

Official Newsletter of Wildcare Australia

WILDNEWS

Spring 2012 Issue 64



**How To Build
A Big Flight
Aviary**

**Brush-tailed
Rock-Wallaby**

Feature Story

A Driving Passion



President's Report.

Karen Scott

WELL, ANOTHER BUSY SEASON IS WELL AND TRULY UPON US. I FEAR THAT IT WILL BE A DEVASTATING ONE FOR OUR LOCAL WILDLIFE, WITH MANY SPECIES ALREADY HAVING A ROUGH TIME DEALING WITH THE EXTREMELY DRY WEATHER OVER RECENT MONTHS.

This is a great time for those members who have been holding off, to finally take their first animals. We really do need more wildlife carers. Even if you can only take one or two animals at a time, it all adds up and may mean the difference between life and death for some of them. There is plenty of support available to you from your Species Coordinators, who can help you get ready and will 'hold your hand' along the way. It truly is a rewarding experience, to be responsible for helping one of our remarkable animals get back on its feet and back out where it rightfully belongs. You might be surprised that it doesn't take as much of your time as you think it will.

Thank you to those members who took the time to attend the Wildcare AGM in late July. It was nice to catch up with many of our members and it gave some of our key volunteers an opportunity to put a face to the name of members with whom they frequently talk on the telephone.

Thank you to those members who accepted Committee positions for the coming year. This year we have welcomed Lewis McKillop to an official position on the Wildcare Committee.

Lewis has been assisting the Committee over the past year with processing the Permit Endorsements and has taken on the official role of Wildcare Secretary. We have also welcomed Rachel Lyons to the role of Committee Member. Rachel brings with her an extensive background in wildlife management and natural resource management along with 15 years' experience as a wildlife carer.

We have also welcomed several other Wildcare members who have taken on roles to assist the Committee. Sharon Hutchison has done a tremendous job organising the new Wildcare uniforms and processing orders. Nicole Walters has also put her skills to good use helping with several Wildcare grant applications. Having members assist with other roles, such as these, is a tremendous help not only to the Committee but to our members in general. On behalf of the entire Wildcare Committee, we welcome Lewis, Rachel, Sharon and Nicole.



Our Mission

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

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Cover photo: Brush-tailed Rock-Wallaby
courtesy of K.JOHNSTON

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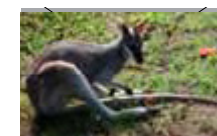
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Secretary - Lewis McKillop
Treasurer - Tracy Paroz
Committee Members - Natasha Lewis-Miller, Rachel Lyons

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Newsletter submissions can be sent to news@wildcare.org.au



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"A Driving Passion"



PHOTO // R COX

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A Warm Welcome to Our New Members

Wildcare Australia welcomed the following new members in July, August & September 2012

Blair McEwan; Melodee Brencher; Kerry & David Beaumont; Anna Barnes; Denise Madsen; Kirsty Callander; Jenni Timbs; Jennifer Roughton; Caroline Santos; Rhianwen Vigor; Ashleigh Gorrington; Renee James; Kay Wilkinson; Anne Marie Barnes; Felicity Jones; Lorna Mitchell; Michael & Christel Story; Jenna Mooring; Ruth Wheeler; Kimberley Bettridge; Janet Cleary; Nadia O'Carroll; Amanda Hockley; Samantha Oliver; Sarah Powell; Jeffrey Boughton; Neale Ambler; Robyn White; Brett Hancox; Lianne Knipe; Krystal Evans; Kathleen & Ryan Van Der Meulen; Cassie Ward; Julie Nolan; Lisa & Jayson Geldart; Brigitte Blakeway; Melissa Baillie; Alberto & Mercedes Meza; Lynsey Pascoe & Aidan Mountford; Mark Healy; Vanessa Trudgian & Andrew McCloskey; Elaine Falvey; Kim Hunter; Lynda McElroy; Kristy Currie; Geoff & Damian Irons, Catherine Shaw; Grace Frew; Michael Moffatt; Melissa Mol; Jackie Coulter & Taryn Mail; Anthony Bagnette & Alexandri Brandon; Amanda Cooper; Laura Hair & Kieran Mc Carthy; Chris Kelly; Kathy Pedersen; Robyn Rollason; Jarrod Schenk; Pauline Naylor; Emma Barry; Kate Wehipeihana; Soren & Natasha Widahl; Karin & Robert Asher; Carolyn & Tim Spencer; Hilary Kaye; H. Sykes; Selena Rollason; Angela & Emily Newnham; Francoise Chanovre; Brian Jenkins; Karin Stronkhorst; Angie Duncan; Kate Brodie; Lynda Leake; Jane Holmes; Lorraine Holst; Nikki Holst; Kim Molloy.

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.

Calling all Leaf Pickers

Robyn Braniff

The 'Hidden Woods' area and nearby property is a popular site for carers to collect vegetation for our wildlife. We all know that in the near future this area is going to be developed, and so far the developers have turned a blind eye to us, as we have respected the area and have always cut leaf properly.

A few months ago the barbed wire fence was cut, and was subsequently repaired. In a matter of weeks it had been cut again. I have also noticed that recently there have been a large number of trees cut down and the small branches taken of the same species that I cut - another possum carer? I measured one of the stumps today and it had a 40cm circumference. I have cut there for five years and if we want this abundant source of leaf to continue to be available to us, we must show respect for the area. Do not break branches off trees. Always cut with sharp cutters and "prune" the trees, don't destroy them. Do not cut fences or leave rubbish. It will only get harder for us to find leaf, so let's look after what we do have, before it is taken away.

If anyone has found my long orange handled ratchet cutters, can they please let me know. I put them down and then couldn't find them. It's a big area.

Unfortunately leaf cutters from some of the commercial enterprises have been known to cause considerable damage to trees when collecting for koalas. Ed.

Telephone Report

Christine Johnes

The hotline has still struggled this quarter to find enough members to assist manning the phones.

Over the three month period, the phones were diverted to message bank for over 16 days – this means that **almost one fifth of the wildlife are not getting the help** we can offer them as carers and rescuers simply because no-one is there to take the call.

