

Role Description

Designation:	Field Ecologist – South East <i>[FE- SE]</i>
Reporting to:	Wildlife Ecologist – South East <i>[WE- SE]</i>
Supervising:	As delegated by the Wildlife Ecologist: may include AWC ecologists, Interns, Volunteers, Indigenous Rangers, Contractors
Based at:	Buronga, NSW

Organisational context

Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) is a national conservation organisation dedicated to the effective conservation of Australia's native wildlife and their habitats. AWC delivers practical, on-ground conservation across a diverse network of wildlife sanctuaries and partnership landscapes spanning multiple bioregions of Australia. Our work is led by integrated Operations and Science teams, supported by and working with Philanthropy, Communications, Finance, People and Legal functions. Through long-term land stewardship, partnerships with other land managers, and the application of world-class ecological science, AWC delivers measurable conservation outcomes at landscape scale.

With a strong focus on evidence-based land management, adaptive learning and continuous improvement, AWC is advancing a dynamic and nationally significant model for conservation - one that demonstrates what effective conservation looks like when science and practice are tightly integrated.

AWC's science program

AWC's science program plays a fundamental role in helping AWC meet its mission. The purpose of AWC's science program is to acquire, analyse and disseminate information that facilitates the delivery of effective conservation, with a primary focus on AWC properties and partnership sites. AWC currently employs around 80 professional ecologists to deliver its conservation science program. Key tasks performed by AWC's science team are to:

- Monitor and evaluate the ecological health of AWC properties – AWC is a national leader in reporting conservation outcomes across our network of sites;
- Conduct research on issues relevant to the conservation of wildlife – we currently support a large number of applied and fundamental ecology projects led by AWC staff and collaborators;
- Plan, implement and monitor reintroductions - AWC is a national leader in the reintroduction of threatened mammals to parts of their former range;
- Contribute to the development of conservation and land management strategies, addressing key threats to wildlife; and
- Develop and provide advice on conservation issues to AWC's Executive and Board, and to the public.

AWC's science program is delivered in the field through Regional Science teams. Each team is led by an experienced Regional Ecologist, responsible for overseeing implementation of the AWC's science program in the region, while ensuring that the program gives effect to AWC's national frameworks. Regional teams comprise Wildlife and Field Ecologists, who are responsible for implementing the science program (designing surveys, conducting field work, evaluating and reporting outcomes) at AWC properties and partnership sites.

The Regional Science teams are supported by AWC's National Science team (NST), comprising conservation ecologists, spatial analysts and data managers. The NST coordinates national conservation and reintroduction programs, leads national research projects, runs specialist ecological surveys, analyses and maps spatial data, develops data management systems, and provides information to AWC's Executive and other parts of AWC.

AWC's science program in the South East:

AWC currently manages four wildlife sanctuaries and three partnership projects in the South East, protecting threatened ecosystems and species. These properties extend over a total area of 164,400 ha. Three of the properties support nationally-significant reintroduction/ conservation projects within feral predator-free fenced areas.

In the South East, AWC currently manages Scotia, Waulinbakh, Mongo Valley and Egg Lagoon wildlife sanctuaries and we partner with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to manage Mallee Cliffs National Park and Pilliga State Conservation Area. AWC also partners with Wandiyali Restoration Trust to manage Wandiyali in the South East. AWC's work in the region may expand over time.

Role:

Reporting to the Wildlife Ecologist, South East, the Field Ecologist will contribute to the delivery of AWC's science program at one or more AWC properties and partnership sites in the region. The role primarily involves field work, with associated planning, preparation, equipment maintenance, data management and reporting. The role will also contribute intellectually to the development, analysis and interpretation of AWC's science program in the region, commensurate with the professional skills associated with a conservation science degree or equivalent.

The Field Ecologist must be strongly motivated to make a substantial difference in nature conservation, contribute to the development of the private nature conservation sector, and be willing to help develop and promote AWC's conservation model, with particular application to the social and environmental context of the region.

Key duties of the position:

- Contribute to the delivery of the science program at AWC properties and partnership sites in the region, as delegated by the Regional Ecologist, working as part of a team of ecologists.
- Contribute to data management, analysis and reporting of AWC's science program at sites in the region, ensuring a high level of scientific integrity.
- Work in an integrated way with AWC Operations staff to plan and report on conservation and land management strategies at sites in the region.
- Work effectively with key stakeholders, including Indigenous groups, AWC partners, government agencies, recovery teams, the conservation sector and local communities, in the delivery of AWC's conservation science program at in the region.
- Contribute to the communication of AWC's science program to stakeholders, the scientific community and the public.
- Assist with AWC's fundraising activities.

