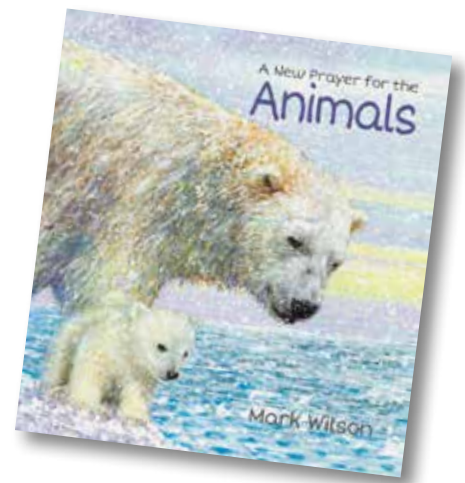


# A New Prayer for the Animals



Written and illustrated by Mark Wilson  
Published by Windy Hollow Books

## Teachers' notes

### AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND - MARK WILSON

A New Prayer for the Animals marks the 15th anniversary of my first picturebook *Prayer for the Animals*. I did that book out of frustration with the conservation movement that had lost much of its momentum fifteen years ago. It had been many years since anything concerning conservation or endangered species had made the front pages of a major newspaper in Australia where I live. Many people didn't seem to care enough about our endangered wildlife or their habitat to actually do something worthwhile about it, so the book was not only a personal prayer for the animals but also a plea for people to actively become involved in conservation issues.

Mark Wilson is a multiple award-winning author/illustrator with 21 books in print worldwide. He grew up with a passion for comics and rock'n'roll, drumming and singing with the bands Piranha and Centerfold. Mark has a passion for Australian history, the environment and endangered animals, exploring these themes through his picturebooks and workshops. Mark has won many CBCA, Whitley and Wilderness Society Awards, was shortlisted in the 3rd C.J. Picture Book Awards International, and was presented with the 2011 Dromkeen Medal for Services to Children's Literature. Mark hopes his books encourage students to study their own family history and Australian native species & habitat.

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### INTRODUCTION

We are running out of time! My new picturebook for *A New Prayer for the animals* for Windy Hollow Books sprang from the need for all of us to take action now! For example – there are between 7 and 10 million feral cats across the Australian landscape. In a single night, one feral cat will kill 'several' animals, many of them native species. That means more than 35 million 'creatures' are killed every night in Australia. This march towards extinction is happening all over the world due to pollution, clearing of forests, spreading cities, coastal development, clearing for pasture/crops, over-fishing and global warming. It's simple. We have to fix it now. The devastating bushfires that are ravaging the South Eastern Australian forests as I write this, have proven how vulnerable our environment and the wild creatures are. We have lost so many native and domestic animals, birds insects, reptiles – and even fish in these fires, that some may soon be listed as endangered species. The fires on Kangaroo Island have not only wiped out thousands of Kangaroos, Koalas and many other creatures, but may have also wiped out the only population of Kangaroo Island Dunnarts (featured on P. 22) left in the wild. We simply don't know yet, as the fires are still raging as I write.

I will be taking my little granddaughters Sophie and Georgia to a wonderful place called the Healesville Sanctuary just after Christmas. It is in Victoria, Australia. Sophie is five and Georgia is nearly two. As we walk around and see each little animal at the sanctuary, Sophie will ask me about them. Am I to tell her that the beautiful little creature may be extinct soon, as many of them may be in her lifetime, or can I tell her that they are just in trouble, but we can do things to save them. I actually believe we can, and that's what I will tell her. We saved the platypus, by restoring their habitat, creeks and river ecosystems across Southern Australia, and we saved the humpback whale by 'mostly' banning whaling, and we have preserved whole ecosystems worldwide by banning dredging in many fragile marine systems. That is what I will tell little Sophie because I know we can do it. *A New Prayer for the Animals* is my 'rally to the flag' for action. Children get it. We need more adults, including politicians, to come to the party as well!

Mark Wilson  
January 9, 2020



## READING

1. Find out all you can about endangered species.
2. What is the small black and yellow creature featured in this book? Find it and read about the reasons it is endangered (Corroboree Frog).
3. Which other Australian species are endangered that you know about? Read about them and find out why they are endangered (example - Northern Quoll).
4. Are there any endangered species in your country or area? If so, which ones, and are there any projects in place to protect them? (Contact your local council or conservation group.)
5. What are the causes of endangerment or extinction of a species. Are they natural or caused by man?

There is a wealth of information on the internet and at your local or school library on all these issues.

*Note: some internet sites and books are listed at the end of these notes.*

## WRITING

1. Choose one endangered species and write a short essay on why that animal has become endangered. Example: Kangaroo Island Dunnart, Orangutan or Sea Lion.
2. Make up an article as it would appear in your local newspaper about wildlife in your area, and what you think should be done to protect it.
3. Compose a letter to your local politician about what you think could be done in your area to protect wildlife and habitat.
4. Make a list of ten creatures from the book and write about what makes each one unique. Example: The orange-bellied Parrot mates for life.
5. Choose an animal in the book that comes from a different country to where you live. Read about it and write a short essay on how many there are left, what it eats etc.

## VISUAL ARTS

1. Animal camouflage and survival - choose a creature from the book and do a drawing or painting that shows how its markings work to help it survive in the wild.

Example: The Amur Leopard's spots help it blend in with the grass when it is hunting. The Little Penguin's colouring helps it blend in with water and waves.

