

THE ARK



HATCHLING HOPE

First Manning River turtles hatched in insurance population
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CONSERVATION FROM THE COUCH

Conservation organisation Aussie Ark calls on the
community to decide its next project

DIRECT FROM THE PRESIDENT

“The Earth is a fine place and worth fighting for”

Ernest Hemmingway

2020 has brought with it some of the lowest of lows that our world has seen in a long time. The bushfire crisis annihilated our wildlife and left our ecosystems blackened. One billion animals are expected to have perished. I have never been prouder to be an Aussie than during this time, where our nation banded together to help protect, preserve, and uplift one another.

Just as we began rebuilding after these devastating losses, the world has shown how fragile it is again. COVID-19 has sent us back into our homes and separated us from our loved ones. We hope that you and your families are safe and well.

Whilst our world is rapidly changing around us, Aussie Ark remains steadfast in its mission to provide a future for native Australian wildlife through species and habitat recovery. We are continually thankful to each and every one of you for standing by us during these uncertain times, believing in the Aussie Ark mission, and helping us to achieve real, on-the-ground, outcomes.

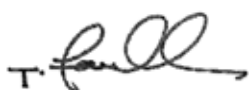
75% of our Aussie Wildlife Bushfire Appeal funds have been distributed, with the remaining 25% waiting for project finalization. The Australian Wildfire Fund focuses on supporting wildlife rescue, recovery, and implementing long-term solutions to restore and repopulate unique ecosystems destroyed by the fires. We hope to use the remaining funds to bring our children closer than ever to conservation, something that I believe so strongly in. The future of our wildlife is in their hands.

We have seen promising signs of recovery in the areas surrounding Aussie Ark. Lush green has begun to penetrate the blackened land, water has returned to our river systems and we have started to see wildlife make their way back. The Aussie Ark team and I have continued to supply supplementary food drops to wild endangered Brush-tailed rock wallabies in the Barrington Tops region. We still are in the care of platypus and Hunter River turtles, which we removed from damaged, diseased and dried out waterways. These animals are still receiving veterinary care and we are closely monitoring their waterways to determine when best to release them. We look forward to sharing this with you. Given the chance, our wildlife, ever resilient, will recover. We must not forget them. Help us provide them with this chance.

Aussie Ark recently launched the campaign *Conservation from the Couch*. This campaign presents you, our supporters and wildlife heroes, with a choice of five projects - we want YOU to tell us what is next! Each of the projects proposed provides tangible outcomes and a long-term future for each species. I urge each and every single one of you to jump online to the Aussie Ark website and cast your vote! Your opinion matters to us. Now is YOUR time to decide what happens next.

As always, I want to take a moment to thank you for your ongoing support. Together we are providing hope to our wildlife. Donate if you can, share our message and vision, follow us on social media, and jump on by voting for what's next!

Yours sincerely,



Tim Faulkner - President
Aussie Ark



VISION

Creating a long-term future for Australia's threatened wildlife.

MISSION STATEMENT

- To protect Australia's threatened species with robust insurance populations,
- To create healthy ecosystems within Aussie Ark sanctuaries and through rewilding,
- To have long-term tangible outcomes for the species in our care,
- To be a proactive, professional, transparent, and effective organisation

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Youtube
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Twitter
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HUNTER RIVER TURTLES: THE FIGHT AGAINST EXTINCTION

Home to more than one million species of plants and animals, Australia's wildlife is uniquely ours, found nowhere else in the world. However, new pressures from invasive species, as well as severe drought, devastating bushfires and record heat waves, have triggered the loss of entire ecological communities, and possibly entire species.

Australian freshwater turtles, like many species, are faced with extinction. Working already with the endangered Manning River turtles, Aussie Ark took a commitment to save and provide a secure future for the Hunter River turtle species by launching the *Save Our Turtles* project.

Why the Hunter River turtles specifically? The species are, like the rest of the freshwater turtles, nature's vacuums - they clean up our beautiful river systems, keep the aquatic vegetation in balance, and maintain the stunning waterways. Hunter River turtles are essential to our freshwater ecosystems. Additionally, the endangered species is endemic to NSW, Australia, and can be found nowhere else on Earth! Coupled with the worst drought in history, the recent bushfire crisis has meant that rivers have stopped flowing, which have had catastrophic effects for the Hunter River turtle habitat and its ecosystem, leaving the species even more susceptible to road strike, being trampled by cattle and predation from feral foxes and cats. Aussie Ark's team relocated over 160 Hunter River turtles to deeper water. 30 new turtles were brought back into care, being too sick to be left in the wild.

