Wildlife Ecologist – Ngalurrtju & Central Deserts

Role Description

Designation:	Wildlife Ecologist – Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts *[WE- Ngalurrtju & Central Deserts]*
Reporting to:	Regional Ecologist – Central South *[RE- CS]*
Supervising:	AWC Ecologists and, as relevant, Interns, Volunteers, Indigenous Rangers, Contractors
Based at:	Alice Springs NT, or as agreed, with frequent travel to Ngalurrtju

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 Central South:

AWC currently manages five wildlife sanctuaries and two partnership projects in Central and South Australia, protecting threatened ecosystems and species across more than 1 million hectares. AWC properties include Newhaven in the Northern Territory, and Kalamurina, Buckaringa, Dakalanta and Yookamurra in South Australia. AWC also partners with local landholders and conservation groups to protect threatened species on Kangaroo Island (SA) and Traditional Owner groups within central Australia

In the Northern Territory, AWC has partnered with Traditional Owners of the Ngalurrtju Aboriginal Land Trust (formerly Mt Wedge Station). Ngalurrtju sits next to AWC's Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary, north-west of Alice Springs. The partnership covers 323,128 hectares. Its aim is effective conservation, achieved by applying AWC's approach alongside strong engagement with Traditional Owners in planning and the direct employment of Indigenous Rangers. Expanding AWC's work in the region using this conservation model may expand over time and is currently being explored through the Central Deserts Project

Role:

Reporting to the Regional Ecologist, Central South, the Wildlife Ecologist will contribute to the leadership of AWC's science program in the region, more specifically at Ngalurrtju and through the Central Deserts project

The Wildlife Ecologist will be responsible for the implementation of AWC's science program at one or more AWC properties and partnership sites in the region, including managing and mentoring junior science staff on properties within their remit. The role has significant intellectual component, related to the design, analysis and reporting of elements of the science program, commensurate with the professional skills acquired in a PhD or equivalent. The role also has a substantial field work component.

The Wildlife 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:

- Lead the development, implementation and reporting of the science program at Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts, and potentially other AWC properties and partnership sites in the region, as delegated by the Regional Ecologist.
- Provide expert input to the design and reporting of AWC's science program at AWC properties and partnership sites in the region, as delegated by the Regional Ecologist.
- Work in an integrated way with AWC Operations staff to design and, as relevant, implement and report on conservation and land management strategies at Ngalurrtju and central Deserts, and potentially other AWC properties and partnership sites in the region, as delegated by the Regional Ecologist.
- Work effectively with key stakeholders, including Indigenous groups, AWC partners, government agencies, recovery teams, the conservation sector and local communities, to develop AWC's conservation science program at Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts, and potentially other AWC properties and partnership sites in the region, as delegated by the Regional Ecologist.
- Communicate AWC's science program to stakeholders, the scientific community and the public through scientific publications, reports, presentations, participation in workshops, etc.
- Assist with AWC's fundraising activities.

Location:

Many of AWC's properties are located in remote locations. The Wildlife Ecologist will be based in Alice Springs. The job involves a balance of office work and field work.

Key relationships:

- The position reports to the Regional Ecologist, Central South, then to AWC's National Conservation Science Manager, and ultimately to AWC's Chief Science Officer. Reporting lines may change over time.
- The position has responsibility for managing AWC ecologists, Interns and volunteers, and potentially supervising the work of Indigenous rangers and contractors, contributing to the implementation of AWC's science program at Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts, or the Central South region generally.
- The position will work as part of a team of ecologists in the region, and across AWC.
- Within AWC, the Operations and Science teams work in an integrated manner to design and deliver conservation and 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 to facilitate their involvement 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. **Advanced 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. Ideally, you will have experience working with land managers to design applied conservation land management strategies.
3. **Excellent ecological field and research skills** including high level knowledge of the ecological literature; advanced knowledge of experimental design and sampling methods; strong skills in vertebrate ecology and sound skills in field ecology generally; advanced skills in statistical analysis of ecological data and the use of computer software packages relevant to the position.
4. **Getting things done**: you need well-developed planning and organisational skills, including a demonstrated ability to prioritise and execute a range of tasks in an effective manner.
5. **Leadership:** you need strong leadership and team-building skills, including the ability to manage and coordinate a team of staff and volunteers working in remote areas.
6. **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.

7. **Scientific communication skills:** you will have a well-developed capacity to write and review scientific reports and publications, compose funding applications and reports, and communicate science and conservation messages to a general audience.
8. **Financial management, paperwork and compliance**: you will have the ability to deliver projects in a cost-effective manner and to manage financial resources, and to ensure contracted obligations are met, commensurate with the requirements of the position.
9. **Resourcefulness**: you will have the ability to improvise and 'problem-solve', developing practical solutions with limited resources.
10. **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 PhD in ecology or a related discipline.

In some cases, graduates lacking a PhD but with equivalent proficiency in applied conservation science as evidenced by a higher degree (e.g. Masters), combined with extensive relevant experience, may be suitable for appointment to this role.

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.
- Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check, or willingness to obtain. Remote First Aid

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
• Contribute to the development of AWC's science program and policies, at a level commensurate with the position • Lead the implementation of the science program at Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts, and potentially

other sites in the Central South region as delegated by the Regional Ecologist. At these sites, oversee the work of a team of ecologists, ensuring appropriate delegation of tasks.

