

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Australian Geographic supports endangered Tasmanian owl research

The Australian Geographic Society will feature a University of Tasmania wildlife research project as its latest in-store fundraising campaign.

The plight of the endangered Tasmanian masked owl will be showcased across the Society's 50 national stores from this month with public donations going directly to the School of Zoology project.

The three-month awareness campaign is one of four fundraising events held in the Australian Geographic Shop each year.

Researcher and CRC for Forestry PhD Candidate, Michael Todd, said continued research on the ecological requirements of the Tasmanian owl was reliant on the next wave of funding.

Mr Todd said the funds would be used to purchase additional GPS data logging devices as well as enabling the surveys for the owl to be extended statewide.

"I am grateful to the Australian Geographic Society for recognising the importance of this research into the threatened Tasmanian masked owl," Mr Todd said.

"There is an urgent need for information about this unique bird's ecological requirements so that guidelines for its management can be developed."

The project has the potential to be the most detailed assessment of any owl species in Australia and the most comprehensive of any species of barn owl in the world.

Past research has been supported with funding from the CRC for Forestry, Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment and the Forest Practices Authority.

Mr Todd said the masked owl population is loosely estimated at 550 breeding pairs and the owls usually live in old-growth forests.

The aim of the research is to determine the owl's habitat requirements, the impact of past and current forestry practices and evaluate the natural demise of aged trees with hollows.

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