

Official Newsletter of Wildcare Australia

WILDNEWS

Winter 2011 Issue 60



*"Loving our Local
Native Plants"
continued*

*"Building an Aviary
for Possums or Birds"*

PHOTO: K SCOTT



President's Report.

Karen Scott

THE PAST FEW MONTHS HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY BUSY within Wildcare. Thankfully things have finally slowed down a little and I for one, have been able to catch my breath.

Firstly, a huge thank you to everyone who contributed towards our inaugural WALK FOR WILDLIFE. What an amazing day. Even though the weather was not in our favour in the morning, the afternoon turned out beautifully. Thank you to those who braved the rain to walk and show their support. A special thank you to our members and friends who helped on the day, it would not have been possible without your help. We are hoping to make the Walk an annual event and I look forward to next year being even more successful. The best news is that we raised \$5,000 and these funds will be added to our Carers' Subsidy. Most of these funds were raised by only 26 people so that is an amazing effort. Congratulations!

Secondly, thank you to everyone who took time out of their busy schedule to attend the Annual General Meeting in June. We were so honoured to have both Steve Parish and Terry Wimberley as our guest speakers. Both Steve and Terry were truly inspirational and I thank them both for kindly agreeing to speak with our members.

I hope that everyone is taking it easy during our 'quieter' months. No doubt Spring will be here before we know it.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to our new members. Please feel free to contact either myself or any of our Committee members or Coordinators, who will be happy to assist you get started on your way to becoming a wildlife carer.



"End of the Earth: voyages to Antarctica" Peter Matthiessen

Therefore I seek to understand phenomena that might help our self-destroying species to appreciate the shimmering web of biodiversity in the earth process—the common miracles, fleeting as ocean birds, which present themselves endlessly to all our senses, to be tasted, experienced, and fiercely defended for our innocent inheritors against the rape and dreadful wasting of the beautiful and fragile biosphere and its resources. In forgetting that we, too, are animals, a part of nature, as dependent on its health and balance as any other mammal, we foolishly permit the unrestrained destruction of our earth habitat that promises to leave mankind as desolate and bereft of hope as a turtle stripped live from its shell.

Washington DC National Geographic, 2003 (p42)

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: Brushtail possum joeys

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Newsletter submissions can be sent to news@wildcare.org.au



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A Warm Welcome to Our New Members

Wildcare Australia welcomes the following new members:

Charlie Thomson; Amanda Harding; Lachlan Gilding; Wendy Craggs; Mark Biegemann; Kathrine & Irene Learmonth; Nina Bosman; Ebony McIntosh; Luke Jamesion; Stacey Christensen; Linda Kirkland; Lynette Jenkinson; Christine Viehbock; Joshua Walker; Kavina Pyke; ARcy Salvacion; Georgia Church; Tammy Scown; Kyle Campbell; Jo Tolley; Sally Jones; Nerida Smith; Zak Sheppard; Jemma Rolff; Jeff Follett; Sue Jackson; Christopher Wilkins; Laura Moffatt; Kowhai Te Kira; Kathryn Killingback; Jan Schaap; Shelley Gamon; Amanda & Anton Cooper; Kate Moffitt; Kylie Jones; Sandra Moye; Di Tully; Jodi Salmond; Shannon Rand; Chris Arrington; Deborah Bianchetto; Thomas Smith; Sherise Filipsons; Kyle Brownlee; Tameron Rossouw; Steven Birchley; Angus Stevenson; Josephine Dudson; Serena Halliday; Anthony Bone; Tracey West; Juls Purcell; Jane Palmer; Natalie Scotcher; Michelle Tomkins; Sally Begbie; Scott Edwards; Anita Shaw; Susan Hooper; Zowie Lenard; Kelly Weir; Samira Parker; Kara Stevens; Sarah Horrobin; Hayley Costa; Yvonne Crofts; Alan Casells; Siminee Wratten; Tracy King and Helen Cekalovic.

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.



Wildcare Opportunities



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.

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! The submissions must be original or, if not, must be correctly accredited. Submissions may be emailed to news@wildcare.org.au

Thank You!!

...Greg Edwards for making the A-frame display boards for us!!

Volunteer Profile: Roy Webster

As a Wildcare member since 2002, Roy is the sort of person that falls under the screened title of 'quiet achiever'. The one often in the background busily moving about fulfilling and completing the all-important needs and requirements of what-ever task undertaken.

How many people do you know who would get out of a warm bed in the middle of the night, in any type of weather, travel numerous kilometres from home to face the soul destroying ugliness of euthanizing an otherwise healthy vibrant wallaby/kangaroo which is now smashed, broken and contorted through the impact of a car? More often than not, these tragic gut-wrenching incidents are compounded by the fact that a baby, either still in-pouch or thrown nearby, will also have to be euthanized due to similar impact effects.

For those people who have the "guts" and willingness to wait for Roy to arrive at these 'accident scenes', there are consoling words to ease the shock and horror and thankfulness, that someone has called, so he can at least shorten the immense suffering. Undoubtedly, these people leave with greater awareness of "Wildcare", what it stands for and hopefully of the need for more care on the roads.

Roy Webster's name and telephone number have indeed dispersed into an expanded web of contacts. As the person to ring for "macropod" information, support and direction of care, not only does he cover a vast geographical area that he is regularly called out to, but people also "turn up" at his home because they have heard "Roy's the bloke who looks after injured native animals". Thus, it is a regular event for Roy to appear at Currumbin Sanctuary Vets with a variety of animals in need of medical attention. When you consider the fact that Roy clocked up over 2,000 km for the month of June alone, and it's the "quiet" time of the year, you'll start to get the picture.

Included with the above are two days a week he gives to the 'Wildcare office', answering the emergency phone line. Here, Roy assists distressed people with their needs for native animal rescues and enquiries, along with maintaining the 'shop' which provides discounted priced foods and other items for 'Wildcare' use.

