

# WILDNEWS

Summer 2012 Issue 62

*"Dehydration"*

*"Loving our Local  
Native Plants"*

*"An amazing  
journey"*

*"Education  
Report"*





# President's Report.

*Karen Scott*

I HOPE THAT EVERYONE HAD A SAFE AND RELAXING CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR AND YOU ARE ALL GEARED UP TO START ANOTHER YEAR.

Unfortunately I feel that this year will see many changes for Wildcare as an organisation, as we are faced with the unfortunate closure of our small administration office. The Office has remained open four to five days a week thanks to the tremendous contribution of Roy Webster and Trish Hales. I know that many of you have dealt with Roy and Trish and are well aware of their passion and dedication to not only our local wildlife but to Wildcare and its members. I know that all of our members join the Wildcare Management Committee in wishing Roy and Trish a relaxing 'retirement' from their office duties.

Many organisations that rely on volunteers continue to find it increasingly difficult to obtain, engage and maintain volunteers and Wildcare is no exception. Being a volunteer wildlife rescuer or carer is different from most volunteer roles, where people can volunteer a few hours here or there.

Volunteer wildlife rescuers and carers are 'on call' and their roles are so much more diverse than many others. Unfortunately the current economic climate has impacted on the ability of many of our volunteers to continue to volunteer at the level

that they have been previously. The cost of fuel, the cost of rescue and rehab equipment and the need for people to work longer hours is all having an impact.

We appreciate that is becoming more difficult, but I would encourage everyone to try to contribute in a small way; even if it is only doing the odd rescue or helping with transporting animals to vets or wildlife hospitals. Every little contribution helps to ease the burden on those who are already stretched to their limits.

I look forward to working with all of our members over the course of 2012 and hope for a brighter future for our wildlife.



# 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.

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Cover photo: Australian King Parrot courtesy of EM HANGER

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## The Main Committee

President - Karen Scott  
Vice-President - Gail Gipp  
Secretary - Tracy Paroz  
Treasurer - Ashleigh Paroz  
Committee Members - Natasha Lewis-Millar and Trish Hales

Newsletter Team - Eleanor Hanger, Karen Scott, Renée Rivard, Deb Bianchetto  
Newsletter submissions can be sent to [news@wildcare.org.au](mailto:news@wildcare.org.au)



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### "Dehydration"



PHOTO // A BIRD

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

## *A Warm Welcome to Our New Members*

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*Wildcare Australia welcomed the following new members in November and December 2011*

Belinda & Julian Moore; Tammy Allison; Trudy Davidson; Aaron Gee; Trish Sean White; Narelle & Andrew Hannay; Kimberley Davies; Suzie & Frances Barry; John Rollings; Zach Hemming; Sharon Parfitt; Graham Collins; Alistair and Louise McKay; Vicki Franz; William & Patricia McIntosh; Kim Kurtz; Rodney Duncan; Rosalind Pritchard; Amie Burnett; Sharon Hutchison; Kate & Greg Payne; Sophie & Henry Lancaster; Samantha Hutchins; Sarah Zillmann; Claire Bowry; Greg & Steffany Cockerell; Pam Fawcett; Cara and Melissa Parsons; Melindi Robertson; Larissa Carrus; Ruth Hutchison; Primula Lill; Michelle Burt; Mitch Irvine; Emma Dalley.

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, call our office 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.



PHOTO // JM HANGER

## *Wildcare Opportunities*

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### **Office Volunteers**

The Wildcare office is in desperate need of volunteers. The contribution of only half a day, once a week by five or six volunteers would make a huge difference to those few who contribute full days, several times a week. We understand that everyone is busy, but we need your help. Please review your schedule and find a little time each week to help support the Wildcare Australia vision and mission. a little time each week to help support the Wildcare Australia vision and mission.

### **Newsletter Submissions**

We are always looking for articles of an educational nature as well as news, upcoming events, stories and other items of interest for Wildnews. Pictures, preferably >1MB in size, are also needed and must be sent as a separate file attachment (please do not insert pictures into MS Word or other documents). We encourage new members to share stories of their first rescue or rehab! Stories should be about 800 to 1000 words. The submissions must be original or, if not, must be correctly accredited. Submissions may be emailed to [news@wildcare.org.au](mailto:news@wildcare.org.au)

# Record Keeper's Rap

## Record Keeping Tips

*Kiersten Jones*

Thank you for an overwhelming response by members to the email sent out in early January requesting that all 2011 records be submitted by 14th January 2012.

I have been kept busy processing these and am gradually getting back to each of you with your 2012 records files. I now have records files for 133 members, and the figure is still rising. I'm sure this is a record in itself!

So, if I haven't got back to you as yet, this is why, and I will be in touch soon. For those who are still to submit, don't let this stop you, please get them in as soon as you can as I'm about to collate them all. Thanks!

For those without email link-up, here it is again:

### **2011 Wildcare Rescue and Rehab Records now due:**

Just a friendly reminder to all members with a permit endorsement under Wildcare Australia, that your records for 2011 are now due. Could you please send them in by 14th January 2012? If nil in care since last submission or since receiving your permit endorsement, then a quick email (or if no email, then a phone-call to 0409130000 A/hrs) advising this, is all that is required.

