

Australian wildlife: 2020-2022 in review



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Pala (approx nine months old) was abandoned and found wandering alone in a paddock in Larnook in the New South Wales Northern Rivers. Pala was taken in by IFAW partner, Friends of the Koala on 10 April 2022.

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Photo: Bonorong © IFAM

Scotch the echidna in care at Bonorong Wildlife Hospital after likely being hit by a car – he has since recovered and been released.

Funding from our supporters, partnerships and foundations has contributed invaluable towards IFAW's holistic koala wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and recovery programme in the wake of the Black Summer bushfires and the recent catastrophic floods.

You have enabled the treatment of almost 1,000 koalas by an expert veterinary team at Friends of the Koala, the deployment of IFAW x University of the Sunshine Coast (UniSC) Detection Dogs for

Conservation koala detection dog Bear, who found over 100 bushfire survivors, and the planting of almost 40,000 native trees along some vital wildlife corridors along Australia's east coast. These important plantings contribute significant food and shelter for local koala populations and other native species in years to come.

providing lifesaving veterinary treatment to endangered koalas with Friends of the Koala



Vet nurse Marley Christian (FOK) and Nicole Marin (IFAW) perform a health check on Lancelot at Friends of the Koala.

you ensured over 1,000 koalas were able to be treated by an expert vet team - thank you!

Your support contributed to full time onsite veterinary capacity at Friends of the Koala (FOK) which rescues over a third of koalas (approx. 350 per year) rescued in New South Wales (NSW). This vital and immediate onsite specialised treatment of sick, injured and orphaned koalas has hugely improved welfare outcomes and led to a steady upward trend in release rates.

Over the course of a day, the team is able to rescue koalas and complete a full veterinary work up and if healthy, release them back to the wild. Crucially, having a superintendent veterinarian onsite has enabled Friends of the Koala to obtain a hospital license making them one step closer to achieving their goal of becoming the first 24/7 koala hospital in the region.

This lifesaving work has become even more crucial, with koalas in NSW, Queensland (QLD) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) now listed as endangered and predicted to go extinct in NSW by 2050 without radical intervention. The population of koalas in the NSW Northern Rivers region is significant and by working to not only rescue and rehabilitate koalas in the region but also to restore their habitats - we are helping to ensure they thrive into the future. Now more than ever, every single koala saved counts directly towards the future of the species.

how koala detection dogs are continuing to help bushfire survivors



Photo: Tyson Mayr @ IFAW

UniSC's Detection Dogs for Conservation (DDC) researcher Riana Gardiner, IFAW Landscape Conservation Officer Wendy Simpson and detection dog Billie-Jean analysing koala scats.

The support we received enabled the rapid deployment of Team Bear in the wake of the bushfires. IFAW x UniSC koala detection dog Bear, his handlers and expert drone users joined search and rescue teams to locate surviving koalas in the charred landscape. Bear's unique skill of being able to detect live koalas via the scent of their fur made him a secret and lifesaving weapon. Bear located over 100 koalas in the aftermath of the fires, most of which would never have been found without him. Those injured and sick animals were able to be rescued and receive expert veterinary treatment.

We were also able to embark on a crucial three-

year research project to investigate the impact of fire on the health and resilience of koalas. This project is now in its final year, although Covid, fires and floods, has hampered fieldwork. Eight sites have been surveyed in QLD and NSW and we've collected 359 scat samples for analysis.

This work includes a resurvey in February this year of TV presenter and IFAW Ambassador Tyson Mayr's property after it was badly impacted in the Black Summer bushfires.

