

Wild **News**

ISSUE 78

New
**People
Profiles**

Education
**Don't get
too close**

Discover...

All News & Events

+ Species Coordinators' Reports



President's Report



By Karen Scott

Welcome to another edition of WildNews.

Sadly, it seems the 'quiet' season didn't last very long at all. Recently there have been reports of baby birds coming into care, and there has been a sudden influx of orphaned mammals.

I do hope that some of our wildlife carers managed to get some downtime and are refreshed and ready for the onslaught that spring and summer inevitably will bring. Unfortunately, I think that this year is going to be worse than last, as it always seems to be.

I do appreciate that actively caring for sick and injured wildlife at home is not possible for some members, however there are many ways for members with limited time to contribute. The Wildcare members-only Transport Facebook page has been a great example of this, with some members offering to help with the transportation of wildlife to busy wildlife carers, as well as helping release wildlife from the wildlife hospitals. This is a great opportunity for members to be able to help out periodically without over-committing themselves. A link to the members-only Facebook groups can be found in this edition.

The busy season is a time when many of our wildlife volunteers come under a lot of pressure. They become tired and overloaded, with the continual arrival of animals coming into care. Our wildlife rescuers become sleep-deprived with the continual calls for help and our small team of Hotline volunteers, who can take up to twenty to thirty phone calls an hour during a busy day, will struggle with the coordination of so many rescues and enquiries.

This is typically a very trying time for all of our active members, but please keep in mind that we are all volunteers and we are all trying our best, in what can be a difficult situation. Please be patient and kind to each other. We don't know what the other volunteer at the end of the phone is struggling with on any given day and you may well be the fifteenth person that they have contacted to try to get help for an animal. When contacting people for advice, again remember that you may well be the tenth person who has rung that particular person in the past hour.

I would also ask members to be responsible for keeping relevant information accessible to you. One of the most frequent enquiries that Wildcare receives from members is for contact details for relevant key volunteers, including Committee members, Species Coordinators, wildlife hospitals. This information is provided to members at Orientation and is included in the footer of every formal email sent through the Wildcare database. Please make sure that you have this information printed and/or downloaded, so that it is easily accessed by you.

Finally, thank you for the wonderful work that you all do. Whether it is helping transport an animal now and then, or caring for twenty to thirty animals. Without each member doing their bit (no matter how big or small), we wouldn't be able to achieve what we do.

Wildcare Australia Inc

PO Box 2379
Nerang Mail Centre,
Qld 4211

24 X 7 Emergency Phone
Service **(07) 5527 2444**

www.wildcare.org.au

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OUR MISSION

To protect and enhance the environment by providing a high standard of rescue, care and rehabilitation for sick, injured, orphaned and displaced native fauna with the goal of successful release into the natural environment.

EMAILS

enquiries@wildcare.org.au
education@wildcare.org.au
news@wildcare.org.au
records@wildcare.org.au

MAIN COMMITTEE

President Karen Scott
Vice-President Lewis McKillop
Treasurer Tracy Paroz
Secretary Caitlin Raynor
Committee Members Rachel Lyons,
Brigitte Blakeway

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Eleanor Hanger & Deborah Bianchetto.
Submissions can be sent to
news@wildcare.org.au
Cover photo: Karen Scott

A Warm Welcome to our New Members

Wildcare Australia welcomed the following new members in January, February and March:

Belinda Grigg; Tracy Reeby & John Hartley; Robyn Mundy & Gary Miller; Jamy-lee Lyons; Erika Henzell; David Goss & Glenis Goss; Daniel Light; Anthony Sinn & Kelly Sinn; Sally Silverton-Smyth & Richard Smyth; Jenna-Rose Tangredi; Diana Taylor; Lisa Draney; Skye Bloxsom; Hannah Thornton & Gerard McLachlan; Larissa Claudio & Joshua Rayner; Wayne Griffiths; Emma Widmer; Vivienne Pither & Charlotte Pither; Samara Williams; Jacob Shaw; Kim Walker & Darren Walker; Charlotte Lloyd; Zachary Paterson; Courtney Whittington; Julie Howe; Nicole Taylor; Karina Waterman; Megan Broe; Elizabeth Dalley; Lisa Willcox; Sarah McCallion; Tracy Lindberg; Denis Glindemann & Diane Glindemann; Dominique Macdonald; Ellen Watson; Laurelle Tracey; Kym Haughton; Bob Wiley; Cody Briggs; Nina Kristiansen & Stijn De Lathouwers; Rose Dimauro; Deb Douglass-Berger; Lisa Falcongreen; Stacey Ward; Sam Young; Leisa Taylor & Ben Taylor; Catherine Hayes; Luke Dyer; Michelle Phillips; Natalie Richardson & Val Richardson; Ashley Sandercombe; Lana Johnson-Hopwood; Ofalia Ho; Kirsty Hewson; TJ Phillips & Teahgan Phillips; Narelle Hill; LeisaMarie Whittaker; Diana Maclean & Lauren Maclean; Carol Smith; Katie Hibbert; Joanna Horsfall & Rowan Burrows; Jan Light & Scott Story; Donna King; Lauren Smith; Rebecca Pedemont; Tia Sanders; Jason Mercer & Luanna Rose; Catherine Prentice; Kathleen Souter & Dylan Souter; Samantha Dallmann; Jade Westrup; Donna Anna; Debra-Ann Tanzer; Tamika-Jayd Brown; Nyssa Clacher; Steven Grant; Amy Bond; Luke Robson; Jimmy Barnes; Lisa Wright; Cassie Way; Judi Newman & Carol Wilson; Jessica Taylor-Webb; Sammy Ringer; Joanne Otteson; Deanne Hall; Alan Clarke; Anne Thomasson; Holly Keddie; Daniel Wesche & Chelsea Kvilkys; Vanessa Moscato & Luc Yllera; Heather Gray; Anne Fisher; Cayley Little; Jessica Mills; Sherri Cather; Cindy Ritchie & Brittany Ritchie; Madeleine Barlow; Annika Brycker.