Please email your records or 'nil' advice to [records@wildcare.org.au](mailto:records@wildcare.org.au). Please include all rescues as well as records of all the animals in your care. Road kill sightings are also valuable to include provided you give the exact location where found. Once these are all received, our 2011 records data can be collated and used for requested reports and new grant submissions.

If you need any help, then please contact me.

The records forms (emailing and handwritten) and records guidelines may be downloaded from Wildcare's website [www.wildcare.org.au](http://www.wildcare.org.au) - under "Carers' Resources".

For those of you who have already submitted your remaining 2011 records, thank you for your promptness.

Thank you again, and all the best for 2012.

Kiersten Jones  
Record Keeping  
Wildcare Australia Inc.

Email: [records@wildcare.org.au](mailto:records@wildcare.org.au)



PHOTO // JM HANGER

## *Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference* \_\_\_\_\_

THE AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE REHABILITATION CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD IN TOWNSVILLE FROM THE 16TH TO 20TH JULY 2012.



This is an event in the wildlife calendar that is not to be missed. The conference brings together wildlife carers, veterinarians and researchers for four days of sharing and learning. An enormous range of topics are covered, including such subjects as emergency response, the latest treatment for trauma, environmental issues and fundraising.

If you are interested in receiving regular email updates, as the conference takes shape, you can sign on the website below. Also available on the website are the registration form, information about the workshops and other events and activities.

<http://www.2012awrc.org.au/>

## *Office Report* \_\_\_\_\_

### THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

We have laughed, cried, spat the dummy and learnt so much.

We have been praised, abused and entertained by members of the Public.

We have been amazed by the kindness of some and driven to distraction by the selfishness of others.

We could write a book with some of the crazy calls we have taken such as, 'There is a crocodile in my roof' or 'I have just passed a penguin walking down the MI'.

We have been sustained, encouraged, and educated by Wildcare Committee and Members.

We are saddened at the closure of the Wildcare Office.

We are grateful for having the opportunity to help save our native wildlife.

So it's 'Goodbye' from Trish and Roy in the Wildcare Office.

# Grant Funding

*Karen Scott*

## GAMBLING COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

The Wildcare Management Committee is very proud to announce that we have been successful in obtaining a grant from the Gambling Community Benefit for \$15,438. Grant funding was requested to purchase the following items:

- Possum traps
- Relocatable aviaries
- Bird rescue nets
- Duck enclosures
- Intensive Care Units

We are currently in the process of ordering these items. We are sure that these items will help our volunteer wild-life carers in their rehabilitation activities.

The Intensive Care Units are items that have become almost a necessity for wildlife carers who take on the care of small unfurred joeys and baby birds. I am sure that they will be put to good use immediately!



Gambling  
**Community Benefit Fund**  
Queensland Government

### PERMIT REMINDER

Don't forget that you must have a REHABILITATION PERMIT to be able to care for native wildlife.

A gentle reminder to those members who have a Permit Endorsement issued by Wildcare to check the Conditions noted on your Endorsement. If your Permit was conditional upon you attending update training workshops or submitting your Rescue/Carer records please ensure that you make arrangements to satisfy these conditions before the required time lapses. Permits will be revoked if the Conditions are not satisfied.

Wildcare has provided a fair amount of leeway to members to satisfy these Conditions over recent years but all members should now understand their obligations.

If you are having difficulties with satisfying the requirements please contact a member of the Wildcare Management Committee or the Wildcare Record Keeper.

## *A Rat down your Shirt, a Bilby in the Ceiling*

### *What next?*

*Penelope Hacker*

Do you have times when you think your life is dull? Could you do with some exciting wildlife mind games, or a good laugh? Probably not, if you're a rescuer/rehabilitator, or indeed have anything to do with animals, and wildlife in particular. But you might like to feel you could achieve something extra, something really worthwhile. And what about making new, though possibly distant, friends?

Then may I make a suggestion? Join the Wildcare phone volleys, and you will have all of these in spades!

Since starting my weekly three-hour stint, and occasional extras, even, bravely, a few over-nighters, I have had a lot of laughs, some real puzzles, calls from exciting places, and felt that I was really contributing without leaving my lounge room. Mind you, dinner has got a bit cold on some nights. It pays to be organised before you start.

I have had a call from the Stuart Highway just north of Katherine in the Northern Territory, where someone had hit a kangaroo, one from Magnetic Island (an injured Tawny frogmouth), another from a mine site west of Mt Isa (a Black kite in a tailings dam). Before you panic and say, "I could never answer those", nor could I have, without the help provided by the excellent manual. There are lists of carers in other states, twenty-four hour veterinarians and sundry other resources, including snake removers, and, most importantly, many knowledgeable people to offer advice, when you are stuck for an answer.

