

# WildNews

ISSUE 72 - SPRING 2014

Rehabilitation  
Keeping Your  
Aviaries Cool

Christmas  
Gift Cards

Discover...

# All Upcoming Events



Compassionate Kids Section





## President's Report



By Karen Scott

It seems that 2014 is coming to an end on a very busy note. Our hotline volunteers are being inundated with phone calls to our emergency hotline, our rescuers are busy trying to keep up with the high number of rescues at this time of the year and many of our volunteer carers are already at or over capacity.

As is usually the case in most volunteer organizations, even ones the size of Wildcare, there is generally a small group of volunteers who undertake most of the work. We have only 21 volunteers trying to keep our hotline operational during the busy seasons and around 150 volunteers on the Rescue List with only around one-third of them doing more than one or two rescues a week. Some of the volunteer rescuers are attending in excess of three or four rescues every day.

We also have a lot of members who have current Permit Endorsements from Wildcare however are not actively caring for any animals at present, whilst we have others who have up to 20 animals in care at any one time.

I would strongly urge those members who don't have animals in care to consider whether you are able to take even just one or two to help alleviate the burden on some of our already over-worked volunteers. In particular, we are desperately in need of carers to take possums, birds and ma-

cropods. If you do have a Permit and are able to help, please make contact with your local Species Coordinator. For those volunteers who have been holding off taking their first animal – now is the time to jump on in and do it!

Please try to find some time to take care of yourselves during the next few busy months. Remember our wildlife need you well – both physically and emotionally.

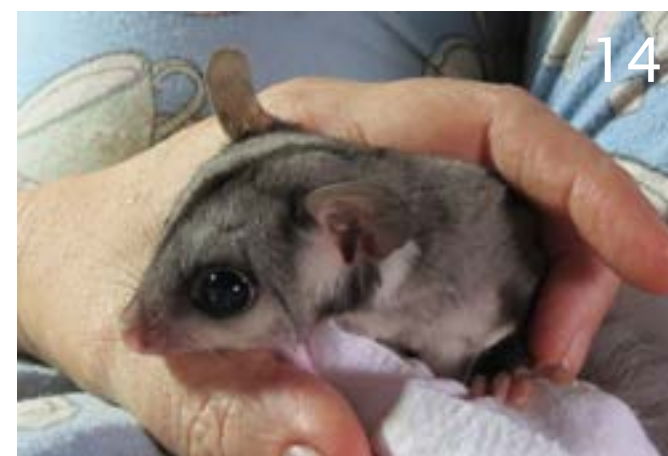
Finally, on behalf of everyone on the Wildcare Management Committee, we wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Take care everyone.

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#### 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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#### NEWSLETTER TEAM

Eleanor Hanger & Deborah Bianchetto.  
Submissions can be sent to [news@wildcare.org.au](mailto:news@wildcare.org.au)  
cover photo: A. Roberts



## A Warm Welcome to our New Members

### Wildcare Australia welcomed the following new members in August, September, October:

Louise Sala: Tristan Gough and Emma Gough; Rochelle James; Natalie Engelman; Kelly Frunks and Paul O'Brien, Summah-Jane and Alexander; Carlie Chadburn; Christine Cozens; Nikki Frost and Bethany; Adam Playne; Kimberley Revelly; Cecilia Rimberth and Lucasz Sudak; Crystal Kincaid; Samantha Anderson; Jacky Arbuckle, Oscar, Zigi and Remy; Sonia Alcorn; Monique Bramley; Lohnet Byrne and Ben Byrne, Zack and Jacob; Paul Denham; Tammy Fielding; Lucy Gray; Clare Harris and Rosie Harris, Ruby, Alana and Ryan; Dyarni Lewis; Robyn Reynolds; Louise Savage and Linda Harris; Morgan Walker; Joanna Malicki; Brett Bolton and Catherine Raff, Flynn, Macey and Sofia; Rhea Phelan; Mary McCranor; Catherine Perna; Richard Coleman; Tamika Wood; Allana McCarthy; Kerry Briggs, Thomas Overington and Jack Overington; Britt Willkinson and Debra Wilkinson; Tina Davidson; Lisa Sweeney; Jacqui Fitzgibbons; Dirk Danielsen; Emma Cameron; Kate Lawrance and Justin Johnson, Eden, Kirra and Emily; Bethany McBryde; Jay Hecate; Kelli Benjamin and Patrick Thomas and Ziggi; Maite Amado; Karissa Bernoth; Camila Campos; Lisa Chin, Michael Fairchild and Caroline Merritt; Jake Hazzard; Yenny Ho; Sharon Keegan; Graeme Moore; Damien O'Connor; Kate Poulsen; Craig Suddrey; Linda McLeay and Gillian McLeay; Barbara Bauer and Markus Bauer, Olivia and Celine; Leslie Rhoades and Marlene Rhoades; Jade Lecole; Claire Mason; Kimberley Campbell and David Lau; Hayley Kerr; Chris Davies and Amy Davies, Katie, Tara and Jamie; Sabrina Lepiane; Julie Smith; Robyn Strutt; Janet Holden; Yvette Van Amstel and Erin.

**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.**

### NEXT ISSUES SUBMISSIONS DATES

**Summer** - Issue 73: 20th December

**Autumn** - Issue 74: 20th March

**Winter** - Issue 75: 20th June

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Wildcare Australia or of the editors.



# Education Report

By Karen Scott

**Congratulations to our younger members for all the effort they put into the Junior Activity day, which was held in September at Wacol. We are so blessed to have such a remarkable group of young conservationists amongst us! Thank you to Cathy, Nigel and Natalie who worked with Jasmine, Lilly and Jack to bring the day together. Well done!**

We are currently working on finalizing the January to June 2015 education calendar and hope to have that out to everyone shortly. We have only a few workshops left for 2014 with our volunteer trainers taking a well-deserved break during the Christmas and New Year period. Workshops will start up again in mid-January 2015.

The offer of hard copies of training manuals has been well received with many members taking advantage of ordering colour copies for workshops.

Our sincerest thanks to the RSPCA Wacol and Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital for their continued support through 2014 by providing us with free venues for our training workshops.

## Wildcare Risk Management System

By Karen Scott

**The Wildcare Committee has been working hard over recent months with our newly appointed Safety Officer, Melinda Brennan, to finalize our Safety Management Manual.**

With wildlife rescues depending increasingly on volunteers to undertake them, it has been critical that volunteer organizations such as Wildcare have in place systems to ensure the safety of our volunteers and the general public.

A draft of the Safety Management Manual (SMM) has been emailed to all members. If you do not have email or if you require a hard copy of the SMM to be forwarded to you by post, please contact Karen Scott to request a copy.