By joining Wildcare Australia you are demonstrating your commitment to the welfare of Australia's native animals. Please don't hesitate to get involved in this, your organization. If you are unsure of where your personal niche may be, contact us and I'm sure we will be able to help you. We hope you have a long and happy association with Wildcare Australia.

Thank you to all those members who have renewed their Wildcare membership subscription for another year. Your ongoing support is much appreciated.

NEXT ISSUES SUBMISSIONS DATES

Issue 80 : 15th October
Issue 81 : 28th December

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Wildcare Australia or of the editors.



Education Report

Thank you to everyone who has attended the wide variety of training workshops offered by Wildcare recently. We have worked hard this year to offer volunteers new workshops, including the advanced workshops being delivered by Dr Robyn Stenner.

Our thanks to the Brisbane City Council for their support through funding via their Lord Mayor's Community Sustainability and Environmental Grants program. This funding allowed us to offer three advanced training workshops, in possums, koalas and wildlife first aid, all of which were well attended. The funding also allowed us to print our Rescue and First Aid for Wildlife manual at a reduced cost of \$15 each (normally \$25 each) and many members have taken the opportunity to obtain a copy of this important manual.

We have just received word that the City of Gold Coast has approved our funding application under their Community Grants Program. This will enable us to offer several more advanced workshops this education calendar, including birds, reptiles and wildlife first aid. I would encourage all members to attend these training workshops as they are invaluable in furthering your education and knowledge of our wildlife.

And finally, many thanks to our volunteer members who help provide such an amazing variety of training workshops for our volunteers. A great deal of time is invested in making sure that Wildcare continues to offer high quality training to our volunteers.

Wildcare Assets

A reminder to all members who hold equipment on loan from Wildcare.

Please remember that you are not permitted to transfer this equipment to another member without notifying the Committee. This ensures that the item is "signed back in" by you and then re-allocated to someone else.

If an item needs to be repaired, please remember to contact the Committee, so that we can consider repairing it.

A reminder

Have you received animals into care from Currumbin Wildlife Hospital, the RSPCA or the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital? If so, please remember to advise them of the outcome for each animal. This includes releases, deaths and also when animals have been passed on to other carers.

The information is very important for their statistics, and in the case of releases and deaths gives valuable feed-back to the treating veterinarians.

Coordinator Reports

KOALAS

By Karen Scott

It has been quite sad to see the number of sick and injured koalas coming into care over the past few months. The areas of greatest concern on the Gold Coast continue to be East Coomera and Pimpama, as well as the Parkwood area, due to the clearing for the Smith Street and light-rail upgrades.

We have also seen an increase in the number of orphaned koala joeys coming into care; some of which are doing well, some of which we haven't been able to save due to their size and existing injuries.

We have however had the opportunity to return some of our koalas back to their rescue sites, which has been a great experience for not only our volunteers, but also for the residents, who know and watch out for their resident koalas. One such koala was Renee, who was released back to Tallebudgera and was she happy to be home! She barely stopped for a photo. What a difference a few

months in care and a round of antibiotics made! Although she came into care with advanced conjunctivitis and had barely any vision at all, she certainly knew where she was, when we arrived at her 'home'.

We would like to express our thanks to the wildlife hospitals and the veterinarians, who assess and treat our koalas, for their continued support and also to the local community without whose reports these animals would not have been given a second chance.



Photos: Karen Scott

ECHIDNA

By Karen Scott

Echidnas are really getting themselves into strife this year. We have had a huge increase in the numbers of echidnas requiring rehabilitation, with as many as twelve to fifteen being in care at any one time.

Echidnas are relatively secretive little critters, but it still doesn't stop them from getting into some dangerous situations. For example, Berry who decided to sleep in the hub of a car wheel and ended up with extensive damage to her back. After several months in care at the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital, where she received treatment for a large open wound, she was transferred, for several weeks of home-based care with one of our new echidna carers, before being released.

