

WildNews

ISSUE 67 - WINTER 2013

Introducing the
New Wildcare Brochure

**Calling all
Possum Carers!**

Species Coordinator's Report

Repticon Conference

+ Treating Bloat in Ringtail Possums



President's Report



By Karen Scott

Many thanks to those members who were able to attend the Wildcare Annual General Meeting in late June. It was great to see many familiar faces, and a few new ones, and gave everyone a chance to catch up in a setting other than a training workshop!

My sincere thanks to Lewis and Tracy for all their hard work in helping to organise the AGM this year.

You will see that we have a few new members on the Management Committee including Sam Longman and Annette Bird. The addition of Sam and Annette will strengthen the Committee even further and along with other key volunteers who have taken on positions, will result in Wildcare having a strong and productive year ahead.

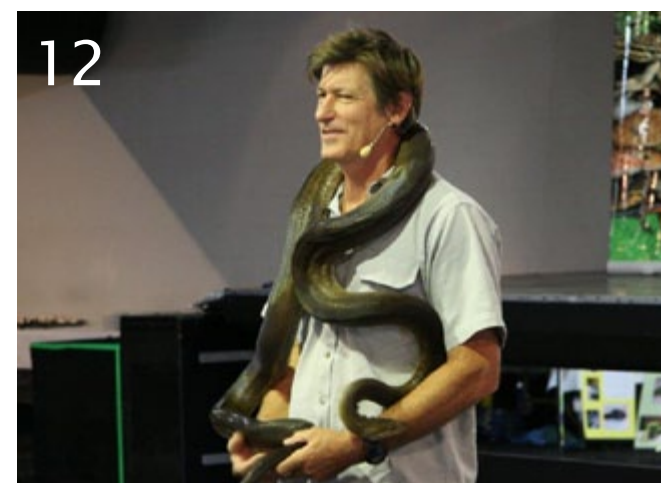
This year will see the first year in a very long time where Gail Gipp will not be holding a position on the Wildcare Management Committee. As many of you know, Gail was one of the three founding members of the carers' branch of Wildcare. Gail has held a position on the Wildcare Management Committee for the past 13 years in various capacities including President, Vice-President and Committee member. I have held various positions on the Committee for the past 13 years alongside Gail and I must admit that I am a little saddened that I will no longer be working with her on the Committee. Gail was one of the very first people I met when I joined Wildcare

and she was responsible for many of my 'firsts', including my first wallaby joey, first possum joey and first koala joey. She was also responsible for involving me in many other areas of Wildcare. Gail still maintains a number of positions within Wildcare, including Head Carer and Koala and Macropod Coordinator but due to work commitments is reducing her 'administrative' work load. I am sure that I speak on behalf of everyone when I thank Gail for her tireless work on the Committee for those 13 years, as she is one of the people who have made Wildcare the professional and well-respected organisation that it is today.

The 2013 Annual Report is now available for download from the Wildcare website. Please take the time to read the news from the past year and in particular to digest the record keeping statistics. What an amazing effort our members have put in! This is clearly shown in the recorded data.

Finally, I hope everyone is enjoying the 'quiet time' before Spring arrives in a few weeks, although I hear that there are already baby birds coming into care.

Photos: T Gilmour & A Roberts



NEWS & ACTIVITIES

President's Report	02
A Warm Welcome to our New Members	04
Blue Cards for Wildcare Volunteers	04
Record Keeping Rap	05
Education Report	06
Calling all Possum Carers	06
Coming Soon	06
Community Events Report	08
Australian Native Birds Rescue Training Workshop	09
New Wildcare Brochure	09

REHABILITATION

Species Coordinators' Reports	10
Treating Bloat in Ringtail Possums	14

EDUCATION & CONSERVATION

Palm Oil and Plastics	16
The Importance of Being Observant	16

And also...