- Mentor junior staff, Interns and students in the region, and encourage their professional development.
- Assist with the recruitment and supervision of AWC staff, volunteers and contractors.
- As required, co-ordinate, engage and supervise (ensuring all relevant AWC policies are complied with including safety):
    - Visiting staff;
    - Contractors (in accordance with AWC procurement policy); and
    - Volunteers.
- Provide strong direction, support and alignment to your team so that: expectations are clear, performance goals are set and measured, and regular support and feedback is provided, ensuring employees feel valued and empowered to contribute to AWC's mission.
- Encourage and facilitate a highly inclusive and collaborative culture by ensuring positive communication, within the immediate team, across AWC more broadly, and with AWC partners and key stakeholders.
- Champion the integration of science and land management.
- Be a champion of the AWC values and ONE AWC approach
- Proactively identify, manage and address psychosocial risks within their teams and foster a psychologically safe, respectful and inclusive workplace.

3. Science program

- Lead the development, implementation and reporting of the science program at Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts, and potentially other AWC properties in the region, as delegated by the Regional Ecologist.
- Provide expert input to the design and reporting of AWC's science program at properties in the region, as delegated by the Regional Ecologist.
- Oversee implementation of AWC's science program on Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts and, as relevant, other sites in Central South as delegated by the Regional Ecologist; including:
    - develop inventory surveys, Ecohealth Plans, Conservation Plans, Research Strategies, and providing science input to Conservation and Land Management Strategies, consistent with AWC's national frameworks
    - design and implement annual workplans to give effect to the approved science program
    - manage staff, workplans and schedules
    - oversee and contribute to field work
    - oversee the management and analysis of data, and the reporting of results, including AWC reports and scientific publications
- Contribute to the management of external research projects and collaborations, particularly involving AWC properties in the region, and more broadly within your area of professional expertise.

4. Monitoring and evaluation of ecological health

- Contribute to the development and review of Ecohealth Monitoring Plans for Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts and elsewhere in the region, as delegated by the Regional Ecologist.
- Consult with Indigenous stakeholders to ensure integration of Indigenous interests, and appropriate incorporation of Indigenous ecological knowledge, in relevant monitoring plans
- Implement a program of ecological surveys to give effect to the Ecohealth Monitoring Plan:
    - 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
- oversee and conduct data management, analysis and reporting of AWC's science program at sites in the region, ensuring a high level of scientific integrity
- prepare annual Ecohealth reports and scorecards, survey reports, etc
- ensure all permits and approvals are in place and help manage regulatory reporting

5. Research

- Lead the implementation of AWC research on Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts and, as relevant, other sites as delegated by the Regional Ecologist.
- Contribute to the development and review of AWC research strategies and projects on Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts, and elsewhere in the region, as delegated by the Regional Ecologist.
  - AWC-led research should primarily address key knowledge gaps relevant to the conservation management of Australian wildlife and their habitats (e.g., the ecology of threatened species, the impact and management of threatening processes, reintroduction ecology, etc).
  - At Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts and other projects as relevant, consult with Indigenous partners in developing research projects
- Implement approved research projects in accordance with AWC policies and relevant permits.
- Develop and manage partnerships with external researchers undertaking collaborative projects, in accordance with AWC policies.
- Provide supervisory support to students and Interns, as relevant.
- Contribute to the administration of research projects including the storage and management of data, preparation of project reports, and writing of scientific publications.
- Contribute to the management of external research projects and collaborations, particularly involving AWC properties in the region, and more broadly within your area of professional expertise.

6. Reintroductions

- Contribute to the development and review of Reintroduction Strategies and Translocation Proposals for Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts and, as relevant, other AWC properties in the region, as delegated by the Regional Ecologist,
  - Review the available evidence on the historical faunal assemblage, the species potentially suitable for reintroduction, and the likely outcomes of reintroduction under scenarios of feral predator control
  - Consult with AWC staff and external scientists with expertise in reintroduction ecology, genetics, climate change, monitoring and related fields.
  - Consult with Indigenous partners.
- Contribute to the implementation of Translocation Proposals, including:
  - Sourcing animals for reintroduction
  - Conducting the translocation and release of animals
  - Undertaking post-release monitoring and research
  - Developing strategies for the release of locally extinct mammals outside feral-free areas.
- Work effectively with government agencies, Recovery Teams and other parties involved in reintroductions.

7. Conservation and land management

- Contribute to the design and review of strategies for fire management, feral animal control, weed

control and other land management activities on Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts and, as relevant, other sites as delegated by the Regional Ecologist, in collaboration with AWC's Operations staff and Indigenous parters.

- Contribute to the development of annual work plans developed to implement these strategies on Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts and, as relevant, other sites as delegated by the Regional Ecologist.
- Report on the outcomes of management activities on Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts and, as relevant, other sites as delegated by the Regional Ecologist

8. Management of personnel

- Manage AWC staff, Interns, volunteers, and as relevant Indigenous Rangers and Contractors implementing AWC's science program at Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts and, as relevant, other sites as delegated by the Regional Ecologist
- Oversee the management of volunteers in the science program on Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts, 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.
- Oversee the selection, engagement, evaluation and reporting of Interns to the science program in Central South region, working in collaboration with other Ecologists, as delegated by the Regional Ecologist.
- Contribute to 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
- 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 on Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts, and on other sites as relevant.
- Act with respect towards Indigenous cultures and peoples.

10. Project and financial management

- Prepare workplans and budgets for AWC's science program on Ngalurrtju and Central Deserts and, as relevant, other sites as delegated by the Regional Ecologist, ensuring AWC's obligations under partnership agreements are met.
- Implement 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.
- Prepare reports detailing progress in implementing workplans, at the request of your manager.
- Ensure financial records are retained and, as necessary, submitted 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 planning, co-ordination and implementation of Philanthropic (fundraising) programs.
- Assist in drafting, submission and management of applications for funding, and prepare 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.