There has also been quite a few that have been hit by cars and sustained fractured beaks. These injuries result in six to eight weeks of hospital/cage rest. Thankfully we have had good success with many of them, with several being released back to the wild and others now advanced from hospital rest to being allowed outside into large outdoor echidna pens.

A reminder that echidnas are on the move at the moment due to their breeding cycle, which means that females will soon be giving birth. Please remember to check dead echidnas to make sure that there isn't a little puggle lying nearby.

BIRDS - The Pleasure of Observing the Wildlife

By Ailsa Watson

With the peculiar weather we have been having, I suppose it is only natural the poor birds get a little confused. My local butcher birds already have chicks and the magpies are actually sitting.

I was surprised a couple of weeks ago when I saw them repairing their nest, but did not think they would lay eggs at this point in time. Well, mum is sitting and with this burst of cold weather we have just had, I hope that it does no lasting damage to the eggs or the chicks.

Not having particularly good health these days I find myself sitting on the back landing late in the evening and watching the birds go home to roost. The ones I find the most fascinating are the ibis. They fly over in flocks which seem to contain twelve at the most. At the end of the flock is the one I call tail-end Charlie,

as there always appears to be one bird flying on his own just behind the others.

Another thing of interest is the fact, that in this area, we have about six to seven individual flocks go over heading towards their roost in a swamp near the wetlands.

I mentioned this to a friend of mine and she became intrigued enough to watch her birds go home, as they roost in a swamp just outside of Palmwoods. She says her flocks go over in bundles (her words) of up to twenty, again with one bird dawdling. But she has only seen about four flocks at any given time.

This probably does not mean anything to anyone, but it is certainly fascinating to sit and watch. As the last of the birds go over, the bats start coming in, my tree in the park is not in flower yet, but as soon as it is, I will be sitting there again listening to the fighting that goes on with the bats all wanting the same blossom.

People Profiles

Meet some of our wonderful members interviewed by Caitlin Raynor.

EMILY RADERMACHER, 28 years old and a member since January 2016.

What do you like most about rescuing wildlife?

I like to minimise the suffering caused by human impact (which is especially large on the Gold Coast). Whether it is the effects of introduced animals, cars, habitat loss or pollution, much of the time the animals I rescue wouldn't be in the situation if it weren't for humans, so it feels good to try and balance those scales, even the tiniest bit.

What I don't like about rescuing is seeing prolonged suffering, especially when it was avoidable (e.g. long term fractures from speeding cars)

Why did you join Wildcare?

I was volunteering on reception at Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and got chatting to one of the carers. I mentioned how I wanted to join but that I lived in an apartment and couldn't have joeys bouncing and birds flying all over the place (I imagined a very Dr Doolittle scenario). They assured me that I could stick to doing rescues and was under no obligation to turn my apartment into an animal reserve.

Why did you decide to rescue instead of being a rehabilitator?

I have limited space for caring, but I am in the (long and drawn out) process of organising some terrariums so that I can begin doing reptile caring. Actually, summer is coming up, I'd better get onto that quickly...

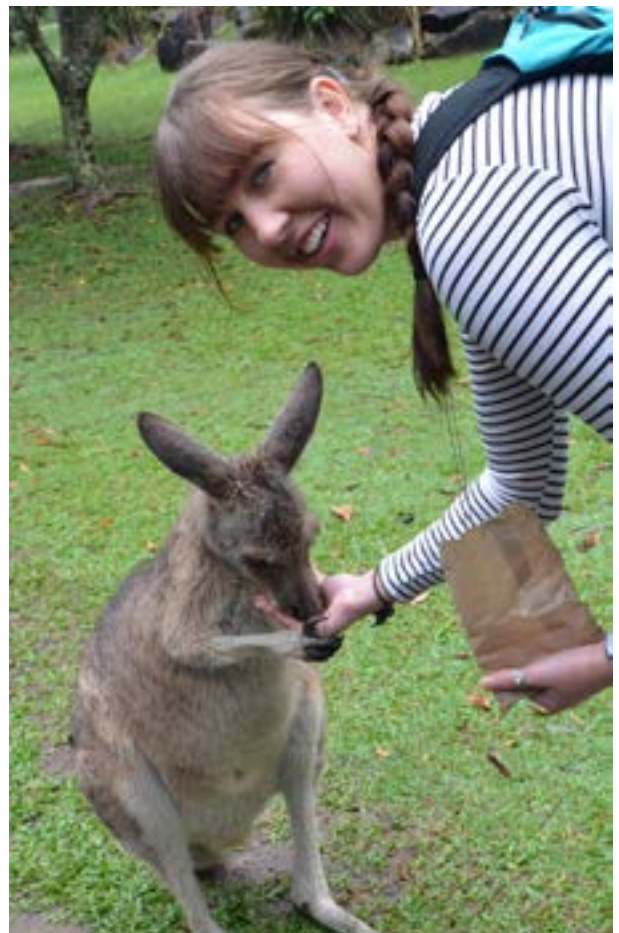
Tell us about your most memorable rescue.

