



Wild about Wildlife!

ISSUE 3: JAN — MAR 2008

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Wildlife Burns Workshop

Members of the Granite Belt Wildlife Carers Inc recently attended a Wildlife Burns Workshop run by the UQ Vet Science Wildlife Association.

The workshop was presented by Dr Anne Fowler, who's experience with bush fire victims in Victoria has highlighted the need for a more cohesive approach to managing large scale wildlife burns scenarios. Her aim with this workshop was to refresh and raise the skill levels of animal welfare professionals in relation to burns protocols.

The workshop covered topics such as:

- Bushfire groundwork (what to expect, hazards, personal protective equipment)
- Assessment of wildlife that has been burned
- Treating the burns

- Supportive care including fluids, food and housing
- Rehabilitation and re-release
- Practical bandaging session
- Assessment: comprehension test.

The carers who attended the workshop said that it was



Photo: Anakie CFA

very informative and a lot of the information and skills gained could be brought back to our community and applied should we be unfortunate enough to experience another major bushfire.

President of the GBWC Inc, Betty Balch was involved in rescuing wildlife who suffered burns in the bushfire which hit our area in 2002. She stated that "if we had known then what we know now, we would have been in a much better position to attempt to save more wildlife."

She said that "Bushfires are a part of our community, and like it or not they are going to happen again. If we can man our volunteers with the information, skills and equipment they need to try to save our native animals, then we will be much better prepared for what lies ahead."

Workshop Wonders

Earlier this year, some members also had the opportunity to attend a series of workshops in Nambour run by WILVOS—Wildlife Volunteers Association Inc.

WILVOS are a wildlife rescue and caring organization based in Nambour but cover from Gympie to Caboolture and into the hinterland.

They have approx 250 members, 100 of which are active carers and the remaining 150 are "Friends of WILVOS".

The husbandry and rehabili-

tation workshops were presented by Dr Anne Fowler and covered:

- Native birds;
- Marsupials including macropods, possums, wombats, koalas and echidnas; and
- Native reptiles (including turtles, snakes and lizards) and frogs.

Dr Fowler is an entertaining speaker and all of the workshops were thoroughly enjoyable. You can find out more about Dr Fowler at: <http://www.fourthcrossingwildlife.com/AnneFowler.htm>



The workshops were accompanied by a manual which our members have been able to use to impart the information on to those carers who were unable to attend. They also make great reference sources and have already been used to assist in rescue situations.

Four and twenty blackbirds? four and twenty too many.....

Author: QPWS Ranger Jo McLellan



Turdus merula

Common or
Eurasian
blackbird

If they haven't as yet, the introduced common blackbird *Turdus merula* could be tapping on our back doorstep, potentially encroaching on the Granite Belt's thriving stone fruit industry and effecting native plant and animals populations. However, with a community effort together with the Queensland Government, we are well-placed to prevent this species becoming an established pest in Queensland.

Blackbirds have slowly but surely expanded their range north, and are now infiltrating south east Queensland. It has been recorded in parts of the Toowoomba area and Granite Belt. They are considered pests because they damage a variety of soft fruits including figs, grapes, olives, berries and stone fruit. If fruit is available, they will consume it throughout the year. They also have been implicated in the spread of weed species such as blackberry and are highly aggressive and will compete with native species for food and habitat requirements.

Particularly found in parks and gardens where they enjoy

scratching around in the leaf litter and mulch for their food, they are given to untidy feeding habits flicking mulch, leaves and sticks everywhere. They are most obvious during spring and summer when the males sing from vantage points. Their beauti-



Side view of a male Eurasian Blackbird, perching on a thin branch, with its head in profile showing the bluntish bill, orange-rimmed eye, bold, pure-black plumage, and athletic legs.

Photo: www.dkimages.com

ful song may be a novelty but belies their pest potential if allowed to establish and spread further. To hear their call, visit the Toowoomba Bird Observers website at www.toowoombabirdobservers.org.

Blackbirds should not be confused with the common starling and common myna – two other introduced pests. The male blackbirds are black and have a distinctive orange

to yellow bill and eye-ring. Females are greyish-brown and have a dull yellow-brown bill. Blackbirds also move by jerkily hopping around rather than walking.

Queensland's Departments of Primary Industries and Fisheries and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service officers are working closely with Toowoomba Bird Observers and Toowoomba City Council to determine the current whereabouts and size of any blackbird populations in southern Queensland, particularly in larger centres such as Toowoomba and Stanthorpe areas where control measures would be difficult once the birds become entrenched. The general public can greatly assist with blackbird management by reporting all sighting.

