

WildNews



ISSUE 68 - SPRING 2013

**One person
can make
a difference!**

Rescue
A Happy Ending

Event Report
Dance in the Bush

A Plea from Billie

+ Plant Pruning Techniques



President's Report



By Karen Scott

Spring has well and truly arrived bringing with it beautiful warm days and sadly, the beginning of the inevitable high numbers of injured and orphaned wildlife.

Unfortunately, I think this year will be a particularly bad one for many of our species, as they continue to struggle not only with the encroachment of development and other human related problems, but also with having fewer volunteers to rescue and care for them, which may have an even greater impact.

With over 600 members, it is surprising to realize that we only have about 100 volunteers actively rescuing wildlife, with a large percentage of these only available irregularly. There is a very small team of around 30 members who are actively rescuing most species of wildlife throughout the week. This is a reflection of how 'time poor' many people have become, with so many work and family commitments encroaching on our ability to undertake volunteer work. For those members who have not as yet taken the plunge and become involved with wildlife rescues, I would strongly urge you to become involved. Our wildlife really needs your help now, over the busy spring and summer months. You do not need to be hugely experienced or to have fancy equipment – a few towels and cardboard boxes is all you need to start off with. Sadly, we are finding

that some animals are not being rescued promptly, because we simply do not have the volunteers available to help. For every simple rescue you undertake you are impacting on the life of a wild animal and are helping to reduce its suffering tremendously. There are many people available to help with any questions you might have, and we are very fortunate in South-east Queensland that most local vets will accept wildlife, so generally you would not be required to travel any great distance to take the animal for help. So please... just jump right on in – our wildlife will be very grateful!

Finally, a huge thank you to our very small team of telephone volunteers – our wonderful group of about 20 volunteers who do their best to be at the forefront of helping our wildlife. I know that the hotline is already starting to get a little crazy and will only get worse over the coming months. Your patience, dedication and compassion are inspiring. Anyone wishing to become part of this wonderful team, please contact us – we really need your help.

Wildcare Australia Inc

PO Box 2379
Nerang Mail Centre,
Qld 4211

24 X 7 Emergency Phone
Service **(07) 5527 2444**

www.wildcare.org.au



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Summer - Issue 69: 29th December
Autumn - Issue 70: 29th March

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.

EMAILS

enquiries@wildcare.org.au
shop@wildcare.org.au
education@wildcare.org.au
news@wildcare.org.au
records@wildcare.org.au

MAIN COMMITTEE

President Karen Scott
Vice-President Gail Gipp
Secretary Lewis McKillop
Treasurer Tracy Paroz
Committee Members Natasha
Lewis-Millar, Rachel Lyons

NEWSLETTER TEAM

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



A Warm Welcome to our New Members

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

Amber Davidson; Jessica Gorrington; Lacey-Jane West; Elspeth Cope; Katie Carter & Troy Carter; Tara Hansard; Elisabet Grant; Sandra Warren; Andrea Riordan; Sharna Schmith; Yvonne Humphries; Hayley Gigg; Michelle Perkins & Peter Lind; Catherine Goggin; William Pledger & Krystal O'Brien; Peta Wickenden; Jolande van Nispen & Emile van Nispen; Andrew Banham; Kenneth Killeen & Sera-Jean Wilson; Carolyn Martin; Nalda Paterson; Natalie Behncken & Stuart Behncken; Cheyenne Bates; Johanna Keopnick; Jacqui Frederick & Marilyn Cook; Jessica Bishop-Fischer; Judy Smith & Edward Hof; Dekota Stevens; Bastian Steinrucken & Tracey Steinrucken; Graham Dart; Jade Kingsley & James Henderson; Deidre Carty & Stephen Baker; Jo Hammond; Fiona Gunn; Darren Volker & Ying Ying Yu; Louise Robinson; Kathleen Gibson & Jeff Gibson; Caroline Villarreal & Justin Mackenzie; Jane Jacoby; Robin Wright; Karla Heath; Janelle Shephard; Hayley Butcher; Mary Timms; Nateesha Wootton; John McArdell & Michele McArdell; Geoffrey Heller & Ramona Heller-Handebo; Susan Deakin-Lord & Michael Deakin; Skye Hartung & Nicole Hendriks; Collene McDonald; Grant Neilson & Nicole Seden; Nick Fraser & Jack Fraser; Allison Beutel; Amanda Mugridge; Sophie Decoque; Paula White & Paul Taylor; Paulina Streten; Mary Chapell & Jason Stankoski; Karen Cossor-Schubring & Wayne Schubring.

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.

Big Thanks to City Farmers

By Dianna Smith

City Farmers at Burleigh Waters kindly donated a substantial amount of seed to Wildcare. It was only "slightly" affected by weevils – even more protein for the birds. My little plovers (masked lapwings) love chasing them around their tub.

Quite a few members were able to take advantage of these donations. Please remember this retailer for any of your pet, garden and pool supplies, since they remembered us.

Thank you, City Farmers.

Wildcare Record Keeping Survey Results

By Kiersten Jones

A huge thank you to the 114 members who completed the online survey about the current Wildcare record keeping practices. The result was tremendous and has helped us considerably in revising the way in which records are maintained. It also highlighted several areas where improvements can be made.

Below is a summary of the pertinent information that was collected, which also includes some insight into some of the questions and information that is collected and how it is used.

Of the 114 responses, 75% are currently submitting Rescue/Carer records (thank you!)