2. Discuss where the paintings in the book are set and what they tell you about the creatures and their habitat.  
Example: Polar Bears live mainly on the ice, but are also good swimmers.
3. Discuss how the paintings in this book are done (acrylic paint, ink and Derwent pencil on canvas or card). Choose an animal and illustrate it in a different way to the way it is done in the book.
4. Do a group mural for your classroom featuring as many endangered species as you can.



## SPEAKING

1. Debate – Is mankind responsible, or is extinction a natural phenomenon? Include: Discussion on climate change and its effect on wild creatures and the environment.

Example: Thylacine, dinosaurs.

2. Give a short talk on introduced animals, such as feral cats, buffalo, rabbits, foxes pigs and dogs, and their effect on certain species and their habitat. Example: Corroboree Frog/ hoofed animals.

3. Give a short talk or discussion on the things species need to survive.

Example: Fairy Penguins – safe nesting sites.

Discussion could include habitat, weather, food stocks and breeding programs in zoos and wildlife sanctuaries.

4. In groups, discuss ecosystems and their importance to conservation. Each group selects a different type of habitat and produces an essay or project sheet. Individual members of each group give a short talk on an aspect of that ecosystem.

Example: Pond life creatures, food chain, weather, water flow, pollutants and other threats to survival.

## ACTION

1. Learn all you can about native creatures, starting with those in your own backyard or neighborhood (skinks, butterflies, bees, birds etc.). Find out what they need to survive.

2. Find out what your local council is doing about conservation; for example, are they planting native trees and shrubs in streets and parks which will attract native birds and insects?

3. You can join a conservation group working to protect native species and their habitat. They need your support and can guide you in your actions. A list is provided at the end of these notes.

4. Write letters of support to conservationists, councils and politicians who take steps to protect native wildlife and habitat, because they are instrumental in instigating re-vegetation programs.

5. You can visit nature reserves, parks and wildlife sanctuaries. Many of the paintings in this book were the result of my visits to the Royal Melbourne Zoo and the Healesville Sanctuary. They are the only place many of these animals, reptiles, birds and insects can be observed closely, and they have wonderful research and breeding programs for endangered species. They would they exist without your support?



## More Information about our endangered species can be obtained from:

### **Healesville Sanctuary**

Badger Creek Road, Healesville, Victoria 3777 Australia  
Ph: 1 300 966784  
[www.zoo.org.au](http://www.zoo.org.au)

### **Taronga Zoo**

Bradleys Head Road, Mossman, NSW 2080 Australia  
Ph: (02) 9969 2777  
<https://taronga.org.au/contact>

### **Western Plains Zoo**

Obley Road, Dubbo, NSW 2830 Australia  
Ph: (02) 99692777  
[dubbo.org](http://dubbo.org) › [explore](#) › [western-plains-zoo](#)

### **World Wildlife Fund**

Level 1, 1 Smail Street, Ultimo, NSW 2007 Australia  
Ph: 1 800 032551  
[www.wwf.org.au](http://www.wwf.org.au)

### **Royal Melbourne Zoo**

Elliot Avenue, Parkville, Victoria 3052 Australia  
Ph: 1 300 966784  
[www.zoo.org.au](http://www.zoo.org.au)

### **Werribee Open Range Zoo**

K Road, Werribee South Victoria 3030 Australia  
Ph: 1 300 966784  
[www.zoo.org.au/](http://www.zoo.org.au/)

### **Australian Conservation Foundation Australia**

Level 1, 60 Leicester Street, Carlton VIC 3053 Australia  
Ph: (03) 1800223669  
[www.acfonline.org.au](http://www.acfonline.org.au)

### **The Wilderness Society Victoria Inc**

353-355 King Street West Melbourne VIC 3003, Australia  
Ph: (03) 90380888  
[www.wilderness.org.au/](http://www.wilderness.org.au/)

### **The International Union for Conservation of Nature**

IUCN Global Species Programme Red List Unit  
IUCN UK Office, The David Attenborough Building  
Pembroke Street, Cambridge CB2 3QZ  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0)1223 331199  
<https://www.iucnredlist.org/contact/contact-page>

## The books listed below were all used as reference for A New Prayer For the Animals

### **Australian Animals**

Dalys Newman, Ken Stepnell, Woollahara and Murray David Publishing, Newtown, 2004

### **A Field Guide to the Mammals of the World**

Peter Menkhorst, Frank Knight, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001

### **Frogs and Reptiles**

Steve Parish, Steve Parish Publishing Pty. Ltd., Archerfield, 2002

### **Collins Guide to the Rare Mammals of the World**

John Burton & Bruce Pearson, William Collins and Sons, London, 1987

### **Rare Birds of the World**

Guy Mountford & Norman Arlett, The Stephen Greene Press, Lexington, 1996

### **Our Wildlife in Peril**

The Endangered Species Committee of the Total Environment Centre, Reed, Sydney, 1983

### **Australian Endangered Species: The Extinction Dilemma,**

Mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, invertebrates and plants.

Michael Kennedy, (Ed.), Simon and Schuster, Brookvale, 1990

### **Freshwater Invertebrates**

Ralph Miller, Gould League of Victoria Inc., Moorabbin, 1996

### **The Worlds Disappearing Wildlife**

Dr. Maurice Burton, Robert Burton, Marshall Cavendish Corporation, New York, 1978

### **The Gould League Book of Australian Endangered Wildlife**

Frank Haddon, Tony Oliver, Golden Press and the Gould League of N.S.W., 1983

### **The Macdonald Encyclopedia of Butterflies and Moths**

Mauro Daccordi, Paolo Triberti and Adriano Zanetti, Macdonald Orbis, London, 1988

