



TWEED VALLEY WILDLIFE CARERS INC. NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2007

It's an Amazing World

Everyone has seen the advert telling us it is an amazing world. But I hope we don't need television to remind us of what lies only a little way from our very own doorstep.

Rainforests cover less than 0.03% of Australia however they hold nearly a third of the mammal and bird species and around half of the plants.

The World Heritage listed National Parks in our region have been developing over millions of years.

So many of our unique animals are nocturnal and for the most part remain unseen and little known.

Our night skies contain such things as a tiny bat of around six grams in weight (Golden-tipped-thought to be extinct until it was found in 1981 after 87 years) that flies through the forest canopy and dines solely on spiders. One of the 37 bat species of the region and the only mammal to learn to fly. It alone can hover to pluck the spiders from their webs.

Another unique individual is the Hip - pocket frog. Two to three centimetres long the male frogs have two hip pouches in which the tadpoles are raised. The only other frog to brood young in pouches occurs in South America.

Of the Birds of Paradise we have our very own Paradise Rifle bird. The females build the nest and raise the young while the males spend all their time displaying their magnificent plumage to best advantage high in the canopy.

We also have the tiny marsupial Antechinus the only species known after the breeding season in which not a single adult male is left alive (apparently the stress gets to them). Mum raises the babies, which, when old enough, cling to her back with their teeth as she hunts for

insects.

Even the common old Brush Turkey lays her eggs in a mound of soil and leaf litter and the male tends it carefully keeping the temperature at a steady 33 degrees (as a carer I can appreciate the work involved to keep the temperature even). Mounds can reach over a metre high and 4 metres wide. The young escape the mound and in no time are foraging for themselves.

Then the echidnas - the mum digs a nesting burrow, baby hatches from an egg the mother has in a pouch on her belly and weighs 0.05grams. Drinking 20 % of its weight at each meal it is left in the burrow after the spines have emerged. Mum returns to feed baby every day or two.

How lucky are we! There are all sorts of interesting things out there. Get out and see for yourself.

Just think - as a wildlife carer or as a volunteer you actually get to meet and learn a little about some amazing creatures. O.K, maybe you won't get to see a Coxen's Fig Parrot, but I'm sure you will be amazed.

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Chair Chat...by our President Ilona Roberts

After such a long time with no newsletter, I'm finding it difficult to get back into the rhythm of Chairchat. I am happy to welcome Karen Bishop to the position of Newsletter Editor.

TVWC has been through a period of turbulence, which resulted in some resignations both from the group and from the management positions, although fortunately, some of these have since been withdrawn. We are still intact, although now we have fewer committee members and at present no animal co-ordinators. I hope that in the future these positions will once again be filled. To their everlasting credit and despite serious differences of opinion, some members have demonstrated that their love of and dedication to assisting wildlife in distress is the most important thing. After all, it is for the animals that the group exists at all. To all of those people, I am grateful.

Over the past months, we have had the spring/summer influx of babies. Despite the chronic lack of carers, we have managed to deal with most of them. Thank you to all who undertook to care for the birds, the bats and the joeys. Of course baby season was just in addition to the usual care for the adult animals, who continue to run foul of human endeavour; cars, windows, dogs, cats, the usual suspects. This summer has seen an increased number of snake calls too; Salt and Casurina developments clearly did not take into account the resident

snake population before they invaded these areas. The reptile rescuers deserve a special thank you because they have gone way beyond the call of duty, both in the number of calls that they have attended, and in keeping their cool when dealing with people who think the only good snake is a dead one.

We have had several calls also about endangered bush-stone curlews; some of these keep turning up in Kingscliff; in the shopping centre, near the air/sea rescue tower and the nearby picnic area. Possibly they would have come from where the Salt and Casurina developments now stand; concrete and glass replaces what would have been their habitat.

There have been two NWC meetings (report page 5) which I have attended in Sydney. This group is now up and running and is working hard to improve conditions for wildlife and wildlife carers and draw government attention to wildlife issues.

Orientation Training

We have recently run an Orientation session, which was followed by a rescue and emergency care day for birds. I hope that those who attended feel that if the need arose, they would have the basic skills to cope. What I wanted to get across too, was that no one need feel that they are alone in this - although the situation

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Photo: A young Tree Martin enjoys a meal worm. Martins catch prey on the wing.