Current methods used to submit records:

- 85% are using Microsoft Excel template
- 4% are using Microsoft Word template
- 11% are using hand-written record template

Those members who are not using the preferred method of the Microsoft Excel template state the following difficulties:

- 11% - No access to a reliable computer
- 56% - Do not have Microsoft Excel
- 33% - Do not know how to use Microsoft Excel

Of those members who are using the Microsoft Excel template, only 10% find the program difficult to use.

Despite this, the majority of members would like to progress to an online database. The stated preferred method of submitting records:

- 84% - Web-based online database
- 14% - prefer to stay with Microsoft Excel
- 2% - prefer to stay with hand-written records

When asked the reasons why volunteers struggle to maintain their records, reasons cited included:

- Lack of time (most common reason cited)
- Computer and software incompatibility/difficulties
- Losing information kept on loose pieces of paper
- Large numbers of animals in care

When asked for suggestions on how record keeping could be simplified:

- Make an easier, more automated system
- Logging records into the template as soon as possible
- Set fields to be populated depending upon the species selected
- Hire a personal assistant!

We feel that an online database will assist those who have difficulties with software compatibility and will be a more automated system for submitting records.

In view of how members will manage submitting their online records, we asked how often volunteers are entering their records into their template:

- 45% - within a day or two of rescue or outcome
- 18% - each week
- 16% - every few months
- 21% - when they are due to be submitted to Wildcare

With the recent introduction of a duplicate rescue form, we asked how volunteers keep their data (before transcribing into the prescribed template):

- 30% - on loose pieces of paper
- 47% - in a dedicated notebook
- 11% - in their smartphone or iPad
- 56% - by keeping admission/discharge paperwork from wildlife facilities

Note: participants could select more than one answer.

Wildcare Record Keeping Survey Results

continued

When asked what the main benefits of maintaining records were:

- 58% - ability to look back and find the caller/finder contact details
- 92% - ability to find original rescue location
- 86% - to find information to pass onto next carer

Note: participants could select more than one answer.

When asked what information volunteers considered to be important to be recorded, participants selected most of the existing data however there were a few important comments made. A summary of those and the reasons why they are currently collected is listed below.

The data that was considered necessary to maintain included:

- date of rescue
- location of rescue
- species
- reason for rescue
- outcome

Other comments made relating to other data collected included:

- Wildcare Identification Code – 65% considered it important. By way of history, this code was originally allocated by the Wildcare hotline operators (the code would not be the rescuer/carers initials but rather the volunteer manning the phone on the day). The code was designed so that a rescuer could look back on the code and know the name of the telephone operator, date and the call number and the information could be reconciled with the telephone records. Several years ago, the hotline operators discontinued issuing this code and it reverted back to being issued by each individual rescuer.
- Quantity – 80% considered this irrelevant as the quantity would generally be one. There are some instances where the quantity would vary including groups of ducklings, orphaned small mammals, clutches of reptiles.
- Animal Group – Currently our template lists the animal group (e.g. bird, possum, macropod etc) and then the individual species. Several comments were made that this is not necessary when the actual Species is then recorded. Maintaining the 'animal group' does help with narrowing down the pick list for the species and helps with data summaries for

grants and lobbying.

- Name of Animal - Only 50% considered this relevant. Of those who did consider it relevant, those carers are generally caring for mammal and monotremes. This was not considered particularly relevant by bird and reptile carers. It is very common for mammals to be named and also carries forward from many of the wildlife facilities that provide for animals to be named by donors. Several comments were made that the animal name and ID code could be combined into one field.
- Gender – 78% of participants considered this relevant. Those that did not consider it relevant cared for species where gender was not easily distinguishable (e.g. birds).
- Council Area – 63% participants considered this information relevant. Although the information may not be relevant to many rescuers, it is very important data for Wildcare to collect as this is used when submitting grant applications to individual Councils and is used to lobby Councils for changes to protect wildlife (such as road improvements etc). It is also used by carers in some Council areas to easily distinguish the animals in their care when they are applying for local Council grants. We could look at automatically linking council to suburb on the online database.
- Wildlife Facility Accession Number – 80% of participants considered this relevant. A large percentage of wildlife now come into care via one of the wildlife facilities and the accession number needs to be recorded when re-submitting the animal for a re-check and should be quoted when advising the facility of the outcome of the animal.

Some suggestions were made of other information that could be collected including:

- Ability to upload a photo of the animal
- Reason for euthanasia
- Weights (first arrived into care and then release weight)
- Veterinary treatment obtained/administered
- A field to include comments or additional information
- Details of diet whilst in care
- Specific information for species (e.g. ear tag numbers for koalas, microchip numbers for koalas and echidnas, identifying features of the individual animal)

Wildcare Record Keeping Survey Results

continued

We asked members to consider the benefits and disadvantages of using a web-based online database and the following information was gathered:

- Most members considered that a web-based database was a great idea and would be easier to use
- Easier to access – could access from any computer, tablet or smartphone
- Web browser is easier to use and access as opposed to Excel
- More professional
- Ability for Coordinators and other key members to have access to information readily
- Ability to collate reports quickly and easily
- Ability to log a record even if all the information isn't available – and the ability to re-enter and fill in any missing information as it is collected
- Printable version of each entry
- When a species is selected, contact information for the relevant coordinator is provided along with relevant information on that species.
- Information field to record individual requirements such as behaviour, diet, housing etc so that this information stays with the animal when transferred to the next carer
- Linking the 'reasons for rescue' with the species so that only relevant reasons are shown for that particular species

Suggestions received for a web-based database included:

- Use tick boxes and drop boxes to keep the system simple and easy to use
- An individual number be allocated against the animal automatically – which could then be transferred to another carer and the information is automatically transferred over without the need to send it separately and for it to be re-entered

The information collected has been carefully considered by the Wildcare Committee and we are now making arrangements to start developing a web-based database with most of the suggestions and feedback received being planned to be incorporated into the database.