Grants	17
Special Thanks	18
Advertising & Supporters	19
Thank you	20

Wildcare Australia Inc

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www.wildcare.org.au

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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MAIN COMMITTEE

President Karen Scott
Vice-President Samantha Longman
Secretary Lewis McKillop
Treasurer Tracy Paroz
Committee Members Rachel Lyons,
Annette Bird

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Eleanor Hanger & Deborah Bianchetto.
Submissions can be sent to
news@wildcare.org.au
cover photo: Annette Bird



A Warm Welcome to our New Members

Wildcare Australia welcomed the following new members in April, May & June:

Jessie Gaskon; Marion Simpson & Jillaine Simpson; Angela Fleming; Rhiannon Hutchings; Margaret Wise; Marilyn Woods; Linda Tichbon & David Griswald; Ellice Duncan; Sarah Blackwell; Vaughan Poynter; Louise Terone; Anna Neynens; Katherine Lee; Peter Dickson; Brett Gadd; Daniel Brewer; Samantha Allen; Shelley Davis; Oliver Humphry; Hayden Cooper; Lucy Hordern; Meggin Brockbank; Denyse Hopkinson; Kelly-ann Middleton & David Middleton; Daniela Parra; Joke Van Laere; Cass Gaisford; Sarah Magnay; Jane Tunks & Amber Tunks; Samantha Stewart; Michael Dickinson; Lisa West & Garth West; Antoinette Ward; Alexander McDonald; Georgie Nicetin; Jennifer Leech; Will Babbage; Jon Groom & Liz Groom; Kylie Corcoran & Ryan Caterson; Joanne Davis; Andrew Miller; Alex MacKay & Courtney Damen; Andrew Sharpe; Courtney Haack; Rebecca Harris; Ashley Fraser; Lindsay Harris; Rob Storey.

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.

Blue Cards for Wildcare Volunteers

By Karen Scott

Wildcare members, who plan to represent our organization at events or schools, should ensure that they apply for a Blue Card. This is essential when participating in events where children or young people are involved. For Wildcare, this would include such activities as manning Wildcare displays where we have face painting or colouring competitions, or attending talks at schools.

There is no application fee for volunteers, however there is a section of the form that needs to be completed by Wildcare. Information on applying for a Blue Card can be found at www.bluecard.qld.gov.au or by contacting Karen Scott by email at karen@wildcare.org.au

Photos: D Turnbull & K Treleaven

Collation of the Jan to June 2013 Records

Thanks to all those permit-endorsed members who submitted their records on time for the first half of this year. The records were collated at the end of July, and the following reports were recently completed and distributed using the data:

- Records outcomes for Currumbin Wildlife Hospital (SIC animals from 2012, and Jan to June 2013 animals).
- Records outcomes for Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital (SIC animals from 2012, and Jan to June 2013 animals).
- Road Trauma & Road Kill Sightings Records for Springbrook Wildlife Appreciation Group (SWAG) – covering Jan to June 2013.
- Koala Records for koalas rescued in the Gold Coast, Scenic Rim & Logan areas – covering Jan to June 2013.

There were just over 2000 animals reported in records in the first 6 months of 2013, although I'm yet to go through and merge all the duplicate records (i.e. animals transferred between carers). Unfortunately for the above reports, there was a large component omitted. Of the permit-endorsed members on my list, only 44 members (41%) submitted their complete Jan to June records. Another 21 members (20%) only submitted up to March or April, and the remaining 42 members (39%) have yet to submit their 2013 records. Hopefully they will be submitted in time for the end of year collations. Thanks again to those who did.

Excel Records Form

The Excel records form was recently re-created from scratch after some problems with the new outcomes pick-list experienced by many in the 2013 Excel records form. If you didn't think there was an outcomes pick-list..., well, that was the problem! So goodbye 'version j', hello 'version k'. I am gradually going through and converting each member's existing records over to the new version 'k' form and am emailing these to them. This new Excel records form will soon be available on the new Wildcare website, but I can email it to anyone who needs it in the interim.

Record Keeping Online Survey

Thank you to Karen Scott for putting the record keeping survey together. We had a high response from members and we look forward to collating the responses and comments. The results indicated that most members agreed that an online database is the way to proceed. We are currently negotiating with a developer who specialises in developing custom databases and will keep members up to date as this progresses. Thanks to all of you who participated in the survey.

Education Report

By Karen Scott

As you will no doubt have seen, we have a very full calendar this semester with 57 workshops scheduled. We have worked hard to continue to deliver a variety of workshops to our members and hopefully members are benefiting.

We have a number of new workshops scheduled this calendar, which have proven popular with members wishing to extend their knowledge.

We are currently looking at developing several more advanced or specialised workshops for our more experienced members and hope to get more of these underway soon. Our sincerest thanks to Michael Pyne at Currumbin Wildcare Hospital who, once again, has run two Advanced Bird Workshops for our experienced bird carers and to Mimi Dona, who delivered a Raptor handling workshop a few months ago.