Now, if all this isn't enough, Roy also takes on those tough demanding 'touch and go' special cases. Baby macropod 'pinkies' that

need regular round the clock feeding, medication and care. If they are going to survive at all, these are the warm caring hands to be in. And the fact that many do survive to become healthy sprightly free individuals, released back into the wild, attests to the amount of effort and care given ever so willingly.



Roy Webster certainly has an extremely positive and productive effect on 'Wildcare', those associated with it and the broader community. His ceaseless energy, commitment and enthusiasm for what he does are amazing. We in turn appreciate him... to the max!

Katherine Page

Record Keeper's Rap.

2011 Records now due!

Could all members with rehabilitation endorsement permits under Wildcare Australia Inc. please submit all their rescue and rehab records up to end-June 2011, so they can be collated for new reports. Submitting these records is one of the Wildcare's permit endorsement requirements, and it is time to reapply for these too. Your records are also required for receiving the new carers' subsidy. Thank you to those volunteers who have already sent through their records. Please email them to records@wildcare.org.au or post handwritten forms to Wildcare (PO Box 2379, Nerang MC, 4211).

2010-2011 Records Reports

The past year was full of requests for our records, with over 28 reports listed over the twelve month period. That's more than two a month on average. Obviously they are still useful, especially in our grant applications.

2010 Records Summary Stats

I also encourage you to look at the 2010 summary data that was included in the AGM report as it summarises the 5000+ rescue/rehab records and road kill sightings received for this year.

**TOTAL NUMBERS rescued/rehabilitated
By ANIMAL CATEGORIES**

ANIMAL GROUP	QTY	%
Bird	2792	54.7
Possum/Glider	958	18.8
Macropod	483	9.5
Reptile	291	5.7
Bat/Flying-fox	242	4.7
Mammal-Small/Other	144	2.8
Koala	133	2.6
Monotreme	52	1.0
Amphibian	12	0.23
Crustacean	1	0.02
TOTAL (2010)	5108	100

As you can see, bird rescues consisted of over half of our rescued wildlife, with a large portion being ducks/ducklings, lorikeets, 'black & whites' and honeyeaters. Aside from the bird species, the most commonly-rescued/reported mammals included common brushtail and common ringtail possums, Eastern grey kangaroos and red-necked wallabies, flying-foxes, and koalas. The most frequently-reported reptiles were bearded dragons and Eastern water dragons.

Sadly, 'road trauma' topped the list for most species as the most common reason for rescue/reporting, with the exception being only for flying-foxes and bats where it was 'barbed wire' trauma. Most of our records were for animals from the Gold Coast area (2000 animals), followed by Brisbane, Moreton Bay, the Sunshine Coast and Logan areas.

Kiersten Jones
Email: records@wildcare.org.au

Walk for Wildlife

Help our wildlife

www.walkforwildlife.com.au

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to our inaugural WALK FOR WILDLIFE in June. Although the weather was not the best to start out with on the day, the event ended up being a lot of fun and everyone that attended enjoyed it immensely.

As a result of the fundraising efforts, over \$5,000 was raised which was added to the Carers Subsidy.

Thank you to the Walk Sub-Committee who spent hundreds of hours organising and preparing for the event - well done!

A very special THANK YOU to our wonderful sponsors who made this event a reality.

Hoyland Medical

Mary Horner

Animal Emergency Services

Zarraffa's Coffee

Alicorn Pottery



Walk for Wildlife continued..



Walk for Wildlife continued..



Mum's Day

Did all the (human) mums have a lovely day on Mother's Day? I hope you didn't get the same present I did. Both my little pademelon joey, and his Swamp wallaby "sister" left a series of black poos on my lap. By now, I should know to be suspicious of joeys that sit quietly after a feed with a thoughtful expression. Still, it was better than the more liquid offering – delivered the next day while feeding... That was not fair – nothing you can do about it with both hands busy.

I never cease to feel, after many years as a carer, what a privilege it is to have close contact with, and the trust of, our exquisite native wildlife. Even at 2am in winter when some poor mite is struggling to survive... and then doesn't want its bottle.

I am often asked whether the close bond that the joeys form isn't a problem at release time. It is for mum, but, as any mother of a teenager knows, the desire for cuddles and closeness wanes ("Not in front of my friends, Mum!") and the need for independence and an adult life becomes stronger until the baby develops into a functioning member of his society. And how proud mum feels, to see her baby achieve in the world...

Who deserves a chance? Often the public is frustrated at the wildlife that creates problems for them: bandicoots and their holes in the lawn, possums with a passion for parsley and hobnailed boots when they traverse our roofs, scrub turkeys (need I say more?) and snakes...

Only last week a friend rang about a sick snake – she thought it was an Eastern brown, our second most deadly, and she turned out to be right! It had been lying across a track bordered by long grass, where she regularly walks her dogs, for a couple of weeks, only moving very slightly.

Not me, I thought. But luckily I know a venomous snake expert who was prepared to have a look, and I was prepared to take the photos! He has been bitten many times but still handles them with great respect. My friend's job was to hold the first aid kit.

Once the five-footer was very securely contained, I was happy to drive him to where I knew he would get treatment, the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital, and he was given a chance. He cleared the consult area of all but non-staff, though up to nine of them appeared to watch. Sadly, my friend and I had to watch from the "Sneak Peak" area too, securely behind glass and a tour was

firmly diverted to the same area. They were most impressed: a turtle who was a patient at the same time attracted little attention, though the koalas, of course, were stars as usual.

Dr Robyn was on triage and seemed unfazed. However, nothing happened until snake handlers arrived from the zoo.

