

# WILDNEWS.

Autumn 2009 Issue 52  
Jan – Mar 2009



*Candida  
Infections in  
Hand-Reared  
Wildlife.*

*Setting up a  
Feather Library  
and Database.*

*Red Eared  
Slider Turtle  
Eradication  
Update.*

*Plus*

- Mudgeeraba Show
- Cage Library
- Observations of a Bird Watcher
- Photo Gallery
- PJ's Wildcare for Kids

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COVER PHOTO: ELMO, THE ORPHANED TAWNY. PHOTO // HOPE HAGAR

# President's Report.

*Gail Gipp.*

**HI EVERYONE, I HOPE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY ARE ALL WELL AND YOU ARE NOT TOO OVERWHELMED WITH ANIMALS!** I was tallying up some figures here at the Australian Wildlife Hospital a few weeks ago, and discovered that in the five years since we opened we have treated just over 17,000 animals; the numbers have been growing at a rate of around 1,400 animals a year. And whilst that information amazed me, my thoughts then turned to what would have happened to all those animals if we were not here. Not just the hospital, but the amazing wildlife care network of which Wildcare Australia is part. If you think about all the care groups and individuals, about Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and the Australian Wildlife Hospital and tried to estimate the number of animals rescued in South East Queensland in one year,

I think the figure would be astounding. Well done to all of you for your dedication and care!

The AGM is coming around once again and I urge all of you to consider accepting nomination for a position on the committee, or of nominating someone who, you think, would make a great contribution to our organization. This is your chance to have a say so don't be shy.

We were all shocked and horrified by the recent spate of disasters that have struck Australia; fires, floods, mass strandings and oil spills. All of us have been affected in some way. Below is one of the victims of the oil spill, a sea snake that was completely immersed in oil. Luckily, he survived and was released a couple of weeks later. Another that arrived on the same day died.

*"The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard."*

*GAYLORD NELSON (Founder of Earth Day)*



A sea snake rescued from the recent oil spill disaster.



Scrub Turkeys ugly... I don't think so! How beautiful is this one, a resident of Noosa National Park? We receive reports on it all the time. It's great to see him/her healthy and surviving. The photo was taken by Rhonda, one of our staff.



Sometimes the smallest amount of fluid can seem so much!

## A Warm Welcome to Our New Members

*Wildcare Australia welcomes the following new members:*

Susan Peters, Molendinar; Nicole Bosch, Bonogin; Letitia McCartney, Wavell Heights; Melissa Warne, Russell Island; Diane & Richard Pearse, New Farm; Sylvia Austin, Sinnamon Park; Ashleigh & Sandra Sforcina, Little Mountain; Julie & Adrian Melhop, Clontarf; Lee Ferguson, Jimboomba; Joy & Theodore Mars, Hervey Bay; Naomi Mumford, Draper; Emily Clemance, Clontarf; Rebecca Lee & Libby Hastie, Tugun; Ann, Keith & Jessica Smith, Petrie; Kyron Halleday, Southport; Ray & Murray Chambers, Caloundra; Stefan Guardie, Bray Park; Lynda Malcolm & Holly Hopita, Upper Coomera; Rab Naidoo, Coorparoo; Emma & Debra Kucks, Rochedale South; Kylie Strachan, Tallebudgera; Rebecca Frith, Mapleton; Wendy Walburn, Oxenford; Allison Roberts & Erik Streed, Thornside; Tia KiwiKiwi- Griffin, Upper Coomera;

Dee Smith, Redland Bay; Tania Ansell, Maleny; Tracy Crozier, Ashgrove; Karla Hamilton, Thornlands; Kaylene Pearce, Morayfield; Christine Day, Moorland; Debbie & Vic Todhunter, Landsborough; Tanya Sambell, Eudlo; Rebecca Stirling, Banyo; Jane Maker, Maryborough; Lana Wainwright, Cotton Tree; Debbie Myburg, Carindale; Samantha Stringer, Kilcoy; Craig Milburn & Naomi Confos, Carrara; Tom Hill, Nerang; Amy de Boer, Southport; Laura Perry, Caloundra; John & Dawn Osborn, Southport; Rebecca Hudson, Ashmore; Casey & Donna Windon, Varsity Lakes; Louise Robinson & Breedan Kidd, New Farm; Alexandra Goodwin, Paddington; Madonna O'Brien, Ocean View; Alexandra Henderson, Margate; Meredith Koch, Tallebudgera; Kyle Children, Downer; Jane Koltoft, Helensvale; Carolyn Sandford, Bulimba.

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. The office is open from 8.00am to 4.00pm from Tuesday to Friday.

**We hope you have a long and happy association with Wildcare Australia.**



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

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# Farewell Renee Rivard

She's gone!! For those of you who don't already know, Renee has returned to the US. Wildcare is definitely better for all the work she did and there are lots of people who miss her and her help in so many areas. She was only a member for two years, but her contributions were invaluable.

She especially loved the native birds and she and I were co-coordinators for the birds on the Gold Coast. Her knowledge and technical expertise helped us set up amazing bird networks on the Coast and in Brisbane – making the coordinators' jobs so much easier. She was also a great educator – one on one with carers needing advice, devising new training and recruitment methods for the phone and helping with regular workshops for Wildcare. Because of her computer skills she also helped with the carer records and the newsletter – I am sure Kiersten and Eleanor will miss her input. She was instrumental in getting outside funding for different projects and was investigating the possibility of updating our website with the help of some members with those skills. You undoubtedly know her name if you don't know her personally as she did get involved in so many different areas of Wildcare.

This is beginning to sound like an obituary, but I assure you she is alive and well! I was hoping to let you know how much we are all indebted to her for her valuable input in so many

areas. I, for one, really miss her for what she was doing for Wildcare and also because she was a good friend. I am sure you all wish her the best in the future – whatever that may hold for her.

