



Rescue Rehabilitate Release

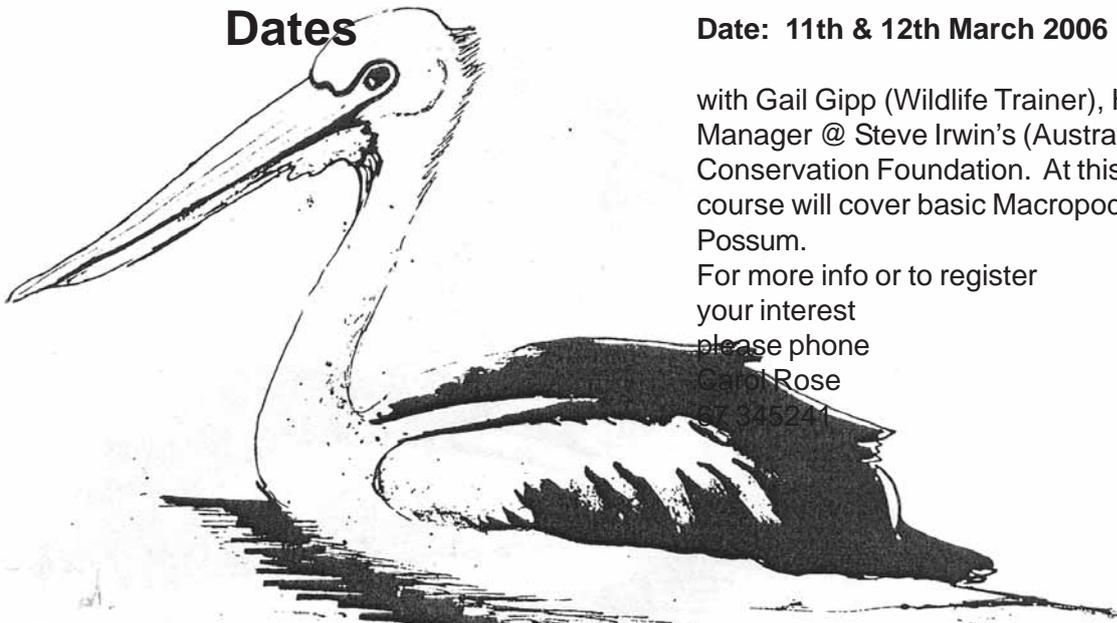
Wildcare **Newsletter No. 69** **January 2006**

Diary

Training Course - Macropods & Possums

Dates

Date: 11th & 12th March 2006



with Gail Gipp (Wildlife Trainer), Hospital Manager @ Steve Irwin's (Australia Zoo) Conservation Foundation. At this stage the course will cover basic Macropod and Possum.

For more info or to register your interest please phone
Carol Rose
on 345244

Annual General Meeting General Meeting

Date Sunday 12th February

Venue Woodlands Centre, 80 Mann St, Armidale

Time 1pm AGM 2pm Gen Meeting

At the AGM all positions will be vacated by the hard working past committee. Some may be persuaded to extend their term but new positions for various jobs such as grants searcher, 'fearless rescue leader', 'fundraising persuader', media promoter, web site producer, NWC 'rep and sub', as well as a 'super secretary' are dreamt of.

All are very much needed so please come forward and help.

Raffle

2 nights accommodation at Moffat Falls Lodge (near Yarandoo), Ebor.

Tickets \$2

Drawn: Fundraising Christmas in July dinner

Bat deaths concern

Flying Fox rehabilitators up and down the coast & some inland areas are working overtime dealing with the aftermath of heat stressed animals from bat colonies at Wingham, the Hunter Valley, Central Coast and Cabramatta Creek in suburban Sydney. Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers' Bats Co-ordinator, Connie Crehan is one, with 4 animals from the Hunter area in her care.