There are so many! I think Luca the Koala stands out because he is a bit famous now. Brenda called me out to assist her, and the lovely couple who had hit Luca had stayed around to help. Poor Luca's thumb was torn pretty badly, but he was having none of our help! It took all four of us because he was determined that he was staying on that tree. That was one with a more positive outcome. Recently I've started training with Karen to work towards getting my trauma carer's licence. I will always remember the poor Eastern Grey and her non-viable pouch young that were my first euthanasias in the field. Very sad, but I'm glad they are no longer in pain.

Do you have any advice for a new rescuer?

Firstly, know your limitations before you dive in. If you know what they are, then you won't have the doubts holding you back. My first possum rescue had me nervous, but I also knew that I could do it, so I was able to move quickly and confidently. Secondly, search your feelings to make sure that you can cope with death as an end to suffering. You will feel sad about the animals

that need euthanasia, but remember that it is a much better alternative than death by prolonged suffering. Thirdly, follow your instincts. Sometimes you will attend a rescue and everything will seem fine but you will have that nagging little gut feeling that the animal needs intervention. Trust yourself. Lastly, don't expect the animals to be grateful for your help! They will be scared, angry, miserable but almost never grateful. However, the people you meet, the wonderful people who call out of concern for these animals, they will be very grateful and they will tell you that you are doing a wonderful job, because you are.





People Profiles

Continued

DAVID ZAMMIT

What do you like most about rescuing wildlife?

I love being able to make a small difference in favour of our wildlife to counteract what our society is doing to our native animals.

What do you find most challenging?

Some people think that some of our native animals are less important than others. I get upset hearing comments like “it’s just a kangaroo/possum, they get run over all the time” or “I love wildlife but oh, I hate such and such.”

Why did you join Wildcare?

I worked for the RSPCA rescue unit for a few years and when I left I still wanted to keep doing my bit rescuing animals, especially wildlife. I dealt with Wildcare quite a bit during my time with RSPCA and always found them very helpful, organised and professional, so it was natural progression that I would join them.

Tell us about your most memorable rescue.

On my last shift with the RSPCA we got a call about a kangaroo joey that was in a mob of about 100 kangaroos. It was trying to jump into any pouch he could find, but kept getting rejected! We determined that he was an orphan and needed to be taken into care, so my colleagues and I set out slowly into the mob to try and catch him. All was going to plan until the mob got spooked and started running in all directions. We feared the joey would get trampled in the confusion. At one stage he turned around and ran at me and I was able to scoop him up easily! It was memorable because it looked like an impossible job trying to rescue one little roo in a mob of a hundred.



What advice would you give a new rescuer?

Always assess the animal and its surroundings before you attempt the rescue. Try to think what the animal will do once you approach it. Have lots of patience. Before you start make sure you have everything you’ll need to do the rescue close at hand, and above all stay safe and don’t put yourself in harm’s way. Never hesitate to call a more experienced rescuer for advice or for help.

How do you juggle wildlife rescue with the rest of your life?

As rescue calls can come at any time it’s tricky! I have all of my rescue equipment in the car at all times and check it weekly, so when I need to attend a rescue all I have to do is just jump in the car and go. I do plan my day in such a way, that if I get a call at certain times of the day I will know instantly if I can or can’t attend.

People Profiles

Continued

CARA PARSONS

Why did you join Wildcare?

I had always wanted to look after wildlife since I was little and, when I came across the Wildcare brochures at our local library, I started to look into it as a real possibility. I went to the initial orientation in February 2012 and knew from then I wanted to be a possum carer, and then moved onto flying foxes at the end of that year.

What do you like most about rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife?

I really enjoy being able to make a difference in the life of the individual animals. I know that many of the animals I rescue will unfortunately have to be put to sleep, but I feel better knowing that I have ended their suffering and they were able to pass in a more comfortable way. I feel that by raising orphaned possums and flying foxes, I have helped to carry on the legacy of their mothers, so that their lives weren't lost in vain.

What do you find most challenging?

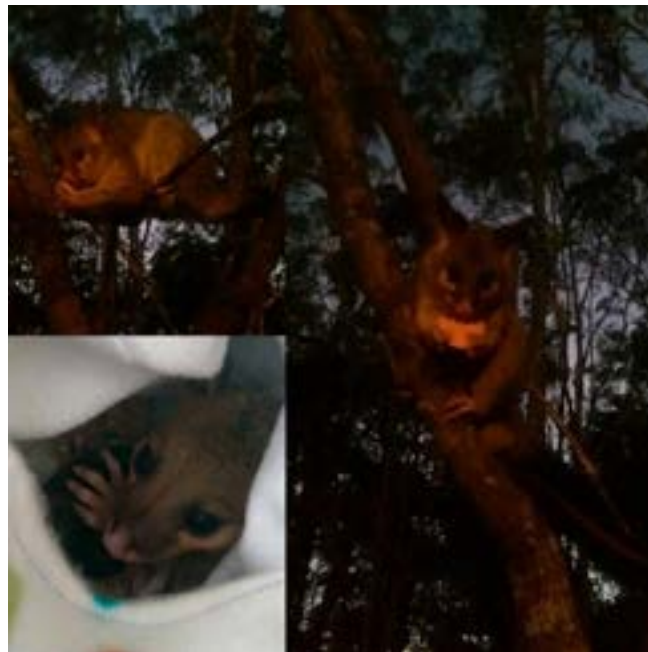
It's upsetting when one of the babies gets sick, especially when it's something you weren't prepared for, such as when the flying fox pups start to show symptoms as a result of electrocution.

