

## **Wild Animal Resources and Their Use by Aboriginal Communities**

*By George Wilson, Andrew McNee and Peter Platts*

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This survey was undertaken by the Bureau at the request of, and supported by, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. The book looks at the opportunities for using wild animals to improve the economic and social conditions of Aborigines in rural Australia. It briefly discusses Aboriginal cultural perspective towards animals and considers where particular wild animals are found, their proximity to Aboriginal communities and the types of products that can be derived from them.

It also has an analysis of Aboriginal employment on the 1986 census and concludes that the highest levels of unemployment, approaching 50%, occur where wild animals are most numerous, that is in the extensive pastoral and grazing lands, and where other control techniques, particularly for the larger species such as goat, buffalo, camels, horses and kangaroos, are often uneconomic.

The book places great emphasis on the need to clearly identify wildlife management goals so that, where the aim is to reduce animals that are causing damage and are clearly pests, prescribed levels to ameliorate this damage should be set. In the case of rabbits in most environments the prescribed level will be very low, that is as low as possible. However, in the case of native animals and some desired introduced species such as buffalo and camels the desired population level is sometimes not as 'low as possible'. This also applies for many native species and indeed in some circumstances Aboriginal communities would like to increase the number of wallabies, emus and other species to maximise their availability for both personal use and commercial sale.

These and other related issues are discussed in the book.

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