

# The Copley Circle



Newsletter 1 | August 2022



*Legacies for Wildlife*

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Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) is a global leader in conservation, providing hope for Australia's wildlife with a science-informed, land management partnership model that delivers high impact results.

The mission of AWC is the effective conservation of all Australian animal species and the habitats in which they live.

To achieve this mission our actions are focused on:

- Establishing a network of sanctuaries which protect threatened wildlife and ecosystems. AWC now owns, manages or works in partnership across more than 12.9 million hectares (31.9 million acres).
- Implementing practical, on-ground conservation programs to protect wildlife. These programs include feral animal control, fire management, weed eradication and the translocation of threatened species.
- Conducting (either alone or in collaboration with other organisations) scientific research that will help address the key threats to native wildlife.
- Hosting visitor programs at our sanctuaries for the purposes of education and promoting awareness about the plight of Australia's wildlife.

AWC is an independent, not-for-profit organisation with its head office in Perth, Western Australia. Donations to AWC are tax deductible.

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Cover image:  
A family of reintroduced Eastern Pygmy-Possums at North Head Sanctuary.  
Aiden Wright/AWC

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## CEO MESSAGE

First and foremost, thank you for including Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) in your will or for considering a legacy gift. We are honoured that you have entrusted us to act on your values into the future. Through your involvement during your lifetime and the legacy you are leaving, you are playing a meaningful role in protecting and restoring Australia's threatened wildlife and habitats for future generations.

Australia is biologically megadiverse and home to animals, plants and fungi found nowhere else in the world. I feel extremely lucky to be able to live and work in such a special environment. At the same time, Australia is one of the lowest ranking developed nations when it comes to protecting biodiversity. We have the worst mammal extinction rate in the world and more than 1,900 species and ecological communities are now listed as threatened.

Australia's State of the Environment Report, released in July, concluded that increasing pressures from threats like climate change, habitat loss and invasive species are propelling environmental deterioration. Confronted with this grim report, I was very proud to see AWC cited as a 'bright spot' in conservation, recognised for our investment in feral predator-free safe havens, approach to practical management of ecosystems, and commitment to working alongside Traditional Owners and Indigenous ranger groups to improve outcomes. AWC's model is delivering high impact results and scaling up our conservation efforts across the continent will help this bright spot to grow.

As a member of The Copley Circle, you share the name with AWC Founder Martin Copley AM. Like you and I, Martin recognised the urgent need for effective and pragmatic conservation – not only purchasing parcels of land for conservation but managing them effectively. Over time, AWC's model has grown to include strategic and collaborative partnerships with Indigenous groups,

governments, pastoralists, landholders and other conservation organisations. Members of the AWC team are also committed to conserving wildlife and habitats beyond their lifetimes, like Board Director Guy Fergusson and his wife Georgina, who are members of The Copley Circle. These gifts are one of the most effective ways you can support AWC's work – bequests contribute between 4 and 17% of operating costs each year.

Your bequest is a legacy to AWC but also a legacy of your life. This means the continuation of your passions, whether it be healing nature and protecting wildlife like Copley Circle community members Alan and Diane Steele (page 8) or that AWC's aims and actions matter to you, as for Patricia Novikoff (page 6). For me, it doesn't get any better than restoring threatened wildlife. The recent translocation of critically endangered Central Rock-rats to Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary in Central Australia is probably the proudest moment of my professional life. The feeling of seeing an endangered species protected from feral predators in its natural habitat, after years of hard work and preparation, is deeply moving.

Thank you for being part of The Copley Circle. We feel honoured to have you as a member of this special community, helping AWC to answer the urgent call for effective conservation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Allard'.

Tim Allard  
Chief Executive



[Right page] Steven Christopher Kolb.