Once again, thank you to all those who took the time to complete the survey.

Education Report

By Karen Scott

Over the past few months we have had about 70 new members, many of whom have taken the time to attend the Orientation Program and Rescue and First Aid for Wildlife workshop. We hope to see many of your names popping up on our rescue list soon.

The Wildcare workshops continue to be well received with some workshops reaching capacity for the booked venues. Thank you to those members who continue to take the time to further their knowledge, and to those experienced carers who are so willing to share their experiences.

We are already starting to work on the calendar for the first semester of 2014. Thank you again to our wonderful trainers who dedicate their time to developing and delivering our quality workshops. As most members are aware, our trainers receive no remuneration for teaching these workshops and many are employed full time in other areas, but are happy to give their time to help ensure that our volunteers are skilled in the species that they are rescuing and caring for. As a courtesy to our trainers, we do ask that members remember to send in their apologies if they are unable to attend a workshop. Sadly, there are members who repeatedly have failed to attend workshops that they have registered for and have failed to forward an apology for their inability to attend (despite receiving several reminders of their registration). Some of these workshops have been 'invitation only' workshops with limited numbers and their place could have been offered to another volunteer. Because of this, we have unfortunately had to start to create a list of members who repeatedly fail to send their apologies. They will not be offered places in specialised or invitation only workshops and will not be given preference when workshops are at capacity.



Dance in the Bush

By Robyn Cox and Debbie Overell

On Saturday 14 September the “Music in the Bush” fundraising dance was held at Mt Nimmel Hall at Austinville. It was a fun packed night with wonderful acoustic music on arrival, played by John Houldsworth. Following this was an array of talented musicians including Michael Quensia, Tracey Davis, Steve Carter, Michael Eastham and Bill Edwards making up a rock band called “Perfect Strangers”. What a hoot!

There was not much time to let the dust settle from the moment we ate the sausage sizzle, to dancing the night away, to eating the most sumptuous supper. The games were fun and gave us all time to have a breather from rocking the floor. The lucky door prizes kept coming and the raffle prizes were very appropriate for the night. The winners of the raffle were Sandra Mainland who won the bottle of Shiraz, Sheena Parfitt who won a beautiful Lenox vase, a wildlife painting by Dale won by Andrew Sharpe, a double pass to Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary won by Paul Parfitt and a massage won again by Andrew Sharpe. It was the Sharpe’s and Parfitt’s lucky night !

It truly was a great night! Thanks to all who showed up and gave support (in particular the Rasmussen family, whose multi generational family made up almost half the numbers) To all who attended thanks for your dedication. I would like to say a special thank you to Lindy and Tom Meath, who came all the way from the Sunshine Coast to help us. Pat yourself on the back; we raised over \$1,000 for Wildcare’s day-to-day operations!

Wildcare Australia would like to thank the following for their wonderful support of our organization:

- Dale Oliver, who painted and donated a picture for the raffle
- Colleen Parriott, who donated major raffle prize
- Michael Quensia for music; guitar and singing
- Tracey Davis for music; guitar and singing
- Steve Carter for music; guitar and singing
- Michael Eastham for music: drums and singing
- John Houldsworth for music; guitar and singing
- Bill Edwards for music; guitar and singing
- A special thank you to Lindy and Tom Meath, Debbie Overell, Eric Black and Robyn Cox for organizing the event. You did a magnificent job and your hard work is greatly appreciated.



One Person Can Make a Difference

By Brigitte Blakeway

The story of an inspiring young girl, who has done so much to make a difference to the lives of koalas, and our other wildlife.

In July, Emma Carter (aged 10) completed an Environmental Research project on koalas in the Elanora - Currumbin Waters area. As part of her research she contacted Tina Niblock, a Conservation Research Officer for the council, the staff at the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and also Karen Scott, the President of Wildcare Australia. After learning more about the plight of koalas in her own backyard, Emma decided she wanted to try to do something to help. The stories and photos of joeys that Karen had shared with her had really made an impact.

The first thing she did was join Wildcare. Emma thought that raising awareness and fundraising at the local shopping centre would make the biggest difference but unfortunately it wasn't possible so she had to come up with other ways she could help. She wrote letters to The Sun and Bulletin highlighting the plight of the koalas. Her letter was published in The Sun. Emma held a blanket drive through her school encouraging families to donate old towels, blankets and bunny rugs to help Karen care for joeys. She attended the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital's Open Day where she learnt more about the work they do. Emma created a display in the school library to help raise awareness of the issues faced by our native wildlife. During the school holidays she is letterbox dropping koala brochures to homes in the Lakewood Estate.

Emma has reported koala sightings on the council website and has been encouraging others to do the same. She wrote to Councillor McDonald asking for increased koala signage in the area. Councillor McDonald responded to her letter stating that she would investigate the issue. Emma has received a further letter informing her that a koala sign will be erected on Casuarina Dr near the Eddie Kornhauser Reserve.

Her koala project was awarded first place in her school science competition and also in the Environmental Section of the Gold Coast Science Competition.

Emma is very proud that she has been able to make a difference.



A Plea from Billie, the Black Flying-fox

By Jane Koltoft

I have been pushed to the front of our little gang and asked to put out a big PLEASE HELP US to all the thoughtful people, who have joined Wildcare with the intention of assisting our rescue and rehabilitation.



