

# MEDIA RELEASE



**Invasive Animals CRC**

## **BUSH'S BIG BROTHER – Camera traps expose the secret lives of wildlife!**

**11 September 2012**

Two hundred wildlife scientists from more than a dozen countries are gathering this week in Sydney for a world-first Camera Trapping Colloquium in order to conserve and protect wildlife around the globe.

Australians are renowned for their rapid uptake of technology. Adoption of camera traps to monitor wildlife has happened at warp speed in Australia, particularly in the last three years, and the world is beating a path to our door to collaborate.

Camera trapping is cutting-edge technology and uses remotely-placed heat-sensing cameras to take photos and videos of animals, without the need for people to be present. Species being monitored by camera traps to be discussed at the Colloquium include mallefowls in Western Australia's wheatbelt, Tasmanian devils, feral camels in Central Australia, endangered rock wallabies, the Spotted-tail Quoll, the bare-nosed wombat, the endangered Leadbeater's possum, bandicoots, feral goats, rodents, feral cats, red foxes and sambar deer, among many other species.

The Colloquium is co-hosted by the Australasian Wildlife Management Society and the Royal Zoological Society of NSW in collaboration with the Invasive Animals CRC, NSW Department of Primary Industries and sponsors including the WWF Australia.

Colloquium convenor and Churchill Fellow, Paul Meek of the Invasive Animals CRC and the Vertebrate Pest Research Unit of the NSW Department of Primary Industries, said that camera trapping is rapidly being adopted by researchers and managers around the world to look into the secret lives of animals.

"Camera trapping has resulted in some amazing new findings and the Colloquium will expose camera trap users to new developments in technology and methods," Paul said. "Camera trappers will share knowledge and there will be many opportunities for new collaborations".

To coincide with the Colloquium, a new camera trapping manual written specifically for Australian conditions has been published by the Invasive Animals CRC. The manual *Introduction to Camera trapping for wildlife surveys in Australia* is written by Paul Meek, Dr Guy Ballard and Dr Peter Fleming from Vertebrate Pest Research Unit of the NSW Department of Primary Industries. It contains species-specific methods and will help camera trap users make sense of the myriad of camera models available. These all have different uses and having different operational capacities are fit for different purposes.

Paul Meek said that a considerable amount of research by the authors and researchers, here and internationally, has been used to underpin the principles of current best practice included in the manual.

"It is a 'one-stop-shop' of information on most aspects of camera trapping for wildlife purposes from selecting a fit-for-purpose camera, designing camera trapping surveys and recommendations for managing and analysing camera trap data," Paul said. "The manual provides fundamental technical information about the cameras, general principles and standards for camera trapping, specifically for wildlife monitoring and research.

"The camera trapping manual is a living-document and will be updated as our collective knowledge of camera trapping advances". The manual is now available for free download at

<http://www.feral.org.au/camera-trapping-for-wildlife-surveys/>

The Camera Trapping in Wildlife Management and Research Colloquium is at Taronga Zoo on 13-14 September 2012.

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## MEDIA

Camera trap photographs of invasive and other animals are available from the Invasive Animals CRC Communications Manager Glenn Conroy on (02) 6201 2890 and [glenn.conroy@invasiveanimals.com](mailto:glenn.conroy@invasiveanimals.com). A photograph of the Colloquium Convenor Paul Meek (courtesy the Coffs Coast Advocate newspaper) with a camera trap in hand is also available. To arrange radio interviews with Paul Meek, he can be contacted on (02) 66505703 or 042 992 5628. We can arrange media interviews with any of the Colloquium's international and Australian camera trap scientists on 13-14 September at Taronga Zoo in the ANZ Lecture Theatre.

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## BACKGROUND

Among the Colloquium speakers from across Australia, New Zealand, the World Conservation Union, USA, Canada, United Kingdom, Holland, Germany, Denmark, Peru, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Mongolia and Papua New Guinea are:

- Andrew Claridge - Senior Research Scientist of more than 20 years with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service who has authored three books relating to natural resource management and threatened species and more than 100 peer-reviewed scientific papers in the same field.
  - Don Swann of the US National Parks Service, Saguaro National Park, Arizona.
  - Jim Sanderson of the Small Cat Conservation Alliance, USA
  - Some of the talks also include authors like Pat Jansen, Sue Townsend, Roland Kays, Bill O'Shea, Marcus Rowcliff, Eric Fegraus, Jorge Ahumada – these are the camera trapping leaders in the world both as individuals but also representing groups like Conservation International, Royal Zoological Society London and the Smithsonian Institute.
  - Peter Fleming - an invasive species specialist with 28 years experience in research at the Vertebrate Pest Research Unit of NSW Department of Primary Industries. His research has led to more than 200 publications and presentations including 52 peer-reviewed articles and the editing of a Special Issue of Wildlife Research in 2008 on aerial survey methods, analyses and application.
  - Guy Ballard also with the Vertebrate Pest Research Unit, NSW Department of Primary Industries since 2007. He has worked as part of a team undertaking camera trapping and other research on mammalian predators (wild-living dogs, red foxes, feral cats and spotted-tailed quolls). Much of the work is funded through the Invasive Animals CRC and is undertaken in partnership with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forests NSW, NSW Livestock Health and Pests Authorities and the University of New England.
  - Paul Meek also with the Vertebrate Pest Research Unit of NSW Department of Primary Industries and affiliated with the Invasive Animals CRC and University of New England. Paul has worked as an ecologist throughout Australia including working on Islands such as Christmas, Bowen and Mutton Bird and has also spent time working overseas in Mongolia, Malaysia, Bali, Austria, Switzerland, Netherlands and the USA. He first started working with camera traps in 1999 trialing their applicability of detecting visitors to fox bait stations. Since then, he has used camera trap research on Hastings river mice, native and introduced rodents, wild dogs, foxes and feral cats. He has published more than 30 scientific papers and contributed to five books. In 2011 he was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to travel to Europe and the USA investigating camera trap use.
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