

## Wildlife Meetings 6th

### March

## Check out our Website at [www.ntwc.org.au](http://www.ntwc.org.au)

- Rescue coordinators meeting 10.30
  - Fund Raising Meeting Meeting 11.15
  - Lunch 12 noon BYO
  - 1.00 pm AGM
  - Followed by:
    - General Meeting, Time 1.30pm\*
- Come along and support your organisation
- Venue: Armidale Tree Group Woodland centre  
East Mann St. Armidale.
- You can print out your
    - Membership form
    - Foster Carer report
    - Milk request form
    - Animal transfer form
    - Animal report form
  - You can have access to most carer organisation throughout Australia
  - Have access to lots of useful links for education and help for native animals



Telstra country Wide and New England Mutual are proud to be sponsors of NT Wildlife Carers...Local people working together.

Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers  
PO Box 550 Armidale 2350  
[www.ntwc.org.au](http://www.ntwc.org.au)



## Rescue Rehabilitate Release



## Newsletter of The Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers Issue No 88 February 2011 Phone - 1800-008290 [www.ntwc.org.au](http://www.ntwc.org.au)

## Donations for Wildlife Disaster Relief - Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (QWRC)

Donations for Wildlife Disaster Relief - Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (QWRC) is also continuing to monitor the

rehabilitator be in need of assistance please contact your



*Hundreds of Roos stranded on high ground*

flood situation across QLD as it relates to wildlife and wildlife rehabilitators, many have been affected.

**They are coordinating some support for carers** including assisting in the provision of food and transport for wildlife in care, and having set up a trust fund to handle the offers of donations they are receiving. Should any

local QWRC representative [www.qwrc.org.au/contactus.html](http://www.qwrc.org.au/contactus.html) or the QWRC Chair, Annie Saunders (Ph 4975 6281) and will do the best they can to get you the assistance you require.

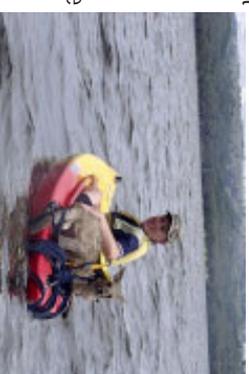
A trust fund has also been set up to receive donations. Donations can be made to the wildlife disaster relief fund by

direct deposit to the QWRC Trust Fund account BSB 814 282 and account number 30932248. We ask that people please use their surname as a reference. We will ensure all funds are distributed where they are most needed.

[www.qwrc.org.au/index.html](http://www.qwrc.org.au/index.html)

[www.qwrc.org.au/disaster.html](http://www.qwrc.org.au/disaster.html)  
Eliminate Dengue trials commence - a significant step in Australian science

3/1/2011 UQ News:  
[www.uq.edu.au/news/index.html?article=22455](http://www.uq.edu.au/news/index.html?article=22455) "In an effort to eliminate the global burden of dengue fever, an Australian-led international



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  - Write to NTWC PO Box 550Armidale 2350
- Northern Tableland Wildlife Carers is a network of trained volunteers licensed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. We rescue, rehabilitate and release injured, sick, orphaned & unwanted native fauna. Any assistance please call the above numbers in your area.
- Membership \$20 single and \$25 family year for authorised and support members. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.
- This Newsletter is designed by Colin Wood and printed by New England Credit Union.
- Telstra Country Wide are also proud to be a sponsor of NTWC



## Contents,

1. Donations for Wildlife Disaster Relief - Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (OWRC)
3. The Myth of the Wedge-Tailed Eagle
4. Goodbye and goodluck Suzie, October 2010
5. Eddie's Story (a tragedy)
6. Honeyeater Chicks survive Goshawks
7. Lou Lou the wallaby
8. Raffle Draw
8. Mud Larks recovery
9. Honours Research Project. (wombats)
11. The two Tawnys ready to release
11. RAISING FUNDS
12. A Tragic Story, and a lesson in caring.
13. A few of this season's more interesting snake relocations.
16. Wildlife Meetings 27th February



Brown snake feeding

retrieval of a young RBB that, unfortunately, passed away in care as a result of being chewn on by a larger individual prior to our arrival. Over the years, I'd always been led to believe that elapids were immune to their own kind's venom. In this case, at least, this has been proven a fallacy. The following day, I was called back to the same property,



as the larger RBB had returned to the scene of the crime and was searching for it's hapless victim.

