



Northern  
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TERRITORY

Wildlife Park

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## Artwork of Territory Wildlife Park Dingoes wins national art prize for drawing.

The Mortimore Art Prize for Drawing has been awarded to one of the Territory Wildlife Park's Artists-in-the-Park, Janelle Fisher. Ms Fisher won the award for a pastel drawing of a pair of dingoes from the Territory Wildlife Park. Ms Fisher has spent the last couple of months observing, photographing and drawing the dingoes as part of the Territory Wildlife Parks Artists-in-the-Park program. Ms Fisher was recently notified that she was the overall winner for the Drawing category in the national art award.

The Mortimore Prize showcases art realism and has been described by it's founder, Mike Coward, as "Australia's leading realist art prize". It is in its sixth year.

Ms Fisher said "I first entered the show last year, and the pastel was selected as a finalist. This year I entered two pieces and both were selected as finalists. My pastel pencil work titled "Made for each other" of the Territory Wildlife Park's dingoes "Ernie" and "Socks", won Best Drawing. The judges, Paul Deprat (Julian Ashton Art School) and Peter Smeeth (2010 Mortimore Art Prize winner) reportedly commented on the engaging gaze of the dingoes."

The exhibition opened in Dubbo on 24 September, and will travel to various locations around NSW, Qld, Vic and the ACT, including Sydney, Byron Bay, Bendigo, the Gold Coast and Canberra, until June next year.

Ms Fisher was selected earlier this year by the Territory Wildlife Park to be one of four resident Artists-in-the-Park from July to October this year. The program is designed to give artists the opportunity to access the parks collection of both animals and plants and to also give the artists opportunity to interact with the keeping staff and learn more about the animals and habitats that can be found at the Park.

The aim of the program is to raise awareness amongst the arts community that the Wildlife Park is a fantastic resource and source of inspiration for artists to respond to and create new works. The program also aims to give visitors the opportunity to witness artists working and creating works on site in the park and assist local artists in raising their profile to a wider audience.



"Made for each other" Pastel pencil 70 X 90cm – By Janelle Fisher 2011

great  
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A Territory Government initiative

# Artists-in-the-Park

artwork goes on display



Left to right: Alison, Janelle, Jacinda, Gerald

Four Territory Artists commenced in the Artists-in-the-Park program on the 4 July 2011. They have spent the last three months, photographing, sketching, painting and recording their experiences and interactions with the animals, plants and staff at the Territory Wildlife Park. Works by all of the artists will be put on display in the Café and Main station area at Territory Wildlife Park over the month of October to showcase some of the projects that the artists have been working on.

## Alison Worsnop

Alison is an established Territory artist who has exhibited regularly as a solo artist and in group exhibitions. Her main passion and interest is in communicating "the beauty and intrinsic value of our native bush as a whole, not simply individual fauna and flora, so that people are encouraged to appreciate and preserve it." Alison works with a number of different mediums ranging from watercolour, chalk pastel, acrylic and collage. As part of this residency Alison will be creating a field diary of sketches in watercolour and pencil which will serve as reference material for studio work. Alison will also be working on a number of pastel works plein-air so make sure you stop and have a chat with Alison about her work as she works within the park.

## Gerald Grady

Gerald is the founder of the Carpentaria Disability Services Bowerbird Art Group. He initiated the CARES (Collaborative Artistic Engagement through Support) program for Carpentaria Disability Services clients attending the art and craft program at Lifestyle Options. Gerald has been the recipient of a number of awards such as the Katherine Art Prize, Pine Creek Art Award, Best Multi-media entry (a collaborative project with CDS-LSO clients) for the Rights on Show and highly commended for the Portrait of a Senior Territorian. As part of his residency at the Wildlife Park Gerald will be working on plein-air paintings, digital sketches and sculpture involving the use of recycled materials.

## Janelle Fisher

Janelle works mainly with pastel, graphite and acrylics when producing her detailed drawings and paintings of plants and animals. Such is her level of technical skill and ability to capture the personality of her subject matter Janelle won the People's choice award for the World Wildlife Fund Threatened Species Art and Photography Exhibition in Darwin two years running. Janelle exhibited both locally and interstate and has been selected for prestigious exhibitions such as Botanica (National Exhibition of contemporary botanical art), the Cossack Art Award and the Mortimore Art Prize. Janelle is aiming to produce a series of pastel/graphite works of the landscapes, animals and natural artefacts of the Territory Wildlife Park.

