

Official Newsletter of

# WILDNEWS

Spring 2009 Issue 54



*Swimming  
with  
humpbacks.*

*Flying Foxes and  
Hendra Virus.*

This newsletter is proudly sponsored by Brett Raguse, MP Federal Member for Forde.

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# President's Report.

*Karen Scott*

HI EVERYONE, FIRSTLY, THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO BRAVED THE TRAFFIC IN LATE JUNE TO ATTEND THE WILDCARE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT BEERWAH. It was great to have the AGM north of Brisbane for a change, to enable people who previously have been unable to attend because of distance and animal commitments, the opportunity to participate and catch up with friends. We will definitely make sure that we rotate the AGM in future.

Secondly, thank you to Tracy Paroz, who is continuing in the role of secretary, and welcome to committee members Tonya Howard, Laura Reeder and Amy Whitman, our new extended Management Committee. They have already taken on extra jobs and are contributing significantly to the organization.

Thank you also to those who responded to my desperate cry for help with regards to our emergency phone roster. We have welcomed some wonderful people onto the phone roster, all of whom have kindly taken on shifts.

Your contribution is very much appreciated.

This coming year is going to be a good one and we are already off to a great start. We have a new fundraising committee just getting started with some great ideas and enthusiasm. We are also in the process of setting up a Community Education Team who will be responsible for delivering talks to schools and community groups. If you are still trying to find your 'niche' in Wildcare, maybe one of these sub-committees is for you.

Let's hope that the coming spring season is not too hectic although things seem to have started early this year with baby birds already coming into care.

Many thanks to everyone in Wildcare for your continuing tireless work. No matter how big or how small your contribution, it all helps our wildlife and God knows, they need all the help they can get.

## A Warm Welcome to Our New Members

*Wildcare Australia welcomes the following new members:*

Robyn Woolford, Aroona; Kathy Hopkins, Melanie MacDonald, Ascot; Julie Clegg, Aspley; Wendy Campbell, Beaudesert; Kerstin Shepherd, Beerwah; Marco Martinola, Benowa; Leanne Zimmerman, Bokarina; Crystal Nelson, Bonogin; Janina McCarthy, Boonah; Margaret & Henry Snowden, Bribie Island; Bren Dalby & Dun Neimed, Canungra; Kym Mulraney & Amie Sawford, Capalaba; Nick Meakins, Carindale; Alyce Wilson, Carrara; Candice Contencin-Clark, Chuwar; Belinda Kau, Closeburn; Cassandra Preece, Coolangatta; Cheri Maguire & James McCulloch, Coomera Waters; Emma Emery, Currumbin Valley; Judith Allen, D'aguiar; Christine Fraser, Dayboro; Claire Rawnsley, Esk; Alison McKirdy, Fairfield; Josephine & John Jordaan, Ferny Grove; Margaret & Justin Hurst, Forest Lake; Danielle Hastie, Greenslopes; Rhonda & Greg Muller, Gympie; Rosemary Wright, Hervey Bay; Miranda Miller, Highland Park; Maree & Michael Rogers, Kangaroo Point; Kim Lamb, Keperra; Kate Emslie Hanna, Wendy & Leigh Saurels, Laceys Creek; Sara Nilsson & Martha Hjelmquist, Miami; Michelle Dawson, Morningside; Leonie Pearson, Mt Tamborine;

Julia Chew, Mt. Nebo; Lauren Steel, Narangba; Warren Sutton, Nerang; Dean Chaloner, New Farm; Carolyn Beaton & John Scomparin, Noosa Heads; Kimmy Wolfenden & Andrew Swain, North Maclean; Jacqueline Belise & Maddie DePace, Paddington; Louise & Alistair McKay, Palen Creek; Telitha Miles, Regents Park; Shahan Beaver, Ridgewood; Christine Brown, Riverdowns; Benjamin Holland, Courtney Upton, Steven & Brittany Lambert, Robina; Caitlin McDonagh, Sharron McKenna, Rochedale; Tonya Giral & Family, Rochedale South; Rachel Monaghan, Spring Hill; Ceris Ash, Springbrook; Robert & Mary Collier, St George; Kate Hannan, St Lucia; Le-Anne & Andrew Dinnie, Strathdickie; Chloe Chambers, Tallebudgera Valley; Maria Curtis, Tamworth; Ann Liffen, Katie Artiss-Kemp, The Gap; Jose Resetarits, Upper Caboolture; Meghan Halverson, Warana; Sarah & Jackie Cahill, Wellington Point; Dennise Drake, Widgee; Kailas Wild, Windsor; Nick & Tina Davey, Wolfdene; Jodie Kleinschmidt, Wongoolba; Kate Jackson, Wynnum West; Angela Speer, Yeronga.

By joining Wildcare Australia you are demonstrating your commitment to the welfare of Australia's native animals. Please don't hesitate to get involved in this, your organization. If you are unsure of where your personal niche may be, call our office and I'm sure we will be able to help you.

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

# 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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Vice-President - Tonya Howard  
Secretary Tracy Paroz  
Treasurer - (Vacant)  
Newsletter Team: Eleanor Hanger,  
Mike Egan, Hope Hagar and Renée Rivard.  
Newsletter submissions can be sent to  
[news@wildcare.org.au](mailto:news@wildcare.org.au)



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# Vice President's Report.

**A FEW WORDS FROM TONYA.** Thank you to all who voted for me. I have been with Wildcare Australia for over six years now, nervously starting on the phones and looking after birds, then going on to caring for possums, gliders, reptiles, and flying-foxes.