Please remember to register early for workshops to avoid missing out, as some fill quickly.

Calling all Possum Carers

By Deb Turnbull

Do you belong to our Possum Email Group (PEG)? If not, or if you are unsure, register your interest by emailing deborah.turnbull@griffithuni.edu.au with 'PEG please' in the subject line.

Anyone with an interest in possums will find PEG a valuable way of gaining and sharing information.



Photo: D Turnbull

Coming Soon - Wildlife Conference

The Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference is being held in Hobart, from the **27th to 30th May, 2014**. The theme of the conference is New Directions: Accommodating Change. Check the website for further information and also papers from past conferences: www.awrchobart2014.org



Coming Soon - Music in The Bush

Several of our dedicated volunteers have organised a wonderful event for Wildcare members and friends, to be held on Saturday **14th September 2013**, at Mudgeeraba on the Gold Coast.

With a great band, lots of activities, sausage sizzle and supper, it will be a great event for the entire family. You will find all the details on the flyer.

Please support Wildcare by attending. We look forward to seeing you there.

Wildcare Australia Inc.

MUSIC IN THE BUSH

We need you!

Wildcare Australia Inc.

Date: Saturday 14 September

Time: from 6pm until 11pm

**Where: Mt Nimmel Hall - Austinville Rd
off Springbrook Rd, Mudgeeraba (Gold Coast)**

Cost: \$25 pp - kids under 15 free

RSVP Debbie on email: eblack@onthenet.com.au / 0414868998

only 100 entry tickets available **BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL**

**Lots of lucky door prizes, games, dancing
all with great live **ROCK / COUNTRY MUSIC BAND****

PERFECT STRANGERS

sausage sizzle & supper included **BYOG**

BRING FAMILY AND FRIENDS

COME ALONG & ENJOY—MEET CARERS & RESCUERS

WE NEED YOU THERE

Community Events Report

By Debbie Overell

Gold Coast Report for February to June 2013 from the Events Coordinator Debbie Overell



Some exciting events have occurred in the last few months in and around the Gold Coast. The first of these was a display at the Numinbah Valley Environmental Education Centre Open Day on March 24, attended by Eleanor Hanger. This is a very informative centre promoting a greater awareness and understanding of the natural environment in a special bush setting. Attended by many Valley locals and visitors, it was a perfect opportunity to promote our key aims and objectives by a very experienced volunteer.



Our next event on 2 June was the Logan Eco Action Festival, located just outside the Gold Coast at Griffith University Campus in Logan. LEAF is a wonderfully organized event and we had a great day. Our volunteers were Chris, Tammy, Jessie, Kelly and Eleanor, who, as well as attending the display, attended the stage ceremony accepting a grant of \$5,000 from the 2013 EnviroGrant program to purchase brochures and a pull up banner.



On 9 June we attended the Gecko Wildlife Expo situated at Albert Waterways Hall, Mermaid Waters. This is the grand finale to Green Week. Lots of different animals were on display here and our site was situated next to a very interesting display of insects. Our representatives at this event were Hiromi Johnson, Dianna Smith and Sally Purbrick-Illek.

On 15 June Brigitte Blakeway attended a school fete at Ashmore State School. This was a perfect example of how one person can make a difference. Brigitte not only attended the display she completely constructed it.

She supplied her own tent and table, did her own posters, and if that wasn't enough even made a fibreglass tree decorated with our favorite wildlife toys as a background to the display. Well done Brigitte!



Finally, on 29 and 30 June we had the Mudgeeraba Show. This is a two-day event that requires nice weather to be really successful. However, we didn't have the best weather, so visitor numbers were down. Saturday was the best day keeping us very busy with our traditional face painting. We featured on the children's treasure hunt this year and we also had an ad on the big screen promoting our face painting. Making a premier appearance were some special wildlife visitors crocheted by Brigitte Blakeway for sale at the show. I would like to give a special thanks to Tom and Lindy Meath, who came from the Sunshine Coast to assist with this event and of course Brigitte. Big thanks also to Rob and Karin Asher, John and Clare Boyd and Ceris Ash. Thanks to Robyn Cox for going out of her way to supply leaf for the display!



Through the assistance and help of the volunteers attending these events we have raised over \$700 for the day-to-day operations of Wildcare Australia Inc. and we have educated many visitors about our organization. Thank you.

