

Official Newsletter of Wildcare Australia

WILD NEWS

Spring 2011 Issue 61

"Olivia's Story"

"Reptile Rescue and Rehabilitation"

"QWRC... Our State Council"

"RSPCA's Wildlife Hero Program"





President's Report.

Karen Scott

IT SEEMS THAT THIS YEAR HAS MOVED ALONG FASTER THAN EVER. I am sure that there are carers who are still recovering from last year's Spring and Summer seasons and the huge number of wildlife that came in during that time and now we have reached that time again. Where did the year go? I sincerely hope that most of our carers managed to get some reprieve during the 'quieter' months although it seems that many of our wildlife species have got their breeding seasons mixed up a bit.

This is always the time of year when I worry greatly about our carers. Each year we receive more wildlife that require rescuing and care but each year our database of rescuers seems to shrink a little more as more people become more time-poor.

Please, during this upcoming Season, take care of yourselves as well as your wildlife. We all have to be realistic about our capacity to care. Going beyond our individual capacity does not help our wildlife, as no doubt the quality of the care that we can provide is compromised. I would also encourage everyone to 'watch each other's back' – be supportive of one another and if you recognise that a fellow carer is struggling with their workload, please speak with one of the Wildcare Head Carers, Committee Members or Species Coordinator. We all have to remember to put ourselves first occasionally, as we will be of no use to our wildlife if we are 'burnt out'. Burn out for wildlife carers seems to occur all too frequently these days and it should be everyone's responsibility to help each other and provide support when we recognise that someone is struggling.

I would also encourage everyone to stop and take a breath sometimes when you feel that you are becoming overwhelmed. During the busy

seasons, when many of our carers are sleep deprived and emotionally drained, it is easy to lose our patience and it is often easy to unintentionally offend others with off-hand comments. We are after all doing this for the same reason, so please remember to be courteous and respect each other's individual opinions.

I would ask that everyone be patient during this upcoming busy season with all key volunteers within the organisation. This is a very busy time for many of our Committee Members, most of whom also have high rescue and care commitments. Many of our Species Coordinators work full time and are juggling family commitments as well as the animals in their care, so please be patient if they do not return your call as quickly as they otherwise may. For our wonderful telephone operators, this is the busiest and most frustrating time of the year, please be patient as our incoming rescue hotline is only going through one telephone line. If you are contacted for a rescue, please be polite to our telephone operators – they have a difficult enough time as it is, without having to be spoken to rudely and abruptly by fellow volunteers or their family members. If you have some free time or are travelling and can assist with transporting wildlife, please telephone the Hotline and let the telephone operator know as there are often animals that need collecting and transferring to other carers or wildlife hospitals.

Please take care of yourselves and each other and have a wonderful Christmas.



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: Eastern Water Dragon courtesy of Annette Bird

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Secretary - Tracy Paroz
Treasurer - Ashleigh Paroz
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Newsletter submissions can be sent to news@wildcare.org.au



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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

Wildcare Australia welcomes the following new members:

Genevieve Whittred, Siminee Wratten, Bec Condon, Michael & Peggy Honey, Ann Samson, Jeanette Edgar, Sharon Doerr, Tracy & Joyce Chaplin, Casey O'Neill, Donna Watts, Michael Wilson, Lelia Carberry, Deborah Ritchie, Alana Legge, Patricia Swift, Ana Jackson, Rosanna Casey, Clancy Hall, Kaylee Hamilton, Maree Fenton, Heidi Olsen, Barbara Brindley, Jade & Amber Kozminski, Mandy Dunn, Alana Kemmerling, David Black, Sonja de Sterke, Matthew Harris, Jhy Carroll, Tara-Anne Albrecht, Cheryl Harris, Alison Vizard, Elizabeth Friend, Karen Shearer, Mark Gant, Nicole Lafferty, Joe Reisenberger.

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.

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



PHOTO // A BIRD

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

Expression of Appreciation



Wildnews received a lovely email from Val complimenting our team and contributors for a job well done. Thank you so much, Val. It is wonderful to know that the efforts of all involved are appreciated and that we are achieving our aim - to be informative, educational and entertaining.

Here is an excerpt from Val's email.

".....The point of this email, however, is to congratulate you again on a very professional job. I like to take my newsletter out to coffee with me, and I did this today. I read a story in the newsletter and thought, 'Isn't that great?'. Then I read the next story and thought, 'Isn't that great?'. And it continued. Such a great compilation of wonderful stories and photos. It is a truly professional - a thoroughly informative, educational and entertaining - job.

And, of course, to all the wonderful contributors. Well done to them, also." Val Bonner-Burrowes

Record Keeper's Rap

Record Keeping Tips

Kiersten Jones

Record Keeping for New Members

There's a lot of information to take in when first joining Wildcare, so for this reason we don't focus too much on records in our Orientation program. This information is instead in the Volunteer Manual for you to read in your own time. So it's understandable that some get confused about when to start submitting records. The answer to this is: As soon as you do your first rescue. Yes, rescues are recorded too, not just the animals that remain in your care.

There are 3 ways that you may submit your records:

1. Download the Excel records form from our Wildcare website (www.wildcare.org.au under 'Carer Resources') and use this to record your rescues and animals in care. There are sample records to guide you (in a separate tab), and you can always email or phone me for support. Email this completed form to me at records@wildcare.org.au.

