



Rescue Rehabilitate Release

Wildcare

Newsletter No. 68 October 2005



We are compiling a list of members' email addresses - if you have one pls email Debbie with it mcleand@northnet.com.au

Diary Dates

- Oct 17-23 Environment week
 Oct 1-31 WAM (Wildlife Awareness Month)
 Oct 19 WAM NTWC stall in Armidale mall 11am-2pm.
 Oct 22 WAM NTWC display Armidale central park 10-4pm
 Helpers needed for both days - Tel Julia
- Oct 11-12 Macropod conservation & handling with Macquarie Uni
 Contact Roslyn Green
 02 9850 9716 (\$385)
- October Photograph exhibition Armidale NPA
 Aussie wildlife rescue training
 8 weekly sessions, \$250, Currumbin wildlife sanctuary - Tel 07-5534 1266 call for dates

Business meeting

Date Thursday 20th October **Time** 4.30pm
Venue *Tattersalls Hotel, Armidale, Bistro*

General Meeting

Date Sunday 27th November **Time** 1.30pm
Venue Woodlands Centre, 80 Mann St, Armidale

Carers information & update

Date Sunday 27th November **Time** 10am
Venue Woodlands Centre, 80 Mann St,
 Tree identification for possum and koala food.
 Macropod care information update and demonstrations on .6 and .7 milk mixing.
 Wombaroo products available and distribution of donated rescue bags!

Cattle – the new Kangaroos

Adapting kangaroo rumen bacteria to cattle has the potential to at least halve cattle methane emissions and cut Australia's production of greenhouse gases up to 6%.

These bacteria could also boost animal energy retention by 10-15% - leading to a 3.5% increase in meat volume produced per animal.

Researchers have isolated four specific bacteria from the gut of the red and grey kangaroo that prevent methane being produced (and emitted) and increase the efficiency of converting native pasture feed to energy and meat.

This year, MLA and the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries started a three year research project to find out if the kangaroo bacteria can be successfully adapted to cattle and have similar effects in the bovine rumen.

They will also investigate the use of the bacteria for sheep, which produce methane but on a much smaller scale than cattle.

DPI&F (Qld) senior principal research scientist Dr Athol Kliev said the project aimed to identify which kangaroo bacteria would be the most effective in inhibiting cattle methane production, improving feed conversion and surviving in the cattle rumen.

He said the kangaroo bacteria could halve methane emissions from cattle to an average 0.9 tonnes/head/year which would be worth \$1.8 billion to Australia in the next 30 years.

The extra energy available to the animals for growth should increase by 10-15%, and if successful, this should boost meat production by 2-5% and lift overall on-farm productivity by \$162 million by 2035.

Kr Klieve said the research would initially apply to northern Australian cattle producers, whose cattle were grazing the same native pastures as the kangaroos. However future research would also investigate the potential of the kangaroo bacteria for southern beef systems.

From Feedback August 2005

“This could mean there will be good reasons for graziers to ‘maintain’ some macropods in cow grazed pastures!”

Julia Rose

Macropod Report

After the rain we are getting more and more roos on the road, hence more hit by cars.

So here is a reminder to all carers as to the importance of checking weights and mixing Wombaroo correctly by weight and volume eg .7 is 250g to make one litre, this is not one litre of water, the end result is the litre.

To illustrate the importance of this we had a joey in with a carer of some years experience who didn't measure the wombaroo and as a result the joey did not get the proper amount of vitamins and minerals in the formula and was not gaining weight as it should. As the bub was also not being weighed this went without being picked up until pre-release time. This joey will now be in care much longer to try and get it up to size where predators will not be as big a danger.

Please carers, weigh your charges regularly, keep in touch with your buddy and your coordinator, and measure your wombaroo carefully. We want our babies to get the best chance possible.

When you pick up your wombaroo in the future you will need to give up dated weights to Jill.

Please when you check road kills report it to your co ordinators even if you just move the body from the road as this is the only way NPWS can get any numbers.

In care at the time of writing this report we have 5 eastern greys, 3 wallaroos, 2 swamp wallabys and 1 red neck all at different stages.

There are 3 with us at Dinner Flat going through pre release and the other carers are Jill Chetwynd, Linda Bale, Julia Rose, Julie Whitney, Helen Moyer, Julie Willis and Naomi. If there is any one else who has a joey please let me know asap.