There's Ruby, the eastern grey kangaroo, who's the spokes-pod for everyone else. She's had her ear chewed by so many roos and wallabies to get drivers to slow down and look out for them in the soft light of dawn and dusk, when they love to leap about from paddock to bush and back again. Ruby was herself raised by a kind human after her mum was hit and killed early one morning on the side of a golf course. Very frightened, she was, tucked in mum's pouch but all twisted over. Luckily an early golfer found her and rang Wildcare when he got to the club house.

Then there's Basil, a hale and hearty common brushtail possum, who was an absolute fright when he went into care. His mum was nowhere to be seen and goodness knows how long he'd been on his own, sitting in a pot-plant, hungry, cold and going downhill fast. When he finally got to a wildlife vet, it took ages to warm him up and re-hydrate him. After a particularly heavy trot of orphaned possums, carers all had their 'no vacancy' signs up.

Eventually one already stretched carer agreed to bunk him in with one of her others and Basil never looked back. You should see him now. What a handsome little guy!

Eddie, the echidna, found him/herself (hard to tell) in the spotlight - literally. He/she had wandered onto a playing field, suddenly lit up for a game of evening netball, stranding poor Eddie. One of the children's mums rang a few numbers before getting onto Wildcare, who sent out a local rescuer to scoop the little critter up and take him/her back to the safety of the nearby sandy bush, where a dinner of termites and ants could be safely enjoyed.

Mango, the young brushy adventurer, fell off his mum during her dash back to bed one morning and was taken to the local vet before one of the neighbourhood dogs found him. By a great stroke of luck, the rescuer managed to hand him back to his mum the next evening, as he remembered exactly where he last saw her. He squawked his head off to be collected from the bottom of a tree, but got quite a telling off, before a big cuddle from his very worried mum. One of the happy moments.

Sid, the carpet python, decided to snooze the day away in some long grass by a large tree, only to be woken very rudely, and painfully, by the loud whine of a whipper snipper. He had succumbed to a quite nasty flesh wound and the gardener had the calm foresight to slide him into a hessian bag with a rake and call for help. Reptile rescuers are a bit thin on the ground and it took all afternoon for help to arrive. Sid was eventually treated and hopefully will recover enough to be released back to his quiet grassy abode. He's actually still with his carer, as reptiles take longer to heal up than mammals. But he's no bother and quite happy to wait out his convalescence in a warm, safe box with no whirring gardening machines.

My pal, Shelly, the rainbow lorikeet, has told me not to waffle too much so I'll get to the point. Shelly, by the way, got so weak and wearisome after constant rain washed all the nectar out of the flowering trees, she fell onto the ground near a shop, was rescued, well fed and cared for, and released once the rain stopped. She has the pick of the flowers during the day and my friends and I tuck in at night.

continued on next page

Photos J. Koltoft - "Just chillin' knowing that I'm in safe hands"

A Plea from Billie, the Black Flying-fox

continued

My own story is one all too commonly told. I am a black flying fox and I lost my grip on my mum's fur one stormy night and she couldn't find me again. I was so cold and wet when someone finally found me next day, that I had to spend a week in humidicrib, just like a human baby! I became the first 'bat baby' for my carer, who had lots of guidance and advice from experienced carers and I grew up to be an 'Alpha Bat'. I'm a big, bold black bat with enormous soft chamois leather wings and a leader of the pack. The girls think I'm OK too.....

Which is why I have to put it to EVERYONE out there to talk amongst yourselves or, to yourselves, and see if you can possibly be part of the chain that connects an injured, orphaned or stranded animal to a safe, secure place so that we can eventually go back into our wild and wonderful world to do what we do best. BE WILD LIFE!

Please don't think, 'Someone else will do it'. We need more wonderful humans to offer to take a phone shift, pick up one of my mates or have the ultimate joy of looking after one of us and seeing us go back 'home'.

If you can find it in your heart, as well as your busy human lives, to say 'pick me, pick me!' you will have the great satisfaction of knowing how you have helped lessen the suffering we have experienced, as well as made a big difference to our numbers in the wild. Wouldn't it be horrible if we just weren't around anymore? You know you love to watch our antics when you don't think we know.....

You know which humans to contact.

With love and a big thank you for hearing me out. (Ruby will be very happy with me now).

From Billy the Black Flying Fox.

A Happy Ending

By Jane Koltoft



The little possum was deemed to be in perfect health and it was determined that a reunion with its mother should be attempted. Here is Jane's story.

Sally, who works at the nursing home from where the possum came, took me to the exact spot where she was found. The little mite called out at the top of her lungs and within half an hour, a large brushie came through a garden bed near some small trees. She moved away when I put the basket down there, but I left the lid up a bit, baby climbed out, squeaking loudly, and she crawled up a small bottlebrush. Mum came back once I was clear, and stood patiently on a fence while her baby climbed aboard and tucked itself into the pouch. Then they were gone!

Sally and I were beside ourselves. It was so special.

Coordinator Reports

ECHIDNAS

By Karen Scott

Our busy echidna season seems to have slowed now, as their mating season has drawn to a close.

The numerous echidnas that have been in care over the past three months have all been successfully rehabilitated and released back into safe bushland near their rescue location. This is a great effort from our licensed echidna carers. Echidnas are truly a remarkable animal to care for ... albeit a little smelly! Most of our washing machines have now breathed a sigh of relief!

MACROPODS

By Karen Scott

There has been a steady intake of macropods that have been hit by cars, which has kept our Trauma Carers relatively busy. Thankfully we have also had a few experienced carers starting to become involved with these more specialised rescues and giving assistance to our Trauma Carers. This has been a great help in getting someone to the scene quickly, to assess the situation and to keep the public placated.

