

PREFACE

Paul Meek was awarded a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship in 2011 to visit the USA, the origin and home of camera trap manufacturing and the biggest international market for wildlife monitoring and other uses, and Europe where he undertook camera trapping field work to monitor endangered and other carnivores. He understood from first-hand experience that effective camera trapping was not as simple as tying a camera trap to a tree and, after some indeterminate time, coming back, collecting the SD cards, and solving all of his wildlife management and monitoring issues. Paul also realised that inappropriate use and interpretation of camera trap data posed a serious risk to wildlife management decisions and potential financial loss to land managers who were rapidly adopting the technology. It seemed that every ranger and researcher had a few cameras and were out to solve all their own wildlife management issues without knowing much about the tool nor how best to deploy it to obtain useful, rather than just interesting and entertaining, images and information. Paul's Fellowship objective was to gain knowledge about camera trap technologies and applications from experts and manufacturers in countries with a longer history of camera trap use – knowledge which was essential for advancing the use of remote cameras in Australia.

When Paul returned from his studies, he saw the need for a meeting to bring together as many global practitioners as possible to discuss and document the state of play with camera trapping technologies, applications and relevant experimental designs for monitoring and research use. He approached the Australasian Wildlife Management Society (AWMS) to hold an out-of-season international symposium about camera trapping. The AWMS Committee was pleased to provide support and, as many members who were likely to be

interested were also members of the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales (RZS), the Council of RZS was approached to collaborate in organising the meeting. And so, the First International Camera Trapping Colloquium in Wildlife Management and Research was organised and held at Taronga Zoo, Sydney, Australia, on the 13–14 September 2012.

Usually, ecological symposia and conferences offer several plenary, keynote and other speakers to present a variety of topics of current interest, which often leaves little time for discussion, debate and deliberation about the important issues raised in presentations. The first camera trapping colloquium was unusual in its format because at the conclusion of each thematic session professionally facilitated discussions were held to summarise the salient points from the theme and identify unresolved issues requiring further research, training or extension. This process allowed targeted discussion and greater involvement of participants, leading to their ownership of the outcomes of discussions. On the final afternoon, critical areas of concern and interest among participants were discussed in a facilitated session, which identified unresolved technical, methodological, design and analysis issues.

This publication brings together papers from a selection of the presentations at the colloquium and provides a benchmark of the international developments and uses of camera traps for monitoring wildlife for research and management. It is in four sections, each relating to the themes of the colloquium: case studies demonstrating camera trapping for monitoring; the constraints and pitfalls of camera technologies; design standards and protocols for camera trapping surveys; and the identification, management and analyses of the myriad images that derive from camera trapping studies. The final paper provides a summary and future directions for research using camera traps.

Of course, any congress about camera trapping will be inundated with interesting, enlightening and entertaining photographs of animals 'doing their thing'. In conjunction with the colloquium, a photo competition was held and the best of those remarkable photographs are also presented here.

As presidents of our respective societies, we congratulate Paul Meek on his initiative and are pleased to endorse this publication, which we hope will be the first of many on the topic. The book will be of interest to our members and others using, or

planning to use, camera traps to investigate, enumerate and monitor wildlife and their behaviours to enhance the scientific management of wildlife.

Peter Fleming
President, Australasian
Wildlife Management
Society

Peter Banks
President, Royal Zoo-
logical Society of New
South Wales

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