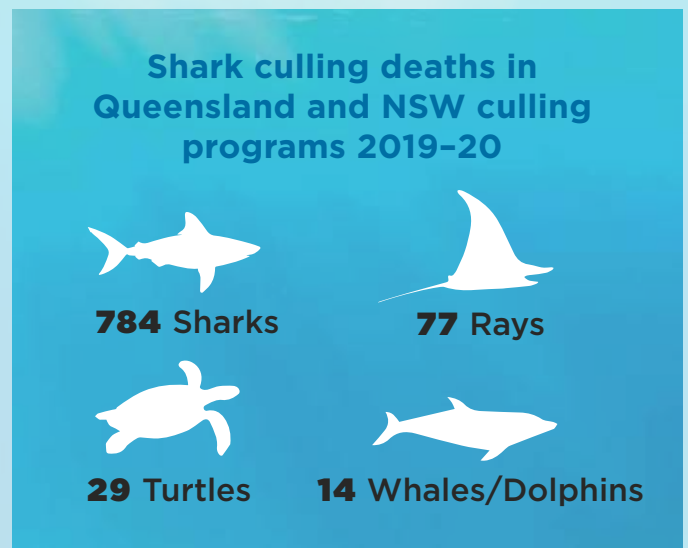
Sharks are uniquely vulnerable to extinction which makes our work so critical. Here are three major shark conservation campaigns that with your steadfast support are creating significant momentum:

► End culling

With your support, we are determined to end the shark culling programs in Queensland and New South Wales. Contrary to popular belief, shark nets and lethal drumlines do not improve swimmer safety, and they take a horrific toll on our marine life. Turtles, rays, harmless sharks and even dolphins lose their lives every year for

absolutely no reason. There are much better ways to keep swimmers safe and we are happy to see more investment in drone surveillance in both states but the nets and hooks for culling need to come out.

Take action to save sharks from culling:
hsi.org.au/SharkCull



Shark nets are the most indiscriminate and deadly of the culling methods used in Australia



IMAGE: WWF AUSTRALIA



Shark fishing kills 100 million sharks each year—many have their fins removed and their bodies discarded.

► Ban finning

Shark finning is a practice that most of us think happens in other countries—surely slicing off a shark’s fins while it is still alive and dumping the body for it to die slowly couldn’t be happening in Australia?

Unfortunately, while technically against the law, there has been a loophole that allowed sharks to be ‘processed’ at sea. This meant that the valuable fins of larger sharks, some of which are endangered, could be sliced off and passed off as having come from the bodies of smaller sharks that are landed.

Thanks to your incredible support, we had a huge victory in one of Australia’s largest shark fisheries last year, when a new rule was implemented for the Queensland’s East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Fishery which requires all sharks to be brought back to land with their fins still attached to their body.

Western Australia is now the only state left that does not have a ‘fins naturally attached’ policy in any of its fisheries. If you haven’t yet taken our action, you can now at sharkchampions.org.au/finning

► Take endangered sharks off the menu: #GiveFlakeABreak

A new consumer awareness campaign, ‘Give Flake a Break’, launched in January, encouraging Aussies to pledge to stop eating ‘flake’—a catch-all term used by the seafood industry to sell shark. The problem is endangered and critically endangered species are included, and legally bought and sold without the knowledge of sellers or buyers. It’s essential to properly label seafood so that consumers can make educated choices to help stop the legal catch of threatened species.

You can help give flake a break by visiting hsi.org.au/Flake



Protecting our unique sea lions from fishing nets

The Australian sea lion, featured on our cover, is one of the most endangered sea lions in the world with an estimated overall population of 10–12,000. They also have 18-month breeding cycles and females are extremely reluctant to move from their birthplace which increases their vulnerability to threats. These unique animals are our only native species of sea lion and have been under threat from entanglements in fishing gear, especially fine-mesh gill nets.

Late last year our nomination to upgrade the Australian sea lion’s protection status from Vulnerable to Endangered succeeded. HSI has also been able to work with the government and the fishing industry on fishing closures and we hope this and its stronger protection status will help the Australian sea lion population start recovering.

Thank you for being there not just for the wildlife that roams our bushlands, but also for the wildlife that lives in our rivers and oceans.