With thanks

Shirley Heffernan 67781357

New book on kangaroos

Kangaroos: Myths and Realities celebrates kangaroos and their kind and exposes the callous failings of control programs and commercial use for meat and hides. After 16 million years of evolution on the Australian continent, the European colonisation of Australia quickly moved from fascination to persecution and eradication of the kangaroo fauna.

Fatuous arguments are employed to keep the public ignorant and indifferent to control and commercial activities that killed more than 30 million kangaroos in the last decade. This system is inherently cruel and supported by an inadequate and unenforceable code of practice for killing kangaroos.

The authors of the book warn about the pathology of animal cruelty and seek a more compassionate approach to kangaroo management. One that is built on acceptance of the complexities of kangaroo reproduction, behavior and ecology; and the realities of local and often minimal interactions with farming and pastoral industries.

This book questions whether the ends – cheap meat and hides, dubious and overblown land management benefits – justify the means. The answer is no!

Available from books stores
\$30 or mail order from WLP
+ \$3 postage.
Contact admin@wlpa.org Tel:
02 9817 4892 or 03 5978 8670

**I was your living symbol – south, through
mist
Of primal morning, in the lonely dawn,
I came to you ... bright fortress of the sun,
Wild continent of colour – the Yaraandoo,
Whose winged outriders beat against the
night
And, at the last day's ending, they will know
...
White birds, my spirit follows in their flight.
I am your dying emblem – broken here,
Whose blood, more ageless than this time-
less land,
Gushes for gold across the plundered plain
And floods my country ... at the gun's com-
mand.
Nan Ingleton**

Introducing "Benjamin"

On a cold winter's night this nice young man named Benjamin rescued a .6 swamp wallaby from its dead mothers pouch and delivered him to my door wrapped up in a jacket. So began joey 'Benjamin's' stay with us and now after lots of bottle feeds (including those hard winter midnight ones) and travelling to different destinations with us, he is emerging into a big world of many dangers and delights. This means snakes. I have watched several joeys come close to snakes and show no fear and have even lost one to snake bite. This is a problem which I hope will be remedied when I 'frighten and stick' him with a rubber snake on a long pole which has a blunt pin at the bitie end. Big problem is how to sneak up without him hearing!! Some may see me hiding behind bushes this month.



Farewell Carolyn Mash

Carolyn has been a member for 3 years and carer/rescuer of many birds and possums. We are going to miss you and leaving us in Spring is not a good time! Thanks for all your help and good luck in Grafton, do hope there are 'nice' wildlife carers there too. We thank you yet again for all those 'Kylies' (bed absorption sheets) which we have found many, many uses for!

Practical ways to create refuges

One of the major threatening processes to the conservation of fauna is the removal of fallen logs and rocks. Many of the woodland and forest remnants remaining in our countryside contain the tree and shrub layer, however, often the ground layer has been simplified. Many of our native grasslands have had rocks removed. Activities such as firewood collection, "cleaning-up" for fire protection and collecting rocks for landscaping industry and for paddock maintenance contribute to the loss of complexity of the habitat. Many landholders ask the question: How do we replace the fallen timber and rocks?

Here are some suggestions:

- If you are cleaning up a fallen tree on your private road (ie roads on your property) or around your house, transfer the cut up timber and branches to your remnant areas,
- Place house bricks or roof tiles in loose piles in areas around your remnants. These can provide great habitat for species such as frogs, geckos, skinks and dunnarts.
- Old fence posts and railway sleepers, even if they are disintegrating can replicate naturally fallen timber, and
- Broken terracota/concrete pipes, slabs of concrete and terracota garden post can provide shelter.

Co-ordinators tales

Surprisingly we have had quite a few Koala sightings and two rescues around town, unusual for winter. Sadly a beautiful adult male was 'hit by car' north of town and died of brain haemorrhage. To see a healthy key animal go this way is a disaster!

We can't wait for the wildlife tunnel to be completed on the Devils pinch upgrade, half way there, it will also include road exclusion fencing. The Sunnyside turn off area is also on the list it seems, a chat with the wildlife consultant last week revealed this and the information he had seen a female with joey in the reserve there.