An important aspect of the risk management protocols is the collection and secure storing of emergency contact details for all members. Thank you to those members who have already responded to our request for this information to be provided. If you have not as yet provided this information, please forward through as soon as possible. This information is being collated in case of an emergency at a training workshop or rescue, to ensure that we can contact a family member if the need arises.

We will shortly finalize the SMM and forward a copy to all members. The SMM will also form part of our Volunteer Manual. From there, we will be ensuring that the system is implemented.

Our many thanks to Mel for her vast experience in the workplace health and safety area, and for the contributions made by several of our experienced rescuers.

## Give a gift for wildlife this Christmas!

Make this Christmas a wild one by giving a gift that benefits our Australian wildlife!



## Congratulations to Bren Dalby

Congratulations to our very own Bren Dalby for being named the Scenic Rim Citizen of the Year. Many of our members will know Bren from volunteering on our hotline for several years and as an active rescuer and carer.

Bren is also an active member of several other volunteer organizations in the Scenic Rim.

Congratulations Bren!



## Biolac Orders

Do you order Biolac direct from the manufacturers?

If so, please note that they will be closed for Christmas, from 20th December until the 15th January 2015.

## Thank you Pascal Press

Wildcare Australia Inc. would like express its appreciation to Pascal Press for their kind donation of twelve titles from the Amazing facts and Activity books series, for prizes for our Junior Activity Day in September. The wide selection allowed us to choose books appropriate to the ages and specific interests of the recipients. Our sincere thanks to Pascal Press.

### Thank you Renee Hutchins

Wildcare Australia Inc. would also like to express its appreciation to Renee Hutchins who donated colouring and activity books for the Junior Activity Day. Our sincere thanks to Renee for her kind donation.



### Thank you Cathy and Nigel Cope and the Rasmussen Family

A very special 'Thank You' to Cathy and Nigel Cope and the Rasmussen family, who put so much time and effort into planning and preparing an excellent range of activities for the Wildcare Junior Activity Day and then running the workshop. The Rasmussen children, Jasmine, Lilly and Jack, gave wonderful presentations and engaged the participating children in lots of fun activities, which were interspersed with the adults' input. The children had a most enjoyable time and are really looking forward to the next Activity Day. All in all it was a tremendous success. Thank you, Jasmine, Lilly, Jack and Natalie Rasmussen, Nigel and Cathy Cope.

# Photography Workshops Report

Annette Bird

**This year, I developed and delivered some new workshops: the egg incubation and photography workshops. They were very well received and a big thank-you to all who attended and gave feedback.**

They are a work in progress and I believe they have the potential to evolve into some very popular workshops. The interesting thing is that I frequently heard comments like, "I can't take a photo to save my life", or "I don't have a good camera". Let me tell you by the end of the day EVERYONE who has attended has gone home totally enthused and with a stack of awesome shots. I had even heard on the grapevine that some of you were up until after midnight that night looking at your photos.

I need to pause here and add that this is partly due to the tireless patience of my reptiles and amphibians – I am so lucky to have a co-operative (well, mostly anyway) team of snakes, lizards and frogs! Even the sheep and dogs were not off-limits! We had members with simpler cameras getting photos that were just as good as those taken on the impressive array of high grade digital SLR cameras.

The purpose of the workshop was to give budding wildlife photographers the basic theory about how their cameras work and I spent a lot of time talking about various skills to enhance capturing great wildlife shots. We had all sorts

of weather; from bright sunny days to very low light or overcast days and this was great as this is reality in the 'photography world'. Everyone learnt how to assess the light and make the necessary camera setting adjustments to optimise their shots. The beauty of using co-operative and manipulable subjects is that people can concentrate on the theory and practice their techniques without having to worry that the animal has suddenly gone. Even the snakes were playing the game – I think they secretly like having their pictures taken! People were able to get in close and personal without fear of a bite!! I'm hoping that the skills learnt on the day can then be practiced and applied to wild animals with the same results. I've included an array of shots taken by attendees at the workshops and I think you will all agree – they can be very proud of their efforts. Note: I know you are used to seeing many of my shots in the Wildcare Newsletters but let me tell you - all of the shots in this article (except the Rottweiler shot) were taken by attendees, so there goes the statement that "I can't take a good picture" – They are great – keep up the good work people.



Riley and Zaya (Eastern Water Dragons)



Rymer the Magnificent Tree Frog deciding she didn't want to sit on that log anymore.



That's better!



Slade – how photogenic is she?



Pella the Woma Python



Here's how we did it!!!



# Coordinator Reports

## POSSUMS - Gold Coast

By Natalie Rasmussen

**With the dreadfully dry weather and carers coming and going, it's been a very full on time for our carers and their much loved furred friends.**

Possums continue to get themselves into all sorts of trouble. There have been many dog attacks, possums trapped in fire places, possums with dermatitis and other problems. Carers have been overwhelmed with the numbers of animals needing care at the one time.

As the dry weather continues to suck the life out of the weak, it is also becoming more and more difficult to find good quality leaf. So many areas have been cleared and carers are traveling far and wide just to get a decent feed for their possums in care.

Whilst sometimes the situation seems hopeless, or we wonder why we are doing this, remember we are all trying to work together to achieve the same results: healthy animals to be released back into the wild, to survive, to thrive and to reproduce. There are always the lows, the ones that we desperately wanted to save, but can't, the ones that were special. That's when we need to look back at the many we have saved and put back out there, the ones that would have died without us. These are the glimmers of hope that keep us going.

We really need to work together. Possum chat groups have been going strong and it's great to be able to get together and share information, learn more and get some new and better ideas. As long as we are still learning we will continue to be better carers, and the second we think we know it all, we sadly will miss the important things we have still to learn.

I want to thank everyone this year who has reached out, whether you have taken animals into care, given valuable advice through a phone call, or just attended a workshop to learn more. You are all needed and appreciated, not just by me but the incredible animals that continue and will continue to need our help every day.

Have a wonderful Christmas.

## ECHIDNA

By Karen Scott

We have had a decrease in the number of echidnas being rescued although we still receive a steady flow of enquiries from the public about echidnas, particularly concerns about them in suburban areas.

Our first 'puggle' (baby echidna) arrived into care in October and is doing well. He is now cutting spines and has his eyes open and shortly his ears will open.

Please remember to check dead echidnas and the surrounding area for any orphaned young. Fingers crossed, this little guy will continue to grow well and will soon be back out in the wild.