Larry Chlebeck, HSI Marine Biologist

North East Victoria Animal Aid

In response to last summer's bushfires, many wildlife care groups were forced to find new ways to help animals and the people who care for them.

North East Victoria Animal Aid (NEVAA) was one of these groups, establishing an innovative Crisis Container program to help wildlife carers in regional Victoria. The program works with 50 wildlife shelters and over 150 carers in the region to acquire, store and distribute supplies to those fire-affected animals that needed them most.

HSI provided funding for the essentials of wildlife care, including supplementary feed, medicine, disinfectant, bottles and blankets. With this contribution, every carer in the program received support, helping to keep up with the influx of new animals and the specialised care needed for fire-victims.

If this program was a significant help during the bushfire season, it became an unexpected necessity during COVID-19. With many carers losing additional income and newly restricted access to food products and disinfectants, the containers became vital as a last-resort for many wildlife shelters in this period.

With your support, these containers have already provided vital support to a wide range of wildlife in need.

The Crisis Container program provided food, medicines and supplies to help a wide range of wildlife in need.

YOUR SUPPORT HAS SO FAR HELPED:

73 wildlife carers and sanctuaries

More than 4,000 native animals in care

Fund **fire-recovery research projects** to support native populations

Establish infrastructure for **long-term fire resilience** including triage centres, wildlife clinics, supply hubs and workshops

“The impact that your funding has made is amazing. The carers that we have helped so far are beyond words and we can't thank you enough.”

Tania Leahy, NEVAA spokesperson



Standing up for our wildlife

We have been deeply engaged in the review into Australia's environment law for more than a year now. You've been with us every step of the way as we have worked to persuade Parliament that this is a critical opportunity to strengthen, not weaken, the law that protects our precious nature.

Just last month, the much anticipated final report into the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* was released by the government. We were really pleased to see that Professor Graeme Samuel had listened to our input and his report confirms that Australia's natural environment and iconic places are in an overall state of decline and under increasing threat.

He recommends a package of reforms which, if implemented in full, have the potential to deliver a much healthier future for Australia's environment. The centrepiece of the reforms he calls for are strong, binding National Environmental Standards. Standards are key to halting the extinction crisis we currently face and they must be an improvement on the status quo.

Unfortunately, the government continues to press ahead with their attempts to devolve environmental decision making to the states and territories. They plan to do it with a much weaker set of standards than Samuel recommended.



HSI's Alexia Wellbelove gives evidence to Senators on the government's devolution bill.

Samuel himself warns the government not to "cherry pick from a highly interconnected suite of recommendations" and yet that is precisely what we are seeing.

As this goes to print, we are continuing work to block efforts to pass the devolution bill in the Senate and to convince the government to raise the standards to nothing less than our precious wildlife deserves. Thank you for standing with us and for raising your voice for Australia's nature.

PLEASE HELP to ensure our voice remains loud and constant, go to hsi.org.au/SaveNature and complete the form and we can send a letter to MPs and senators on your behalf.



Thank you
for the hundreds of Christmas cards that lifted the spirits of our wildlife carers.

I am going to put these lovely letters in a safe place and whenever I need a pick me up I shall read them.

Shane, Bridgetown Wildlife Rescue INC

We got your lovely envelope of cards, read them all twice. We really appreciate it.

Dianna and Warwick, Rocklily Wombats



INSIDE STORY



Caroline Pattison

HSI's Supporter Relations and Office Administrator

A key member of our Supporter Relations team, Caroline, or 'Caz', joined HSI in 2017 and oversees all our daily supporter inquiries and donations. If you have called or emailed us with an inquiry about your donations or our campaigns, it's likely you have talked with Caz. Caz loves the fact that her job helps to make the world a better place for animals.

What do you love most about your job?

I love working with HSI as I am a huge animal lover and love working with an amazing team who have so much passion to help animals and the environments they live in. My job is definitely not boring. You never know what to expect. I enjoy talking with our supporters and hearing their stories along with the great appreciation they have for the work we do.

What has been the most interesting question you have had from a supporter?

I do receive lots of interesting phone calls. We have many passionate supporters who like to share their experiences with animals. It is wonderful to hear the excitement and reports of animals spotted on their

properties or close by. A lot of people are calling for advice about their animals also. I am always happy to help where I can or point them in the right direction.