Scan the QR code to watch the research project video



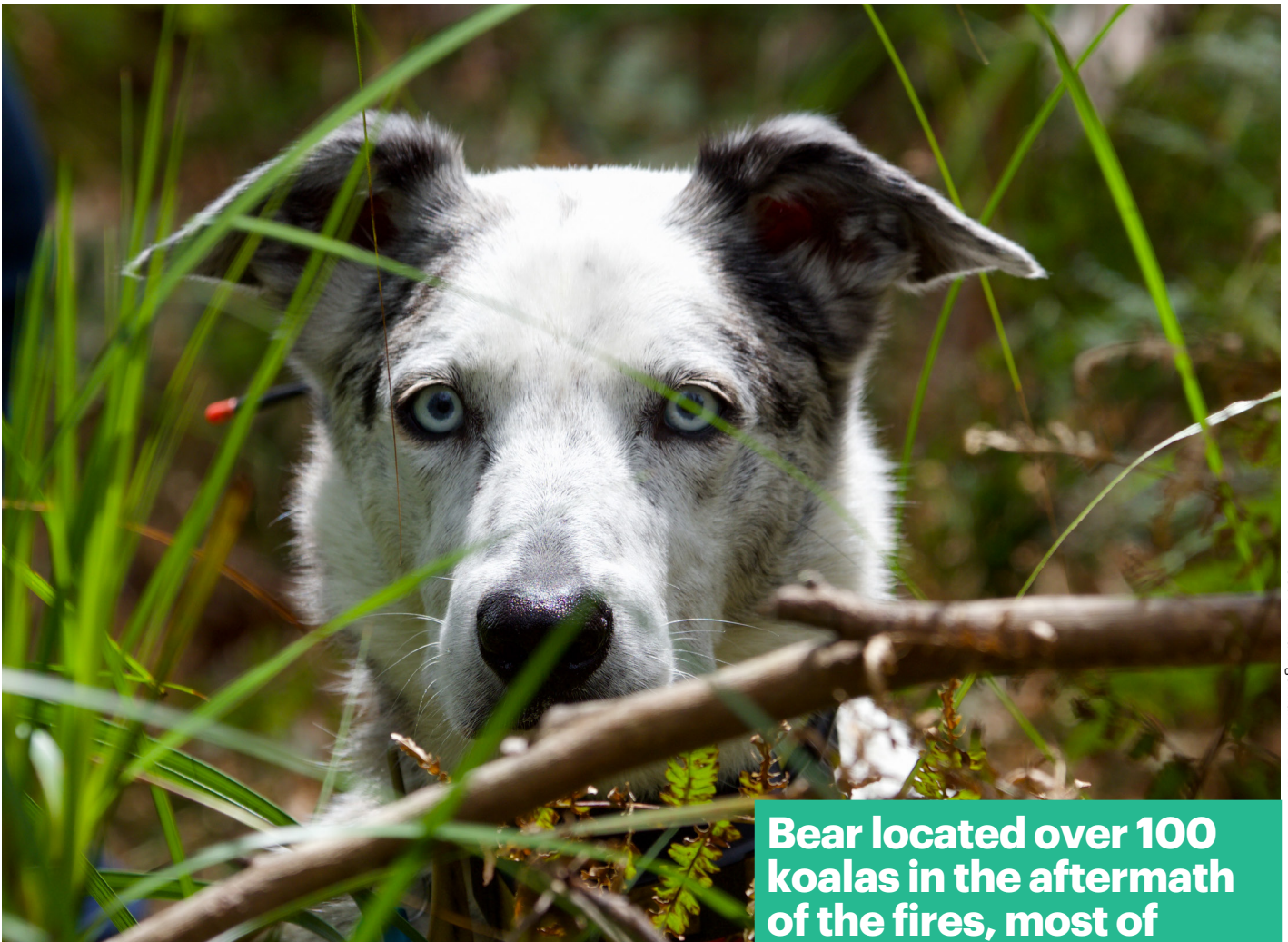


Photo: Ina Egermann © IFAW

Bear located over 100 koalas in the aftermath of the fires, most of which would never have been found without him.

IFAW X UniSC detection dog Bear taking part in a koala survey in Ngunya Jargoan Indigenous Protected Area (IPA).