A big show of gratitude to the twenty-one champions (YES, ONLY 21) who helped with the phones these past three months:

Bren Dalby, Brenda Nilsson, Ceris Ash, Christine Johnes, Deb Flack, Dianna

Smith, Jo Brierley, Joseph Finn, Karen Scott, Lindy Meath, Paula Fraser, Penelope Hacker, Rosalind Pritchard & Rod Duncan, Sally Purbick-Illek, Sam Longman, Sandra McCammon, Sharon Hutchison, Tammy Allison, Theo & Joy Mars.

I implore you to try and find a mere three hours in your busy schedule to dedicate to helping our wildlife, as our current staffing levels are unsustainable.

Looking forward to adding your name to the list of champions next quarter.

Reminder for Wildcare Rescuers

Please remember to advise us if you are going to be unavailable for rescues for any length of time (e.g. holidays). This enables us to keep our wonderful volunteer telephone operators up to date, so that they are not bothering you when you are not available. It also saves them substantial time when trying to coordinate rescues.

All updates to your availability for rescues can be sent through to Christine our Telephone Coordinator at hotline@wildcare.org.au

Helped needed for Scales & Tails Reptile Expo @ Ipswich

This great event is scheduled for 10th November 2012.

We need volunteers to help with the Wildcare display and also to help with the cooking for the day.

If you are able to assist at this event, please contact Sharon Hutchison by email at: accounts@smartwayservice.com.au

Grants

Brisbane City Council

Wildcare's Brisbane carers and those who look after animals that come from the Brisbane City Council region please note, that the Brisbane City Council's environmental and sustainability **grants are now open**. This is your opportunity to get financial assistance for your work with native wildlife. You do have to be a current financial member and have a current permit endorsement with Wildcare. Your carer records will need to be up to date, and will need to be attached to your application.

Information on the Grant and the application process can be found [here](#).

Please note that submissions for funding close on 26 November 2012.

Part of your Application process though is obtaining a letter of endorsement from Wildcare. If you require this letter, please email your request to education@wildcare.org.au by **12 November** to allow sufficient time for these to be processed.

Shop Orders – Biolac

We are now stocking Biolac in in 1kg bags which works out more cost-effective than the 500g tubs. For enquiries on Shop orders please contact Roy by email at shop@wildcare.org.au

Wildcare Uniforms

A reminder that orders may now be placed for the new Wildcare uniform. An email and order information was forwarded to all members in September 2012, however if you have not received it, please contact us for a copy. Orders can be placed by emailing treasurer@wildcare.org.au

Recent Conferences

Eleanor Hanger

Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference

The 2012 Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference, formerly the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference, was hosted by Townsville. The organizers are to be complimented on the efficient way the event was managed, the excellent speakers, the broad range of topics, the wonderful food and the great opportunities for networking. Congratulations to Dr Jim Pollock, Eleanor Pollock and the team.

The conference papers are available for downloading from the AWRC website: www.awrc.org.au/townsville-2012.html You may also like to view papers from previous conferences, by visiting www.AWRC.org.au and selecting 'Past Conferences'.

There were so many interesting papers and we were privy to some, as yet unpublished, research findings, but as a possum coordinator I must direct your attention to 'Culture and Sensitivity Studies on Exudative Dermatitis of Common Brushtail Possums in Townsville' by Jim Pollock BVSc and Jenelle Gay and also to 'Necrotising Syndromes in Possums' by Dr Derek Spielman et al. The latter paper explored the possibility of Cleridini insects and leeches having a role in causing the necrotic lesions in Brushtails and Ringtails.

One of the papers, which was particularly relevant to all carers, was 'Nutrition and Food Preparation for Wildlife' by Dr Anne Fowler, whom many of us know as the presenter of excellent workshops. Dr Fowler emphasized the requirement for increased amounts of nutrient rich food for growing and healing animals. If these requirements are not met serious problems can occur.

Many previous conferences have offered a session on post mortems; however this one provided the opportunity of attending an introduction to parasitology and microbiology at James Cook University. Three lecturers and a number of assistants guided the participants through the course and we were given comprehensive notes. It was a really excellent and informative afternoon.

The next AWRC conference will be held in Hobart in May 2014. So start planning and saving now.

Animals in Focus

The International Conference Animals in Focus was held at the RSPCA Animal Care Campus in Brisbane. It brought together highly respected speakers from Australia and overseas, from varying backgrounds, including veterinary and managerial, for two days of stimulating and very informative presentations.

Although the focus was companion animal welfare, so many of the papers addressed issues relevant to the wildlife industry, such as managing people and animals in emergency situations and the importance of including animals in the government's emergency response, identifying needs and making the best use of volunteers, using the social media to raise awareness and create action for change and so it continued finishing with a presentation 'Working together Effectively Transcending the Tribulation'. Altogether a very worthwhile two days.

Coordinator Reports

Birds

GOLD COAST

SPRINGTIME FOR BIRD CARERS – WHERE TO BEGIN?

With the push for reuniting bird families, things are definitely better than previously, but still many of us are busy. We have had two well-attended workshops recently and hopefully we have inspired many new carers. If anyone is interested in becoming a bird carer or has any questions, please feel free to ring any of the coordinators.

As a reminder for those actively caring and/or rescuing – please remember to ring the appropriate coordinator as soon as possible to ensure the best outcome.

Currumbin Wildlife Hospital's head vet, Michael Pyne recently held an advanced bird workshop for a group of us. He informed us about some emerging new diseases being found in the Gold Coast bird population. We must emphasize how important it is to discourage backyard feeding of wild birds, for several reasons. Diseases are spread when numerous birds are in close proximity for extended periods of time. Often improper diets are offered leading to nutritional deficiencies in adults and their young. Providing extra food can interrupt the natural balance of numbers. If there is a lot of food available, birds often have more babies. The best alternatives are to plant lots of native plants and to provide good habitat.

Another interesting point brought up, was to discourage the use of bird baths. I always thought, especially in this dry weather, that bird baths were essential. Again, it is source of disease, spread by faecal contamination. It was suggested that, if you want to have a bird bath, you have two bowls. Change the water at least daily and rotate the bowls, so they completely dry out between uses.