Through the *Save Our Turtles* initiative, Aussie

Ark, in collaboration with the Australian Reptile Park and the NSW Government, will construct specialised facilities on the Australian Reptile Park site in order to create the perfect environment to enable an insurance population to be established in an effort to bolster the species numbers.

Back in February 2020, our staff collected from the field, together with the NSW Government, 20 individual Hunter River turtles to begin an insurance population. These individuals are the first founders of a healthy captive population providing protection of the species well into the future.

In partnership with the NSW Government, Aussie Ark will continue to conduct ongoing in-situ population surveys to monitor the status of the wild population, protect nesting sites, and land management activities within their natural habitat. Once captive breeding has been established and increased, wild translocation from the captive facilities to areas the turtles were formally found will be conducted to bolster wild populations and to ensure the species remains ecologically functional, while further wild solutions are addressed and implemented.

To prevent the disappearance of this unique Australian species and to support Aussie Ark conservation efforts, visit aussieark.org.au

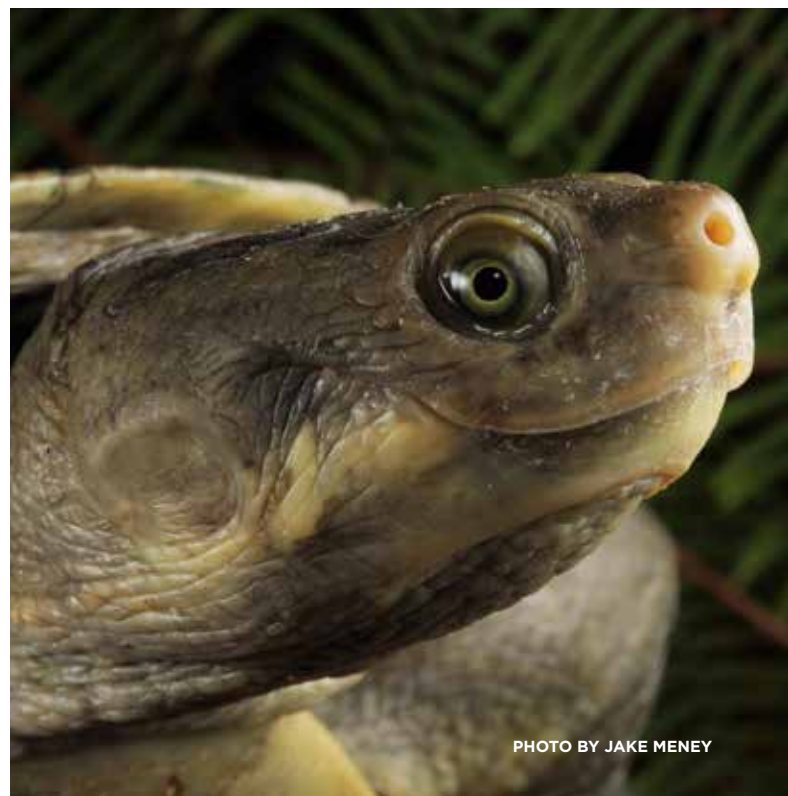


PHOTO BY JAKE MENEY

HATCHLINGS PROVIDE HOPE FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES



Ten tiny turtles are providing hope to their species in the wake of catastrophic bushfires and severe drought. The clutch of endangered Manning River turtles first began hatching on March 5th at Aussie Ark's facility.

The eggs were collected from the wild due to the imminent risk of predation from foxes, as well as being susceptible to being trampled by roaming cattle. Their hatching, in part, marks the launch of the first-ever conservation breeding program for the Manning River turtle, a project supported by Global Wildlife Conservation and the Turtle Conservancy.

Aussie Ark President Tim Faulkner said of the hatching: "Because Manning River turtles were endangered before the fires, we started planning for the conservation breeding program three years ago and happened to have the facilities ready for these emergency rescue efforts when the fires began."

"As amazing as this is, I'll consider the project a major success when we're returning 200 - 300 juveniles back to the river system each year, but this is a truly joyful way to kick off those efforts after so much heartache."

Aussie Ark President, Tim Faulkner

A proactive insurance program mitigates one of the major threats to Australia's turtles: introduced feral foxes and cats that feast extensively on laying females and turtle eggs. Unfortunately, turtles that do hatch successfully are then subject to habitat destruction and disease, often the result of cattle feces that end up in the water in which they live, especially during drier times.