Tell us about the most memorable animal you've had in care.

It's hard to pick just one! Every possum I have had in care, both orphans and adults, have all had such amazing and different personalities. The possum in the photos is Athena, a sweet girl that I raised last year. It was amazing being able to see her a couple months ago living out in the bush near her release site. It was even more amazing when it was discovered that she has a joey! It's really rewarding to know that the baby you have raised has gone on to live a happy life and is able to have babies of their own.

Do you have any advice to pass on to another new carer?

Always learn from your mistakes. Everyone is bound to make them, but it is vital to learn from that experience and don't repeat it. Also, reiterate to yourself that you are in wildlife care/rescue for the animals. It can be hard seeing the pain and trauma inflicted on our native wildlife, but you have to look past it, to continue to help them.



Great Team Work

By Lyndsey Kershaw

The Currawong had fishing line tangled around its foot and the line was also tangled around a branch, anchoring the bird about 8m up in a tree at Paradise Point.

He was too high for me to reach and climbing the tree was too dangerous, so I called Rowley from Wild Bird Rescues Gold Coast, who came to our assistance straight away.

Rowley made a contraption to cut the bird free, by taping a knife to an extendible pole. He tried to cut the branch, with me ready to catch the bird in a large net, so we could untangle the line from the bird's leg before it flew off. This didn't work, so the only option was to cut the line, which he did.

The Currawong flew into a nearby boat yard still entangled in line, with us in hot pursuit. Luckily, it was very hungry, so it wasn't difficult to tempt it down to the ground with some food. Rowley quickly trapped it in a net and cut the fishing line from its leg. After being treated, fed and watered, I watched the bird return to its Currawong friends up high on a building.



Rambo Ringtail

By Sammy Ringer

I must admit I couldn't remember all their names. Five juvenile ringtails brought to me for some 'large aviary time' prior to release.

The first night I just called them all 'guys' and spread their pick around the aviary to give them a chance to munch in peace. One little fella glared at me out of the drey but I shrugged this off as a 'Who brought me HERE?' grump. I didn't talk to him or move closer to the drey – they were here to be dehumanised.

Night two and I'm pleased as punch at the way they've consumed their pick (unlike some common brushtails I could mention...). I waddle the two buckets of new pick into the aviary and start to refresh their restaurant. Mr Glare is watching me ferociously and I smile at him.

Maybe that was the mistake.

This guy didn't run out of the drey – he flew! One moment I'm holding some lilly pilly leaves, the next I'm holding a ringtail on my wrist. Or rather, he's holding me, gnawing and shaking his head, oblivious to the blood and my squeaks of pain. I gather a lilly pilly branch and start to smack him around the head. He glares some more and then calls it quits, scampering back to his drey.

Fine, I think – what I'll do is put a towel in the drey hole while I refresh their pick and then whisk it out as I leave....Ha! The towel worked but I misjudged the time it would take me to exit after removing it. Yesterday's attack is repeated, leaving further bloody track marks up my arm.

This is not good at all.

I have another 'aha!' moment and decide to dress for the occasion. I put on not one but two thick pullovers and enter the battle

ground. He watches me. I watch him. 'Do your best' I challenge and he does, gnawing furiously at my pullover but not reaching flesh. I let him dangle there while I place the pick and he finally gives up and goes back to bed.

Two or three nights of this and he's given up. He doesn't even come to his hole to glare when I enter the aviary and I heave a sigh of relief – but still dress for the unexpected.

Yesterday, a potential carer came round and I took her through the feeding routine. The two brushtails smiled at us sweetly as we moved around the aviary. I told the would-be carer the funny story about the ringtail. "Come and meet him – though you won't see him as he doesn't bother anymore." I said naively, dressed like an idiot in a T-shirt only.

Yes, you know the ending.

Maybe it was the would-be carer's strange voice. Maybe it was because it was a Tuesday. Maybe it was because he saw me so poorly protected.

Rambo the Ringtail flew from his hole and latched onto my hand. When I moved my arm, he latched onto my tit. When I bent over to grab a lilly pilly branch, he gave my arm one last, deep bite and flew back into his drey.

"It's nothing," I squeak, splashing blood everywhere.

The would-be carer is white. I'm pretty red.

Rambo the Ringtail is sound asleep again, having won his battle. I don't know if I'll see the would-be carer again.

Something tells me Rambo and I have a few confrontations to go.



Don't Get Too Close

By Sammy Ringer

I knew all about it, of course. Don't humanise them. Don't think of them as pets. Don't expect them to live because many of them don't.