Over the ten-day period, from Christmas Eve to New Year's Day, between 2.5% and 3.0% of the total estimated population of Grey Headed Flying Foxes (GHFFs) perished. This does not take into account probable unrecorded mortalities in isolated and/or inaccessible colonies. These figures are based on reasonably accurate counts conducted by wildlife rehabilitators from the NSW Wildlife Council's (NWC) affiliated groups involved in the recent crisis. For a species which has a low reproductive rate and had already declined by up to 30% over the decade prior to 2000, (finding of the Scientific Committee, established under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 2000 – 2001*) and has clearly continued to decline since then, these losses are clearly unsustainable.

The Grey Headed Flying Fox is a threatened species, whose existence is of high importance to the regeneration of rainforest and hardwood forest through their dispersal of seeds and their role as pollinators. While GHFFs may carry some zoonotic diseases, the very low incidence of these diseases in the bat population, and their extremely low level of interaction with humans ensures that they normally pose only a miniscule risk to human health.

In the light of the recent mortalities the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) has announced a review of the issuing of licences to orchardists to shoot GHFFs. While recognising the problems of orchardists, the NWC strongly opposes the use of lethal action against a threatened species. We are supportive of low or no interest loans for the erection of exclusion netting to protect crops.

The NWC acknowledges the positive actions

of the Fairfield and Liverpool City Councils in providing water tankers and spray equipment to the Cabramatta Creek Flying Fox colony over the New Year weekend. The abnormally hot conditions with low humidity resulted in the deaths of an estimated 500 animals, considerably fewer than the 2,000 - 3,000 which perished in 2002 in very similar weather conditions.

The NWC will be providing input into the review on shooting licences and will be working with DEC to develop emergency protocols with all councils in NSW with accessible flying fox colonies.

All flying fox & bat rescues must be carried out by Carers vaccinated against Lyssavirus. If you find a bat/flying fox in distress in the New England Area please contact Connie Crehan Ph. 67333259 or NTWC Rescue No. 1800 008 290.

Connie also has an injured Little Red Flying Fox in care. He will be due for release soon. Could anyone sighting a colony of flying foxes in our area contact Connie so this little fellow can join his mates.

Alan Rose



Funding grant success

NTWC has been successful in obtaining funding from National Emergency Volunteers Support Fund for Rescue Team Training. We will hold a weekend of training in 'radio communication' and 'OH&S in the field'. This follows on from our initial course of 'Fire Awareness' held in 2005. Dean Davidson will be co-ordinating this training which is hopefully to be held at a UNE venue during March/April. Would all keen rescuers please contact Julia on 1800 008 290 to make sure you are on the contact list.

This course will be available for other wildlife care groups to attend so be on the list early.

Possum relocation study

A study by Deakin University in Melbourne (Pietsch 1994) has shown that most relocated Common Brushtail Possums die in stressful circumstances soon after release. As part of the study, resident possums in a proposed release area were observed over 13 weeks. During this time, no possum carcasses, partial remains, or patches of fur were found. After the release of relocated urban possums in the same area, researchers recorded numerous patches of possum fur and the remains of eight possums most apparently killed by foxes. Another 12 possums fitted with radio collars were released but only two were alive after 10 weeks. Seven had died within the first week. Four had been killed by predators, probably foxes, two died of stress related causes, and one was hit by a car. Two of the collared possums could not be found – their radios went off air prematurely.

The Deakin study showed that relocated possums spent significantly more time on the ground than resident animals, and 68% of their dens were on or under the ground during the first week after release. (Brushtail Possums rarely sleep at ground level under normal circumstances). Contrary to popular belief, there was no evidence of any homing tendency in the released animals. Dispersal was in random directions. Similar studies of Common Ringtail Possums in Victoria and NSW have mirrored the Deakin results. Clearly, relocation is not a humane way of dealing with the problem.

Info supplied from Ozark forum.

Yellow faced whip snake

A dark, comma like mark between the eye and mouth is a distinguishing feature of the yellow faced whip snake. Individuals vary in colour from light grey to greenish above and grey-green to yellowish below.

