

Wildlife Ecologist Mount Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary

Australian Wildlife Conservancy is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the conservation of Australia's threatened wildlife and their habitats. AWC now owns and manages more land than any other private conservation organisation in Australia - 28 properties, covering more than 3.9 million hectares - protecting more than 1,200 fauna species through active land management informed by strategic scientific research.

Four of these sanctuaries – Karakamia, Paruna, Faure Island and Mount Gibson – occur in southwestern Australia, an internationally recognised “biodiversity hotspot”. AWC is seeking an experienced and committed ecologist who will be pivotal in the development and implementation of the conservation and science program, initially focusing on Mount Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary, but in due course will shift attention to other southwestern sanctuaries.

Mount Gibson is a large property (over 130,000 ha) that lies within a transition zone between the eucalypt-dominated southwestern Botanical Province and the mulga-dominated Eremaean Botanical Province, and consequently the property has rich flora. In addition, the property has outstanding conservation values because it protects habitats, in good condition, that have been extensively cleared in the adjacent wheatbelt region. However, the region has experienced extinctions of up to 18 mammal species, largely due to predation by introduced predators. An ambitious program aims to restore the ecological health of Mount Gibson, including but not limited to, reintroducing some of the species that have become regionally extinct.

To be successful for this role you will have a Ph.D. degree in ecology or a related science. You will be responsible for implementing a program of wildlife reintroductions, wildlife survey and monitoring projects, and research designed to improve conservation management in the South West. As such, demonstrated experience and skills relating to these tasks are required. You are expected to develop relationships with other research and conservation organisations, and work with students and volunteers to help develop the program. You will also assist with AWC's fundraising and communication strategies when required.

The Wildlife Ecologist (SW) will work as part of a small team of ecologists and land managers in southwestern Australia. The position reports to the Regional Ecologist (SW), who in turn reports to AWC's National Conservation & Science Manager.

Initially based at Mount Gibson, where on-site accommodation will be provided, this is a unique opportunity to join Australia's largest non-government conservation organisation, and help shape the future of private sector conservation in Australia.

Please see below for a full job description.

Enquiries to: Dr Michael Smith, Regional Ecologist (SW): Michael.Smith@australianwildlife.org

Applications (Cover letter addressing the critical competencies and CV) to:

employment@australianwildlife.org

Closing date for applications: Monday 20th March 2017

Role Description

Designation:	Wildlife Ecologist – South West
Reporting to:	Regional Ecologist – South West
Supervising:	Other AWC staff, Interns, volunteers, contractors
Based at:	Initially Mt Gibson – with duties carried out at other sanctuaries as required. <i>A residence (which may be basic) will be provided at Mount Gibson for the successful candidate.</i>

Organisational context:

AWC is currently implementing the Mount Gibson Endangered Wildlife Restoration Project. In this project, 10 species of regionally extinct mammals are being reintroduced to the largest feral cat- and fox-free area on mainland WA. To date, Woylies, Numbats, Bilbies and Greater Stick-nest Rats have been reintroduced to Mt Gibson, with Banded Hare Wallabies, Shark Bay Mice, Western Barred Bandicoots, Red-tailed Phascogales, Chuditch and Brush-tailed Possums to be reintroduced in 2017 and/or subsequent years.

AWC is about to start work on the establishment of a feral predator-free area and associated reintroduction project at Paruna, in the Perth hills. This project will contribute to the conservation of a range of threatened mammals including the Woylie and Black-flanked Rock-wallaby.

The Wildlife Ecologist – South West will play a leading role in the design, implementation and monitoring of reintroduction programs at Mount Gibson and Paruna, and contribute more broadly to the implementation of science programs at AWC's southwestern sanctuaries. Key duties of the position are to:

- Contribute to the planning, implementation and monitoring of reintroduced mammals at Mount Gibson and Paruna wildlife sanctuaries. This will involve working effectively with key stakeholders involved in reintroductions including government agencies, Recovery Teams, industry partners (eg, zoos) and the broader scientific community.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of AWC's science program, including:
 - measuring the ecological health of wildlife sanctuaries
 - conducting research on key issues relevant to conservation and land management.
- Work in an integrated way with AWC operations staff to design strategies for feral animal control, weed control, fire management and other land management activities at AWC's south-west sanctuaries.
- Assist with AWC's communication and fundraising activities.