A couple of special mentions are required. This is always difficult, as I know everyone does as much as they can. Paula Fraser is a new member who has taken on caring, rescues and phones and is doing a fabulous job. Remember though, you can say 'No'. And we have a relocation from the Brisbane area, Allison Roberts, who has been wonderful in taking a lot of the little ones and also helping with transport.

Thanks to you all, for doing your part in caring for the birds of the Gold Coast.

Simone Smith

Note: The Bird Coordinators' contact numbers can be obtained by telephoning the Wildlife hotline or referring to the Contact List provided to all members



I'm learning how to eat grown up food here



These boys couldn't wait for their flowers!

PHOTOS // S SMITH

Coordinator Reports continued...



Babies



PHOTOS // S SMITH

Birds

SUNSHINE COAST

PROBABLY BECAUSE OF THE WET CONDITIONS EARLIER IN THE YEAR OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS HAVE ENTERED SPRING WITH GUSTO.

Baby birds are coming in fast and furiously and each clutch, to date, has a minimum of two and maximum of four, which includes one butcher bird's lost family of four. Their tree came down in strong winds.

Some birds do not appear to have migrated. Each year the Pittas in the sanctuary near my home seem to disappear at the end of August and return during the following March/April, but one was sighted only yesterday foraging on the ground just off the boardwalk. That probably says they, or some of them, are not leaving this year.

The Indian Koels came early - heard the first one in middle of August, which by my records, was very early indeed. Normally the first call is heard about the middle of, or end of September.

Because of the early influx, I did get caught out on a good supply of food for meat eaters, but have now stocked up and am awaiting the arrival of more babies as the storm season gets into full swing.

Ailsa Watson

Coordinator Reports continued...

Possums

GOLD COAST

IT'S BEEN ANOTHER CRAZY POSSUM SEASON! BUT I HAVE TO SAY CARERS HAVE BEEN JUST AMAZING YET AGAIN. As a coordinator it is very refreshing to call on our possum carers and have all of you being so incredibly willing to lend a hand, travel, and take on more animals. You are all truly wonderful individuals and very much appreciated.

This season there appears to be many more orphans coming in due to road traumas. This is just so sad to see, and is caused in part by more and more vegetation being cleared leaving these precious animals nowhere to go, other than having to cross busy roads to claim territory, or simply to find food.

One issue that has stood out given the number of animals in care, is the difficulty carers are having collecting vegetation. Either their areas have been cleared or they are being questioned by members of the public, as to what they are doing. My advice to this is, be very polite, explain exactly what you are doing and be mindful of the way you are cutting the vegetation.

Most people, once they are aware that you are doing no damage and are collecting for wildlife, will be really impressed.

As for the areas that have been cleared maybe it's time to start planting ourselves. Get a list of lovely native plants that your species just can't resist and plant, plant, plant!

Finally I would like to thank my fellow coordinators, Robyn Branniff, Jane Koltof, and Eleanor Hanger for all of your support and help throughout the season.

Natalie Rasmussen

You will find native plant lists in the possum notes, as well as considerable help with choosing the right plants for your area in Michelle Benson's "Loving our Local Native Plants", a series of articles Michelle has been writing for the Wildcare newsletters. Beautiful quality native plants can also be purchased from Michelle at very reasonable prices. Ed.

PHOTOS // R COX



'Is it safe to come out? I am looking for a friend.'



'No friends out there. I'd better get back inside.'

Coordinator Reports continued...

Possums

BRISBANE

IT IS 9:00AM ON A SATURDAY MORNING AND I HAVE HAD TWO CALLS FROM VETS ALREADY. IF THIS WEEKEND FOLLOWS THE TREND, THERE WILL BE THREE OR FOUR MORE CALLS BY TOMORROW NIGHT. AND I AM JUST ONE CARER! THE 'BUSY SEASON' STARTED EARLY AND HAS JUST KEPT GOING. A couple of months ago there were no spare beds in humidicribs. Now the cribs are empty and there are no spare aviaries for juveniles. The number of possums coming in this season has stretched the Brisbane Wildcare carers to breaking point and we are now directing the overflow to RSPCA. Thank goodness for RSPCA! I know that Annette placed nine possums in a single day in early October.

The large numbers of possums coming in has tempted some people to group common brushtails the way we crèche ringtails. I understand that carers just want to offer places to homeless possums, but grouping brushtails is not advisable. Briefly, brushtails are not social animals. Once the offspring leave mum there is very little evidence of cohabitation.

Some people use this to justify pairing young brushtails and I do the same – sometimes. While grouping small ringtails nearly always works, it is often problematic with brushtails. Young ones will go looking for a teat and a male scrotum is often a handy substitute. This can lead to pain, inflammation and distress for the poor boy. The other key problem is back-riding. It happens often with brushtails and can be quite detrimental to the poor possum underneath. So, while I do pair my brushtails, I often have to separate them again.

I am discussing this issue with other senior possum people and will be writing a detailed explanation of why this is not advisable and sending it to possum carers through PEG (possum email group). If you have not received a possum email from me in the last few months you are probably not on my PEG list. If you want to be on this email list please email me at deborah.turnbull@griffithuni.edu.au with PEG in the subject line.

Deborah Turnbull

Coordinator Reports continued...

Bats

BABY BAT SEASON IS ALWAYS FOR ME A JOYOUS AND SAD TIME; JOY THAT WE GET THE CHANCE TO CARE FOR THESE SPECIAL BABIES, BUT SAD THAT A MOTHER HAS HAD TO LOSE HER LIFE IN ORDER FOR THIS TO HAPPEN.

This time last year we were already full, with lots of premmie baby bats. It is nice to have a breather and get back to normal. Our first official orphan again arrived on the 10th of October as they have done for the past seven years. To date as of the 13th we have four little black babies and one premmie grey headed flying fox orphan, but we also have eleven mothers with babies and probably another dozen ready to give birth. The sad fact is, half of these mums have injuries that will not enable them to be released, but at least the babies will have a good start in life being bat mother reared, so they know they are little bats. When the time comes for mum to let them go, we have to make the sad decision to euthanase mum as we are unable to place her in a zoo situation. We have taken this path as we feel it is better for all concerned if the mothers are allowed to rear their young. This also makes our load lighter, as our carers can look after the orphans, who have lost their mothers.