Australian Native Bird Rescue Training Workshop

By Sally Purbrick-Illek



I was fortunate to attend a four-hour workshop led by members of the Pelican and Seabird Rescue Inc on July 14, 2012.

A warm and sunny day greeted the workshop participants who gathered at the Jacobs Well Tavern to learn how to rescue injured native birds that can still fly. The well-informed and entertaining mother and daughter facilitators spoke about the identification, equipment required, observation, capture, treatment and release of injured birds.

After lunch we all trooped out onto the beach for the practical part of the workshop, where another facilitator had identified a seagull with an injured leg. We then were shown how to set up a loop snare, followed by a demonstration of the “enticer” luring the injured gull with fish, while the “snarer” prepared to catch the bird once the “spotter” announced that the bird had entered the perimeter of the snare. This sounds quite straight forward, but the fish attracted quite a crowd of other gulls as well as a few pelicans, and trying to get the injured gull to step into the snare was a bit like herding cats. However, with patience the targeted gull did finally hop into the snare, and in the blink of an eye it was secured by the enticer for examination. It turned out that the gull had a broken leg that had healed in an awkward position, so it was put into a carrier and later taken to a vet for further examination.

If you are interested in learning more, please see this website: www.pelicanandseabirdrescue.org.au

New Wildcare Brochure

The beautiful new Wildcare brochures, on re-cycled paper in line with our ethical standards, have now been printed and are ready for distribution. We would like to thank Print by Design and Dorratt Design for the designing and printing of the brochure and Greenleaf Images for the cover photo.



Coordinator Reports

ECHIDNAS

By Karen Scott

While other species have been leading relatively quiet lives, echidnas have been out partying all night, it seems. Our emergency hotline is receiving many more calls from the public, reporting sightings of these incredible animals digging up their garden beds looking for food.

Sadly, we have seen an increase in the number of echidnas coming into care due to road trauma and dog attack. We have also seen a number of echidnas getting themselves into sticky situations including 'Pool Boy', who was rescued out of a pool filter box where he inhaled water into his lungs. Pool Boy was in care for six weeks, but was eventually released back to his natural habitat, just a little distance, however, from any backyard pools. And then there was Errol, who was found in an industrial bin of scrap metal with a piece of metal wrapped around his beak. How he managed to get there is anyone's guess, but thankfully he was found on the conveyor belt of the waste metal facility before he was recycled. He was rescued by the RSPCA Rescue Unit and has been in care with a Wildcare licensed echidna carer. Errol should be cleared for release shortly.

MACROPODS

By Karen Scott

I fear that I will jinx the good karma that must be occurring at the moment, by stating that our 'trauma season' has been much quieter than in previous years. We are still certainly seeing adult macropods hit by cars every day throughout South-east Queensland, but compared with previous years, the numbers appear to be slightly lower. Last year, it was not unusual for each of our Trauma Carers to be attending two or three animals a day. Touch wood and all fingers crossed, the quieter streak will continue.

We have still had a steady intake of orphaned kangaroo and wallaby joeys into care from the South-east Queensland area, as well as a number of Red Kangaroo joeys that have been transported back to the region from western Queensland. Many of these joeys were orphaned as a result of their mothers being shot for recreational purposes, or being attacked by hunting dogs. It is extremely sad for our macropod carers to see these joeys orphaned for no justifiable reason.

KOALAS

By Karen Scott

The winter months are usually a busy time, with frequent koala rescues due to road trauma, dog attack and sick koalas coming to ground. Surprisingly, over the past few months we have had a relatively quiet time with koalas on the Gold Coast. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for koalas in other regions, where they continue to come into care at an alarming rate.

We have seen an extremely high number of orphaned koala joeys coming into care from North Stradbroke Island. Most have been found on the ground on their own. All have been far too young to be without their mothers. There doesn't seem to be any explanation for the orphaning, but hopefully whatever is causing this problem will end quickly, and the young will stay safe with their mothers.

We have a few more members now geared up and ready to help with koala rescues, thanks to the equipment purchased from funding received from the Mazda Foundation and the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. The grant funding has enabled us to purchase large rescue cages, rescue poles and binoculars to assist with rescues. Many of these items are outside the financial reach of our rescuers, so this has been a great opportunity for our volunteers and we thank those organisations for their support.