On a good note, a first for me this season has been a call out for a "nest" of snakes at a South Hill location. "Yeah...right!", was my initial reaction, another "nest of satan's spawn". On arrival, I was pleasantly surprised and excited to find Marsh (or Swamp) Snakes basking communally in a sunny patch of the garden. Although several evaded capture (good for them), I was able

to catch three individuals, all of whom, I believed to be gravid females! After a search of the literature and internet, I could find no record of aggregations of gravid females in this particular species, though it is know to occur with another livebearing local, the Red-bellied Black snake.

Continued from page 3

This practise has long ceased as many now know that eagles only take sick and dying animals. Most farmers have been educated that the eagle does



not have a negative effect on the sheep industry, but sadly there are still many out there who don't believe it and continue to shoot, trap and destroy Wedge-tailed Eagles despite them being protected in all states.

Eagles are incredibly large and lanky birds. The bulk of these birds limits their chances of hunting live food and more often than not they are unsuccessful in their attempts at seizing live prey. The eagle doesn't have the manoeuvrability as does the smaller birds of prey such as falcons, hawks and kites and not only are twists and turns difficult - near impossible - for the eagle such manoeuvres use up valuable energy which is better used for circling in thermal air currents searching for carrion, which makes up a large part of their diet.

and I decided to wait it out with a cuppa and see what happened (it sometimes works, but not always). After half an hour or so, a large, male Red-Bellied Black (RBB) emerged from the garden, only to take shelter under a concrete step (bit slow in putting my tea down). Anyway, to cut a long story short, another half hour later, I found

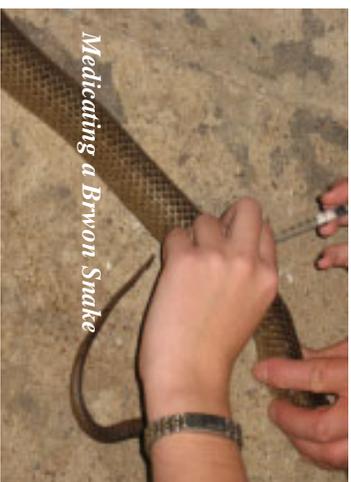


step on my knees and trying to hook a large RBB out from under the slab while fending off "Claude" the "watch goose", who emerged from around the corner at a most critical moment in the proceedings and took offence to the strange snake man loitering around his dwelling. As he slowly but surely dragged my jeans down to my ankles with his wickedly hooked beak, an enraged Claude also had his owner in a bit of a state (she wasn't game to go near him) and all she could think to do was rain goose pellets down on the both of us while yelling "here goosey, goosey, come to mum, Claude!!!"

On one occasion, my German Shepherd, "Grim", has been a useful asset in the search for an adolescent RBB at a property along Rockvale Rd. The snake had been seen earlier entering the laundry through an open screen door and was suspected to be

loose somewhere in the house. Luckily, Grim saved us a lot of time and effort as he located the snake in the toe of a shoe in the laundry within the first few minutes. Time for another cuppa!