But the Pee-wee was different. I called him Peepee. He was a bumptious character. From day one, he was hopping onto the hand, onto the shoulder, chittering and pecking and insisting on his food. By day two he was house trained, knew feeding hours and was laying on the charm. However, he was still a juvenile, far too young to cope on his own. On day five, he escaped from the aviary and fluttered up into a tree.

Hitting myself round the head for my stupidity, I debated whether to get a ladder or wait and see what he did. I got the ladder, a handful of mealy worms and a small prayer of hope and edged towards him. He gobbled the worms and chreeked and I gently lifted him down and put him back in the aviary. If only they were all that easy!

The time came for a soft release and I began to leave the aviary door open. He kind of liked that and decided to divide his time between the great outdoors and my house.

Each night at dusk, he would fly in and plonk himself on my shoulder. When it was really dark, I would take him out to the aviary, bid him good night and place him on his branch.

Though the aviary door remained open, he seemed to realise that this was where he was to sleep.

Over time, his morning chreeking became a warbling. I fancied that he was calling out to a lady Pee wee down the road and waited for him to fly off and join her.

He didn't. He warbled and chreeked and sat on my shoulder at dusk and went to bed each night.

Then, one Thursday between 4.30 and 5pm, he was gone.

Simply gone.

And he hasn't come back.

And though I shouldn't mourn him, I do.

But – perhaps I shouldn't.

After all, if you were an handsome teenage Pee-wee with a new mate, would you visit the step-mother- in-law?

The Magpie-lark (*Grallina cyanoleuca*)

By Eleanor Hanger

The Magpie-lark (*Grallina cyanoleuca*) also known as Mudlark, Peewee and Peewit.

When reading “Don’t Get Too Close”, I became interested in the vocalizations of young Peeweesees, so decided to refer to the Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds (HANZAB) to see what I could learn.

It seems the first begging call is heard a day after hatching. It is soft, is associated with begging for food and becomes louder with age. It is usually given when the parents are nearby (Tingay 1981, as cited in HANZAB). At around 14 days of age, a loud piercing drawn out note, *peech*, is given when the parents are absent and this call is given until independence (Tingay 1981). Tingay documents a third call, drawn out repetitions of a high pitched *pee*, which is uttered when a predator is close or when handled. This was first noticed in advanced nestlings (Tingay 1981).

Before the first moult and a few weeks before leaving the natal territories, the young birds start to make new vocalizations, which gradually replace the earlier ones. They join flocks of immature birds and slowly improve their repertoire until by about three months of age they are quite proficient. Individuals differ in the composition of the repertoire, its frequency and mean duration. Song practice may continue into the second year.

Some months before the breeding season, the song may attract the interest or participation of other birds and ultimately lead to pair bonding and breeding.



Reference: Higgins, P.J., J.M. Peter & S. J. Cowling. (Eds.) 2006. *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic Birds. Volume 7: Boat-bills to Starlings Part A Boatbill to Larks* 148-149. Oxford University Press, Melbourne. Photos: Eleanor Hanger.

An Amazing Man – a Fascinating Book.

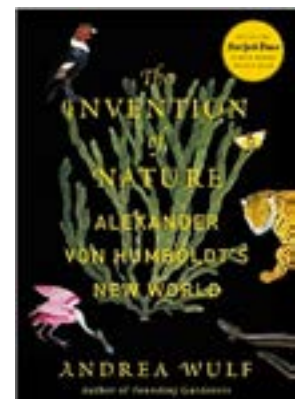
By Eleanor Hanger

Theoretically we should learn from the past and not repeat the same mistakes and yet I often used to think, when reading history, that we are having the same problems and repeating the same mistakes as, for example, the Romans were 2000 years ago. Human nature never changes, it would seem.

However, closer to home, a book has recently been published on Alexander von Humboldt, “*The Invention of Nature*” by Andrea Wulf. Humboldt was born in 1769 and was a great explorer and a remarkable scientist. What I find most fascinating about the book, of which I have only read a little, is his remarkable insight into the ecological processes, the web of life, “everything is interaction and reciprocal”. He speaks of the importance of the forests, “the wooded region acts in a threefold manner in diminishing the temperature: by cooling shade, by evaporation and by radiation.” As Humboldt travelled, he observed the ecological damage done where forests were felled for agriculture and timber – the drying out of the soils, the loss of soils in heavy downpours, the loss of fertility, falling water levels in lakes, springs drying and rivers severely eroded during heavy rains because the vegetation which previously had slowed the run-off was gone. Humboldt’s

questioning and his observations, in many countries around the world, led him to postulate human-induced climate change and to warn that this could have devastating consequences for future generations. This was the year 1800.

More than 200 years have passed since Humboldt wrote those prophetic words, the human population has increased enormously, the demands on a finite planet for food, water and shelter are being stretched to the limits, migration is happening on an unprecedented scale, ecosystems are being destroyed at an alarming rate and yet some among us choose to ignore the signs and the science. One can only hope that we learn from some of the more enlightened nations and become part of the global effort to prevent a disaster for all life on the planet. I can’t help but wonder what Humboldt would think were he to see Planet Earth in 2016.





