

**Media Release:**

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## **Dusky Grasswren Chicks on Display at Desert Park**

A successful breeding program at the Alice Springs Desert Park means visitors now have a rare opportunity to see a family of Dusky Grasswrens at one of the Park's Desert Rivers aviaries.

Desert Park Specialist Bird Keeper Lisa Harris said staff worked hard to create the right breeding environment for a pair of Dusky Grasswrens (*Amytornis purnelli*) acquired two years ago, and they were thrilled when two chicks hatched in August.

"As far as we know, Dusky Grasswrens have never been kept in captivity before," said Ms Harris.

"There are 10 species of Grasswren, but most live in very remote areas not frequented by people, so details of their natural history – and particularly breeding – are not very well known to science.

"It has been very exciting for us to be able to observe these birds up close, and now that the chicks have left the nest and begun exploring the aviary with their parents, our visitors can also see them in action."

Similar in appearance to Fairy-wrens, the Dusky Grasswrens are streaky brown and hold their long tail erect like a flagpole.

They are predominantly found in the Northern Territory, as well as other areas of Central Australia, and prefer rocky areas with Spinifex.

Ms Harris said Desert Park staff are fortunate to have had the opportunity to study these Dusky Grasswrens, as little is known about their breeding habits in the wild.

"These birds have been very tolerant of our presence, which means we have been able to observe behaviours that have never been documented before," said Ms Harris.

"Our bird experts are happy to share their knowledge and we encourage people to come to the Park to see our Dusky Grasswren family and learn more about them, as well as our many other Central Australian birds."

For more information on Alice Springs Desert Park, visit [www.alicespringsdesertpark.com.au](http://www.alicespringsdesertpark.com.au) or phone 8951 8788.

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**Media Note – for more information, contact Estelle Marshall on 8951 8707.**

Images – 1. Male Dusky Grasswren with chick. 2. Female Dusky Grasswren.

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