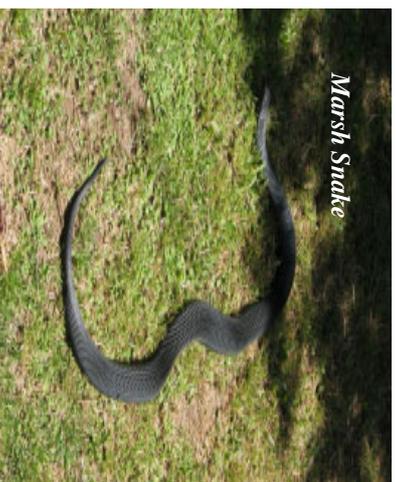
Yet another interesting call has been the removal of a large Eastern Brown Snake from under an invalid pensioner's recliner chair on Goswiyck Road, complete with pensioner! Although it's a good twenty



Medicating a Brown Snake

minutes from my place, both the Brown Snake and, needless to say, the pensioner hadn't moved an inch from the time of the call. I later asked her, if I'd called to confirm the snake's current location, would she have answered the phone...NOOOO WAY!!

Another interesting callout has been the



Marsh Snake



Website: [www.daff.gov.au/](http://www.daff.gov.au/)

[animal-plant-health/pests-diseases-weeds/animal/notifiable](http://animal-plant-health/pests-diseases-weeds/animal/notifiable).  
What is a 'notifiable' disease? A **notifiable disease is one that must be immediately reported to agricultural authorities.** If you suspect or can confirm that an animal is showing symptoms of one of the diseases listed below, you **must report** it to: local vet or

your state or territory's department of primary industries or agriculture by phoning the **Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888.**

## The Myth of the Wedge-Tailed Eagle

There is a common myth that surrounds the Wedge-Tailed Eagle which has contributed heavily to its demise in many areas of Australia. Many farmers of small stock, such as sheep and goats, believe that the Wedge-tailed Eagle hunts and kills stock young and that these birds badly



effect the sheep industry, trying, crippling their in-come. This is not so.

Yorkeys Knob and Gordonvale," said 'Eliminate Dengue' project leader, Professor Scott O'Neill of The University of Queensland's School of Biological Sciences. "By April we should know if we are on the right track or not, in our bid to stop the Aedes-aegypti mosquito from being able to transmit the dengue virus between people." The field trial involves introducing strains of a naturally-occurring bacterium called Wolbachia into the mosquito population, which through laboratory research has been shown to act like a 'vaccine' for the mosquito....." follow link to read more.

## New National List of Notifiable Animal Diseases

Disturbingly, in the 1900's literally thousands of eagles were killed. Between 1927 and 1968 in Western Australia alone 150,000 Government paid bounties were given as rewards for eagle carcasses, and in Queensland another 10,000.

Continued on page 15

## Goodbye and goodluck Suzie, October 2010

For the past three months Suzie had been restless especially when there was a full moon! Hormones again? Had the time had come to do something about her new home? We knew she needed to be close to a colony but not within and in a wombat friendly area. This is where being a wildlife carer gets really hard, it is a case of wanting them to have their best chance in life. Luckily I had recently met up with a school friend who lived on a property in 'wombat land' but was sad because their population had suffered badly from mange many years ago. Was this a possible new Suzie home?

Further thoughts of this were put aside as we were frantically gardening, the date for Open Garden was getting closer and the weeds were winning! Friends came to stay and much admired the visiting wombat who was camping in our culvert. Her sleeps were being disturbed by Trangrid working under the mega powerline deleting more beautiful trees and widening the easement. This was the result of the findings after the Victorian fires last year and has left us with an exportable woodchip pile and whole lot of replacement planting.

Three days after her visit we get a call to 'rescue' a big wombat 10km away and guess who it was..... yes Suzie. She had got out and travelled south and was leaving home! First attempt at catching her was abandoned as she holed up under a level crossing.....very snug and safe. Think again. Early next morning we set off with her big box on the truck and a large fishing net. Luckily we spotted her further down the road so we had a chance this time. I spread the net on the ground between us and lifted it up in front of me for protection as I could see she was not about to be friendly. She came to my call at a pace. I threw the net over her, she went into a crocodile roll then wonderful 'non-rugby player hubby' did the tackle

of this life! Next problem was how to get them up and her into the box..... Amazing strength came with determination. Now what? Suzie had settled down for a snooze in her old home.