It is a good idea, however, to study field guides and learn a bit about the likely distribution of our amazing wildlife. I can tell you now that no MOP (Member of the Public) wants to find anything common and this is where the laughs come in (after you have put the phone down, of course) They will firmly tell you: that they have found a bilby in the ceiling of their house at Gilston near Nerang (probably a brushtail possum – anything with long ears can be called a bilby); that they have a cassowary in an outer Brisbane suburb (Stone curlew); that they are holding a baby glider (I told her to hold it next to her body for warmth. She put it inside her shirt, then rang back to say her boyfriend had come home and identified it as a rat!); that they have a Brown quail in Surfers Paradise (Brush turkey chick); that a bird had a broken wing in a Gold Coast car park and couldn't fly (Stone curlew again – didn't want to fly). You may be asked to help save a lost dog in NSW, or help with horses that have got out (RSPCA for both).

The internet has a lot to answer for, because that is where many of these are "identified". But technology can help out with people sending photos via their mobile phones (the Stone curlew which wouldn't fly), or googling better suggestions (the bilby became a Northern brown bandicoot).

But, seriously, it is wonderful that these people wanted to help an animal they thought was in need, and we have the opportunity to gently educate them, and to help the creature, wild or domestic, when needed.

One evening I realised how worthwhile my seemingly insignificant efforts are. A caller from the Gold Coast fire department rang to say they had rescued a badly burned koala which had been caught in a bush fire. I rang Karen (Scott) who said "I'm on my way", as she has to so many times, day and night, as well as doing over-nighters and a myriad other tasks. So Jacinta, as the koala was later named, was raced up to Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital where she received the best of care. The pain of her injuries must have been awful.

So, give it a go! There are heaps of people who can help you if you are stuck. Just think of Jacinta who may have been left in pain otherwise, and enrol in the Phone volunteer workshop. Just give what time you can – one three-hour session a month is an enormous help.

I have also found some wonderful helpful people in Wildcare, whose faces I only attached to the voices I knew, when I went to the AGM – "So, that's what you look like," we said.



Jacinta heavily sedated in hospital

PHOTO // P HACKER

# Coordinator Reports

## Birds

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### SUNSHINE COAST

SINCE THE LAST ARTICLE WHEN I MENTIONED MY TWO PEEWEE FAMILIES NESTING IN THE SAME TREE, and combining forces to chase off any predators, I decided this very unusual occurrence required a little more research. I went through my reference books and could find nothing at all to substantiate this unusual situation. In fact just the opposite seemed to be the case. Most of the reading I did suggested that each family would consider another family in the same way as it would predators, and would chase them off.

I have finally come to the conclusion that these four little birds were among the six I released locally in 2010. Maybe the fact that they shared a cage, were released into aviary together and finally freedom, had something to do with the closeness they seem to have developed.

If anyone knows anything at all about this, or has a personal case to narrate I would love to hear about it.

I am happy to report that all four babies were successfully weened and have left the area. My four adults are still hopping around the garden and arguing with the butcherbirds and magpies. I am sincerely hoping they will consider nesting here again next spring.

Ailsa Watson



PHOTO // EM HANGER

## Echidnas & Small Mammals

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SUMMER HAS BROUGHT ALONG WITH IT A STEADY FLOW OF ORPHANED ANTECHINUS YOUNG, again more coming into care in the northern areas than in the Gold Coast region this year.

There has been an influx of orphaned bandicoots, primarily from cat attacks sadly. Most of these are doing well in care and should be able to be successfully hand-raised and released back to the wild. For those who haven't had the joy of raising bandicoots, you don't know what you are missing. They are funny little animals – full of character and personality.

The warmer months have been kind to our echidnas with most of them staying out of trouble. There have been very few rescues occurring in the southern areas and thankfully very few orphaned echidnas in care this season, which is good news.

Karen Scott

## Coordinator Reports continued...

### Possums

#### GOLD COAST

POSSUM CARERS WELCOMED IN THE NEW YEAR WITH AVIARIES FULL: ORPHANS, DERMATITIS SUFFERERS, DOG ATTACKS, CAT ATTACKS AND THE BEWILDERED. "Bewildered," you say. Yes, it usually refers to my age group, but the younger generation is not immune, particularly if reared by the well-intentioned, but ill-informed.

Another little sweetheart has found her way into care, as she thinks she is a human and definitely diurnal. We are working on this, but it is not easy and should never happen. In fact it is a welfare issue, as releasing a possum that is so humanized is setting it up for disaster.

The person who took this possum to Currumbin Wildlife Hospital was worried for its safety. It was found in a rubbish bin and when removed to a tree immediately rushed after the rescuer, climbed up her leg and settled on her shoulder. The rescuer said that a number of possums had been killed by dogs in her street. One may speculate that an untrained wildlife rehabilitator is operating in the area.

There is a saying, and it appears to be a mis-quote from G.K. Chesterton, that if something is worth doing, it is worth doing well. For the welfare of the wildlife that has the misfortune to find itself in care, our aim should be to provide the highest standard of care possible and to return them to the wild as quickly as is appropriate. This involves continually re-assessing our management skills, attending to any problems expeditiously, attending training courses and keeping in touch with the co-ordinator. Workshop dates are to be found on the Wildcare Australia website [www.wildcare.org.au](http://www.wildcare.org.au) under Training.