When "Crusher Brown" as we called him (sounds like an all-in wrestler) next appeared, his first 30cm had been inserted into a glass tube (I would love to have seen how they achieved that!) and he was sedated by injection, no one being keen to put a mask over the business end! Then Dr Robyn calmly worked on his damaged head and mouth...

It seemed he had crush injuries to his head – a slasher had been down the track recently, though the tractor driver had not seen the snake – and he was given antibiotics and a chance. Sadly, his head injuries were too severe and "Crusher Brown" had to be euthanased several days later.

But he was given a chance. I was touched that my friend was concerned that even such a dangerous animal was suffering and wanted to help him if possible. So many people only want to help the cute and fluffy, but surely every living creature is entitled to a reasonable life and a humane death.

It would definitely solve our (human) population problems if only the beautiful and those without bad habits were allowed to survive.



*Don't do this
at home!
Eastern Brown*

Please note that I don't offer this service on a regular basis, and snake removal not at all!

Penelope Hacker



Dr. Robyn giving the sedative

Emergency Telephone Report

OUR SINCEREST THANKS GO TO OUR EXISTING TELEPHONE VOLUNTEERS WHO WORKED **TIRELESSLY** over the busy Spring and Summer months taking thousands of incoming calls. This was one of the busiest seasons we have had in many years. Your dedication and commitment is second to none and our wildlife is so much better off because of your contribution.



We hope that our new telephone operators enjoy the experience; it is extremely rewarding and often very amusing.

I WILL DO MORE

I am only one, but I am one.
 I cannot do everything, but I can do something.
 And what I can do, I ought to do.
 And what I ought to do, by the grace of God, I will do.
 I will do more than belong I will participate.
 I will do more than care I will help.
 I will do more than believe I will practice.
 I will do more than be fair I will be kind.
 I will do more than dream I will work.
 I will do more than teach I will inspire.
 I will do more than earn I will enrich.
 I will do more than give I will serve.
 I will do more than live I will grow.
 I will do more than talk I will act.
 I will be more than good I will be good for something

Edward Everett Hale, American Clergyman and Writer (1822 - 1909)

A Life Enriched

PHOTO // R GOONAN



"Kooka"

The motivation to join Wildcare came from seeing the impact of the 2009 Victorian bushfires on the native wildlife. My initial involvement was as a phone operator and I attended several workshops to learn more about different species. Many of the phone calls taken were related to birds and their vulnerability became apparent to me. To be honest I was never that 'into birds'. Yes, I love the warble of magpies and hearing the different bird calls in my day to day life, but took all of this for granted, as most of us Aussies do. After doing a basic 'Caring for Birds' workshop I decided to contact Natasha Lewis-Millar (Bird Species Co-ordinator) and notify her that I was available to care for 'black and whites' in the upcoming baby bird season.

Natasha's vast knowledge and unwavering support made my transition to 'bird carer' very easy. The babies I was given were fully feathered, daytime feeders with very good appetites. Not a peep when the sun set. I marvel at the fact they all had their own unique personalities. The orphaned baby birds stayed in my care until they could fly. I don't have an aviary so they went back to Natasha where she monitored their ability to self feed and organised their release. Apart from having to be available for feeding every two to three hours it was easy. However, the deep end of the bird carer pool came when I rescued an orphaned, very young kookaburra, I affectionately called "Kooka".

It was the evening of February 15th, 2011. Kooka was picked up by a member of public who found him on the ground.

He/she had fallen 15-18 metres out of his nesting hollow. No sign of parents. It was getting dark, he was unfeathered, only pins and bare skin underneath. Luckily, my very supportive husband was driving and I was able to put him against my skin to keep him warm on the drive home. Natasha guided me through his requirements for the night, predominantly warmth. Would he survive the night? Had he sustained injuries from his mammoth fall? Had he been rejected by his parents due to some underlying health problem that wasn't apparent to me? Time would tell.

Next morning I was so relieved that he had survived the night, first milestone achieved! It then occurred to me that I had already formed a bond with this little guy and would like to care for him. I sought Natasha's approval and she agreed.

Over a four week period I watched in awe as this not-so-pretty pinned kookaburra transformed into a beautiful feathered bird. The early morning I discovered he had a well developed kookaburra laugh meant that my neighbours didn't need their alarm clocks that day.

By March 13th, 2011, Kooka could fly. Time for the aviary. After a teary farewell from me, he was in Natasha's care for "pre-release" - the final stage of his care. I would seek weekly updates on his progress. Unfortunately, he wasn't a good self feeder, he seemed fine but there was that niggling thought, was there a problem or was he just a slow learner? Luckily, the latter.

April 20th, 2011. I was present for Kooka's release. More tears. Mission accomplished.

My experiences as a bird carer have enriched my life so much. It is a privilege to help these orphaned/injured, birds/animals. Kooka will forever be a very fond memory.

Wendy Walburn

Loving our Local Native Plants...

GROUNDCOVERS AND GRASSES

Native groundcovers and grasses, you've got to love 'em. Our wildlife does! They play a huge role in habitat, yet we often tend to disregard them in our general garden plantings.

Firstly they help our earth naturally in many ways:

- Protect the soil surface from moisture loss
- Insulate surface roots from temperature change
- Help reduce soil compaction
- Prevent soil erosion
- Help reduce weed seed from entering the soil
- Protect the native seed bank

Most importantly, they help our wildlife by providing:

- Food for herbivores, omnivores and granivores
- Food for all sorts of insects and invertebrates that in turn make up the diet of many larger species
- Shelter from temperature variables for all sorts of small and vulnerable creatures
- Nesting sites for ground dwellers
- Nesting materials for a wide range of species
- Escape from predators for many small species

If you are living in a wilder environment, you will appreciate the vast array of different covers nature has to offer. Some of the smaller, subtle herbaceous plants deserve recognition as many of them have exquisite little flowers, and tiny as some of them are, they excite a naturalist's senses. (And then a wallaby comes along and eats them all!)

