

# WildNews



ISSUE 83

*Education*

**Rodents  
Native or Not?**

**News**

**Joey Pouches**

*Discover...*

**All News & Events**

 Species Coordinators' Reports





# President's Report



By Karen Scott

**Welcome to another edition of WildNews.**

**I'm not sure about everyone else but I am feeling particularly dismayed at the state of our environment and the resulting impact on our wildlife.**

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I know that there are many people in the community, like us, who are doing whatever they can to protect the ecosystems on which our wildlife depends for survival, but sometimes it seems as though we are taking one step forward, only to go two steps backward.

Everywhere we turn, there is more development and tree clearing. It has become increasingly difficult for wildlife carers to source native browse for the animals in our care, let alone to find suitable release sites where they will be safe.

My social media newsfeeds are filled with online petitions to protect the environment and various species, with news stories of cruelty to domestic animals as well as livestock and wildlife. It is easy to feel as though we are losing the battle. Should we just give up? That would certainly be the easy answer. I do feel that the only way we can continue to fight is to engage every person we meet. Take the time to speak with friends, work colleagues, family and in fact any person who will listen, about our native wildlife, the dire predicament they are in, and the very real possibility that in our lifetime some local species will become extinct. I encourage you to get involved with your local community Facebook groups. This is a great way of educating residents in your local area. Continue to promote emergency contacts, such as the Wildcare Hotline and the RSPCA Queensland

number, so that people know who to ring when they find an animal in distress.

Thank you to all of our members who work tirelessly to protect our wildlife. Your dedication and commitment are inspiring.

Our 2018 AGM will be held on the 11th August at Nerang and I hope that some of you will be able to attend. This is a great opportunity to meet other members and to hear about what has been happening within Wildcare during the past year.

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## OUR MISSION

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

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Cover photo: David Clode @ Unsplash

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# A Warm Welcome to our New Members

## Wildcare Australia welcomed the following new members:

Rosalind Cairns; Cara Manning and Benjamin Penman; Teresa Muldoon; Jessie Hughes; Nicky Convine; Rowena Bibby; Lindsay Howard-Smith; Ana Carolina Garcia and Anthony White; Karin and Peter Machell and family; Leesa Robinson; Helena Bilic; Rangite Haara, Shontelle te Haara and family; Heidi Dahlenburg; Jan Winton; Rebecca Little; Kira Sandford; Patricia O'Mullane; Kirsten Thompson; Susan Lucke-Wilmott; Cori-Nicole Wong, Brandon Raynor and family; Kym Daff; Maxine Little; Kirsten and Richard Reid and family; Michelle Pearson; Rea Mertens; Tamasin Chugg; Janelle Watts; Brooklyn Hare; Alexa Goslin; Chloe Frizzell; Maddison Hutchinson; Ryan Davies; Christine Walsh; Darrren Smith and Naomi Allsop; Camila Plaza; Paul Bennett; Sharyn Wineberg; Daniel Collins; Jason Coe; Cherie Brent-Schuller; Veronica Warren and Melody Thomas; Emma Gray and Brody Brookes; Hannah Smith; Gail and Katrina Barrett; Basil and Margaret Burne; Lisa Ilgner and Peter Aust; Lochlyn Figgins; Jodie Brown, Michael Ahern and family; Jane Osborn; Chloe Dalton; Inaki Maiztegui; Driely Liporaes; Brooke Morgan; George Sourrys; Kerri Timms; Madeleine Davis; Carolyn Bock; Erina Forres and Andrew Arlington; Hayden Champion; Jo Cabale; Lisa Walton and Kerry O'Shea; Stefanie Little; Jess Grady; Janette Taylor; Rebecca Harders; Andrew Morrell; Laura Rouse; Jenny Campbell; Rebecca Fewings; Mark and Linda Ambrose; Iain MacPhail; John Knights; Tara-Jayne Anderson and Yvonne Beckman; Jenny Lamb; Kim Earle; Louise Henshall; Lyle McKinney-Smith, Danielle Sinclair and family; Amanda Green; Nikki Hernan; Susan Kachaniwsky; Georgina Claridge; Kasey Downing; Scott Finselbach; Sarah Engelhard; Tamsyn Minehan; Emily Vincent and Oliver Straton-McDonald; Erin Moffat; Robbie Black; Nikki Mikula; Eri Sasaki; Chris Lo; Courtney Muss; Shina Aubrey; Desiree Sheehan; Hikari Nakaya; Sally Robertson; Shayne Kake and Brioni McDonald; Lynda Penney; Lily Allen; Sharron Lowe; Wendy and Patty Sierra; Benji Crow; Charles and Melissa Wong; Maya Sapir; Trudy and Tony Mason and family; Carolyn Rea-Francis; Tracy and Cameron Bartholomew and family; Serena and Daniel Kang and family; Georgie Tuffley; Fiona Byres; Megan Randall; Henk Bas ten Brinke and Priscilla Warren; Shayne Hirsh; Nicola Burt; Lauren Gilchrist; Hayley Coster; Mimi Macquarie; Gina Vains; Kerri Vains.