## Jacinda Brown

Jacinda is a local freelance photographer who has had her work published in a number of publications. Jacinda's most recent work is the design, and production of the children's illustrated picture book "I spy a reptile eye". This book is available for sale in the parks gift shop. Jacinda's environmental photography is well known in the Top End as she has created a range of handmade greeting cards, fridge magnets and framed works which are sold through galleries, shops and markets throughout Darwin. Keep your eye out for Jacinda as she moves around the park photographing plants and animals for her next project. Make sure you ask Jacinda for some tips on photography as she is more than happy to share her knowledge and experience in this field.

# Community Involvement



Volunteers collecting seeds on Park



Some of our volunteers hard at work in the Botanical Activity Centre

Community Involvement Days encourage members of the local community and Darwin area to actively take part in small projects at the Territory Wildlife Park. All projects will start at 9am and finish at 12pm with a free sausage sizzle for volunteers.

## OCTOBER

### Sunday 9, 9am-12noon, Billabong

Meet some of the residents of the Billabong while working on the other side of the fence. Removing weedy grasses from the smaller island at the Billabong exhibit and replace by planting out potted grasses. Cleaning up the water areas by thinning out the identified aquatic weed, prepare to get wet.

### Sunday 23, 9am-12noon, Monsoon Forest

Making up seed raising mixes and preparing seed trays and propagating, pricking out seedlings and potting on. Learn techniques for preparing fleshy fruits for propagation. Collecting mainly Monsoon Forest species such as Syzygium, Carpentaria palms, Carallia.

## NOVEMBER

### Sunday 13, 9am-12noon, Vet / Quarantine Centre

Working in the Vet Centre quarantine and holding yards carrying out landscaping and maintenance, gaining a greater understanding of how to set up off-display animal holding areas.

### Sunday 27, 9am-12noon, Botanical Activity Centre

Visiting the Monsoon Forest on park to identify trees that are fruiting to collect fresh seed and cuttings from suitable species for propagation. A great opportunity to learn how to identify and recognise Monsoon Forest species.

## DECEMBER

### Sunday 11, 9am-12noon, Botanical Activity Centre

A day spent in the Botanical Activity Centre learning how to divide and pot up plants and carrying out general maintenance work such as weeding, pruning, fertilising and pot rotation. Learning about botanical hygiene techniques and preparing natural pesticides.



To attend a Community Involvement Day contact:

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Territory Wildlife park  
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Email sarah.hirst@nt.gov.au

# Territory Wildlife Park

## Threatened Species Conservation

### Freshwater sawfish

Freshwater sawfish are listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as critically endangered. The Park has displayed juvenile sawfish at the Aquarium since 1991. Sawfish outgrow their aquarium within five years and need to be released.

In 2010, Territory Wildlife Park (TWP) embarked on a project to release and track a 2m long female sawfish. The results of this work will be presented at the International Aquarium Congress in South Africa in 2012. Kathryn Buckley, TWP Wetlands Supervisor is the lead author of this research with contributions from Fisheries Scientists, TWP Veterinarian and Curator of Life Sciences. The research explores the moral and ethical considerations of keeping sawfish in captivity and investigates the success of several release strategies that have been employed in the past.

TWP are looking into the possibility of increasing the public's awareness of Freshwater Sawfish by providing signage at boat ramps and public access points on river systems that are known to, or are likely to, have sawfish present. This would be a joint project with Charles Darwin University, NT Department of Resources, Murdoch University and the National Aquarium in Baltimore with support from local councils and Traditional Owners.



### Oenpelli pythons

Oenpelli pythons are listed as vulnerable in the Northern Territory and are highly sought in the reptile trade. TWP is working with the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation (BAC) to develop a captive breeding program for sustainable use. All proceeds from the sale of these animals will go back to the communities where the snakes were collected.