[This page] Martin Copley's vision, dedication and relentless work to conserve endangered Australian animals and plants inspired Steven Kolb to bequeath a major part of his estate to AWC. A memorial was held at Paruna Wildlife Sanctuary, WA, in celebration of Steven's life and to show AWC's deep appreciation of his legacy gift. From left to right: Rebecca Wellard (AWC), Liz Mueller, Kaethi Mueller, Samara Achermann, Roger Achermann, Marcel Achermann, Chloe Robertson, Beth Reid (AWC), Andre van Boheemen (AWC) and Clint McGee (AWC). Front: Peter Mueller. *Corinne Achermann*

## Generous \$1.14 million legacy for wildlife

**IN MEMORY OF STEVEN CHRISTOPHER KOLB**  
9/12/1952–5/12/2018

AWC deeply respects that leaving a legacy for wildlife in your will can be one of the most important decisions you make during your lifetime. We feel greatly honoured by those who choose to include AWC in their plans.

There are many compelling reasons to leave a legacy gift, perhaps one of the most important being that Australia's unique biodiversity is under threat – many ecosystems are on the path to collapse. Reversing this decline in our animals and habitats is at the core of AWC's conservation efforts, a focus that resonates strongly with many of you.

For the late Steven Christopher Kolb, animal care was always high on his agenda. Steven bequeathed a \$1.14 million legacy gift to AWC, and we celebrate his incredible generosity. Steven's good friend Peter Mueller notes that 'Steve was impressed by the entirety of the work carried out by AWC and by Martin Copley's [AWC Founder] vision and entrepreneurial spirit. Steve was a unique individual – independent, honest and straightforward – and he particularly liked that AWC is a private organisation and not influenced by government.'

Steven moved around a lot during his childhood, spending his first three years in America, followed by three years in Switzerland, ten years in South Africa, back to Switzerland, Paris for 18 months, and finally back to Switzerland. At the age of 22 and on completing his mandatory military service with the Swiss Army, Steven decided to set out on his own adventure and move across the world to Australia. Steven was convinced the country was his kind of place – 'easy-going, informal, lovely climate and not too crowded.'

After falling in love with Perth but finding himself at a loose end, Steven visited friends at their Pingelly farm and promptly found himself falling in love with farming, particularly being outdoors and surrounded by animals. Steven absorbed and learnt as much as he could on the job, all done with great zeal and enjoyment. At the time, Pingelly was a town seemingly plucked from an old cowboy movie; the phones were dual-party lines with an exchange operator, the TV was mostly just a fuzzy screen and drivers licenses had no photos. After eventually

purchasing his own small farm, Steven would call Pingelly home for the rest of his life.

Many tough farming years followed – during which Steven built his own house from scratch – until he and Peter Mueller (who was living in Switzerland at the time) hit on the idea of yabby farming. Through extensive research, close care for animal welfare and by using science to inform business processes, Steven perfected yabby collection and transportation techniques and Southern Yabby Farms became a success. In 1990

Steven and Peter pioneered yabby exports to Switzerland with a modest first year turnover of 2 tonnes. Just four years later, the team shipped out 70 tonnes of yabbies to various countries in Europe and Asia and Southern Yabby Farms won the 1994 West Australian Export Award for Agricultural Products.

In 2003, Steven sold the business to return to local farming – this time for the fun of it. Ever inventive, he started breeding a non-shearing meat sheep – a mix of six breeds – creating a composite named Dorpalees. Steven noted that 'personality wise they [the sheep] are more like goats, making them very entertaining.'

Steven died too soon at the age of 65. Before his death he took the time to reflect on his life, writing 'I have had an interesting and enjoyable working life, with huge challenges, but overcoming them was part of it. Thank goodness I did not have to spend 40 years stuck in some office, as many have to! When we risk living, we risk dying. Farming has taught me that birth and death are just part of the natural cycle of life, so I accept that.'

Steven was not actively involved with AWC during his lifetime but chose to leave his \$1.14 million bequest in support of AWC's business model and to further conservation in Australia.

Peter describes him as 'a self-educated man, who never concealed his feelings and was a very good friend.' Rest in Peace, Steven Christopher Kolb. Your personal legacy of friendship, enterprise and knowledge lives on in those who knew you. Your legacy gift to AWC means that your incredible generosity will have a lasting, positive impact on Australia's threatened wildlife and habitats.