The Aussie Ark team have been monitoring the baby turtles closely and will eventually move them into a nursery of

specialised tanks, where they will live for about four months before being moved to smaller ponds. In the months after, Aussie Ark will decide how many turtles will stay in the conservation breeding program, and how many will be released back into the wild in the exact place the nest was found. Those that are returned to the wild will be fit with radio transmitters to help the team track and monitor the species.

These new additions are just the start for us. 10 more eggs hatched at our facility in early April, bringing the total to 20. The team is scheduled to collect further adult specimens in the coming weeks and months.

Turtles play a vital role in the maintenance of Australia's waterways and their survival is vital. Aussie Ark has committed to saving the Manning River turtle from extinction, and even more recently, has committed to saving another two species of turtles under threat: the Hunter River and Bell's turtles.



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THIS IS A TRULY JOYFUL WAY
TO KICK OFF OUR EFFORTS
AFTER SO MUCH HEARTACHE.

– TIM FAULKNER
AUSSIE ARK PRESIDENT



WHERE DID THE ASH GO?



Australia's 2019-2020 bushfire season was one of the worst in history. Australia and the world rallied to help fight and protect the beautiful lands Australia is known for. The intensity of these fires ripped through unprecedented amounts of land, leaving blackened piles and ash filled skies in their wake. Some of Australia's biggest losers were its wildlife.

Recent rains have provided some much-needed relief and have seen a suite of animals return and start to rebuild. However, it does pose the question, where did the ash go? The rain has washed the ash and eroded soil from burnt forests into the rivers and freshwater ecosystems are feeling the impact.

Ash that has settled on, or washed into, the rivers begin to be consumed by bacteria in the water, as does the oxygen. Most plants and animals cannot handle environments with such low levels of oxygen. Changes in the turbidity, or amount of sediment in the water, is another factor that can threaten Australia's unique aquatic species.

Members of our staff were recently snorkelling in search of endangered and threatened turtle species and commented on the siltation in the water, making the discovery of any wildlife present extremely difficult.

Aussie Ark President Tim Faulkner commented: "I snorkel a lot looking for different wildlife, and it is truly concerning to see the amount of siltation in our waterways and the impact it is having on aquatic wildlife"

"The water quality is so low that I struggle to comprehend how our wildlife could see, hear or breathe under there.

They will eventually rebuild, but our wildlife will suffer in the long run", Mr. Faulkner continued.

Aussie Ark has been rescuing endangered Manning River turtles from the waterways and relocating them to its breeding facility. The facility will maintain a population of the turtles as insurance and release turtles back into the waterways once they have rebuilt, bolstering the numbers of the endangered turtle.

You can help Aussie Ark by donating today to aussieark.org.au



UNITED FRONT: THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE TO THE 2019-2020 AUSTRALIAN UNPRECEDENTED BUSHFIRE CRISIS/SEASON



In the wake of the numerous wildfires ravaging the state of California in the United States, the catastrophic Australian bushfires, spanning from 2019 to 2020, reserved an even worse toll in loss of life and biodiversity. Indeed, the recent environmental tragedy, caused by the unprecedented bushfires violently escalating over several months, impacted the lives of thousands of Australians, as well as the lives of billions of animals, and burned over 10 million hectares of land over the entire Australian territory.

In the midst of the destruction, the international community eventually became aware of the severity of the crisis and rallied together to assist Australia's bushfire relief efforts. The help from abroad predominantly came in three forms: fire expert's support, military support and operational assistance. Here is an overview of the contribution of the principal countries that have offered their help during the unfolding of the Australian bushfire crisis.

With the first contingents deployed as early as December 2019, the United States and Canada were the first countries to send firefighting and fire expert assistance. The United States' National Firefighting Coordination Center has sent more than 150 firefighters, including about 20 veteran firefighters from California in NSW and VIC. Moreover, the United States Air Force provided a contingent of two cargo load teams.

Furthermore, the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Center sent about 90 firefighters to help combat the wildland fires in VIC, QLD and NSW, in accordance with a previous arrangement between the Department of Natural Resources of Canada and the Emergency Management of Australia. Additionally, the Royal Canadian Air Force provided a military aircraft and offered operation assistance by providing incident management teams, assisting in the logistics of combating the bushfires, and planning and managing aviation units.