The Legend of Tiny Tim

© Shelley Hansen
www.shelleyhansen.com

Out back of Quambone by Macquarie Marshes, there's a tale that's grown into a living legend that will never pale. It tells about a lady known as Myra, and the day that she was saved from danger in a most amazing way.

The Willie Camp Retreat is Myra's marshland place of rest – where you may bring your caravan, or be a bunkhouse guest. She built it up with husband Phil, to supplement their sheep. Now, though she is no longer young, she maintains its upkeep.

She's Wildlife Rescue, Weather Station – outback and remote – with cockatoos, a kangaroo, a pet pig and a goat. The peacocks and the pigeons live in perfect harmony with parrots and echidnas in this strange menagerie.

But Myra has a special pet – his name is Tiny Tim – the smallest of an emu brood. She fed and hand-raised him. He liked to greet the visitors ... until there came a day when Tiny Tim revealed himself in quite another way!

Three blokes came through the gate on one of those dark outback nights. Their odd behaviour indicated they were “high as kites”. They drove a trayback stocked with guns, with pig dogs caged behind so Myra didn't need to wonder what they had in mind!

“Now stop right there,” said Myra, “this is private property. The wildlife live in peace round here. You can't come in for free and take pot shots like it is some Big Game Safari Park. Besides, did you not see the sign – No Entry After Dark?”

The driver rudely interrupted, “What sign? We can't read!!” Then, winking at his mates, he said, “It's time we had a feed, so we'll just have to come on in and you can't tell us No!” “I beg your pardon,” Myra said, “I'm telling you to go!”

The adjectives that followed came directly from the drain ... (though I could quote verbatim, it is best that I refrain). “And who will make us go?” came from the thinnest of the three. Though Myra quaked, she stood her ground and bravely said, “You'll see!”

And see they did! For suddenly there came a mighty sound accompanied by thundering of feet upon the ground – a wild and eerie chanting rising to a fearsome cry, a billowing of feathers and a bright and beady eye ...

Then Tiny Tim the emu sallied forth in battle charge – and Myra would have not believed that he could seem so large! He puffed up till he stood erect at over six feet high then launched himself like some avenging angel from the sky!

The yobbos fell upon each other, paralysed with fright! They couldn't tell what monster was upon them in the night. They howled and yelled and grabbed the doors to leap into the ute and sped off in a cloud of dust as fast as they could scoot!

But Tim was not quite finished! He pursued them to the gate which they were forced to stop and open, fearing that a fate far worse than death awaited them, as Tim resumed attack – until they finally escaped to safety down the track ...

Or so they thought! In fact their woes had only just begun, for Myra, gathering her wits, had lost no time to run and phone the Crime Prevention Squad, to see what they would say. “We'll pick 'em up,” the boys said, “for we're not that far away.”

Much later they returned and said, “We found them, thanks to you. The dogs are an illegal breed, the guns unlicensed too. The engine in the trayback has been stolen – and what's more, that weed that they were smoking isn't from the corner store!”

“We're worried for you, Myra. Blokes like that don't mess about. We cannot understand how you contrived to throw them out!” But Myra smiled and said, “No need for you to feel alarm.” And then she told how Tiny Tim had rescued her from harm.

So there's an emu hero in the folklore of this land! What brought him to the rescue we may never understand. But one thing is for certain – Tiny Tim repaid, real quick, the kindness Myra showed to him when he was just a chick.

The lesson in this story (and the tale I tell is true) ... if you make friends with Myra, Tiny Tim's a friend to you. But if you should harass this gentle Lady of the West – there's means at her disposal – and you'll come off second best!

The Legend of Tiny Tim is printed in our newsletter with the kind permission of Shelley Hansen. Photos: John Hanger.



Local Deforestation and our Wildlife *By Jasmine Rasmussen*

If you live on the Gold Coast, you may have noticed the rapid development occurring recently. Thousands of animals are being displaced and left without territory, food sources and community groups. This kind of stress places our animals at greater threat of encountering the dangers of human interference (domestic animal attacks, road traumas) and the development of fatal diseases.

One iconic Australian species which is suffering greatly from this loss is the koala. We all love this famous marsupial, but the majority of Australians rarely take the time to consider the effects we have as a human race on these awesome creatures. In South East Queensland, koalas are considered vulnerable, which means they are under threat of facing extinction, if the population declines further. How could Australia possibly stand back and watch as one of our most loved furry friends disappears forever!

But koalas aren't the only ones in trouble.

Of course, deforestation does not only affect animals on the Gold Coast, as land is cleared unsustainably around Australia, many species will be victims of the repercussions of habitat destruction.

It is important to remember to report any koala sighted, so that they can be monitored.