TRAINING DAYS

- March 24 (Saturday)** **Glider Workshop**
Where: 'Narrowleaf', Advancetown. 9.30 - 4.30 pm (E.S.Time)
Contact: Ilona Roberts - O2 6676 6259 Cost: \$15
- April 21 (Saturday)** **Basic Birds with Dr. Ann Fowler**
Where: Sth Tweed Community Hall - 9am - 4pm
Contact: Ilona Roberts - O2 6676 6259
- April 22 (Sunday)** **Baby Birds with Dr. Ann Fowler**
Where: Banora Point Community Centre - 9am - 4pm
Contact: Ilona Roberts - O2 6676 6259
- April 28 (Saturday)** **Introduction & Rescue Course**
Where: Northern Rivers Woolongbar - 9am - 4.00 pm
Contact: Ilona Roberts - O2 6676 6259 Cost: \$7.50
- May 26 (Saturday)** **Orientation**
Where: Sth Tweed Community Hall. 12.00 pm
Contact: Ilona Roberts - O2 6676 6259
- June 9 (Saturday)** **Basic Rescue**
Where: Sth Tweed Community Hall, 10am.
Contact: Ilona Roberts - O2 6676 6259
- June 10 (Sunday)** **Advanced Possum Workshop**
Where: 'Narrowleaf', Advancetown. 10.00 - 4.00 pm
Contact: Ilona Roberts - O2 6676 6259 Cost: \$15
- June 17 (Sunday)** **Adult Koalas**
Where: 'Narrowleaf', Advancetown. 10.00 - 3.00 pm
Contact: Ilona Roberts - O2 6676 6259 Cost: \$15



Remember-

Carers must attend applicable workshops before caring for animals. Experienced carers also must update their knowledge - it is an obligation by TVWC regulations.

Workshops are a great place to meet people with the same interests, learn new techniques, and make new friends.

Cage Inventory

An inventory is currently being collated by Barbara Thompson of all TVWC cages and release cages so records can be updated.

Could members who currently have a cage or cages belonging to the group please advise Barbara on the cages and their condition of the ones in your possession as soon as possible. Members

are required to ensure the cages are cared for and safe to house wildlife.

As always we also need people willing and able to make & assemble release cages and repair or modify existing cages. Are there any handy people out there able to help?

Cages are such expensive items,

but good quality cages are vital for the safety of the wildlife we rehabilitate.

Barbara Thompson can be contacted on 02 6672 8143

Photo: A young Antechinus slumbers. One of six siblings successfully released back to the wild after being raised by Jan Bishop.



Photo: Karen Bishop

Chairchat ... (continued)

might be strange and even scary (it often is the first time an animal is taken into care - the immediate fear being of making whatever is wrong with the creature worse) - there is always going to be someone to call on for advice or actual physical assistance.

At the end of the training session, we had seven new members signing up and another couple thinking about just how they wanted to contribute. Again, thank you to all the carers, phone people and transporters/rescuers who contributed.

A special thanks too to the phone volunteers - these past couple of months have seen several phone people out of the country or the State, dealing with changed work conditions or moving house and consequently unable to volunteer for the phones. Which meant that those remaining have taken on extra shifts, so thank you all for this.

Code of Conduct

There is now a code of conduct drawn up. This is based on similar codes which are used in other groups (like FoK and NWC). It serves to remind us that although we are all volunteers, there nevertheless is an obligation to behave with honesty, integrity and dignity in all our dealings as TVWC members. Undoubtedly all of us love our native animals unconditionally and have endless patience with and compassion for them, but we need also to extend this to our fellow carers and to members of the general public. I say this knowing well that it applies to me no less than anyone in the group.

Workshops &..

Finally, apart from welcoming new members, a word about future meetings and workshops:

On March 24 there is a Glider workshop to be held by Eleanor Hanger at the Wildcare headquarters at Narrowleaf, past Advancetown. This will be a full

day and you need to bring your own lunch. Anyone interested in attending should contact me asap so I can book you in and if necessary arrange car pooling.

We have invited guest speakers from Friends of the Koala (FoK) to address our general meeting on April 14. The dearth of carers is especially keenly felt in koala care as Debbie Moore and Sue Johnson are the only people competent to do this work and with Debbie's increased work commitments at TAFE it puts an impossible burden on Sue's shoulders. FoK will hopefully be in a position to assist us in this and they also want to tell us about a koala friendly schools project they are piloting.

We have arranged for Anne Fowler to conduct Basic Bird and Baby Bird Training courses on 21 April and 22 April. I will be following up on these. Anne is a wildlife vet and an excellent teacher. Her workshops are a must for anyone intending to care for birds. Even experienced carers will benefit from attending.