**Dianna Smith**

*I would like endorse Dianna's comments and also to thank Renee for the assistance she gave me with the newsletter. Her enthusiasm was infectious, and she brought to the newsletter an efficiency and expertise which resulted in a totally revamped publication, which has been exciting for me and very well received by the members. Thank you, Renee. You are greatly missed and we wish you well for the future.*

**Eleanor Hanger**



## Reminder To All Rescuers/Carers

Pursuant to Section 1.10 of the Code of Practice (as issued by the EPA), "All animals coming into care must be examined by a veterinary surgeon as a matter of urgency to establish whether they are suitable for rehabilitation." There are no exceptions to this rule. Wildlife rehabilitators are NOT vets. A wild animal comes into care for a reason and a firm diagnosis of the animal's condition must be made if we are to abide by the Code of Practice.

All carers/rescuers should be familiar with this document.

*Please also be reminded that being a wildlife rescuer/carer DOES NOT entitle you to take wild animals and domesticate them (i.e. make them "pets"). If you have an animal that you feel is unreleasable, you need to proceed through the appropriate channels to obtain permission to keep that animal as a pet.*

**Karen Scott**

**Vice-President / Education Coordinator**



PHOTO // HOPE HAGAR

## *Candida Infections in Hand-Reared Wildlife*

*Dr Jon Hanger*

**We have recently seen a marked increase in the number of hand-reared wildlife suffering from *Candida* infections. It is essential that all wildlife rehabilitators understand the pathological process of *Candida*, how to prevent joeys in your care developing the condition and the recommended treatment.**

Candidiasis is an infection caused by *Candida* fungi (a yeast), especially *Candida albicans*. These fungi are found almost everywhere in the environment and are commonly found in the mouth and gastrointestinal tract of humans and animals. In a healthy human (or animal), the infection is kept under control by the body's natural bacteria and the body's immune defenses. If the body's natural bacteria is reduced or if the body's immune system is weakened by illness, stress, malnutrition etc then the *Candida* multiplies and clinical signs of infection become evident.

Given the circumstances under which orphaned joeys come into care, it stands to reason that these animals will be at an

increased risk of developing *Candida*. It has been long-accepted that stress in wildlife depletes the immune system and therefore makes them more susceptible to disease. It is this understanding that should highlight the need to ensure that we reduce the effects of stress on hand-reared wildlife and ensure that wildlife carers are extremely diligent in recognizing the early signs of disease, including *Candida*.

### *The clinical signs of *Candida* include:*

- **Diarrhea** - this may be chronic or intermittent. All animals with diarrhea should be assessed by a veterinarian and a simple faecal test conducted to check for signs of *Candida* and/

or bacteria.

- **White plaques in the mouth** – often noticed once the joey becomes reluctant to bottle-feed.
- **Red, dry and/or inflamed skin** – *Candida* can also cause skin infections. This often occurs after the animal has had diarrhea for a period of time. Your veterinarian will conduct a skin-scrub of the infected area and test it for *Candida* and other microorganisms.
- **Inappetence.** ▷





PHOTO // HOPE HAGAR

### *Candida infections can be spread between animals by:*

- Direct contact.
- Contamination of fomites (bedding, feeding bottles, teats etc).

It is essential that any sign of illness in a hand-reared joey is referred to a veterinarian promptly. Failure to do so is negligent on the part of the wildlife rehabilitator as conditions such as Candida can become serious very quickly and can even result in the death of the animal. For example, a joey that develops diarrhea within days of coming into care should be assessed immediately by a veterinarian. The longer the condition is left undiagnosed (and therefore untreated), the more difficult it is to treat the condition effectively.

There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that some Candida strains are becoming resistant to commonly used antifungal medications, and standard treatments (such as Nilstat®) are becoming less effective.

To prevent hand-reared joeys developing an overgrowth of Candida, wildlife rehabilitators should ensure that their hygiene is IMPECCABLE. It is recommended that ALL rehabilitators (including experienced ones) take a step back and review their current hygiene practices to ensure that they are doing everything that they can do prevent Candida developing. We must remember that these animals are immune-suppressed (either through illness or stress) and, like human AIDS patients, are at a high risk of developing Candida infections.

### *The following standards should be adopted when hand-rearing wildlife:*

- Clinical signs of diarrhea are referred to a veterinarian WITHOUT DELAY. It is much easier to treat a minor case of Candida than a severe one. Some rehabilitators have been battling this infection in joeys for several months.
- Any signs of skin infections (redness, dryness, inflammation) should be referred to a veterinarian for diagnosis and treatment.
- Limit the use of antibiotics – use for the minimum amount of time required to treat the condition.
- Minimise STRESS.
- Ensure that your hygiene is impeccable, not only for pinkie joeys but for ALL animals.

### *The following practices should be adopted to ensure that good hygiene practices are being used:*

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap after handling each animal.
- All feeding equipment (e.g. bottles, teats, syringes etc) should be washed IMMEDIATELY following use in cold water. This will prevent milk fat from setting on the equipment. You should NEVER leave empty milk bottles/syringes sitting around – this is a breeding ground for disaster.
- Wash in hot water and detergent to remove all milk deposits.
- Soak in a sterilizing solution (e.g. Milton). Follow the manufacturer's

directions precisely. Failure to do so is simply a waste of product.

- Rinse in pre-boiled warm water.
- In addition to this, many rehabilitators are also then steam-sterilizing the items in a sterilizer in the microwave. This should be done at 100% power for 8 minutes.
- Ensure that all bedding (this includes pouches, towels, blankets etc) is kept clean. If you have an animal with an infection, all linen/bedding should be soaked in a nappy sterilizing solution.
- Ensure that other equipment is also disinfected at least weekly. This includes baskets, cages, humidicribs etc. These should be cleaned with F10 disinfectant (or similar).

### *Management of infected animals:*

Animals that have Candida infections must be regularly checked by a veterinarian to assess response to treatment. There is no point in treating an animal for weeks if the treatment is not working. The best way of assessing treatment efficacy is to have samples (faecals or skin swabs) checked by an experienced wildlife veterinarian at least every 4-5 days. Treatment should not be stopped until 2 consecutive samples at 4-5 day intervals have shown CLEAR.

If Nilstat is being used, it must be given on an empty stomach. Try to give it at least 1 hour before a feed is due. It must be given a minimum of 4 times each day for treatment of gastrointestinal or oral infections. •

# Setting up a Feather Library and Database

PHOTOS // MIMI DONA

The imping of feathers has long been recognized as an effective way of replacing damaged flight feathers with healthy feathers, better known as hair extensions for birds. This can restore the flight to a bird that otherwise may have had to wait many months for new feathers to molt through. The actual technique of imping is relatively simple but just requires some patience and the foresight to have saved some healthy feathers in advance.