Ring friend? Would she still like wombats on her property and would now? today? be a good time to deliver first one? Yes? Really? Thanks. ... We should be with you in 2 hours. Heavy rain had begun to fall ..... so what. We arrived in a perfect valley away from main roads and hadn't seen a



dead wombat beside the road, it looked good. After a welcome cup of tea and siles were discussed, we set off down towards the creek in their back paddock with some fairly steep hills on both sides. Placing the box and Suzie is a quiet corner of bushland we opened the door and wished her luck and a long life, no hugs required.

We could do no more but hope. Living with a wombat for three years has been an enlightening experience for us. We don't live in wombat land and knew we would have difficulty releasing them after they had made a territory here. But a lonely wombat is not worth considering.

We have many friends and carers to thank for their help. John Donnelly who rescued her, Linda Dennis for care guidance, Carol and Alan Rose who moved in several times and gave us a holiday and Josie who visited Suzie and made sure all was ok once she was out in the big enclosure. Thankyou all.

Julia and Phillip Rose.

As such, I would not have been too concerned if the possum had been unafraid of his original carer as there is commonly a bond between animal and human "mum or dad", but he should have been frightened of us and anybody else who went near him. However, this possum was afraid of no-one and nothing.



When we realised that the possum had no fear we embarked on a mission of trying to scare him away. He regularly came to sit at our glass sliding door, and would peer inside, so we would bang and crash to try and frighten him away. When we were on the

verandah at night he would jump out of the gum tree and prance up to us. We tried running at him, stomping our feet, but he would just sit up on his haunches and look at us quizzically. Life in the wild did not look good for poor possum.

We have two dogs, who we keep away from our native animal charges. Domestic animals and native animals just do not mix, I've learnt that from experience. Sadly however, the possum had been raised in a home with a resident dog, which regularly sniffed at him through the bars of his cage. The dog was relatively harmless, but the possum learnt that dogs were nothing to be scared of. Can you guess the rest?

One dreadful morning we went to our dogs night lock-up to release them for their breakfast and there was poor possum, dead in front of the dog kennel.

There is only one tree in the dog lock-up, not accessible from any other tree, for some reason the possum had climbed the fence and jumped in. We don't feed our dogs in the lock-up so there were no food scraps that might have attracted him in.

So, the strong message - if you plan on raising a native animal for release back into the wild it is imperative that you keep it away from all domestic animals. Your dog or cat might be harmless, but the dog or cat that the animal encounters once released probably won't be. You also need to ensure that the animal has survival instincts, that is can search for its own food and prey (possum nest) and that it is frightened of all strangers - people, domestic animals and other wild species alike.

## A few of this season's more interesting snake relocations.

by Richard Biffin

After a relatively late start to the season, probably due, in part, to all the wet weather, things are finally starting to gather pace from a snakey



view point. Once again, the majority of callouts have been for the ubiquitous Brown Snake, with a smattering of Red-bellied Blacks and the odd "Marshie". One of the many things I love about this job is that you never know quite what to expect on the next callout; in that sense, it's a bit like "a box of chocolates", though the adrenaline rush can be a bit more exaggerated, at times.

Perhaps my most "entertaining" moment occurred earlier in the season on a callout to a property bordering Dangar Falls. After initially losing the snake in the vegi patch, the home owner

## A Tragic Story, and a lesson in caring.

by Linda Dennis

This is a short story with a strong message. It has a sad outcome, so if you don't want to read a



Brush-tail Possum should begin to be gradually withdrawn from around 300 to 400 grams, it is the latter weight when the possum is fully out of pouch.

Contact varies with each individual animal however, as some seem to take longer to develop mentally than others. Release weight is approximately 1 to 1.5 kilos.

I didn't weigh the possum when he came into my care, but I estimated him to be a couple of kilos, give or take.