Subsequently, the government of New Zealand, alongside with the New Zealand Defense Force, deployed a contingent of more than 140 members, including 25

firefighters and 35 combat engineers, to assist the local efforts and the Australian Defense Force in VIC, NSW and SA. They also provided the Australian authorities with military personnel and equipment.

In the case of Papua New Guinea, the Papua New Guinea Defense Force deployed a contingent of about 95 members, mostly engineers, to assist firefighting efforts in the state of VIC. Thereafter, the French government sent a group of firefighting experts to provide operational aid in an effort to help the Australian bushfire relief efforts protect the population and preserve Australia's biodiversity.

Finally, various other countries offered military assistance to the bushfire relief efforts. The Republic of Singapore, Japan and the Republic of Fiji offered their assistance by sending contingents in NSW, VIC, SA and TAS, and contributed to the efforts by providing military equipment.

With this in mind, we also cannot disregard to mention the tremendous support provided by charities and NGOs, together with hundreds of thousands of individuals and businesses from all around the world. Our wildlife and biodiversity have not yet completely recovered and still need your help in rebuilding and ensuring their future. Help us create a better future for our beautiful and unique native wildlife by donating to the Australian Wildfire Fund today at aussieark.org.au



CONSERVATION FROM THE COUCH



Aussie Ark has been delivering native wildlife conservation outcomes for 10 years. We boast the largest mainland insurance population of the quickly disappearing Tasmanian devil, as well as a collection of endangered Eastern quolls, wallabies, and small mammals. Our organisation, which focuses on species and habitat rehabilitation, protects thousands of hectares of land through feral exclusion fencing. Thus, providing hope and sanctuary to endangered and threatened flora and fauna.

Aussie Ark is now asking the public to help decide what the next BIG PROJECT is for native wildlife conservation. Should we build a facility for threatened Hunter River turtles, plant 1,000 trees for Australia's largest wild and disease free Koala population or develop an insurance population for the declining Broad toothed rat? What about a safe haven for Spotted-tailed quolls or the translocation of animals into the wild?

Each project and the threatened species that benefits from it are outlined below:

Spotted-tail Quoll - The Spotted-tail quoll is the largest of the four quoll species and is considered vulnerable in NSW. Since European settlement, the Spotted-tail quoll has declined in both distribution and abundance. Aussie Ark can begin to change the trajectory of decline by investing now in this species' future by building a breeding facility to secure a robust population of Spotted-tail quolls.

Hunter River turtle - Australian freshwater turtles are in danger of disappearing. The East Coast of Australia has been ravaged by fire. More than five million hectares of land in NSW have been decimated, which have had catastrophic effects on freshwater turtle's habitat. Aussie Ark will build a breeding facility that will be environmentally and climatically perfect, due to its proximity to the wild distribution of the species.

Broad toothed rat - Little is known about the Broad toothed rat, other than the certainty surrounding its demise. Its extinction is largely being monitored with little action being taken to prevent its disappearance. It is time to take action. Aussie Ark is building a captive breeding nucleus for the species, constructing intensive breeding facilities; modification of sites for release to sanctuary, wild population supplementation, and research.

Rewilding the Barrington Tops - Australia is home to more species than any other developed country, with most of the nation's wildlife found nowhere else in the world. However, Australia also has the WORST mammal extinction rate on Earth - at least 29 of Australia's 273 mammal species have gone extinct since European colonisation. We have succeeded in the area of species management. It is now time to deliver and return animals to where they once called home.

Koala - Aussie Ark is committed to planting 1,000 trees to act as a pilot trial in aiding Aussie Ark in eventually securing a self-sustaining population of Koalas. Alongside this pilot trial, we are also committed to managing the population to best allow health and growth including treating and eradicating diseases such as chlamydia that plagues Koala populations.

Each project has real tangible outcomes for Australia's threatened wildlife and their habitat. Without having to leave your couch to help wildlife, now is better than ever to get on board with conservation. You can head to aussierk.org.au to cast your vote. Aussie Ark urges you to look at which species needs it most and to think not only with your hearts, but with your head. The future of conservation is in YOUR hands.

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THE FUTURE OF WILDLIFE AND THE HABITAT
THAT THEY DEPEND ON IS BEING DESTROYED.
IT IS TIME TO MAKE NATURE AND ALL THE
BEAUTY LIVING WITHIN IT OUR PRIORITY.

– PAUL OXTON



BOOTS ON THE GROUND – AN UPDATE FROM OPERATIONS MANAGER WILL HANSEN



Working behind the scenes are Aussie Ark's keepers, ensuring the day to day care and well-being of the seven flagship species located at the Ark. Their work is essential to the survival of this diverse species assemblage and the preservation of the sanctuary.