What is your favourite animal and why?

Do I have to pick one? I love all animals. I do have a big soft spot for whales though. They are such majestic creatures. I am lucky enough to live by the coast and love to spend time whale watching. My wish came true last year when I saw a baby whale breaching on its way home to Antarctica. I was so happy to see this I cried!

Which campaign most resonates with you and why?

I would have to say last year's bushfire crisis response. It was the first time our Australian team were hands-on in a disaster situation and deployed to Kangaroo Island. Everyone worked so tirelessly to save as many animals as they could. It was a very busy crazy time, but so rewarding to be a part of a great team who worked so hard. Hearing their stories was very sad and to see the devastation that took place could never be forgotten. But there were lots of heart-warming rescue stories as well, which got us all through it.



A humpback whale breaching off Australia's east coast.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT



Anne Labone

Animal Defender

Animal lover Anne Labone always cared about animals. Her first pets were the family cats, Melanie and Sissy, and she adored them throughout their long lives.

Warm and loving, she knew that she could make a difference for animals—whether they were her pets or wild animals that needed help.

She became a volunteer for WIRES and devoted many long hours to nursing a wide range of injured wildlife from possums to birds, tirelessly caring for them until they could be released back into the wild.

Her family vividly remembers one year when having become a reptile rescuer, Anne brought a python to Christmas lunch! The lucky python was released back into the wild later in the day.

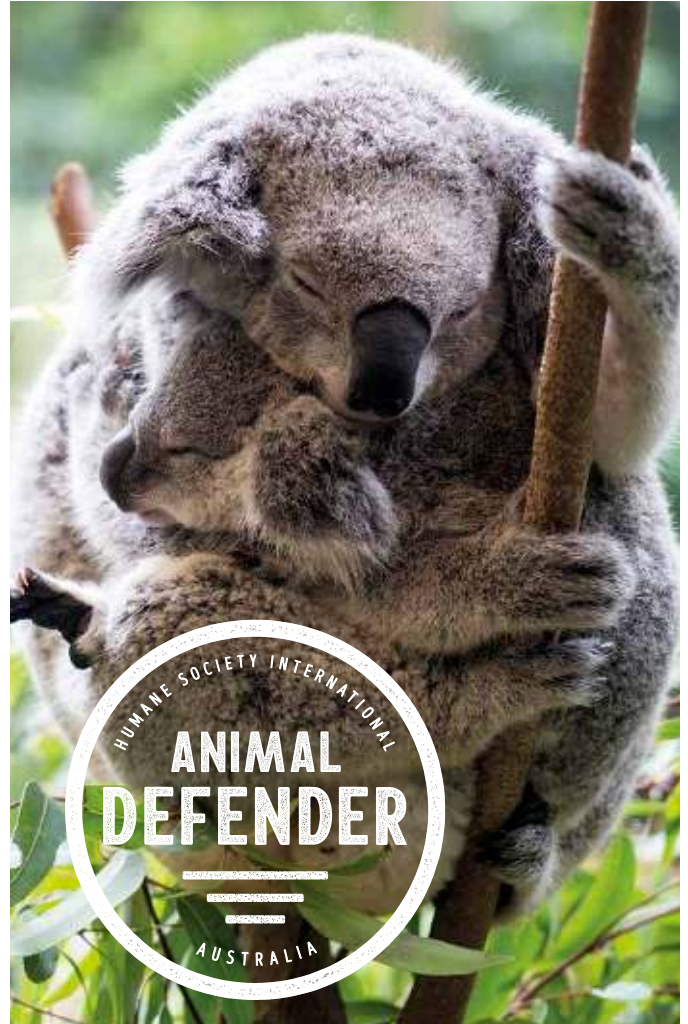
She was an avid traveller and so became aware of the plight of animals around the world. This compelled her to start supporting Humane Society International back in 2002—knowing that her donations would help animals in need in Australia and around the world.

As one of our Animal Defenders her monthly contributions helped to do amazing things including rescuing elephants, supporting anti-poaching patrols, saving dogs from the dog meat trade, and contributing to legal reforms to protect Australian wildlife.