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

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

## NEXT ISSUES SUBMISSIONS DATES

**Issue 84 : 15th August**

**Issue 85 : 15th October**

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



## Education Report

Thank you to all of our current rescuers and carers who have continued to expand their knowledge and improve their skills by attending training workshops. Registrations for most workshops have been close to capacity and it is great to see such enthusiasm for learning.

People attend the Wildcare training workshops for a variety of reasons including:-

- Wishing to undertake training to become a registered wildlife carer and care for animals at home;
- Wishing to further their knowledge, to improve their experience in volunteering at a wildlife hospital or facility;
- To aid in study opportunities, including TAFE courses;
- To gain more knowledge to assist in wildlife management employment roles;
- To further their skills and improve their job prospects; and
- Members just simply wishing to learn more about living harmoniously with our native wildlife.

Although not everyone will take the plunge and become an active rescuer and carer, everyone who takes away a little more knowledge and understanding of our native wildlife is helping to protect them. By sharing this knowledge, we can help to educate others and hopefully, encourage people to appreciate our amazing natural environment.

We are currently finalizing our next Education Calendar and hope that all active rescuers and carers will find something that is relevant to their level of experience and knowledge.

This year we have been fortunate to be able to offer two advanced workshops which were sponsored once again by the Brisbane City Council. Dr Robyn Stenner has presented three workshops for Wildcare members this year including Possums (Advanced), Adult Koala Rehabilitation and First Aid for Wildlife (Advanced). We are grateful that Council has afforded us this opportunity, as it means that we are able to provide the training free of charge to members. A special thank you, also, to the RSPCA Wacol for allowing us to use their auditorium free of charge.

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

The 2018 Annual General Meeting for Wildcare Australia Inc. is scheduled to be held on Saturday 11th August 2018.

Information regarding the AGM and a call for nominations for Management Committee positions will be forwarded via email to all members in early July 2018.

All current financial members are invited to attend and we look forward to seeing you there.

## Environment and Sustainability Award – Ricky Johns

By Michael Wilson

**On the 23rd of January 2018 Redlands City celebrated the Australia Day Awards at the Alexandra Hills Hotel Function Centre.**

The awards were for multiple categories and the evening was hosted by the Redland City Council CEO Andrew Chesterman. Wildcare member, Ricky Johns, was nominated alongside others for the Environment and Sustainability Award. It was the first one announced. As we sat there Ricky went quiet. The anticipation was starting to build. The nominations were read out one by one and both Ricky and her guests waited nervously to see whose name would be called as the winner. Without notice, the name was read out, Patricia Johns. Ricky won the Environment and Sustainability Award for Redland City 2018 for her dedication to the Environment, the community, the Wildcare organisation, the Redlands 24 hour Wildlife Network, for educating new carers and being a pivotal point for knowledge and advice.

Ricky has been caring for possums and gliders for over 35 years in Redland City. She was a founding member of Wildcare Australia Inc. and continues today as a key member and educator for new possum carers along with Eleanor Hanger, I can't think of many people who would not have met her.

Ricky played an integral role in the creation of the Redland City Council's 24 Hour Wildlife Rescue Service. When this Wildlife Rescue Service started in 2001 it was run by a small group of local carers and rescuers in partnership with Redlands City Council. As well as caring for sick and injured wildlife, Ricky is a volunteer with this pager network, fielding calls for information and assistance, organizing rescues or attending to them herself. Ricky is also a valued member of the 'Bushcare Volunteer community, and has actively participated in events and activities across the city.

Ricky teaches the Wildcare possum workshops along with her good friend and caring colleague, Eleanor, and for many years has been mentoring new carers, always going above and beyond, to ensure carers, both new and existing, are supported and well educated to provide the highest standard of care.

Her dedication to Australian wildlife is second to none and her passion is shown in the quality of her care of orphaned ringtail possums, with which she continues to assist, in between looking after her grandchildren.

Over years of working with many species Ricky has acquired considerable knowledge and has built up the trust of all of those with whom she has come into contact.

She is held in very high esteem by the Environment and Education officers at the Redland City Council and was able to negotiate a fodder farm for the Redlands' carers. Ricky also assisted in the first planting of food trees in the fodder farm. When you are next at the Victoria Point fodder farm remember it was started because of Ricky's passion and dedication to wildlife in this beautiful part of Queensland. Ricky is an inspiration to carers and it has been a privilege to care alongside her.

Join me in congratulating Ricky for her outstanding achievements over many years.



Ricky Johns with her daughter, Dr Tracey Johns, after having won the Redland City Australia Day Environmental and Sustainability Award.





## Help!

*By Judy Swanton*

Do you have enthusiasm, a positive attitude and a spare two to three hours per week or fortnight?

The Wildcare hotline ( Wildcare's emergency call telephone line) is looking for three or four members to join the hotline team in readiness for the next busy season that will start as Spring approaches. There are currently 45 shifts per month not covered and it would be great to reduce this, so we can take more calls and organise more rescues.

Now is a good time to start as it is generally quieter, allowing operators more time to research answers in between calls. Training is provided and one on one support provided in the initial stages of taking calls. Volunteers have ongoing access to peer support and regular information updates.