# Coordinator Reports

## REPTILES

by Annette Bird

**After a slow start to the reptile season, things are becoming busier. I have had a constant flow of injured (mostly) and sick (a few) reptiles.**

Probably one of the most dramatic was Mina, a Blue Tongue Skink who had an encounter with a dog a few months ago. I received the call about the skink, who “has a pink thing coming in and out of its chest”. Well, you all know where this is going – the pink thing was her left lung (fully) coming in and out with every breath. Luckily, the caller was happy to drive the skink past about a dozen vet surgeries and across a couple of suburbs to Brisbane Bird and Exotics Vets at Mt Gravatt. I just knew from experience that if a dog or cat vet (nothing against them, as I have dogs) saw the protruding lung it would all be over for her. However, knowing how tough reptiles are, I opted for giving her a chance. BBEV were notified of her pending arrival and she was rushed straight to surgery. Her lung was put back where it should be, her chest was washed out and she was closed up. She came to me the next day, a very cranky and irritable skink. Probably just as well, as this fortitude stood her in good stead and I am pleased to say that her sutures are all out. I caught her climbing the wall in her enclosure in an attempt to catch a snail, that was doing its best to escape her reach. So, that was the sign that she was ready for release. Such a great outcome: note the first shot of her on arrival to BBEV.



Looks terrible, but again, not game over for a reptile. She received very aggressive antibiotics and pain relief as she had fractured ribs too and if you look closely at the photo, you can also see air bubbling through her lower abdomen and top of spine about an inch down from her exposed lung. She was a very seriously injured skink. The other shot is her peeking out at me a few weeks later!

This story is hard to top, but I also have a number of pythons in care. Two have fractured spines and ribs and all have other assorted injuries. There is also a little python, Kalaja, who tried to bleed to death. She is about a metre or so in length and weighs about a kilogram. The weight is important when you consider the amount of blood this

little darling sprayed all over her enclosure, me and the floor. She had been caught in netting and had an area of skin that I was watching very closely as it was starting to discolour. Now, to top it off her eyes went milky (meaning an imminent shed) and I knew we were in for trouble. She had a hide in her enclosure that she could rub her head on to assist the shed, but no, she decided to rub the area of skin that was beginning to break down and the result – straight through an artery. Luckily I was home and walked in to check on her just as the blood shot to the roof of her enclosure.

continued on next page



# Coordinator Reports

## REPTILES

Continued

Many years of operating theatre nursing has taught me not to panic and I knew I had to stop the bleeding as soon as possible. I want you to consider the logistics though, of attempting to get a compression bandage on a wild snake one handed. The other hand was pre-occupied with holding the biting end. I had not only to deal with the snake, but to try to stop the bleeding, while with my teeth and feet, open a cupboard and then the bandages that were all neatly packed away in plastic wrapping. There's a lesson. Well, I not only managed to stem the flow, but also got the bandage on and avoided being bitten. I got her back into her enclosure, slowed my own heart rate and then assessed the amount of blood everywhere. After about 10 to 15 minutes, Kalaja was starting to look a little poorly, so I took her to see the wonderful vets at BBEV, who waited back for me to arrive – of course it was after hours. We took the compression bandage off. A quick blood test revealed her PCV was low-ish but not critical.

Another good ending: Kalaja is about a week off release now. Her dusky area did not progress, she has shed fully and after a month of feeding up has passed her last blood test.

Another of my cases of note is Glin, a large female 5-foot Eastern Brown Snake. Glin was also caught in netting but

sadly, the homeowners noosed her neck tightly as well. Now, Glin wasn't going anywhere, so I'm not sure what the purpose of the dog-noose treatment was. In fact, on rescue she was still being strangled. This places the rescuer at great risk because it means someone has to go very close to the end that I'd rather not get too close to. She was taken straight to Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and came to me for rehabilitation the next day, on antibiotics via injection! This is a feat in itself, because by then Glin was over humans, but I have to say, she behaved very well – as well as a brown snake can anyway. She has now been released and has been replaced with a very cranky youngster, another Eastern Brown Snake.

I am eagerly awaiting the arrival of my first hatchlings for the season, with three incubators going and over 60 eggs. I have Eastern Bearded Dragon eggs from a dragon in care with new carer, Jill. Jill is doing an awesome job and so far has brought me 47 eggs from two clutches from the same dragon, Kholo. All eggs are viable at this stage, so a great effort if all hatch and get to release. I also have Central Bearded Dragon eggs and Centralian Prickly Knob Tail Geckoes to hatch.



*Glin, the Eastern Brown Snake*



*Kalaja, the Coastal Carpet Python*

# Coordinator Reports

## BABY BIRD HATCHING

By Annette Bird

This article is really just a chance to brag, as we would like to share some of our recent experiences assisting baby birds into the world. I hatch a large number of baby reptiles every year, so from my perspective, it is the joy of learning some new skills.

There are very big differences between bird and reptile eggs. First there is temperature; birds require much higher temperatures. The recommended incubation temperatures of 35.8 degrees to 37 degrees for most Australian native birds are about 10 degrees hotter than for reptiles. The second major difference is that bird eggs need to be turned every few hours for most species, whereas turning a reptile egg may kill the baby. Regardless of species, I think every baby is special and I don't care whether they are baby Eastern Brown Snakes or baby Rainbow Lorikeets (even though the latter terrify me). This is not a typographic error - I do actually mean the latter. Additionally, humidity is very important to successful incubation and attention to all three components is critical.

It seems that there are a few different styles of incubating that are resulting in babies being hatched so the adage that there are many roads to Rome holds fast. Some have been hatched in ICU units, with manual egg turning, some in dedicated reptile incubators, with manual egg turning and some in dedicated auto-turn bird incubators. At present, we are all pooling our information and this can only help us build a knowledge base. There isn't a huge lot of data about the science of hatching more obscure wild Australian bird species and I think that anything we learn about the more common species will benefit us immensely with other less common species. So far, we are tracking incubator temperatures, humidity, turning regimes and even egg weights over time.

So far this year, between us, Kelly and I have hatched a

number of plovers and I had the pleasure of the baby lorikeet, as seen in a previous newsletter. Dianna has hatched two baby Bush Stone Curlews (she beat me by about a week) and I hatched one also.

Where are all the eggs coming from? With reptiles, it is generally as the result of being dug up accidentally by gardening tools or large machinery, or laid in an inappropriate and visible place by a young, inexperienced mum, or even eggs laid in care by injured mums. With birds, it appears that tree felling (lorikeets) is a common cause of eggs coming into care. Each year Wildcare receives calls about birds that have laid their eggs in front of schools or in public places and are aggressively defending their eggs (Plovers and Curlews). Dianna told me about her stand-off with a very irritated Bush Stone Curlew mum and having faced off against cranky Eastern Brown Snakes, I get the picture – again, I know which one I'd take on – each to their own I guess!