Like many volunteers, I work full time, have a child, pets and a house to clean (least of my priorities), but I still find time to help our native wildlife.

When I tell people that I look after wildlife, most say, "Oh, I would love to do that, but I just don't have the time." Well, they should make time, as it is such a rewarding feeling knowing that you are actually doing something for love and not for money.

I am hoping to ease Karen's work load, as I have now become aware of the enormous amount of work she does and how much she puts up with. I have also come to realize that we can't make everyone happy. We seem to have a great committee team who are willing to get in and do some hard work, so if you have any suggestions or comments, please let us know.

One thing we have to remember is that we are all volunteers and we must not lose sight of the reason we joined Wildcare Australia: to help our native animals. So let's try to keep politics out of it and do what we are here to do.

Tonya Howard

## MUDGEERABA SHOW 2009.



Last year we had torrential rain which resulted in the cancellation of many events. Would we have nice sunny days this year? The weather forecast was not looking too good, so we hoped for the best and prepared for the worst.

Friday was very overcast as we set up our exhibit. Saturday wasn't much better. It was very cold with a few showers and muddy underfoot which kept the crowds away. Sunday was however much better and the people came.

This year "the Senior Family" did most of the work and added another marquee, so we were able to spread out and have more room for our displays. They also organised lucky dips and a jelly bean guessing competition which pulled in the crowds.

Thank you so much Dianne, Murray, Shawn, Aleisha and Justin Senior and Penelope.

Our exhibit looked beautiful, all covered in wattle.

Rowley Goonan made the most amazing display board showing the traumas our waterbirds suffer as a consequence of fishing line and hooks.

Dianna Smith as usual was there to help from beginning to end. Thank you so much Dianna, and once again thank you Bret Hales, for repairing and erecting our marquee and lighting.

A very big 'thank you' to Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and Dreamworld for donating passes for prizes.

With the assistance of these volunteers we were able to show the work of Wildcare Volunteers, communicate with the public and answer their many questions.

I urge all Wildcare Members to get involved and to help with these events so that we can attend the many more that are available. Trust me, you will find this work really rewarding.

Trish Hales

## Fundraising team. \$\$\$\$

**WE ARE CURRENTLY GETTING TOGETHER A FUNDRAISING TEAM AND WOULD WELCOME ANY ASSISTANCE YOU CAN GIVE.** We will all benefit from the money raised, by getting new equipment and the much-needed Carers' subsidy back.

Please email your details or call the office and we will have the Fundraising Coordinator contact you to see how you can help.



# *Wildcare Management Committee*

## *Meeting Summary*

### *June/July/August*

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#### *Website redesign*

The Wildcare Australia website will be re-designed and the Committee is currently working on setting up a team to undertake this task.

#### *Members/Memberships*

All new and renewing membership applications were approved.

#### *Grants and Donations*

Wildcare was successful in obtaining a GVEHO grant for \$2,300 which will be used to update the existing membership database which can be accessed by Committee members over the internet.

Wildcare received a \$1,250 donation from Woolworths Region 10 Social Club which will be used to purchase some portable, lightweight display boards for use at Publicity events attended.

#### *Fundraising Events*

Wildcare will participate in the Currumbin Careers Expo, Beaudesert Show and the Springbrook Fete.

#### *Education/Workshops – Wildcare*

The Education Calendar for September – December 2009 is available on the website. Discussions are currently underway for more Workshops to be offered to members living in the Gympie/Murgon areas.

#### *Rehabilitation permit endorsements*

The Wildcare rehabilitation permit will be changed to cover a maximum of 20 animals in care at any one time. There will be the option to apply for a permit to cover more than 20 animals in care under exceptional circumstances (i.e. Ringtail crèche or duckling groups).

#### *Wildcare Publicity*

Six episodes will be filmed and appear on "The Shack" on Channel 9. Bris 31 will also be featuring Wildcare on its station. (MORE INFORMATION FROM LIZ)

Tracy Paroz  
Secretary

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## *Education Report*

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OUR FINAL CALENDAR FOR THE YEAR FROM SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER HAS NOW BEEN FINALIZED AND HOPEFULLY EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE A COPY. IF NOT, YOU CAN DOWNLOAD IT FROM THE WILDCARE WEBSITE.

The past few months have seen a few new workshops introduced, all of which have been very successful. Thank you to Mimi Dona who donated her time to run a workshop on fluid therapy for wildlife carers.

We have also trialed some half day workshops, which were welcomed by most members. One of the results of our recent Volunteer Survey was that "time" was the biggest factor influencing people's ability to rescue and care for wildlife and to attend workshops. With this in mind, we are going to continue to offer several shorter workshops which will hopefully still give everyone an opportunity to enjoy part of their weekend.

The past few months have seen many of our scheduled workshops filling up quickly and for several workshops we have had to turn people away, as they were fully booked. Unfortunately though, some members who regis-

tered for workshops didn't attend and failed to notify us of their changed circumstances, which meant that other interested members were not given the opportunity to attend. In view of this, we are going to change our system of registration. In future, we will accept all registrations and the trainer will then decide who will be invited to attend. This will simply mean that, if the workshop is overbooked, preference will be given to those who are reliable. Hopefully this will be a fairer system.

We are also (thanks to the efforts of Laura Reeder) setting up a Community Education Team to formalize the presentations and talks that some of our members do for schools and community groups. If you would like to be involved in this, please contact Laura by email at [L\\_reeder@big-pond.net.au](mailto:L_reeder@big-pond.net.au).

