

Badger Bates

Bio

"My father was white and my mother was black," says Badger as we drive along the unsealed, bumpy Pooncarrie Road in Kinchega National Park. "That's why I don't care about the politics. We're all Australians. We've got to accept each other."

Badger is an elder of the Paakantij group, and for the past twenty years has worked as a Heritage Officer with the Rangers of the National Parks and Wildlife Services. He jokes that, one time, a woman in a sight-seeing group approached him and asked him how long it took him to become a ranger. He said, "I'm not a ranger, I'm a bush-ranger". She asked him what was the difference. He replied, "the rangers protect the animals, I eat 'em." Badger kills about three to five kangaroos each week. He portions out the meat to the old people of his group who cannot hunt any more. This week he also brings some to cook for our small group, and that night we enjoy a feast of kangaroo meat and damper, preceded by kangaroo tail soup.

Excerpt: Blackfella Whitefella - Interview with Badger Bates by Janis Lander