*AWC's aims and actions matter to me – removing and excluding feral animals and plants and then fencing those areas, reintroducing the original fauna (rewilding), restoring habitat and using strategic mosaic burning to reduce intense wildfires.*

*PATRICIA NOVIKOFF*



### ***The Copley Circle community: Patricia Novikoff***

I discovered AWC when I joined Birds Australia (BA, now Birdlife Australia) in about 2000 – there was an AWC info sheet in their magazine. I was impressed and started donating in a small way and then those amounts grew over time.

I gave about \$1,000 to BA to help purchase Newhaven Station [now Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary] and then AWC took it on. Wonderful!

AWC's aims and actions matter to me – removing and excluding feral animals and plants and then fencing those areas, reintroducing the original fauna (rewilding), restoring habitat and using strategic mosaic burning to reduce intense wildfires. What AWC is doing is so different from any organisation I've come across in Australia. They get the science right and consistently follow up. I haven't seen governments in recent years giving the environment any priority, especially when it stands in the way of extracting some kind of profit.

I have visited a number of places where AWC is involved – Piccaninny Plains (QLD), Scotia (NSW), Mornington (WA), Pungalina–Seven Emu (NT), and Mount Zero–Taravale (QLD) wildlife sanctuaries, Pilliga State Forest (NSW), Bullo River Station (NT) and North Head (NSW). They all protect special ecosystems and stunning landscapes and I've had the privilege of seeing wildlife interacting in the environment.

I can't think of a more worthwhile beneficiary of my estate. AWC is doing something positive for the environment and is one of the rare bright lights on the horizon.

[This page] The sprawling landscape of Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary (260,000 hectares) in Central Australia. Newhaven is home to a 9,450-hectare fenced safe haven that has seen six locally extinct and threatened mammals reintroduced. *Wayne Lawler/AWC*

[Right page] AWC Senior Wildlife Ecologist Eri Mulder and Patricia Novikoff at Mount Zero–Taravale Wildlife Sanctuary in Queensland. *Patricia Novikoff*



Alan and Diane Steele are long-term supporters of AWC. Alan and Diane Steele



Bilby burrows and foraging pits transform the landscape and restore important ecosystem processes. Wayne Lawler/AWC

***Nature has an incredible capacity to heal itself when given the opportunity, which is what AWC does and that's what motivates me***

ALAN STEELE

## ***The Copley Circle community: Alan and Diane Steele***

Alan and Diane Steele are long-term supporters of AWC. We recently had the opportunity to interview Alan about why the couple chose to leave a legacy gift to AWC. We hope you enjoy reading his responses.

### ***How did you first become involved with AWC?***

From a young age I have always loved the bush and enjoyed bushwalking, camping and spending time in the great outdoors. In my twenties, I was aware of environmental problems, particularly issues such as the logging of old growth forests. I often thought about the loss of the forests and where the wildlife would go when these habitats were destroyed. In the 1990s the idea of 'buying back the bush' came to be an important way to make an impact for conservation, and this is when I came to know and be a supporter of AWC.

### ***Why is the work of AWC important to you?***

Over the years I have seen AWC develop its model from simple land acquisition to now working in partnership with governments, Indigenous communities, and commercial and private landholders. I have always thought that there must be a way to combine commerce and conservation, yielding not only the desired environmental protection but also enabling businesses to continue. I am very happy that AWC has achieved this at Bullo River Station (NT), which operates as a successful pastoral property whilst making an important contribution to conservation. Australia needs this sort of approach to really make a difference. AWC does this incredibly well.

Alongside this there is the scientific basis to AWC's work, with the team monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of their efforts to always ensure the desired positive impact is being achieved. As a supporter this is important to me.

I am also extremely impressed by AWC's financial management, which is a big motivator. Knowing that my funding is largely going to actual conservation work, not to fundraising and building membership, is important to me.

