



PRACITIONER PRESENTATION

Kaarditjin Waalitj: Knowing Eagles

Simon Cherriman, iNSiGHT Ornithology

Abstract

Successful environmental education requires participants to feel inspired to take interest in a particular topic, and motivated to feel they can engage with a participatory approach to building their knowledge. An effective way to achieve this is by using storytelling, charismatic fauna, indigenous cultural values and modern sustainability values to educate and inspire young people about environmental issues. For the last 14 years I have used a combination of weaving a personal story about a childhood interest in ornithology and high-school bullying with the biology, ecology and historical persecution of an apex predator, the Wedge-tailed Eagle, to educate and inspire hundreds of students in Western Australia about biodiversity conservation. This presentation will showcase a range of information on eagles and their 'story' to offer insights into how, in an era of many an environmental crisis, an 'eagle's eye view' on Country gives a powerful standpoint from which practical, inclusive and inspiring educational activities can be imagined. I will build on this idea by describing one case study, which focuses on a different group of 'charismatic' fauna (hollow-dependent birds and mammals), and involves constructing and installing artificial nest-boxes for wildlife

Speaker Profile

Simon Cherriman is an award-winning environmental scientist, educator and wildlife filmmaker and an enthusiastic advocate for the unique Australian bush and its creatures. Simon grew up in the Perth Hills and spent his childhood climbing trees, observing birds and learning firsthand about the local environment. It was at 15 that he found a giant Wedge-tailed Eagle nest and this captivated and inspired him to spend more than half his life studying, photographing and filming these magnificent birds, incorporating eagles into much of his tertiary education. Currently Simon continues to spread his passion for the environment through his small business, iNSiGHT Ornithology, which specialises in bird-related research and environmental education, and he is currently undertaking PhD research on Wedge-tailed Eagle population dynamics and movement ecology at Murdoch University

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