Most of you are aware of the fact that I am a big fan of Eastern Water Dragons and happen to think that they are possibly the cutest babies on the planet. Now though, I have to concede that maybe....just maybe.... there's another contender for this honour: baby Bush Stone Curlews. Check these out and let us know your opinion. I'm a fan of both.... but if the pressure was on to make a choice... it would still be the Eastern Water Dragon – what can I say?

Despite all of the techniques that we are perfecting, one of the main issues remains: What happens to the eggs pre-incubation i.e. BEFORE we get them? This is often the difference between viable and non-viable and because we put so much effort into checking and turning (those of us doing it manually), we have put together some tips to help us get the eggs in the best possible condition, optimising the likelihood of a successful hatching.

*Below: Baby Masked Lapwings (Plovers) hatching and at 2 days*





# Coordinator Reports

## BABY BIRD HATCHING

Continued

The following is a summary of what you can do if you find eggs (bird or reptile):

- Have a container in your car that you can transport eggs safely. The biggest thing is to secure them so they don't roll around (critical if they're reptile) and smash into each other. I use either vermiculite for reptiles, or aspen snake bedding, a pine bedding material, for birds. For reptiles, I wet it with 50:50 water (boiled and cooled – not from the tap). For birds keep it dry.

- This container is then placed in another container with a heat disc and portable thermometer. I additionally pack newspaper to secure the container further. It is critical that they don't get cold. Bird eggs are particularly sensitive to cooling. I try to keep reptile eggs between 26-28 degrees and bird eggs between 35-36 degrees during transport. If you have no way to heat them, then you need to get them to someone with an incubator as soon as possible.

- I don't worry too much about humidity until I get them home. If they are dry, I use a few techniques to rehydrate them. Check out the Wildcare Education Calendar – I will be doing an egg incubation workshop again in the new year for those who are interested.

- It is critical that eggs are placed into care as quickly as possible after rescue, to optimise successful hatching i.e. they cannot wait until after shopping etc.

- Ideally, call the species co-ordinators immediately for advice if you find an egg or are called to rescue eggs. Sometimes people do not know the difference between bird or reptile eggs. I was called to rescue some 'snake' eggs that turned out to be Buff Banded Rail eggs. Sadly, they had no mum for 3 days, so were unviable from the start, but I gave them a go just the same.

- Try to ascertain as much information about the eggs as you can, for example

- What species are they (Different species may need to be incubated at a different temperature)? We have experienced bird and reptile people in Wildcare who are proficient at determining the identity of bird or reptile species by eggs.

- Bird eggs generally have a hard shell, whereas reptile eggs are softer and usually buried. DO NOT rotate suspected reptile eggs – use a Nikko pen to mark the top of the egg to assist with orientation when taking from the ground and placing in your container. It will not hurt a bird egg but rotating may kill a reptile. If you aren't sure, call for advice and don't rotate. If it is a bird egg, the carer will begin the turning process, better to be safe than sorry.

- How long have the eggs been without a mum? (important for determining the viability of bird eggs. There is no such thing as an orphaned reptile... but frequently their eggs need to be incubated for various reasons)

- If they've been dug up (reptiles), what species frequent the area? Again this is critical for incubation temperature.

- If they have come down in a tree felling, how high up were they and are they damaged? Even cracked eggs can hatch but they need urgent attention. I place tegaderm over the defects to prevent contamination and fluid loss. This needs to be done straight away.

- Ideally, if the eggs are in situ (i.e. under a mum), call a bird co-ordinator for direction before the eggs are collected. This will mitigate any problems by having a plan of action in place early and will optimise the likelihood of hatching. Thus, the carer can be lined up and waiting for the eggs. Delays in getting them to temperature and into turning patterns may compromise the eggs, resulting in failure to hatch.

Currently, I am awaiting my first reptile babies to arrive: I have about 60 eggs in the incubator from three different species.

Post-note: At least I don't have to hand raise my hatchlings! For them it is just a rest, some food and release!



## Keeping Your Aviaries Cool

By Eleanor Hanger

A study in Spain looked at the effects of green facades on a building and its ambient temperatures. It found that during summer, buildings with a wall covered by a climbing plant were up to 15 degrees cooler than those without. From Australian Geographic May – June 2014 p.66

This idea can be applied to our aviaries to make conditions more tolerable for the inmates (our animals in care). When the temperature soars and the aviary becomes a hot-house they can't leave to search out a cooler resting spot but are trapped within the four walls and rely on us to alleviate their discomfort.

Planting trees, shrubs and vines around the aviaries are options which should be considered. While waiting for them to grow, branches and leaf litter on the roof can reduce the temperature, as can shade cloth strung up in an appropriate position to protect the aviary from direct sunlight.

Another idea is to hose the aviary using a fine mist. Wetting the vegetation on the outside and the inside will help to reduce the temperature.

You can buy misting kits designed for reducing temperatures in outdoor entertainment areas and shade houses. These could be used for your aviaries. Further information is to be found on-line, or at hardware stores.





# Dehydration and Exposure Ulcers

By Deborah Turnbull

**I recently had four young gliders come into my care through the RSPCA, from four different locations. They all looked perfect, but all four came home with medication for corneal ulcers. How could this be?**

At first I thought the veterinarian had worked one too many 14 hour shifts and was beginning to see things, so I quietly took the gliders to my wonderful local veterinarian for a second opinion. Initially, she too thought it was too much of a coincidence but ended up bowing in deference to the RSPCA vets – all four gliders DID have corneal ulcers.

The gliders' eyes all healed well, but I was curious about these ulcers and had a few questions I wanted answered. I took my questions to one of the treating vets at RSPCA, Dr Joke Van Laere.



The ulcers are a particular type of corneal ulcer that occur as a result of dehydration. The greater the dehydration and the longer the animal has been in this state, the greater the chance of these exposure ulcers occurring. They can be from pinpoint to covering a large part of the eye; shallow and affecting only the outer layer of the cornea or quite deep. Regardless of the size of the ulcer, there is associated inflammation and they can be very painful.

My gliders had very shallow ulcers and, although covering a considerable area, were not visible to the naked eye. Shallow ulcers like this may self-resolve but pain relief and the prevention of further infection are necessary. My gliders were treated with Metacam to reduce inflammation, and Conoptal to lubricate and provide a protective eye film.

So, what does this mean for carers who have their animals treated at a local vet? First, the ulcers are not visible with the naked eye so a fluorescein stain is required. Exposure ulcers are fairly common and can affect any species so eye checks should be routine for dehydrated animals or animals that may have been exposed to elements for some time. Treatment plans will vary depending on the extent of the ulcers. In mild cases such as my gliders, pain relief and the easing of discomfort may be sufficient while the ulcer self-resolves. In more serious cases, a range of alternative treatment plans may be implemented by the treating veterinarian. Both the diagnosis and treatment of exposure ulcers requires a veterinarian. This is a condition that could equally occur in domestic animals and domestic veterinarians have the required skills, diagnostic equipment and medications to successfully treat exposure ulcers in wildlife.