2. If you cannot use Excel or don't have the program on your computer, then you can download the Word records form instead. I personally find this harder to use than Excel but it suits some. Again this is emailed in.

3. If you are not so computer-savvy, then ask someone to print the Word form off for you and use this to handwrite your records.

If you are applying for wildlife rehab permit endorsement under Wildcare for the first time, then it's a good idea to let me know by email that you haven't had any animals in care or rescues up until now. This applies once you receive your permit endorsement too, so if nil rescues or animals in care at the end of any given period, then please email me again to let me know, especially when you receive an email from Wildcare about the records needing to be submitted in time for collation – this usually occurs each July and January.

Record Keeping for Not-So-New Members who are behind in their records

It's easy to fall behind in records. It is the same for me in processing them. If you don't get the time to attend to them regularly, due to non-Wildcare activities or due to a sudden rush of multiple rescues, then it quickly escalates and the thought of catching up can easily become overwhelming. And to make it worse, it's never-ending once you start! For most of you who are also working, you'll probably find doing your records similar to your workplace accountability activities - It's a drag, but it's got to be done. If not accountable, then

your position is not validated. In a way, it is similar for Wildcare, as we use these records to justify why we should receive funds to continue what we do, and they have now been used in several successful grant applications.

So if this sounds like you – you've become behind in your records and need to catch up because you've re-applied for permit endorsement – then try the following:

- Firstly, just start your records again from today. Don't worry about the backlog initially. Just focus on getting back into the habit of doing your records soon after rescues or receiving animals into your care.
- Once you are back into the habit, then start working on the gap since your last records were submitted:
 - start by accounting for all the animals currently in your care and add their records in.
 - Next try working backwards if this is easier than starting from where you left off.
 - Use anything that jogs your memory on the details: For example, you may have kept pieces of paper with the details of each rescue, taken at the time you got the phone call, so go through all of these. Once you type in the rescue details, you'll hopefully recall the outcome for each animal.
 - Look in your diary or on your wall calendar if that helps jog your memory. You may not have mentioned every animal in these, but you may have put things in like when other carers were coming to transfer animals to you, or when you went somewhere to release an animal. Maybe some other event on your calendar reminds you that you happened to get that animal in on the same day.

If you've become behind in your records because you had trouble using Excel to do your records, then email me for help. It may be also be easier or more practical for you to change to handwritten records, so consider what works best.

Kiersten Jones
Ph: 0409 130 000
Email: records@wildcare.org.au

A Quiet Achiever

Lilly Rasmussen

THERE WAS A BRILLIANT TEAM OF PEOPLE THIS YEAR WHO MADE THE INAUGURAL WALK FOR WILDLIFE the success that it was. Most of us were seen and heard, and got our message across, but there was one sweet little girl who worked away quietly behind the scenes.

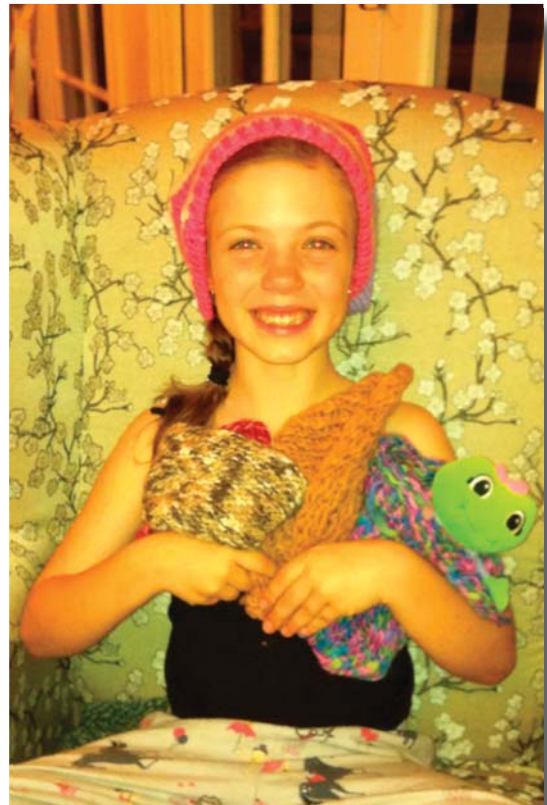
Lilly Rasmussen has a big heart when it comes to the comfort and love for all animals, but especially Australian wildlife. Being a comfort creature herself, Lilly became concerned for the warmth of the animals that came into our care, most of them being possums and gliders, furred and unfurred. Lilly has an incredible gift that requires, time, patience, and love. She began knitting when she was only six years old and has become quite a professional, knitting the most beautifully coloured pouches I have ever come across, and I have to say our possums agree.

At this year's Walk for Wildlife, Lilly worked tirelessly. Producing one amazing pouch after another with the intention, that more animals would be warm and the money raised could go to Wildcare and continue to help the animals she adores. Lilly said it was the least she could do for a group of people, who do so much for wildlife.

Being her mother, I feel so incredibly proud to have children who think and feel for creatures other than themselves. Not only do they dream of making this wonderful world a better place, they put their dreams into action, and little by little the world looks brighter.

Our children really are our future, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the younger people in Wildcare for making a difference. Well done, Lilly, and thank you from Wildcare for those wonderful pouches.

Natalie Rasmussen



Top Right: Lilly Rasmussen with her beautiful hand-made knitted possum pouches

Top Left: Two very lucky little possums enjoying Lilly's hard work!

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 wildlife carers in their rehabilitation activities.