Watch the video which provides a snapshot into this groundbreaking research project, which we hope will tell us how resilient koalas are to disasters and to improve conservation outcomes for the species.

In August 2022, we embarked on more post-fire koala surveys in Ngunya Jargoan Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) in the NSW Northern Rivers region. This biodiversity and cultural hotspot on Jali lands in Wardell has been devastated by fires and floods and we have been checking up on how the resident koala population is faring.

We are excited to report that 32 koalas were detected so far by a drone-mounted thermal camera, which is promising evidence that they are not only surviving, but thriving, after the fires. The drone-mounted thermal camera picks up their heat signatures and they show up as little glowing balls in the treetops.

We thank the Nyangbal people of the Bundjalung nation for welcoming us onto their land. We recognise and pay respect to the oldest living culture in the world and value their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Koala detection dog Bear then helped the team search for the drone-detected koalas so we could conduct health checks. Most of the koalas we were able to find appeared to be doing well and two even had young joeys in tow.

Bear's trusty teammate Austin (aka Dangerpaws) helped sniff out koala poo, which we are collecting for analysis to give us a picture of the health and genetics of the koala population.

It has been a truly 'koalaborative' effort working with Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council and rangers, NSW Department of Planning and Environment & Saving Our Species, Ballina Shire Council, UniSC Detection Dogs for Conservation and Friends of the Koala, supported by the Australian Government's Bushfire Recovery Exceptional Assistance Immediate Support Package.

planting a future for koalas & other Australian wildlife



A community tree planting (April 23rd 2021) in collaboration with Bangalow Koalas.

Australia is a deforestation hotspot and habitat loss is the number one threat to koalas. With most koala habitat occurring on private land, IFAW is working with community groups including Bangalow Koalas and private landholders to restore habitat on their properties to provide safe passage for koalas.

Just one tree can mean the difference between life and death for koalas and this corridor provides a critical lifeline for koalas and many other animals through this increasingly fragmented landscape.

In July 2020, 5,000 saplings were planted on a 100 acre/40-hectare property in Coopers Shoot, NSW which is a key site along the wildlife corridor. Over a 15-year period 50,000 trees have been planted in this area which is a natural forest/reserve for wildlife including koalas. Local neighbour and tennis legend Pat Rafter joined this community planting.

In April 2021, IFAW, Bangalow Koalas and the Byron Shire Council collaborated to get 4,040

trees planted into council land in the local Bangalow corridor. Adjoining this council land and extending this same local Bangalow corridor, another 6,000 koala and native rainforest trees were planted in July and August 2022. This is a crucial property on the wildlife corridor and koalas, including mothers and joeys, are regularly sighted and have been captured on monitoring cameras.

To give the seedlings the best chance of survival each site is carefully prepared prior to the planting and the plants are monitored and maintained over a three-year period.

In 2022 we also partnered with community groups in NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland to plant even more trees. We thank Alshawa, Queensland Koala Crusaders, Noosa and District Landcare Group, Koala Clancy Foundation, Mornington Peninsula Koala Conservation, Saving Our Koalas, 1300 KOALAZ and Queensland Crusaders for putting even more trees in the ground.

what challenges were encountered and how did we overcome them?



Photo: Mosswood Wildlife © IFAW

2,000 animals were treated by IFAW veterinary teams in 2021.

Buzz (on the right) and Woody (left) snuggle together at Mosswood wildlife. After 11 months in care, they were both released into the wild together on August 5th 2022.

COVID-19 presented a huge challenge to our ability to deliver this work and, like everyone, we have had to adapt our approach. It hindered our ability to conduct field work and forced us to postpone the resurvey of fire-affected properties. It also prevented us from hosting large community plantings but we ensured the trees still got in the ground, via a core team of volunteers.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 also prevented us from holding physical training workshops for vets and vet nurses. However, we have adapted by hosting onsite training days for post-graduate and under-graduate veterinary students and local veterinarians at Friends of the Koala. We have also strengthened relationships with other wildlife hospitals and veterinary surgeries to ensure koalas and other wildlife receive expert care around the clock.