Karen Scott

# *Flying-foxes, horses and hendra. Horsing around with reality.*

With the death of another person from Hendra virus infection the media are again promulgating superstitions and uncritically reporting that flying-foxes are responsible for spreading Hendra virus to horses and humans. The reports that more viruses are being found in bats have not helped either. While it is true that many new viruses have been found in bats around the world in recent years, it remains unknown whether these viruses are all harmful to man. Also, the fact that similar extensive searches performed in other groups of mammals (for example rodents) have similarly led to discovery of potentially harmful viruses, such as hantavirus, has not been mentioned.

Flying-foxes have anti-bodies to hendra virus yet virus has not been isolated from a free living flying-fox in australia.

When first searching for the source of Hendra virus after the initial outbreak in Brisbane, the Queensland DPI considered that flying-foxes would be too difficult to sample. And they would have been, except for the co-operation of the large number of wildlife carers who allowed flying-foxes in their care to be tested for Hendra anti-bodies. This is how the DPI found the anti-bodies and it was an alert carer who first collected a flying-fox foetus infected with Hendra. Through the flying-fox carer network thousands of flying-foxes were tested for Hendra virus.

It is our understanding that extensive testing by the CSIRO Animal Health Laboratories failed to show any mechanism for the transfer of Hendra Virus from flying-foxes to horses. Every type of flying-fox excretory product (urine, faeces, oral saliva, placenta) from infected flying-foxes and even the virus itself was tested on horses without a successful transfer occurring. Experimentally they were able to transfer the virus to guinea pigs and a cat. This suggests that the virus, if at all present, is released at very low levels.

It has been subsequently shown (experimentally) that infected flying-foxes can shed small amounts of Hendra virus in their

urine, but the survival time of the virus in urine is likely to be very short. Most micturition (urinating) by flying-foxes is done at the roost before fly out and then afterwards during the day. Urine bathing is an important part of grooming while at the roost during the day. In any case, the transmission of Hendra from flying-foxes via urine to horses was tested experimentally with negative results.

No other mammal group or species has been surveyed for Hendra virus to the same extent as flying-foxes. There was a small sample of native mammals (possums and bandicoots) tested at the initial outbreak site at Hendra but to our knowledge no significant testing of possible mammalian hosts to Hendra (other than flying-foxes) has occurred. These mammals include rats, mice, cats, brush-tailed possums as well as other possibilities such as ticks, carpet snakes and birds that regularly frequent horse yards. Due to the cyclic nature and low incidence of Hendra found in flying-foxes, large samples of animals inhabiting horse stables would need to be done if the virus is to be detected.

There have been studies overseas that show 35% of horses will eat meat. We are also trying to source a scientific paper that confirms horses will also eat rodents, dead or alive.

Nearly all recent cases of Hendra have

occurred in horses being supplementary fed on stored food and kept in yards where there is scant natural food on the ground. On a recent visit to some horse yards where flying foxes have been regularly roosting in overhead trees for over 30 years the owner said "those flying-foxes have been pissing and shitting all over my horses and their food for years, and none of my horses has ever become ill".

The clinical manifestation of Hendra in infected horses has been changing. Initially it was recognizable by the production of blood-stained mucous discharged from the nose. Then the symptoms suggested some form of neurological disorder and the latest horse was thought to be suffering from snake-bite. This may suggest that either the virus is mutating or that the method of contracting the virus could be varying. Whatever the case, Hendra virus is a serious occupational risk for veterinarians and people attending sick horses. Appropriate health warnings should be distributed to all horse owners. Exposure to any body fluids and possibly inhaling airborne mucous from sick and infected horses can transfer the virus to humans. But it is important to emphasize that humans do not get Hendra virus directly from flying-foxes.

The current singular focus on finding the mechanism of transmission from infected

flying-foxes directly to horses, while seemingly a reasonable pursuit, may be hampering progress. It would be important to focus on the horses and how and where they could become infected. Horses are where the deaths occur and where Hendra gets transferred to humans. All possible routes via any animal that interacts with horses, working outwards from the horse, should be investigated appropriately (i.e. sampled in a manner that is appropriate to locating the virus, given the low incidence of the virus). This route of inquiry is more likely to reveal the real circumstances causing the virus to transfer to horses. The investigation would take a considerable amount of time and funding. Also – has the immune competency of any of the horses that contracted Hendra been investigated? Why has the majority of horses that have contracted Hendra been thoroughbreds and kept in yards and fed supplementary food? If there is a direct transfer of the virus from flying-foxes to horses, why don't more stock horses out in paddocks feeding under fig trees get the virus?

The appearance on TV and in other media of researchers entering flying-fox colonies in full cover "space-suits" is sending a seriously disturbing message to the community. While the clothing maybe a requirement for health and safety reasons it scares anybody who lives near a flying-fox colony. With the media continually reporting that flying-foxes are the source of Hendra virus which kills horses and humans, the public are becoming hostile to one of the most important native animals in our forests.

It's time that knowledge about Hendra virus (and the related Nipah virus) is reported properly. We know very little about the virus, its hosts and how it is transmitted to horses. Most money has been spent on laboratory work by the CSIRO in classifying and describing the virus. This has been to the detriment of important field research in sampling for all possible hosts and methods of transmission. The current laboratory tests to reveal Hendra antibodies still require further improvement. Flying-foxes are the only animals that have been thoroughly tested for the presence of Hendra virus. The help from flying-fox carers in locating Hendra virus saved enormous amounts of time and money for the public health authorities. If sampling of fauna for Hendra virus had been left to the small number of government officials alone – they may have still been searching for it



**Bruce Thompson**

today. It appears that funding is being cut from the group who is presently doing most of the field work on Hendra virus. Because of the low human incidence rate (seven people, with four deaths, in sixteen years) health authorities may regard Hendra virus as a low risk and are unlikely to provide any significant funds for research. What has the equine industry done in the way

of providing funds for Hendra research? We have still so much to learn about this new virus.