Loss and fragmentation of habitat continue to cause major problems for our native animals and with an increasing human population the situation is not going to improve in the near future. Even the loss of a single tree can cause the loss of food and shelter for many creatures, as the removal of a single Eucalypt with a number of hollows proved some years ago. Apart from a Greater Glider, some insectivorous bats, a pair of Corella chicks and some other nesting birds, there were some lizards and numerous arthropods using this tree.

Being a Eucalypt it was potentially a food source for koalas, numerous species of gliders, possums, birds, flying foxes, insectivorous bats, reptiles as well as bees and other arthropods. Those animals that don't eat the foliage, pollen or sip of the nectar will find such delicacies as honeydew, manna, insects and spiders to eat. If one tree can support so many, think of the numbers that are displaced or killed when a forest is destroyed.

My sincere thanks to the Gold Coast Coordinators, Natalie Rasmussen, Robyn Braniff and Clare Boyd and also to the wonderful possum carers for their total commitment to the wellbeing of the animals on the Gold Coast. Your continuing support is most appreciated.

To those who may have completed the training for possum and glider care and are ready to start, please contact the coordinators to let them know of your preparedness. For those who have not done the training but are considering this path, please try to attend the workshops in February and March, as we are always looking for possum carers. Release sites are also sought, so if you can help in this way, please let us know.

Eleanor Hanger



PHOTO // K SCOTT

## Coordinator Reports continued...

### Koalas

THE PAST FEW MONTHS HAVE BEEN A LITTLE QUIETER, WITH KOALA RESCUES SLOWING OVER THE NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER PERIOD.

The quality of eucalypt leaf has been good so hopefully this is helping to keep koalas off the ground. The past few weeks though have resulted in a number of diseased koalas coming into care along with several car trauma cases.

We have now completed our information brochure on koalas, particularly focusing on the southern Gold Coast suburbs. This has been printed and distributed to over 10,000 residents in the Currumbin, Currumbin Waters, Currumbin Valley, Elanora and Tallebudgera areas. We have already received positive feedback from the brochure and we hope that the information will help to reduce the negative impacts on our local koala populations. Thank you to The Pines Shopping Centre who provided the funding to enable this community education program to be established.

I would like to extend my sincerest thanks again to the wonderful volunteers of other koala rescue groups with whom we work closely. On the Gold Coast we rely heavily on working together to ensure the best outcome for our koalas and we would not be able to do this alone.

Thank you to the wonderful volunteers of the Moreton Bay Koala Rescue Group whom we often have to ring in the middle of the night to help with the urgent transfer of koalas to the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital. Even at 2am in the morning they are cheerful and always happy to help, so thank you!

To Ray and Murray Chambers from Sunshine Coast Koala Wildlife Rescue – your dedication and commitment never cease to amaze me. Your passion is unwavering and I thank you sincerely for the trips that you do from the

Sunshine Coast to help with transporting our koalas.

We are also excited to be working with the Gold Coast City Council on the Koala Management Plan for the Currumbin-Elanora area. The information to be sourced from surveys and health assessments will hopefully help to establish a sound future management plan.