For further information or to express your interest, please contact the hotline coordinator, Judy Swanton: [hotline@wildcare.org.au](mailto:hotline@wildcare.org.au)

## Joey Pouches

*By Karen Scott*

Our joey carers have been incredibly blessed over recent months by the kindness shown by members of the community, as well as some of our own members, who have been making joey pouches and knitted nests.

Many of our members are much better at caring for wildlife than they are at sewing and the beautifully sewn, knitted and crocheted items are an incredible help to our busy wildlife carers.

Thank you to the volunteers from Sewing for Charity Australia who sewed about 800 joey pouches of various sizes and knitted and crocheted around 40 nests.

Thank you to our very own Lyn Shorthouse who whipped up nearly 500 pouches on her own, as well as Kelly Withers who sewed nearly 200 beautiful pouches. It is clear that there was so much love and care put into these pouches and our carers have been very impressed with how well they were made.

A special thank you to Bronwen Zande and her mother, who have been crocheting not only nests but ducklings as well. Bronwen donates countless nests both directly to Wildcare, as well as to STAR Stitches for distribution to carers throughout Australia.

Thank you to the volunteers from STAR Stitches for Tamborine Animal Rescues for their ongoing support, sewing pouches and producing other items for the carers of Wildcare and other wildlife rescue groups around the country.

Thank you, also, to many other lovely ladies in the community, who often post in a bundle of pouches made with love.

Our wildlife and our volunteers greatly appreciate your kindness.



## Flighted Bird Rescue Workshop

By Angela Bell

On the 25th March, Pelican & Seabird Rescue Inc. (PaSR) and Wildcare Australia Inc. presented a great workshop on the intricacies of catching flighted birds (i.e. injured birds that are still able to fly). The topics covered included, the use of leg snares and d-nets, how to apply these methods safely, in what situations and for what bird species.

Some of the reasons flighted birds need help are leg and beak entanglements caused by various human materials and being caught by, or having ingested fishing hooks. They can be quite a challenge to catch, so the information and training provided by Hammy, Sal and David will hopefully be invaluable for the wildlife rescuers who attended. They will now have the skills to help more birds in the future.

It was a fantastic day and we thank Pelican & Seabird Rescue Inc. and Wildcare. Having such opportunities for quality learning, giving us more ways to help our native wildlife is truly appreciated.



Photo: E. Hanger



Photo: A. Bell

## STAR Stitchers for Tamborine Animal

By --

STAR (Stitchers for Tamborine Animal Rescues) is a local group of Mountain women and men providing life-sustaining pouches and other items to help in the care of orphaned, injured and sick Australian wildlife until they can be returned to the wild. To date, we have made more than 10,000 items which are given free to trained and registered wildlife carers. These are dedicated volunteers who fund the care of their rescue animals themselves, including having to buy, for example, expensive specialised milk products.

STAR provides a range of items to make their lives easier – these can include: wooden stands to enable macropods (kangaroos, wallabies etc.) to feel safe while still able to graze - as they would in their mother's pouch; sewn pouches of all sizes, thicknesses and fabrics for all kinds of native wildlife - kangaroos, pademelons, wallabies, possums, sugar-gliders, koalas, wombats and birds; bat burritos and wraps; knitted and crocheted nests and caves; lined transport baskets; and drawstring bags. Each animal in care can require up to 30 pouches, as they may need changing with each feed, and demand is great, as some carers have more than ten animals. Our pouches are designed with practicality in mind, so they wash and dry quickly.

All money raised by STAR goes directly to the welfare of the wild animals – we have no core costs to fund. If you would like to donate to our critical work with wildlife, and the smallest donation is always welcome, our bank details are: BSB 084835 Account # 680873963 Account name STAR. You can find us on Facebook at STAR Stitchers for Tamborine Animal Rescues, and our email address is [starstitcherstamborine@gmail.com](mailto:starstitcherstamborine@gmail.com)





## Vale Michele Venables

By Karen Scott

### **Wildcare has recently been the recipient of a very generous bequest from Michele's Estate.**

Michele was only 58 when she passed away in January 2017 after a very short battle with pancreatic cancer. Michele was passionate about many charitable causes during her life, including wildlife, domestic animals and homelessness in our communities, and she very kindly left sizeable donations to those causes close to her heart.

Michele's closest friends have shared with us a little about her, which demonstrates the breadth of her compassion. Whilst travelling through Valdora on the Sunshine Coast several years ago, Michele came across a dog running in a state of distress with barbed wire twisted around its neck. After managing to secure the dog in her car she took it directly to her own veterinarian and covered the veterinary costs associated with trying to treat it. Sadly it wasn't able to be saved but at the end of its life, Michele provided the dog with the care, love and attention that it deserved.

Michele took on many rescue dogs and stray cats over the years and provided each of them with love and kindness for the remainder of their lives. Michele had an amazing way with animals and many were blessed to have become a part of her life.

Michele was also heavily involved with youth programs, another cause close to her heart.

Several years ago Michele visited a display and met some of our Wildcare members. She was impressed by the work being undertaken by the wildlife volunteers and it was their dedication that inspired Michele to leave Wildcare a bequest in her Will. The donation from Michele's Estate was a very generous \$50,000. It was Michele's wish that part of the funds be utilised to assist those wildlife volunteers who contributed significantly to wildlife over many years so as to help ease the financial burden associated with their work. The remainder of the donation is being used to purchase rescue and rehabilitation equipment which is loaned to our wildlife volunteers, as most of it would be outside their financial reach.

