

Dingo Bold

The life and death of K'gari dingoes

In May 2015 I met a young male dingo on the beach on K'gari (Fraser Island) and nicknamed him Bold. We had an uneventful one-minute encounter before Bold walked away down the beach of his own accord. Three months later he was killed by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service rangers because he was deemed to pose a safety risk to people. My book *Dingo Bold* is the story of his life. It weaves together memoir, wide reading of historical and scientific sources, and extensive interviews with people who live and work alongside dingoes – including Aboriginal elders, national park rangers, and animal welfare advocates – to argue for a more nuanced understanding of dingoes.

In this talk I contextualise my meeting with Bold in terms of the reporting requirements for dingo–human interactions on the island and within the bigger picture of the kinds of research that have been deemed to constitute ‘scientific’ research about dingoes. The interaction reports that have life and death ramifications for dingoes are part of a management strategy that is based on behaviorist models and was conceived by wildlife ecologists who gained their dingo expertise as pest eradicators. I speculate that sociable dingoes such as Bold may be advocating for different forms of human–dingo research.

Bio

Rowena Lennox’s second book, *Dingo Bold: the life and death of K'gari dingoes*, was published in January 2021 by Sydney University Press. Her essays, fiction, memoir and poems have been widely published and her first book, *Fighting Spirit of East Timor: the life of Martinho da Costa Lopes*, won a NSW Premier’s History Award in 2001.

Rowena is an adjunct fellow at the Australian Centre for Public History at the University of Technology Sydney. Her recent scholarly publication [‘Feral violence: the Pelorus experiment’](#), co-authored with Fiona Probyn-Rapsey, investigates a ‘conservation’ project in which dingoes who had been implanted with poison 1080 capsules were used to eradicate goats from a Great Barrier Reef island.