Karen Scott

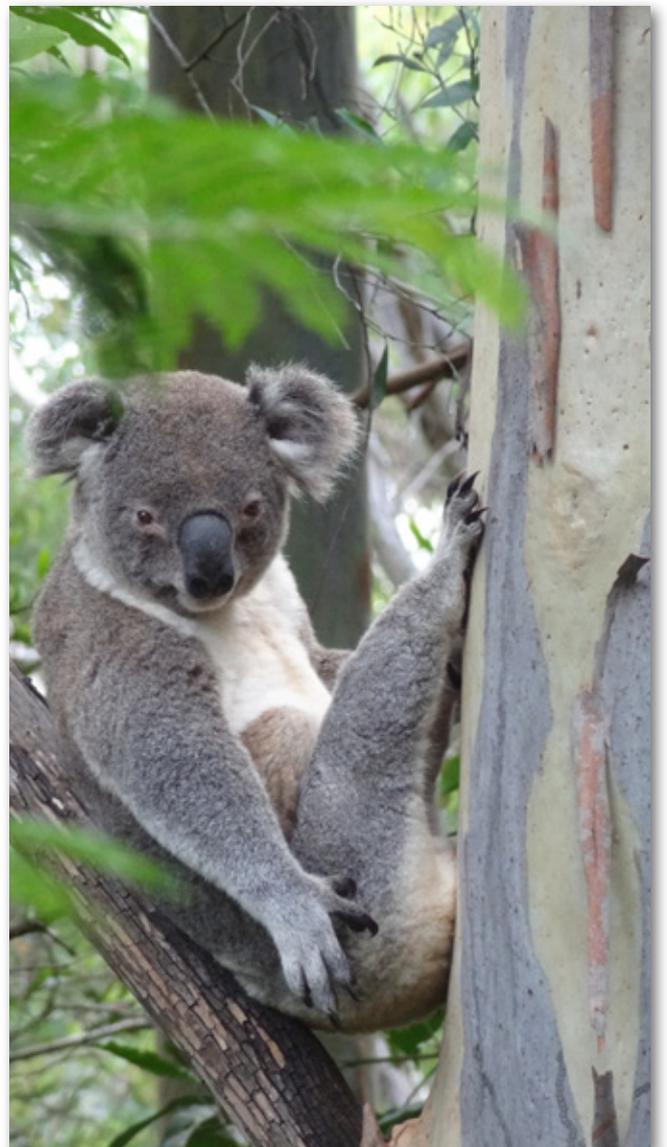


PHOTO // EM HANGER

## Coordinator Reports continued...

### Reptiles

WELL, IT HAS BEEN A BUSY FEW MONTHS ON THE REPTILE FRONT, WITH A NEVER-ENDING SEA OF REPTILES TO BE RESCUED AND A LARGE PROPORTION OF THEM STAYING WITH US FOR A PERIOD TO RECUPERATE.

Also of note, has been our presence at the two Reptile Expos for the year: The Gold Coast two days and the day at Ipswich. Chris and I would like to thank those volunteers who helped on the three days, particularly Mary, who was awesomely patient. The days went very well, with a huge donation coming from the Ipswich Council and from Scales and Tails Magazine. Scales and Tails auctioned a large number of items on the day, with the proceeds coming to Wildcare. We look forward to next year's expos and hope to see more Wildcare people there.

Just to give you a snapshot of the rescue front: A few weeks ago, we had three pregnant female Blue-Tongue Skinks savagely attacked by dogs. Two were so badly injured they were euthanased by Currumbin Wildlife Hospital after undergoing a Caesarean Section to deliver their babies: twenty in total. The third female suffered a ruptured lung (this was poking through her chest cavity when we rescued her) and we couldn't get her immediately to CWH as it was after hours. She went into labour half an hour later delivering another twelve babies. All babies have now been released, but the surviving mum is still with us recuperating. She is still very unwell.

Mya is a female Eastern Bearded Dragon who came into care months ago, after also being savaged by a dog. She suffered terrible injuries and it was touch and go for weeks whether she would survive her initial injuries. She had open puncture wounds all over her abdomen and chest and had air sucking in and out of the open wounds each time she took a breath. She had half her tail bitten off and to top it all off, she was heavily gravid (pregnant). This was the main reason she wasn't euthanased immediately.

She received intensive care treatment at Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and then came to us for care where she delivered seventeen eggs a few days later. But that's not the end of Mya's story. Because of the abdominal trauma, she was unable to completely lay all her eggs: she then underwent a Caesarean Section to remove the remaining six intact eggs. But the damage from the dog's teeth had ruptured several more eggs inside her and she also had to have one ovary and egg tube removed due to infection. She was given a very low chance of survival.

Mya had other ideas though and despite all that she had been through, she initially did well with a lot of

help from us. However, things took a bad turn just before Christmas when she completed her eight week antibiotic course. She became very unwell and was immediately taken back to CWH where she underwent another operation (laparotomy) and had a 50 cent piece section of her abdominal wall removed due to recurring infection from the original trauma. She is now back on antibiotics and remains quite sick. Through all this, Mya's determination to survive is inspiring. She has never given up and is a delight to treat.

We are pleased to report that most of her eggs are now beginning to hatch – five so far! Mya's story highlights the reason we fight so hard. All going well both Mya and her babies will be returned to the wild as soon as they all pass their health checks.

The photo below is Mya eight weeks into her care, once she was well enough for a photo opportunity. She was simply too sick to photograph when she arrived. Also, see the shot of one of her babies hatching – too cute for words.

Annette Bird



PHOTO // A BIRD

## Coordinator Reports continued...

### Macropods

UNFORTUNATELY THE NUMBER OF MACROPODS REQUIRING RESCUING REMAINS FAIRLY STEADY.

Sadly, the Gold Coast still has a very high number of adult macropods being hit by cars. These require euthanasia. The worst areas are Hope Island, Coomera, Nerang and Oxenford and our Trauma Carers have been kept very busy in those areas over recent months. The rural areas surrounding Jimboomba and Beaudesert have kept Annette fairly busy too, with again, high rates of vehicle traumas.

Recently we have been very fortunate to receive confirmation of funding from the Gold Coast, Logan and Scenic Rim Councils to assist Wildcare with the cost of the necessary drugs and consumables to attend to these trauma calls. The cost to sedate and euthanase an

adult kangaroo can be as much as \$30 per animal and this cost is payable by Wildcare. Our Trauma Carers continue to self-fund the cost of fuel and equipment to carry out this necessary service. Thank you to those members who provide ongoing support to our Trauma Carers: those who get dragged out in the middle of the night to help with rescues.

A steady stream of orphaned macropods has been placed in care with both Wildcare members and with members of other wildlife care groups.

Karen Scott

PHOTOS // EM HANGER



Eastern Grey Kangaroo and joey

# Dehydration

*Jon Hanger BVSc (Hons) BVBiol PhD MACVSc*

DEHYDRATION IS SIMPLY A STATE IN WHICH THERE IS NOT SUFFICIENT WATER IN THE BODY. This may occur from a variety of causes resulting in either inadequate water intake, or excessive water loss, or a combination of both, and may vary in degree from mild to life-threatening.