COVID-19 also brought new challenges for wildlife rehabilitators across Australia. Several of our partners rely heavily on revenue from public tours to support their operations, making it particularly difficult when they had to close their doors for the

safety of visitors, staff, and animals. Nevertheless, with your help they were able to remain open and continue to care for the wildlife that needed it most. Two of these partners were Friends of the Koala in NSW and Bonorong Wildlife sanctuary in Tasmania.

In southwest Victoria, we supported our partners at Mosswood Wildlife throughout this challenging time as they cared for koalas and other rescued animals.

The majority of these koalas are joeys who were rescued from the horrific Cape Bridgewater incident in February 2020, during which hundreds of koalas were injured and killed during the bulldozing of a former blue gum plantation. Volunteers at Mosswood Wildlife provided the

Scan the QR code to see how the partnership between IFAW and Bonorong Wildlife Hospital makes a difference in Tasmania





Photo: Bonorong @ IFAW

A member of the IFAW vet team at Bonorong Wildlife Hospital listens to the heart and lungs of Pedro, a platypus, during a health examination.

young koalas with specialised rehabilitation and around the clock hand feedings. Mosswood is one of the busiest shelters in the region of southwest Victoria, admitting up to 600 animals a year.

Two such koalas are Buzz and Woody who were admitted to Mosswood in late 2021. Woody was found on his own after his mother went missing and Buzz was admitted shortly after when his mum was attacked and killed by a dog. The two were buddied up and, after taking a while to warm up to each other and a period of play-fighting, the two became fast friends. They were inseparable during their rehabilitation, often climbing into each other's baskets to be together.

In Tasmania, our partners at Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary took initial safety precautions to temporarily close their gates to the public. The team's 24-hour wildlife rescue services continued to operate and the wildlife hospital remained open with vet support and emergency funding from IFAW.

IFAW funded the veterinary team, allowing the wildlife hospital that IFAW helped build, to operate five days a week. By increasing veterinary capacity

at the hospital, we improved welfare outcomes and release rates of rescued wildlife that came into care. Doing so ultimately gave wildlife in care a critical second chance at life back in the wild. In FY21, the specialised vet team treated 950 animals including the endangered wedge-tailed eagle, the endangered Tasmanian devil and the eastern quoll, with 406 animals being released back into the wild.

We continue to provide critical funding and support to our key partners at Bonorong Wildlife Hospital (TAS), Friends of the Koala (NSW) and Mosswood Wildlife (VIC) to support specialised care and veterinary treatment for wildlife in their regions. This has resulted in almost 2,000 animals admitted into care and more than 600 released back into the wild over the past year!

then came the floods

After the bushfires and Covid, Australia suffered through several record breaking floods across multiple states. Australia's iconic wildlife was impacted once again. We saw first-hand how climate change is increasing the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events like this.

The catastrophic flooding in March 2022 had a devastating impact on the Northern Rivers region where partners Bangalow Koalas and Friends of the Koala are located. Some plantings were destroyed (not our plantings directly) but this dealt a blow to the progress of the wildlife corridor as a whole. Thankfully, Friends of the Koala hospital was not impacted directly as it is on higher land but the local town of Lismore was devastated, with many people losing homes and businesses. Roads were cut off, affecting staff and volunteers' ability to travel and work. A skeleton veterinary team and volunteers worked around the clock to keep the facility open during this time to ensure all the koalas were kept warm, fed and dry.

While we may never know the full extent of the impact of the floods on wildlife, we know burrowing animals such as wombats and echidnas are some of the most heavily impacted because their homes become filled with floodwaters and mud. We supported Sleepy Burrows Wombat Sanctuary in southern NSW to build portable shelters with recycled materials which can be moved to higher ground during floods or other emergencies - saving more lives.