About a boy ...Karen Bishop

An outing to a major theme park had been organised for a small group of children. Each child had a carer as all the children had been dealt a rough hand in life.

Horror of horrors, one of the little boys disappeared during the morning. Unable to speak or communicate in any way the lad had gone.

Staff went all out to find him. Stopping all the rides so there could be no accidents the staff joined the search. Unable to call him they had to visually search everywhere they could think of in the area

Finally he was found. Dripping wet and smelling 'pongy' they had no idea where he had gone or what had happened to him.

It was decided to cut the visit short as they now had a very wet

and bedraggled boy.

Several hours later the young lad was home. His mum, wondering what he had been doing changed the boy and checked him over for injuries. As his clothes came off mud oozed from the pockets and crevices.

He had a little backpack with him and his mum thought if she checked that she might get a clue to what had happened.

Unzipping the backpack she took out the small towel and bits and pieces and found at the bottom of the pack a very unhappy fairy penguin.

Mum now had her answer.

She rang the park to find out what to do; they asked her to clear out

her vegie crisper in the fridge and put the little penguin in this until they could get someone to pick it up.

Twenty minutes later a helicopter landed in the street. A somewhat happier penguin was retrieved from the vegie crisper and set into an esky for the trip home.

Animals can reach almost everyone.

Photo:- Beau is doing well in care with Tash & Jenny Graham.
Photo K.Bishop

It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again because there is no effort without error and shortcomings, who knows the great devotion, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the high achievements of triumph and who at worst, if he fails while daring greatly, knows his place shall never be with those timid and cold souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

Theodore Roosevelt



Photo: Karen Bishop

Report Minutes from meeting No.6 Wednesday 14 February 2007

NSW Wildlife Council

Office Bearers: As there was only one nomination per position, the Committee is as follows:

Chair: Audrey Koosmen (Native Animal Trust Fund)

Vice Chair: Stan Wood (WIRES)

Secretary: Lorraine Vass (Friends of the Koala)

Treasurer: Joan Hills (Wildlife Carers Network)

Media Officer: Sandra Stewart (Independent General Licences)

INSURANCE: A Certificate of Currency has been obtained (29 Jan) It is up to individual groups to pursue refunds from former insurance companies.

NSW Govt. has covered the cost of insurance for 2007 but it needs to be established that this will be an ongoing situation, not a "one off". Lorraine Vass has written to the Minister for confirmation of this. No response at time of meeting.

Non-members (e.g. volunteers who may be working in an office are covered. Any employees must be covered by workers comp. Children of volunteers not covered.)

Claims are to be made via NWC. Stan Wood to get clarification.

There was discussion about communicating the existence of NWC to various parties - OZARK was suggested - Sandra Stewart will do article to go to OZARK with links to NWC website. Stan will Circulate an article written by Lorraine about NWC to various animal magazines.

KOALA SURVEY: no news yet re payment for information submitted. Audrey chasing this up.

RESEARCH & STATISTICS GROUP: Terms of reference have been drawn up in draft form. Objectives being researching options for improving data collection, analysis etc. also communicating the value of keeping records and statistics to wildlife rehab community.

Focus will be on developing strategies to help wildlife rehab community.

FLYING FOX WORKING PARTY:

Gwen Parry-Jones nominated to head this. Also identified the need to seek outside expert assistance to help working committees.

Gwen's email address is wambina@bigpond.com.au

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE: Vet payments: Stan is looking at overseas models. For these to be successful there needs to be a reliable database and the payments can then be tied to the database.

There needs to be a breakdown of costs - perhaps a standard fee service - e.g. microchipping, euthanasia, basic consult. Open to suggestions

LICENSING ISSUES: DEC wants NWC to assist with who gets issued licences. NWC is willing to contribute opinions and information regarding criteria for licences but not to influence who does or does not receive them.

Representations are being made to the Minister about this. DEC needs to enforce its

own policies and rules. NWC can offer support so that Govt. allows DEC to do this. There is presently overlapping of jurisdictions which has led to conflict and ill-will because DEC has permitted licences in violation of its own licensing regulations.

WIRES has no identified existing branch boundaries - these have never been defined by DEC.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Judith Hallinan and Derek Spielman from WAIF.

Aim is to support and improve health of wildlife individually and the communities in which it exists. Aim to provide health services (clinics run in Sydney area for carers to take animals) Vets are paid for services.

Aim to give assistance also to incidents such as heat stress in F-f colonies. Provide assistance for obtaining equipment and specialist care facilities.