This financial assistance has already been graciously accepted by some of our very long-standing volunteers and has been a tremendous support to them and enabled them to continue their rehabilitation work.

We are deeply appreciative of the fact that Michele chose to honour our volunteers in this way. Our sincerest thanks also to Michele's close friend, Vicki, for assisting with the bequest and for sharing a little about Michele and her passion for all animals.

## Gold Coast Catchment Association

By Rosalinde Brinkman

### **Citizen Science is all about studying and monitoring the environment. It's still hands-on but it's a little more about science and less about getting your hands dirty.**

The main objective is to make science more accessible for the community and to produce valuable information so we know where more work is required. The Association would like to increase communication between scientists and citizens and make data more accessible to the public. Data gained from these projects are as valuable as those obtained by scientists themselves! We currently have the following citizen science programs up and running:

- PlatypusWatch
- Macro-invertebrate sampling
- Water quality monitoring

All programs are being organised throughout the Gold Coast and we provide free training for each program to our community members to ensure reliable data as well as to up skill our volunteers. These programs are fun, hands-on and all ages included. We are seeking interest from community groups or individuals to come along and help collect vital data on the Gold Coast.

Please contact: [info@goldcoastcatchment.org](mailto:info@goldcoastcatchment.org) for more information on training dates and citizen science days!

# Review of Protected Animals Management Framework *By Karen Scott*

The Queensland Government is currently reviewing the way in which commercial and recreational wildlife licensing is undertaken in Queensland.

There are a number of proposals being put forward that will have a significant impact on people who keep protected animals, particularly as pets.

If you hold a Recreational Wildlife License, I strongly suggest that you read through the documents carefully and complete the online survey and/or consider putting in a submission.

Information can be found at the link below:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/wildlife-permits/framework-review>

## Coordinator Reports

### KOALAS

*By Karen Scott*

Recent months has seen a welcome decline in the number of koalas in South-east Queensland requiring rescue through Wildcare.

Sadly though, the colder months are typically a period when we receive more rescue calls for sick koalas and those hit by cars. As with all of our nocturnal animals, they tend to be out and about when many of us are travelling on the roads to and from work. Please remember to be even more diligent during the short days and keep an eye out for our wildlife that may be close to the edge of the road.

If you have not already taken the time to read about the recent conservation measures regarding koalas in the Queensland Koala Expert Panel Report, I encourage you to do so. Information regarding the history of the Expert Panel and the recommendations can be found at the following link.

<https://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/wildlife/koalas/review-conservation-measures.html>

### REPTILES *By Lewis McKillop*

With the cooler months now here, the number of reptiles coming into our care is slowing down. We had a late rush come through in the autumn months, and many of these animals will require care over the winter months, until temperatures warm up again.

Thankfully, we were able to release this bearded dragon before the temperatures dropped. He spent over two months in care following a vehicle hit that left him with a broken pelvis. Thanks to his rescuers, Currumbin Wildlife Hospital, and his awesome carer, he is now back out in his Highland Park home, and will hopefully stay away from cars.

While we are fortunate to have several amazing reptile carers, we are very short of non-venomous snake rescuers. If you have an interest in reptiles, and would like to know more about snake rescue, please get in touch with me.

For those members who haven't attended a reptile workshop recently, we would encourage you to come along to our newly-revamped *Intro to Caring for Lizards* and *Intro to Caring for Snakes* workshops. Look out for them both in the next Education Calendar.



*Photo: Lewis McKillop*



## REPTILE NEWS *By Brigitte Blakeway*

### Some of the reptiles and an amphibian that found themselves in care in recent months

#### Meet the skinks



#### **Renji the Pink-tongued Skink (*Cyclodomorphus gerrardii*) – Cat Attack**

Renji came into care after a cat attack up on Tamborine Mountain. He had some puncture wounds when taken to Currumbin Wildlife Hospital (CWH) where he was treated and placed on a course of antibiotics and pain relief.

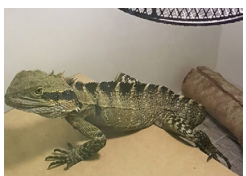
Pink Tongue Skinks prefer to have a diet of snails and slugs and Renji decided he was not going to eat at CWH, so he was placed into care with a carer who was able to provide a more natural diet. Plump, juicy snails and the odd slug brought an end to his refusal to eat and aided in a quick recovery and a good weight gain. **Outcome: Released**



#### **Dory the Eastern Blue-tongue Skink (*Tiliqua scincoides*) – Pool Find**

Dory was discovered in a pool and brought straight to CWH for treatment. When he was stabilized he was sent off to be looked after until his course of antibiotics was completed. Dory was full of character and while in care often displayed his big blue tongue, often chasing away the hand that fed him. **Outcome: Released.**

