



# Great wildlife gets better looking

It's always a pleasure to welcome readers to a new issue and a new year of wildlife. In this case, it's a pleasure as well to welcome in a fresh look, and a whole new approach to our NatureWatch section.

Our writers and photographers contribute superb material: our designer, Katharine Farley, puts it together in wonderful layouts that showcase the material and invite the reader into our pages. She's been working closely with our enthusiastic new NatureWatch compiler, Christine Pfitzner, to develop and present an exciting change of focus for this regular feature.

Chris, a science writer and consultant, is also WPSO's new Education and Development Officer. She's building a network of nature-lovers who know their patch of wildlife and can tell us what's happening this season, where to see it and what's interesting about it. Whether you're planning a holiday around wildlife events or just watching from your window or verandah, we hope this new NatureWatch enriches your wildlife experience with intriguing insights and sends you off on further explorations. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank Kate Bright for her much-appreciated years as a sterling compiler of NatureWatch; we hope to see some great travel pieces from her in the near future.

Our other design changes are not quite as radical as the NatureWatch remodel – it's not so much a make-over as a refreshment, to keep the magazine look current and relevant as well as classic, informative and readable. Australia's wildlife, not to mention our readers and contributors, deserve nothing less.

On a current events note, Australia Day honours have been announced as we prepare this issue. Congratulations to Dr Tim Flannery for the well-deserved Australian of the Year award, and further congratulations to him for continuing to speak out strongly on environmental issues. It's good to see the federal government getting serious (after how many decades?) about the water crisis we've precipitated, but it's difficult to solve a problem if you don't understand it and, as Dr Flannery said in an ABC radio interview, 'We don't understand our weather systems in Australia particularly well because we haven't invested the money in climatology that we should have.'

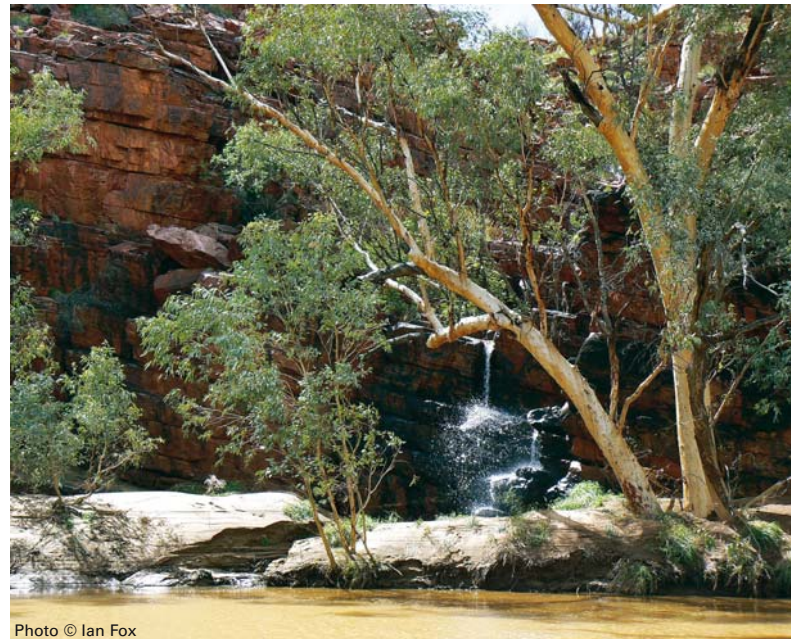


Photo © Ian Fox

*Will we ever understand Australia's weather? With snow, bushfires and drought raging around the country, January rains brought floods to parts of our arid inland. Ian Fox got to Trepghina Gorge in time to catch this ephemeral waterfall. 'Knowing it won't last more than a day or two makes it extra special,' he says. 'Things have really greened up ... the next few months should be bountiful, so wildlife will respond well for winter visitors.'*

Our theme for this issue, Protected Places, has attracted a lively array of articles, from life in the supposed protection of bird nests to areas protected as a national park, a marine park and a nature reserve; from how to finance conservation to how to turn us all into dasyuridophiles. It's a great start to good reading for 2007.

**SAREN STARBRIDGE**, editor

## SWAMP by Gary Clark