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



COUNCILLOR PETER YOUNG - GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL

Our sincerest thanks go to Councillor Peter Young who has assisted us with a generous donation of \$750 towards the costs incurred by our Trauma Carers in the Division 5 area. These funds will go towards the costs of the drugs to sedate and euthanase critically injured wildlife and to assist with fuel expenses.

On behalf of Wildcare, we thank Councillor Young for his support which has spanned well over 10 years.

Expenses incurred with offering this service have grown expeditiously over recent years and is currently costing Wildcare over \$4,000 a year in drugs and consumables. The Wildcare Trauma Carers cover all fuel expenses from their own resources in providing this service.

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 that 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.

QWRC... *Our State Council*

Annie Saunders – QWRC Chair

The Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council Inc. commonly known as QWRC (pronounced Quirk) is the State peak body representing Queensland's Wildlife rehabilitators. That means we are here to represent YOU. Have you joined QWRC yet? If not you are probably saying why should I join QWRC, they are just another group and I cannot afford the membership. Well QWRC membership has many benefits including:

- Membership of the State representative body.
- A collective voice for rehabilitation.
- Access to a network of carers across the State.
- Financial membership offers cover under QWRC's Public Liability and Volunteer Workers Insurance policies.
- Support with wildlife rehabilitation and welfare.
- Access to QWRC endorsed training courses.
- Access to professional advice, information, and data.
- Access to Best Practice Guidelines.
- RnR newsletter twice a year (March and September).
- QWRC Quotes member's update (January and June).
- Eligibility to nominate for a position as a QWRC District representative.
- Eligibility to vote at all QWRC elections.
- Help to build a strong council to advocate on your behalf.

Most importantly though we are not just another group. For many years wildlife carers across the State had

been asking for a group such as this to give them much needed support, guidance and assistance. Queensland was the first State to establish a peak body representing wildlife rehabilitators with other States following in our footsteps.

The need to establish a representative body for wildlife rehabilitation in Queensland was identified within the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) "Wildlife Review Discussion Paper" October 2002 after the associated public consultation meetings across the State, canvassing a review of the wildlife component of the Nature Conservation Regulation 1994.

The establishment of an association to amalgamate wildlife rehabilitation interests under an over-arching yet inclusive body was strongly sought by wildlife rehabilitators and government alike. QWRC was established in 2003 and incorporated in 2004.

QWRC now has a membership of over 500 which includes 8 groups who have taken advantage of the insurance cover membership offers.

QWRC membership provides Volunteer Workers Personal Accident Insurance and \$20 mil Public Liability Insurance

BONUS - all new memberships received before December 2011 will be extended to 31 December 2012 expiry.

A QWRC Membership Application Form is attached to this edition of WildNews.

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, covering an enormous range of topics, such as emergency response, the latest treatment methods for trauma, environmental issues and fundraising.

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

www.2012awrc.org.au



Olivia's Story

Maree Green

I received a little 85g Common Brushtail from the RSPCA on the first day of school this year. She had been in a car accident with mum, and mum was DOA (dead on arrival). She was unfurred, her eyes weren't open and there was a little wound (like a graze) on the side of her body. I got her home and fed her for the first time and we called her Olivia.

Olivia went ahead in leaps and bounds and followed all the milestones: opening her eyes, cutting fur and absolutely loving the milk that she was fed every four hours. Her weight slowly crept up, at about 3% each week (we were expecting 5% from what we had read).

When Olivia got to about 134g, we introduced a mate for her, a little boy who was quickly named "Trouble", because the first thing he did when I got him out of the basket was latch onto me with a "hey I'm not sure of you" bite.

They both grew, and as long as I fed Olivia first and let her run around and do the typical two year old things before I got Trouble out to feed, Olivia didn't have her nose put out of joint as much as you might expect.

They both grew at a fantastic rate, got into plenty of mischief while in their successive sized cages, and especially loved the idea of jumping a long distance, to see if I was watching, or just hanging by their tail (and only their tail) at different points as well. They both loved their native browse and we slowly decreased their milk supplement as they grew.

When we had these guys in the biggest cage for inside, and they were about 850g, we decided that it was time to really start decreasing their milk. They did not seem to be that interested in the milk any more and we had been told that they should be weaned by this size. While we were decreasing the milk, we were also increasing the leaf as well as decreasing the human contact.

Unfortunately we had some family tragedies at this point, and we focussed our attention on that, forgetting about checking on Olivia and Trouble's weight. BIG MISTAKE

Late one Sunday afternoon, I was out collecting leaf for the tribe of possums, while my husband, Chris, cleaned out the old vegetation from the cages. He was expecting Trouble and Olivia to come out of their box, as they always did, to see what was happening. Instead, he found Trouble sitting by himself, looking distressed, and no sign of Olivia at all.

Chris searched the enclosure, and found Olivia on her back in the back corner of the cage, lying very still, feet in the air, one hand gripped tightly onto the bars. His first thought was that she had fallen and broken her back. He frantically climbed through the door of the enclosure and



PHOTO // M GREEN

was able to see that she was still breathing – but only just. Chris got her out of the enclosure. Her extremities were cold, so he wrapped her up and put her inside his jacket to keep her warm, while he waited for me to return. He met me at the car and he, the kids and I rushed Olivia to our closest emergency vet (BVSC at Albany Creek).