## *Foresight = a feather library!*

We commonly perform imping on raptors and kookaburras, although it is possible to perform the technique on all birds. This particular case, as an example, is a Brahminy Kite that came into our care with a badly broken ulna. The bird had been unable to fly for some days prior to being found and the walking on the ground had damaged all of his tail feathers. Following surgical repair of the ulna and an extended rehabilitation program, the bird needed new tail feathers prior to his release. Imping was performed, reducing his time in care and complications on release such as loss of fitness and territory.

Imping needs to be very precise and is easiest performed under general anaesthetic. It is best to prepare all the materials prior to the procedure helping to reduce the length of time the bird needs to be under anaesthetic; whittle all the rods and label the new feathers (ensuring they are attached to the correct feather shaft).

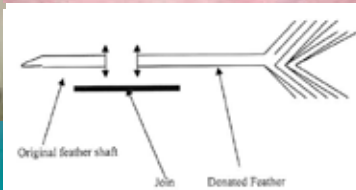
The rods need to be cut or whittled into a size that neatly fits into the hollow feather shaft, this can be very time consuming for beginners but a good fit is important to ensure the strength and correct positioning of the new feather. Sometimes it is best to take them home and whittle them in front of the television!

## *The supporting rod can be made out of a variety of different materials depending on the size of the bird.*

- Toothpicks – suitable only for small birds
- Bamboo skewers
- Fibreglass, taken from car two-way radio antennas from your local auto shop. These antennas are a very strong and flexible material that can be easily split into fine rods.

Once under anaesthetic, the existing feather is cut. When cutting, do not split or damage the feather shaft as this could cause splintering once released. It is best to heat up a scalpel and use

the heat to cut the shaft rather than pressure to reduce this risk. Cut all the feathers needing imping at exactly the same level; where the vane starts to come off the feather shaft and insert the exposed rod on the new feather into the hollow shaft checking the rod is the correct length. Sometimes more whittling is needed during this process. The supporting rod can then be glued into both of the feather shafts; we typically use▷





Superglue, hot glue or araldite and paper to separate the feathers, protecting them from the glue.

It is generally best to leave the imping until the bird is ready to be released, such that there is minimal chance the bird will damage its new feathers prior to release. We imping the new feathers onto the Brahminy kite the day before he was due to be released. Test flying the bird post-imping is ideal if your cage allows this without causing any damage and will allow the bird to get used to his new set up.

As many of our patients require imping, we keep a library of feathers that are collected from birds that were unable to be saved. It is crucial to use an exact replica feather when imping wildlife; using the feathers from the wrong species or incorrect positioning of the feathers will make it almost impossible for that bird to survive when released. To reduce this risk we store the wing and tail feathers as complete units and freeze them to stop them from going rancid. A database containing information and photos is used to main-

tain this system.

In the case of the Brahminy kite we knew on arrival he needed imping and checked the database immediately. This revealed we had a match. The photo verified this and the numbering system made it easy to locate. This was a very efficient process, as we did not have to rummage through the library, which can also cause damage to other feathers in the process. It is also very useful when deciding if we need to keep the feathers of a dead species, checking the database rather than the freezer to reveal how many we have in stock.

A special thanks to Bob and Jenny James who volunteered their time and efforts to develop and implement this database.

We hope that the sharing of this database with other wildlife hospitals and institutions will help improve the feather stock available, therefore reducing rehabilitation time and improving their chance for survival. •

# *Education Calendar for May to August 2009* ▷

You will note a few new workshops– including some shorter ones tailored to more experienced carers. Please read the flyer carefully as numbers are limited for some workshops, and for others you will have to register your interest to attend. Preference for these workshops, where numbers are extremely limited, will be given to current Wildcare members who are **ACTIVELY** involved in rescuing or caring for those species. We also have a number of bird workshops scheduled before spring so everyone will have time to brush-up on their bird res-

cuing and rehab skills before the busy season starts. I also heard a rumour that Karen Barney may be teaching some of those as well – many of you will remember Karen as our previous hard-working Head Bird Coordinator. Karen has so much knowledge about birds, so don't miss those workshops.

*It is preferable that you register for workshops by emailing [education@wildcare.org.au](mailto:education@wildcare.org.au).*

**Karen Scott**

**Vice-President / Education Coordinator**

## *Education Report*

**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS MADE THE BEGINNING OF 2009 SUCCESSFUL IN TERMS OF OUR TRAINING WORKSHOPS.** A big thank you to the many Sunshine Coast carers who have attended our training at the new conference room at the Australian Wildlife Hospital. Lots of familiar faces have made those workshops a joy to teach.

Contained in this edition of WildNews is the Education Calendar for May through to August 2009. Please remember to register for workshops by emailing to [education@wildcare.org.au](mailto:education@wildcare.org.au).

Please also remember to register for workshops that you wish to attend as early as possible, to be assured of a place. In the past months we have had to close registrations for two workshops because they were full.

I am hoping in the coming months to put together some new training sessions. In particular, I am hoping to have an Advanced Mammals Course up and running in the next few months. If you

have any suggestions as to what you might like to see covered in an advanced workshop, please email me your suggestions.

On a final note, I would like to say a very sincere thank you to the many volunteers within Wildcare who give up their time to run our training workshops. Most of our trainers work full time and are also juggling children, wildlife in care, study and other commitments. We are very fortunate that we have Coordinators who have so much knowledge and experience which they are so willing to share. Without those Coordinators our education program would not be as successful as it is.

If you have any questions regarding our education programs, please do not hesitate to contact me either by email at [education@wildcare.org.au](mailto:education@wildcare.org.au) or 04 00 165 462.