WAM month is a new initiative and something for us all to get involved with. If you know of any other possible venues we will squeeze it in. The sonic car whistles are something for all cars, at \$5-\$7 they are a must have! Save just one roo and the insur-

ance battle and you are streets ahead! Possum and macropod training for 2006 is on the go, hopefully a 2-3 day course covering both if we can.

Koalas in trouble again



Australia's koala populations are facing a new threat from a fungal disease, cryptococcosis which can cause pneumonia and meningitis, in humans and animals. A new research team, comprising University of Sydney vets, k o a l a

conservation groups and pharmaceutical and health industries, has been formed to study the environmental factors contributing to the spread of the fungus, which lives in certain types of eucalypts, and to establish suitable treatments. More research into chlamydiosis – a bacterial infection already posing a significant threat to koalas – will also be carried out as part of the three year project.

Sydney Morning Herald 4/8/05

NTWC wish list

One thing we really need is a NTWC business card, if our names could be added even better. Also an updated version of our information leaflet, we have several samples from other groups to give inspiration. If there are any members who could help out with either of these please offer your servicessoon!!!?.

Details of our new web site could also be added to both of the above. Colin Wood has offered to set up a web site for NTWC which is a whole new area and likely to open up many more possibilities. There could be sections for access 'by members only' which would be a very handy way to share information. Thanks Colin.

Julia

Welcome to new members

Deborah Keep and Yvonne Campbell at Drake and Gary Wilson and Julie Willis on old Grafton Rd, east of Glen Innes, it is great to have rescuers/carers in these areas.

Keeping your charges cool

The following is from an article written by Cheryl Cochran from the Northern Rivers Wildcare newsletter.

Remember if you are feeling the heat then your animals in care will be too. Out in the wild they have the opportunity of moving to a cooler place or taking a dip in a nearby dam or creek. While they are in our care we must take responsibility for keeping them comfortable. If you are going out for a few hours or to work for the day make sure your animals will be okay during the hottest part of the day. The following tips will help:

Make sure all animals have plenty of clean water, both to drink and bathe in. Terracotta pot plant saucers keep water cooler. Place water bowls in shaded areas in the aviary. In extreme temperatures place a frozen block of water in the bowl, this will keep the water cool for long periods.

Flying foxes and possums relish a drink of apple juice diluted with water in hot weather. Birds in cages or aviaries really enjoy being misted with water on hot days. If you have the luxury of plenty of water and water pressure a gentle hosing down of the aviary is the easiest solution.

Small cages can be covered on three sides with wet cloth (natural fibre works best) to reduce the inside temperature. You can also hang bottles of frozen water inside cages. Frozen blocks of water in bags slowly defrosting on the roof of cages also help.

A second roof over part of the aviary reduces the temperature greatly. I've found old pieces of canvas (free from companies that repair annexes, etc) work best. Raised around 40cm above the aviary roof, the canvas keeps the heat off the aviary but still allows the breeze through.

Aluminium aviaries heat up the worst. Polystyrene boxes broken apart or laid on the roof (attached or weighted down) act as great insulation.

Wet potato sacks hung on wire coat hangers and hooked through just under the aviary roof will keep the sides of the aviary cool.

Possum boxes in aviaries can be covered with wet towels, or a well wrapped frozen ice brick can be placed inside the box.

Animals inside the house are a little easier to manage. Always monitor your inside tempera-

ture, it may seem much cooler than outside but may still be well over 30 degrees. Cover cages with wet cloths and place near the fan or under a ceiling fan if you have one. You will need to re-wet these often but the temperature will be so much cooler, you'll wish you were in there!

Finally, take care when transporting animals in the car if you don't have air conditioning. Add a bottle of water and an extra towel to your rescue box. Cover your box or basket with a wet towel and allow plenty of airflow to reduce heat. If possible take a thermometer with you.

Young Readers

Question: Is a lizard's heart on the left or right hand side of its body?

Unlike most animals, a lizard's heart is midway across its body, and is close to its neck.

When visiting vet, Anne Fowler, dissected a dead dragon lizard, inside were about 20 eggs (about 15 mm long and 10 mm across). When a female lizard is ready to lay her eggs she digs a hole in a moist spot, then buries them. The eggs actually increase in size as the embryo develops assisted by absorption of moisture through the egg shell. When the young lizards are ready to hatch a tiny egg tooth enables them to tear a hole in the shell. Then they are on their own. It is not surprising that only a small fraction of the number laid make it to adulthood. Did Aboriginals eat lizard eggs?