The nurse rushed Olivia out the back. They gave her IV (intravenous) fluids and glucose, and ran blood tests. We waited as long as we could, but we had to get back home to organise the kids' baths and dinner. BVSC promised to keep us updated on Olivia and how things were going. Things only got worse. They phoned me at 7pm to tell me that I needed to get Olivia straight up to AWH (Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital) if she was going to have any chance of survival. We didn't even think about it. We arranged for my father to watch the kids, and we rushed her up to AWH. Our lovely cousin Cathy Cope (who lives down the road from AWH) met us there to offer support.

The nurses at AWH were fantastic. They hooked Olivia up to the fluids/glucose, kept her warm, did more blood tests, and talked to Dr Claude over the phone about what to do. They decided that Olivia needed to spend the night at AWH so Dr Claude could assess her in the morning. We said our goodbyes, and it was a very long drive back home. I didn't sleep very well that night.

Continued on next page

Olivia's Story (con't)

Dr Claude called us about 8:30am the following morning with her diagnosis. Even though she was eating leaf, and eating supplements, Olivia wasn't getting enough nutrition out of either. The leaf that was available after the January floods was quite poor. Olivia had needed her milk, and she wasn't ready to stop.

Olivia spent a week recuperating at AWH. During this time we were fortunate to have support from the staff at the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital, Deb Turnbull, Corali Philpott, and our cousins Cathy and Nigel Cope. We don't know what we would have done without them.

When Olivia came home, we reintroduced her to Trouble. She made it very clear to him that she was boss! They had previously happily shared a single box, but now we needed two. Of course we reintroduced milk to both of them, and they stayed on it until 1kg. When we weaned these two back off the milk again, we had learned our lesson: we were weighing them everyday to make sure they were coping with the diet change.

Finally, the day came where they were ready for release. They were thoroughly dehumanised – even with us, they were cautious and would hiss if we got too close. At 1.2kg, they were certainly big enough to look after themselves!

We took them to Madonna and Ben's place at Ocean View for their release. We have plenty of memories of their behaviour, and unique personalities. It is hard not to become just a little attached to any creature that is in your care from an infant, and there wasn't a dry eye in the car as we left Olivia and Trouble with our friends.

The moral of this story is don't rush to take your possums off their milk. When you do, make sure you are in a position to weigh them daily while you're reducing their intake.

Dr Claude told us that it doesn't hurt them to be on milk once a day until 1kg.

Take things slowly. And ask questions! If you're uncertain about something, don't be scared to ask, as nine times out of ten the person whom you are asking has been in a similar situation, or knows someone who has, and will be happy to advise you.

Maree Green



PHOTO // M GREEN

Emergency Telephone Report

OUR SINCEREST THANKS GO TO OUR TELEPHONE VOLUNTEERS WHO CONTINUALLY WORK TIRELESSLY to ensure that our emergency telephone service is manned. As Spring is now upon us again, our telephone volunteers will once again be kept very busy taking thousands of incoming calls.

A special thank you to several of our telephone volunteers that certainly take on more than their fair share of shifts including Deborah Flack, Vanessa Croft, Tracy Paroz and of our course our dedicated Office volunteers Trish Hales, Roy Webster and Katherine Page.



Overview of the RSPCA 1300ANIMAL & Wildlife Hero Program

From September the RSPCA Call Centre will be receiving the majority of the wildlife calls previously taken by the DERM wildlife hotline 1300 130372.

When callers ring the DERM number for sick, injured or orphaned wildlife their call will be automatically directed to the RSPCA's call centre which operates 24 hours a day 7 days a week. All callers will be able to speak with a Call Centre operator, in contrast with the DERM hotline which was an answering machine type service, which provided recorded details rather than any person to person contact.

Some of you will be familiar with the 1300ANIMAL (1300 264625) rescue service that the RSPCA offers for reporting injured or distressed animals. The objective of the 1300ANIMAL number is to centralize, simplify and expedite the reporting and rescue of animals who are injured, sick or orphaned. The RSPCA Call Centre (manned 24 hours, 365 days a year) will then direct the call to the nearest Wildlife Hero or rescue group in that area. The Call Center operator telephones a rescuer directly whilst the finder is on hold and they can then be connected directly to each other. The program is currently operating only in Queensland, but it is an initiative that will eventually go national.

Currently the RSPCA is looking for people to register as Wildlife Heroes and to be included on the state wide database. The RSPCA's database Shelter Mate can search for a rescuer or carer, by species and suburb. The Wildlife Heroes program aims to engage people like you to add depth to the dedicated network of wildlife rescuers and carers around the state, who help sick and injured wildlife.

To be a Wildlife Hero you don't need to be a wildlife carer or even have knowledge on different species. You just need to care about wildlife and be prepared to lend a helping hand every now and then.

We are also calling on Queensland wildlife carers to register their details with the RSPCA in order to provide a comprehensive state wide database for the rescue of native animals. The more carers we are able to have listed on our database the more successful this program will be. We do ring groups as well as individuals, when appropriate, however not all groups are created equal and in some instances groups are not available to attend. If you would like to register your details please contact the RSPCA and they will send you out a registration form either by email or post. We are currently developing an online registration system.

