



October 10, 2023

## Whitley Awards 2023

### Recognising the best of Australasian zoological literature

Peregrines and Plains-wanderers, flies and Hump-backed whales, Thylacines and Tassie Devils, and Australasia's prehistoric fauna have been placed in the spotlight as the Royal Zoological Society of NSW announces their prestigious Whitley Awards for zoological literature.

Awarded annually, the Whitley Awards recognise the best publications that profile the unique wildlife of the Australasian region. These awards are named after Gilbert Whitley, the fish Curator at the Australian Museum for many years (1926-1964). He was very active on the Council of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW as President and was editor of the Society's journal, *Australian Zoologist*, from 1947-1971. He published many scientific papers and these prestigious awards which recognise the best of Australasian zoological literature are fittingly named after him.

This year we have awarded 16 Certificates of Commendations in a range of categories including children's books, zoological reference books, zoology guides and cultural knowledge. Six of these Awards are for children's books representing books suitable for different age groups. The Society encourages publishers to submit such books as these readers represent our next generation of zoologists and the best one has been awarded the inaugural Noel Tait Award for Best Children's Book.

**A Special Commendation has been awarded to Professor Michael Archer and Emeritus Professor Suzanne Hand of the University of New South Wales for a lifetime contribution to the promotion of the Australasian Fossil Fauna and its conservation.**

Mike Archer is a Professor and member of the PANGEA Research Centre at UNSW. His research focuses on the deep past such as the World Heritage fossil deposits at Riversleigh, the fragile present such as conservation through sustainable use of native resources including having native animals as pets, securing the future based on the wisdom of the fossil record, and trying to bring extinct species back into the world of the living.

Mike has received a range of awards including Fellowships in the Australian Academy of Science, Royal Society of NSW, Royal Zoological Society of NSW (President 1985-86), Australian College of Educators, the Eureka Prize for Promotion of Science, the Romer-Simpson Medal of the Society of Vertebrate Palaeontology and is a Member of the Order of Australia. He has produced over 350 scientific publications including editing or co-authoring 16 books.



Sue Hand is an Emeritus Professor based at the PANGEA Research Centre in the University of New South Wales. She is a vertebrate palaeontologist of world renown researching the history of Australian mammals, continuing climate and environmental change in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania, implications of that change for forest and island faunas, and the biodiversity, global relationships and evolutionary ecology of bats.

Sue is a Fellow of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW (President 1990-91) and has authored or co-authored 262 publications including 11 books and 28 book chapters. Her research covers the areas of evolutionary biology, functional morphology, phylogenetics, and biogeography, with a special interest in fossil and modern mammals.

A key focus of the UNSW PANGEA Research Centre is the study of the fossil-rich Cenozoic faunas of the Riversleigh World Heritage Area in north-western Queensland. These extremely rich 40 km<sup>2</sup> deposits span the last 26 million years of Australia's extraordinary prehistory and have been described by Sir David Attenborough as one of the four most important fossil deposits in the world. The UNSW research group lead by Mike and Sue has been exploring, processing and studying assemblages from these deposits for over 40 years. Their findings have more than trebled previous knowledge about the diversity of Australia's terrestrial vertebrates with identification of more than 300 new kinds of animals.

Career-long contributions to publication of books qualify Mike Archer and Sue Hand as outstanding recipients of the Whitley's Special Commendation for 2023.

**The Whitley Medal for the most outstanding zoological book of the year goes to “Prehistoric Australasia: Visions of Evolution and Extinction” by Michael Archer, Suzanne Hand, John Long, Trevor Worthy with illustrations by Peter Schouten.**

This book presents some of the most extraordinary creatures the world has ever seen with tree-climbing crocodiles, gigantic venomous lizards, walking omnivorous bats and flesh-eating kangaroos – all unique to Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand and their surrounding islands.

Over 100 meticulously painted panoramas by palaeoartist Peter Schouten are accompanied by descriptions of the unique environments and features of these animals, written by four of Australia's foremost palaeontologists. This book explores the nature and timing of extinction events in the Southern Hemisphere, considers whether some of these losses might be able to be reversed, and how we can use the fossil record to help save today's critically endangered species.



Through stunning artwork and fascinating text, *Prehistoric Australasia* brings this globally unique transformation over time to glorious, colourful life.

The President of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW, Pat Hutchings said “On behalf of the RZS NSW I would like to thank all applicants and encourage anyone with an interest in zoology to read some of these amazing books that are available.”

### **Contact**

For more information about the awards, please contact Dr Pat Hutchings, President of RZSNSW ([President@rzsnsw.org.au](mailto:President@rzsnsw.org.au).)

Link to RZS 2023 Whitley Awards page is [here](#).

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### **Certificates of Commendation**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Creators</b>	<b>Publisher</b>
<b>Children's Reader</b>	Who's Afraid of the Light?	by Anna McGregor	Scribble (an imprint of Scribe Publications)
<b>Urban Zoology for Children</b>	Peregrines in the City	by Andrew Kelly, Sue Lawson and Dean Jones (Illustrator)	Wild Dog Books
<b>Children's Illustrator</b>	On the Trail of the Plains-wanderer: A Precious Australian Bird	by Rohan Cleave and Julian Teh (Illustrator)	CSIRO Publishing
<b>Children's Investigative Zoology</b>	Sylvia and the Birds: How the Bird Lady Saved Thousands of Birds and How You Can Too!	by Johanna Emenev and Sarah Laing (Illustrator)	Massey University Press
<b>Children's Natural History</b>	Tasmanian Devil	by Claire Saxby and Max Hamilton (Illustrator)	Walker Books Australia
<b>Educational Children's Book and Noel Tait Award for Best Children's Book Zoology Guide</b>	Eyes on Flies	by Bryan Lessard	Pan Macmillan Australia
<b>Zoology Resource</b>	A Guide to Land Snails of Australia	by John Stanistic, Darryl Potter and Lorelle Stanistic	CSIRO Publishing
	Wildlife Research in Australia	by Bradley Smith, Helen Waudby,	CSIRO Publishing



## Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales

<b>Wildlife Photography</b>	Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia, New Zealand and New Guinea	Corinne Alberthsen and Jordan Hampton Edited by Chelsea Maier and Chris Williams	New Holland Publishers
<b>Historical Zoology</b>	Thylacine	by Branden Holmes and Gareth Linnard	CSIRO Publishing
<b>Conservation Zoology</b>	Ahuahu: A Conservation Journey in Aotearoa New Zealand	by David Towns	Canterbury University Press
<b>Popular Ecology Cultural Knowledge and Zoology</b>	Koala Gurawal the Whale: An ancient story for our time	by Danielle Clode by Max Dulumunmun Harrison and Laura La Rosa (Illustrator)	Black Inc Magabala Books
<b>Highly Commended</b>	Quail, Buttonquail and the Plains-wanderer in Australia and New Zealand	by Joseph Forshaw and Frank Knight (Illustrator)	CSIRO Publishing
<b>SPECIAL COMMENDATION</b>	For outstanding contributions towards the promotion of the Australasian Fossil Fauna and its conservation	Michael Archer and Suzanne Hand	
<b>WHITLEY MEDAL</b>	Prehistoric Australasia: Visions of Evolution and Extinction	by Michael Archer, Suzanne Hand, John Long, Trevor Worthy and Peter Schouten (Illustrator)	CSIRO Publishing

The Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales advances the science of zoology and helps conserve the indigenous animals of Australasia and their habitats

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