## CAUSES OF DEHYDRATION

Causes include inadequate intake of food or water, diarrhoea, vomiting and kidney failure. In orphaned wildlife the most common causes are inadequate intake (as might occur after orphaning) and diarrhoea. Electrolyte disturbances and other things may complicate dehydration: when caused by diarrhoea, dehydration may be associated with significant electrolyte loss, and therefore reduced blood levels of electrolytes; when caused by starvation (for example, in orphaned joeys), it may be associated with concentration of the blood and high blood electrolyte levels. The maintenance of water and electrolytes in the correct ranges is called homeostasis. When homeostasis is not maintained, cell processes begin to fail, leading to organ failure and damage, and eventually death of the animal.

## CONSEQUENCES OF DEHYDRATION

Aside from the electrolyte imbalance mentioned above, dehydration eventually leads to significant loss of blood volume, and often concentration of the blood. Low blood volume means that there is less blood to perfuse the organs and tissues. Water starts to be drawn from the tissues into the blood vessels in an attempt to restore volume, the kidneys start to concentrate urine to their maximum capability, and secretion of fluid and enzymes into the gastrointestinal tract particularly, slows and eventually stops. Other secretions, such as saliva and tear production slow, then stop. Inadequate perfusion of organs and tissues leads to poor oxygen delivery, leading to cell reliance on anaerobic metabolism, which is inefficient, energy intensive and leads to lactic acid production. Cell waste products are not efficiently removed from the tissues, and as the perfusion of the kidneys reduces, their ability to excrete waste products also reduces, and eventually ceases. Thickening and increased viscosity of the blood caused by concentration leads to sludging of blood in the smaller vessels, and increased strain on the heart.

Of course this also diminishes the supply of oxygen and nutrients to cells and organs and removal of wastes. Eventually, untreated dehydration leads to cell death, organ failure then death. Some organs have good ability to regenerate after severe episodes of dehydration, but others do not. Brain and kidney have only a very limited regenerative capacity, liver and gastro-intestinal tract have better regenerative properties.



PHOTOS // H BRADLEY

# Dehydration (con't)

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From a practical point of view the signs and effects of dehydration on animals are as follows:

1. Drying of the mouth and other mucous membranes, including the eyes – this can lead to corneal ulceration due to inadequate tear film production;
2. Tackiness and stiffness of the skin – when pinched up, it will “tent” and be slow to return to its place;
3. Inability to secrete digestive enzymes and gastro-intestinal fluids, leading to inability to properly digest and absorb food;
4. Transfer of water from the tissues into the blood vessels, leading to tacky, stiff skin and reduced muscle mass;
5. Concentration of the urine, then cessation of urine production leading to “pre-renal” kidney failure;
6. Dehydration of ingesta and faeces (when the dehydration is not caused by gastro-intestinal disease).
7. Predisposed to development of myopathy due to lactic acidosis and poor circulation in muscle.

Understandably, severe, untreated dehydration has profound effects on the cells and organ systems, the end result of which is failure and death. Severe dehydration may also lead to permanent organ damage in an animal that has received treatment and recovers from the acute phase of dehydration.

These are:

1. Kidney damage leading to renal insufficiency – kidney tissue has very limited regenerative ability, so serious damage is permanent. Chronic kidney damage may manifest as chronic illthrift, inability to cope with normal variation in fluid intake, propensity to the development of myopathy, chronic gastro-intestinal issues, and anaemia.
2. Brain damage – leading to subtle or not-so-subtle neurological signs, such as impaired vision, incoordination and altered mentation.
3. Poor growth or growth deformities, when dehydration has occurred in young animals.
4. Corneal scarring leading to impaired vision.

## TREATMENT OF DEHYDRATION

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Severe dehydration (10-15% dehydration) is a medical emergency, and needs to be corrected promptly by a veterinarian. It is helpful to have some idea of the cause of the dehydration, because this may influence the choice of fluids used to rehydrate. For example: dehydration caused by diarrhoea is likely to lead to electrolyte loss as well as water loss, hence treatment fluids must contain electrolytes (such as Hartmann’s solution). Dehydration associated with orphaning and starvation is likely to be mainly water deficiency, so fluids with lower electrolytes and glucose are appropriate (such as 0.45% NaCl + 2.5% glucose, or 5% glucose). Dehydration associated with protein loss or other causes of hypoproteinaemia (low blood protein) must be treated very carefully because excessive fluid dilution of the blood may lead to fluid build-up in the lungs, which can be fatal.

A general rule of thumb for rehydration of small animals (<2kg) is to rehydrate with 10% of their body weight per day PLUS the degree of dehydration corrected over two days. For example: if a 1 kg kangaroo joey is orphaned and judged to be 10% dehydrated, it would need 100ml fluid daily (10% of body-weight) PLUS an additional 50 ml (10% corrected over two days) – so a total of 150 ml of fluid per day, for at least two days.