FAST GROWERS/FAST FOOD FOR WILDLIFE

Commelina diffusa (**native wandering jew**)
Creeping herb in moist areas. Blue flowers. Leaves and flowers – wallabies, possums, pademelons.



PHOTO // M BENSON

Tripladenia cunninghamii (sarsparilla lily)

Cymbopogon refractus (**barb-wire grass**)
Clumping grass to 1M. Reddish brown flower spikes. Found in open forest understorey. Leaves have a lovely spicy lemon scent. Leaves – wallabies, kangaroos. Seed – rosellas, finches, rodents.

Gahnia aspera (**saw leaf**)
Tufted sedge to 80cm in open forest and rainforest margins. Sharp edged strap like leaves. Flower spikes all year round. Shiny dark red seed. Seed – Pied Currawong, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, King Parrot, Cockatoos.

Murdannia graminea (**slug herb**)
Succulent grass-like herb to 50cm in moist open forest. Purple flowers. Leaves and flowers – wallabies. Seeds and tuberous roots – bandicoots, rodents.

Oplismenus aemulus (**creeping beard grass**)
Spreading groundcover in moist open forest. Leaves - wallabies, pademelons, Seed – finches, pigeons, rodents.

Poa labillardieri (**tussock grass**)
Fine tufted grass to 1.2M. Flower spikes in narrow panicles most of the year. Found in moist open forest. Leaves – wallabies. Seed - finches, pigeons.

Themeda triandra (**kangaroo grass**)
Tufted grass to 1M in open forest. Leaves – wallabies, kangaroos. Seed – finches, rodents.

Tripladenia cunninghamii (**sarsparilla lily**)
Small tuberous ground plant to 40cm in moist shady forest. Leaves and flowers – wallabies, pademelons, possums. Seeds and roots – bandicoots, rodents. (not a fast grower, but a beautiful little plant)

Viola hederacea (**native violet**)
Creeping herb in moist shady areas. Small purple flower. Leaves and flowers – wallabies, pademelons, possums.

Xanthorrhoea macronema (**bottlebrush grass tree**)
Stemless grass tree to 1M in open forest. Large cream flower spike. Flower – honeyeaters, Spinebills, gliders. Seeds – King parrot, Cockatoos. (Not a fast grower but a beautiful plant)

Perhaps we could let our own gardens grow a little wilder at ground level, and in doing so become more aware of some of the precious ground dwelling plants that have a vital role to play in providing, in so many ways, for our wildlife.

Michelle Benson
michellesnativeplants@bigpond.com

Building an Aviary for Possums or Birds

Eleanor Hanger

Building an aviary can be expensive, but there are ways to minimize the cost and still meet the requirements of the animals in care.

Points to consider:

- Species to be housed.
- Materials
- Size
- Position
- Furniture

Species to be housed

Firstly it is important to decide the species for which you want the aviary. This will determine the materials that you will need, the size and the choice and placement of furnishings. For example the requirements for a Feathertail Glider will be very different from those for a Common Brushtail. A feathertail is tiny and a great escape artist, so the aviary will need to have small gauge wire that is totally fly screened, whereas a Common Brushtail is a much larger animal so will not require the fly screening. Similarly a thornbill would be safe in an aviary with one centimetre square wire whereas a cockatoo with its very powerful beak will need an aviary with much stronger wire.

Materials

Metal aviaries are probably more cost effective and easier to clean. Also they may not need the maintenance that wood requires. Ensure that materials, such as wood and paint, have not been treated with toxins. The gauge and strength of the wire will be determined by the species to be housed. Concrete footings may be needed to keep snakes and rodents out. My preference is for natural floors covered with leaf litter.

Size

Bigger is always better when it comes to aviaries, but length will be more important for birds and gliders, that need flight or gliding practice prior to release, than possums that need height to gain climbing skills.

Wildcare has recommended minimum sizes for housing the different species.

Position

Position is extremely important. Some points to consider:



Aviary set-up showing polypipe water container for vegetation, tree holder and pot plant also closed and open roofed sections.

- Prevailing weather conditions such as wind, rain and sun: Face the aviary away from the prevailing winds and rain so that the covered section remains dry during inclement weather. In South-east Queensland a north-easterly facing aviary works well as the prevailing winds and rain generally are from the south-east or west. Be aware that the western sun can be a problem in Summer, so ensure adequate protection is provided from the sun during the hottest part of the day. Trees, shrubs or vines may help or a double roof allowing air circulation between the two, remembering that part of the roof needs to be open to the elements to allow the animals to experience the full range of weather conditions.
- Noise: The aviary needs to be situated away from household traffic and entertainment areas, as pre-release animals should have minimal contact with humans.
- Domestic animals: The aviary must be isolated from domestic pets, as familiarity with dogs and cats can be a death sentence on release.

One cost saving option is to attach the aviary to an already existing structure, such as the side of the house, shed or garage, providing this won't cause excessive noise or disturbance to the animals.

Furnishings and Set-up

It is imperative to set up for the species for which the aviary will be used. Try to create an environment which mirrors the one from which the species comes. Careful planning will allow for adaptation.

Shelter: The aviary is the safe house for

Building an Aviary...continued

preparing the animal for release. Depending on the species it will need some form of shelter, such as a nest box for possums, as most species use tree hollows. The shelter/nest box will be placed high in the aviary and under the covered area. When setting up for birds, look at where they sleep in the wild and try to mirror that in your aviary, for perching birds, suitably placed branches. Some birds like dense foliage for shelter so would feel very vulnerable on an exposed branch/perch. Small ground dwellers, or birds such as pheasant coucals, may require a dense understory of grasses and small shrubs in which to hide and rest, while other birds that spend time on the ground, such as plovers, prefer large open areas.