Unfortunately we continue to have a steady influx of orphaned macropod joeys coming into care. This is keeping our very small team of macropod carers busy. Our thanks to several other wildlife care groups who have assisted in the placement of these animals when we have not been able to find homes for them.

KOALAS

By Karen Scott

The last few months have seen an increasing number of koala rescues. Sadly many have succumbed to vehicle trauma or dog attack. We have seen a few 'repeat offenders' coming back into care for various reasons, and are keeping our fingers crossed that they stay out of trouble in future.

Although koala conservation has been receiving much needed publicity and attention recently and we find more members of the community are reporting koalas, there are still many situations arising that could have been avoided. We continue to try to educate the public about ways that they can help our local koala populations by distributing brochures and posters, and we work closely with the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and Gold Coast City Council.

PLEASE NOTE: Great Koala Count from 7th to 17th November. More information on www.koalacount.ala.org.au

SMALL MAMMALS

By Karen Scott

We are starting to see a few orphaned bandicoots coming into care now and after a very well attended Bandicoots and Native Rodents workshop in September we are hoping that we will have some more volunteers available to care for these funny little critters.

Anyone who is keen to get started should make sure that they have contacted their local Small Mammal Coordinator to let them know, and to run through what facilities you have.

We will shortly see the usual intake of antechinus orphans requiring fostering and will need more carers to take on these fast little guys.



POSSUMS

Gold Coast *By Eleanor Hanger*

Possum numbers in care continue to grow, with joeys arriving throughout the year, together with sick and injured adults. The reasons for this sad state of affairs are loss of habitat leading to dog, cat and car victims, dermatitis, poisoning and electrocution. Our carers are at capacity.

Just a reminder to those people, who are looking after animals, or who are ready to care, please keep in touch with your coordinator. This is important for many reasons, not least of which is, that it ensures possums are placed quickly with the most appropriate person. For example, if a single ringtail possum comes into care, the placement coordinator knows immediately who has a crèche of ringtails, or who is waiting for a companion for their lone ringtail, so can place the animal with minimal delay.

Stress is one of the biggest killers of animals in care, so we try to minimize stressful situations as much as possible. Having a social species reared on its own or having an animal passed from one carer to another and then another can be very stressful and in many cases totally unnecessary, if coordinators are kept informed.

Are you ensuring your animals are well hydrated? When an animal first comes into care it will be suffering some degree of dehydration. If the de-hydration is mild, we start offering fluids as soon as the animal has been warmed up. Remember the mantra: Warmth and fluids, warmth and fluid, warmth and fluids..... in that order. Once rehydrated the orphan may be started on its milk feeds. The really important thing to remember is to continue offering extra fluids for a few more days. For more detailed information, please read the possum or glider notes, or speak with a coordinator.

Another point, sometimes overlooked, is the fact that when an orphan first comes in to care it will require more feeds per day than the Easy Reference charts recommend for its age and stage of development. Give smaller feeds more often, until the joey has settled in to its stressful new life, and becomes comfortable with the strange food, human handling, unfamiliar sights, sounds and smells. Gradually (it may take a few days or a week or more) as it accepts the inevitable, you can gently work it into the routine appropriate for its age and stage of development. Again for more information, please read the notes, and do keep in touch with your coordinator.

Thank you to all our wonderful coordinators and carers, whose commitment to the welfare of our wildlife is making such a difference for so many animals.

Photos C. O'Keeffe and C. Philpott

Coordinator Reports

REPTILES

by Annette Bird

Well, after a relatively quiet few winter months, we are seeing the first reptiles emerge from their brumation. As usual, the first to emerge are the skinks and they are frequently getting themselves into trouble.

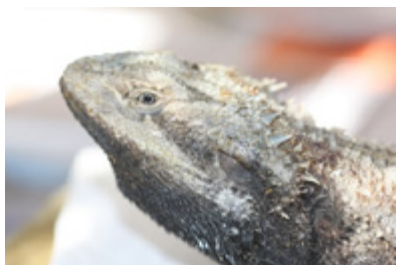
The most common reasons are dogs, cats then cars. Now, we are seeing the dragons and snakes appear and they are trying to out-do the skinks for ways to harm themselves!! We have just released the animals in care over the winter to make room for the flood of new injured and sick reps coming our way and we are filling fast. For those reptile carers with current rehab permits, can you please contact me and let me know what enclosures you have available and we will begin to fill them.

Recently, I received a distress call about some turtles that were in a terrible situation at Logan Village. On investigating, it turned out that a large housing development had destroyed their dam. I was forced to call the RSPCA to immediately attend heavy machinery, literally driving around and over visible turtles trying desperately to escape. As the RSPCA do not have the authority to halt major works, I next called the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and within minutes, the job site was closed down, until we could retrieve as many turtles as we could find. After three hours of swimming around (no exaggeration) in thigh-deep mud and sludge, we managed to locate and rescue ten turtles: 8 Broad-shelled river turtles, a Saw-shelled turtle and a Krefft's River turtle. Two were injured, one badly and all were transported to the RSPCA vet at Wacol for a full examination (they were so covered in mud on rescue, it was difficult to do more than a cursory examination). Nine turtles were subsequently released and the most seriously injured turtle remains in care.

Additionally, our incubators are filling fast with displaced eggs coming into care. Currently, we have 35 Bearded Dragon eggs and two Gecko eggs in and awaiting their hatching in a month or so. Brigitte and I also attended a Bearded dragon laying eggs on a footpath in full view. Needless to say, we collected her eggs (they are in the incubator) and got her checked over in case there was a medical reason she chose that spot. It turns out, she was fine so she was released. It is likely that she was a young in-experienced dragon who just got caught out.