© Deborah Turnbull (assistance from Dr Joke Van Laere is gratefully acknowledged).

## Ticks – A Constant Torment

By Eleanor Hanger

For those of us who collect browse each day, ticks are a most unpleasant parasite, which often go unnoticed until it is too late. A constant itch draws your attention to the site of the unwelcome guest.

The Australian Association of Bush Regenerators has published a comprehensive review of current information entitled Ticks and tick-borne diseases protecting yourself. Find a copy at <http://www.aabr.org.au/>

## Toxoplasmosis – a Hidden Killer

By Eleanor Hanger

Many people are unaware of the threat to our wildlife caused by the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii* which is spread by cats. For more information see: <http://theconversation.com/toxoplasmosis-how-feral-cats-kill-wildlife-without-lifting-a-paw-32228>

Feral cats are a huge threat to our native wildlife, hunting and killing an estimated 75 million animals across Australia each night. Irresponsible domestic cat and dog owners are also guilty of the deaths of thousands of native animals. Think about the implications of this level of predation.



A series of shots showed a small mammal being killed, after which the cat just walked away to see what else it could play with. No wonder kitty sleeps all day it leads such a busy night life!



One of the many cats that appear frequently on camera each night. Where are the responsible owners?

## Loving our Local Plants – Weeds

By Michelle Benson

One fine day four years ago I was looking out over the forest from my verandah, when I spied a lovely yellow mass, so off I went hoping to discover the bloom of Brush Cassia (*Cassia marksiana*), only to be greeted by Cats Claw in flower. This is one of the most invasive, smothering weeds, which is threatening many of the remnant rainforests in our region, as it claws its way up and over everything in its path.

And so my fate in weed control began. There is no way I could be a happy camper until the Cats Claw was eradicated along with other invasive weeds that have infested the habitat of many vulnerable and threatened rainforest species here, including the Richmond Birdwing Butterfly.



Cats Claw



# Loving our Local Plants – Weeds

Continued

In the 216 years since European settlement we are finally starting to value the wealth of native flora that Aboriginal people valued for their livelihood for 40,000 years. But we are now paying a huge price in trying to control many of the exotic plants introduced for our benefit. A lot of those lovely plants grandma insisted are a must for your new garden, or those cuttings the neighbour kindly offered that struck so easily, are heading off and becoming bushland bullies! Disturb a piece of ground and like bad magic, up come the weedy exotics out-competing the native species that mother earth designed for the purpose of healing the wounds of exposed ground. And as development infringes more and more on forests, so will the weeds.

Weeds can be defined as very competitive plants out of place; the clever exploiters in life's story of winners and losers, and as wind, wildlife and human impact spread them far and wide, they are unfortunately here to stay. The role weeds play in degraded habitat creates huge challenges in restoration, where weed control needs to be carefully staged, as we try to shift the balance back to natives. Dare I say, Lantana does serve as protective habitat for whipbirds and many small, vulnerable species and Camphor Laurels did provide a food source that saved many frugivores from extinction after the destruction of rainforests by early settlers.

But amidst all the complex debate regarding species survival in our rapidly changing environment, aggressive weeds need seriously addressing, particularly those threatening remnant forests that harbour endangered species.

Our region is still rich in biodiversity and we all love observing the unique abundance of wildlife with which we share our backyards, so let's also love protecting the native flora, particularly some of the vulnerable species our unique wildlife have evolved with, by being alert to bushland bullies!

It can be overwhelming trying to identify native plants let alone exotic weeds in our gardens, but there is a huge amount of valuable information online with detailed photos, descriptions and control methods to help us identify and target the serious environmental declared bullies listed as 'Class 3' weeds. I recommend googling 'city of gold coast environmental weed fact sheets' to get more detail on some of the weeds listed below.

- **CATS CLAW** (*Dolichandra unguis-cati*) Garden escapee. Tuberous ground smotherer & clawing climber to 30+m. Yellow trumpet flowers. Winged seeds dispersed by wind and water. Native alternatives – Bower of Beauty (*Pandorea jasminoides*) & Wonga Vine (*Pandorea pandorana*) Both have beautiful trumpet flowers.
- **CAMPHOR LAUREL** (*Cinnamomum camphora*) Large tree introduced as a shady ornamental that now dominates

our landscape. Distinct camphor scent to crushed leaves. Mature trees produce thousands of black seeds that rain-forest frugivores spread. Native alternatives- Three veined Laurel (*Cryptocarya triplinervis*), Murrogun (*Cryptocarya microneura*), Red Barked Sassafras (*Cinnamomum virens*), or any native Laurels.

- **GIANT DEVILS FIG** (*Solanum chrysotrichum*) & **WILD TOBACCO** (*Solanum mauritianum*). Garden escapees. Large shrubs with broad leaves. Seed spread readily by birds and bats. Native alternatives – Prickly Nightshade (*Solanum semiaratum*) Native Mulberry (*Pipturus argenteus*)
- **LANTANA** (*Lantana camara*) Garden escapee. Thicket forming shrub spreads in moist areas. Small black fruit spread by wildlife. Native alternatives-Velvet Leaf (*Callicarpa pedunculata*), Currant Bush (*Carissa ovata*), Rose Leaf Bramble (*Rubus rosifolius*), Poison Peach (*Trema tomentosa*)
- **MOLASSES GRASS** (*Melinis minutiflora*) Thick matting resinous grass introduced for livestock feed smothers open hillsides, serious fire hazard. Native alternatives-Hairy Panic (*Panicum effusum*), Barb Wire Grass (*Cymbopogon refractus*), Blady Grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*).
- **SINGAPORE DAISY** (*Sphagneticola trilobata*) Garden escapee. Dense ground smotherer with yellow daisy flowers. Spread by humans. Native alternatives- Guinea Flower (*Hibbertia spp.*)

As council has a huge task in weed management we are all encouraged to get involved. There are some great programs on offer including Bushcare, Land for Wildlife, and SEQ Catchment and workshops from which we can gain a better understanding of best practice in weed management and how we can help protect the magnificent biodiversity of South East Queensland.



Wild Tobacco



Velvet Leaf



Rubus Rosifolius



Crofton



Billy Goat



Degraded habitat

# A Constant Challenge

By Eleanor Hanger

Before proceeding may I suggest that you consider the species that you usually care for, the type of habitat that they occupy, what strata in that habitat they occupy and the variety of food that makes up their diet at different times of year. From this information you can ascertain what you are going to need in order to provide a nutritious native diet.

