

National Threatened Species Day

EARTH FIRST

By PETER WEST, ECCO

National Threatened Species Day is held on 7 September each year to encourage the community to help conserve Australia's unique native fauna and flora. We can all take action to prevent further extinctions by helping to protect endangered species and ecological communities in our local area.

National Threatened Species Day was first held in 1996, to commemorate the death of the last Tasmanian Tiger in captivity in 1936. The concept was developed by the Threatened Species Network – a community based program of the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Australian Government Caring for our Country, as a way to showcase Australian threatened species.

Australia's landscapes and species have been severely impacted by over 200 years of habitat loss and fragmentation. The impacts of land development, urbanisation, introduced plants and animals, grazing, river flow regulation, salinity, changed fire regimes, pollution, and a changing climate all place additional pressure on our threatened species and their shrinking habitats.

Over 630 species of native plants and animals are classified as nationally endangered and a further 840 species are classified as nationally vulnerable.

By focusing attention on the plight of many of our unique Australian species and threatened animals and plants, Threatened Species Day aims to encourage greater community support and hands-on involvement in the prevention of further losses of Australia's unique natural heritage.

What happened this year?

This year's event, held last weekend was spectacular, involving a large number of events at various locations across Australia to raise community awareness about threatened species, and to encourage community participation in conservation activities.

Activities ranged from exhibitions and festivals, to displays, guided walks, workshops and a range of other community education and promotional activities. Dozens of volunteer groups were involved in undertaking hands-on rehabilitation work. Other activities included workshops to learn about managing bushland for biodiversity, education activities, a frog monitoring program, and flora and fauna surveys including nocturnal spotlighting activities to learn about Australia's unique nocturnal wildlife.

National Threatened Species Day encourages people to join in the fun through educational activities, and raises awareness of many threatened species in Australia.

What can we do in Orange?

There are many ways we can get involved in protecting threatened species in our local region.

- 1 Be informed – find out about Australia’s threatened animals and plants, and those that occur in our Orange district
- 2 Join and participate in community groups - Find out about activities happening in your local area and get involved
- 3 Undertake on-ground rehabilitation by replanting areas with native plants, such as acacias, eucalypts, and native grasses, or fencing off creeks and drainage areas for aquatic life
- 4 Protect remnant vegetation and hollow-bearing trees, needed by many bird species for nesting and shelter, including the threatened Superb Parrot – know to occur in Orange
- 5 Get involved in the National Threatened Species Day events in your region
- 6 Involve your children in education activities and tree-planting exercises
- 7 Contact Orange City Council and the Central West Catchment Management Authority to identify ways to protect biodiversity on your property.

Material sourced from the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, and WWF–Australia (11/9/08)