

CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY

PROFESSORIAL LECTURE SERIES

Making Australian threatened species legislation more effective and efficient

Professor Stephen Garnett

Professor of Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods, Charles Darwin University

5:30pm – 7:00pm

17 September 2013

Nitmiluk Lounge, Level 4, Parliament House

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Lecture abstract

Each year, millions of dollars are spent mitigating the impacts of development on threatened or migratory Australian species. It is proposed that the majority of this expenditure does little for threatened species it aims to benefit in terms of mitigating threats or moving the taxa towards a safer conservation status. Among the reasons for this failure are inaccurate lists and, until recently, a failure to deal strategically with threatening processes, especially if the principal threats operate elsewhere. However, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List guidelines, which are used commonly to guide listing of taxa as threatened, offer the opportunity to be far more sophisticated about the listing process. In particular, the different criteria for listing under the guidelines lend themselves to separating those taxa affected by localised site development from those suffering more diffuse threats, or threats at other sites for which other management is necessary. Improvements in the listing processes and modifications to legislation could improve the targeting of threatened species investment while relieving business of the need to undertake irrelevant interventions, often at great expense.



Professor Stephen Garnett

Charles Darwin University

Stephen Garnett is a conservation biologist who has spent most of the past 35 years in tropical Australia. Originally appointed as the inaugural Professor of Tropical Knowledge at Charles Darwin University in 2004, he is now Professor of Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods in the Research Institute for the Environment and Livelihoods. He is known best for his work on Australia's threatened birds, for which he has received several awards, but has also worked on a wide range of other topics. These include

everything from understanding the knowledge economy in Northern Australia, to the ethics of assisted migration in the face of climate change and the mobility of the professional workforce in remote and regional communities. He has also worked extensively on natural resource based livelihoods, both in Northern Australia and in South-East Asia where he has many students. The lecture he is giving arises from work he has undertaken on environmental assessment and threatened species legislation.