Permits to collect these animals are being issued this year. TWP's involvement with this project is to research the captive breeding methodology and captive husbandry requirements and assist BAC to establish their own captive breeding group. This will allow TWP to hold and display the snakes and interpret them according to the traditional owner's customs and beliefs.

This project has been ongoing since 2007 and forms part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between TWP and The National Aquarium Baltimore, and has been supported financially through a conservation trust since 2006.



### Northern hopping-mouse

Listed as vulnerable in the NT, the Northern hopping-mouse (NHM) is locally common but restricted in its range and possibly declining in abundance locally.

TWP is interested in obtaining animals in a joint collaboration with Traditional Owners on Groote Island, to investigate their biology and look at ecological requirements on Groote Island vs on the mainland. Mining on Groote Island presents a threat to existing (NHM) populations and a joint collaboration and ex-situ breeding program could be developed to support reintroduction of this species post mining.

The NHM is very similar in appearance and stature to the more southerly distributed Spinifex hopping-mouse and is a representative species to demonstrate and interpret the continuing decline of small mammals. To date, this species has not been maintained in captivity; therefore little information is known about its suitability for captive breeding and recovery programs.



### Northern quolls

The Northern quoll program is continuing to break new grounds in the use of aversion training techniques to prevent quolls eating the toxic cane toad.

The research has revealed that quolls trained not to eat toads have an increased chance of survival in the presence of toads. An interesting aspect of this research that is yet to be confirmed is the capture of juvenile quolls in the release site. This may indicate that toad aversion, as a learned behaviour, is transferred from mother to offspring. Samples were collected from the juveniles that were collected at the release site for genetic testing to see if they are indeed, related to the parent animals that were trained to avoid toads.

This research is ongoing with the anticipated collection of 10 pairs of quolls from Astell Is in Eastern Arnhemland in November this year. TWP will be working with the Marthakal Rangers to collect these animals to introduce new bloodlines into the breeding program.



### Flatback turtles

The plight of sea turtles world wide is the theme of this education program. Flatback turtles are Australia's only true endemic species and their status is vulnerable under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (EPBC). All sea turtles are listed as endangered by the IUCN due to harvesting pressures.

The TWP maintains two juvenile Flatbacks that were rescued from a nest on Bare Sand Is in June 2011. These turtles will be raised in captivity until large enough to improve their chances of survival in the wild. This will take approximately 18 months.

Funding will be sought to procure a satellite tracker to track the released turtle in a focused education campaign in collaboration with the Department of Education, Austurtle, Charles Darwin University, Sea Darwin and Territory Wildlife Park.



# Baby pelicans all grown up!

The Territory Wildlife Park welcomed the hatching of two baby Australian pelican chicks back in early June. We were especially excited by these new arrivals because pelicans rarely breed in captivity and it's the first time the Park has had a successful Pelican hatchling in the 21 years that the Park has been open.

The chicks have certainly settled in to their new routine of tucker time in the morning, a mid morning sunbake on their island, and a late afternoon swim. You will find the new additions to the Park on display at the Billabong daily.



A huge THANK YOU to all 75 volunteers that came out to the Park on Friday, 9 September 2011 for our Toad Bust. A total of 553 toads were removed and Rhiannon Constantine was awarded the TWP prize pack for her efforts in finding the biggest toad on the night, weighing in at 348g.



## Darwin WildCare pays TWP a visit

Darwin WildCare paid the Park a visit on Wednesday, 21 September to have the flight deck identify a Brown Goshawk chick that was found at the base of a tree earlier that week. A French film crew was on tow to film the story who have been following WildCare on their wildlife rescues. WildCare will raise the little chick until it is ready to be returned to the wild.



## Threatened Species Book Packs awarded to Millner and Woodroffe Primary Schools.

Congratulations to Smriti from Millner Primary School and Christopher from Woodroffe Primary School, who won Threatened Species book packs for their schools by participating in Threatened Species Week on Park and entering the Flatback Turtle colouring-in competition.

This year the Park invited schools to participate in a threatened species themed day, which aimed to educate students on the threatened species that we have living on Park.

The day included a threatened species quiz trail, keeper presentation and each class was given a bird box to take back to their school.

