



Rescue Rehabilitate Release



Wildcare

Newsletter No. 70

April 2006

Training

May 27th & 28th -

Wires Tamworth - Ph: 6769-3393

Macropod Care - Cost \$65.00

Suzanne Ulyatt

May 20th & 21st - NTWC

Disaster Rescue - OH &S

Radio Communication

June 3rd & 4th 2006 -

Wires Coffs Harbour

Birds - Beyond Basics

July 29th & 30th 2006 -

Wires Coffs Harbour at Grafton

Possums & Gliders

Phone Stephen Cross - 6568-5367



*Drawing by
Wendy Beresford*

Meeting Dates

Thursday 26th April 2006 - 4.30pm

Business Meeting
at Tatts Hotel

Sunday 14th May 2006 - 1.30pm

General Meeting
at Armidale Tree Group
(Woodlands Centre)
Mann Street, Armidale.

Sunday 14th May 2006

11.00am - 12.30pm
at Armidale Tree Group (as above)
Helping co-ordinate the 1800 No.
Update on Bird Rescue

Please note this meeting is before the
General Meeting on the same day.

Fundraising

The sale of Owl Pins is continuing on behalf of Retina Australia. These sales benefit the club as we make a percentage on all sales. Your support is gratefully appreciated.

Membership is Due

Annual Membership is due in June 2006. It was extended to this date, to bring it into line with NPWS Licence requirements. The amount is \$15.00 single or \$20.00 per family. Please renew as early as possible.

A Wonderful Story of a Bat Rescue

by Ann Kermode - Walcha

Ann sent us a letter, so that we could all share in the experience.

Now for the account of the bat rescue from our heater flue. In mid- January, just before dusk, I heard soot falling down the heater flue; not unusual, except it did not fall with usual 'whoosh'. It was more a sprinkle, accompanied by a gentle rubbing sound. When it happened several times, I began to think that something must be trapped in there.

Husband Allan, who is deaf, did not believe me when I told him that I thought a bird may be caught in the flue - because he could not hear it. Throughout the evening the rubbing sound and soot falling continued. By 9.30pm, I had convinced Allan that something was trapped.

"It can't get out of the bottom, because of the damper," he said. "Can you do something to rescue it?"

It was late and he would be too busy with work in the morning.

"It'll probably be dead by then and get fly-blown and smell," he said. "Maybe we should set a fire in the heater," he added.

"No - that will only cook it!" I replied. "Poor little bird, it won't take long to remove the fire-bricks and damper and then rescue it," I continued.

Eventually at around 11pm and after much persuasion, he relented, making it very clear that removing the damper was very hard and even harder to replace. (A week later the damper and the removed fire-bricks, had still not been replaced!)

Nothing came out of the heater, so I shut the door and went to bed, only to be called back a few minutes later.

Bat Rescue cont...

A scene of drama was emerging.

"There's a bird in the lounge room!" he called.

I thought it was my turn not to believe.

"Quickly," came the urgent call.

I rushed into the room, just in time to see something flutter onto the floor, in the corner. Allan carefully pounced on it. A quick and careful look, so it would not escape, showed that it was not a bird.

It was a bat. Allan did not realise the danger associated with a possible bite, so I hurried him to the outside door. he quickly let the tiny bat go. As he did, I caught sight of this tiny dark-brown furred body - not much bigger than a cotton-ball. It's wing-span was about 18cm.

What a beautiful sight, as it flew off into the night. We were both very relieved that the rescue was without mishap to either the bat or Allan! Of course, we may not need to sweep our flue for some time!

Thanks to Anne for this lovely story.

Emerging Wildlife Disease in Birds Letter from NPWS

Regarding our story on Page 6 of this Newsletter, the contact details for further information or questions is:

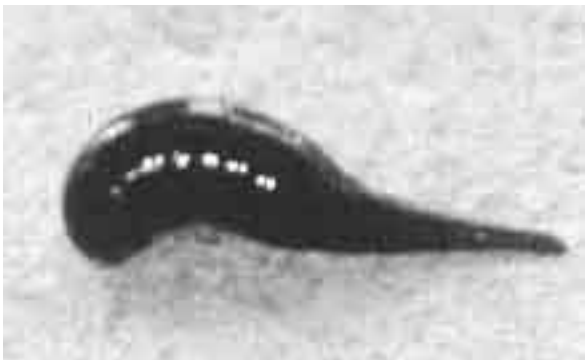
Dr Kelly Waples
Manager Wildlife Licensing & Management Unit
Parks and Wildlife Division
Department of Environment and Conservation

Leeches still have a Vital Role to Play in Modern Medicine

by Dr Mahri Kock

The recent rains across the region, followed by consistently high temperatures, have encouraged a number of little parasitic creatures out to look for hosts.