Sadly, Anne passed away last year, a sister to four brothers who cared for her deeply. As one of her final acts of generosity, Anne left a wonderful legacy in her will to ensure that she could continue to care for the animals she loved so much, even after she had passed.

Anne's memory will forever live on in all the animals we will be able to continue to help thanks to her.

If you would like to have a confidential conversation about our Gift in Wills program, please contact Caroline Pattison (see opposite) at cpattison@hsi.org.au or on 02 9973 1728.



BECOME AN ANIMAL DEFENDER

By making a monthly donation as an Animal Defender you will enable HSI to plan and respond effectively to the needs of animals and local communities around the globe. To join, please contact us:

Phone: 1800 333 737

Email: animaldefender@hsi.org.au

Website: hsi.org.au/animaldefender



IMAGE: WWW.CSZAMBIA.ORG

Chowo and her pride rest in the shade.

Lioness still roaring

So many of you were moved by the plight of Chowo the lion in Zambia that we highlighted in our Spring appeal. We are happy to report that she is still doing well and living wild and free.

Our friends at Conservation South Luangwa were able to continue their vital anti-poaching patrols and snare removal throughout the pandemic thanks to your support.

Having to cancel some of their fundraising events because of the pandemic meant that being able to rely on our help was more important than ever before. Thank you for making certain that we could stand by them and all the animals they protect.

Urgent update needed to protect Victorian wildlife

After some utterly heinous crimes against wildlife in Victoria failed to be punished appropriately, including the deliberate killing of 406 wedge-tailed eagles, the state's Minister for the Environment, Lily D'Ambrosio, announced a review into Victoria's Wildlife Act.

So we partnered with Environment Justice Australia to produce *Failing our Wildlife*—a report which highlights the many weaknesses of an Act that was initially written with a view to managing wildlife for the purpose of game hunting.

The current Wildlife Act actually sanctions the killing of wildlife, and in 2019 alone 185,286 animals were killed under licence including 966 emus; 3,655 wombats; 3,152 ravens; 6,919 little corellas; and 4,570 sulphur-crested cockatoos.

Shockingly, threatened species are not exempt from these licences to kill, with 6,604 threatened grey-headed flying foxes destroyed in 2019.

Our report has been welcomed by the government and is being used in the review which will recommend changes to update this critical piece of legislation and which will hopefully then offer Victorian wildlife the protection it deserves.



IMAGE: Kim@TheGirlsNY

Building better protections for wombats in Victoria.

Woolly jumper time

Since our last newsletter featuring our campaign to end mulesing, we have launched our Better Wool Guide. Consumers who care about cruelty are increasingly demanding products that reflect their views and the Better Wool Guide helps you find them when it comes to woollies. While Country Road Group, David Jones, Target and Kmart led the way, we now have more than 78 retailers listed in the guide that are committed to only sourcing wool that is declared mulesing-free. Mulesing is a painful procedure which slices off the rear skin of lambs to protect them from flystrike. But there is a much better solution where farmers can shift to breed plain-bodied flystrike resistant sheep. A win-win for sheep and wool growers.

Support kinder wool production by downloading the guide at: hsi.org.au/BetterWoolGuide

Even a pandemic won't stop a dog meat farm closure

Last newsletter we reported on the rescue of 70 dogs from a dog meat farm in South Korea. In spite of enormous obstacles due to pandemic restrictions, HSI Global have not stopped. In October last year, the Animal Rescue Team went into quarantine for two weeks in South Korea so they could shut down another dog meat farm and this time rescue more than 170 dogs from slaughter.

Conditions on a dog meat farm are always really challenging for the team, as dogs are confined in squalid and deplorable conditions. But this time was even harder as the team had to do this hard, physical work while following COVID-safe practices. All the dogs were removed and flown to temporary shelters in the USA and Canada where they could receive any vet care and rehabilitation they needed before finding their forever homes.

This is the 17th farm closure for HSI and thanks to you, we will continue to shut them down one by one until we see an end to the dog meat trade forever.



HSI's Animal Welfare campaign manager Georgie Dolphin makes a friend.



HSI Korea's Nara Kim comforts the dogs during their removal from the farm.



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**Thank you for
your support**