BAT CARE BRISBANE INC.  
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# Coordinator Reports

## Birds – Gold Coast

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Most of our bird carers are having a well earned rest though there are those of us who can't say "no" and still have birds in care (i.e. those with injuries and ducklings that never seem to stop coming).

Even though the cold weather is still with us we are getting ready for the baby bird season which is just around the corner. Two pinkie crows came into care in the second week of July!

Due to the efforts of Simone Smith, we are contacting all bird carers to update our records, so that we have the correct information to make co-ordinating bird care as efficient as possible. With over 70% of all orphaned wildlife being birds there is always a shortage of bird carers. If you are a bird carer or want to be, and you haven't received an email from Simone please contact me at [mustloveducks@bigpond.com](mailto:mustloveducks@bigpond.com).

## Possums – Brisbane

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Our network of carers and supporters is gradually gaining numbers. Please email me at [bungletheowl@bigpond.com](mailto:bungletheowl@bigpond.com) if you would like to be part of the email network for possums. As the season is heating up, please keep your eye on emails calling out for carers to take on our orphaned joeys. I'm also seeking Wildcare members who live in the Brisbane area and would be willing to help with the transportation of possum joeys between carers, or between vets and carers, or members of the public and vets. We are very short on members in some areas and would be greatly assisted by interested individuals who do not want to do 'hands-on' rescues but are willing to jump in their cars and do some driving. Please email me on the above address or phone 3289 9838 or 0423 172 554, for more information.

Now for a happy possum story - I had the pleasure of housing Glitter, an adult female brushtail for a few weeks in July. She had been taken to Australian Wildlife Hospital at Beerwah with a fracture jaw following a run-in with a car in Capalaba. Luckily for her, the jaw was repairable and all she needed was a few weeks

## Possums – Gold Coast

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The situation for possums, and in fact all animals, is desperate. Loss of habitat combined with drought and fires is causing enormous suffering for our native animals. Problems, such as starvation and abandonment of young, are seeing large numbers of animals needing assistance. Pressure on populations is leading to stress related disease. Carers are overwhelmed.

Can you help? If you can take one animal or more, please let us know.

### *Food for Thought*

Each animal (including the human) is a life worth fighting for, so we have to look at the causes of the problems and how they can be redressed. The issues are extremely complex and the solutions are far from straightforward.

We have to conserve habitat; healthy ecosystems will have a diversity of plants and animals. Monocultures are inherently poor quality habitats. We have to plant trees; fewer trees mean less rainfall. Trees help moderate the climate. Trees provide food and shelter for so many of our native animals, both vertebrates and

We have a few workshops scheduled for the coming months. Your Co-ordinators will be at these workshops, which also provide a great opportunity for rescuers, who don't necessarily care for babies, to brush up on their bird skills. If you miss out, don't worry as your co-ordinators are there for you to call for advice, don't hesitate!!

And please remember the golden rule "WARM, DARK AND QUIET". When you get a call to rescue always remind the caller of the golden rule, especially warmth for babies as they die very quickly.

Cheers,

Christine Wilson  
Bird Placement Co-ordinator  
Waterbirds and Insectivores

of recuperation before a final check up and release. She was quite sweet during her time with me, not causing me any trouble at all (apart from me having to conduct daily aviary inspections – adult possums really do like to test your enclosure's strength and escapability!) What was quite remarkable about her time with me was discovered upon her final check up at AWH prior to release. Inside her tightly guarded pouch was a jelly-bean size pinkie latched securely onto a teat. She had given birth while in captivity! What an exciting discovery! I gave the rescuing member of the public a phone call to tell him the happy news, that not only did Glitter survive her confrontation with a car but had become a mother! It was during my conversation with her rescuer that I learned she had not only survived the first car that hit her whilst travelling 80km/h but on his way to retrieve her from the road, a big semi-trailer ran clear over her. If that's not a fright to send someone into labour, I'm not sure what is!!

Caroline Oertel  
Brisbane Possum Coordinator

invertebrates. A good vegetative cover, such as grasses, reeds, shrubs, vines and trees, not only provides food and shelter for animals, but also protects the soil from excessive heat, wind, drying out and erosion.

We have to conserve water on this, one of the driest continents.

We have to look very carefully at our fire regimes. The Australian landscape has been altered and shaped by fire since human occupation many thousands of years ago, but too frequent fires have already, directly or indirectly, led to the extinction, or near extinction, of many species of plants and animals.

It may seem a mammoth task, but unless each one of us takes up the challenge, accepts our responsibility, and is prepared to change our lifestyles to live in a more sustainable way, a way that considers the future of this wonderful country, we will destroy what we hold most dear.

Eleanor Hanger  
[emhanger@ozemail.com.au](mailto:emhanger@ozemail.com.au)



## *Echidnas and Small Mammals*

It has been fairly quiet with few small mammals coming into care. We didn't have our usual influx of antechinus during winter. Bandicoot season is just around the corner though, so anyone wanting to care for them should contact me.

We have had a few echidnas in care from both dog attacks and car hits. Thankfully, we have had some success stories though and have been able to release a few back to the wild.