The photo below is of a small leech escaping with a full stomach after it had attached itself to my leg last week, while I was hanging out the washing. I didn't notice it at that moment. It was some time



later that I felt it roll down my leg and saw my blood beginning to pool on the floor. So, I naturally thought, "You're a goer for my next Eden column."

Leeches are parasitic invertebrates that belong to the class Hirudinea and are related to earthworms and polychaets. They have been used medicinally for centuries to drain blood from hematomas or to "cure" an illness, when the source of a patient's pain was unable to be diagnosed - a letting of blood being considered to heal most things!

Leeches are found in the oceans, fresh water and on land, where it is moist, such as rainforests. This one is quite small, however, tiger leeches are common around the rock pool in my creek and average 10cm in length - before they eat. They all have two suckers, one at the anterior end for sucking blood from a host and one at the posterior end for attachment to rocks

etc. while it senses for the body heat of a host. Many leeches have blade-like "jaws" inside the feeding sucker that are used to slit the host's skin.

Other species secrete enzymes that digest a hole through the skin. The host is usually oblivious to this because the leech also secretes an anaesthetic to cover its work. Once the incision is made the leech then secretes another chemical called Hirudin which stops the host's blood from coagulating, thus ensuring the leech gets lots of blood to suck up - often 10 times its own weight.

After gorging in this manner, a leech will not feed again for many months. It is the many internal segments or series of fused "rings" within the leech's body that allow it to extend its body to accommodate a large blood meal. When one is small and limited in locomotion and dietary choice, it pays to be able to leech out to the max, when a banquet presents itself!

Now that you are all on more familiar terms with leech behaviour you will be keen to sit and watch the next leech coming your way in inch worms style and marvel at the diversity of life here on earth as you watch it feed on your blood, dropping off to find a safe spot to sleep off its meal.

This strange little creature that looks like a bundle of leaves with a head at top right is an invertebrate Lepidoptera moth and groups. it carries



this home around all the time, more or less like a snail carries its shell. The female remains in its case and it is up to the male, who grows soft wings and feathery antennae to search her out.

Reprinted in part from an article by Dr Mahri Kock PhD in community ecology and parasitology.

The Future of Fungi

by Louise Woods

I was recently invited to attend a conference in Brisbane, titled "The Rotten World Around Us". No, it wasn't about current world issues, such as terrorism, or accelerating crime rates, but a very exciting opportunity to learn more about the intriguing organisms called fungi.



This conference concentrated on macrofungi. Presentations from leading experts in the field of macrofungal mycology, like Dr. Tony Young, proved to be very interesting but most significantly, this conference was inspiring - the first conference of its kind in Queensland.

Important facts I learnt about fungi:

- * Life on earth would cease to exist within 60 to 80 years without fungi.
- * Australia has macrofungal species far exceeding plant species.
- * They are important recyclers of the Australian bush, decomposing leaf litter and breaking down soil matter into forms that can be taken up by plants.
- * They help transport essential soil nutrients from over a much broader area than root systems alone.

- * They are important food sources to invertebrates, reptiles and mammals.
- * They have many undiscovered chemical properties possibly important to medical research.

I also discovered that my wildlife biology course at university had only barely scratched the surface about the ecological role of macrofungi and their symbiotic relationship with certain plant species in the Australian bush. I now believe that this superficial coverage reflects the current level of importance given to fungi by governments managing our biodiversity.

Australia's knowledge base is only now on par with English mycology of the 1850's. This is exacerbated by the fact that mycology is very slow and painstakingly tedious work. The experts gave what they believe to be a conservative estimate of around 25,000 species of fungi known to exist in Australia. A staggering 15,000 (60%) are undescribed. This clearly illustrates the paucity of taxonomic data on



this particular organism.

