

## Urban wildlife: more than meets the eye

Daniel Lunney and Shelley Burgin (Eds), 2004.  
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EVER since European settlement of Australia, there have been countless species of fauna which have dramatically declined in distribution and abundance. In the past 200 years, at least 21 species of birds and 19 species of mammals have become extinct (Burgman and Lindenmayer 1998). This pattern of extinction is evident throughout the mainland and islands of Australia, although the local extinction of fauna in urban areas is often overlooked. How and Dell (2000) present alarming data on the plight of urban fauna in Perth, where over half of the native mammal species have become locally extinct.

Similarly, there have also been dramatic declines in reptile and bird species numbers, with only the largest remnants in Perth still harbouring elements of the original fauna (How and Dell 1990; Recher 2004). Many species of animals (e.g., rats, gulls, sparrows), however, profit from the additional resources provided in urban areas, and become pest species that detrimentally affect ecosystem and human health. By collating existing data attained on threatened and pest species in urban areas, and lessons learned from urban extinction events, we can better manage ourselves and urban fauna to exist synergistically.

*Urban Wildlife: more than meets the eye*, edited by Daniel Lunney and Shelley Burgin collates contributions from a wide audience at the 20th October 2001 forum (of the same name) held by the Royal Zoological Society of NSW. The resulting publication presents data and opinions on the management of urban fauna from scientists, consultants, government departments, journalists and even artists.

The book begins with a foreword written by James Woodford, a *Sydney Morning Herald* contributor and book author, who introduces the issue of urban wildlife management through his own personal experiences as a resident of busy inner Sydney. James's foreword emphasizes the important existence of the "urban wildlife underworld" that all people in urban areas live and interact within, but rarely acknowledge or appreciate. Following the foreword is a preface and introductory paper by the editors that forms the frame of reference for the book's concept of urban wildlife management. The book continues with 27 contributed papers that include management issues concerning fauna as varied as snails, bandicoots, deer and penguins. In addition to the inclusion of papers concerning management of threatened species within the urban matrix, it also includes papers on the management of pest species that have proliferated as a result of human disturbance, including Silver

Gulls, Sacred Ibis and Brushtail Possums. This wide variety of papers highlights both the detrimental and favourable effects of urban areas on all fauna, thus emphasizing the requirement for multiple management procedures. The book ends with the inclusion of a plenary session transcript and a concluding chapter by the editors. The plenary session transcript offers hope for the future of urban wildlife management, mainly through the development of ideas and alternative avenues of discussion for a second day on the same forum topic. Likewise, the final chapter synthesizes the ideas generated during the forum and outlines a positive outcome whereby the editors create "a vision of an urban future rich in wildlife that is embraced and appreciated by an urban community which passionately defends its local wildlife and its habitats."

Although maintaining scientific rigidity, the content of each chapter is focused on the results, discussion and outcomes of the study. It reduces details on statistical design and analysis, thus making it a more concise and receptive publication to the general public. All of the tables, figures and plates are well presented, highly detailed and easily understood. In addition, the abstracts were clearly presented and the addition of keywords assists in interpreting the general content of the chapter.

This book is well suited for a wide readership from members of the public to undergraduate students to wildlife managers. As James Woodford states in the foreword of the book, the information presented is "invaluable to those who love to see animals in the city and those who have the job of managing creatures who have chosen to live with us." The inclusion of actual job advertisements as well as information on courses offered in urban wildlife management provides further information for those wishing to pursue this discipline and its practical application. Although written from an Australian urban context, this book would be an invaluable addition to the libraries of those responsible for the management of urban fauna throughout the Pacific region.

### REFERENCES

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