Key relationships:

- The Wildlife Ecologist - South West will report to the Regional Ecologist – South West. The position ultimately reports to AWC's National Science and Conservation Manager.

- The Wildlife Ecologist - South West will work with a team of AWC ecologists in the South West. As well as the Regional Ecologist, currently that team includes a Senior Field Ecologist, two Field Ecologists, Interns and volunteers. Another Field Ecologist is expected to be appointed in 2017.
- As part of AWC's Science team, the Wildlife Ecologist - South West will work with AWC Operations staff to design and deliver effective land management and to measure and report ecological health.
- The Wildlife Ecologist - South West will work closely with AWC's Development and Communications team to promote AWC's model of conservation.

AWC has sanctuaries located across Australia, with a head office based in Perth, WA.

The position requires a high level of competence in wildlife survey and applied conservation research; strong skills in project management; and good communication skills. The position involves a mix of field work and office-based writing and research tasks.

Critical Competencies:

1. Advanced knowledge of issues associated with the conservation of Australian wildlife and the broader systems which they inhabit, including:
 - a. The conservation and management of threatened species
 - b. The impact and management of important processes such as fire and those relating to the presence of weeds and introduced animals
2. A comprehensive understanding of the science of wildlife management
 - a. Effective natural resource planning
 - b. Advanced expertise in experimental design and statistical analysis
 - i. The ability to use a range of computer software packages for statistical analysis and data management and visualization
 - c. Expertise in monitoring and managing wildlife and key system processes, including:
 - i. Wildlife identification, capturing and handling, and passive detection
 - ii. The collection and management of spatial data (both from wildlife and associated processes), including an ability to undertake routine GIS-related tasks
3. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills including the ability to:
 - a. Draft and edit reports and scientific publications;
 - b. Establish and maintain relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders;
 - c. Work as part of a small team in a remote location.
4. Excellent organisational skills including demonstrated ability to prioritise and execute a large number of tasks in an efficient manner. This will include a demonstrated ability to co-ordinate and manage projects and events (such as biological surveys).
5. Practical skills in relation to the routine maintenance of assets, especially conservation equipment.
6. An ability to work independently, with minimal supervision.
7. A manual driver's licence, and 4WD experience in difficult conditions.

Qualifications:

1. A Ph.D. in ecology or a related discipline is essential.

Licenses & Certificates:

1. *Valid* manual driver's licence with 4WD experience in difficult conditions is essential.
2. First aid certificate (remote certification – highly desirable).

Required Experience:

1. Designing and conducting biological surveys, monitoring programs and ecological research. This will include experience in identifying, capturing and handling a range of animals, using a wide range of field techniques (pitfall traps, Elliott traps, cage traps, radio-tracking, mist nets etc), as well as experience in undertaking vegetation surveys and the collection and identification of plants.
2. Collection of data and its subsequent management and storage, including experience in the routine use of GIS software.
3. Managing and coordinating events such as field activities.
4. Managing a large number of tasks and relationships.
5. Preparing written material including reports and publications.
6. Design of and practical implementation of land management programs such as feral animal control programs and fire management.
7. Proficient use of relevant software.
8. Performing routine maintenance of relevant assets and infrastructure.
9. The use and maintenance of plant and equipment including 4WD vehicles and quad bikes.
10. Managing financial and human resources, developing and working within a budget.
11. Working in a rural/remote area.

Working as part of a team, and as required, independently.