As a result of IFAW's support, eight innovative shelters were constructed and have since been used by wombats in care. The sanctuary has subsequently constructed additional shelters which have been used by wild wombats in the area

IFAW also supported several groups by providing critical supplies including food supplements, equipment, generators, water tanks, medical supplies, emergency enclosures and help with transportation across Queensland and NSW.

The flooding also had a huge impact on other animals (pets, farm animals and koalas). While some people may think koalas are safe at the top of trees during floods, the reality is they're at real risk of being separated from their mothers or becoming injured and unwell. This was the case for Flux the koala who was rescued after the floods in the NSW Northern Rivers region.

He was brought into the care of the IFAW vet team at Friends of the Koala and was found to have severe chlamydial cystitis. Flux, who is about five years old, spent months

under the expert care of the vet team receiving treatment and supplements to help him recover. Flux thrived in care and we're excited to share he was released back to the wild where he belongs.

Scan the QR code to see Flux being released



working with communities

At the core of recovery is community and connectivity. That's why in mid-2020 we combined forces with the Great Eastern Ranges (GER) to promote community collaboration in landscape conservation by restoring habitats and creating wildlife corridors across 3,600 kilometres of Australia's east coast.

One year later, we embarked on a 12-month critical bushfire recovery project to help communities, wildlife and landscapes heal. The recovery projects target three priority landscapes which were impacted by the bushfires in Queensland and NSW - the Lockyer, Southern Border Ranges and Greater Blue Mountains.

We've been working to roll out these projects with GER and their network of regional and local conservation, Indigenous and community groups, scientific experts and private landholders. As part of our partnership, we also worked with Healthy Land & Water to host a couple of community workshops about platypus and gliders in the Lockyer.

We are restoring habitats and creating wildlife corridors across 3,600 kilometres of Australia's east coast.



Image: Great Eastern Ranges Ltd.

IFAW x GER recovery project priority areas and regional partnerships – Lockyer Uplands Catchments, Border Ranges Alliance and Kanangra-Boyd to Wyangala.



IFAW Global Projects Vice President Jimmiel Mandima, Friends of the Koala Nursery Manager Mark Wilson, IFAW Landscape Conservation Director Phillip Kuvawoga and IFAW Landscape Conservation Officer Wendy Simpson talking about the habitat restoration work being done in the NSW Northern Rivers region.

We recognised our work needed to focus not just on bushfire recovery — but disaster recovery and importantly, building community resilience against these extreme weather events.

While the projects span states, towns and cities — at the core is our combined aim to increase connectivity among landscapes and communities. Connectivity is more important now than ever with climate change continuing to impact livability in areas and increasing the frequency and intensity of disasters.

The 2019-20 bushfires and 2022 floods further fragmented landscapes already broken by land clearing and development. That's why our partnership with GER and their regional networks is so critical. Together, we're determined to enhance habitat, restore and connect the places wildlife call home — so animals and people can have a better chance of thriving together.

For recovery efforts to be successful and long lasting, they must be done in collaboration with local communities. Building capacity and resilience by providing opportunities for those affected to be part of the long-term solution. Our projects include helping communities undertake fire and weed management, as well as other environmental repair activities in and along waterways and on land. We are restoring this landscape so it can be a safe home for wildlife. We're also helping landholders identify the various species of wildlife that live on their properties and

workshopping ways they can enhance habitat suitability, for example building and installing nest boxes. This in turn gives wildlife greater spaces to move safely between properties, through community-established habitat corridors, and their local landscape.

We recognise we all have a part to play and by sharing ideas and working together, we're giving our wildlife and communities the best chances of thriving together into the future.

This crucial landscape restoration work is part of IFAW's full-circle approach to conservation in Australia and our belief that every individual animal matters. We combine our own expertise and a valuable network of wildlife carers, to rescue sick, injured and orphaned animals, and provide the critical resources for their rehabilitation so they can be released back into the wild where they belong. Recognising the life-saving importance of preparedness, we also empower and equip wildlife carers and rescue groups to be prepared for disasters through workshops and guidelines.

