

Ray Thomas National Geographic award 2009

Article sourced from Australian Geographic



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Congratulations to Ray Thomas and the Regent Honeyeater project.

Ray has been awarded the prestigious 'Conservationist of the Year' award for 2009 by the Australian Geographic Society.

Ray Thomas works with the Department of Sustainability & Environment as a Land for Wildlife Officer, one of his roles was to initiate community support for the threatened Regent Honeyeater in Benalla, Victoria.

Ray Thomas has been awarded the Australian Geographic Society Conservationist of the Year for 2009.

Starting out as a secondary schoolteacher of chemistry, maths and sciences in the early 70s, Ray Thomas became a self-taught botanist during many years spent bushwalking. He has discovered three new plant species and throughout his two decades of teaching has instilled in his students a love for and understanding of the natural world – through seed collection, propagation and protection of rare plants near Euroa, Victoria.

Taking up full-time work with the Department of Sustainability & Environment as a Land for Wildlife Officer, one of Ray's roles was to initiate community support for the threatened Regent Honeyeater in Benalla, Victoria.

Ray is now the project coordinator for the Regent Honeyeater Project in Benalla. Under his watch, the project has become one of the most active volunteer conservation projects in the nation, involving roughly 17,000 adult volunteers.



Photo: Ray Thomas the 2009 Australian Geographic Conservationist of the year

Project work includes improving remnant box-ironbark habitats for endangered species still living in the region and large-scale tree-planting. Almost 900 ha of restored habitat is reducing salinity and erosion; and improving water quality, stock shelter and natural pest control.

With Ray's passion for protection and preservation of the environment it's no wonder he has been named the Australian Geographic Society 2009 Conservationist of the Year.

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(<http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/society/2009-conservationist-of-the-year-awardee-ray-thomas.htm>)

Congratulations Ray, and keep up the inspiring work.

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