Inherent requirements of the role:

The execution of tasks associated with the position will involve fieldwork in remote locations and can sometimes be away from an established field base, often in isolated locations working alone. The working environment will be predominantly outdoors and often in the extremes of weather – hot and wet and/or dry. The position can be physically demanding and may require walking and climbing over rough terrain, heavy muscular activity including lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling loads, bending, climbing and driving a variety of vehicles. In addition, the applicant will conduct periods of office work, planning and supervising projects. The successful applicant must be physically capable of performing these activities in the locations required in order to carry out the inherent role responsibilities.

Responsibilities:

<p>1. Assist in the reintroduction of locally extinct mammals</p>
<p>Key activities and responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assist in planning, implementing and monitoring the reintroduction of locally extinct mammals to Mt Gibson and Paruna, and other AWC sanctuaries as required, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Preparation of translocation proposals;○ Sourcing animals for reintroduction;○ Conducting the translocation and release of animals;○ Undertaking post-release monitoring and research;○ Developing strategies for the safe release of mammals outside the feral-free areas.• Obtain all approvals and help manage regulatory reporting.• Work effectively with government agencies, Recovery Teams and other stakeholders (other conservation organisations, Perth Zoo and other institutions) involved in reintroductions.
<p>2. Assist in the design and implementation of a plan for measuring ecological health</p>
<p>Key activities and responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assist in the design of monitoring plans, consistent with AWC requirements, to measure the ecological health of Mt Gibson and other AWC sanctuaries in the south-west including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A suite of biodiversity indicators (inside and outside feral free area);○ Threat indicators such as fire metrics and feral animal activity/densities.• Implement a program of ecological surveys which give effect to the ecological health monitoring framework:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Conduct fauna surveys utilising a range of techniques and methods: eg standard observational surveys; live-trapping; radio/ GPS-tracking; camera trapping; other technologies as developed.○ Ensure survey work is conducted in accordance with AWC policies and relevant permits.○ Manage the collection of vegetation data, the preparation of vegetation maps and herbaria.○ Manage collections of biological samples.○ Ensure all relevant data are recorded, managed and stored securely.• Draft annual ecological health reports and other reports (eg survey reports) as required.• Ensure all approvals are in place and help manage regulatory reporting.
<p>3. Assist in the design and implementation of a research strategy</p>
<p>Key activities and responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assist in the development of a Research Strategy for AWC sanctuaries in the south-west addressing knowledge gaps related to mammal reintroductions, threatened species management, the impact of threatening processes such as feral animals and fire, etc.• Implement AWC research projects in accordance with AWC policies and relevant permits.

- Help develop and manage partnerships with external research agencies undertaking collaborative research in accordance with the Research Strategy.
- Provide supervisory support to students and interns, as required.
- Help oversee the administration of all research projects including the storage and management of data, project reports and publications.

4. Contribute to the design and implementation of land management strategies

Key activities and responsibilities:

- Assist in the design of strategies for fire management, feral animal control, weed control and other land management activities, in collaboration with Operations staff in south-west Australia.
- Contribute to the review of annual work plans developed to implement these strategies.
- Through ecological health measurement (see #2 above), report on the outcomes of management activities.
- Assist in the implementation of conservation and land management projects, as relevant.

Note: these strategies are subject to approval by the National Operations Manager and National Science & Conservation Manager and should be developed in conjunction with the Operations Teams in each region.

5. Management of staff, volunteers & contractors

Key activities and responsibilities:

Under the direction of the Regional Ecologist South West

- Help manage a remote team of AWC ecologists, volunteers and Interns, including mentoring and professional development.
- As required, co-ordinate, engage and supervise:
 - other staff;
 - contractors (through a tendering process, in accordance with AWC purchasing policy).
- Ensure all relevant AWC policies are complied with in relation to the engagement of staff or contractors, including safety and Human Resource policies.
- Help manage the allocation of staff resources at different locations, as necessary, to meet operational requirements.
- Foster, and be an advocate for, the adoption of AWC culture (outcome focused, good science, strong team, cost-effective) across the organisation.

6. Ensure appropriate management of risks in relation to the health and safety of staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors

Key activities and responsibilities:

- In accordance with the requirements of the National Operations Manager and the National Science & Conservation Manager, undertake risk assessments and prepare risk management plans for operations at each site. The risk assessments and management plans must protect the health and safety of everyone on sanctuary including you, other staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors.
- Implement and comply with the provisions of the approved risk management plan.