Interestingly, a day as an Aussie Ark keeper is unpredictable, since unexpected tasks are always being added to their daily duties. Every day, keepers have to do perimeter checks, clean enclosures, prepare food, feed out around the Ark, undertake infrastructure maintenance, and much more. The last few weeks have been particularly eventful. Let me enlighten you on some of our recent on-the-ground duties.

Firstly, solar heating units were mounted in the Brush-tailed rock wallabies (BTRW) enclosures in order to keep them warm through the winter and in preparation for their breeding. Moreover, as we are expecting the arrival of new BTRW from lower altitudes within the next couple of weeks, we wanted to make sure they feel as comfortable as possible. Although BTRW are used to the cooler climate, we want to ensure that new arrivals and small joeys in particular have access to a heat source if need be.

Keepers are also getting ready to begin Tasmanian devil pouch checking to assess the health of female devils and to get an estimate of how many joeys we might be expecting from the population this year. This is easily one of the most exciting times of year for the Ark. Last year we welcomed 69 joeys, this year we hope to beat that number!

Our Eastern quolls are also heading into breeding season shortly, so keepers have been busy moving quolls around in preparation for mating. We broke our record last year with 51 quoll joeys. This year, we are aiming to smash that record again.

Aussie Ark was recently gifted 68 nest boxes for Greater gliders, possums, birds and bats, which will be installed

in our sanctuaries. The next step is to analyse the species distribution in order to place the boxes in the most desired locations.

These are just some of the things we have been up to at the Ark recently! You too can experience and see with your own eyes the work that is being done at our facility by booking a Devils in the Wild tour. Aussie Ark provides a rare insight into its on-the-ground conservation initiatives by opening its doors to the public. We hope to see you up there soon!

Aussie Ark is incredibly lucky to have supporters like you who see the importance and urgency of the wildlife conservation we are engaged in. You can help our amazing keepers help our seven flagship species by donating at aussieark.org.au



Keepers Max and Kelly assessing the health of an Eastern quoll

AUSSIE ARK SUPPORTERS

Aussie Ark is incredibly fortunate to receive the support of countless individuals and organisations.

We have been incredibly humbled at the level of support we received during and in the wake of the recent bushfire season. Our wildlife has the ability to recover if given the chance and Aussie Ark is providing that chance. Our Australian Wildfire Fund was established to assist with on-the-ground action, specifically to:

- Support wildlife rescue and recovery
- Implement long-term solutions to restore and repopulate unique ecosystems destroyed by the fires, increasing climate resilience and reducing the threat of future events of this severity

We are thankful to each and every person who has donated to the fund, each of you are providing hope to our species. We would like to give special mention to Veolia and Port Waratah Coal Services for the generous contributions of \$20,000 each to the fund.

Veolia



Veolia delivers operational solutions across water, waste and energy that drive bottom-line savings, and optimal sustainability performance for their customers. As natural resources become more scarce, and we face growing challenges of urbanisation, consumerism and climate change, we need innovative models that support growth and sustainability.

Today, water, waste and energy can all be recovered. Their solutions transform what is discarded by some, into valuable resources for others.

Port Waratah Coal Services



Port Waratah Coal Services (PWCS) are a local business who provide services to the local coal industry. They are proud to be an active and valued member of the Newcastle region. PWCS aim to build genuine, reliable relationships with stakeholders to create positive outcomes for customers, community and the environment.



PHOTO BY DAVID STOWE



PHOTO BY DAVID STOWE

HOW CAN YOU HELP?



DONATE

Australia has the worst mammal extinction rate in the world. You can help us build a brighter future for Australia's threatened wildlife by donating today. All donations will help fund vital conservation work at Aussie Ark- with every donation over \$2 tax deductible.



STAY

Looking for a getaway? Aussie Ark's "Devils Retreat" is perfect for you. With all of the essentials to ensure a relaxing getaway in the mountains, you'll find yourself wishing to stay longer! Join us for a once-in-a-lifetime experience that you'll remember for years to come.



SUPPORT

Aussie Arks success isn't possible without people like you, our supporters, we cannot thank you enough. Aussie Arks mission is mammoth and we will not stop. Help us help them by providing feral free sanctuaries. \$150 will provide 1 meter of fencing, your contribution goes directly to serving Australia's wildlife.

PROJECT PARTNERS OF AUSSIE ARK