**Karen Scott**

**Vice-President / Education Coordinator**



# WILDCARE AUSTRALIA

## Training Program

May to August 2009



### May 2009

Date	Workshop	Venue
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	Orientation Program	Brisbane
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	Possums – Basic Course	Beerwah
Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	First Aid for Native Wildlife	Beerwah
Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2009	Introduction to Caring for Orphaned Mammals	Gold Coast
Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2009	Native Birds – Basic Course	Beerwah

### June 2009

Date	Workshop	Venue
Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> June 2009	Orientation Program	Beerwah
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2009	Emergency Telephone Training	Gold Coast
Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2009 6pm to 9pm	Fluid Therapy for Wildlife ** (Limited numbers - experienced carers only)	Gold Coast

### July 2009

Date	Workshop	Venue
Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> July 2009	Raptors – Rescue and Triage ** (Limited numbers – experienced bird rescuers only)	Gold Coast
Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> July 2009	First Aid for Native Wildlife	Gold Coast
Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup> July 2009	Native Birds – Basic Course	Gold Coast
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> July 2009	Koalas – Rescue and Triage	Gold Coast

### August 2009

Date	Workshop	Venue
Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2009	Orientation	Gold Coast
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> August 2009 □ day workshop	Caring for Neonates (Pinkies) ** (Limited numbers - experienced carers only)	Gold Coast
Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2009	Emergency Telephone Training	Brisbane
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> August 2009	Introduction to Caring for Orphaned Mammals	Brisbane
Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup> August 2009	Native Birds – Baby Bird Management	Gold Coast
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> August 2009	Flying Foxes – Orphans	Gold Coast

**\*\* Please note:-** These workshops will be available only to experienced wildlife carers. Please **register your interest** in attending these workshops by emailing [education@wildcare.org.au](mailto:education@wildcare.org.au). Places will be made available to those carers that will most benefit from attending these workshops as numbers will be limited.

**Please register by emailing [education@wildcare.org.au](mailto:education@wildcare.org.au) or telephone 07 55272444 during business hours.**

## *Brisbane North Possum Coordinator's Report*



**MY NAME IS CAROLINE OERTEL AND I'M THE POSSUM COORDINATOR FOR BRISBANE NORTH.** I have very recently started a group email for possum carers this side of Brisbane. The aim of this email network is to improve the process of finding carers for possums that come into care, especially ones that need to be paired up or placed in a crèche, sooner rather than later. In addition, I hope that the network will be a forum for carers to share ideas, tips and knowledge on possum care throughout the different developmental stages - there is a great deal of knowledge out there that we can tap into! Currently the network consists mainly of the active carers from the northern suburbs of Brisbane and parts of the Sunshine Coast, with whom I have had some contact in recent times.

At present, individuals let me know via email (or phone) that they have a possum needing a carer or needing a mate. I post the information on the email and carers can respond via email or phone. This is much less intimidating for carers as they are not put 'on the spot' and it hopefully ensures a more timely uniting of a possum with a carer. The possum group email only started one week ago and we have already placed two possums with carers and had three new carers join the list.

If you would like to know more, please do not hesitate to contact me via email (or phone 0423 172 554). Likewise, contact me if you would like to join or know someone who would.

**Caroline Oertel**

## *Echidna and Small Mammal Report*

**IT HAS BEEN A VERY QUIET SEASON FOR ECHIDNAS OF LATE.** Unfortunately the few echidnas that have come into care have all been euthanased due to fractured beaks. Most of these echidnas had no other signs of injury apart from the swollen beak.

It is important that any echidna that has been knocked by a car is treated as critical. A fractured beak in an echidna is extremely painful and if not treated, usually results in the animal either suffocating or slowly dying from starvation.

We have had a number of bandicoots arrive into care as a result of road trauma and cat attack. Another poor little fellow got caught in a swimming pool and couldn't get out. They are enjoyable little critters to care for - although they have nearly depleted my garden of earthworms!

**Karen Scott**

## *Gold Coast Possum Coordinator's Report*

**THE LAST FEW MONTHS HAVE SEEN A NUMBER OF BRUSHTAILS AND RINGTAILS COMING INTO CARE.** One little Brushtail had the misfortune to burn his feet on a BBQ plate and it seems a timely reminder of the hazards of BBQ plates which have not been allowed to cool before being left. Other hazards for wildlife are open fires which have not been extinguished and cooled (buried coals can maintain their heat for some time) and fireplaces or flues which, over the summer months, have become home to some unsuspecting critter who, with the onset of winter, finds its home set alight.

Soft release sites for hand-reared possums are becoming increasingly difficult to find as are release sites for animals that cannot, for whatever reason, be returned to the area from which they came. Loss of habitat remains a huge problem and then there is the odd traveller. We have had one arrive on the Gold Coast on an end-loader. The driver had no idea from where it had hitched the ride. If you know of anyone who has a suitable property and who may be interested in helping out with soft or hard releases, please let



us know.

Cats have continued to take their toll on gliders and ringtails and we have had one ringtail attacked by a dog. Unfortunately the outcome for possums attacked by domestic animals is very poor, so I would urge carers to use every opportunity to encourage responsible pet ownership in their friends and neighbours.

As I will be away for some time in the near future, it is with great pleasure that I welcome Sharon Singleton, who will take over from me. Sharon has agreed to take on the role of Possum Coordinator for the Gold Coast once again and for that I am very grateful. I would like to thank Trish Wimberley for her continuing support with the possums in spite of the enormous workload she carries with the bats and everything else. I would also like to thank the wonderful possum carers, who do such a fine job rearing and rehabilitating, and who keep me informed of the animals in their care.

**Eleanor Hanger**



## Koala Report

**IT HAS BEEN A BUSY COUPLE OF WEEKS WITH KOALA RESCUES. THE LAST FEW DAYS HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY SO AND CLEARLY HIGHLIGHT THE PROBLEMS FACED BY OUR URBAN KOALAS.**

On Sunday morning, I received a call at 6.30am for a koala that appeared to have fallen out of a tree at Helensvale. He hit a concrete driveway – face first by the looks of it (yes, they do fall out of trees!). “Whitlam” suffered a fractured jaw and some soft tissue damage.

That afternoon, another koala was attacked by two Pit Bull Terriers at Currumbin Waters. “Quinn” was a very lucky boy, he sustained a deep laceration to his inner ear, which was sutured, and he was given a course of antibiotics to treat the puncture wounds. He was released ten days later back to his home range.