Location:

Many of AWC's properties are located in remote locations. The Field Ecologist will be based in Buronga, NSW. The job primarily involves field work and associated activity, with a balance of office work.

Key relationships:

- The position reports to the Wildlife Ecologist, South East, then to the Regional Ecologist, South East, then to AWC's National Conservation Science Manager, and ultimately to AWC's Chief Science Officer. Reporting lines may change over time.

- The position may have responsibility for supervising other personnel, including Interns and volunteers, as delegated.
- The position will work as part of a team of ecologists in the region, and across AWC.
- In AWC, the Science Team works in an integrated manner with the Operations Team to design and deliver effective land management, and to measure and report on ecological health. The position will be expected to build and maintain professional working relationships with the Operations team in the region.
- The position will work with Traditional Owners and Ranger Groups in the delivery of AWC's science program on AWC sanctuaries and partnership sites in the region.
- The position will assist AWC's Philanthropy team conduct supporter events, and provide information and content to AWC's Communications team to assist AWC's public education efforts.

Values of AWC:

AWC's work is directed at achieving our mission – the effective conservation of Australia's wildlife and their habitats – and is guided by the following values. At AWC, we are:

- **Respectful** – demonstrating care, recognition and integrity
- **Informed** – working together to acquire and apply evidence, knowledge and experience
- **Dedicated** – committed to delivering effective outcomes, with resilience and tenacity
- **Innovative** – applying creative thinking for effective solutions
- **Accountable** – taking ownership of our actions and outcomes
- **Sustainable** – delivering long-term financial and ecological viability

Critical Competencies:

1. **A demonstrated commitment to wildlife conservation**, evidenced through work, education and other relevant activities.
2. **Strong ecological field skills** including knowledge of, and experience in, the application of standard survey methods in vertebrate ecology, and sound skills in field ecology generally.
3. **Well-developed knowledge of the conservation of Australian wildlife and ecosystems** including the nature and functioning of the Australian biota; major threats to native wildlife and their habitats; and how these threats can be mitigated.
4. **Capacity to undertake ecological research** including sound knowledge of the ecological literature; knowledge of experimental design and sampling methods; skills in the management and analysis of ecological data, and familiarity with computer programs and apps, commensurate with the position.
5. **Getting things done:** you need good planning and organisational skills, including an ability to prioritise and deliver a range of tasks in an effective manner.
6. **Leadership:** Good interpersonal skills are essential, including the ability to work positively and productively as part of a small team in remote locations, with the capacity to manage a small team as required.
7. **Collaboration:** you need good relationship-building and collaborative skills to perform your role as part of a team of conservation ecologists. You must be willing to contribute your expertise, and learn from the skills and ideas of your colleagues. You must be willing to engage with the experience and world-view of a diverse range of stakeholders involved in conservation management including AWC Operations managers and other staff, AWC partners, Traditional Owners and the broader community.
8. **Scientific communication skills:** you will have a capacity to draft scientific reports and publications, contribute to funding applications and reports, and communicate science and conservation messages to a general audience.

9. **Financial management, paperwork and compliance:** you will have the ability to deliver projects in a cost-effective manner and to manage financial resources, commensurate with the requirements of the position.
10. **Resourcefulness:** you will have the ability to improvise and 'problem-solve', developing practical solutions with limited resources.
11. **Travel and time in the field:** you must be willing to travel away from base and conduct field work to meet the requirements of the position.

Qualifications:

A Honours Degree in ecology or a related discipline (or a degree plus equivalent experience).

Experience:

Experience working in conservation or a related field is well-regarded, but not essential.

Licenses & Certificates:

A valid manual driver's licence is essential. You will need to be competent in driving a 4WD in field conditions. Training in relevant competencies may be required.

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 and mentally capable of performing these activities in the locations required in order to carry out the inherent role responsibilities.