#### Dragon Drama



#### **Eastern Water Dragon (*Itellagama lesueurii*) – Chronic Tail Injury**

Eastern Water Dragons have kept me busy in the last few months. This dragon had a chronic tail injury which required amputation. Because reptiles have a slower healing rate, he went into care for six weeks until the wound healed over, and the sutures could be removed. He is one of the more placid water dragons in care and has been a delightful patient. **Outcome: Released.**



#### **Eastern Water Dragon (*Itellagama lesueurii*) - Entrapment**

Captain Hook found himself in a spot of bother. He was trapped in a chainwire fence and while trying to escape suffered wounds to the back legs. Unfortunately, this is a common injury for these dragons - entrapments in chainwire fences. In care he was on a regime of antibiotics and pain medication. He did not lose his ability to eat at all, and had quite a substantial appetite, as well as a tendency to destroy his enclosure. He also had an old injury which had caused the loss of the tip of his tail and the regrowth of cartilage had formed a curl-shaped hook – hence the name! **Outcome: Released.**

#### Python Perfect



#### **M.J. the Carpet Python (*Morelia spilota*) – de-gloving injury.**

M.J. found himself entrapped and unfortunately in his attempt to get free suffered a de-gloving injury on the tip of his tail. He is being kept in care to feed him up, to see whether this injury will impede his ability to shed. M.J, happily snacked away on large rats and made a nice weight gain. After a recheck of the tail he had a hiccup that saw him back into care. His first shed proved a little tricky as the tail tip was still quite raw. M.J., who is very inquisitive and the perfect rehabilitation patient, will stay in care over the winter period, as he needs to shed again to make sure it comes away freely, however he will be first up for release come spring. Wish him well. **Outcome: Still in care.**

#### Frog Legs



#### **Green Tree Frog (*Litoria caerulea*) – Leg issue**

Fremo was having trouble remembering that he has four limbs. He came into care, was put on pain medication and was carefully monitored to see if his back leg would once again be a functional part of his body. Fremo is a very hungry, green tree frog who loves anything that moves, and eats everything on his dinner plate. The good news is, that slowly the leg is catching up with the rest of his body and is gaining strength and function again. **Outcome: Released.**

# Native or Not

By Natalie Richardson

**DID YOU KNOW** that Australia is home to many species of native rodents (native mice and rats) some of which are found nowhere else in the world? South-east Queensland has several species of native rodents, including the Swamp Rat (*Rattus lutreolus*).

Native rodents are protected species and sadly are often confused with non-native species, such as the introduced Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*), Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) and the House Mouse (*Mus musculus*), and are killed as a result.

South-east Queensland is also home to several species of dasyurids (members of the family Dasyuridae: Quolls, Antechinus, Planigales, Phascogales and Dunnarts), which are native carnivorous marsupials, often referred to as 'marsupial mice', though in fact they are not mice at all. Small dasyurids are also often victims of mistaken identity. It is tragic that a number of these amazing critters, both babies and adults, are killed as a result, as they are thought to be feral rats or mice. Like all native animals, they fill unique niches in the environment, and play their own vital part in healthy, balanced ecosystems.

Correct identification of native and non-natives rodents can be made by using a few key features, however "cuteness level", tail length and face shape are not decisive points for identification. Each species of rodent (and dasyurid) has a foot-pad pattern unique to itself. Tail skin patterning is also different among rodents. There are some other features which can be utilised to confirm whether a rodent is native or not, but feet and tail patterns, if evaluated correctly, can be some of the simplest external features for clues to identification.

There is a common belief that, if a rodent has a very long tail or its tail is longer than its body, it must be a feral/introduced, non-native species. This is NOT correct! Many species of Australian native rodents have longer-than-body length tails, and some of the most commonly occurring examples of this in SEQ are the Melomys - both the Fawn-footed Melomys (*Melomys cervinipes*) and Grassland Melomys (*Melomys burtoni*), also known as "mosaic-tailed rats", due to the distinctive patterning of their tail skin. Of the dozens of indigenous rodent species in Australia, the Swamp Rat (*Rattus lutreolus*) is the only one that has a discernibly shorter-than-body-length tail, though this is only truly evident as they mature to adulthood.

Many rodent species can look quite similar at first glance, and can be especially difficult to identify from a photo, particularly when the lighting, angles and quality of the picture may not show the animal's features as they truly are. It is essential to consider all the identifying features and any information about the circumstances surrounding the orphaning of babies, to help with identification. However the reality is, that many species simply cannot be identified with 100% certainty when very young, and they need to be raised with a 'wait and see' approach until they can be positively identified.

Care of young orphan rodents is generally the same for all species, until they start to reach the weaning age and are transferring onto solid foods. From then on diets vary among species. Another important consideration when rehabilitating native rodents is their differing habitat use.

If you are unsure of the species, please don't guess. Arrange to have them transferred to a wildlife hospital or experienced small mammal carer. Remember also, that if the animal appears sick or injured, it needs to go to a veterinarian as soon as possible, just like any other animal (native or not).

Non-native rodents often get reported, as they are found sick from rat bait poisoning. These animals should be humanely euthanased as soon as possible, both to minimise further suffering to that individual and to help prevent secondary poisoning, which can occur when other animals eat the ailing or dead baited animals.