Karen Scott

## *Koalas*

The recent months have been devastating for our koala population on the Gold Coast. We have had a huge number of "displaced" koala sightings and a large number of trauma-related koalas coming into care.

Many of these animals have been euthanased because of the extent of their injuries, however we have had a number of lucky individuals that are on their way to recovery. One of these animals is "Whitlam," a four year old koala from Helensvale, that fell out of a tree onto a concrete driveway. He sustained a fractured jaw and one big headache! He was stabilised at Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and then transferred to Australian Wildlife Hospital for surgery and rehabilitation. After several months in care, Whitlam is getting ready to be returned to his home range at Helensvale.

We have also had an influx of koala joeys coming into care

which is very sad as these little ones have lost their mothers in various ways. I currently have four little ones in care. Rosie was orphaned when her mum was killed in a suspected cow-attack (yes, cows don't like koalas). Annie was orphaned as a result of a dog attack. Mozart was found with his dead mother on a rural property and Tillie's mother was hit by a car.

I would like to thank all of the vets, vet nurses and volunteers at both the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and Australian Wildlife Hospital who take remarkable care of the koalas. Their specialised care means that we can give these koalas a second chance.

Karen Scott

## *Reptiles*

Fortunately, there is little to report this time - winter has seen few reptiles come into care. For those new members wishing to care for reptiles, now is the perfect time to start organising your enclosures in preparation for the beginning of reptile season, which is just around the corner. If you need help in addition to your workshop notes please contact us. Also we would like to hear from anyone willing to rescue reptiles, (especially around Brisbane) as we would like to be well prepared for this coming season.

Please note my new e-mail address - [kristie.remmert@uqconnect.edu.au](mailto:kristie.remmert@uqconnect.edu.au).

Kristie Remmert & Jai Hennessy

## *Record Keepers' Raps:*

### *Phone records:*

There has been some confusion about where to send records. Amy used to collect the phone records and Kiersten the carer records. Since May it was decided that it was no longer a requirement to submit the telephone records. Instead, phone volunteers should keep their own phone records - at least for a month. This will enable anyone chasing an outcome for an animal a place to start. The phone record template will still be available on the website for individual use should you want to use it; however, the collection and processing of these records will no longer take place. With this being the case, the phone record keeper's position is no longer needed. Amy will still help Kiersten in the event that she is overloaded, but all records (rescue/carer records) should now be directed to Kiersten. Thank you to everyone who is involved with the telephone roster/telephone shifts both past and present. You do an amazing job!

### *Carer/rescue records:*

The 2008 year of carer/rescue records have now been compiled and completed. However there are still a few more to come, so we will add these in, if or when they do. At present, there are quite a few records of animals listed as 'still in care' or 'transferred to other Wildcare member' without their final outcomes (refer to outcome figures as shown in the AGM report). So before submitting records it is really important for carers to check through their older records and update those where animals are still in care. If you haven't already received an email asking for outcomes for specific SIC records, then you may get one shortly. It would be great to get these outcomes as soon as possible, thanks.

### *Recent Reports completed based on Carer/Rescue Records.*

- 2008 Raw Data Compilation, Record Keeping Report & Summary Tables
- 2008 Outcome records for Currumbin Wildlife Hospital (all records associated with CWH)
- Koala Rescue/Carer Records 2000-2008 - for EPBC data submission and Qld Main Roads inquiries
  - 2003-2008 Road Trauma/Road Kill stats - for Qld Main Roads
- 2008 Bat/Flying-fox Carer/Rescue Records - for Karen Scott (for grant application)

## *Revised Record Keeping Guidelines and Carer Records Forms*

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We have again revised the carer records forms, guidelines and sample records based on feedback received from carers over the past 12 months. These can all be found on Wildcare's website [www.wildcare.org.au](http://www.wildcare.org.au) under 'Carer Resources,' then under 'Carers and Telephone Records Forms.' You can also email Kiersten to request the latest version of carer/rescue records forms using the generic email address listed below.

Kiersten Jones & Amy Whitham  
Record Keeping  
Email: [carerrecords@wildcare.org.au](mailto:carerrecords@wildcare.org.au)

## *Telephone Coordinator's Report*

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It seems that the call of the 'wildlife warrior' in us all is finally being answered! I must pass on my thanks to all of you who have put your names forward and have already completed many shifts on what was becoming a very sick looking phone roster. We seem to have almost all shifts covered over the weekends so thanks to everyone.

It might not seem like many but six extra people taking on one or two shifts have made a huge impact on the monthly roster.

Remember just ONE 3 hour shift a month really does make all the difference. The new people are commenting all the time about how much you learn whilst on the phones.

With baby bird season just around the corner we need more of you to step up and relieve those who will be busy caring and rescuing as well as answering emergency calls. So if you are not already on our roster then call us now. I will email the roster to you and you can pick your own shift.

WE NEED YOU - 5527 2444

Liz Meffan  
Telephone Coordinator

## *Brisbane City Council*

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The Brisbane City Council has recently offered a wonderful funding opportunity to volunteer wildlife carers through their Environmental Grants Program. Several Wildcare Australia members have been fortunate to obtain funding to assist them with the rescue and care of sick, injured and orphaned wildlife.

Anyone interested in applying for funding can visit the Brisbane City Council website at [www.brisbane.qld.gov.au](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au) and search for "wildlife carer funding". You can download the funding guidelines and application form.

This is a very generous offer by the Brisbane City Council and has been of tremendous help to those of our members who have secured funding.