For further information or to advise of a blackbird sighting please contact the Blackbird Hotline on 4699 4365 or 4633 0553 or enter the details online at www.toowoombabirdobservers.org. If possible, please submit a photograph to assist in confirming the identification.

A message from our President

A brush with a Brushie

A fairly quiet time for animals at the moment, which no doubt is a good thing. We can all do with a bit of a rest from time to time. With the body of grass around, let's hope the macropods stay away from the roads.

I notice there are in pouch possums (Brushies) around again at the moment, and with wood cutting season here, we can probably expect some casualties.

Should you get a call such as this, it is a help if they simply wrap the whole body in something which helps keep the joey warm. Don't stress if it's only an old bag....often people don't have anything better in their truck, and at least with the mother's body, there is some warmth available.



I once told a fellow to stick the baby down his shirt, and by the time he got to me, he was in a dreadful state, quite badly bitten and scratched. I was so surprised he didn't throw the vicious little tyke out the window!



Bird disease query?

It is always a relief when the birds have stopped nesting!! But at the moment birds are a big problem, with various members of the parrot family succumbing to some unknown ailment which is killing them in great numbers. One town resident has reported that dozens of King Parrots have died at her property on the edge of town.

The Rangers at Girraween have requested that any sick birds be reported to them or to me, so that we can get them away as quickly as possible for inspection by the Department Veterinarian in Toowoomba. If you happen to have a sick one or a fresh body, the sooner we know, the sooner a solution can be found.

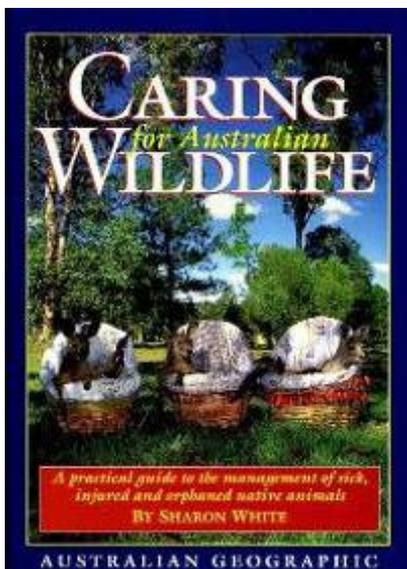
Fowler's followers

Some of us have been lucky enough to have been able to attend the "Dr Anne Fowler" workshops in recent months. The Marsupial Day in Nambour was exceptionally good, even if it was a very long day!! It was so refreshing to hear a speaker who not only has the academic capabilities but who has the practical abilities as well. And the same goes for the Burns workshop, as Ruth has covered in this edition as well. I feel it was a great pity some of us weren't able to be at the Bird Day, but.... at least we were able to obtain the Manual.



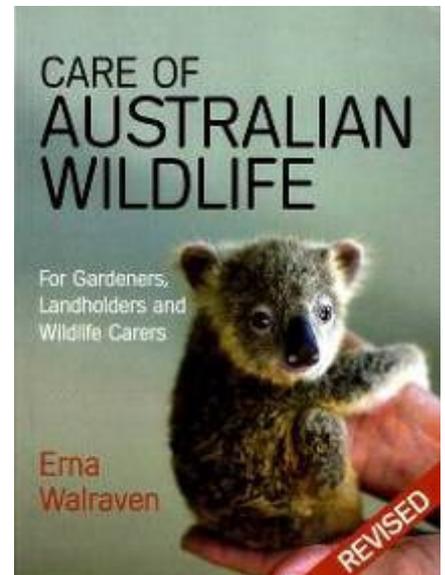
I think workshops are a very essential part of our caring, but with us being such a small group, I feel that while we are able to "hook onto" other groups, and access their programmes, we will do better than try to have our own. There are several groups willing to have us visit with them for these occasions, which is fantastic. So, as they become available, we must try to attend.
Betty

Recommended References



Caring for Australian Wildlife
Sharon White
Published by Australian Geographic
Available from Australian Geographic for \$19.95
ISBN: 1 86 276 021 7

Care of Australian Wildlife
Erna Walraven
New Holland Publishers
Available from Dymocks bookstores for \$24.95
ISBN: 1 74 110 207 3



Did you know.....?