While most snakes are slow moving and tend to corner their prey in blind crevices or burrows, Australian whip snakes are the sprinters of the snake world, capable of chasing and capturing lizards at speeds exceeding 10km/h. Growing to about 1m long and as thick as a finger, the yellow faced whip snake frequently visits suburban gardens yet most gardeners are unaware of its presence. It hides among surface debris, crevices and hollows, and can change colour subtly to blend in with its surroundings. The yellow faced whip snake will bite if cornered or handled roughly but, although painful, a bit is usually only enough to cause localised symptoms of relatively short duration.

Snakes are an integral part of our ecosystem, yet many species now live with the threat of extinction. Rather than fear these remarkable creatures, we should learn to live alongside them. Most are harmless to humans and many, like the yellow faced whip snake, are beautiful and fascinating to observe. The fangs of most Australian snakes are too short to penetrate thick clothing and snakes are reluctant to bite people, preferring to retreat if given the chance. It is always wise to be cautious, especially at night when most snakes are on the move. Snakes avoid crossing open spaces where they are exposed to predators and if you live in or near the bush, you can discourage snakes from the area around your house by clearing debris and keeping the grass short.

Gardening Australia Oct 05

Kasey gets another chance at life.

Just before dawn, on a cool morning in late November, well south of Walcha, a Wallaroo with a pouched Joey was picking out the tender grass shoots on the roadside. A vehicle heading north was closing in on the Wallaroo mother, but she was oblivious to any danger. Suddenly, bright lights came over the hill, blinding her vision. For a split second she froze, spooked and then jumped – directly into the oncoming lights. Sadly, she became another tragic statistic of our wildlife road kill.

An hour later two young men, driving from Sydney, spotted the Wallaroo's broken body and saw a flicker of movement as they passed. A tiny Joey was trying to climb back into its dead mother's pouch. They stopped, picked up the Joey and moved the mother's body off the road. Some hours later Jill Chetwynd received a call from Naz, the young man who had so kindly given the Joey another chance at life. Naz decided to call her Kasey, after a beautiful dog he once owned. Kasey was only 1.8Kg, but in good spirits. Unfortunately, on closer inspection, Jill and Brian found that Kasey could not walk, probably due to a broken foot bone. An X-ray revealed that her calcaneus (heel) had snapped off at the time of impact and her prognosis was not favourable. Not prepared to give up, Jill and Brian sent the X-rays to Nth Qld and found that an operation to pin the bone was possible, but very expensive and carried some risk. Veterinary Surgeon Ron Raymer from Creeklands Vet Clinic, came to the rescue, offering to do the operation without any fee, as a special situation, only charging for drugs etc.

On Nov 30th, Kasey went into the theatre – she was too small for pre-med, so Isoflourane was used and Ron then prepared the area, cutting a 5cm incision along the foot and leg. He peeled the tissue back to the metatarsal (foot) bone and tendons. The broken bone had moved, due to the tendon contraction and it took a lot of work to get the piece and tendon in position. Two stainless steel pins were inserted and tied with wire threaded through

the tarsal. During the operation, Kasey had to be carefully watched, to ensure her heart and breathing were maintained and the anesthetic was continuously adjusted, during the hour long drama. Finally, it was over and Ron re-attached the internal tissue with soluble stitches and then sewed the skin back.

Kasey pulled through, rather sore, but with a brighter future ahead. With foot strapped, she went home to a 3 day course of Amoxil to combat any infection. She progressed well during the first week, but then her heel and foot swelled to four times normal size and she could not move. Fearing the worst, Jill and Brian were concerned about Osteomyelitis, a fatal condition, under these circumstances. Clindamycin, which is very expensive and only available in oral form, is the drug of choice, but it does have an impact on gut flora. After much consideration, it was decided on a 10 day course of injectable Linco-spectin, a broad spectrum antibiotic that may do the job. Brian started the course by sub-cut, but later changed to IM to avoid the risk of ulcers. The first 6 days revealed little change and then almost overnight Kasey started improving. After 12 days the swelling had reduced and another X-ray confirmed she was on the mend with no Osteomyelitis

Some 6 weeks after the operation Kasey is weighing in at 3.2Kg, nearly double her incoming weight and she runs madly around the house yard. When inside, she leaps over the furniture, as only a Wallaroo could do. Kasey's fight is not over yet; she has just had more X-rays. Her operation to remove the pins has just been successfully completed and she will spend the next 2 weeks with a strapped leg. Kasey is a beautiful, bright little girl, who is a real fighter and Jill and Brian are confident that her zest for life will get her through. She may end up with a slightly "gammy" leg, preventing a full release, but thanks to Ron Raymer, Bernie May and many, many others, Kasey is getting a second chance at life.