I have also had the arrival of my first captive-bred Blue Tongue Skink babies – 16 in total. If anyone is looking for a scaly family member, contact me. They are so cute! We love our baby reps. This indicates a very busy reptile season to come.

Some of our current residents include:



KOBI - the Eastern Bearded Dragon

Kobi was hit by a car. He suffered terrible head injuries, including skull fractures, and lost his right eye. At present, he is still in a critical condition and is receiving pain relief (orally) and antibiotics (IMI). He is being hand fed and is very dull mentally at the moment – I imagine he has a shocking headache. He has his light wattage reduced to assist his headache, but gets to sit out in the sun with me for short periods every other day. His prognosis is grave but he is a reptile and we know that reptiles are very resilient, so we will give him every opportunity. If he makes it through the next few weeks, he will likely be in care for a long time and will then have to learn to hunt with one eye.

continued on next page

Coordinator Reports

REPTILES

Continued



Oran – the Lace Monitor

Oran is a large female lace monitor who was also hit by a car. She has a significant head injury and myopathy (yes, reptiles are very susceptible to myopathy). Additionally, she has a fractured sternum and oesophagitis. She is currently on total cage rest and receiving pain relief by injection. Luckily, she is a very nice monitor (so far!) and is a pleasure to treat. This is the legacy of head-injured monitors – they become nice, but no doubt that will change as she recovers. She will be left to rest and eat small meals for now (with no bones for her sore throat) and will be transferred to a larger, outdoor enclosure soon, where she can climb and exercise. Like all monitors, she likes to sleep in and rarely wakes up before 10 am. What a life!



Petra – the Eastern Water Dragon

Petra is a young female Eastern Water Dragon who was attacked by a cat four months ago. She has severe injuries: a fractured spine, fractured ribs and when she came in, could only move one front leg. She additionally had abscesses from some of the puncture wounds in her chest. She was in a critical state, with a very poor prognosis. Now, she is off all medications, her abscesses have resolved and she is enjoying time out in the sun every day. She has been receiving daily physiotherapy to her legs the last month and can now use her paralysed front leg normally and is beginning to get some movement in her rear legs. Despite these big improvements, Petra will be in care for a long time yet and has a long way to go.

Some other exciting reptile events recently include Channel 10 (for Totally Wild) doing two stories: the first was the release of Ryvan, a large and feisty male Eastern Water Dragon who resides at the Southport Golf Club. He had been hit by a car. Ryvan had been a handful in care – at over 800 g he was not small and packed a punch, but he was impeccably mannered for the camera and just sat there in the end. We filmed the final part twice, in fact, and he obliged by staying put and looking at us with curiosity. Keep an eye out for us on Totally Wild in the near future.

The second story was filmed the next day and was a story about how we rehabilitate reptiles. For this one, Petra and Kobi lent their time and were both very well behaved. Keep an eye out for this story as well.

We will also be flying the Wildcare banner at the Springfield Anglican College on the 16th October and talking to primary school kids on what we do, what to do with an injured native animal and why we should not take an animal from the wild and keep it as a pet. We will also cover basic snake safety. Thank you to those who offered to help with these events and we look forward to working with you all.

The big event for the year is the Scales and Tails Reptile Expo at the Ipswich Showgrounds on the 9th November. It is very likely that Wildcare will again do the catering (food-prep and service) which was a blast last year. I am asking for expressions of interest to assist on this day - we need as many hands as we can get. Admission is free to all Wildcare members who assist on the day. Whilst it is busy, it is also a great day and you don't have to be a reptile-freak to enjoy it. There is always a heap to see and do. Please contact Annette on either **0404660547** or email: kalrissan@bigpond.com if you think you may be able to help. Scales and Tails have been very generous in their support for Wildcare in the past and this is our way of saying thanks.

Coordinator Reports

BIRDS

Gold Coast *By Simone Smith*

Happy baby season everyone!

We would like to welcome the new placement coordinators to our bird team:

- Paula Fraser - our magpie expert (Omnivores and Tawny Frogmouths)
- Wendy Walburn (Carnivores)
- Ashley Fraser (Ducks/Ducklings)
- Karen Raison (Doves/Pigeons)

We will be working hard over the next six months to expand our bird network and recruit more carers, so if you would like to help please let me know.

Just a reminder to all phone operators and rescuers, please contact your coordinators for help when you get stuck, but most importantly, please make sure you are working with them and any rescues are reported to the relevant coordinator.

At this time of year please be mindful of the temperatures at which baby birds need to be kept, to ensure survival for the car trip.

It is particularly important to know what species come out of hollows or from a constructed nest. When using the baby buckets they must be monitored regularly. Only nest dwelling species can be put in buckets.

It is always best to get any baby bird vet checked before attempting to reunite it with its parents. But most importantly ask the Coordinator for advice.

Snake Proofing - Urgent reminder

Please remember to go over your cages and aviaries thoroughly, both inside and outside to ensure they are snake proof. It is amazing how intelligent snakes can be, so don't underestimate them. I don't recommend staples for any cages or aviaries. Heavy duty wire/mesh, that cannot be bent, needs to be bolted on and held taut with gaps no bigger than 1cm.

Before snake proofing your aviaries and cages how about consulting our expert Reptile Coordinator, Annette Bird, or sending her some pictures for her comments. If a snake can get in, she will know!