### ***Have you ever visited one of AWC's sanctuaries? Can you tell us about your experience there?***

One of my first sanctuary visits was to Scotia Wildlife Sanctuary (NSW) where I had the chance to meet AWC Senior Field Ecologist Felicity L'Hotellier [now based at Mount Zero-Taravale Wildlife Sanctuary, QLD]. You could see the difference the feral predator-proof fence was making. Inside the fence the ecosystem had been brought back to life. Bilbies had been digging and weeds had been removed restoring it to the way it was meant to be. The Bilbies created little holes where leaf litter and seeds were caught, and these holes also trapped water assisting germination. Bringing our Australian landscape back to its pre-European settlement state, and working with the land, is part of AWC's combination of business and conservation. This has always impressed me.

Nature has an incredible capacity to heal itself when given the opportunity, which is what AWC does and that's what motivates me.

### ***What is it about AWC that inspired you to leave a gift in your will?***

My family has already been looked after and will continue to be when I have passed. But with what is left, I would like to see it playing a role in protecting Australia's wildlife. The work of AWC has been important to me during my lifetime and I want to know that this work will continue to restore and protect what is left of our incredible species and landscapes well into the future.

## Joining The Copley Circle community

By leaving a legacy gift to AWC, you are ensuring the continued delivery of high impact results for wildlife. Gifts in wills provide crucial support for AWC's science-informed land management and partnership model.

To those of you who are already Copley Circle members – thank you. We are incredibly honoured to be custodians of your significant commitment to securing the future of Australia's unique biodiversity.

If you are considering a legacy gift – thank you. We greatly welcome your involvement with the organisation during your lifetime. If you choose to include a gift to AWC in your will, you will be invited to join The Copley Circle.

Martin Copley AM, the founder of AWC, was a philanthropist and conservationist who made an extraordinary contribution towards halting the extinction crisis in Australia and slowing and reversing the tide of species and ecosystem decline.

More than thirty years on, AWC is Martin's – and all the incredible people who have been involved with the organisation over the years – environmental legacy, protecting endangered wildlife and habitats, and delivering and influencing effective conservation across more than 12.9 million hectares of the continent.

Membership in The Copley Circle is an acknowledgement of your commitment to preserving Australia's animals and their habitats for generations. By notifying AWC of your intentions via a confidential online form (you can use the QR code on page 11), you will be eligible to join The Copley Circle and enjoy the membership benefits of this select group, including:

- a certificate and pin acknowledging your gift;
- invitations to special events at AWC's remote sanctuaries;
- the chance to meet AWC's dedicated team of field ecologists and land managers;
- invitations to AWC's city-based functions;
- a lifetime subscription to Wildlife Matters;
- a dedicated AWC team member to keep you informed about our activities in the field.

Joining The Copley Circle provides greater opportunities for you to engage with AWC on a more personal level. If you would like further information or a confidential discussion about your intentions, please contact Bequest Manager Emma Morgan at [emma.morgan@australianwildlife.org](mailto:emma.morgan@australianwildlife.org).



### Upcoming events

By confirming your gift in will and becoming a member of The Copley Circle community you gain access to special events. From time to time, you will be invited to join webinars to deepen your knowledge of AWC's work, strategic direction and governance. In 2023, we plan to run special city-based events so you can engage with us on a more personal level and deepen your understanding of all things AWC. To register your interest in being invited to webinars or events please email Bequest Manager Emma Morgan at [emma.morgan@australianwildlife.org](mailto:emma.morgan@australianwildlife.org).

### We want to hear from you!

If you have enjoyed the first edition of The Copley Circle Newsletter and would like to receive this annually, please let Emma know via email. If you would like more information on how to leave a gift in your will or would like to notify us about your gift and join The Copley Circle, please get in touch via our confidential online form using the QR code below.

### Thank you

Gifts in wills are a wonderful way of ensuring your values are carried beyond your lifetime. Legacies for wildlife are also legacies for conservation and help AWC to plan for the future and to thank you during your lifetime. Thank you for the part you play in The Copley Circle community.





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