Mycology (the study of fungi) needs increased government funding, particularly as taxonomic research lays the important

foundation for all biological research. Government investment in the research currently conducted by Australia's few remaining macrofungal mycologists is minimal. Government support for the training of new mycologists is similarly dismal.

Three main reasons for this are mentioned in Dr. Young's 2005 publication "*A Field Guide to the Fungi of Australia.*"

- 1.) A politician protecting a toadstool on a cow pat doesn't have quite the warm, fuzzy appeal when compared to the protection of a cute and cuddly mammal.
- 2.) Taxonomy doesn't give particularly profitable returns on investment for governments.
- 3.) Mycology is largely an unknown field to the majority of Australians. Therefore, there has not been sufficient public pressure applied on our governments to increase funding.

Considering fungi's relative importance to the environment, I ponder what the future holds for Australian macrofungi, exposed as it is to so many political and non-political barriers. It's a shame. We haven't yet fully realised our potential to become world leaders in the research of these beautiful and awesome organisms. However, I like to consider myself an optimist and I hope that at least the Queensland Government will now push forward to make fungi of equal conservation concern on its environmental agenda.

As an aside, I consider myself very much a novice when it come to fungi, but I am very interested in learning more about identifying and documenting fungi in our area. If you love fungi and would like to share information or even help put a field guide together for this area in 2006 please contact me.

Louise Woods

Email: lou_woods@yahoo.com.au

Mobile: 0410-570-672

Peptosyl & Ivomec Available for Carers

Peptosyl:

This liquid suspension is used on macropods, to assist in the control of diarrhoea, or to settle the gut, particularly after oral anti-biotics. It is given orally and can be used quite safely, without undue concern of any side effects.

Ivomec:

A clear liquid used for the worming of macropods. This can be done on a regular basis if an overburden of worms is suspected. A simple 'float' test by the Vet will determine their presence.

Every carer with a joey should have some of each on hand. Jill Chetwynd has a purchased a quantity and it is available in small amounts.

Phone Jill for supplies 6772-5854

A Wildlife Carer is Expected to be

A Diagnostician, Physiotherapist, Physicologist, Vet Nurse, First Aid Attendant, Dietician, Urologist, Mind Reader, Faecal Connoisseur, Biologist, Botanist, Chemist, Chef, Wild Animal Handler, Animal Behaviouralist, Ambulance Driver, Grief Counsellor to other carers, Gravedigger, Advisor, Telephone Operator, Superman, Insomniac and in addition, must be on call and on duty every night and day of the year!!!

Must also have a thick hide and a bent sense of humour and at least 6 arms!! Must also be fearless when handling wildlife, vets and members of the public!!!

Thanks to Ozark, where this was posted.

The above of course is in addition to your normal qualities!!

Emerging Wildlife Disease in Birds Letter from NPWS

Dear Wildlife Carer

This letter and the advice is to inform you about the current status of an emerging wildlife disease and give instructions in relation to its management. It is requested that this information be passed on to individual carers as soon as possible.

You should pay particular attention to points 6 and 7 below, outlining the disease symptoms and the DEC's instructions to carers.

1. The disease has presented in Magpies (*Gymnorhina tibicen*), Currawongs (*Strepera versicolor*), Kingfishers (*Todiramphus* sp.), Laughing Kookaburras (*Dacelo novaeguineae*), Australian Magpie Larks (*Gallina cyanoleuca*), Crested Pidgeon (*Ocyphaps lophotes*) and Silvergulls (*Larus novaehollandiae*).

2. **Avian Influenza** has been **ruled out** following virus testing by NSW DPI.

3. Serological testing conducted by Linda Hueston, ICPMR Westmead Hospital has not found any evidence of West Nile Virus / Kunjin, Murray Valley Encephalitis, Japanese Encephalitis (virus neutralising titres), or Enteroviruses (complement fixation).

4. Virology and toxicology testing is underway.

5. About 80 anecdotal reports of bird deaths (numbers ranging from 1 to 15 in each report, mostly clusters of 2 - 6 birds). A mixture of adult and subadult birds and male and female birds.

6. **General Symptoms:** Birds are found dead or unable to stand. Progress is often

with a characteristic sequence; unable to fly then, unable to stand, then unable to hold their head up, then acute respiratory problems, then death. Birds generally die within about 6 hrs - 8 hrs of presentation, though reports of some birds surviving up to 10 days. Birds are often weak, rather than totally paralysed. Many recumbent birds will stand when stimulated. Many birds retain vent tone, withdrawal reflexes and remain bright and alert.