Fresh water should be available at all times for all animals. Food and water dishes need to be placed where the animal would normally look for food. For example birds that feed in the canopy of the forest need to have their food placed high, while ground feeders should have their food bowls on the ground. So look at where the species lives, where it feeds and shelters. Does it feed in water, on the ground, close to the ground, in long grasses, in shrubs, in trees, high in the tree canopy, above the canopy? We try to create a similar environment in our aviary.

Branches of varying diameters are arranged for perches (never use dowel) to allow maximum exercise (space for glider to practice jumps and glides and space for birds to fly) and to give access to food. Tree holders are excellent as they also hold water, so a good sized branch will stay fresh for a few days. This provides a more natural environment, as well as another source of food.

All vegetation, whether it be for eating or harbouring insects, should be placed in water to keep it fresh. Containers to hold the vegetation can be made from plumbers' pipe. Never leave them empty or filled with water without a solid branch in them, as animals have died by drowning, or because the sides were too smooth to climb out.

Aviary furnishing can be changed and adapted for different species, so, for example, birds, such as nectivores, frugivores and insectivores many of which live and feed in forests and woodlands, could have a similar set up to possums, with tree stands holding large branches and poly pipe holding smaller branches from where they can glean their insects, nectar and fruit.

Planting out the aviary with grasses, ground covers, and shrubs makes a more natural environment for birds and gliders and provides a natural source of seeds. Grasses and other

grains could also be planted in shallow containers, so they can be used when the aviary plantings become thin. Potted plants are also a good idea but not for the larger possums, as they will demolish everything in one night.

Ease of maintenance is another consideration when planning your aviary. Place the door in a position that allows easy access, for example, when carrying large branches or potted plants in and out. Have a water source handy so you don't have to walk miles each day carrying water, for example, for cleaning and filling vegetation holders. Try to arrange the furniture so that you don't hit your head on branches or nest boxes every time you replace vegetation. Well and hygienically maintained aviaries are critical to the health of your animals.

To summarize:

- Observe your chosen species in its natural environment.
- Research your chosen species, how and where it lives, what it eats and when.
- Try to set up your aviary to mirror the habitat from which the bird or possum comes and to which it will be returned.

You will be rewarded with healthy, happy animals well prepared for their future in the wild.

Eleanor Hanger

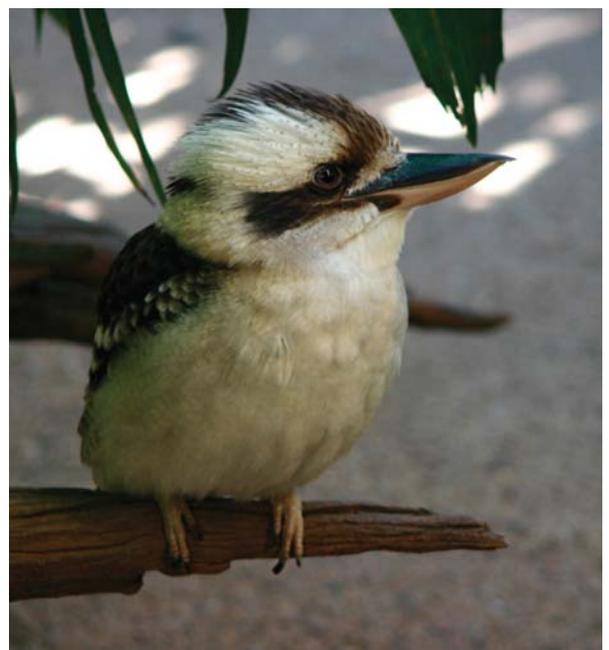


PHOTO // K SCOTT

Coordinator Reports

Bats

I would like to have been the bearer of good news about our bat friends, but not a lot has changed for the better since my last report. In the bat world we are still very busy. Our little Canungra rescued babies were not in a fit enough condition to be released in March/April with the other rehabilitated babies, although now they are finally looking a lot better and as soon as they have a clearance from the Vet will be able to be released.

I attended a seminar today at Griffith's Nathan Campus with experts discussing the current Hendra news and all evidence is showing that bats do have Hendra antibodies, but that it seems to be a natural occurrence within the bat population and they live quite well with it, as we do with measles, mumps etc. The problem is when this spills over to our horses, which seem to have no resistance to Hendra and so succumb. To date we, as carers, don't seem to have a problem handling bats, but as with all our native and domestic animals, we need to be conscious of our hygiene principles.

This last week found Dusty the dog was our first canine victim but, as with our bats, only showed antibodies which mean it had been in contact with Hendra but, as with the bat, it did not affect Dusty but only produced antibodies. Dusty acquired the virus from the horse and not from the bats. As of today Dusty was still alive, but the decision to euthanase is still on the cards.

As you may be aware there is much misinformation amongst the general populace about Hendra and as a consequence, a mass hysteria and "let's cull the bats", or move them on, which then becomes someone else's problem. The worst possible thing

to do now, whilst we are in the peak of Hendra season, would be to disturb and stress bats even more than they are already. The result would see an explosion of the virus and more horse and possibly human deaths as a result.

It saddens me to see this hysteria amongst the uneducated public, but what saddens me even more is that some of the comments about bats being vermin and we need to get rid of them, as they play no important role, are coming from within Wildcare. When I chose to join a wildlife group and care, it was because I cared about every species of animal native and domestic I did not put the importance of one species above another. I think as wildlife carers it is our duty to make sure we are educated about the importance of all our native animals for how can we call ourselves carers if we don't care for all our animals. There is a wealth of information about Hendra virus and Lyssa virus on the DERM website www.derm.qld.gov.au, Bio Security website www.dpi.qld.gov.au and a Hendra virus information article for horse owners.