This was only part of the possums troubles. He had been raised on exotic fruits, such as custard apples, exactly the kind of food that he wouldn't find in the wild (not in our area, anyway). When he came to us we slowly reduced his exotic food hand outs and increased his natural food offerings, hoping that he would identify such food in the wild and start to forage for himself. Native diet includes gum leaf tips, flowers, fruits, insects and bird eggs. We were dismayed, however, when we discovered he had been raiding the dog food container in the garage - and had been doing so for quite some time.

When raising any young mammal, with the aim of releasing it back into the wild, it is imperative that the animal be moved to the release site well before sexual maturity. Indeed while it is still quite young. This enables the animal to become accustomed to its surroundings - the new sights, sounds and smells.

It also enables the "de-humanisation" process that should begin after the joey stage, and well before the animal gains sexual maturity.

Current theory is that human contact with a

## Eddie's Story (a tragedy)

by Linda Dennis

Eddie's story is one which I still find hard to tell. Why do I tell it you may ask? Well the answer is that it was probably my first taste of reality into wildlife care: the joy and heartbreak all rolled into one little wombat.

Eddie was my first ever wombat, a 2kg ball of furry fat which came into my care after he was found in his dead mum's pouch. She had been hit by a car the night before.

Like most wombats when he first arrived he was a right royal pain in the behind to feed. But after a few days of cursing and a lot of phone calls for moral support he was our shellers monster on four legs and everyone loved him.

Spending his days sleeping, eating and playing Eddie was a bundle of energy. Someone once told me wombats have 10 minutes of madness, well they lie. They have at least 30 minutes of madness where they play with everything that moves and try to bulldoze through anything that doesn't, and then collapse in a heap re-energizing for their next attack on the world.

Eddie continued to grow and do wombat things enjoying life's simple pleasures of being waited on hand and foot. By the time he reached a hefty 7kg, we moved him into what we thought was a wombat proof yard.

It wasn't until he reached the small size of 1.4kgs that we realised it wasn't quite as wombat proof as we would have liked! Eddie managed to escape and ended up locking himself in our neighbors laundry much to their bewilderment.

After a night in the 'wild' Eddie was never the same, he went from being a slightly hyperactive wombat to an independent grouch who just wanted out. We bit the bullet and decided it was time to move him to his release site. All went well, he was out being a wild animal in the same area as he came from and then tragedy struck.

Some hoon (that was probably the nicest word that we used!) hit Eddie and left him on the side of the road to die. We were lucky that by chance an experienced shelter found him, picked him up and raced him to a vet the following morning.

Thanks to the fantastic work done by the vets Eddie survived the crash, only to reveal a much greater problem, he had lost all feeling in his back legs.

After much debate (and quite a few tears) it was decided to give him a go and try some new techniques, involving a spinal specialist for canines.

Six weeks of physio, three times a day to a wombat who had decided he was wild was no easy task. Thank you to all the staff at the vet hospital, some of which I am positive are still trying to find calf muscles and fingers that he may have sampled. To Leasa and Sue for helping me with the physio sessions and Georgina and Tina for giving me the emotional support while on this rollercoaster.

After six weeks although a very slight improvement (where he could feel us touching his feet) it was decided that it was time to let Eddie go.

The wild is no place for a two legged wombat. I have made the decision to euthanasia hundreds of animals as my time as a carer. But agreeing to euthanase one of my babies was one of the hardest things I have ever done.

Did I make the right call, yes I am certain of it, did that make it any easier, no.

As a shelter I made the commitment to return animals only 100% fit back to the wild. We all do our best to raise animals which we hope will live a long happy life in the wild, reality is that some don't.

## Honeyeater Chicks

**survive Goshawks**  
by Jenni Drewitt

When I noticed honeyeaters acting suspiciously – they were regularly dashing in and out of the grapevine near the back door - I found it difficult to imagine that they were actually building a nest there. This spot is far from quiet, especially since the radio is on most of the time, and the door opens noisily (the rollers need replacing). But it wasn't long before I noticed a classic cup-shaped nest – I really had to strain my neck to see two tiny speckled eggs.