7. As per Condition 1 of the Licence issued to you / your organisation, you are instructed that until further notice, birds presenting symptoms or signs consistent with this illness **MUST NOT** be rehabilitated but should be euthanased as soon as practicable and disposed of appropriately.

This is to ensue that:

- * continued spread of the disease through wild populations is restricted.
- * birds in care do not contract the disease.
- * facilities used for the rehabilitation of native birds do not become contaminated / infected with the disease.

8. Currently no further samples or specimens are needed for analysis. However detailed information on cases including date, location, number of individuals and condition should be reported to your bird co-ordinator or equivalent. A summary of this information should be provided to the AWHN or the Wildlife Licensing & Management Unit. Carcasses and serum sample may be frozen for future where appropriate storage facilities are available (eg freezer not used for human consumables), otherwise birds should be disposed of as appropriate. The ARWH website provides advice on hygiene and disposal protocol (<http://www.arwh.org>).

9. This advice does not apply to birds presenting with obvious injuries.

For contact details see Page 2 of this Newsletter.

Good News for Heat Stress in Bats

by Robin Gough

We have good news on the strategy for cooling bat colonies when the temperature gets to 40°C. Allan Rose of Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers has continued work on the polypipe "gun". This can now gently spray water 30 meters high, creating a huge area of fine drift that will wet an arc of many meters more.

Construction of the prototype was made possible by financial support from Austrop. While this unit belongs permanently to Bat Rescue, Gold Coast, it is available to loan to any group, assuming it is not already in use.

The complete unit, set up and ready to go, with nozzle, hose, concertina polypipe (for transporting) and fire fighter pump with carry handles would cost \$1000.00. We need at least two.

We also have research that reveals the exact temperature at which animals will die: 41.7°C. This is the critical temperature, regardless of humidity. We also know the last critical sign: bats hanging extremely low, who are licking at thumbs and wrists.

The tragic heat that usually last only one or two days but kills 7000 - 8000 animals per colony is sure to happen again in our area. Assuming we own or at least have access to the polypipe "gun", we will be able to bring the temperature down in the colony instead of standing and waiting for them to fall.

Finally, we still need extra helpers for our feeding team. Let me know immediately if you can help.

Batty Thanks

The bat carers of Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers gratefully acknowledge the support of several members of the Byron Farmers'

Market during the recent influx of heat-affected flying foxes:

- * Gavin Monty for supplying watermelons
- * Lance Powell for wonderful, continuing supply of bananas
- *Joni Seal for a great positive attitude towards our wildlife
- * And thank you also to Northern Rivers Rural Buying Service for the donation of Styrofoam boxes used for the cold room storage of fruit.

Stop Press:

20th February: Bat baby season not over yet - 5 week old black boy rescued from power lines at Coorabell, by new bat lover Vanessa!

Control Of Disease in Frogs How we can play a role

Chytrid fungus has been identified as one of the important causes of declining frog populations.

It invades the frog's skin and causes death in as much as 100% of cases.

It is transmitted through water and is susceptible to things like temperature, dehydration, salinity light and supply of oxygen.

So frog populations are at real risk if there is a transfer of frogs or water from an infected site to a clean one. Care is needed with vehicles moving through wetlands; the use of equipment and footwear or the movement of frogs or tadpoles or transplanting of flora from one site to another.

Vehicles can be cleaned with "toilet duck", otherwise disinfectants such as Chloramine can be used on equipment.

Bleach 5% concentration may also be effective against this and some other frog diseases and would seem a sensible precaution with plant material.

Equipment might either be disposable, or disinfected and thoroughly dried before use in another site.

An excellent hygiene protocol is published on the NPWS website.

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 Chetwynd 6772 5855
Newsletter	Debbie McLean 6775 0202

Co-ordinators

Armidale:	Julia Rose 1800 008 290
	Wendy Beresford 6775 3747
	Jill Chetwynd 6772 5855
Deepwater:	Carol Rose 67345241
	Marilyn Kennedy 67345397
Tenterfield:	Pam Brice 6736 2462
Glencoe:	Connie Crehan 6733 3259

Wildcare

P.O. 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