Below are details of the projects that the Council has funded. Several other projects have just received approval including more possum aviaries and possum boxes!



*Dedicated to a better Brisbane*

### *Amie – Possum Aviary.*

Amie has been caring for injured and orphaned possums for the past months and during that time she has cared for a large number of ringtail possums that have been successfully rehabilitated and released back to the wild.

Amie applied for funding for a large colourbond aviary to house these possums during their final pre-release stage of development. The aviary has already been put to good use and has been "home" to several dozen possums.

Amie was very grateful for the funding provided by the Brisbane City Council as this has enabled her to rehabilitate many more possums than she otherwise could have done.



Photo | Amie's pre-release possum aviary courtesy of the Brisbane City Council.

## Deb – Humidicrib and wildlife care supplies.

Deb's life has changed dramatically since receiving the Brisbane City Council grant earlier this year.

Having the Brinsea Intensive Care Unit (humidicrib) increased the survival rate of Deb's pinkie possums to 100% for uninjured Brushtail possum joeys. Deb is able to sleep much better, knowing that her babies are at just the right temperature and are not becoming dehydrated - no more QV on dry skin!

Like most volunteer wildlife carers Deb spends any spare money (and some that is not spare) on the animals in her care. The BCC grant also supplied Deb with artificial Ringtail possum dreys, milk formula for orphaned joeys and fuel for leaf gathering.

Deb is a firm believer in wildlife caring being a local affair: local carers caring for local animals, and when local government chips in with financial support the picture is complete. There will always be times when animals have to be passed on to someone with better skills but with the BCC grant lack of facilities will no longer be an excuse.



Photo | Orphaned ringtail possums enjoying the dreys made from funds received from the Brisbane City Council Wildlife Carer Funding Program.

Photos | Deb's new humidicrib courtesy of the Brisbane City Council

## Kelly – Bird Flight Aviary.

Living on an average sized block in the northern suburbs of Brisbane, Kelly has been caring for native wildlife, particularly birds, for many years. Kelly is often challenged during the final stage of rehabilitation due to the facilities required to ensure pre-release is successful.

A pre-release flight aviary is essential to determine if a species in care is ready for release. The aviary needs to be large enough to allow a bird plenty of room to exercise and strengthen its muscles and bones, particularly for injured birds and to accomplish both navigational and elevated flight behaviour.

In addition to exercise, a pre-release flight aviary also provides a replica of the bird's natural environment whilst maintaining protection for it and gives the carer an opportunity to observe the animal's developing skills. Skills, such as foraging for food, socializing with local species and predator awareness are all crucial for long-term survival post release.

Receiving a grant from the Brisbane City Council has covered the costs involved to con-

struct this much needed flight aviary on Kelly's property and is a valuable resource to support the final stage of bird rehabilitation and successful release back into the wild.



Photo | The pre-release bird flight aviary built by Kelly and her husband with funds from the Brisbane City Council.



## *Meet the Cassowary.*

### THE STRANGEST BIRD IN THE FOREST

ABC DVD has just released a new documentary on the struggle of cassowaries in Northern Australia following the Cyclone Larry disaster that destroyed much of their natural habitat.

The documentary takes you on an intimate journey inside the rarely seen world of this remarkable and majestic creature and shares the story of QPWS rangers in their fight to save the birds from starvation and the perils of suburbia.

The DVD is available through ABC DVD for \$19.95.

ABC DVD has generously donated several copies of this remarkable documentary to Wildcare. All current members will automatically be put in the draw to win a copy.



## *Australian Government funding.*

Wildcare Australia Inc was fortunate to receive funding from the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts under their Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organizations (GVEHO) Program. The funding received was \$2,300 to help with administration costs.

These funds were used to cover the costs of our updated membership database that has now been put in place and is proving to be very beneficial for committee members and coordinators.

Thank you to the GVEHO for this wonderful funding opportunity.



Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

## *Livefoods Unlimited.*

A range of live insects available including crickets, cockroaches, giant mealworms. Also available in limited quantities are standard mealworms and grasshoppers. Bulk discount offered to all Wildcare members (minimum number of most items 250). Orders can be picked up from Tallegbudgera Valley, usually with next day

collection, or they can be mailed out if orders are placed by close of business Monday for dispatch that week, postage and packing charges apply.

Ph 5533 8375 or email [the3porters@bigpond.com](mailto:the3porters@bigpond.com)

## *Swimming with Humpbacks.*

Since our first whale watching trip at Hervey Bay many years ago, we've dreamt of an in-water experience with a humpback whale. This year, that dream finally became a reality.

In August we travelled to the South Pacific island of Niue where from July to October each year, humpbacks come to calve in the warm tropical water.

We were fortunate enough to have several encounters with whales during our week on the island, but two occasions stand out.

The first occurred before we were even out of the harbour. We came across a yearling and took the opportunity to slip quietly into the water. That first "up close" view of one of these magnificent creatures is just unbelievable. To be so near an animal that weighs in excess of 40,000 kilograms and is more than ten metres long is initially unnerving. The yearling moved

in nearer - as if to get a closer look at us; and my heart surely skipped a few beats as I waited apprehensively to see what it would do next. It is difficult to comprehend the size, and I stayed close to our zodiac, although our little craft was dwarfed by this young male. You are in the water with this huge animal, trying to absorb the enormity of its mass, its strength, and the sheer size of it, and wondering how well it can judge the distance between you; then unexpectedly you make eye contact. Instantly you feel comfortable, perfectly safe - and awestruck. They are majestic. All too soon, that first experience ended.