Countless numbers of native rodents and dasyurids are killed each year just through our own wildlife network, because of misinformation and misidentification. Please don't rush in and make assumptions on identification. It is better to use the "wait and see" approach, check all the facts using a reputable field guide, such as the Field Companion to the Mammals of Australia edited by Steve Van Dyck, Ian Gynther and Andrew Baker, consult with someone experienced and skilled in the identification of rodents and dasyurids, and be absolutely positive of the identification before any decisions are made.



A juvenile Swamp Rat (*Rattus lutreolus*) who was successfully raised through to release, after coming into care as an orphaned baby with its eyes still closed. Photo: Angela Bell.





## Tadpole Tales

*By Jenny Campbell*

**It isn't often you find yourself caring for a few hundred Green Tree Frog tadpoles.**

Our resident male frog, Richard, who had been living in the rainwater tank for about nine years, attracted a lovely girlfriend to our yard back in January. Over a period of six hours one night, Richard and his egg-bearing belle had a croaky discussion about whether or not our accidental twin ponds were a good place to lay. Richard repeatedly assured her they were, and eventually she jumped down off the brick wall to check them out. The next morning both ponds had a healthy deposit of eggs, which were evenly distributed between them. The 'ponds' were deep wells of rainwater which had gathered in a sinking tarpaulin we had placed over a broken outdoor spa bath. A nice layer of detritus had settled in the bottom from surrounding plants.

Within a week, tiny tadpoles were wriggling around looking for food. Soon afterwards I started feeding them fish food and finely chopped spinach. I regularly topped up the water from the rainwater tank and shielded the ponds from constant sun with *Strelitzia* leaves and duckweed. By the time they started metamorphosing, the group of 200 had shrunk to around 120. The ponds were a bit crowded and we suspected a kind of cannibalism was taking place beneath the duckweed. It was an exciting time watching them transform.

The afternoon everything changed was balmy and damp. Rain had been falling on and off all day and the sun was making its final farewell. Mum and I had been enjoying the golden afternoon light filtering through storm clouds when we heard a heavy 'plop'. As I scanned the water for the source of the sound, I found myself confronted by two big eyes camouflaged somewhat by the duckweed. I felt that cold rush of dread normally associated with horrible news. It was a cane toad - a big, grotesquely charismatic and now very well-fed cane toad. It had been trying to exit the pond when it saw me and jumped back in. We stared at each other for quite a while. He was trapped by my 'maternal' outrage and I think he knew it.

The next half hour is mostly an adrenalin-fuelled blur but I do remember taking a photo and then grabbing a spade. I manoeuvred the spade behind him and scooped him out of the pond. He landed at my feet and took one big hop to the side. I don't normally hurt living things, but I was so upset I brought the blade of the spade down squarely on his back and to my horror, it bounced off as though he was a tennis ball. With one leap he was gone and as I frantically looked for him in the shadowy garden, I heard another 'plop'. Looking around, it seemed he had backtracked and landed in the second pond. I scooped him out again and shouted to mum to get a plastic bag. Abandoning the spade I struggled to keep him in my sights in the rapidly dwindling light. Mum returned with the plastic bag as I rushed inside to get my head lamp. I chased the wily amphibian through the garden for fifteen minutes or so. The toad didn't seem to be in a hurry either. Every time I'd try to grab him, he would take one leap in a different direction and then wait for my next move. It was as if he was toying with me. I finally caught him off-guard and wrapped him up in the bag, weighing him at 280 grams before putting him in the refrigerator and later in the freezer.

I surveyed the damage under the lamplight and found there were only five froglets left in the first pond and around thirty in the second pond. We were devastated. The next morning when I came out to check on them, the first thing I noticed was a trail of duckweed on the edge of the second pond and a large lump of greeny-brown scat close by. A head-count came to only eleven froglets in total. How could this be? Thinking back, it became clear that there was not one but two cane toads - one in each pond. The first one didn't jump back into the water, it hid and returned later to finish its meal. I had caught the second toad trying to escape from the second pond.

# Tadpole Tales

Continued

Dismayed, I set up a disused artificial pond and filled it with pond water and duckweed, placing it above the ground on a table. I scooped the remaining froglets out and put them in their new home. They were very close to leaving the water and we had already found a couple wandering around on previous days, so I layered plants next to the new pond and toward the ground to make it easy for them to start their new life when the time came.

As for Richard, the father of them all, we have not heard from him since, which is several months now. We don't know if he escaped or was eaten. Having moved up here from New South Wales to care for my mother, I really had no idea of the high emotion involved in dealing with the cane toad scourge. Now I do.



Richard's girlfriend



Richard calling



## If Echidnas Could Sing...

By Sammy Ringer

The world might be a better place if we could stop for just one moment and listen to the spider's web, which sings so hopefully, lustrous and elaborate, reborn every morning.

If we could dance round the embers of all the loves gone wrong and all the loves simply gone, or simply dance for the sake of sunrise and the glistening of rain on green leaves.

If we could make gifts every day and give them and wish for no thanks.

If.

What if. We could?

Perhaps the Echidna would sing to us. Of armour and defencelessness, of hard and soft. Of being small. The Echidna would sing, no doubt, of those things we have forgotten.

Things too small to count or recollect. Things we have left locked and numbered in our past. Left with rust and scabs. Left with unspoken dreams and voices of hope. Left behind.