POSSUMS

Gold Coast *By Eleanor Hanger*

In my absence over the past two months, it seems that the main problems for possums on the Gold Coast have been poisoning and dermatitis.

Dermatitis is an on-going problem for our possums and, as it is often the outward manifestation of a more severe problem, it is important to have a correct diagnosis by a wildlife veterinarian, so that if there is an underlying problem it is treated.

Poisoning is another issue altogether. This is where education of the public is so necessary, as I'm sure many people use rat and snail baits without giving any thought to the suffering and death of non-target species, not to mention those targeted. There are other more humane ways of dealing with unwanted pests and these are what we should be promoting in our displays and talks.

The possum coordinators and carers have really had their hands full over the past few months, so if you have completed your training and are ready to care for these creatures, please let us know.

We remind all carers to keep in touch with their coordinators. It is critical for the well-being of the animals and, if they are orphans, for their successful release, to be creched (where appropriate) with others of their species as early as possible. The welfare of these animals is our priority.

To help our coordinators with placements, please let them know what animals, if any, you already have in care, or what animals you have the time, expertise, food (natural diet) and facilities to care for.

Remember too, that we have mentors, experienced carers, who are willing to assist, if you feel you need help or just need someone with whom you can discuss a problem. It is amazing how a simple phone call can ease your mind, put something into perspective, or give you a simple solution, which you may have overlooked in your panic. New carers should keep in contact with their mentor on a regular basis.

There are a number of workshops coming up in the near future, so please try to attend. Workshops provide a wonderful opportunity to learn and to share knowledge, as well as to meet your coordinators and other carers.

Photos: B Vernon & L Meath

Coordinator Reports

REPTILES

Repticon Reptile Conference, by Annette Bird



After the success of last year's event, Pet City Mt Gravatt and Kong's Australia again hosted the 2013 Repticon Reptile Conference. Pet City Mt Gravatt and Kong's Australia are leaders in their field developing and then implementing the first reptile conference targeting reptile fanciers from far and wide. The day was a huge success with a good attendance and great food.

The speakers this year were excellent, starting with well-respected and published photographer Gunther Schmid.

There would be very few reputable reptile books that don't feature his awesome shots. His talk was about how to capture good animal shots (reptiles predominately) and his presentation slide show was mesmerizing – I was captivated anyway!

The second speaker was Greg Miles, who spoke at length about the plight of wildlife in the top end. He discussed the history of the local area and the impact of introduced animals on particular species of wildlife and the response of the authorities charged with the protection and management of the ecosystems. He was very thought provoking and discussed how the pet industry could possibly help the wild animal population. His talk generated some hot responses (there were QPWS representatives in the audience!). Next came the always entertaining Martin Fingland from Geckoes Wildlife Presentations to break the tension with his entourage of live animals. As usual, they were on their best behaviour and were enthusiastically received by the audience. He talked about how to entertain with live animals and his stories are always captivating.

After a very filling roast lunch, Dr Deborah Monks from Brisbane Bird and Exotic Vets talked about viruses affecting captive dragons and as usual her talks are quite scientific and practical. The next speaker was Gabrielle Latta, who delivered a very comprehensive talk on how to care for freshwater turtles. The final speaker of the day was Pet City's Laura Addy, a Bearded Dragon breeder, who specializes in designer dragons. She talked at length about new and exciting blends of colours and genes.

I was then invited to speak for a while on the work that Wildcare does in relation to how we operate, our rescue and rehabilitation workload, the education and support we give to our new and existing carers and how we work with other organizations to achieve our goals. I think the audience was surprised to hear our actual workload. All photos were taken by Pet City's Tiffany.

At the end of the day, I was very humbled to receive a cheque from the organisers of the event, Pet City, for \$1600 to go towards our efforts. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the sponsors who contributed to this donation and tell you a little about them:

continued on next page



Above: Gunter delivering his talk



Above: Martin's talks are always a big hit



Above: Martin and his two Rough Scale Pythons

Coordinator Reports

REPTILES

Continued

Pet City Mt Gravatt has been catering to the pet industry now for over 56 years. They have both in-store and online services catering for all pet needs, including more exotic animals such as reptiles, spiders, scorpions and rather fancy fish! Check out their website for a full product list or better still, stop in and say 'high' to their very experienced and knowledgeable staff. www.petcity.com.au

Kongs Australia have been catering to the pet industry for many years promoting quality products for dogs, cats, reptiles, birds and fish. They are very active in assisting with reptile welfare and education endeavours, including founding the first Repticon Reptile Conferences with Pet City Mt Gravatt. www.kongs.com.au Indepet is a collective of pet superstores who work together to support the pet industry. Represented at this year's conference were: Pet City, Stafford Pet Superstore, Mackay Pet Superstore, Gold Coast Pet Superstore and Redland Pet Superstore.