Later in the week, we were incredibly lucky to spend an afternoon in the company of three of these beautiful mammals. We found a mother and calf not far off shore and watched from our vessel to see if they might be willing to accept us in the water. They appeared unfazed

by our presence so we slid quietly out of the boat.

The mother was huge; she looked for all the world like a sleek fat torpedo. She moved slowly and effortlessly through the water, staying a few metres below the surface. The calf was barely a week old, at least four metres in length - quite the baby! It stayed within easy reach of the surface as it needed frequent breaths, and never ventured too far from Mum. We soon discovered there was a third whale, another adult acting as the escort - barely noticeable in the depths, but for the occasional flash of white of a pectoral fin as the afternoon sunlight cut through the water.

It was such an honour to be able to observe the interactions. The tenderness that was shown between the mother and calf as she helped it to the surface for a breath can only be experienced to be believed. She was unfailingly gentle



but forever observant. You could well imagine that her behaviour would change instantly if she felt any threat; that massive tail could easily kill in one sweep. She seemed to comprehend that we meant no harm, but she maintained a watchful eye on all of us.

For almost an hour we floated on the surface – totally mesmerised, barely breathing. Finally, we got out of the water to give this family group an opportunity of a break. We wait anxiously to see what they would do, but they didn't move far. Eventually we are given the go ahead to glide softly back into the ocean, and we bobbed about, peering down into the depths – collectively willing them to rejoin us. Suddenly they were back in front of us.

They were more used to us by now. They gave the impression of being almost as curious about us as we were of them, and showed no concern about being watched. Indeed, Mum seemed positively proud to show off her beautiful child.

Both mother and calf moved closer to us, and they looked bigger with each pass. We collectively stopped breathing as this slow moving torpedo finally headed directly towards our group, and we froze. At the last moment, the slightest movement of a flipper was all it took to glide effortlessly

past, just a few meters away. It truly took our breath away.

We watched as the calf continued to gain confidence, inquisitive about the strange floating creatures on the surface. Eventually it swam straight up towards us on its own – again we froze; then it dived down directly in front of the group, opened its mouth wider than it seemed was possible, and rejoined its Mum. It seemed proud of itself, and we were blown away by the amazing display.

All too soon, it was time to get out of the water and return to land. As if what we'd experienced already that afternoon wasn't enough; as we moved to get out of the water, one of the whales breached a short distance away.

Finally as our zodiac sped back towards shore, the adults offered us one more parting gesture, a series of pectoral slaps – seemingly waving us goodbye, and our remarkable encounter was over.

We finished that trip euphoric, and with even greater awe and respect for these magnificent creatures. It had been an absolute privilege to be able to witness them up close in their own environment. The encounters will remain etched on our consciousness for a long time.

Jay Lima

## Traditional Christmas pudding.

This recipe was submitted by Jane Koltoft, volunteer and self-proclaimed bat fanatic, who found several people interested in her Christmas Pudding recipe at the 'Christmas in July' held at Trish's place recently. Jane kindly decided to share it with the newsletter readers.

Jane writes, "It is so easy and keeps for as long as you want - in a cupboard during the cooler months or in the fridge during the heat. It can even be frozen and de-frosted at room temperature."

Ingredients - Serves up to 12

- Lightly grease 2 ltr basin (or 2 x 1ltr bowls)
- Greaseproof or baking paper
- Foil
- String
- 1 kg good quality mixed dried fruit
- 1/2(125ml) cup brandy
- 250g softened butter
- 1 1/2 cups (330g) soft brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 tbs marmalade
- 1 tbs black treacle (optional)
- 1 cup (150g) pl flour (substitute gluten free if required, but add 1tsp Xanthan gum)
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1/2 tsp ground cloves
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 cups (140g) fresh breadcrumbs (substitute gluten free if required)

- 1/3 cup (55g) chopped blanched almonds
- 1 grated apple
- Juice and grated rind 1 lemon

Method

- Place fruit and brandy in a bowl, cover and leave overnight
- Sift flour, salt and spices in large bowl
- Add lightly beaten eggs and all remaining ingredients and mix gently but thoroughly.
- Spoon into prepared bowl, cover with layer of baking or greaseproof paper, layer of foil and tie tightly with string.
- Place in large saucepan on trivet or upturned saucer with water coming 2/3 up side of bowl. Bring to boil, cover and simmer for 5 hours. Check every now and then, add more boiling water if necessary.

Can be served immediately, but best if kept in cool place for a while and re-steamed for 2 hours with fresh paper.

Serve with custard or Brandy Butter – equal parts butter and caster sugar beaten till soft and fluffy, add enough brandy to taste. ENJOY!!

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### *Positions Vacant*

Spare time on your hands? Want something exciting to do for Wildcare? The following positions are vacant!

#### *Treasurer.*

If you know what GST stands for and have a good calculator, good computer skills and a few spare hours a week then you may just be what the accountant ordered! This position would require someone with experience in book keeping and preferably local to the Gold Coast (to enable the transfer of cash, receipts and documents). If you think that this might be you – please email Karen Scott at [education@wildcare.org.au](mailto:education@wildcare.org.au)

#### *Grants Coordinator.*

If you are skilled in drawing up applications and researching

funding opportunities then we need YOU! This is something that you can do at your own pace from home. If you are interested please contact Karen Scott.