Responsibilities:

1. Science practice
Actively protect the integrity of AWC's science program, by adopting, promoting and helping maintain high standards of scientific practice.
2. Leadership
Lead small teams of personnel in the field, including Interns and volunteers, as delegated
3. Science program
- Contribute to the delivery of the science program at AWC properties and partnership sites in the region, as delegated by the Regional Ecologist. - Contribute to obtaining permits and approvals, and to regulatory reporting
4. Monitoring and evaluation of ecological health
- Implement a program of ecological surveys to give effect to Ecohealth Monitoring Plans for AWC properties and partnership sites in the region: - conduct fauna surveys utilising a range of techniques and methods: e.g., standard observational surveys; live-trapping; camera trapping; tracking surveys, acoustic monitors; other technologies as developed - manage the collection of biological samples, herbaria and vegetation data - ensure survey work is conducted accordance with AWC policies and relevant permits

○ contribute to data management, analysis and reporting of AWC's science program at sites in the region, ensuring a high level of scientific integrity ○ contribute to the preparation of Ecohealth reports and scorecards, survey reports, etc.
5. Research
● Contribute to the development of research projects to address key knowledge gaps related to the effective conservation of Australian wildlife and their habitats ● Implement approved research projects in accordance with AWC policies and relevant permits. ● Assist external researchers undertaking collaborative projects, in accordance with AWC policies. ● Contribute to the storage, management and analysis of data, preparation of project reports, and drafting of research reports and publications, commensurate with your professional skills.
6. Reintroductions
● As relevant, contribute to the implementation of Translocation Proposals for AWC properties and partnership sites in the region, and elsewhere as delegated by the Regional Ecologist, including: ○ sourcing animals for reintroduction ○ conducting the translocation and release of animals ○ undertaking post-release monitoring and research.
7. Conservation and land management
● Contribute to the development of annual work plans to give effect to conservation and land management strategies on AWC properties and partnership sites in the region, and assist in reporting outcomes. ● Assist in the implementation of conservation and land management activities, as relevant.
8. Management of personnel
● Contribute to the management of volunteers in the science program in the region, ensuring integration with AWC's national volunteer program. In particular, ensure you: ○ Select appropriate people as volunteers; ○ Provide volunteers with information and agreements before travelling to AWC properties (e.g. related to conditions and tasks they will be asked to perform, etc); and ○ Induct and manage volunteers adequately. ● Contribute to the Intern program, including the training of Interns in field ecology and related skills.
9. Stakeholders
● Develop and maintain productive working relationships with stakeholders in AWC's conservation projects in the region, including AWC partners, Indigenous interests, government agencies, landowners, recovery teams, conservation organisations and community groups ● Represent AWC's interests and promote AWC's mission and values in interactions with stakeholders ● Where relevant, attend 'On-Country' knowledge-sharing trips and meetings, including annual planning meetings, with Indigenous Rangers and Traditional Owners, and provide practical training opportunities for Indigenous Rangers and Traditional Owners with the science program as relevant. ● Act with respect towards Indigenous cultures and peoples.
10. Project and financial management
● Contribute to the preparation of workplans and budgets for AWC's science program in the region, as delegated by the Regional Ecologist.

• Contribute to the implementation of science activities set out in approved workplans: ○ Ensure activities are delivered in a cost-effective manner. ○ Ensure all expenditure is in accordance with AWC procurement policy and procedures. • Ensure financial records are retained and submitted, as necessary, to AWC finance department.
11. Communication and development
• Represent AWC at scientific and public events in accordance with AWC policies and requirements. • Compile and submit information on AWC's conservation science program including text and images to AWC's communications team for use in a range of materials such as Wildlife Matters, social media posts, e-news, AWC website etc. • Assist in the implementation of Philanthropic (fundraising) programs. • Assist in drafting of applications for funding, and contribute to the preparation of reports.
12. Risk management
• In accordance with the requirements of the Chief Operations Officer and Chief Science Officer, undertake risk assessments and prepare risk management plans for operations at each sanctuary and partnership site. The risk assessments and management plans must protect the health and safety of everyone on sanctuary including you, other staff, interns, rangers, 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, interns, rangers, 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 competency. • Ensure incident and near miss reports are filled out and submitted as per approved AWC policies and procedures, in a timely manner.
13. Other tasks
• Contribute to the management of assets used by AWC's science team in the region. • Conduct other tasks to ensure the effective conservation of AWC sanctuaries and partnership sites. • Comply with all AWC policies and procedures.