For example, if you care for sugar gliders you would know that they are arboreal, so they are not going to be looking for food on the ground. The major components of their diet are nectar and other plant exudates, such as saps, gums and manna, pollen and insects. The proportion of, for example, insects or nectar in the diet will vary according to availability, which will be influenced by many factors including season, weather conditions, and temperature. You are going to need access to native flowers and a large variety of other native vegetation from which insects can be gleaned. Providing this diet each day is a challenge.

Perhaps you care for seed-eating birds, so where do they usually feed? Do you have ground feeders or arboreal feeders? Ground feeders will need access to a large range of native grasses, as well as other plants, which will provide a good variety of seeds over a long period. Similarly arboreal feeders will need a constant supply of seeds from trees and shrubs. To achieve this you need to know the flowering times and subsequent seeding times of a large range of plants.

One problem for wildlife carers is the time factor, so our suggestion is to find a buddy. It could be a family member, a friend or a neighbour. It could be a member of a gardening group, someone who volunteers in a community garden. It could be a school, a scout group, a retirement village or Senior Citizen's Club. It could be a tree-lopper or bush regenerator. The possibilities are endless, but it does require the initial contact, creating sufficient enthusiasm that they want to help and then working out a plan to achieve what is needed.

How can the buddy help?

If it is a school, retirement village, or community garden they could perhaps look at converting a garden or two to growing grasses and herbaceous plants for leaves and seeds, as well as leafy green vegetables with which to supplement the native diet, for example, silver beet, spinach, lettuce and Chinese green vegetables. Another advantage of a vegetable garden is that it attracts insects, such as moths and grasshoppers – a food source for our insectivores. Depending on the area available there may be room to plant some more permanent food sources, such as shrubs and small trees to provide for more species of animal.

Similarly a friend, family member or neighbour may enjoy helping out with the above in their own garden

It is amazing how much can be grown in a small space, even a small suburban yard and in Wildcare we have plant lists and members with expertise, who can help you with plant choice for your area and the animals in your care.

If someone has a large property they may be willing to plant,

what is commonly referred to by wildlife carers as a fodder farm. This usually comprises a variety of Eucalyptus species for koalas and possums as well as a number of other tree species, which provide food, not only for mammals, but also for bird and insects.

Purchasing plants in large numbers can be costly and the work involved in planting and maintaining large areas is labour intensive. However most Councils have programs to assist landholders in revegetation or controlling weed species to allow natural regeneration, and in some instances there is funding available for these projects.

Many people, who are unable to rehabilitate animals but would love to help in some way, may be delighted to assist wildlife carers by either growing or collecting food.



*Sunny position  
Adequate water  
Mulch to retain moisture  
Remove leaves as required  
A supplement for animals  
needing leafy greens*



*Not the best of photos, but  
you can see what the Crimson  
Rosella is eating – the  
seeds of the Grevillea sp.  
They also love those of the  
Dodonaea spp.  
Possums love the leaves of  
the Dodonaea spp.*



*Grevillea spp. are a good  
source of nectar for gliders  
and birds.*



*Pipturus argenteus has  
small mulberry-like white  
fruit which are very popular  
with birds and possums.  
A good source of insects too.*



*Banksias are a wonderful  
source of nectar for gliders  
and birds*



# A Constant Challenge

Continued

Here are a couple of ideas that appeared in Wildnews some years ago.

Take a polystyrene box or two or more.

Punch some holes in the bottom for drainage.

Take:    One bag of Potting Mix,  
          One bag of Cow Manure  
          One cup of Dynamic Lifter or Blood and Bone

Mix well and put into polystyrene box. This is a good all round mix which will grow greens, such as silver beet, spinach, lettuce and Chinese green vegetables.

Plant seedlings and watch them grow. When the plants are ready, remove the outer leaves for your animals. 'Cut and come again'. The plants will keep growing and you will have a lovely supply of fresh greens.

or

Sew seeds in shallow furrows, cover with thin layer of fine soil, water and keep moist, and a week or two later when seeds sprout, mulch around the seedlings to retain moisture in the soil and watch them grow.

Alternately, sprinkle grass seeds (native grasses preferably), bird seed mix or seeds of crops suitable for the animals you have in care, such as wheat or any grain (obtain these from your local produce store) on the soil. The sprouts can be used or you may prefer to wait until the crop has gone to seed.

A sunny position and adequate water will ensure a quick crop. Fertilizer, such as sea weed liquid, will encourage growth. Liquid fertilizer from your worm farm is excellent, use one part worm liquid to ten parts water.

Many vegetables, such as cabbage and other leafy greens, attract insects, such as moths and grasshoppers. These will help provide the insect component of the diet and if the moths lay eggs on your vegetables, you may get a supply of caterpillars too.

One idea is to throw a handful of seeds in your aviary, if it is ever empty, water them and watch them grow ready for the next occupants.

**Danger: Never leave wet or mouldy seeds where birds or other animals can get them.**

Another suggestion is to plant grasses and/or shrubs in pots, which can be used in the aviary and removed to allow re-growth as necessary.

Remember, if you want fruit or seeds you need bees and other insects to pollinate your flowers and don't forget the very hungry caterpillars that make a wonderful meal for our insectivores, as do many of the other insects you will find in the garden. To

encourage these wonderful creatures to visit your garden, allow some of your herbs, such as parley, coriander and basil to flower. You can also allow patches of clover and flatweed in your lawn to flower. The lovely sea of white and yellow not only looks beautiful but will be humming with happy bees, sipping nectar and carrying pollen, either to their hive or to pollinate flowers nearby. More about these little treasures in the next issue.

Below are some websites and other references which you may find useful:

**Land for Wildlife** is a voluntary program which assists land-holders to protect and enhance the environmental values of their properties. Most Councils have at least one Land for Wildlife Extension Officer <http://www.lfwseq.org.au/>

A number of Land for Wildlife landholders have offered their properties as release sites for rehabilitated wildlife. Email [news@wildcare.org.au](mailto:news@wildcare.org.au) for more information.

Bush care groups exist in most Council regions <http://www.bushcare.org.au>

Many local Councils produce free booklets with illustrations and information on the native plants species in their region, as well as on environmental weeds.

Some books that are readily available and there are many more:

*Mangroves to Mountains: a Field Guide to the Native Plants of South-east Queensland.* Logan River Branch, SGAP.

McDonald, Graham (2004) *Grow Natives on the Gold Coast: A practical guide for gardeners.* Australian Plants Society, Gold Coast.

*Wild Plants of Greater Brisbane.* Queensland Museum, (2003)

Some editions of the Wildcare newsletter have articles with useful information on local plants and what animals use them; for example, Michelle Benson's "Loving our Local Native Plants" and Eleanor Hanger's "Observations of an Amateur Naturalist", which documents what plants are fruiting or flowering at any given time and what birds or mammals are using them as a food source.

