

Wildlife Ecologist – North East: 3 positions



Help deliver effective conservation in northern Australia

Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) is Australia's largest private owner of land for conservation, protecting wildlife across more than 3.8 million hectares.

AWC operates six wildlife sanctuaries in north-east Australia: Pungalina – Seven Emu in the Gulf of Carpentaria, NT; Piccaninny Plains on Cape York Peninsula; Brooklyn and Mount Zero - Taravale in north-east Qld; Curramore in south-east Qld and Bowra in south-west Qld. Recently, AWC's work in north-east Australia has expanded through collaboration with the Queensland Government to help manage Astrebla-Diamantina National Parks in south-west Queensland and Mt Windsor, Mt Lewis and Mt Spurgeon National Parks in the Wet Tropics. Together, these properties extend over 1,350,000 ha. They protect habitats ranging from montane rainforest to gibber plains and wildlife from Tree-kangaroos and Palm Cockatoos to Bilbies and Night Parrots.

AWC is seeking highly motivated terrestrial ecologists to help implement conservation programs on wildlife sanctuaries and National Parks in Queensland and the Northern Territory.

We are seeking to employ three ecologists at the Wildlife Ecologist level.

Key duties of the positions include:

- Measuring the ecological health of sanctuaries and National Parks in north-east Australia;
- Conducting research addressing major knowledge gaps in conservation, taking advantage of opportunities presented by the integration of science and land management in AWC;
- Working with land managers to design and implement strategies for the management of fire, feral animals, weeds and other threats.

We are looking for hard-working ecologists who want to effectively conserve Australia's wildlife. The successful candidates will have the following skills and qualifications:

- A PhD in ecology or a related discipline, plus relevant experience (including biological survey, research and monitoring)
- Experience working in the bush, ability to get jobs done on time and budget
- Excellent communication skills and capacity to work with a wide range of stakeholders including other scientists, land managers, neighbours, indigenous communities, government agencies and volunteers.

The positions are based in north Queensland with extended periods in the field.

See below for a full job description.

Enquiries: Dr John Kanowski, National Science and Conservation Manager

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Applications to include a cover letter addressing the critical competencies and CV. Please advise where you found the advertisement and send to: employment@australianwildlife.org

Closing date for applications: 21st April 2017

Role Description

Designation:	Wildlife Ecologist – North East
Reporting to:	Regional Ecologist – North East
Supervising:	Other AWC staff, Interns, volunteers, contractors
Based at:	North-east Queensland (TBD)

Organisational context:

Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) owns and manages a national network of wildlife sanctuaries covering more than 3.8 million hectares. On each sanctuary, AWC implements conservation programs including management of feral animals, weeds and fire, supported by robust science.

AWC operates six wildlife sanctuaries in north-east Australia: Bowra (Mulgalands bioregion), Curramore (South-east Qld), Mount Zero-Taravale and Brooklyn (Wet Tropics and Einasleigh Uplands) and Piccaninny Plains (Cape York Peninsula); and Pungalina-Seven Emu (Gulf Coastal Plain) in the Northern Territory. Recently, AWC's work in north-east Australia has expanded through collaboration with the Queensland Government to help manage Astrebla-Diamantina National Parks (Channel Country/ Mitchell Grass Downs) and Mt Windsor, Mt Lewis and Mt Spurgeon National Parks (Wet Tropics and Einasleigh Uplands) in north-east Queensland. Together, these properties extend over 1,350,000 ha. They protect habitats ranging from montane rainforest to gibber plains and wildlife from Tree-kangaroos and Palm Cockatoos to Bilbies and Night Parrots.

The Wildlife Ecologists – North East will help design, implement and report on AWC's monitoring and research programs at AWC's north-east wildlife sanctuaries and National Parks. Key duties of the positions are:

- Contributing 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.
- Working in an integrated way with AWC operations staff to design strategies for feral animal control, weed control, fire management and other land management activities.
- Contributing to the planning, implementation and monitoring of reintroduction programs, as relevant
- Assisting with AWC's communication and fundraising activities.