Less severe dehydration may be corrected by oral, subcutaneous or intraperitoneal fluids administered by a trained person. Glucose-containing solutions should be avoided for subcutaneous use if possible, because the glucose can promote bacterial growth, leading to abscesses or septicæmia.

Other conditions caused by or associated with dehydration may need to be treated, such as:

Corneal ulceration treated with appropriate topical eye drops or even surgical procedures;  
 Microbial causes of diarrhoea treated with appropriate antimicrobials, such as Nilstat®  
 Change of diet, when associated with milk or other dietary intolerance.

# An Amazing Journey

Liz Barnes

**I HAVE JUST HAD THE GREAT PRIVILEGE AND PLEASURE OF RAISING AN ENCHANTING MACROPOD** - my first Red-legged pademelon - from pinky to ready-for-release. The journey has been amazing. I read and read and read anything I could find.

Wow! is their diet different - and what would you expect from elusive little macropods living in the heart of a rainforest? Not much grass there, but an abundance of fallen fruits, flowers and seeds from the canopy. The food supply simply falls to the ground: lots of moss, fungi, ferns, herbs, orchids, sparse native grasses and of course endless amounts of rich fertile soil teeming with life.

I had read with great interest Eleanor Hanger's information regarding the importance of protein in a possum diet and immediately made a connection with the diet my Red-legged pademelon was thriving on. I had seen Tilly, my tiny pouch-emerging girl, pick up a large dead moth from the floor of her snake-proof area and eat it, wings and all, with great relish. She even searched around and retrieved a small piece she had dropped, in her haste to devour it.

Eleanor's advice came into my thoughts: PROTEIN. From then on, not just lumps of dirt but bucket loads of fresh moist rainforest mulch were dumped in the aviary, along with her native browse. She always made a bee-line for that mulch and soil - her natural protein fix and easy for me to supply. I like to ensure variety by supplying copious amounts of browse. I think of my macropod and then pick for a mob. Anyway, it's not wasted. It makes wonderful garden mulch and a great carer resource of protein.

I have observed on many occasions Tilly finding an earthworm and eating the wriggling thing with gusto. Also, small feathers are eaten whole, large currawong feathers are chewed on, little dead insects and even small lizard eggs are eaten with relish. She is now free in the yard to eat whatever

she may find. She is a strong healthy 'paddy' ready to return to her forest home, a ball of muscle and stamina.

These observations are just snapshots over several months. I have no idea what percentage of protein is needed in their diet, but it has shown me that they are opportunistic feeders and if the protein is there and they need it, they will take it.

Good luck Tilly. Stay away from the pythons.



PHOTO // L BARNES

# *Education Report*

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*Karen Scott*

THE PAST FEW MONTHS HAVE BEEN A LITTLE QUIETER AS FAR AS OUR TRAINING PROGRAM IS CONCERNED.

December and January are generally months where we try to take some time out to allow our trainers to have a rest. This works out well as most members are busy with Christmas and New Year celebrations and children home on school holidays.

The January to April Calendar has been distributed to all members and we have already received a great response from members registering early.

We are fortunate to be offering several special workshops this calendar including a marsupial workshop by Dr. Anne Fowler on the 11th February 2012. We have also been thankful to have Martin Fingland offer a reptile handling workshop for budding reptile rescuers and carers. Both workshops have been well received and I am sure that everyone who attends will learn a lot from these experienced trainers.



PHOTOS // JM HANGER

# Loving our Local Native Plants

Michelle Benson

## VINES, GLORIOUS VINES!

Hundreds and hundreds of different native vine species inhabit our bushland and form a vital part of biodiversity. Vines are rapid growers and by recovering quickly after disturbance are the fast fixers in rainforest recovery, where the canopy has been broken or forest edges have become exposed. Vines employ a variety of climbing mechanisms. Specialized hooks, revolving shoots, special tendrils or roots aid their growth, and in their wonderful twisting, twining, stretching manner, become the high-ways and byways, paths and connecting links to help all kinds of forest creatures get around.

The hook climbers are not so welcomed by the nonchalant trying to pass by. Some landholders try to eliminate the thorny climbers from their properties, forgetting that they have an important role to play, providing vital protection from predators for small animals and food for countless creatures.

Hook climbers include:

- **Cockspur** (*Maclura cochinchinensis*) is found in moist eucalypt forest and rainforest. It has mean thorns, but the aboriginal people used them to dig out splinters! Their orange fruits are pleasant to eat and are an important food for frugivores.
- **Wait-a-while** (*Calamus muelleri*) is found in rainforest. It has hooked whips that catch the passer-by. The flesh is said to taste like dates, and the indigenous people used the stems for weaving.
- **Barbed-wire Vine** (*Smilax australis*) found in rainforest and moist eucalypt forest is a favorite of mine. It has strong wiry stems with smaller thorns and can form dense thickets. The new growth is pink and the flowers borne in dense axillary umbels have a lovely perfume. The black berries are important food for frugivores. Possums love the new pink growth.