- Ensure Safety Management plans and safe work systems, as approved by the National Operations Manager, are implemented and complied with
- In particular:
 - Ensure that you and all staff, contractors and/or volunteers have adequate training before using plant, equipment, tools and/or vehicles.
 - Ensure emergency procedures are developed and posted in appropriate locations.
 - Ensure staff members have up-to-date first aid certificates.

Ensure incident and near miss reports are filled out and submitted as per approved AWC policies and procedures, in a timely manner.

7. Assist in the development of operational plans and budgets and provide regular progress reports

Key activities and responsibilities:

- Assist the Regional Ecologist South West in the preparation of operational plans and budgets.
- Assist in the implementation of science activities set out in approved operational plans (including all deliverables specified by contract/funding agreements).
- Ensure activities are implemented in accordance with requirements of AWC policies and relevant permits.
- Contribute to the preparation of quarterly and annual reports detailing progress in implementing the plans.
- Provide additional progress reports, as requested.
- Seek approval for any variation from the operation plans and, if approved, oversee or implement the amended plans.
- Ensure AWC obligations under project agreements and approvals are met.

Note: plans and budgets are subject to approval by the National Operations Manager and National Science & Conservation Manager.

8. Government, community and stakeholder engagement

Key activities and responsibilities:

- Develop and maintain productive working relationships with members of relevant Recovery Teams and staff from Government agencies.
- Engage with other key stakeholders, including the broader scientific community.
- Work effectively with neighbours and other interested parties in the design and delivery of projects.

9. Financial management and reporting

Key activities and responsibilities:

- Deliver activities in a cost-effective manner.
- Ensure that all operational expenditure is in accordance with:
 - The approved budget; or

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For expenditure not identified in the budget, a relevant approval in accordance with AWC financial procedures. ● Ensure that all expenditure is in accordance with AWC policies and procedures. ● Ensure that necessary financial reports are prepared in accordance with AWC policies and procedures. ● Ensure all required records and paperwork are retained and, as necessary, submitted to the AWC finance department.
<p>10. Oversee the science volunteer (including intern) programs</p>
<p>Key activities and responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist the Regional Ecologist South West in management of volunteers assisting in the science program at AWC south-west sanctuaries, ensuring integration with AWC's national volunteer program. ● In particular, ensure AWC staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Select appropriate people as volunteers; ○ Provide volunteers with information and agreements before travelling to Project Sites (e.g. on conditions, the tasks they will be asked to perform etc); and ○ Induct and manage volunteers adequately. ● Contribute to the intern program, including the selection and engagement of interns, evaluation and reporting of interns.
<p>11. Assist in the implementation of an effective information and communications strategy</p>
<p>Key activities and responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist in the implementation of a Communications Strategy for AWC south-west sanctuaries. ● Contribute to the recording and submission within AWC of information, including information relating to wildlife, ecosystems and science program activities. ● As required, compile and submit information and images for use in relation to all communications products including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wildlife Matters, AWC website; and ○ Visitor displays and information. ● Submit regular weekly reports on science activities. ● Represent AWC at various public events, as requested by the Regional Ecologist South West, and in accordance with AWC policies and requirements.
<p>12. Assist in the implementation of development programs</p>
<p>Key activities and responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As required, assist in the implementation of development (fundraising) programs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assist in drafting, submission and management of applications for funding. ○ Prepare reports. ○ Assist with planning, co-ordination and implementation of events.

13. Undertake other tasks, as required

Key activities and responsibilities:

- Assist in the management, care and maintenance of all assets used by the AWC science team in each region.
- Assist with all necessary permit applications, annual returns and other required reports to government authorities, to facilitate the conduct of the science program.
- Conduct other day-to-day management tasks, as required, to ensure the effective conservation of the sites.
- Comply with all AWC policies and procedures.