Annette Colling
Wildlife Rescue And Rehabilitation Coordinator
RSPCA Queensland



A copy of the RSPCA's Wildlife Hero brochure is annexed to this edition of

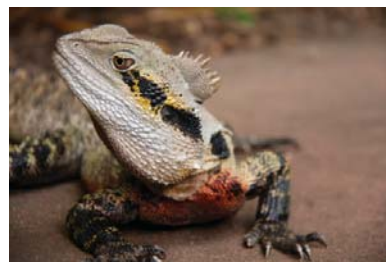


PHOTO // A BIRD

Environment Alliance

Earlier this year GECKO (Gold Coast and Hinterland Environment Council Association Incorporated) facilitated the formation of an 'alliance' of local environmental groups on the Gold Coast, called the Environment Alliance.

The Charter of the EA is to seek to combine the community's strengths and networks and to protect the local environment. It is hoped that by having the various environmental groups uniting, we will have a stronger voice to advocate for the environment.

Wildcare is excited to be a part of the Environment Alliance and we will keep members up to date with the progress of the Alliance.



Reptile Rescue & Rehabilitation

Annette Bird

WE WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE OURSELVES TO EVERYONE: My name is Annette Bird and my Partner is Chris Peters. For those of you who haven't met us yet, we are the new reptile co-ordinators. What I'd like to do is present some short stories about a few of the animals that we have had in care over the last few months in the hope that some of you may consider coming over to the 'dark side'! I realize that reptiles are not everybody's cup of tea, but we think they are just misunderstood. Over the years as a vet nurse, I have cared for all sorts of animals: reptiles, macropods, possums/ gliders and of course, an array of birds. What I can say is that, out of all of them, reptiles are my absolute favourites!

There are some glaring differences from an anatomical point of view and these are major considerations when medicating and, of course, handling (a wallaby is hardly going to wrap you up and eat you!). They are not 'cuddly' and I have even heard people giggle when I say that they

are (dare I use the word) 'cute'. I will point out that the dictionary definition of 'cute' is 'ugly but interesting'. We think they're great and definitely interesting. They are also quite civilized and (apart from the snakes and geckos) like to sleep at night. This is a big bonus if you're like me and detest getting up every couple of hours to feed something.

Anyway, I guess the point we'd like to make is: please consider the option of caring for reptiles – they are just as rewarding (and frustrating at times) as anything else. We'd be more than happy to meet you at an upcoming workshop (check out the education calendar). If you don't have any idea about housing/ enclosures, we can also help out here. Chris is madly building some and we are happy to sell them at cost price (all set-up and ready to go). This will save you heaps. Here are a few stories to warm the heart.

CHARLIE'S STORY

Charlie, an Eastern Bearded Dragon, is one of my treasured success stories. He had been with us for over six months. Charlie was hit by a car and suffered a fractured jaw, fractured skull and a caudal brain case injury. He also had gravel rash all over the left side of his head. He was a very sick dragon when he came into care. Unfortunately for Charlie, he was very thin and dehydrated when he was originally rescued. This is quite common as Bearded Dragons would have to be one of the toughest animals alive – they can survive unimaginable injuries. It is quite likely that he was hit by the car several weeks before he was found as often they will crawl off and hide. They then come back out onto a road to warm up and this is when they are usually found as they are easier to catch. Poor Charlie had obviously been unable to eat due to his serious injuries.

As a result of Charlie's head injury he is now permanently blind in his left eye. His rehabilitation was centred around keeping his wounds clean and waiting for his mental state to return to normal. Then, we had to teach him to catch his own food - depth-perception is a big issue with one eye especially when you have to catch very fast-moving things. This was a very slow process but eventually he got the hang of it.

Once his accuracy [with catching live food] hit over 90% in his hospital enclosure, he was transferred into a larger, outside enclosure for pre-release observation. Here, he also excelled and after checking he had maintained his weight for a few weeks he was successfully released. The photo above is Charlie's parting photo as he went on his way back to the wild. Note: He looks a bit scruffy as he was finishing a shed at the time!

We wish you all the best Charlie.



PHOTO // A BIRD

Reptile Rescue & Rehabilitation (con't)...

BRUIZA AND GAZZA

Bruiza and Gazza are tiny Green Tree Snakes, weighing in at a whopping 4 and 5 grams respectively (about the weight of a tea spoon of sugar).

Both these guys came into care at about the same time after surviving cat attacks. They presented unique challenges as their treatment involved keeping their puncture wounds clean (not so hard) and administering intramuscular antibiotic injections every three days (very challenging). Now, try and picture restraining a very sore and very mobile shoelace and then trying not to puncture a lung with the needle!

I am pleased to report that both these guys recovered very well and were released back to where they came from. Good luck guys.

Photo Top Right "Bruiza"
Photo Bottom Right "Gazza"



FRANKIE'S STORY

Frankie joined us in late June after being attacked by a dog. He had sustained some nasty injuries including multiple open bite wounds, fractured ribs and a spinal injury. He was receiving antibiotics and pain killers for a month and was in the 'handle with care' category. His wounds were cleaned regularly as well. Frankie was not small, at over two meters long.

Despite his injuries, Frankie was a gentle soul, who had no inclination to be nasty. He was the most delightful python and an absolute pleasure to care for. Because of his spinal injuries, we did not take any photos of Frankie's wounds – his handling was strictly treatment, hygiene and wound care only. If you look closely directly above his head, you will see a very swollen body section with multiple bite wounds – he was covered in areas like this. Initially he required as much rest as possible, but as he recovered, he was placed into a larger enclosure for some exercise.



Reptile Rescue & Rehabilitation (con't)...