I guess the only good thing to come out of all the bad news is that all Departments are seriously talking and collaborating about the future management of our bats and their camps and this can only be a positive thing for the bats long term. Again I stress, we must all to become more educated about our bats and their importance in the big picture, for only with knowledge can we make an informed decision.

Trish Wimberley

Echidnas and Small Mammals

THE COLD WEATHER HAS SLOWED THE ECHIDNAS DOWN somewhat in the southern region although the northern suburbs seem to have had an influx of echidnas coming into care from dog attacks and road traumas.

We are receiving more reports of echidnas being active during the day which is quite normal for this type of the year. Even for cool-blooded animals, the cold nights at the moment aren't that enticing!

It won't be long before echidnas will enter their breeding season which sadly generally brings with it an increase in the number of trauma victims again.

Karen Scott

Coordinator Reports continued...

Koalas

OUR QUIET RUN ON THE GOLD COAST DIDN'T LAST FOR TOO LONG. The past few weeks have been exceptionally busy, with on some days as many as three rescues in one single day. Sadly, we have seen a number of dog attack victims, some of which have not been able to be saved. We currently have a number of critically injured koalas at the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital under veterinary care.

The cold weather has resulted in an increase in the number of sick koalas coming into care, most of which have been suffering from Chlamydia.

Thank you to our small team of volunteers who are at the ready, day or night, to go and rescue these animals and also to the Gold Coast City Council Koala Conservation Team who have again assisted us with the retrieval of critically injured koalas.

Karen Scott

Macropods

THE PAST FEW MONTHS HAVE CERTAINLY BECOME INCREASINGLY BUSY with more and more macropod joeys coming into care. We are still desperate for more carers who are able to take on these high demand animals. We will be scheduling another macropod workshop later this year.

Acknowledgment must also be made of our Trauma Carers over the winter months. Sadly, this is the time of year where we see many adults hit by cars. Our team of Trauma Carers has reduced in size significantly recently and this is certainly putting a strain on our remaining carers.

On a brighter note, we will shortly have three more Trauma Carers available to assist.

Karen Scott

PHOTO // J M HANGAR



Wallaby and joey

Small Mammals

THE COLDER MONTHS HAVE BEEN QUIETER FOR OUR SMALL MAMMALS. We have had very few orphans coming into care but the usual influx of juveniles. We seem to see more and more bandicoots falling into pools, and being unable to climb out. All of these bandicoots have been successfully treated and released. A good tip to prevent animals from drowning in pools is to place a width of shade cloth into the pool and anchor the other end to a secure area (such as a gate/fence). That way animals that fall into the pool have something to grip onto. It is quite common for bandicoots, echidnas and koalas to find themselves unable to escape and at risk of drowning.

We will be scheduling an echidna and small mammal workshop for September/October, just in time for the next season.

Karen Scott

Coordinator Reports continued...

Possums

BRISBANE

People often ask me if I prefer ringies or brushies. It depends. I'll take a pinkie brushie over a pinkie ringie any day, but when it comes to weaning I'll take the ringie. Weaning can be one of the most difficult times for brushie carers, as some of our newer carers are currently finding out. The biggest single piece of advice I can give you is to monitor their weight regularly and well after they have been weaned. Sometimes the crash comes a month after their last milk feed. The big question is "why?" and the big answer is "I'm not sure."

We need to consider the animal from when it came into care and ask these sorts of questions along the way:

- Is it a robust baby?
- Is its immune system strong?
- Is the balance of gut flora right?
- Did I introduce solids at the right time?
- Am I feeding it the best quality food available (not just the easiest)?
- Are there any other stressors in this possum's life?
- Did I start to wean at the right time?
- Did I try to wean too fast?

Here are a few tips I have learned along the way:

Nutrition has to be good, right from the start. Whichever formula you use, mix it to the correct dilution – no skimping! If you are using extra supplements like vitamins or Impact, make sure they are at the right dose rate.

Do not start to wean brushies before 650g, and don't try to have them fully weaned before 900g. Exact weights will depend on the individual possum, but these are a guide.

Pap is good for brushies too.

Variety is the spice of life. Make sure they get several different types of leaf every night, from the very first time you introduce leaf until release. Brushies should also be getting branches with nice chewy bark, gumnuts, native fruits such as figs and quandongs, a few flowers and the odd grasshopper that

goes in with the leaf will be consumed with great delight.

Weigh weekly at the same time of day. Don't worry about how long it takes to wean. If it takes one possum a month and another possum two months, that's OK.

At times (like now) leaf quality can be poor. It may be necessary to supplement with an almond or two a couple of times a week, a few meal worms once or twice a week, or even a weekly banana, sweet potato, corn or paw paw treat (no more than 100g worth). Some people spray the leaf with high protein supplement mixed in water. This is not an excuse to be lazy, but recognition that we cannot always access the best leaf that wild possums can.

Deb Turnbull

A Possum Email Group (PEG) is operating to expedite the placement of possums, particularly in the Brisbane area. If you would like to be on the PEG contact list please email Maree Green at maree@mgsdl.com

GOLD COAST

The earlier part of this recording period presented many challenges for possum carers because of the large number of animals coming into care over a short space of time in July and August of 2010. Possum carers were stretched to the limits and I would like to thank sincerely the coordinators and carers who assisted over this period.

A notable problem which is occurring all too frequently is the number of possums that lose their home due to clearing for urban development. The difficulty is finding a suitable area to release adults, that is not too far from their original home range, but is not threatened with future clearing. Soft release sites for orphans are also at a premium, due to the numbers we get into care.

As we have mentioned before, loss of habitat is probably the single greatest threat to our wildlife and it is not only due to large and small scale clearing but also to the invasion of weed species which can degrade the habitat

Coordinator Reports continued...

to the point where it will not support any wildlife.