The following night a large female with a small pouch joey was hit by a car at Elanora. “Mimi” sustained some head trauma. She was stabilized at the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and then transferred to the Australian Wildlife Hospital for ongoing intensive care. Both Mimi and her little joey are doing well.

Within hours another koala, “Bob,” was found sitting on the ground very weak and in poor body condition. Unfortunately, as he was in such very poor condition and was suffering from an incurable disease, he had to be euthanased.

The next night a koala was found on Tallebudgera Connection Road with extensive head injuries – she had been hit by a car and left on the road to die. A young man found her and rushed her to an afterhours vet but she was dead on arrival. She also had a very small pouch young which did not survive either.

Early the following night a female koala was hit by a car on Simpsons Road despite the driver’s desperate attempts to miss her. “Dottie” sustained some minor fractures to her toes, fingers and radius (arm). She was ten years old and in very, very poor body condition. Unfortunately she did not recover from the anaesthetic. Her little joey “Dot” who was only 64 grams died several days later.

Later that very same night, a small 2kg koala was found on the road at North Tamborine. She had lots of people standing around her taking photographs. A passer-by thought that something was wrong with her and took her to the local vet. He was right; she had a fractured pelvis and was also taken to the Australian Wildlife Hospital. “Hayley” is doing well and is expected to make a full recovery.

The next morning at 5.00am a female koala was found on the side of the road at Helensvale, being attacked by dogs. A resident called the dogs off her and telephoned

Wildcare. Shawn Senior rushed to collect her and met me on my way to the Australian Wildlife Hospital. She was rushed into surgery but her injuries were too severe and she could not be saved.

Most of these koalas were rescued by our volunteers and were triaged and stabilized at the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital. A special thank you to the staff of CWS who worked long hours to stabilize them and keep an eye on them throughout the night. They were then transferred to the Australian Wildlife Hospital for surgery and specialised care.

Currently at the Australian Wildlife Hospital, Mimi, Whitlam and Hayley are still recovering from their injuries.

I cannot recall a time when we have had such a large number of koala rescues in such a short period of time. I will be holding a special workshop on the rescue and triaging of koalas in July so that we can hopefully get more people trained to rescue these animals. A special thanks to Mimi Dona for being my “phone a friend” and for helping with all of these koalas.

**Karen Scott**

PHOTO // HOPE HAGAR



## A special thank you

**A SPECIAL THANK YOU** to Aimie and Brooke from Dorratt Design for volunteering their time and resources to assist Wildcare with the production of our colour brochures, letterhead and promotional material. Their assistance is greatly appreciated.

## *Help Required with Telephone Records*

**THE TELEPHONE RECORD KEEPERS REQUIRE SOME HELP WITH SHORT TERM DATA ENTRY OF MANUAL TELEPHONE RECORDS.**

**The Task:** To transpose hand written records into an Excel spreadsheet. This task can be done in your own home and you can choose the amount you want to do!

As the saying goes, "many hands make light work."

*If you can help, please contact Amy Whitman at [phonerecords@wildcare.org.au](mailto:phonerecords@wildcare.org.au)*

## *C'mon we need your help !!!!*

**IT IS ONLY A 3 HOUR COMMITMENT PER MONTH WE ARE LOOKING FOR.** Of course if you wish, you can do more

hours. These three hours often mean the difference between a life or death situation. There are so many good people out there who call us when they come across an injured creature. We simply cannot let them down by not having an operator for them to speak with and to reassure them we can and will help.

We really are in need for more operators. It is such a shame to leave it to the same old ones, who tell me they are getting tired of not getting more support from others within the organisation.

So pick up that phone now and call 5527 2444 or 04 19 684 461 and register your interest and even pick a shift.

Your fellow Wildlife Enthusiasts really need some help.

**Your Wildcare Telephone Coordinator,  
Liz Meffan**

## *Record Keepers' Rap: Thank You to Renée*

**HOPEFULLY BY NOW RENÉE HAS SETTLED INTO HER LIFE BACK IN THE US.**

An enormous thank you must go to Renée for all her help with so many things in Wildcare, but particularly as the Head Record Keeper for the past two years or so. During this time, Renée did a much-needed revamp of the records forms to make them easier for carers/volunteers to complete and for us in drawing information from records. She also sorted out the major backlog of raw records data into annual reports and other specific reports, providing much-demanded, useful information to the public. At this stage, Amy and I will continue with our respective phone record-keeping and carer record-keeping jobs, and will divvy up

Renée's tasks between us, but her absence will certainly be noticed!

In the Jan'09 issue of WILDNEWS, Renée provided some information based on the 2008 carers' records. This time, Amy has put together the following information based on the phone records:

*Caller types based on August to October 2008 phone records:*

**New Email Addresses:**

The new generic email addresses are now in place, so we can be emailed via our personal email addresses or by the following new generic ones:

**Amy Whitman, Phone Records:** [phonerecords@wildcare.org.au](mailto:phonerecords@wildcare.org.au)

**Kiersten Jones, Carer Records:** [carerrecords@wildcare.org.au](mailto:carerrecords@wildcare.org.au)

*Software Assistance Required*

At present, I particularly would like some help from anyone who has advanced knowledge of either the Excel or Access programs, particularly in designing & modifying pick-lists in Excel and creating queries in Access. If anyone can assist, then please email me.

**Kiersten Jones  
On behalf of the Record Keeping  
Team, Wildcare Australia**

## *Are You a Triple Zero Emergency Wildlife Enthusiast?*

**IF YOU ARE A TRUE WILDLIFE ENTHUSIAST THEN YOU SHOULD BE ON OUR EMERGENCY TELEPHONE LIST AS A WILDCARE TELEPHONE OPERATOR.**

And now as things have become a little quieter, it really is time to dive in and volunteer your services as a Wildcare Telephone Operator. Just like the triple zero operators, you too can become part of a professional and caring team of people who help our native wildlife every single day of the year. Isn't it time you gave something back to your community? And what is three hours a month of your time going to cost you??