CHELSEA'S STORY

Chelsea is a female Eastern Water Dragon and came into care early May 2011. She was found after being entangled for some time in a wire fence. She had sustained full thickness wounds to both groins and under her belly. She also had a nasty deep wound on her back. She had obviously been caught for a while as she was very dehydrated, stressed and underweight.



Chelsea had extensive surgery to debride necrotic (dead) tissue from her legs and back for six weeks and received antibiotic injections every three days to prevent infection. We also cleaned, packed and dressed her wounds twice a day for many weeks in between her surgeries. As she healed, these were done daily and then third daily. Her mood also improved!

Below: Chelsea's wounds (note – these were taken a few weeks into her care as she was too stressed when she first arrived – they were much cleaner by this time)



PHOTOS // ANNETTE BIRD

Now, Chelsea is recovering well and her wounds have almost healed. With time, we are confident she will make a full recovery. See the photos below taken from early July 2011. Chelsea is now off her antibiotics and doesn't need dressings. But, she will stay with us until she sheds to make sure there won't be any issues, particularly as her wounds were in both groins, but all is looking very good for Chelsea. Chelsea will be released as soon as the weather warms up a bit for her (and she demonstrates a clean shed).



PHOTOS // ANNETTE BIRD

October update: the Water Dragon, Chelsea, was released last Saturday after months of work. She sat there for ages looking at us before she went. We were sad but happy to see her go back to where she belongs.

Coordinator Reports

Birds

I CONTINUE TO BE FASCINATED BY OUR BIRD LIFE. As early as July I had a few babies come in and this was confirmed by other carers with whom I had been talking. Add to that the fact the early arrival of my local Koels this year, by my calendar nearly three week earlier than usual, and it was decided that we were going to have frantic and hectic summer months and so we prepared accordingly.

As quickly as they came in, the number of babies reduced. Here on the Sunshine Coast at that time, we had some strong winds, which would have contributed to this situation. There should not have been babies around so early in the season, although perhaps the rain last summer, which created a plentiful supply of food, convinced our fauna to start early, as conditions were ready.

Now I have two sets of peewees nesting in a tree in my backyard. It has been fascinating to watch the babies develop – visible from my dining room table. Upon fledging it was very noticeable that if the babies lost track of mum and dad they came back to the nest and just sat on the same branch until one of their parents arrived. Once that happened they set out again. Is this some form of built-in survival mechanism? I will continue to monitor them.

Ailsa Watson



PHOTO // J HANGER

Echidnas

WE HAVE HAD A STEADY RUN OF ECHIDNAS COMING INTO CARE in the southern Queensland area and have been able to successfully rehabilitate many of these back to the wild.

Sadly, the Moreton Bay and Sunshine Coast region has seen a tremendous increase in the number of echidnas coming into care and the echidna carers in that area have been very busy.

Remember that we are now in 'puggle season' with many female echidnas carrying small young in their 'pouch'. Once they start to cut spines (ouch!), they will be left in a nursery burrow.

Please remember to check any road-kill echidnas as there may be a puggle with the body. Always check the surrounding area as well, as they are often flung from mum on impact. What to look for – a wriggly ball of Blu-Tak!

Many thanks to those members who braved a morning storm this month to attend the Echidna workshop at Underwood. It was great to be able to combine the workshops of both myself and Vicky Toomey and we had lots of enthusiastic members attend.

Karen Scott

Macropods

ANOTHER BUSY FEW MONTHS UNFORTUNATELY, with the rate of adult macropods being hit by cars still increasing. Thankfully we now have three more Trauma Carers trained and licensed by Queensland Health and this will certainly take some pressure of some of our existing Trauma Carers, particularly Trish and Roy.

Unfortunately I haven't been able to find a spare weekend to hold a macropod workshop but I promise, we will make this a priority for the first calendar in 2012. Don't forget though the Dr Fowler workshop in December being offered by Bribie & District Wildlife Rescue!

Karen Scott

Coordinator Reports continued...

Possums

GOLD COAST

AS THE END OF THE YEAR QUICKLY APPROACHES, IT FEELS AS IF MORE AND MORE AREAS, WHERE THERE WAS ONCE AN ABUNDANCE OF LIFE, have unfortunately been bulldozed, leaving hardly a tree in sight. For the animals that manage to survive the devastation, the search for somewhere to find food and shelter seems to have led to an increase in road traumas for our possum species. Sadly many that we have come across have been too badly injured to pull through. These animals that we call 'common' will no longer exist if we don't slow down. It is important in spite of the busy lifestyles we lead today, to be aware that there is so much around us, and to get somewhere that bit earlier, is not worth the loss of any life.

On a more positive note, it has been an incredibly busy time for orphans, and with the wonderful care that our carers have provided through this period, most of the babies have survived. This year I feel carers have really communicated well with one another and we have all shared our knowledge, thereby gaining better outcomes and healthier possums.

It is a wonderful experience to be sharing the co-ordinating with Robyn Braniff and Clare Boyd, as their help to Eleanor and myself has lightened the load tremendously. So thank you girls, you are fantastic.

As the end of the season approaches, we can all take a deep breath and have a well-deserved break.

Natalie Rasmussen



PHOTO // K SCOTT

ATTENTION POSSUM CARERS

Correct nutrition in early weaning

The desirability of early weaning of possums and other hand-reared animals (for whatever reasons) must be balanced against the very real risk of nutritional deficiencies arising from the removal of sufficient milk from the diet. "Natural" diets consisting of limited browse species and some fruit and vegetables are generally very low in protein, compared with their bulk, and are likely to have inadequate calcium content to meet the demands of a rapidly growing young animal. Early weaning diets must provide adequate protein and calcium to avoid general malnourishment and clinically significant calcium deficiencies which will lead to broken or malformed bones. Diets must include a calcium-rich supplement, such as milk or milk powder, and a rich (and preferably diverse) source of protein, such as nuts, insects, egg, and high-protein supplement.