Road trauma and dogs continue to take their toll, with 50% of animals coming into care over a couple of months last year due to dog attack. Cats contribute to the death and injury of large numbers of ringtail possums and gliders and, of those who survive the initial attack, the prognosis is not good.

The number of possums presenting with dermatitis seems to have reduced over recent months which is interesting and leads us to ponder the thought that perhaps with the recent rains and the vegetation more lush than ever, there is ample food with fresh new growth, and less competition, thereby reducing stress. Whatever the reason, it is refreshing to see fewer of these beautiful animals coming into care with dermatitis. Wildcare will have its Guidelines for assessing and treating possums with dermatitis available soon. These have been developed by Kathryn Kielly in consultation with veterinarians and Wildcare. For those who are new to this problem it is important to be aware that dermatitis is often a secondary problem to a far more serious

issue, such as leukaemia.

As carers we cannot stress enough the importance of the natural diet for our possums. It is becoming increasingly difficult for some to access the right vegetation, but please persist in searching it out as the benefits are obvious. The possums really thrive on the correct diet of a variety of good quality vegetation and are then well prepared for their future in the wild. It is so rewarding to see these amazing creatures as they venture from their aviary and enjoy the freedom of exploring their wonderful forest home and for the carer to know that they have released a healthy animal with the skills to survive.

Thank you to the dedicated carers who continue to give their hearts and souls to assisting our precious wildlife.

We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Robyn Braniff and Clare Boyd as Possum Placement Coordinators for the Gold Coast and thank them sincerely for accepting the position.

Natalie Rasmussen and Eleanor Hanger

What Is It?

Not by finger print nor by DNA, but by shape of beak, feet, legs, size, outline, shape of wing, colour, flight pattern, call, habitat, range, time of year, correct identification is critical to the well being of animals in care. Incorrect identification can lead to stress, illness, suffering and death.

Listed below are four good field guides for birds to help you with your identification. They are regularly reprinted and periodically revised. Each has its particular strengths, Pizzey, for example, gives brief comments on behaviour which can be of great assistance in confirming an identification. Morcombe has an extensive section on nests and eggs. Simpson and Day have a section on taxonomy, behaviour, feeding and breeding. A couple of them are also published in a more compact edition—a little lighter for the bushwalker/birdwatcher.

- Field Guide to the Birds of Australia by Ken Simpson and Nicolas Day. *Viking O'Neil*.
- The Field Guide to the Birds of Australia by Graham Pizzey Frank Knight. *Angus & Robertson*.
- The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds by Peter Slater, Pat Slater & Raoul Slater. *Weldon Publishing*.
- Field Guide to Australian Birds by Michael Morcombe. *Steve Parrish Publishing*.



Brown Cuckoo-Dove

PHOTO // R RIVARD

&

Notes from an Enthusiastic Bird Watcher

THE BARAKULA FOREST, NEAR CHINCHILLA, WAS NOT LOOKING TOO PROMISING for bird watching on this beautiful June day. A two kilometre walk along a creek, scenically attractive as it was, lined with Lomandras and Eucalypts, was disappointing—not a bird nor any other living creature to be seen. Suddenly, however, the silence was broken by a battalion of Noisy Miners harassing, most energetically, a lone Blue-faced Honeyeater. They flew by at speed and disappeared into the distance. Well, at least I had seen something.

We returned to the car and drove further along one of the forest's many roads negotiating one to two metre deep washouts, the bonus being we didn't see another vehicle. The reason became apparent later in the day, when we drove up behind a 'Road Closed' sign. I was so pleased we entered the forest by another unmarked route or we would have missed some very special moments.

The next stop provide a totally unexpected, but pleasurable hour or so, as a muddy puddle in another severely eroded washout was the chosen bathing and watering hole for half a dozen species of honeyeaters; Brown, Fuscous, Yellow-faced, Yellow-tufted, White-plumed and White-naped. They were joined by a small flock of Red-browed Firetails.

What a delight to watch these gorgeous creatures as they landed on the exposed roots of a nearby tree which leaned gracefully towards the water giving a perfect perch from which to launch themselves into the water to bathe. A quick dip was followed by a return to the perch for a few shakes and the exercise was repeated several times. Drinking was done by either standing by the water's edge or leaning down from their perch on the root.

A video of the event would have been excellent, but as the camera was thirty metres or so away in the car, I didn't want to risk frightening the birds off by moving from my perfect viewing platform, a fallen log, to go and get it.

Ideas for Setting up an Aviary for Honeyeaters or Finches

Observing birds in their natural environment can give you ideas for setting up an aviary. My observations above would suggest that a shallow pool with suitably placed perches should be arranged in one area of the aviary not too far from some denser vegetation to which the birds can retreat for a feeling of security.



PHOTO // JM HANGER

The muddy puddle.

In my observations in the Barakula Forest the chosen pool, in a very eroded section of an ephemeral creek, was in an area of forest with about 50% to 60% canopy cover with some understory plants but fairly open. The predominant species were Eucalypts, Acacias and Callitris.

Eleanor Hanger

From "Beyond the Frozen Sea" by Edwin Mickleburgh

"In the words of a leading conservationist, 'There can be no justification for the exploitation of Antarctica except in terms of human greed. For we do not need Antarctica's supposed resources but merely desire them to give longevity to a way of life which must, ultimately, come to terms with its own bankruptcy. We have to stop somewhere in our quest for more resources, because resources are finite. Should we not stop this rape before we destroy the last remaining great wilderness, rather than afterwards.'"

London, The Bodley Head 1987. (page 185)

Education Report

WE ARE FORTUNATE AGAIN THIS YEAR TO BE OFFERING THE WILDLIFE ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY COURSE with Dr. Tania Bishop. The initial training date for this course was emailed to all members a little while ago and that course filled quickly. We are hoping for another date to accommodate everyone who wishes to attend.