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**Eleanor Hanger**

# *MUDGEERABA SHOW*

## *Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th June 2009*

### **WILDCARE AUSTRALIA HAS ONCE AGAIN BEING INVITED TO HOLD AN EXHIBIT AT THE MUDGEERABA SHOW.**

This is a great opportunity to meet members of the public, answer their many questions and show the work of Wildcare Members. If you can spare any time over the two days of the show, or help set up our exhibit on Friday 26th June 2009, it would be greatly appreciated.

**Please contact Trish Hales on Tuesdays and Thursday in the Wildcare office 5527 2444 or email [office@wildcare.org.au](mailto:office@wildcare.org.au)**

# *Bird Week at Mt Barney Lodge*



**MT BARNEY LODGE IS HOSTING A BIRDWEEK ON 7-13 SEPTEMBER 2009.** The start coincides with National Threatened Species Day and highlights the onsite Glossy Black Cockatoo conservation project and the Eastern Bristlebird surveyed in the Mt Barney National Park.

Mt Barney Lodge is an eco accredited retreat next to the wilderness of the World Heritage-listed Mt Barney National Park. It is in an area of nationally recognized biodiversity.

A free Firedance event will be held on Friday 11th September from 7.30pm. This will include a bonfire ceremony featuring a ceremonial egg lantern holding images of local birds and their stories which will be offered up on the bonfire to release their good wishes for the future.

**Please view the full program from our website [www.mtbarneylodge.com.au](http://www.mtbarneylodge.com.au) or Phone: (07) 5544 3233.**

Please book in advance if you wish to attend the Birdweek Program – An Earlybird discount of 10% applies to bookings made before 12th June 2009.

**Innes and Tracey Larkin**  
Ph/Fax: (07) 5544 3233  
[mtbarneylodge@bigpond.com](mailto:mtbarneylodge@bigpond.com)  
[www.mtbarneylodge.com.au](http://www.mtbarneylodge.com.au)



PHOTOS//R.JOHNS

# Cage Library

Photos // R Johns

**WE HAVE HAD QUITE A FEW GREAT DONATIONS OF CAGES AND AVIARIES LATELY.**

Please let me know if you need anything and I will keep you in mind as different donations become available. There are quite a few cages in the storeroom at the office. If you need any let us know and we can arrange for you to inspect for suitability.

**Dianna Smith**

[dianna@milroy.com](mailto:dianna@milroy.com)



## Correction

**WE APOLOGIZE TO TERRI EATHER** whose photo of gliders on page 12 of the January edition of Wildnews was incorrectly attributed to Trish Wimberley.

## Observations of a Bird Watcher

**MY ATTENTION WAS DRAWN TO A FEMALE SATIN BOWER BIRD**, which was working its way very methodically along the branches of an acacia tree. On closer scrutiny it turned out to be eating insects from the galls with which this particular tree was covered.

Possum carers (and bird carers) please note, galls, as a source of insects for your animals in care, can be found on the leaves and stems of Eucalypts too.







# Photo Gallery

**THERE ARE NINE SPECIES OF POSSUM IN SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND AND EIGHT OF THEM APPEAR HERE.**

Above are: the Greater Glider, Eastern Pigmy Possum, Squirrel Glider, Common Brushtail Possum, Short-eared Possum (previously known as the Mountain Brushtail) Ringtail Possum, Feathertail Glider and Sugar Glider. Which one is missing?

Possums are nocturnal, arboreal marsupials. Some lead fairly solitary existences, while others are more social within their family group. Tree hollows are favoured as shelters, although the ringtail makes a large spherical drey (nest). The diet varies greatly according to the species.

Answer: Yellow-bellied Glider

# PJ's Wildcare for KIDS



## HI AGAIN EVERYONE!

Hope you all enjoyed a nice Easter. Did you enjoy camping in the wet weather? I recently had a trip over to Tangalooma Island Resort where I had never been before. We had a great boat ride over there and when we arrived we were shown to our room in the Kookaburra Lodge.

Later in the afternoon, my parents and I went quad-biking. Here's a picture of me going down the hill. My mum hit the accelerator instead of the brake and banged right into the back of my dad—it was really funny!

While we were there, we fed the dolphins in the evening. I fed Rani and Bobo. Rani is over 20 years old so he was a bit slow. Before we feed the dolphins, we must wash our hands and feet in chlorinated water to avoid giving the dolphins any diseases. Then, we go waist deep into the water with a guide on either side of us, and they take us to the dolphins. I held a fish in my hand and held it out in front of me for the dolphin to reach up and take. The fish are very fresh and have been caught especially for the dol-

phins. It's a great place to visit just for a day, or to stay for a holiday. We also went snorkeling around the beach and saw stingrays and starfish as well as lots of interesting fish hanging around the jetty. We also went sand tobogganing. First we had to go up to the sand-dunes in a great big bus which had 4WD. The wheels were so big and it was a fantastic bumpy ride (which was the best part of the whole adventure). Then, when we got there, we had to walk up a huuuuge sand-hill. I went down very fast and got sand in my mouth. My mum only went up once and then said it was too tiring to go up the hill just to go down it so quickly!

This week I wanted to talk about how important it is to keep your pet cat indoors as much as you can. We live in a townhouse so the wildlife is fairly safe because my two cats cannot get out of our own garden. We also don't get any possums in our courtyard. Unfortunately, not everyone understands how much damage just one cat can do to our precious wildlife. In my street, there is always a big fat cat which

spends all of its time, day and night, on the loose, going anywhere it wants. I can only imagine how many animals it has killed.

A few weeks ago, my neighbour was talking to me and his pet cat was wandering around in the gardens outside. The next thing, we saw it running back towards the house with something small and brown in its mouth! It was a tiny, baby ringtail possum which had fallen out of the trees above. Then we saw its mother which already had another baby on her back. Maybe she just couldn't look after two babies although that is what ringtails usually have. We threw water on the cat and it let the baby possum go. My neighbour then took it to the vet. It had a bit of blood on it but was breathing and probably in shock. I never did find out whether it survived, but I hope so. It was so beautiful and small.

So remember, tell your parents and friends and every person you know that owns a pet cat...