Will do training. Derek Spielman is a vet - may be possible to get him for training at some stage.

EDUCATION: Coralie Leticia (Wildcare Queenbeyan) will put together a list of trainers and set up a database.

TAX DEDUCTABILITY: this is being sought by NWC for groups of fewer than 50 members presently required.

7-DAY HOLDING PERIOD: This is shortly to be debated in parliament - NWC has sent in recommendation as has DEC.

Also to be debated is directions to individuals to stop feeding wildlife - warning given and 28 days notice - if not compliant the offender may face fines. Situations like restaurants permitting feeding of seagulls, nursing home residents feeding ducks - in either case the animals not only can become malnourished but may constitute traffic hazard.

NWC is also to join Nature Conservancy Council. Lorraine Vass to be Rep.

Current TVWC Office Bearers

President : Ilona Roberts - 02 6676 6259
Secretary: Chato Page - 02 6679 7151
Treasurer: Suzanne Raabe - 02 6679 1445
Committee: Barbara Thompson, Tony Seto,
Sybil Primrose.
Phone Co-ordinator: Ilona Roberts
Membership Officer: Karen Bishop - 07 5524 9127
Newsletter Editor: Karen Bishop - 07 5524 9127



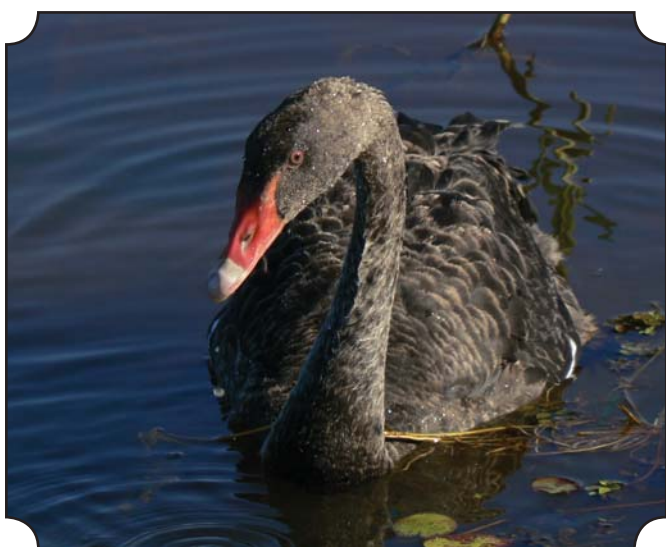
Photo: Sooty

A 3 week old cygnet came into care last year with a terrible chest wound. Vets repaired the damage and the youngster was not expected to survive.

As you can see she grew into a beautiful bird.

A diet of lettuce (up to six a day), English spinach and broccoli was the wildlife vet's recommendation. She was returned to the wild in late September to a lake which had several other swans, it wasn't breeding season - so no problems with territorial disputes.

Watching her grow was the most rewarding experience and it was all topped off by the successful release.



Welcome to New Members

Arna Baartz
Aaron Brand
Kathy Heaton
Linda Hogan
Annette Jones
Eugenie Levy
Rhian Mc Cormack
Stephen Pont
Jennifer Pusey
Shirley Shore
Jenny Travis-Jones
Marion Williams

Also welcome returning member
Leanne Gardiner-Smith

On Extinction.. a quote from Bradley Trevor Greive

*"These wonderful creatures will not argue their case.
They will not put up a fight, they will not beg for reprieve.
They will not say goodbye, they will not cry out.
They will just ... vanish.*

*And after they are gone, there will be silence, and there will be stillness,
and there will be empty places,
and nothing you can say will change this."*

Dates to Remember

- March 24** - **Glider Workshop** - , Advancetown - 9.30am - 4.30pm (E.S.Time)
- April 14** - **General Meeting** - CWA Hall, Murwillumbah - 1.00pm
- April 21** - **Basic Bird Training** - Sth Tweed Community Hall - 9.00am - 4.00pm
- April 22** - **Baby Bird Training** - Banora Point Community Hall - 9.00am - 4.00pm
- April 28** - **Introduction & Rescue Course** - Wollongbar - 9.00am - 4.00pm
- May 26** - **Orientation** - Sth Tweed Community Hall (12.00pm)
- June 2** - **General Meeting** - CWA Hall, Murwillumbah - 1.00pm
- June 10** - **Advanced Possum Workshop** - Narrowleaf - 10.00am - 4.00pm
- June 17** - **Adult Koala Workshop** - Narrowleaf - 10.00am - 3.00pm



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