It is with sadness this season that we raise these babies only to know that they stand the chance in future seasons of being shot. On endangered species day the Queensland government decided to re-introduce shooting of flying foxes, a decision that is not supported by a lot of people, but a decision none the less that made it through parliament as an election promise. Officially it will only be commercial orchardists who can apply for a permit to shoot bats, with limited numbers per species and only after they pass a stringent questionnaire. Camp dispersals will be allowed to happen where there is major disruption to people's living standards, again only through permit

application and once future management plans are in place. The result is going to be an endangered species already on the brink being pushed ever closer to extinction. How true is the following quote from Bradley Trevor Greive?

"These wonderful creatures will not argue their case.

They will not put up a fight, they will not beg for reprieve.

They will not say goodbye, they will not cry out.

They will just.... vanish.

And after they are gone, there will be silence, and there will be stillness, and there will be empty places, and nothing you can say will change this."



PHOTO // T WIMBERLEY

Coordinator Reports continued...

Bats (con't)

I hold out no hope for a government reprieve. The only thing that can make a difference to their staying will be people power, but it will take a lot of education to show people that these creatures are a keystone species. Their loss will be our loss, as it will change the very nature of what our wonderful bushland is. Along with that loss, will be the loss of the Koalas, the gliders, the possums, the birds and the myriad other creatures that use these forests, where the trees depend on flying foxes for pollination and seed dispersal.

From floods, to starvation, to camp dispersal, to habitat loss they put up with all that nature and we humans throw at them, but still they keep doing their job as foresters and pollinators. They keep giving and ask nothing, but to be left to do what they do so very well, and have been doing for millions of years. It is time for us all to take stock and start giving back to a land we all take for granted. Nothing in this life comes free. It is time to start paying our dues, if we want to keep living in this wonderful landscape.

A bit of a morbid report but time has run out to be anything but. To all those carers who will have the privilege of caring for

these beautiful babies this season, enjoy them while you can.

As a memorial to Jeannette Miles a wonderful bat advocate and dear friend, whom we sadly lost a couple of months ago on Beechmont Road, the volunteers at the Bat Clinic asked if the first baby girl born this season could be called Jeanette. As luck would have it our first baby was a little girl born to an injured mother three weeks ago. Both mother and baby, Bettina and Jeannette, are progressing well. Jeannette is a much loved little bat, well cared for by her mother and growing fat and healthy. She is now flapping her wings madly and looking inquisitively around at the world, just like her namesake, Jeannette.

Enjoy your babies. If you are not able to care for baby bats maybe you can help a carer who does, by offering to feed if vaccinated, or maybe doing the washing and cleaning of the many baby bottles, and then the fruit cutting as they get old enough to eat solids. Whatever you choose to do, you will cherish the experience. Baby bats somehow manage to melt even the coldest heart.

Trish Wimberley



Coordinator Reports continued...

Echidna

THE PAST FEW MONTHS HAVE SEEN A STEADY FLOW OF ECHIDNA RESCUES, WITH SOME ADULTS REQUIRING BOTH SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM CARE.

In recent weeks we have seen the arrival of the first 'puggles' into care. There are currently three, all of which are 'pouch young' i.e. ones that were still being carried by their mums.

One little puggle had a remarkable rescue. His mother was hit by a car. Thankfully the mum was found by a motorist who took her to Rachel, one of our Trauma Carers. Sadly, she didn't survive. However it was noticed that she had a formed 'pouch' which indicated that she may have had a small puggle on board when she was hit, or she may have had a young in a burrow. The motorist was kind enough to go searching the following day, in the exact location where she found the echidna and remarkably, in a drain on the side of the road, she

found the missing puggle. Weighing only 120 grams it was truly a miracle that he was spotted still alive and unscathed. He is currently doing well in care with one of our experienced echidna carers.

The next months are Puggle Season so if you do see a dead echidna please remember to check the body for a possible baby. They are easily thrown from mum on impact, so it is important to always check the surrounding area carefully. Once a puggle starts to cut spines, the mother will dig a burrow and leave the young in it. From that point she only returns every three to ten days to feed the young.

Karen Scott



PHOTOS // R LYONS

Coordinator Reports continued...

Small Mammals

WE ARE NOW STARTING TO SEE A STEADY INFLOW OF ORPHANED BANDICOOT BABIES WITH OVER A DOZEN BABIES COMING INTO CARE IN THE GOLD COAST REGION ALONE.

We will very shortly see the annual arrival of orphaned antechinus and hopefully our small mammal carers will be well prepared for these unique little critters.

Thank you to everyone who attended the recent Bandicoot and Antechinus Workshop at Wacol. The workshop was well received with 45 attendees, however unfortunately a few who were late to register had to be turned away. We have now welcomed several members to the world of raising bandicoots and hopefully will have a few more to care for antechinus this coming season also.

On a final note, we have a happy story of a young Brush-tailed Phascogale that was reu-

nited with its mother. A small 30g young came into care as a result of a cat attack. She had to remain in care to enable treatment with antibiotics, however it was discovered that the resident sees the mother every night when she leaves her nesting location to forage for food. The decision was made to try to reunite the baby with her mother. The mother very quickly found her and returned her to her siblings.

We do not often get opportunities to reunite young with their mother after treatment, so this was an excellent outcome all around.

Karen Scott

Koalas

THE KOALA POPULATION IN SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND HAS TAKEN A TREMENDOUS BEATING OVER RECENT MONTHS WITH A HUGE NUMBER COMING INTO CARE.

Our local wildlife hospital at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital have been dealing with multiple admissions every day, and as many as nine in a single day.

Sadly, we have seen an increase in the number of koalas being attacked by dogs, particularly in suburban areas and some from suburbs where we do not normally rescue koalas. A number of orphaned koalas have also arrived into care and are being hand-raised by specialised koala carers

The rate of disease in our local koalas seems to be on the increase, with many female koalas rescued testing positive for advanced reproductive disease.