By restoring and ensuring the long-term protection of critical landscapes, we're providing safe places and room to roam for the animals we rescue and rehabilitate to be released into. All of this work is underpinned by working with the best scientists and experts in rehabilitation and land management to ensure people can and are empowered to live harmoniously with wildlife.

we continue to help animals all across Australia



© IFAM

Installing Habitech nest boxes at Two Thumbs (NSW).

We are excited to share with you that we have been working to rebuild wildlife rehabilitation enclosures and help with landscape recovery at Two Thumbs Wildlife Trust Sanctuary, near Cooma in NSW. Two Thumbs Wildlife Trust Sanctuary was devastated by bushfires on 23rd January, 2020, but two and a half years on, with a helping hand from IFAW and our friends at Habitat Innovation and Management, there are promising signs wildlife is returning to the once biodiverse hotspot.

Thousands of critical tree hollows that wildlife call home were unfortunately lost. Tree hollows take 100 years or more to reform to enable wildlife to thrive again in the area, together with Habitat Innovation and Management we installed specially designed nest boxes. These nest boxes mimic natural hollows found in trees and the innovative Habitech design is made from composite material, is modular, highly insulated, recyclable, weather resistant, and designed to

last decades.

The Habitech nest boxes at Two Thumbs Wildlife Trust specifically target the endangered gang-gang cockatoo and several glider species, including the endangered greater glider and yellow-bellied glider.

During preliminary surveys of the property, a greater glider was spotted by Habitat Innovation and Management ecologists — just weeks after the nation's largest gliding mammal was up-listed to Endangered under the *Australian Government's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

We will be monitoring these boxes in the coming months and installing more at Two Thumbs and hopefully other bushfire impacted habitat areas throughout the country.

new partnerships to help wildlife even more...

Dozens of critically endangered animals were given a second chance at life after being rescued in Dec 2021-Jan 2022 during Western Australia's bushfires and heatwaves. For several months, parts of Western Australia experienced recordbreaking heatwaves and catastrophic bushfires last summer. As a result, local volunteer group FAWNA Inc was inundated with severely injured and distressed wildlife in the South West region of Western Australia. To assist IFAW provided emergency support and sponsored a specialist wildlife vet to ensure injured animals were given timely assessments and if needed, immediate specialist treatment and relief from suffering.

IFAW is also supporting WA Wildlife to assist Western Australian wildlife care groups and individuals in disaster preparedness and evacuation. Also, we are supporting the WA Wildlife Hospital laboratory which provides critical diagnostics and veterinary treatment to sick and injured wildlife.



IFAW-sponsored vet Dr Shan Siah assisting wildlife in WA

© FAWNA Inc.

how you can help wildlife when out & about

Recognising the life-saving importance of preparedness, IFAW has developed an emergency evacuation planning kit which includes step-by-step guidelines and templates to assist Australian wildlife care groups and individuals in preparing an effective evacuation plan. We ran workshops throughout covid lockdowns to ensure our partners and other wildlife rescue groups have a disaster evacuation plan in place. Check out our website here:

www.ifaw.org/au/resources/evacuation-planning-kit-au

You can also help rescue wildlife by downloading the IFAW Wildlife Rescue App before heading out onto the roads. This free app puts people directly in touch with the nearest wildlife rescue group to report an injured animal.

Scan the QR code to download the app



Please note: This App is currently only operating in NSW and Tasmania at the moment but launching in other states soon.

Thank you so much for your incredible support which has allowed us to restore Australia and care for local wildlife and the place they call home.

We would like to acknowledge all of our supporters who have chosen to leave their lasting legacy to the animals through a gift in their Will. Did you know that 1 in 5 animals are rescued and protected thanks to these wonderful gifts.

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IFAW acknowledges the traditional owners of the country throughout Australia and the Oceania region and their connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

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