Eleanor Hanger

Coordinator Reports continued...

Koalas

THE WINTER MONTHS ARE GENERALLY WHAT WE CALL 'TRAUMA SEASON' IN THE KOALA WORLD. On the Gold Coast, we were blessed with fewer koalas coming into care from car hits and dog attacks than we have in recent years, but sadly they were still a common occurrence. Sadly though, the Moreton Bay and Sunshine Coast region were harder hit which kept the koala rescue groups in that area very busy.

The colder months are also the time when we rescue more sick koalas, ones that are not doing well when eucalypt leaf is not at its prime.

We are very close to finalising our koala information brochure for the southern Gold Coast suburbs. This was made possible by a very generous grant from The Pines Shopping Centre. The funding enabled us to purchase more koala rescue equipment and will fund the printing and distribution of an informative brochure for residents on the local wildlife population, including what to do if they see a sick or injured koala. There is also detailed information about the diseases and struggles that they face. We are very excited that this brochure is part of a joint project between Wildcare, Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and the Gold Coast City Council. The GCCC have recently announced the commencement of a Koala Management Plan for the Currumbin, Elanora and Tallebudgera area which is a great initiative of the Council and we look forward to working closely with the Council and CWS in this project.

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.

Also a special thank you to Nurse Nicole from Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital. There have been many a day when Nicole has been late for work because she has been waiting for a critically injured koala to arrive from the Gold Coast to be transported north.

I have had a wonderful eight months 'off' from caring for koala joeys, but I do have to thank the other koala carers who have taken the few Gold Coast youngsters that needed hand-raising. Thank you guys!

We will get another koala workshop scheduled for early 2012 as well as a rescue workshop for those who are interested in getting involved with rescuing koalas. If anyone is really keen to do this, please email me and I will do my best to get a date scheduled.

Karen Scott



PHOTO // K SCOTT

Photo Above: 'Fleay' being released back to the wild at Burleigh Heads. This was the third time she was released - twice before with her mother 'Joy Rosemary' and now on her own as a young adult. Fingers crossed she stays safe...

Coordinator Reports continued...

Small Mammals

THERE HAVEN'T BEEN AS MANY BANDICOOTS COMING INTO CARE IN RECENT MONTHS although we are now just around the corner from 'Antechinus Season'. I hope that this year the Sunshine Coast carers are not inundated with as many as they were last year!

These are an amazing group of animals and hopefully after the Bandicoot and Small Mammal workshop we will have a few more 'small critter carers' for this season. If you are keen to turn your caring skills to something small, quick and fast-growing, please let Vicky or myself know.

I have had an amazing opportunity this past month to raise a litter of five Brush-tailed Phascogales. What amazing little critters! Sadly they came into care in very poor condition, after having been held in care by inexperienced, but keen, members of the public. They are now doing amazingly well. We do not receive many of these into care, so upon their arrival there was a quick call to Vicky for her care notes from the last litter. We have also received

two other youngsters as well and all are growing rapidly and shouldn't be far off release. Hopefully with the information that we are able to collate from this season's young, we will be able to formulate a Progress Chart to help in future.

Karen Scott



PHOTOS // K SCOTT

Brush-tailed Phascogale

Meeting of Groups

Karen Scott and Tracy Paroz

WILDCARE RECENTLY ATTENDED A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVES/COMMITTEES OF ALL WILDLIFE CARE GROUPS IN SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND. This meeting was at the request of Wildcare and was facilitated by the RSPCA wildlife representatives.

The meeting was a great opportunity for care groups to form a stronger bond with QWRC and the RSPCA and most importantly to formulate a list of priorities for wildlife care groups. There were a number of priorities raised and we feel strongly that the meeting has paved the way for groups to open the lines of communication and work more closely together.

Most of our members would have received the regular newsletter 'R n R' from the Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (QWRC) either by email or post. As noted in the last newsletter, non-QWRC members will no longer receive the newsletter. If you have not as yet joined QWRC, I would strongly encourage you to do so. QWRC is the State Council for wildlife rehabilitators in Queensland. It is imperative that all wildlife carers support the Council so that they will have a stronger voice which will ultimately benefit all wildlife carers and our wildlife. If you haven't joined as yet, membership is only \$20 per year. Please support the Council by downloading a membership application form at www.qwrc.org.au and becoming actively involved with the wildlife industry.

Notes from an Enthusiastic Naturalist

Eleanor Hanger

WHILE SPENDING A FEW MOMENTS ON THE DECK WITH A CUP OF COFFEE, I noticed a bird partially concealed in the vegetation. It appeared significantly larger than the little thornbills and Red-browed firetails that had been feeding in the area.

Was it a Bower bird?

Changing angles to try to get a better view, I noticed that it was quite dark, but as I couldn't see the beak, chest or tail, identification was difficult.

Was it a male Bower bird in the process of getting its adult plumage?

Then I noticed a Brown thornbill apparently flying very close to it and away. This behaviour occurred repeatedly. Finally the larger bird moved sufficiently for me to see that it was a cuckoo and a young one. It made occasional short flights of less than a metre in amongst the foliage and when it stopped it kept opening and closing its mouth.