The next exciting thing I saw were two tiny balls of grey fluff huddled together which only showed signs of life when one of their parents returned with a minute insect. Then, they



*Honeyeater chicks begging for food*

would instantly lift their heads up and open their huge beaks (in proportion to the size of their heads) and chirp in unison (see photo). Their developing eyes were large bulges on the sides of their heads.

My heart sank when a pair of goshawks (see photo) started

showing an interest in the nest – they would be like crumbs to these large birds (42 cm



*Goshawks*

long). To try to discourage them I hung CDs near the nest, but it didn't take them long to realise that CDs are no threat.

In an attempt to foil the goshawks I improvised a cage around the nest with wire netting (see photo) The netting holes were large enough for the honeyeaters to easily fly through, but too small for the



goshawks to negotiate. Prickly branches were squeezed into spaces where the Goshawks may have tried to sneak in. I also left the radio on at night as a deterrent (to help spook the goshawks - whenever I went outside the goshawks would fly off). It was such a relief when the goshawks gave up.

As the chicks grew, they took turns standing on the side of the nest and practised flapping their wings.

When they first left the nest, they sat in the grapevine for ages, very close together, even though it was a hot day. Their parents continued to feed them often, and the chicks still cheeped loudly when their parents approached. Although I opened the noisy back door often (+ radio), along with me eye-balling them, they didn't bat their tiny eyelids. They appeared to doze often in between vigorously grooming themselves. Only a few hours after leaving their nest, the honeyeater twins individually left their improvised 'cage' followed by flustered twittering parents each bearing an insect. Just as well insects are juicy because until the young ones leave home they don't drink, nest to

## The two Tawny's ready to release

The Tawny Frogmouth, *Podargus strigoides*, is an Australian variety of frogmouth, a type of bird found throughout the Australian mainland, Tasmania



*Tawny's as chicks*

The Tawny Frogmouth was first described in 1801 by English naturalist John Latham. Its specific



*The first 2 tawny Frogmouth chicks ready for release.*

and southern New Guinea. The Tawny Frogmouth is often thought to be an owl. Many Australians incorrectly refer to the Tawny Frogmouth by the colloquial names of "Wopoke" or "Moreport", however, these are actually common alternative names for the Southern Boobook Owl. Frogmouths are not raptorial birds.

name is derived from the Ancient Greek stems *strix* "owl" and *eidos* "form". It belongs to the frogmouth family Podargidae, which also includes the other types of frogmouths like the Jaren and Solomon Islands Frogmouth. Tawny Frogmouths came from Aves (modern birds) then the neaves, which has such birds like flamingos, cuckoos and the owls. continued on to Caprimulgiformes.

## RAISING FUNDS 2011.....

### We begin 2011 with a "LUCKY DIP" Raffle

Prizes (x 6 so far) include a choice of :

- 1 Crocheted double bed blanket ~ donated by the late Brenda Martin (she also made all our 'joey wraps')
- 2 Book ~ 'Australian Owls' by S. Debus, donated by J. Rose
- 3 Opal pendant ~ donated by L. Morgan
- 4 Crocodile key ring , ~ donated by Mrs J. Wright
- 5 Wildlife tea towel, ~ donated by J. Rose
6. Book ~ Autographed copy of "Caring for Australian Native Birds" by Heather Parsons. Donated by Colin Wood.

Draw date is : 28<sup>th</sup> April which to includes Easter and tickets are \$1 each.

Stall selling dates ; Centro bookings TBA.

Newsletter of The Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers  
 along roads. When we conducted the fieldwork, my technician and I went to the study sight and within an hour we got the 4WD stuck on a rock. This took us another hour to dig our way out of it. It was raining on those couple of nights and it was freezing. The cattle had fun with the traps and removed them from the burrows. Sadly we didn't catch any wombats but I still have a video footage of the wombat that was in one of the trapped burrows leaving two nights after the traps were removed. The only thing I caught was a nasty cold.