#### *Community Speakers.*

We need people interested in attending schools and community groups to deliver our community education program. We are currently putting together education packages for you to use, so all you will need to do is turn up and dazzle a small audience with your passion for our wildlife. If you are interested in joining our Community Education Team please email Laura Reeder at [talks@wildcare.org.au](mailto:talks@wildcare.org.au).

## *Wildcare Australia Thanks Greencross Vets Nerang.*

Greencross staff recently held their first fundraising event in support of Wildcare. The girls got busy baking an assortment of sweets, muffins, cupcakes, ginger bread cookies; even candy coated apples were on offer for a gold coin donation. The staff had a great time putting the event together and promoting Wildcare to their clients. Over a three day period, they raised over \$400.

The staff at Greencross Nerang, are always happy to help our members with advice and to treat wildlife in need. We thank them sincerely for their continuing support. Carla Harp would also like to say a special 'thank you' to Greencross Nerang.





# Photo Gallery

## Focus on Lizards

There are five lizard families in Australia:  
Flap-footed (Legless Lizards), Geckos, Skinks, Dragons and Monitors



The Flap-footed lizards have completely lost their forelimbs and have only vestigial hind limbs. They are often mistaken for snakes and are killed. Some species are insectivores while others eat reptiles. They are egg layers and are closely related to geckos.



Geckos are small, nocturnal lizards, that may be arboreal or terrestrial. Some have clawed digits while others have expanded toe pads. They use their tongues to clean the clear spectacles over their lidless eyes, as do the legless lizards. Their diet varies according to the species; some eat arthropods, some smaller reptiles, others eat fruit.



Skinks are the largest and most diverse family of lizards in Australia, with more than 370 species recognized. In the cooler climates they are livebearers while in the tropics they are egg layers. Most have tails that can be discarded and regrown. Some have a fixed clear eyelid, others have a moveable lid. Most skinks eat invertebrates, but the larger species include a significant amount of vegetable matter in their diet.



Monitors (Goannas) are the largest lizards in Australia. They have a long forked tongue, large powerful legs and all are hunters and scavengers.

They lay clutches of up to 35 eggs. Some species bury their eggs, others use termite mounds to incubate them.

Water monitors are terrestrial, arboreal and semi aquatic. They have laterally compressed tails to aid swimming and they spend considerable time foraging in the water.



Dragons are diurnal lizards. Unlike the smooth scaled skinks their scales are duller and rough and some have spines, capes or beards.

They are mainly terrestrial but like to use a vantage point like a tree, fence post or rock to survey their surroundings. They are egg layers. Their diet varies according to species but may include invertebrates, reptiles, nestling birds and vegetable matter.

PHOTOS // J. HANGER

## Shop News.

Email: [shop@wildcare.org.au](mailto:shop@wildcare.org.au)

On the Wildcare website ([www.wildcare.org.au](http://www.wildcare.org.au)), Carer Resources, Wildcare Shop for members, you are able to access and download the following information: Shop Price List/Order Form, Payment Form, information sheets about the books, food supplements and miscellaneous items we currently hold in stock.

You are able to place your orders 24hrs/day, 7 days per week by emailing [shop@wildcare.org.au](mailto:shop@wildcare.org.au) or faxing your order through to (07) 3318 7678 for processing.



### HEAT PADS

We have some new heat pads available from the shop for \$60. They have a quilted cover and are available in a large size or a size that fits into the lid of the plastic rescue baskets. There is also an in car lead available for \$10.

### WILDCARE TSHIRTS, VESTS, JACKETS AND CAPS

We now have a supply of Wildcare T Shirts, Vest, Jackets and Caps available for immediate purchase. Orders for these can be placed using the order form available from the Wildcare website and either emailing it through [shop@wildcare.org.au](mailto:shop@wildcare.org.au) or faxing it to (07) 3318 7678, alternatively you can come into the Currumbin shop and purchase any of these immediately.

### ASHDENE MUGS & SCATTER TRAYS

Mugs \$10 each

(Baby Orangutan, Elephant, Zebra and Panda, Pelican, Koala, Kangaroo and Possum)

Scatter Trays \$5 each

(Baby Orangutan, Elephant, Zebra, Panda and Koala)

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## *Wildcare Australia acknowledges the support of wildlife hospitals and veterinarians.*

Most wildlife volunteers have no veterinary training and therefore have to rely on the expertise and good will of their local veterinarians and wildlife hospitals. The partnership between wildlife carers and their veterinarians is precious and without this relationship many animals would die and an equally large number would endure unnecessary pain and suffering.

In South-east Queensland we are privileged to have not only some excellent and caring veterinarians in private practice, who willingly give of their time to treat native animals, but also two wildlife hospitals to which carers can take their animals for treatment.

Wildcare Australia would like to express its sincere appreciation to Currumbin Wildlife Hospital, the Australian Wildlife Hospital, Beerwah, and the many veterinarians in private practice, for their on-going assistance.





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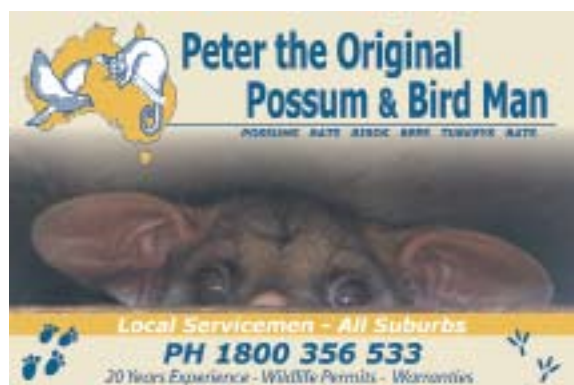


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