

D. L. Serventy Medal 2011: Citation

DAVID CLELAND PATON AM

The D. L. Serventy Medal is an award of the Royal, Australasian Ornithologists Union (now BirdLife Australia) that honours members who have made outstanding contributions to publication in the science of ornithology in the Australasian region.

Dr David Paton is an ornithologist and ecologist with more than 30 years experience in conservation biology. His first publication, *First record of the Leaden Flycatcher in South Australia*, was published in *Emu* in 1965, the same year he became a member of the RAOU. He is well known for his pioneering publications on the ecology of Australian honeyeaters, particularly the importance of manna, honeydew and lerp in their diet. More recently, he is renowned for his work on bird conservation and habitat restoration in woodlands of South Australia and the environmental restoration of wetlands around the mouth of the Murray River. Recent outstanding publications include lead authorship of Birds Australia's *State of Australia's Birds – Restoring woodland habitat for birds* in 2009 and a number of papers on the Coorong, e.g. *A Future for the Coorong and Lower Lakes* published in *Pacific Conservation Biology* (2009). He has worked tirelessly to draw attention to the plight of this area through extensive field work, numerous media engagements, membership of advisory boards, and various scientific and general publications, notably his book *At the End of the River – The Coorong and Lower Lakes* published in 2010.

David has been at the University of Adelaide since 1983 where he has supervised more than 100 honours and post-graduate students. He has trained and inspired them to be passionate conservation biologists and in turn they are now spreading their own spheres of influence for better environmental outcomes (e.g. some graduate students are now working within the SA Government). David has won dozens of grants for Conservation Biology totalling over \$4 million, including a prestigious Queen Elizabeth II Fellowship and ARC Australian Research Fellowship. He is currently Associate Professor, School of Earth and Environmental Sciences. His dedication to conservation and teaching has won him many accolades including being made a Member General Order of Australia in 2008.

David's publication record is outstanding, with 89 peer reviewed articles and book chapters and more than 100 short notes and unpublished reports. This work has dealt with more than 40 species of birds in Australia as well as bird groups, particularly honeyeaters, woodland birds, waterbirds and waders. His work spans ecology and conservation, bird-plant interactions, threatening processes, habitat restoration and species recovery. He is highly respected for his ability to apply conservation science to influence government policy and public opinion for improved environmental outcomes.



David has complemented his publication record through outstanding leadership and long-term commitment in his many other contributions to Australian ornithology in South Australia and through Birds Australia. Some highlights are: BA – Councillor 1995–1999, Research and Conservation Committee 2003–2009 and Congress coordinator 1986 and 1999; Editorial boards – *Ecological Management and Restoration* (2004–2006), *South Australian Ornithologist* (1997–) and *Emu* (1999–2005); Recovery Team membership for Glossy and Red-tailed Black Cockatoos and Mt Lofty Ranges Southern Emu Wren; Steering Committee for assessment of NHT Biodiversity Outcomes.

Dr David Paton AM has an outstanding record as a leader in ornithology in Australia and is a most worthy recipient of the D. L. Serventy Medal.

Jack Baker