So a lot of changes had to be made on my research, but from many late nights, staring at a computer screen for many hours, drinking lots of coffee and with a lot of help with my supervisor I looked at the issue from a different approach. And what my results showed that there was a high wombat burrow density in areas of high forest cover and burrow occupancy was lower than wombat occurrence at the burrow. Wombats will use culverts regularly with results from track analysis having higher probability of use than did camera trapping analysis.



The high burrow densities, determined by distance sampling, and results that show that based

on the averaged-model estimate from camera-trapping which show that half of the burrows are being occupied, suggests that there is a high wombat population in areas around Thunderbolts Way. This indicates that wombat habitat preference

found with the habitat characteristics along Thunderbolts Way have resulted in the road being a hotspot for wombat road mortality.

Drainage culverts look promising as a tool for providing wombats with a safe passage across the road. With using habitat modifications, such as increase forest cover

around the culvert and have more culverts closer together will make culverts more attractive to wombats. A further benefit of this study is the finding that the detection/non-detection method can be used as a monitoring tool.

I will admit that this research was not easy. I faced many issues in my project and had to

redesign my research half way through the year which caused a lot of stress. After the thesis was submitted, I spent a lot of time catching up on sleep. But from all the hard work I gained a Class II division I with a mark of 80%. This research has also answer a few questions about wombat ecology in hotspot regions and the potential use of culverts to reduce wombat road kills. I would like to thank the NTWC for there support and my two supervisors Stuart and Karl at the University of New England. I thank Julia, Linda and Richard for assisting in field work while Colin for computer assistance. I thank the Linnean Society of NSW for funding and the people at National Parks and State Forest. I also thank the property owners for allowing me to conduct my research. Finally I thank my family and friends for they support in 2010.



*Honeyeater chicks (Yellow-faced) not long after they had left their nest*

keep the Goshawk couple away. These Brown Goshawks nest in a large tree on the hill behind the house. It's amazing how quickly these fluffballs metamorphosed into fully-feathered birds just like their parents (see photo).

## Lou Lou the wallaby

WEIGHING just 1.5kg, Lou Lou the wallaby stood almost no chance against the floods that inundated the northwestern Victorian town of Great Western.



The tiny joey was seen with her mum in an enclosed backyard veggie patch before locals were evacuated. When they returned, mum was gone and Lou Lou was in a bad way. Luckily, Ros and Trevor Alderson at the Landsborough Wildlife Shelter, near the Gramplains, were just a phone call

away. Lou Lou's broken leg was bandaged and she is now plumping up on five feeds of milk a day. The orphaned marsupial must reach a goal weight of between 10kg and 12kg before she can be released into the wild.

Lou Lou was among more than 50 animals to be rescued by the Aldersons during Victoria's widespread floods. In more than eight years of running their wildlife shelter, it's the couple's first encounter with flood-affected animals.

"Unfortunately, we have had to put a lot of them down," Ms Alderson said. "A lot of joeys that have come in have been euthanased because they were found thrashing around in the water and it's just been too much for them."

Among the flood casualties was Rosie, the waterlogged rosella, found freezing in a pool of rainwater in a Moonambel backyard. Thankfully, her colourful feathers will regrow and the young bird will be flying high again one day.

Bob the echidna's rescue was a near miracle. Found paddling in the middle of Lake Lonsdale, near Stawell, Bob was scooped up by people on a passing boat. He is now being treated at their wildlife shelter for hypothermia.

Kelly O'Shea, our snake coordinator has left town. We want to thank her and wish her well in what she will be doing in her life after her university course.



## Raffle Draw

Mark Ingram from NPWS drawing the Carwell Australian Open Gardens raffle with Harold Heffernan.



Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers were the charity chosen by garden owners Phillip and Julia Rose. Three days of beautiful weather brought many visitors to the garden which featured native plants and the idea for a garden for wildlife. Lucky winners of the raffle were P. Koebel, R. Bird, J. Neale and H. Brad.