The Echidna sings, I am sure, within us all.

Perhaps, in its spiky way, it dances as well. Somewhere in sunset. Beyond the sun and shadow, quietly turning in the dusk, hiding in the hills and calling, softly, to his Echidna mate.

Waiting, in his Echidna way, for her to hear the song - and embrace the dancer.



## Holconia's Dance

It was late in the evening and Holconia, the huntsman, was doing a dance on the kitchen floor. She swayed from side to side and moved backwards and forwards. Then she did a part turn in a clockwise direction and started swaying from side to side and moving backwards and forwards again. The choreography followed the same pattern until she had completed a 360° turn. This took some time and I was riveted to the spot, as I have never seen this behaviour before. So fascinated was I by the performance that I neglected the once in a lifetime opportunity to video it.

Has anyone seen this or any other interesting behaviour, if so, please let us know?

## Time for a Bath

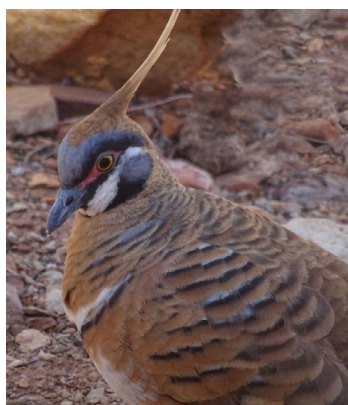
Some creatures are very badly brought up, as I have noticed at the bird bath.

It seems that birds have preferred times for bathing and often different species arrive at the same time, which leads to some interesting behaviours. For example, the Satin Bowerbirds dominate and as there are so many of them, patience is required by other species. However even within their own group there is an order of precedence and those who ignore the rules are reminded in no uncertain terms. Following the Satin Bowerbirds come the Regent Bowerbirds, usually only one or two of them. The female attends to her ablutions in a fairly efficient manner, however the male takes his time, remaining up to ten minutes if he feels so inclined, repelling the attempts of the Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Lewins Honeyeaters, Eastern Yellow Robins, or anyone else who happens to be in the queue, from approaching too closely, or trying to sneak in when he is looking the other way. Parental training obviously didn't include showing consideration for others.

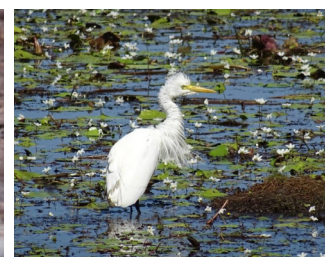
What is attracting the birds to this area of the property? Apart from the opportunity to bathe, the *Pipturus argenteus* (Native Mulberry) has been fruiting for weeks and it is a great drawcard.

Other interesting observations included a squadron of Noisy Miners chasing a Grey Goshawk, a White-crowned Snake which was surprised to find itself exposed to the sunlight, when a rock was moved, and a small St Andrews Cross Spider, which, sadly, was missing the following day, leaving only a large hole in what had been a perfect web. The Willie Wagtail has returned to the area in recent weeks, perhaps the young spider formed part of his meal.

Photos: EMHanger



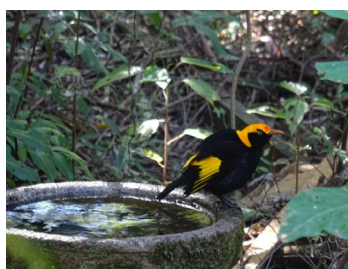
Spinifex Pigeon



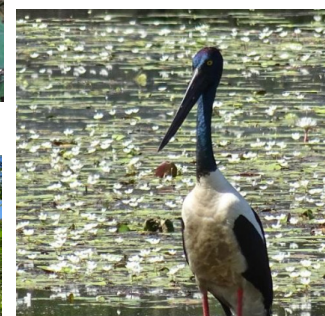
Intermediate Egret



Australasian Darter



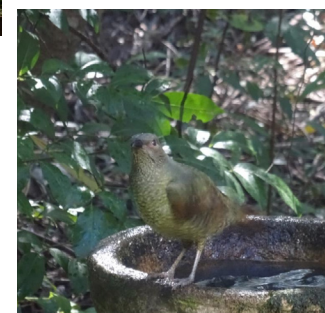
Regent Bowerbird



Black-necked Stork or Jabiru



Edith Falls, Northern Territory



Satin Bowerbird

# Oh No! Not Another Weed

By Michelle Benson

**This time last year I posted a photo on my Facebook site of a fruiting Velvet Leaf (*Callicarpa pedunculata*) that I had planted four years ago in our rainforest restoration area.**

Looking gorgeous with heavily laden pendulous branches of little hot pink fruits, it beckoned frugivores to come devour and disperse its seed. There are many *Callicarpa pedunculata* shrubs growing naturally on the edges of our rainforest area, but this planted one had that extra 'wow' factor.