With mixed feelings, my excitement tempered with sadness, I watched that little thornbill work hard to feed the hungry baby cuckoo and wondered if it ever got a chance to rear its own young. Meanwhile, in the distance, I could hear the call of a Fan-tailed Cuckoo. Was it the mother, I wondered?



PHOTO // J HANGER

Education Report

Karen Scott

THIS HAS BEEN A BUSY FEW MONTHS WITHIN WILDCARE FOR OUR TRAINERS.

There have been many members who have taken advantage of the reptile workshops being offered by Annette and Chris. They have been well received and hopefully we will gain some more much-needed reptile carers – just in time for the busy reptile season! Thank you Annette and Chris for all the work that you have put into the training workshops and into mentoring carers.

We have had to reduce the number of workshops this term as one of our Brisbane trainers, Laura Reeder, is overseas until early 2012. We have a limited number of trainers available to teach some of our workshops so please be patient if we are not able to offer all of the workshops in each location. We do need to find alternative trainers to help with delivering some of our training workshops. If you have been an active member of Wildcare and are an experienced carer and would be interested in delivering the Orientation program, please let me know. I would also dearly love to hear from anyone who would be able to deliver the First Aid for Native Wildlife (Basic Course). This would require someone with veterinary nursing experience/knowledge and have a good background with rescuing most species of local wildlife. I would also love to hear from anyone who has raised orphaned mammals of various species, who may be able to deliver the Introduction to Caring for Orphaned Mammals workshop. If you feel that you would be able to assist with any of these workshops, I would love to hear from you.

Unfortunately work and other commitments of our trainers have meant that we have not been able to offer many workshops in the Sunshine Coast area. I would encourage members in that area to take advantage of the specialised training workshops coming up, that are being offered by other groups, particularly workshops being conducted by Dr Anne Fowler. Workshops by Dr Fowler are recognised within Wildcare and are countered towards your training for your Permit requirements.

We are pleased to let members know that we have been able to find an economical option to have some of our training manuals printed at low cost. We currently have a number of

training manuals already available to purchase including Introduction to Caring for Orphaned Mammals, Macropods, Echidnas, Bandicoots & Small Mammals, Native Birds, Gliders and Possums. We will shortly have the reptile and koala notes available in printed form as well. The notes are printed in black and white only to reduce cost and are available for purchase at \$8 each. If you have attended one of these training workshops and would like a hard copy, please email education@wildcare.org.au so that we can organise this for you. You will still receive a CD at each workshop with the full notes in PDF (full colour) which also includes some other documents as well. We hope that this will help those members who like to have a hard copy of the material on hand. I must admit that I find it handy to be able to put all of the PDF training notes on my iPad!

We are grateful that we were able to offer two sessions of the Wildlife Anatomy & Physiology workshop with Dr Tania Bishop this term. Both sessions were booked out quickly and unfortunately a few members still missed out. Hopefully we will be able to schedule another workshop in early 2012 for those people. These workshops are a wonderful way to further your knowledge.

And lastly, don't forget that the Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference is being held in Townsville in July 2012. Make sure that you check out the website at www.awrc.com.au – I hope to see you there.

PHOTO // A BIRD



Date Claimers...



DR ANNE FOWLER, who is a much respected wildlife veterinarian with amazing training skills, will be visiting South-east Queensland in coming months.

The following workshop dates have been confirmed by Wildcare and other wildlife care groups in the region. These workshops are open to wildlife carers from all groups and I would encourage you to take advantage of this wonderful training opportunity. Many of us have already booked in and marked our diaries!

10TH AND 11TH DECEMBER 2011 – BRIBIE & DISTRICT WILDLIFE RESCUE

Workshop will be held at Ningi

10th – Husbandry & Diseases of Native Birds

11th – Husbandry & Diseases of Possums and Macropods

To book email gsarthur@bigpond.net.au or telephone 0400 836 592

Cost is \$25 per day which includes morning and afternoon tea and lunch.

11TH AND 12TH FEBRUARY 2012 – WILDCARE AUSTRALIA INC

Venue and topics to be confirmed – details will be emailed to all members in December.

Suggestions for topics welcome. One day will be focused on mammals.

Cost yet to be confirmed.

24TH AND 25TH MARCH 2012 – WILVOS

Venue will be on Sunshine Coast.

Topics to be confirmed but will include session on burns.

Cost yet to be confirmed. Once confirmed we will email members with details.

Koala Conservation Plan *for Elanora-Currumbin Waters*

Wildcare is proud to be involved with the Koala Conservation Plan initiated by the Gold Coast City Council.

The project aims to formulate a plan to conserve the koala population in the Elanora-Currumbin Waters area. The project will include installation of new road signs in a number of key areas, undertaking koala surveys, mapping of koala habitat and conducting health profiles on koalas rescued from that area.

Wildcare will be working with the Gold Coast City Council's Koala Conservation Team along with the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital during the Project.

This area is the most common area where Wildcare rescues sick and injured koalas and we are pleased to see such a pro-active measure being taken by local Council to help conserve the existing koala population.

PHOTO // K SCOTT



Photo Above - "Simonee", a young female koala that was attacked by a dog and sustained a fractured femur. After many months in care she was released back to Elanora. It is hoped that the Koala Conservation Plan will help to protect koalas such as Simonee.

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.



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.



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