**Lucky Winner**  
winner of 3rd computer was a delighted Simon Scott of Armidale who had never won anything before.

## Mud Larks recovery

'Latest arrivals ..... mud-lark chicks complete with lice!



I am delighted to say Aeroquard gets them off me and a bird dusting powder has deleted most from the nestlings. They are now feasting happily on grubs and crumbles in the mealworm dish. The Guyra tomato farm wanted them removed so I can't see them being reunited with the parent birds. At this point I am looking at my two resident mudlarks and wondering if they might adopt. Always worth a try!

**Come along to the February 27th Meeting including AGM at East Mann st Armidale. BYO Lunch at 12noon. Come & support you organisation**

## Habitat is associated with road mortality of wombats and the potential use of drainage culverts as crossing structures.

### Honours Research Project. (wombats)

by Natasha Crook

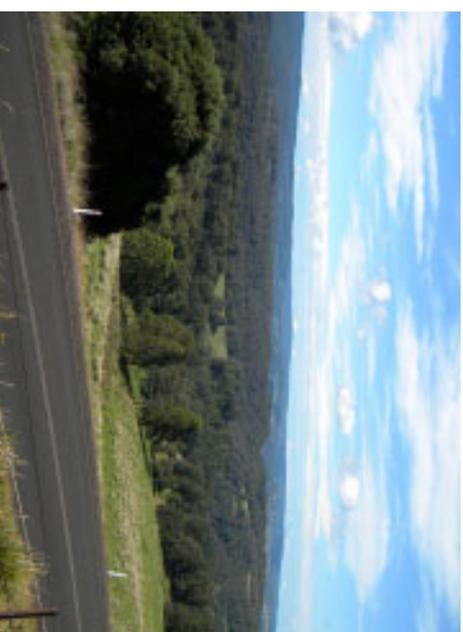
Many wombat populations throughout NSW have been reduced because of high road mortality: an understanding of particular characteristics of wombat populations within hotspots is limited.

Increasing such understanding could help increase the effectiveness of measures to mitigate wombat road kill within hotspots. Thunderbolts Way is a road located within the Northern Tablelands, New South Wales and has been identified as a hotspot for road deaths of the bare-nosed wombat (*Nombatus ursinus*). My honours thesis aimed to assess a wombat population in Nowendoc hotspot region and to evaluate if existing road structures can be used as effective mitigation measure to reduce road mortality. The study examined aspects of wombat ecology, specifically, burrows density and occupancy, and assessed the use of drainage culverts by wombats. This study was conducted last year with the University of New England.

The wombat ecology was examined using two methods: distance sampling to determine wombat burrow density and camera trapping and using the

detection/non-detection method to determine occupancy estimations of burrows and wombat presence. Culvert use was assessed by using cameras and tracks, as well as the detection/non-detection method.

I had many interesting experiences when I conducted field work. The first time I conducted my burrow survey Julia and I realised the difficulties I would faced. We walked over two kilometres on a 45° degree slope in thick vegetation. I was



constantly having problems with the GPS as it was always losing reception. I was zapped by an electric fence and only completed two line transects (I completed 50 transect by the end of the study). But it was worth it when we set up the cameras at

Nowendoc National Park. We were exhausted and Julia looked into a log and quietly called out "look Nat" and there was a little wombat hidden within the log. Even though I was covered with over 20 leech bites, seeing that wombat was worth it. (Photo 1)

I have been very lucky as I got to see wild wombats. Another time I was on the edge of the road about to finished my burrow survey, I turned around and saw a young wombat a crossed the road grazing (Photo 2). But the field work was tough, many kilometres were trekked in rough terrain where I faced many difficulties (Photo 3). However, when I got video footage of wombats on my cameras or saw a burrow in the distance, I was happy.

Originally, part of my project was to put GPS collars on wombats to examined home ranges