Help - Bird carers needed please

This is the time of year we receive many babies into care. All the magpies have come out to play at the moment so we are run off our feet! We have plenty of ducklings and quite a few baby lorikeets. Please contact me, Simone Smith, if you can help just a little, or know of anyone who can. Thank you in advance.

Simone Smith (0400 100 638)

continued on next page

Coordinator Reports

Meet Andrew & Tash

These are two Rainbow Lorikeets that have been receiving treatment at the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital. They both had leg fractures and subsequently each had a splint on its leg, which was changed every three days over a three week period. Their splints are now off and they both love the use of their new legs! It has been a pleasure working with these two cuties.

Due to habitat loss the Rainbow Lorikeets look for whatever hollows they can find and fancy a particular type of palm tree here on the Gold Coast, the Date Palm. Date Palms are found in many newly built estates and shopping villages. The birds tunnel out the fern section below the fronds to create their hollow, however not being the best material to work with, we are seeing more babies come in from nest falls.

Thank you to the Currumbin Hospital staff for their support and thank you to all our bird carers. Remember to slow down and enjoy the babies while they last! It is easier said than done.



They are both running around like nothing ever happened

BIRDS *By Ailsa Watson*

Spring is here and we have been surprised at how quiet, to date, this breeding season has been. Earlier in the year it seemed as if we were going to have a bumper crop of babies. I don't know what has happened.

My butcher birds, after busily refurbishing their nests, seemed to have lost interest. Even my peewees, after spending a considerable amount of time building a new mud edifice have abandoned it. I am wondering if the sudden appearance in the district of a pair of crested hawks is the reason. Their usual haunt is up in the wetlands, where we often see them soaring over the mudflats, but they have been around here for a couple of weeks now. Also surprising is the fact that they don't seem to have any fear of humans. I have been up quite close to them on the balcony and they just looked at me.

I always know when these birds are around, as my bantams are dead silent, the pet bird on the landing is quiet for once (red collared lorikeet), and even the birds that frequent the park next door can be seen sitting completely silent in the trees.

In fact the only things around in abundance this season seem to be snakes. We have quite a population of both carpet and tree snakes and the birds spend a lot of time harassing them in the park. I am waiting for the hullabaloo to start, when parents, whose children are playing in the park realise the snakes are there. People are still of the view that "the only good snake is a dead one", and these are really quite harmless, if you leave them alone in the treetops.

Trusting this state of affairs will continue a little longer, but don't count on it.

Opinion Piece

By Deborah Turnbull

It has been said that it takes 10,000 hours of practice for a musician to master their chosen instrument. The best musicians will also say that they never stop practicing.

I wonder how this compares with wild-life caring? How many hours of hands on practice do we need to master our chosen species? How many hours to become competent? What happens if we stop practicing?

It can be frustrating for carers who have been around for a few years to be lumped in the 'beginning carer' category, but the reality is that you ARE a beginning carer for a long time. It's not just about the numbers of years you have been caring, but also the number of animals you have had in your care. This too can be frustrating for newer carers, who just want more animals. There is a balance though between quality and quantity. The musicians stress those 10,000 hours is of GOOD practice. Good caring requires time and patience and keen observation. To adequately observe animals, you need the time to watch and you need to know what to look for. This process cannot be rushed. Skills are built up slowly, one animal at a time.

There is no magic line in time or number of animals that marks the move from beginner to competent, or competent to master. There is no clear definition of a competent carer. It is certainly not being mistake-free because even the very best carers will sometimes get things wrong. A competent carer understands the behaviour of their chosen species the same way a competent musician knows the intricacies of their instrument. They seem to be able to look at an animal and instantly know there is something wrong, and that's because they have such a clear vision of what is right. It takes many years of looking at animals that are 'normal' to be able to pick up the subtle clues of 'abnormal'. I can't tell you when or how I became an 'experienced' possum carer. One day the

most experienced carers just started referring to me as an experienced carer. It's not something you decide for yourself, or that other people discuss and then make a conscious decision. There is just something in the way you handle your animals, talk about them, and make decisions about their care that other carers view as a sign of experience. It is also about the responsible way in which you manage the animals in your care.

Of course you never really stop being a beginning carer. After you have cared for countless ducks, someone will give you a curlew and you start all over again. Going from possums to echidnas is like moving to a different country. Moving from furred mammals to pinkies, or orphans to trauma cases, all involve a change of mindset and a whole new set of skills but, at the same time, they build on previous experience. For me, that magical title of 'experienced carer' keeps moving just a little further away as my desire to learn more and do more takes me in different directions.

So for all those carers who have been around for a little while, and who have done half a dozen or so animals, don't be frustrated when you are treated as a 'new' carer. Even within the same species, new experiences keep popping up for many years. Listen to your mentors, watch your animals closely and, one day, you will be introduced by someone as an 'experienced' carer. Then you will panic just a little because you know just how much you still need to learn. Only 9,978 hours of practice to go...

Observations of an Amateur Naturalist

By Eleanor Hanger

My attention was drawn to the Quandong the other day, where I noticed a Noisy Miner searching through the foliage. It emerged and flew off carrying in its beak a very large and extremely distressed cicada. The Noisy Miners are more often seen sipping nectar from the Grevillea flowers.



While playing among the rocks in the creek the grandchildren disturbed a snake, which swam for its life upstream and to the far side with only its head and neck above the water. I was unable to identify it, but we watched its progress with great interest. I am always amazed at how well these creatures can swim without the modified tail of their sea dwelling cousins.