Brian Chetwynd

Koala Friendly Beef

Conscientious consumers who need to know their food has been produced with the environment in mind, have been taste testing a world first – ‘eco-friendly beef’ certified by the Australian Koala Foundation. The AKF, together with the Qld Dept of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F), have been conducting on farm trials in Western Qld to produce premium quality beef while maintaining koala habitat.

Producers must meet environmental standards set by the AKF to be awarded and maintain the ‘Certified Koala Friendly Label’. These standards set guidelines for ecological sustainability and koala conservation, ensure the protection of water quality, biodiversity and soil health and provide independent certification that farming practices used are protecting koala habitats.

For more info visit www.savethekoala.com/ecolabel.html

AKF newsletter Nov/Dec 05

A tribute to Mike O’Keeffe.

When some one like Mike ‘drops off the perch’ I can’t believe it wasn’t a mistake his name got onto the list. Here was a man who gave everything to life and his fellow human beings. He did so much for his little pupils at the local primary school who adored their big bearded teacher. Their school excursions to the coast included lots of wonderful ‘Yowie ‘ stories around the evening campfire which were never forgotten (a clever way of keeping them in their beds at night). But that was Mike’s way.

When he could no longer bend down to the low desks he went on to create the Armidale Tree Group as we know it today. He had promised himself he would do something about the eucalypt die-back problem when he first came to Armidale and he did. I can remember the small selection available when trying to find local hardy native plants for the garden to keep some sort of tree canopy when so much seemed to be dying each summer. Mike gathered seeds and cuttings, worked out their propagation secrets and planted the millions of native trees and shrubs which are growing around Armidale today. All native animals and creatures great and small owe him so much.

Now it is up to us to continue to love and care for our earth as he did. We can make a small beginning and use of the best planting season for decades to ‘Plant a tree for Mike’. His favourite was the tree *eucalyptus nova –anglica* . If you have the space for one of these magnificent trees or even for a variety in a woodlot then that would be a special tribute. Donations are also being accepted at the Woodland centre, soon to be renamed in memory of its’ creator.

Julia Rose

Wildcare Contact Numbers

Tel: 1800 008 290

Committee

Chairperson	Alan Rose 6734 5241
Vice Chairperson	Harold Heffernan 6778 1357
Secretary	Wendy Beresford 6775 3747
Treasurer	Julia Rose 1800 008 290
Wombaroo	Jenny Nordstrom 6775 3124
	Jill Chewynd 6772 5855
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Co-ordinators

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Deepwater:	Carol Rose 67345241
	Marilyn Kennedy 67345397
Tenterfield:	Pam Brice 6736 2462
Glencoe:	Connie Crehan 6733 3259

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

Massive police response – potential disaster thwarted

Traffic was brought to a stand still on a busy Saturday morning in Armidale, on the 17th December. Wakened unconscionably early by madam Coordinator, with the call that several ducklings were inside a drain, the dozy carer headed off to a subterranean meeting with not only a family of distressed Black ducks, but also the full force of the Law in all its majesty.

The mother of 10 day old ducklings had appeared from somewhere with her new family and was proceeding down Dangar St, presumably to do some last minute Christmas shopping.