Many dragon lizards are killed as they sun themselves on roads. You can help reduce the lizard road toll, by keeping your eyes peeled when lizards are likely to be using roads as heaters - slow down and toot your horn to frighten it off the road. If this doesn't work, touch it on the tail and it will usually disappear in a flash. If it is early in the day or season, you may need to pick the lizard up and place it on the side of the tar. Otherwise they will probably head back to living dangerously in the middle of the road. During the cooler part of the day, lizards improve absorption of sunlight by darkening their skin.

Since large birds like kookaburras relish lizards, it makes the difference between life and death, if the lizard has a number of places

Young Readers cont'd

to escape to. This could be as simple as pturned pieces of curved bark, a pile of wood or rocks. You could also construct a 'lizard lodge' (Julia is the expert) from rocks or pieces of wood. If hiding places are at regular intervals, lizards are less likely to end up as lunch. Cats and dogs don't mind tackling lizards, and you can guess which animal is unlikely to survive this contest.

See: 'The Young Observer's Book of Australian Lizards' by H.G.Cogger

Question: Name two reptiles (includes lizards and turtles) which produce live young/don't lay eggs.
Jenny Drewitt

Australian Wildlife Health Network

Established in 2002 to co-ordinate Australian wildlife health surveillance and information systems into a single national database, the Australian Wildlife Health Network (AWHN) has proved an invaluable tool in the investigation and management of diseases affecting native species.

Prior to the establishment of the AWHN a number of disease outbreaks and mass mortalities in wild fauna indicated the risk of such events to Australia's biodiversity and also potential threats to agriculture, aquaculture, human health and trade.

For more information on the AWHN email awhn@zoo.nsw.gov.au

Bird murderers

The following is an excerpt from an interesting article that appeared in Wingspan June 2005 by Graeme Chapman.

In the garden we have a problem common to a lot of Queenslanders – too many planted grevilleas, resulting in an overabundance of Noisy Miners. The Miners are aggressive and drive out even large birds such as currawongs. However, there is one exception: our champion male Magpie-lark 'Mr Peewee'!

When he stands guard on the birdbath he keeps three or four Miners at bay, and on two occasions he has even tried to drown an unwitting Miner.

On each occasion, I was attracted by the commotion. I found Mr Peewee in the middle of the bath, wings held high and flapping, calling loudly and holding a Miner under the water. In the first case, probably because

of my arrival, he released the Miner, which could barely fly. On the secon occasion, his victim was youngish and couldn't fly at all. Since writing this note a similar observation of a Magpie-lark drowning another bird was published by Chris Armstrong in the newsletter of Birds Australia Southern Qld. In this case, the Magpie-lark was protecting its nestlings from a young Grey Butcherbird. Eventually the hapless Butcherbird was drowned in the Condamine River and again, the Magpie-lark (sex not stated) flapped its wings as it stood on its victim.

Finding Your Grid Reference with Dean

was our activity last meeting. Dean needed a high point for the practical part of this exercise so I offered Carwells' top paddock. We require these skills when out rescuing after bushfires etc. Getting lost is not a desirable thing in emergencies. After a morning's tuition we went to a point where we could see and find several grid references and discovered we could all do it quite well. Thankyou Dean for teaching us and for the promise of a certificate!

As it happens Dean is a man of many talents, he has sorted out our 'Call' data files and other computer lists making DPI returns a dream job. Also he is qualified to teach 'radio communications' and 'OH&S in the field' should we be fortunate enough to be a successful applicant in the next funding round from Dept of Ag as a 'supporting organisation' for natural disasters. These two days would be held in April/May next year.

Julia



Bird flu alert

The spring/summer has well and truly arrived with the return of the dollar birds, much warmer weather and welcome rain. The larger number of waders and water birds on our farm dam probably means that we have visitors that have wintered in Asia.

Thankfully none of them appear to be sick, but we are warned that it will probably happen one day. Bird flu is endemic throughout Asia in wild bird populations as well as domestic poultry and caged birds. In some countries, traditional rural and semi urban people have very close contact with their poultry. It is not unusual to find the hens more or less living with the family and cages of the male fighting birds hanging in the men's quarters. Such arrangements favour the transfer of virus from birds to humans.