We are fortunate for the ongoing support of facilities such as Currumbin Sanctuary and Australia Zoo as well as the support from other volunteer organisations such as Sunshine Coast Koala and Wildlife Rescue, and Moreton Bay Koala Rescue.

We have also relied on the expertise of the Koala Conservation Team of the Gold Coast City Council who have 'loaned out' some of their team to assist in the rescue of injured koalas in difficult situations. Several of our local Gold Coast koalas would not have been rescued if it was not for the assistance of the GCCC koala team.

Karen Scott

Coordinator Reports continued...

Macropods

THANKFULLY OVER RECENT MONTHS THE NUMBER OF ADULT MACROPODS NEEDING HELP HAS SLOWED DOWN TO A DEGREE.

The winter months saw the typical increase in road trauma victims and an influx of orphaned young requiring care. A huge thank you to our trauma team and helpers, who often respond to over 20 calls a week to deal with these road victims.

Thank you to our wonderful macropod carers who took in these little ones, even though many were already at or near capacity. Macropods are a difficult and long-term group of animals to care for.

One of our macropod carers also is having the privilege of raising two orphaned Brushtail Rock Wallabies. Recent dry weather has resulted in rock wallabies coming down to lower ground for water and sadly there have been a number of road trauma victims over recent months. Two little male orphans, Bernie and Ernie are doing well in care and will be released back to their original rescue location when they are older and wiser.

Karen Scott

A phone call or email can make such a difference

Eleanor Hanger

When an orphan comes into care, the sooner it is placed with others of its kind, or at least with its future carer the better. Being held for any length of time with the rescuer, or temporary carer only adds to its stress. We therefore ask carers to keep in touch with their coordinators, so that the animals can be placed quickly.

What will the coordinator want to know?

- If you have animals in care, what species you have, and their ages and stages of development
- Whether you have an established crèche or want to form one
- If you don't have any animals in care, whether you are able to take one or more
- What facilities you have
- Do you have access to the natural diet for the species
- Can you take animals through to release, and if not, during what stages of their development can you care for them

Remember the Story

If you are passing an animal on to another carer, it is extremely important to give the history of the animal: the reason for care, the length of time it has been in care, any injuries or health issues, any treatments or medications, any behavioural or feeding problems.

The history is invaluable in ensuring the correct management of the animal and can alert the new carer to any potential problems.

A Driving Passion

Robyn Cox

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU HEARD THE PHONE RING AND YOU IMMEDIATELY THINK, "OH NO, I HOPE IT'S NOT WILDCARE CALLING"?

You have your hands full, so much is going on, you have had a big day, just got home, tea is on the stove, visitors have just arrived, so much to do, so little time. You call to someone in the back ground, "Say I am not here", "Say I am in the shower", "Say I am not home from work". Then you hear a possum needs you. Suddenly the 'stuff' that mattered so much, doesn't seem to matter anymore and you call out, "Where is it?" Then you pick up the car keys and head out the door.

We have all got stories to tell; some so happy your heart could burst, some so sad you think your heart will break. It's a rollercoaster ride for all carers and rescuers. But we persevere, we are resilient and we are hardy people. This 'work' is not for the faint hearted, it is for the strong. Being able to take the good with the bad, pick yourself up again and again, take a knock, take a dig, lose friends, stand up for animal rights, work long hours with little sleep, do

things you never dreamed you would be capable of, put the animals in your care first, take responsibility for endangered wildlife for future generations, and not think of all the creepy crawlies you could have in your car, during and after transporting a car full of leaf.

We are so needed in the world today. We need to get people caring about our precious wildlife. We need to keep persevering. We need to pat ourselves on the back sometimes and we need to keep the passion. We are all working towards the same thing so when you think you are alone or you don't think you can do it anymore – think again. Take a break. Pick up the phone. There are others out there who know what you are going through. We need you to stay strong. Get those feel good photos out and reminisce about the good outcomes and know that there will be more ahead. Here are a couple of mine. Both have been released back to the wild.



I dropped off Mum's back when she was trying to get away from a dog in a backyard. Luckily the owner saved me, after the dog picked me up and took me to them. I very tired, so having a snooze in my yellow bag which was knitted by a very nice lady in a nursing home.



My Mum couldn't be saved, but I was taken from her pouch on the operating table at CWH.



My healthy Mum was poisoned. I was cut off Mum's teat.

Education Report

Karen Scott

WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE IN RECENT MONTHS HAS BEEN VERY STRONG WITH SEVERAL WORKSHOPS BEING AT CAPACITY, SUCH THAT WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO ACCOMMODATE SOME MEMBERS WHO HAVE REGISTERED LATE.

A reminder that we are running another specialised workshop 'Wildlife Anatomy and Physiology' in November. This is an excellent workshop for wildlife rehabilitators and is most suited to those who have at least six months experience in caring. The workshop is delivered by an experienced wildlife veterinarian and this time will be offered at the RSCPA Wacol to allow attendance by Brisbane, Ipswich and Gold Coast members. If you are interested in attending, please contact Wildcare by email at education@wildcare.org.au. The cost of attending is \$50 which is great value for a specialised full day course.

We are currently working on Education Calendar for January to June 2013 and this will hopefully be ready for distribution at the end of November. We have more specialised workshops in the planning which I am sure will benefit many of our members.

We have unfortunately had to postpone a number of workshops recently due to the ill-health of several trainers. To those who registered, thank you for your understanding.

Finally, some housekeeping: Please remember to register for workshops as early as possible. As mentioned, we have had some workshops at capacity and we have had to turn some members away.

The Indian Myna—Another Unfortunate Introduction

Eleanor Hanger

THE INDIAN MYNA (NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH OUR NATIVE NOISY MINER) WAS INTRODUCED TO AUSTRALIA IN THE 19TH CENTURY TO CONTROL INSECT PESTS. IT HAS NOW COLONIZED MUCH OF SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA AND, IN FACT, THE NUMBERS IN CANBERRA SOME YEARS AGO HAD REACHED THE TENS OF THOUSANDS.

"Well," you might ask, "what is the problem?"