We have had a number of visitors to the balcony lately – you would hardly describe them as wild birds though, as their casual behaviour is a cause for concern, considering the number of free roaming cats in the area. The most badly behaved was a kookaburra who flew down at speed and tried to grab my husband's breakfast, sending bacon, eggs and toast flying. A pair of King Parrots, a pair of Crimson Rosellas and a Currawong have all tried to weaken my resolve – to no avail, as there is still plenty of food around the area.

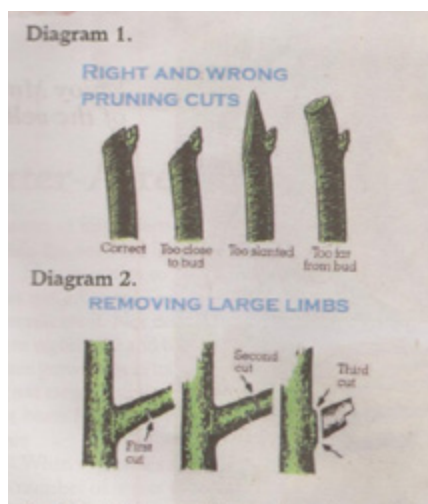
Interestingly the currawong arrived on the balcony today, looked around, walked hither and thither and then opened its mouth and let fall a handful of Blueberry Ash fruit. I have seen the currawongs and Satin Bowerbirds eating the fruit of the Blueberry Ash (*Elaeocarpus reticulatus*) in recent weeks. Someone else left another pile of seeds, Scentless Rosewood (*Synoum glandulosum*), on the balcony railing. I must look into this behaviour.



I am hoping to see the Richmond Birdwing butterfly this year. It has not been around for a few years now and I heard to my consternation from one of the local regenerators, who has been working on some of the properties in the area, that there are a number of large stands of Dutchman's Pipe about. This is the exotic vine which is toxic to the larvae of these butterflies and accounts for their declining numbers. If you know of any Dutchman's Pipe vines growing in your area, try to have them removed and replaced with the native *Pararistolochia* spp.

Plant Pruning Techniques

By Eleanor Hanger



The following information and illustrations have been taken from Plant Pruning Techniques by Grahame Johnson in the Gold Coast Hinterlander - April 2013, page 7 and are published with the kind permission of the author and the editor.

Wildlife carers, particularly those raising some of our mammal and bird species, spend a considerable amount of time collecting browse. Our aim, when cutting vegetation for wildlife food, is to cut in such a way as to minimize damage to the plant, and to preserve the form or shape of the plant, so as to leave as little visual impact as possible.

Similar principles apply when pruning all plants, including trees shrubs and climbers, and this involves pruning to a nodal point. A nodal point is where a bud, leaf or branch junction occurs (refer diagram 1). When a correct cut is made the plant will heal over the cut surface reducing the likelihood of the introduction of disease or insect attack.

When removing large limbs the three cut method is best employed (refer diagram 2) otherwise the branch's weight will cause it to fall away just before you complete the cut, tearing a strip of bark away from the branch or trunk beneath it.

1. Make an undercut 1/3 of the limb's diameter at approx. 300mm from the junction of the branch base;
2. Make a top cut through the limb 50-70mm beyond the first cut until the branch falls away;
3. Cut off the remaining stub just beyond the branch collar.

The branch collar is a slight bulge usually the first 10-20mm of the start of the limb.

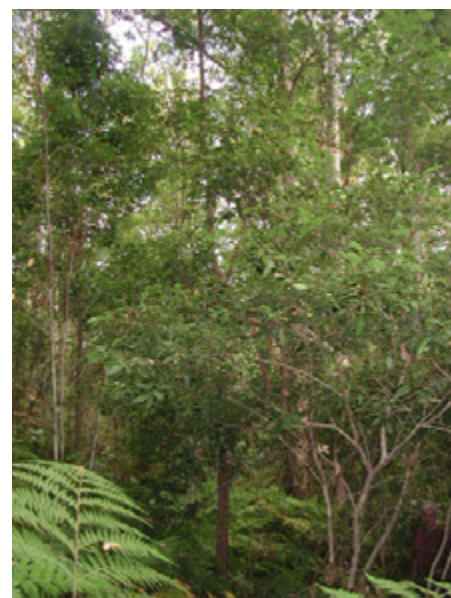
Forests give far more than they take.

Taken from ECOS Magazine published by the CSIRO

"The list of ecosystem services provided by forests is long and wide-ranging. Forests provide habitat and clean water, regulate local and global climate, buffer weather events, protect watersheds, water flows and soils, store carbon, produce oxygen and support pollination and nutrient cycling. They also provide genetic resources for crops and have spiritual, cultural, recreational and tourism values".

See more at:

www.ecosmagazine.com/paper/EC13176.htm#sthash.pEd-BzQeJ.dpuf



Grants

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



GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL

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



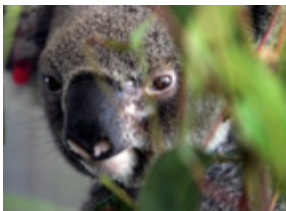
CITY OF IPSWICH

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



MAZDA FOUNDATION

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



QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION

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



LOGAN CITY COUNCIL

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

SPONSORSHIPS

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

Support Wildcare's Members & Supporters



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



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ANIMAL EMERGENCY CENTRE St Lucia 3365 2110	KENILWORTH VET CLINIC Kenilworth 5472 3085
ANIMAL EMERGENCY SERVICE Carrara 5559 1599 Underwood 3841 7011	MANLY ROAD VET HOSPITAL Manly 3396 9733
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COAST VET Burleigh Waters 5520 6820 Helensvale 5573 3355 Robina 5593 0300	NOOSA VETERINARY SURGERY Tewantin 5449 7522
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