There have been a number of tragic human deaths from bird flu in South East Asia. All Wildcare members need to take extra precautions.

1. **Be alert** if you are presented with a bird that appears sick for no apparent reason. Remember all very sick birds will tend to just sit with their feathers fluffed up. Use disposable gloves, wear a face mask to avoid breathing in feather dust and eye protection to avoid body fluid splash when examining birds.
2. **Housing** Keep any suspect bird isolated in a disposable cardboard carton until you have a firm diagnosis. House all wild birds in care in a small aviary or unused back yard shed. This is the only safe way to protect both the bird and your own health. **On no account should sick birds share living space with you or your family.**
3. **Call outs.** Capture poses special risks for transfer of virus in body fluid or feather dust. The wearing of eye protection, a disposable face mask and clothing that can be disinfected and washed in hot water are all good precautions. A handy capture device can be made from a sturdy garbage bag with a child's plastic hoop taped into the mouth to keep it open. The bag is simply dropped over the bird.

Twisting the bag, prior to removal of the hoop isolates the bird. An alternative low contact catching device can be made from an unused fishing net. The plastic garbage bag is simply placed inside the net and taped to the rim with masking tape. Twisting the bag, prior to separation of the net isolates the bird.

4. **Treatment.** There is no effective treatment for bird flu. Most birds die within days and a few survive to become chronic carriers of the virus. The humane and environmental friendly option for affected birds is prompt euthanasia. Unfortunately it is likely that many vets will not accept these birds being delivered to their surgery due to the risk infection to staff and other clients. We need to develop a quick, humane and cost effective method of euthanasia for birds suspected to be suffering from bird flu.

Wendy Beresford

National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference, August 2005

Three Roses attended (Alan , Carol and myself) and really enjoyed three days of catching up with old friends and making new ones. What a great bunch of volunteers wildlife carers are. Carers from Australia wide came ACT x5, Vic x21, S.A. x 4, NSW x 46, NT x 3, Tasmania x 8, W.A. x 10 and QLD x120. The next carers conference will be in Darwin and hopefully in cooler months. The three days were packed full of information and the venue and catering were excellent. Outside the only thing of note was Harley Davidson bike week so there was a lot of thundering along the streets but not by us! Inside we were treated to several more wonderful Ann Fowler sessions, a particularly good one looked more closely at wounds and stages of healing. Dr Larry Vogelneist emphasised the need for virus awareness and isolation of diseased wildlife. Which was timed to help with possible Bird virus entry into Australia. Our congratulations and thanks go to the organisers of the conference, a great job well done. All papers are available on the web at www.nwrc.com.au so go check them out and download those you need.

Wildcare Contact Numbers

Tel: 1800 008 290

Committee

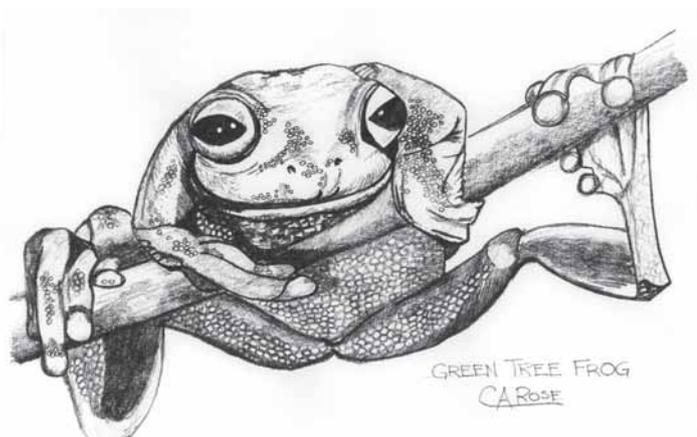
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Wildcare

PO Box 550, Armidale, NSW 2350



Wildcare is a network of trained volunteers licensed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. We rescue, rehabilitate and release injured, sick, orphaned and unwanted native fauna. If you need assistance with a native animal, please call:

Armidale - 1800 008 290
Tenterfield - 6734 5241



All donations \$2 and over are Tax Deductible

Telstra Country Wide Armidale are proud to be a sponsor of Wildcare - local people working together