Key relationships:

- The Wildlife Ecologists – North East report to the Regional Ecologist – North East. These positions ultimately report to AWC's National Science and Conservation Manager.
- The Wildlife Ecologists – North East will work with a team of AWC ecologists in the North East. As well as the Regional Ecologist, that team includes other Wildlife Ecologists, Senior Field Ecologists, a Field Ecologist and a Botanist.
- AWC's Science team works closely with Operations staff to design and deliver effective land management.
- AWC's Science team works with o Development and Communications staff to promote AWC's model of conservation.

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

The positions require a high level of competence in wildlife survey and applied ecological research; strong skills in project management; and good communication skills. The positions involve a mix of field work and office-based writing and research tasks.

Critical Competencies:

1. **Getting things done:** you need well-developed planning and organisational skills, including an ability to prioritise and execute a variety of tasks in an efficient manner and work effectively with colleagues.
2. **Managing staff:** you need good people management skills, including the capacity to lead, manage and coordinate small teams of staff and contractors in remote locations.
3. **Working with people:** you need good interpersonal skills, including the ability to develop and maintain relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders including the broader scientific community.
4. **Well-developed knowledge of the conservation of Australian wildlife and ecosystems** including:
 - a. knowledge of the nature and functioning of the Australian biota; and
 - b. knowledge of major threats to native wildlife and their habitats and how these threats can be mitigated (eg, knowledge of strategies for fire, feral animal and weed management).
5. **Excellent ecological research skills** including:
 - a. good knowledge of the ecological literature relevant to the position;
 - b. good knowledge of experimental design and sampling methods;
 - c. well-developed skills in wildlife survey, including animal trapping, identification and handling, radio-tracking and camera-trapping; and
 - d. well-developed capacity to manage biological surveys.
6. **Well-developed capacity in statistical analysis** of ecological data and the use of computer software packages including analytical, graphing, and spreadsheet software, as well as competence with GIS and database software.
7. **Good science communication skills** including a well-developed capacity to draft and review scientific reports and publications, compose funding applications and reports, and communicate science and conservation messages to a general audience.
8. **Competence in project management:** ability to deliver projects in a cost-effective manner.
9. **Resourcefulness:** the ability to improvise and 'problem-solve', developing practical solutions with limited resources.
10. **Living in the bush:** Previous experience of working and living in a rural area, preferably remote.
11. **Paperwork/compliance:** Capacity to manage contracts and adhere to AWC's procurement policies.
12. **Information technology:** Well-developed capacity in using standard professional software packages.
13. **Willingness to travel.**

Qualifications:

1. A PhD 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).

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 design and implementation of plans 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 AWC sanctuaries and relevant National Parks in north-east Australia 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 helping manage regulatory reporting
<p>2. 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 and relevant National Parks in north-east Australia 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.
<p>3. 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 AWC sanctuaries and relevant National Parks in north-east Australia, as relevant, 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, zoos and other institutions) involved in reintroductions.

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 AWC sanctuaries and relevant National Parks in north-east 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 - North East

- Help manage a remote team of AWC ecologists and volunteers, 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 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 Conservation and Science 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 – North East 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, and 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 Conservation and Science Manager.

8. Government, community and stakeholder engagement

Key activities and responsibilities:

- Develop and maintain productive working relationships with QPWS staff, members of relevant Recovery Teams and other conservation and land management organisations
- Engage with other key stakeholders, including the broader scientific community.
- Work effectively with neighbours, indigenous groups 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 – North East in management of volunteers assisting in the science program at AWC North East sanctuaries and relevant National Parks, 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 North East 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 ○ Visitor displays and information ● Submit regular weekly reports on science activities. ● Represent AWC at various public events, as requested by the Regional Ecologist – North East, 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 and maintenance of all assets used by the AWC science team including traps, animal handling gear, electronic equipment, computers, communications gear, books, GPS, vehicles etc.
- 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.