The problem is, that Indian Mynas have become a major threat to the survival of many of our native species. Hollow dwelling animals, such as possums, gliders, parrots and owls are evicted from nesting hollows, by these beautiful, but aggressive birds, which are prolific breeders. They will also prey on the eggs and chicks of native species.

If we want to protect our native species a control program will need to be successful. However a top priority for any animal control program must be, that it is ethically managed to ensure that the highest animal welfare standards are adhered to. It is absolutely intolerable to see animal control programs providing misleading information to the public, or actively encouraging, or turning a blind eye to animal welfare issues.

The Logan City Council and the Queensland Bird Breeder's Club together have initiated a program to control these birds. For more information you can email the Logan City Council: council@logan.qld.gov.au or the Queensland Bird Breeder's Club: indianmynainfo@gmail.com. Other websites are: www.indianmynaaction.org.au / www.canberraactiongroup.com.au

Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby

Kerry Johnston

WE LIVE IN AN AREA WHERE WE ARE FORTUNATE TO BE SURROUNDED BY AN EXTENSIVE RANGE OF NATIVE WILDLIFE. ON OUR OWN PROPERTY WE HAVE MOBS OF WHIPTAIL WALLABIES, RED-NECKED WALLABIES AND SOME EASTERN GREY KANGAROOS.

This year we have had a plague of paralysis ticks. Local Vets contend it is the worst season for 30 years. Several neighbours have lost livestock - horses and cattle to the ticks. The native wildlife is suffering as well.

Recently I got a call from a friend in the area. He has, among other things, a small mob of Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies on his property. He had observed that one of the young mums seemed to be losing weight. He came home from work one night to find her young joey lying on the concrete pathway. The mum was nearby but made no attempt to be reunited with her joey, so he tried several times to reunite them, but without success. Fearing for the wellbeing of the little one and knowing I cared for macropods, he brought the joey around to me.

Little 'Bernie' was only 213 grams but furred. He was very dehydrated, cold and unresponsive. We warmed him up and then started rehydration fluids. I found and removed six paralysis ticks from him. Over the next few days he passed a lot of very mal-odorous excrement. He seemed to us to be very underweight and suffering from malnutrition.

I started feeding him on half strength Wombaroo™ then gradually increased the ratio to full strength. He went through a period of lethargy and thirst, which I suspect was from tick poisoning. Fortunately he is now fully recovered and doing extremely well. He is now 450 grams and as you can see from the pictures his fur is nowhere as good as Ernie's but it is improving.

Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby are listed as a vulnerable species. Consequently our President, Karen, had to apply for a special permit for us

to keep him. These animals rarely come into care, so imagine my surprise when the next macropod we got was another Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby, whose mother was hit by a car. This little boy was found in the pouch by his rescuer and was in care before he became cold or dehydrated.

He too was suffering from tick poisoning as we found three ticks on him. We began the treatment that worked so well with little Bernie. We have called this little one Ernie. He is 464 grams and his fur is much denser than Bernie's. He is very shy, so we leave him quietly in his feather pouch to recover. He is drinking well now and starting to look brighter.

As far as I can tell there have never been any growth charts produced for Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies. Consequently we are learning as we go along



PHOTO // K JOHNSTON

Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies

LISTED AS VULNERABLE UNDER QUEENSLAND LEGISLATION, THE BRUSH-TAILED ROCK-WALLABY (*PETROGALE PENICILLATA*) IS A HIGHLY AGILE SPECIES WITH PROMINENT TAIL THAT ENABLES EXTREME FLEXIBILITY AND BALANCE WHEN HOPPING THROUGH ROCKY AREAS.

Rocky outcrops with tumbled boulders, ledges and caves play a vital role in the biology and conservation of rock-wallabies as they provide refuge from foxes and provide habitat for rock-wallabies to shelter and breed. Large fig trees in rocky areas are an important food source, while also providing protection from predation. Female rock-wallabies give birth to a single pouch young each year when conditions are favourable.

The Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby's distribution has reduced throughout its range from Yarraman in Queensland through the upper Snowy River in Victoria due to many historical and current reasons. Despite this, it remains the most widespread rock-wallaby species in Australia.

The threats associated with the decline in rock-wallaby numbers include habitat degradation (that has led to an increase in isolation), small population size, lower migration rates, drought, fire, predation by foxes and competition with goats.

Historically, this species was the target of extensive hunting, for skins and because it was deemed an agricultural pest. In one year, in the early 1900s, over 500,000 bounties and over 90,000 skins were paid for by a single company. It is hard today to comprehend an environment with this number of rock-wallabies in it.

More recently, extensive surveys have been conducted throughout the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby's range and have produced some interesting results. A survey in the late 1990s found Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies at 131 sites in Queensland. Half of these were on private land. This clearly shows the role of landholders, including some Land for Wildlife members who are lucky to have rock-wallabies, can play in the conservation and survival of this species. Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies are also the faunal emblem, and a significant symbol, of the City of Ipswich.

Reference

Curtis LK et.al. (2012) *Queensland's Threatened Animals*. CSIRO Publishing.

This article was published with the kind permission of Deborah Metters, Land for Wildlife Regional Coordinator SEQ Catchments, and Stephani Grove, Program Officer (Natural Environment) Ipswich City Council.

A Wilderness That Must Be Protected At All Costs

Eleanor Hanger

WORDS ARE INADEQUATE TO DESCRIBE THE POLAR AND SUB-POLAR REGIONS OF THIS AMAZING PLANET.

South Georgia, former scene of such unforgettable and unforgivable carnage, is absolutely spectacular. With its towering, snow-covered mountains, stark black cliff faces, glaciers, fabulous ever-changing cloud formations, allowing glimpses of delicate blue sky, rays of sunlight striking a glacier, or illuminating rocks festooned with orange lichen, this is one of the most isolated places on earth. The weather is unpredictable, but for us it generally revealed its gentler side.