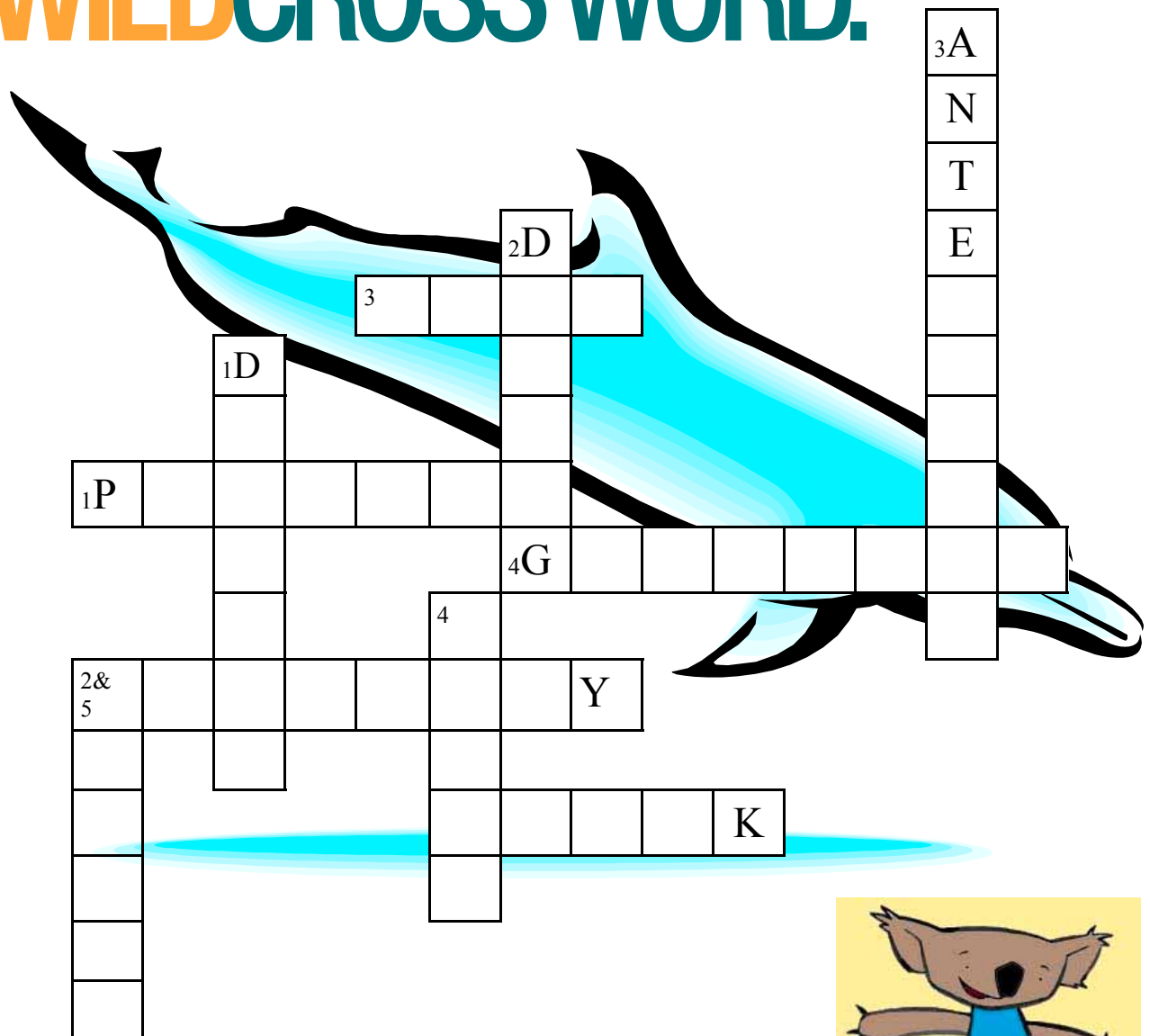


And it isn't just possums! It's lizards, butterflies, birds, sugar-gliders, bandicoots, pademelons, phascogales - anything that's small and moves around in the garden or bushes. Send me your photos and stories by email at [pjdick@optusnet.com.au](mailto:pjdick@optusnet.com.au). I will send you a surprise as a thank you!

Bye from  
P.J.



# WILDCROSS WORD.



This edition's crossword features some animals that live in and near the sea. Also, animals and birds commonly found in the gardens of South-East Queensland. Those that are often victims of pet cats!



## DOWN

1. Bottle-nosed - - - - -
2. Chubby sea-grass eating mammal
3. Small nocturnal marsupial "Subtropical Ante - - - -"
4. Australian - - - - - Turkey
5. S - - - - - Gull

## ACROSS

1. Large-billed sea bird
2. Bottom-dwelling sea creature
3. - - - - -tongued Skink
4. G - - - - - Treefrog
5. Garden S - - - - -

Answers: DOWN: 1. Dolphin 2. Dugong; 3. Blue; 4. Graceful; 5. Skink  
ACROSS: 1. Pelican; 2. Stingray; 3. Blue; 4. Graceful; 5. Skink

# Red Eared Slider Turtle Eradication Update

## DPI&F Biosecurity Queensland

The red-eared slider turtle (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) is exotic to Australia and is a major environmental threat. Keeping red-eared slider turtles as pets is illegal in Queensland. Only native turtles can be kept as pets in Queensland and only with a permit from the Environmental Protection Agency.

The discovery of two adult, free-ranging red-eared slider turtles at Mango Hill in January 2004 prompted an intensive investigation and eradication campaign.

Although eradication is proceeding well, the illegal trade in red-eared slider turtles means that new wild populations could become established as a consequence of deliberate or accidental release. Veterinarians can assist by providing clients with information about the potential consequences of keeping or releasing invasive animals and passing on any information about illegally kept red-eared slider turtles or other exotic reptiles to a compliance officer at Biosecurity Queensland, DPI&F on 13 25 23.

If a red-eared slider turtle is found in the wild or handed in to a surgery, please isolate the animal, keep it alive (if possible), and contact project officer Scott O'Keeffe 3310 2815, Mobile 04 28 240 015 or 13 25 23.