Some vines that can be incorporated into our garden plantings:

- **Bower of Beauty** (*Pandorea jasminoides*) a robust climber found in rainforest often on rocky slopes. It has large, pink, tubular flowers in terminal clusters. Wallabies love the flowers.
- **Scrambling Lily** (*Geitonoplesium cymosum*) is found in moist eucalypt forest. It has small white flowers and black berries.
- **Red Kennedy Pea** (*Kennedia rubicunda*) is found in Eucalypt forest. It is a scrambling, dense vine. Dark red flowers in racemes attract honeyeaters, spinebills and possums, who also like the leaves.
- **Sarsaparilla Vine** (*Hardenbergia violacea*) is found in Eucalypt forest. It is a small scrambler with bright purple pea flowers in a raceme. Spinebills love the flowers, and swamp wallabies and possums love the leaves.
- **Richmond Birdwing Vine** (*Pararistolochia praevenosa*) found in rainforest is a robust climber, with small orange flowers and orange fruit. It is the only food source for the Richmond birdwing butterfly caterpillar.
- **Slender Bindweed** (*Polymeria calycina*) is a creeping ground vine found in moist eucalypt forest. It has pink flowers. Wallabies love it.

Continued on next page

# Loving our Local Native Plants (con't)

## TO SUM UP:

- The leaves, flowers and fruits of vines are an important food source for wildlife.
- Vines provide pathways for small creatures to get around.
- Vine thickets provide safe nesting sites for small animals and birds.
- Many vines have edible fruits for human consumption.
- Some vines can be planted to cover exposed ground and to help prevent erosion.
- Vines are host plants for butterflies.
- Vines have been used by indigenous people for medicines, basket weavings, and tools.
- Many vines have aromatic flowers for our enjoyment.
- Vines add visual interest and contrast to our environment.
- Vines add diversity to habitat which is the key to healthy wildlife.



*Kennedia rubicunda*



*Calamus muelleri*



*Geitonoplesium cymosum*

PHOTOS // M BENSON

# *The Fallen Tree*

Throughout the years  
You survived and you grew  
With a vigour and spirit  
That only you knew

Twisting and turning  
With shape and delight  
Toward the sun  
You had reached your full height!

You had strength and a beauty  
And you once stood tall and free  
Amongst our universe  
Oh so magnificently!

Shelter, nourishment and  
comfort you gave  
To all forms of life  
That sought your enclave.

But, nothing compares with the  
Moon on your branches  
Or the gentle breeze  
Through your leaves as it dances!!

Now uprooted in time  
By a most fierce some storm  
I mourn the loss  
Of your once awesome form!

I've envisioned thy beauty  
I've felt thy last breath  
And in the tranquillity  
You lay simply to rest!

*Anne Fletcher Sept 2007©*

# Grants

As a non-profit organisation we have been extremely fortunate over recent years to obtain sponsorship and grants through a number of different programs.



The Logan City Council has kindly supported the Wildcare Education Program over the past year and has helped fund expenses associated with our extensive training program, fuel expenses and general administration expenses.



Gambling  
**Community Benefit Fund**  
Queensland Government

The Gambling Community Benefit Fund has enabled Wildcare to upgrade the two computers at the Wildcare Office and to purchase a new laser printer and a card printer for membership cards. Funding was also received to cover the printing costs of our Volunteer Manual. A further grant has been received recently to purchase essential wildlife rescue and rehabilitation equipment.

Many of our volunteer wildlife carers from the Brisbane region have been fortunate enough to apply and receive funding from the Brisbane City Council under their Native Wildlife Carer Funding Program. This has been a fantastic initiative of Council and has provided a wonderful opportunity for our volunteers and one that we are sure they are extremely grateful for.



The Pines Elanora provided funding of \$5,000 to enable Wildcare to further help protect local koalas in the southern Gold Coast areas. Funding was utilised to purchase essential rescue equipment and to develop an information brochure and poster on koalas. The brochure and poster have been printed and already the brochure has received positive feedback from local residents and has resulted in a number of sick koalas being reported which has enabled them to be treated early.



Find us on Facebook. Search for "Wildcare Australia" We have a "fan page" that everyone can contribute to and we also have a "members only" page.

# Amy's Aviary

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**Sale Price: \$550**

Size: 4.04L x 1.67W x 1.8H

Currently flat packed as I have moved

Will also include a smaller bird cage that is on wheels, heat pad and any of my bird rehabbing products

Unable to help with transport though

Bought new and was in use for a year, before moving prevented me from continuing rehabbing Tawnies, now sitting next to my garage.

Current Location: Loganholme

*If you are interested contact Amy on 0421 119 884*

# A Wildlife Paradise

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**57 Cloverdale Road, Doolandella, Brisbane**

The property is a created bush habitat of 10000m<sup>2</sup> yet only minutes away from shops, schools, medical facilities, etc. There is an attractive one level brick home with 2 bedrooms, an office space (previously a bedroom), 2 bathrooms, a double carport with storage cupboards and a toilet. There is also a powered shed. The property is in an emerging community area.

Plant, animal and bird lists are available on request.

*Inspect by appointment.*

*Expressions of interest are welcome.*

*Phone: 07 3372 1826 after 5 pm.*

*Email: [dahanger@acenet.net.au](mailto:dahanger@acenet.net.au)*



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