Opposite the NAB is a large drain cover, with a grid just the perfect size for day old ducklings to fall through, which is what 8 of our family immediately decided to do. Not surprisingly, the mother was seriously alarmed by this development and was circling the drain noisily. When dozy carer arrived however, she stayed steadfastly close by, while chins were rubbed and processes considered as to how to get the drain open. Then, from out of the West, a lady Police sergeant arrived, a crow bar was found, and the drain opened. This was the sign for the ducklings to rush off down the 10 inch drain at full speed. The madding crowd then proceeded to proffer advice, naturally none of it worth anything.

Eventually they (the ducklings)

crept back up the drain and were bravely leapt on by Dozy Carer and returned to the maternal bosom.

By this time, 5 more police on foot, and 4

more in vehicles had arrived. For the

next ten minutes this cohort then guided the reunited family to Civic Park via the Kmart carpark. Traffic was halted at the roundabout by two patrol cars with flashing lights, and finally all 11 ducks made it to the big pool.

And people say you can never find a copper when you need one!

Dick McColl

BOOK ORDERS – NOW!

We are ordering copies of Sonya Stanvic's "Possums" book – an excellent reference for all care information.

Let Julia know ASAP if you wish to receive one.

Cost \$20

Endangered website

A new website established by the NSW Dept of Environment and Conservation will give people living on the NSW north coast, Northern Tablelands and Hunter access to detailed information of all the region's threatened plants and animals.

The site is the collective work of more than 60 scientists and experts on threatened species and information technology. It will be an authoritative register of the State's threatened species which can be regularly updated while providing information on the State's threatened species legislation and regulations.

www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au

Endangered animal web trade

The sugar glider has joined a Noah's Ark of exotic animals including spider monkeys, gorillas, giraffes and tigers that are being traded globally on the web. Dead wildlife – in the form of skins and teeth, ivory and shell – are also for sale, often obtained illegally in a trade said to be driving some endangered species closer to extinction.

A report published by the International Fund for Animal Welfare proposes that the aggressive regulation of the web that tackles child pornography should also deal with the wildlife trade.

Living Australian animals and birds readily found for sale on the web included Bennett's wallabies and easter rosellas, but sugar gliders are a hit marsupial in the US.

The fund's Australian campaigner, Rebecca Brand, said "these are nocturnal animals at home in Australian forests. You can just imagine what they undergo being carried around in pockets and poked and prodded."

The fund wants individual governments to enforce existing wildlife protection laws more strongly and greater co-operation through Interpol's Wildlife Crime Working Group.

Cat de-sexing to protect threatened species

The Threatened Species Network held a free cat de-sexing and micro chipping day at Bruny Island on 19 September – the first such event held in Tasmania.

While the RSPCA and local councils have held similar subsidised pet de-sexing days before, this is the first that deliberately targeted an area with the purpose of protecting threatened species and other wildlife.

The Web newsletter spring 05

Young Readers

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

You could have named the red-bellied black snake (8-40 young); the copperhead (10-15 young); the broad-headed snake (8-20 young); and the tiger snake (up to 126 young); or the blue-tongued lizard (1-15 young). The body size within a particular species tends to relate to the number of young born. Live young tend to be favoured over eggs in cold climates worldwide. As can be imagined this enables the developing young to stay warmer, growing within their mother's body. For instance most of the skinks/Scincidae in Tasmania, including the blue-tongued lizard, are born live.

Incidentally, the broad-headed snake is endangered in NSW because many of its hiding places have been removed - they hide under bush rock, as do most of their prey do, such as lizards. **See:** www.park.tas.gov.au and www.faunanet.gov.au.

Questions: What is the difference between hibernation and torpor? Can you name any animals which experience torpor?

Jenny Drewitt

Quoll success

NTWC carers Harold and Shirley Heffernan have successfully rehabilitated a Spotted-Tail quoll, which is listed as a threatened species. She was in care for approx 7 months and came in with a broken jaw. Due to the injury she had to be hand fed and because she had a broken canine tooth that is used for gripping prey as well as the broken jaw, she probably wouldn't have been able to catch and kill her own food and survive back in the bush. She has now gone to Featherdale Farm west of Sydney where they have a colony of Spotted Tail Quolls and are desperately short of females.