### Identification

- Distinctive red stripe behind the eyes, which may fade as the animal ages. Animals may also have dark band on the carapace (dorsal shell). The plastron (ventral shell) may be yellow and marked with brown or rusty coloured swirls, spirals or blotches.
- The red-eared slider turtle pulls its head straight back into its shell – all native turtles retract to the side.
- Red-eared slider turtles are about the size of a 50c piece at hatching and grow to roughly the size of a dinner plate.



### Eradication methods:

- Trapping and Netting – a variety of nets and traps are used.
- Canine Detection - A trained Labrador is used by professional handlers to detect terrestrial nest sites, eggs and hatchlings.
- Habitat Removal - In some landscapes, habitat removal has been a practical method of eradication. Small water bodies

### Environmental impact – why eradicate?

- During the 1980s, the species was extensively farmed for the pet trade. Hatchlings are attractive “penny” turtles but become aggressive as they grow and dumping by “bitten” owners has been the source of many naturalised populations. The species is now naturalised in more than 25 countries.
- They compete with native species for food and space and appear to have displaced native turtles in some sites in Australia. Observational studies in Europe and California have shown that introduced red-eared slider turtles have displaced several native species.<sup>2,3</sup>
- Climatic modelling<sup>3</sup> suggests that they can readily establish colonies in Queensland across a range of habitats.
- If they become established in major river systems, they have the potential to cause severe environmental damage through competition and predation.
- They are prolific breeders, laying multiple clutches of 4 to 23 eggs per year. The female can lay fertile eggs for a period of five years after a single mating. The life span is approximately 40 years.
- The turtle will eat anything from fish, frogs, insects and vegetation, and in Australia they have few predators. Carnivorous fish are unable to digest hatchlings, and these are regurgitated if eaten.
- Researchers in New South Wales have demonstrated that at a site invaded by red-eared slider turtles, two species of native turtle acquired the blood parasite *Pirhemocytion cheilonurum*, not previously found in Australia<sup>4</sup>.





can be drained and filled in with soil.

- **Barrier Fences.** A re-useable turtle exclusion fence has been designed that excludes turtles, but allows access to sites for landholders and non-target fauna. Flow-through sections allow water to pass. These fences have been used successfully to prevent re-infestation of treated sites within areas that have not been fully cleared of red-eared slider turtles.
- **Environmental DNA.** Researchers in France have recently perfected a method for detecting aquatic vertebrate pests using environmental DNA. It is hoped that this method can be adapted to detect red-eared slider turtles.

### Current Eradication Status

- **Mango Hill -** Breeding red-eared slider turtle populations have been eradicated from five farm dams using a combination of trapping, netting, and habitat modification with exclusion barriers in place to prevent re-infestation of two remaining farm dams. Eradication continues to remove a small number of red-eared slider turtles from Halpine Dam.
- **Burpengary -** A small population inhabits a small farm dam at Burpengary. Eradication was delayed during the equine influenza outbreak. A small number of red-eared slider turtles' nests and hatchlings have been found in the surrounding landscape. Eradication work will continue and the 'home' dam will be drained.
- **Gold Coast -** A red-eared slider turtle was discovered last year and is currently thought to be an independent release but further monitoring is required. •



## Sweet Release

By Greer McNeill

**THIS STORY IS FROM THE DARK AGES OF WILDCARE. A TIME WHEN THERE WERE NO 24 HOUR VETS, NO WILDLIFE HOSPITALS, WAY BEFORE WE WERE GRACED WITH OUR 'ANGELS OF MERCY'.** A time when animals that were unfortunate enough to be injured at night or on the weekend had to wait.

To all those animals that endured, may your trials never be repeated!

The house lights flickered to darkness for an instant and the computer monitor faded to black with a static hiss. I sighed, knowing full well that all my work that I should have saved more often had now vanished irretrievably into the ether, so I wandered to the kitchen for a consolatory cup of coffee. At the third sip, the telephone rang. A flying fox had hit a power line at Coomera, so Jim and I gathered our bat rescue kit and set off.

The power lines were black heavy cables, obviously the main supply lines for the area and I thought that the outcome might not be good. The caller and family showed where the unfortunate animal had crawled some 15 meters across the lawn and now hung in a small hibiscus shrub. After some judicious pruning, encouraged all the time by the house owner, we were able to wrap a towel around the bat, a large black male, and transfer him to the box.

At home I offered him a drink of Lectade, which he accepted, and placed the box on a heat pad for warmth. About an hour later we quietly examined him.

Although wary, he allowed us to gently open his wings. There were areas in the centre of one wing which were brittle and grey. The other was worse and I knew that the fate of this animal was sealed.

Knowing he was in extreme pain and knowing the outcome, I dissolved half a Codeine tablet and added it to some juice, most of which he drank. The dose rate was totally wrong, but at least, I reasoned, it may help ease the pain.

I sat with him through the night.

At first light, the full extent of his injuries was apparent. Sections of both wings had completely disintegrated and there were raw burns on his fingers, arms and feet.

"Oh you poor thing," I whispered softly, "hold on, it won't be long now, I promise."

Suddenly, the wariness left his eyes and there was a new expression on his face and he reached out to me with his thumb hook. On impulse I gave him my finger and he leaned his head forward and looked straight into my eyes. With a shiver I realised he was asking to be released from his pain and that he knew I was the key.

With tears in my eyes I whispered, "Little one, I wish that I could have done more and faster." He held my gaze for a moment longer, then released my finger, wrapped himself in his shattered wings and closed his eyes.

We never made that final journey for, shortly after he had closed his eyes, I found that his wish had been granted and the flying fox had already found his sweet release. •

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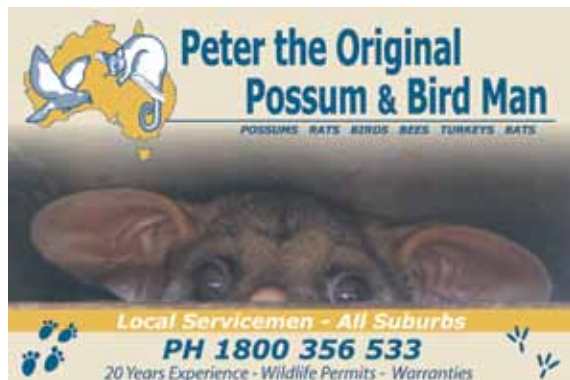


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