We were fortunate to have Dr Anne Fowler attend the Gold Coast and deliver a two-day bird workshop. Those members who attended thoroughly enjoyed Anne's teaching style and her wealth of knowledge and experience. We hope to have Anne back in early 2012 to teach

more workshops for our members.

Our Education Team has recently expanded to include Cathy Cope who has been helping me tremendously in the past few months with workshop registrations, workshop certificates and general education tasks. Many of you would already have had contact with Cathy and we welcome her warmly to the Wildcare Education Team.

I hope to see everyone at an upcoming workshop.

Karen Scott



Other Wildlife Education News...

DR ANNE FOWLER WORKSHOP

Bribie & District Wildlife Rescue have secured Dr. Anne Fowler on the weekend of 10th & 11th December 2011 to run two workshops:

- Saturday 10th - Husbandry and Diseases of Native Birds
- Sunday 11th - Husbandry and Diseases of Possums and Macropods

Wildlife carers from other groups are welcome to attend at a cost of \$25 per day. This is a great training opportunity. To book a place please email Bribie & District Wildlife Rescue directly on gsarthur@bigpond.net.au.

GOLD COAST PET & ANIMAL EXPO

When: 17th and 18th September 2011

Where: Varsity Lakes, Gold Coast

Another 'must attend' event for the Gold Coast.

"WILDCARE-GLIDERS" TO AIR

Totally Wild story "Wildcare - Gliders" went to air on Monday 15th August at 8:00am on Network Ten.

Aviary for Sale

4.04 L x 1.67 W x 1.8 H. 1.5 years old. Flat roof, mesh on the sides. 5 panels, includes 1 access door. Is flat packed at the moment. Sale price \$550, unable to help with transport though. Will include a new bottle of F10 cleaner and a second large bird cage on wheels. Was used to rehab Tawnies. Loganholme area.

Contact Amy on 0421 119 884.



Training Program - September - December 2011

Date	Workshop	Location	Full Day	Half Day	Pre Requisites
September 2011					
Saturday 3 rd	Orientation Program	Gold Coast		☺	<i>Wildcare members only</i>
Saturday 10 th	Orientation Program	Underwood		☺	<i>Wildcare members only</i>
Saturday 17 th	Possums – Basic Course	Gold Coast	☺		<i>Introduction to Caring for Orphaned Mammals</i>
Sunday 18 th	Introduction to Caring for Reptiles and Lizards – Basic Course	Gold Coast	☺		
Saturday 24 th	Snakes – Basic Course	Gold Coast		☺	<i>Introduction to Caring for Reptiles</i>
Sunday 25 th	Introduction to Caring for Orphaned Mammals	Gold Coast	☺		
October 2011					
Saturday 1 st	Native Birds – Basic Course	Gold Coast		☺	
Saturday 8 th	Flying Foxes (Orphans)	Gold Coast	☺		<i>Introduction to Caring for Orphaned Mammals</i>
Saturday 8 th	Echidnas	Underwood		☺	<i>Introduction to Caring for Orphaned Mammals</i>
Saturday 8 th	Bandicoots, Antechinus and Native Rodents	Underwood		☺	<i>Introduction to Caring for Orphaned Mammals</i>
Sunday 9 th	Telephone Training	Gold Coast		☺	<i>Wildcare members only</i>
Saturday 15 th	First Aid for Native Wildlife (Basic)	Underwood	☺		<i>Orientation Program</i>
Sunday 16 th	Gliders	Gold Coast	☺		<i>Introduction to Caring for Orphaned Mammals</i>
Sunday 16 th	Baby Birds	Brisbane		☺	
Saturday 22 nd	Anatomy and Physiology *	Beerwah	☺		
Sunday 23 rd	Snakes – Basic Course	Beerwah		☺	<i>Introduction to Caring for Reptiles</i>
Sunday 23 rd	Microbats	Gold Coast	☺		<i>Introduction to Caring for Orphaned Mammals</i>
Saturday 29 th	Introduction to Caring for Reptiles and Lizards – Basic Course	Carindale	☺		
Sunday 30 th	Possums – Basic Course	Slacks Creek	☺		<i>Introduction to Caring for Orphaned Mammals</i>
November 2011					
Sunday 13 th	First Aid for Native Wildlife (Basic)	Gold Coast	☺		<i>Orientation Program</i>
Saturday 19 th	Orientation Program	Underwood		☺	<i>Wildcare members only</i>
Saturday 26 th	Orientation Program	Gold Coast		☺	<i>Wildcare members only</i>
Sunday 27 th	Introduction to Caring for Reptiles and Lizards – Basic Course	Beerwah	☺		
December 2011					
Saturday 10 th	Snakes – Basic Course	Underwood		☺	<i>Introduction to Caring for Reptiles</i>
Saturday 10 th	Introduction to Caring for Orphaned Mammals	Beerwah	☺		

(*) Dr Tania Bishop Workshop
 Cost \$45
 Only six places available

To register for workshops:
 Please email (preferable) – cathy@wildcare.org.au
 Or telephone 07 5527 2444 (during business hours)
 Please try to register at least 5 days before the schedule date so that appropriate arrangements can be made for venues and training material.

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.

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.



We were recently successful in obtaining a grant from the Jimboomba Branch of the Queensland Country Credit Union to purchase two large intensive care units for the care of orphaned and critically injured wildlife from the Scenic Rim Region. Our sincerest thanks to the QCCU for providing this wonderful opportunity to our carers.



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.

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We would also like to offer free home delivery to all carers from as far north as the Sunshine Coast and as far south as Lismore. This discount also applies to home deliveries with a minimum order of \$30 for the Gold Coast and \$40 for Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and NSW.

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