Then, in September last year, an alert came from the Queensland Herbarium that the weed *Callicarpa rubella* was mistakenly being propagated and planted out in restoration areas as the native *Callicarpa pedunculata*. This weedy relative is a native of South East Asia. At first glance both *Callicarpa rubella* and *C. pedunculata* look very similar, as two metre open shrubs, but *Callicarpa rubella* has oblong and darker green leaves and is generally more vigorous looking. On closer inspection one will see that its leaves have a distinct cordate (heart shaped) leaf base and a very short petiole (leaf stem). Our native *Callicarpa pedunculata* leaves are a lighter green, the leaf base is obtuse (rounded), and petiole is longer.

Like too many introduced plants *Callicarpa rubella* is just as tempting to frugivores and could become a persistent weed, so in this early stage of detection all forest restorers and Land for Wildlife properties are being advised to check the *Callicarpa* species in their area and eradicate it as soon as possible, if it is the weed species. Also note that there is evidence that *Callicarpa pedunculata* and *C. rubella* can hybridise.

So what choices are there for wildlife carers to provide local native fruits to birds and animals in care? Some common plants that usually fruit in abundance in bushland at certain times of the year and could be a part of backyard planting are Barbed Wire Vine (*Smilax australis*), Kangaroo Vine (*Cissus antartica*), Giant Water Vine (*Cissus hypoglauca*), Slender grape (*Cayratia clematidea*), Native Bryony (*Diplocyclos palmatus*), Native Ginger (*Alpinia* spp.) Scrambling Lily (*Geitonoplesium cymosum*), Wombat Berry (*Eustrephus latifolius*), White Nettle (*Pipturus argenteus*), Coffee Bush (*Breynia oblongifolia*), Poison Peach (*Trema tomentosa*), Lilly Pillies (*Syzygium* spp.) Bleeding Heart (*Homalanthus nutans*), Hairy Psychotria (*Psychotria loniceroides*), Palm Lily (*Cordyline* spp.), and Native Raspberry (*Rubus* spp.), and Tape Vine (*Stephania japonica*). *Callicarpa pedunculata* is not as common but is also a great one for backyard planting.

But how do we get our head around those succulent loaded seedy weed bombs that just keep coming. Weeds like Corky passionflower, Brazilian nightshade, Brazilian cherry, Ochna, Tobacco bush, Devils fig, and Asparagus fern unfortunately attract many birds including Lewins Honeyeaters, Olive backed Orioles, Figbirds, Brown pigeons,

Currawongs, and Bower birds. The task of weed eradication can seem endless. But with good old time and passionate persistence we can rid our backyards of weed species, and for those working in rainforest restoration areas, native plant species will regain ground as the forest canopy forms.

As our environment continues to evolve through natural selection plus the huge stresses we impose on it through weed invasion, there will be continual challenges for the survival of many of our native species. As much as I hope for a weed free future, weed management is probably more the reality. Change is the only constant in life, but it hurts when we are reminded that the rapid rate of change in Australia in the last 200 years has led us to having one of the highest species extinction rates in the world.

Weed management is now a routine part of councils' responsibilities. Understanding the importance of protecting biodiversity is really starting to gain momentum in the community with landholders being valued for preserving existing remnant rainforest on their properties. I praise local council for helping encourage and empower conservation practice through NaturallyGC workshops and activities, and the fantastic Land for Wildlife Program as we continue to learn about our place in nature.

There is a small subtropical rainforest remnant in a gully on our property with ongoing restoration efforts happening right up to its doorstep. Stepping through that door is like entering another world, a perfectly weed free paradise. Its deep dark magnificence excites the senses and gives hope that with consistent effort and time (at least 40 years+) and with its bioregional connectivity, the rainforest with all its complex biodiversity will one day flourish again as a refuge for many vulnerable species.

As there is so little of our precious lowland subtropical rainforest left in the Gold Coast region, I'm sure a greater appreciation of how beautifully unique these small remnants are, and a greater understanding of the importance of weed control will stir awareness into action.

Long live happy weeders and forest restorers.



*Callicarpa rubella*



*Callicarpa pedunculata*



# Grants

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



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



**AURIZON COMMUNITY GIVING FUND** - Funding received of \$3,890 to fund the purchase of a trailer and construction of a mobile release aviary to be used for all species of wildlife to enable successful release back to their natural habitat.



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



**CITY OF GOLD COAST** - Funding was received from the City of Gold Coast under their Community Grants Program to support Wildcare's work with wildlife rescue and rehabilitation in the Gold Coast region.

## Plantation – Fodder Farm

In late 2017, the City of Gold Coast kindly organized an expansion of the existing fodder farm, which was planted two years ago at Tallebudgera.

This fodder farm was originally developed with about 400 native trees and will eventually be able to be used by wildlife carers, to harvest browse for feeding our wildlife in care.

Council organized the planting of another 1,000 trees in late 2017 which includes more eucalypts as well as flowering species suitable for gliders and birds.

The fodder farm is progressing well and should be ready to be used by carers in about another 2 years. It is important that the trees are not cut too early into their life as it would significantly impact on their survival, so many of us are waiting eagerly for them to grow.

On behalf of our bird and mammal carers, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to the Vulnerable Species Management Team (Koala Team) and the Natural Areas and Parks staff for all of their hard work in both the original tree planting as well as the last planting. Your support to not only our wildlife, but our volunteers, is greatly appreciated.

# Support Wildcare's Members & Supporters



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



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# Thank you!



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