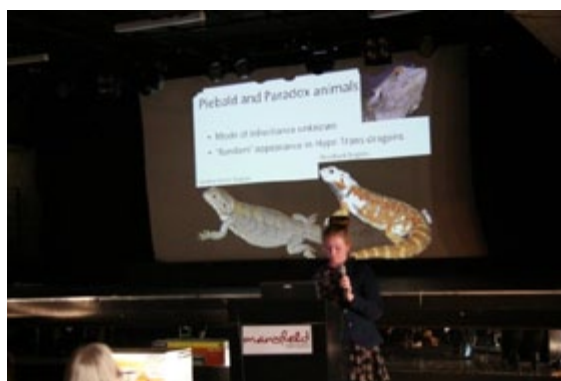
Reptile Publications (ABK Publications) produce a wide range of bird books, magazines and bird DVD's featuring many bird species from Australia and around the world. They also produce a series of reptile and amphibian books. They regularly support reptile events and are a Burleigh based business. www.reptilepublications.com.au

Computer Alliance is a Queensland-owned and operated IT company located in Mt Gravatt. They are known for their competitive pricing, flexibility, diverse and leading-edge product range, and after-sales service and support. Supporting the enthusiast, home, and small office/home office (SOHO) markets, they have developed substantial relationships with government agencies, educational institutions and SMEs based on a reputation for providing value and support. www.computeralliance.com.au

Scales and Tails Australia Magazine is an international reptile magazine officially launched in 2008 providing reptile enthusiasts with all the latest information about reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. Topics regularly include information about particular species, breeding, health and conservation and the photos are out of this world. www.scalesandtails.com.au



Above: Dr Deborah Monks



Above: Laura Addy

Treating Bloat in Ringtail Possums

By Deborah Turnbull

This discussion is based on over ten years of raising ringtails, talking with vets, and sharing ideas with other carers. The paper itself was written in consultation with the vets at RSPCA wild-life hospital.

First, there are some basics that apply to all ringtails raised in care. Good hygiene is essential – yeasts and bacteria lurk everywhere. Ringtails should never be fed fruit, particularly the fruits we humans love. I hold off on flowers until they are weaned, and then give sparingly. Some carers offer flowers a little earlier, but not before they are consuming leaf as at least 50% of their diet.

The list of proven and possible causes of bloat seems to grow every day, but there are some things we do know. Broadly speaking, there are different forms of bloat; a fluid bloat and a gaseous bloat. A possum with fluid bloat will have a spongy or doughy-feeling abdomen. A possum with gaseous bloat will have a tight abdomen, like the skin of a drum. Although they are similar, there are differences in both the development and the treatment of the two forms of bloat. This discussion pertains mainly to the gaseous form.

Yeasts may cause bloat, as can an imbalance of gut flora following a course of antibiotics. 'Stress' seems to cause bloat, but I suspect there is also an underlying medical issue going on such as yeast, milk intolerance or bacterial infection. What is important for ringtail possum carers is the complexity of bloat, the multiple causes, and the individual differences among animals. The bottom line is that the true cause of bloat can only be determined by a vet, and even they cannot always be confident they have found 'the' source of the problem for any individual animal. It is also important to remember that bloat is often fatal, but some animals do survive.

I am going to use the story of 'Scout' a 112g cat attacked ringtail to illustrate this discussion.

The owners of the cat found Scout and got him to me (via the Wildcare hotline) within an hour or so of being attacked.

He was very flat, with eyes closed. I immediately administered antibiotics (Clavulox® injection), anti-inflammatories (oral Metacam®) and pain relief (Painstop®) under veterinary instruction, and popped him in the Brinsea ICU. Over the next few hours I offered oral fluids and later some milk. He was still alive in the morning and looking brighter. There were puncture wounds around the joints over his shoulders and neck so we went to the vet for a closer examination. The vet prescribed ten days of antibiotics and three days of anti-inflammatories with pain relief as required.