If you have any ideas or suggestions that you would like to share with your fellow wildlife carers, please forward them to [news@wildcare.org.au](mailto:news@wildcare.org.au) Providing a nutritious, natural diet is critical to the survival of our native animals in care, so any help you can give will be gratefully received.

# The Good Old Days – Or Were They?

By Ailsa Watson

Our native fauna don't know how lucky they are today. I have been researching a bit of history in old newspapers lately and came upon the following.

**1903** The Nambour Chronicle reported, " Please be advised that the season on Koala bears is now closed for three months." (Their wording, not mine)

**1950** The North Coast Government Association comprising of Pine Rivers Shire, Maroochydore Shire, Landsborough Shire, Caboolture Shire, Kilcoy and Widgee Shires had a discussion on bounties for native birds.

Pine Rivers advised that they would pay up to 2/- (20 cents) on crows only.

Widgee Shire said they paid this amount for crows, hares, dingoes, foxes, eagles and hawks.

A motion was then passed for a uniform bounty of 2/- for all this vermin.

**1880** An advertisement appeared in a Sydney paper asking for the return of their slut kangaroo. It had escaped wearing its harness and lead. A reward was offered.

Now this kangaroo had me puzzled until I looked up some written information on old English. It appears that the word 'slut' was not only used for a female, usually of ill-repute, but also for female animals. We were all classed as too delicate to see the word 'bitch' written in the paper.

Gives food for thought does it not.

a voice for the  
environment.

## Gecko's mission:

To actively promote, conserve and restore the natural environment and improve the built environment of the Gold Coast region in partnership with our member groups and the wider community.

**Become a member today.**



**Gecko**

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## Grandad and Wattle

By Greg Grimmett

### Hatching and my trip to Stradbroke

I was hatched in a nest at Ormiston, a suburb of Cleveland just south of Brisbane.

The egg to the front is my brother. He was the last laid and didn't hatch until four whole days later, so he's much younger than me. He's a bit like a baby brother really.

My mother and father thought I was very, very beautiful. What do you think? My mother and father were really good parents. They took care of us really well and fed us pollen for carbohydrates, nectar for sugars and insects or spiders for protein. We grew very, very fast.

Soon there was not enough room for us in the nest.  
I decided that I was ready to fly one very windy day.  
I climbed out of the nest and spread my wings, just as my Mum and Dad did.

Oh dear! What a mistake!  
The wind caught my wings and blew me away like a thistle seed.  
Over and over I tumbled until I landed in the branches of a tree a long way from home.  
Who was going to feed me now I wondered? I wanted my Mummy!  
I cried and cried but she couldn't hear me. I was too far away

A nice human came and picked me up and took me to her home  
That nice human took me with her when she went for a holiday to Stradbroke.

I wasn't well and the lady didn't know how to make me better so she called, Stradbroke Wildlife Rescue on the telephone.

**Who can complete the story of What What for us?**

**We know the ending, but thought it might be fun to hear your ideas. Please send them to [news@wildcare.org.au](mailto:news@wildcare.org.au) before 5 January 2015.**



# Compassionate

# Kids



## Wildcare Junior Activity Day

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Recently, we held the very first Wildcare, junior activity day. It was such a great success, and we had over eight wonderful fauna fighters attend. There were heaps of games and activities where the children learnt a lot. Jasmine, Lilly and Jack Rasmussen ran the workshop, with the great help of Cathy and Nigel Cope, and they delivered speeches and created some of the activities.

We got to participate in so many fun games such as:

- animals heads
- sand box - find the litter .
- puzzles
- quizzes
- animal bingo
- book reading (possum magic)
- turtle handling

Fauna Fighters was a concept created by the Rasmussen children as an example of what the junior members of Wildcare should strive to be like. We learnt all about how to make a difference as young children, and we also learnt about some endangered species, native plants and marine biology. It is so important for us all to understand that as young kids, we can and must make a difference! There are many small, easy ways to impact the welfare of the environment. Every one of us is responsible for our actions, and as junior members it is our duty to care for the environment and change what we can.

Included in this issue is just some of what was included in the awesome activity day.



### Monthly Mission:

Try to be a fauna fighter and complete something on the starter pack list. Whether it is spreading the awareness to you family and friends, or writing a letter to someone who can help you on your mission.





# Wildcare Junior Activity Day



## How do I become a good Fauna Fighter?

There are so many ways to make a difference as a child. It's just too easy. All the little things you do will make a big difference. Because you are a kid, you can be the one to prove to the world how easy it is to help our valuable wildlife.

### Some simple steps include:

- Pick up rubbish: Around your house, at the beach or in your street.
- Plant some trees: Native trees in your backyard, or if you can around the neighbourhood.
- Raise awareness: Spread the news to your family and friends, asking them how they can help. Talk to your friends at school, your family and all those others who you think need to know.
- Write: Write to your principle, council or anyone who can help you to raise awareness, funds or create activities for the public.
- Participate: Find out about any activity days where you can find out more about how you can make a difference.
- Educate yourself: Try and research so that you can find out more. The more you know, the more you can do.



# Wildcare Junior Activity Day

## ABOUT BEING A FAUNA FIGHTER

In our wonderful country Australia, there are thousands of different animals. For millions of years, these animals have lived in harmony with each other, until European settlements established in the 1700's. Since then, mankind has proven to be a threat to our Australian wildlife. Every day, around 75 million Australian animals are killed. In Australia there are over 86 critically endangered species. And in fact, Australia is home to the most endangered animals. That's why we need our next generation to grow to be protectors of our wildlife and the habitat they live in. Otherwise, the constant decreasing numbers of koalas, frogs, parrots and bats will result in a total extinction of Australia's most precious assets. We need to prove to our own kind that we as humans can be caring, selfless and protective of our wildlife. The animals need you... The animals need you to be their voice, because they cannot speak for themselves. We know what is wrong, and we know what they need, and we need to make our actions count. Even the little things that we do everyday will make a HUGE difference. It's so easy. Just doing something small, such as putting recyclables in the recycle bin, picking up rubbish, planting trees and educating your friends and family about what you feel passionate about.