The scenery is absolutely stunning, but the wildlife is beyond belief and truly awe inspiring. To be almost surrounded by tens of thousands of King Penguins, with their distinctive, rich golden head markings, and their gorgeous, three month old, brown, fluffy chicks, is an unbelievably moving experience. Fur seals lay about on the beaches, occasionally engaging in cursory scuffles, but not of an aggressive nature, as it was not the breeding season. Lumbering elephant seals searched out a comfortable place to rest, or lazily watched the passing parade of humans with an occasional yawn before closing their eyes and resuming their sleep.

Nesting Black-browed Albatross shared nesting space with Rockhopper Penguins. Soaring Wandering Albatross, Fulmars, Prions and Petrels appeared and disappeared in the sheer vastness of the ocean. Sailing by on an iceberg a lone Adelie penguin, one of the species not recovering so well from the slaughter that occurred during the whaling and sealing days. Commerson's dolphins sleek, amazingly agile and swift, playfully dive and leap around the ship

The Antarctic Peninsula is spectacular, with its bays of extraordinary depth embraced by massive mountains ranges rising sheer from the dark plankton rich depths. Here too are sea ice, growlers and icebergs, with their unimaginably delicate colours of blue, green, turquoise, aqua and mauve, sculptural forms of immense variety and beauty.

Are we as a world community going to allow this continent to be plundered for its resources, to satisfy an insatiable need to maintain a lifestyle which is unsustainable? The Antarctic Treaty enacted in 1961 offers a measure of protection, but for how long?



King penguins and their chicks

PHOTOS // EM HANGER

Flight Aviaries for Birds

Claire Smith

ONE OF THE THINGS I REALLY WANTED TO DO AS A REHABILITATOR WAS BUILD A BIG FLIGHT AVIARY. THE BIGGER THE BETTER!

My goal is 15m long so that my birds can build up their flight muscles after recovering from whatever brought them into care.

Large flight aviaries are expensive undertakings and when I was researching prices I was looking at thousands of dollars - it just wasn't going to happen.

Then I had a brain wave - temporary car shelters! Bingo! They are constructed of tubular steel and are really easy to erect. So off to Supacheap Auto and purchase one at cost of around \$140.

Stage 1. Assemble frame where it's going to finally end up.

Stage 2. Purchase Shade cloth - as high UV protection as you can afford. Stretch over roof area and stitch into place. We used 20lb fishing line and an upholstery needle.

Stage 3. Purchase more shade cloth for the walls and ends. Temporarily attach to frame with cable ties. Stitch into place keeping tension on the shade cloth at all times. Remove ties afterwards.

Stage 4. For the base of the walls I used old hardwood timbers I had saved from somewhere or other (knew they would come in handy one day). Dig a trench and bury at least half of the timber in the soil. Make timber pegs at least twice as long as the remaining height of the timber boards and hammer into the ground like tent pegs. You need to do this front and back. Tension the shade cloth as you secure it to the timber using shade cloth staples (available at Bunnings).

Stage 5. Construct a simple door frame from recycled timber.

Stage 6. Make a simple timber frame door and cover with shade cloth. Either using sliding bolts back and front of door or hasp and staple securing latches. (see photo)

Stage 7. Tension and secure a high UV tarp over 1/3 of the roof. Use Cable ties.

Stage 8. Bury large dead branches in an upright position to create perching areas. Here I have also used dead branches horizontally too.

Stage 9. At the sheltered end I created a bit more shelter by using recycled polycarbonate sheeting on the back walls and attached using cable ties.

Stage 10. Plant a couple of native trees.

Stage 10. Ensure that there is some leaf litter on the floor. Birds like magpies, butcher birds, kookaburras love to go through it and it also encourages bug life.

All that remains now is to check the perimeter and ensure that everything is safe and secure. Provide shallow, large water containers for drinking and bathing. I have also put in some stumps to create lower perching areas.

Because I used shade cloth, this aviary is obviously not suitable for parrots. However, it will suit most other birds and because it's shade cloth Kookaburras would fair well in it.

The whole project cost approx. \$700 from start to finish. Its dimensions are 6 x 3 x 3.97m. With basic tools, and a friend to help, this project requires minimal knowledge of construction. It is easy to take down and re-assemble if necessary and it can be built in a weekend...if you put your mind to it! The rewards are fantastic and your birds will have a great space to recoup in. (suitable for bats, gliders etc too)



PHOTO // C SMITH

Loving our Local Native Plants

Michelle Benson

HABITAT TYPES IN OUR REGION AND SOME OF THE NATIVE PLANTS GROWING THERE. THE STORY CONTINUES.

EUCALYPT HILLSIDES

Eucalypts are the lungs of our hillsides. These beautiful huge trees (which include smooth, iron and stringy barks) dominate the hillsides in our region along with Lophostemon (Brush Box), Corymbia (Bloodwood and Spotted Gum), and Angophora (Apple Gum). The leaves of the Eucalypt trees hang downwards, allowing sunlight into the understorey so that Casuarinas (She-oaks), Acacias (Wattles) Banksias, and a multitude of small shrubs, herbs and grasses can flourish.

A lot of us live on these lovely breezy slopes. However the warm and dry windy conditions, that usually prevail in the Spring, can bring the threat of fire. This risk factor raises many questions about appropriate clearing and burning off, to try to protect housing. Fire is a natural part of regeneration for many plant species in this type of habitat, but, if areas are burnt too often, plant diversity (and biodiversity generally) may be reduced and weed species can take over. Molasses grass is a typical example of an invasive and smothering weed that itself becomes a highly volatile fire hazard. There are many difficult and complex issues regarding how we can manage, and at the same time protect, these precious forests.

Examples of Eucalypt hillside areas are found in: Arundel, Advancetown, Beenleigh, Burleigh Heads, Bonogin, Carrara, Coomera, Elanora, Gilston, Merrimac, Parkwood, Pimpama, Tallai, Nerang, Oxenford, Springbrook, Tallebudgera, Willowvale, Ormeau, Lower Beechmont, Tugan Heights.

The type of soil, the altitude, aspect, slope and amount of rainfall all determine the complexity of habitat in a eucalypt forest. Eucalypt forest is also referred to as either dry or wet sclerophyll forest.