After three days Scout was greatly improved and I began to reduce the pain meds, stopping them on day four. The brunt of the cat attack was over one shoulder and Scout was still tender on that side, hesitant to hold leaf in that hand, so I added a small amount of Critical Care to his milk as a substitute for the leaf he should be eating.

On day five things went downhill fast and we went back to the vet. He was not self-feeding at all and I had to revert to syringe feeding him. My first thought was pain so I started him back on pain relief. He also had mild diarrhoea and was beginning to look 'bloaty'. The vet masked Scout down and gave a quick but thorough examination. Even that short anaesthetic really knocked him about and we were worried he would not survive. In the meantime, the vet had determined there were no pockets of infection lurking in joints and we should stop the antibiotics and restart the Painstop® immediately. I suggested Tympanyl® and the vet agreed. Over the years we have used a number of products for the 'wind' or gas associated with bloat, but I now feel that Tympanyl® is the best. Note I have no scientific evidence to back this up. I do think it is better than the Infacol® we used to use.

continued on next page

Treating Bloat in Ringtail Possums

continued

Maybe possum wind is closer in nature to horse wind than human baby wind! Because Scout was not self-feeding and not eating any leaf I increased the amount of Critical Care in his milk.

By day eight he was lapping, but not eating much leaf, and rather peeved that I had not yet removed him from the hospital basket! I continued to put Critical Care in his milk until he was eating an appropriate amount of leaf.

So, what are the principles underlying this story? First, pain must always be managed as a first principle of any rehabilitation. Painstop® (paracetamol and codeine) seems to work well. Just make sure it is the DAYTIME version. As with all drugs, the use of Painstop® and the dose rate must be determined by a vet. Codeine interacts with some other drugs and is not recommended in certain cases, so check first. For example, Infant Panadol® (without codeine) might be better in a dehydrated animal. A vet will also determine how often the drug should be administered.

Antibiotics upset the natural gut flora and therefore can impact on gut motility. Too slow and the animal becomes constipated. Too fast and the animal develops diarrhoea. This is an over-simplification of the process, but our aim as rehabbers is to keep gut motility as close to normal as possible. At 112g, Scout would be eating leaf in the wild but he was not eating leaf in care. He needed both the fibre of leaf and the nutrition to maintain a healthy gut. Critical Care is a good source of fibre and does have some nutritional benefits. It is, however, designed primarily for guinea pigs so the nutritional content is not exactly that required by a ringtail possum, which is why we use Critical Care sparingly – just a pinch or two per scoop of milk formula.

Vetafarm makes Critta Care. The Oxbow product is imported, has a slightly larger fibre size that does not pass through a cannula and is slightly more palatable to possums. The Vetafarm product is made in Australia, a little cheaper and is fine enough to pass through a larger-sized cannula. Talking to other carers, there does not seem to be any clear preference for either of the two available products, so use what is easiest for you to obtain.

Wind! One of the most satisfying outcomes when using Tympanyl® is a peppermint fart. It means the wind is being broken up and passing through the digestive tract. Both Infacol® and Tympanyl® are designed to break up wind. Infacol® is certainly easier to obtain but I am be-

ginning to think that Tympanyl® is a better product for ringtails. You will, however, need to get this under prescription from a vet. Wind can be painful, or at the very least uncomfortable, so pain relief is a good idea for a bloated possum. Wind or gas can also cause some very nasty gut problems, such as a twisted bowel, which is fatal. So, getting rid of wind is a priority.

Almost any gut problem may be associated with an imbalance of gut flora. This is certainly the case following a course of antibiotics. Proper pap (the caecum contents of a dead possum) is the best, but faeces from a healthy adult will suffice. The best faeces for re-seeding the gut of a compromised juvenile is the soft pellets that adults pass during the day and eat as a part of their coprophagic digestive process. It is not easy to 'toilet' an adult possum in order to get these soft pellets but faeces from a younger weaned, or almost weaned animal, will suffice. As a last resort, fresh hard faeces passed at night can be collected on a clean sheet. By the time you are in need of pap, any amount of good bacteria is going to be better than none.

In summary, the three aspects of gaseous bloat that need to be managed are the gas, the pain and the balance of gut flora. A full veterinary assessment is required to determine if other treatments are required. For example, the bloat may be associated with a yeast infection or milk intolerance. A yeast infection can only be determined by the microscopic examination of a faecal sample. Bloat is definitely not a condition a wildlife carer should be treating without on-going consultation with an experienced wildlife vet.