Paper Plate Koala

Supplies:

- regular size paper plate
- 2 small paper plates
- grey acrylic paint
- paintbrush
- black cardstock paper
- googly eyes
- black marker
- stapler
- glue

1. Start by painting the bottom of your paper plates grey and set them aside to dry completely. While your plates are drying, cut an oval nose out of your black paper.
2. Once your plates are dry, staple the two smaller plates onto the large plate to make ears. Then cut slits along the bottom of the ears so it looks like hair.
3. Glue your nose and googly eyes onto your koala. Finish your koala by using your black marker to draw a mouth onto it.

Paper Plate Koala Kid Craft

Paper Plate Koala Kid Craft printed with the kind permission of Rachel Nipper.

Nipper, R. (2009). Paper Plate Koala Kid Craft. [Blog] *I heart crafty things*.

Available at: iheartcraftythings.com/paper-plate-koala-kid-craft.html



Monthly Mission

Find out more about our wonderful Koalas! How much Eucalyptus do they eat in a day? What species of Eucalyptus do they eat? How many of them are there in South-East Queensland? Why do you think habitat destruction will affect them?

Grants

As a non-profit organization, we rely heavily on the generous support of the community as well as the funding opportunities provided by local councils, private businesses and corporations. Wildcare kindly acknowledges the following councils, businesses and individuals who have provided essential support for our volunteer work.



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL - Wildcare successfully obtained a grant for \$3,400 from the Brisbane Council under The Lord Mayor's Community Sustainability and Environmental Grants Program 2015-2016 – Native Wildlife Carers Grant. These funds are being used to deliver three specialised training workshops in Brisbane and to offset some the costs associated with the printing of training manuals.



Possum workshop. Photos: Cathy Cope.



**Gambling
Community Benefit Fund**
Queensland Government

COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND – Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation - Our thanks to the Queensland Government's grant for \$14,780 which is being used to purchase nine new intensive care units and ten aviaries.



Photo: Karen Scott



NOOSA CITY COUNCIL - Funding received of \$4,778 under the Noosa Council's Community Grants Program to help cover consumables associated with attending trauma calls in the Noosa area as well as construction of a mobile release aviary.



AURIZON COMMUNITY GIVING FUND - Funding received of \$4,778 under the Noosa Council's Community Grants Program to help cover consumables associated with attending trauma calls in the Noosa area as well as construction of a mobile release aviary.



SUEZ - Our application for funding for a mobile release aviary, to the value of \$3,830, was successful under Suez's Community Grants program.

The funding received from Noosa Council, Aurizon and Suez has enabled us to fast track our long-term project of acquiring six mobile release aviaries. Our aim was to try to secure funding for these six trailers/aviaries over the next two to three years, however the generous support of these organizations has enabled us to get well ahead of our project plan. These aviaries will help alleviate pressure on our existing release sites and will help minimize the necessity to do 'hard releases'. These mobile release aviaries have been a high priority for our volunteers for some time and we are so appreciative of the support provided by Noosa Council, Aurizon and Suez. By next WildNews, we will have some photos to show you of the new aviaries.

Support Wildcare's Members & Supporters



Our sincerest thanks to Greenleaf Images for the use of several of their beautiful photographs in our promotional material. The quality of the material would not be what it is, without the use of these professional images.



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Thank you!



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 Sunshine Coast Regional Council
 Tamborine Mountain Natural History Assoc.
 The Pines Shopping Centre

TO THE FOLLOWING VETS FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND TREATMENT OF OUR WILDLIFE

ALBERT STREET VET CLINIC
 Beaudesert 5541 1233

ANIMAL EMERGENCY CENTRE
 St Lucia 3365 2110

ANIMAL EMERGENCY SERVICE
 Carrara 5559 1599
 Underwood 3841 7011

AUSTRALIA ZOO WILDLIFE HOSPITAL
 Beerwah 5436 2097

CURRUMBIN VALLEY VET SERVICES
PETER WILSON
 Currumbin 5533 0381

CURRUMBIN WILDLIFE HOSPITAL
 Currumbin 5534 0813

DR. BRIAN PERRERS
 Southport 5591 2246

ANIMAL EMERGENCY CENTRE
 Varsity Lakes 5593 4544

GREENCROSS
 Burleigh Waters 5520 6820
 Helensvale 5573 3355
 Mudgeeraba 5530 5555
 Nerang 5596 4899
 Oxenford 5573 2670
 Robina 5593 0300
 Southport 5531 2573

GYMPIE & DISTRICT VETERINARY SERVICES
 Gympie 5482 2488
 Tin Can Bay 5486 4666

KENILWORTH VET CLINIC
 Kenilworth 5472 3085

MANLY ROAD VET HOSPITAL
 Manly 3396 9733

MT. TAMBORINE VET SURGERY
 5545 2422

NOOSA VETERINARY SURGERY
 Tewantin 5449 7522

TOOWONG FAMILY VET
 Toowong 3613 9644

TUGUN VETERINARY SURGERY
 Tugun 5534 1928

VETCALL
 Burleigh 5593 5557
 Mudgeeraba 5530 2204

WEST CHERMSIDE VET CLINIC
 Stafford Heights 3359 0777

Note: UQ Small Animal Clinic St. Lucia has now moved to the UQ Gatton Campus.