### FAUNA FIGHTER PLEDGE:

"I promise to do all I can, in every way, to protect our Australian native animals. I am the generation of the future, and the animals need me, therefore, I will give all I can to making an effort for these incredible creatures. I am a FAUNA FIGHTER and I will FIGHT for our animals. And have fun at the same time. ☺"

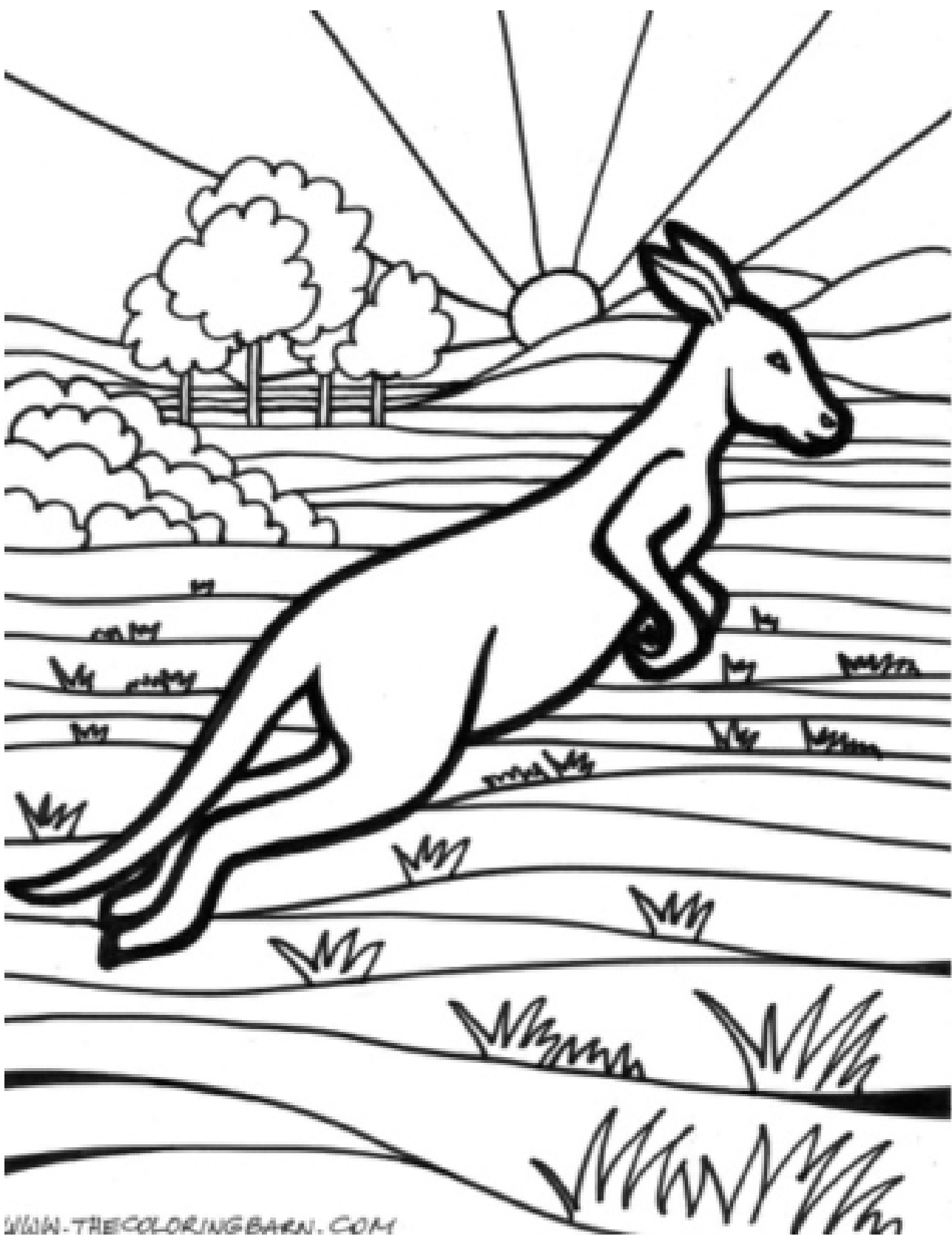
Here's your FAUNA FIGHTER badge that you can cut out and wear to show that you're a true fauna fighter.



Thanks to: Karen Scott, Cathy Cope, Nigel Cope, Lewis McKillop, Eleanor Hanger, RSPCA Wacol, Natalie Rasmussen, Jasmine, Lilly & Jack Rasmussen for making this day successful!



# Colour the Kangaroo



# Grants

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



## REDLAND CITY COUNCIL

Council has recently providing funding of \$9,970 under their Community Grants Program for the purchase of rescue and rehabilitation equipment for the North Stradbroke Island Wildcare volunteers.



## CITY OF GOLD COAST

Wildcare was successful in obtaining \$5,000 in funding from the City of Gold Coast through their Community Grants Program. This funding will go towards our ongoing expenses relating to the Wildcare hotline, emergency response for critically injured wildlife and the purchase of essential rescue equipment.



## QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION

Funding has been approved for \$4,450 for the purchase of koala rehabilitation equipment and another koala trap for the Logan, Brisbane and Redland regions.



## PET CITY MT GRAVATT - 2014 REPTECON

Sponsorship received from the Reptecon convention totaling \$2,600 to be utilized for purchase of reptile rescue and rehabilitation equipment.



## 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.



www.possumman.com.au



www.johnwilliamson.com.au



## Thank you!



### TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

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ASHMORE HOLIDAY VILLAGE  
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AUSTRALIAN BAT CLINIC  
BEC FEED SOLUTIONS  
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Cr. PETER YOUNG  
PRINT BY DESIGN  
RSPCA  
SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL  
TAMBORINE MT. NATURAL HISTORY ASSOC.  
THE PINES SHOPPING CENTRE

### TO THE FOLLOWING VETS FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND TREATMENT OF OUR WILDLIFE

ALBERT STREET VET CLINIC Beaunesert 5541 1233	GYMPIE & DISTRICT VETERINARY SERVICES Gympie 5482 2488 Tin Can Bay 5486 4666
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
AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE HOSPITAL Beerwah 5436 2097	MT. TAMBORINE VET SURGERY 5545 2422
COAST VET Burleigh Waters 5520 6820 Helensvale 5573 3355 Robina 5593 0300	NOOSA VETERINARY SURGERY Tewantin 5449 7522
CURRUMBIN VALLEY VET SERVICES PETER WILSON Currumbin 5533 0381	TOOWONG FAMILY VET Toowong 3613 9644
CURRUMBIN WILDLIFE SANCTUARY Currumbin 5534 0813	TUGUN VETERINARY SURGERY Tugun 5534 1928
DR. BRIAN PERRERS Southport 5591 2246	VETCALL Burleigh 5593 5557 Mudgeeraba 5530 2204
GCARE Varsity Lakes 5593 4544	WEST CHERMSIDE VET CLINIC Stafford Heights 3359 0777
GREENCROSS Mudgeeraba 5530 5555 Nerang 5596 4899 Oxenford 5573 2670 Southport 5531 2573	Note: UQ Small Animal Clinic St. Lucia has now moved to the UQ Gatton Campus.