Thanks to vets Dr Bonnie Cumming and Dr Tania Bishop from the RSPCA wildlife hospital for their comments, and to Karen Scott for fine tuning the text.



Palm Oil and Plastics

By Eleanor Hanger

The plight of the Orang-utan has become the public face of the debate surrounding the destruction of its rainforest habitat and the increasing demand for palm oil, which creates an ever-growing demand for more palm oil plantations.

Palm oil is now used in an enormous range of products; food, cosmetics, detergents and plastics to name a few, so it becomes quite a challenge for us, the consumers, to avoid it, particularly when it may simply be referred to as 'vegetable oil'.

A plea for the flora and fauna of South-east Asia: Avoid altogether, or at least minimize your use of products containing palm oil. 'Extinction is Forever'

Plastics are choking our waterways, contaminating our oceans and killing our wildlife.

We have all read about the islands of rubbish, that are polluting our marine environment; about the turtles and other marine animals that regularly ingest plastic bags, where only the lucky few are found and saved; about the thousands of seabirds that die after mistaking fragments of plastic for food, and the young birds that are fed this deadly cocktail by their unsuspecting parents and suffer a similar fate.

We have days dedicated to cleaning up the beaches and we have clean up Australia day, which are helping considerably, however I believe that everyday should involve some form of consideration for the natural environment, whether it be picking up someone's discarded drink bottle or cigarette butt, or if time allows, spending a little more time in clean-up activities.

To quote the Marine Conservation Society 'Like diamonds, plastics are forever'.

The Importance of Being Observant

By Deb Turnbull

I would like to share a lesson I just had on the importance of keen observation. I picked up a 'perfect' 150g male brush-tail from Vet A. There was no information about whether he was found alone or with a dead mum. During the first feed I noticed one hind foot was slightly swollen. It had been a long day, but I dragged myself off to my local vet to have a look. Under anaesthetic she discovered both ankles, knees and wrists were full of pus - even though they looked OK from the outside. He was euthanased. The diagnosis was septic arthritis and our best guess as to how this happened is, that mum had dermatitis, so we have an immune-suppressed baby plus the key bacteria (staphylococcus) associated with septicaemia and septic arthritis. This is the same key bacteria associated with exudative dermatitis. He looked almost perfect but would have been in a lot of pain. Poor baby.

Photo: A Roberts

Grants

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



GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL

\$10,000 worth of funding was received from the Gold Coast City Council's Community Grants Program for Wildcare to provide a trauma rescue service for the Gold Coast (including purchasing a dart pistol and sedatives, and covering costs of fuel and the emergency phone line) and to provide a community education service which includes provision of training manuals, workshop resources & consumables, a new projector, brochures and pull-up banners.



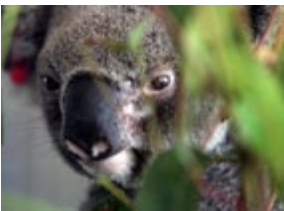
CITY OF IPSWICH

Funding of \$2,000 was received to purchase rescue equipment for our dedicated reptile rescuers.



MAZDA FOUNDATION

Funding of \$4,700 was received for koala rescue and rehabilitation. Funding will enable rescuers to be better equipped, particularly in regions where there are currently very few koala rescuers or none at all.



QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION

Funding of \$6,900 has been received under the Koala Rescue and Rehabilitation Program Grant to enable the purchase of more specialised koala rescue and rehabilitation equipment, such as rescue cages, poles, intensive care unit and binoculars.



LOGAN CITY COUNCIL

Funding of \$5,000 was received from Logan City Council's EnviroGrant Program to assist Wildcare to produce a Wildlife Educational Brochure & Pull-up Banner.

SPONSORSHIPS

A \$1,600 sponsorship was gratefully received from Pet City Mt Gravatt from the Repticon event.



Special Thanks – Greenleaf Images

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



Special Thanks – Toowong Family Vet *By Lewis McKillop*

Toowong Family Vet is a new practice in the western suburbs of Brisbane.

Dr Kirsty and Tahlia are passionate about all animals, and are always keen to promote responsible pet ownership to their clients. They have kindly offered to donate \$5 to Wildcare from every cat boarding with them.

We thank them sincerely for their support, and wish them well in the new practice. You can visit their website at www.toowongfamilyvet.com.au.



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