The word sclerophyll comes from the Greek words 'skleros' meaning 'hard' and 'phullon' meaning 'leaf', as most of the trees in these forests have tough leaves that resist water loss. The dry forests have an open canopy allowing light loving shrubs and grasses to grow. The wet forests are slightly more closed, occurring in gullies and rainforest margins where moister conditions allow a thick understorey of ferns, palms, and vines to grow.

TREES

- **Eucalyptus spp.** Eucalypts are a vitally important food and housing source for many wildlife species. The hollows in the old growth trees, created over many years by termite occupation, rot and fire, are invaluable as places to nest and shelter. Forest Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*) is widespread. Flooded gum (*Eucalyptus grandis*) is found in moist gullies. Spotted gum (*Corymbia citriodora*) is found on drier hillsides. The leaves of these trees are favoured koala and possum food. The blossom is relished by honeyeaters, gliders, flying foxes and butterflies. Seed is eaten by rosellas and cockatoos. The manna (plant exudate) is eaten by gliders and nectivores.
- **Coastal Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*)** Tree to 20m. The yellow flower spikes are relished by blossom bats, honeyeaters, spinebills and gliders.
- **Forest She-Oak (*Allocasaurina torulosa*)** Slender tree to 20m. Seeds are important food for black cockatoos, especially the endangered Glossy Black Cockatoo.

Continued on next page

Loving our Local Native Plants (con't)

SHRUBS

- **Brisbane Wattle** (*Acacia fimbriata*) Large shrub to 6m in moister forests. Profuse yellow flowers in globular heads attract many insects and therefore the insectivores. The seed is eaten by King Parrots, Wonga Pigeons and Eastern Rosellas. The manna is eaten by some gliders.
- **Yellow Pittosporum** (*Pittosporum revolutum*) To 3m in moister forests. Perfumed yellow, tubular flowers and orange fruit.
- **Dogwood** (*Jacksonia scoparia*) Twiggy shrub to 3m in dry forests. Masses of yellow pea flowers in Spring. Leaves eaten by caterpillars of Fiery and Copper Pencilled-blue Butterflies and the flowers attract many insects.
- **Crinkle Bush** (*Lomatia silaifolia*) Small shrub to 2m in dry forest. Its white flowers attract butterflies.

SMALL PLANTS

- **Darling Pea** (*Swainsona galegifolia*) Perennial herb to 1m on moister slopes. Pink pea flowers attract butterflies and insects.
- **Fringed Lily** (*Thysanotus tuberosus*) Perennial herb to 30cm on dry slopes. Exquisite pinkish flowers.
- **Bottlebrush Grass Tree** (*Xanthorrhoea macronema*) Uncommon stemless plant to 1m. Flower spikes feed many nectivores. Seed eaten by King Parrots and cockatoos.
- **Native Indigo** (*Indigofera australis*) Erect open shrub with pink flowers on spikes.
- **Star Goodenia** (*Goodenia rotundifolia*) Perennial trailing herb found in dry understorey. Bright yellow flowers.

- **Blue Flax Lily** (*Dianella caerulea* v. *assera*) Tufted lily type plant in dry understorey. Flowers attract native bees and bright blue fruits are eaten by frugivores.

ORCHIDS

- **Tongue Orchid** (*Dockrillia linguiformis*) Orchid with thick flat succulent leaves. Clings to bark on tree trunks in dry forest. Delicate white flowers attract native bees.
- **Tree Orchid** (*Cymbidium madidum*) Found in moister forests. Forms clumps on tree trunks and their hollows. Leathery strap leaves, and yellowish-brown flowers in spikes.



Swainsona galegifolia

Continued on next page

Loving our Local Native Plants (con't)

VINES

- **Wombat Berry** (*Eustrephus latifolius*) Wiry twining vine. Pinkish flowers and orange fruit eaten by many frugivores.
- **Native Sarsaparilla** (*Hardenbergia violacea*) Common small vine with purple flowers in dry forests. Spinebills enjoy the flowers.
- **Slender Grapefruit** (*Cayratia clematidea*) in moister areas. The fruit is eaten by Lewins Honeyeaters and Wompoo Fruit-doves.
- **Wonga vine** (*Pandorea pandorana*) Vigorous vine found in moister forests. Pale pink flowers.

As our region evolves and development encroaches further into bushland, let's make every effort to promote more awareness about the vital role local native plants play in keeping biodiversity alive and well.



Thysanotus tuberosus

GRASSES

- **Hairy Panic** (*Panicum effusum*) Delicate tufting grass. Seed eaten by finches. Grazing for wallabies.
- **Kangaroo Grass** (*Themeda triandra*) Tufted grass to 1m. Reddish brown flower spikelets. Leaves provide food for many butterfly caterpillars and macropods.
- **Common Mat Rush** (*Lomandra longifolia*) Widespread in dry understorey. Perfumed flower spikes. Seeds eaten by native rodents and granivores.



Dockrillia linguiformis

PHOTOS /// M BENSON

Insects as a Food Source

Are you breeding insects as a food source for your animals in care?

If your answer is 'yes', are you ensuring that your feeder insects are providing a nutrient rich diet for those animals, or are you setting them up for health problems associated with dietary deficiencies?

Most of us have used Wombaroo Insectivore Mix and High Protein Supplement to gut load our insects, however did you know that Wombaroo have another product called 'Insect Booster', which they claim is a complete diet for feeder insects. Details of this product, as well as many others, may be found at www.wombaroo.com.au

The website also answers your questions on the shipping and storage of Wombaroo powdered products and reconstituted liquids.

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.



Gambling

Community Benefit Fund

Queensland Government

Funding was received in 2011 to enable the purchase of essential wildlife rescue and rehabilitation equipment. This included 12 intensive care units which are being put to very good use by our bird, possum and macropod carers. Funding was also obtained to purchase several possum aviaries, nets and possum traps.

Funding was received to assist with the high costs associated with providing an emergency response to critically injured large animals (such as macropods) in the Scenic Rim area. This area has one of the highest rates of injury in macropods. Funding will help cover some of the costs associated with the cost of drugs to sedate and euthanase injured wildlife and a small portion to assist with fuel costs.



Funding was recently received to assist with koala rehabilitation facilities as a result of the increase in the number of koalas coming into care from the Gold Coast region.



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