Where did our native animal names come from



When European explorers first saw these strange hopping animals they asked a native Australian (aborigine) what they were called. He replied "*kangaroo*" meaning "*I don't understand*" your question. The explorers thought this was the animal's name. And that's how the kangaroo got its name.

Also, "*macropod*" means "*big foot*", a distinct characteristic of all macropods.

The name Koala comes from an Aboriginal word. It means "*no drink*", as Koalas usually get enough fluids through the eucalyptus leaves they feed on.

Koalas eat 0.5kg of eucalypt leaves each day.



Donations

This quarter we were donated:

- A sharp carousel microwave oven from Herb and Pat Fawcett, perfect for making our wildlife chocolates.
- A \$20 voucher for Bunnings Hardware Stores from an anonymous donor.



Meet new house-mates Dexter and Chrissie, brush tailed possums from Brisbane.



Thankyou to:

- Neil from Aerated Waters who gave us some display hooks to display our chocolates. Neil has always gone out of his way to assist us with our fund raising activities when he can.
- Vicki at Stanthorpe State School tuckshop who helped us in lending us a display stand and the use of some containers for transportation of our chocolates to use for our market stall.
- Joyce Pozzebon from GM Fabrics who was happy to sell some raffle tickets in our recent quilt raffle.

and the Winner is .?!

Speaking of quilts, congratulations to Mackenzie (Macca) Rowen, son of one of our carers, who is the winner of the patchwork quilt we recently raffled, featuring images of Australian native animals. Sally assures us he will treasure his newly won prize.

Macca's recent claim to fame was to start his wildlife caring skills early. Here he is, perfectly mimicking MaMa feeding his beloved (baby) dinosaur.



Express yourself!

Native animal statues are popping up all over the place, so if you would like to express your love of Australian native wildlife in a similar manner, we have found out that the wallaby statues at 1m tall are \$90 each and available from Nick's Home Hobbies who has the concrete statue display at 115 Granite Belt Drive, The Summit. He can also supply the emus and some of the birds.

If you have any queries, or would like to place an order, please phone Nick or Jenny on 07 4683 2427 or Mobile 0417 780 783.

Native animal statues on Bellvue Rd, Tenterfield



Animals currently in care as at 31 March 2008:

Macropods:

- 7 eastern grey kangaroos with 6 carers - “Sally”, “Missy”, “Johnny B.”, “Digger”, “Ash”, “Bones”, “Rosebud” & “Roofus”.
- 1 wallaroo - “Walter”.
- 1 red-necked wallaby - “Buster”.

- 8 brush-tailed possums - (from left to right)
Top - “Wendy Elizabeth”, “Dexter John”, “Chrissie Ann”, “Brian Keith”,
Bottom - “Casey”, Colin James”, “Cherry-lee” & “Daisy May”.



Possums:

- 1 ring-tailed possum - “Mikey”.

Rescues Animals rescued this quarter were:

Marsupials:

- A pinkie ringtail possum and a red-necked wallaby were picked up from West Warwick Veterinary Surgery.
- A brush-tailed possum was rescued from the roof cavity of a house in Stanthorpe and successfully relocated to a carer’s property.
- A pinkie eastern-grey kangaroo was rescued from Mt Tully Rd.
- 2 ringtail possums were rescued from Amiens.



Birds:

- 1 magpie with a very damaged leg was rescued from the hospital grounds.
- An eastern rosella that flew into a window at Blue Care was rescued and was released after 2 days.
- Another eastern rosella was rescued from Dalveen.
- A sulphur crested cockatoo was rescued from Warwick.
- A galah was rescued from the golf course.
- A second galah that fell out of a tree was rescued from Stanthorpe.

- A third galah that couldn’t fly was rescued from Cannon Creek.
- A tawny frogmouth owl with a broken wing was rescued from Thulimbah.



Releases Animals released this quarter were:

- “Chuckles”, the kookaburra, was released on the carer’s property. This was a successful story, despite Chuckles ‘killing’ strips of ox heart on the carer’s head at the beginning of the release process.
- “Toby” the brush-tailed possum was released on the carer’s property in February.

- 5 ringtail possums were released.
- 1 crimson parrot was released on the carer’s property.
- 1 crested pigeon released on the carer’s property.
- 1 galah was released on the carer’s property.

- The Silver Gull rescued from Girraween Lodge in January spent several weeks in the care of the Seabird Rescue Group and was released in March at the Port of Brisbane.





Granite Belt Wildlife Carers Incorporated

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**Member Tally
to Date:
24**

Granite Belt Wildlife Carers Inc. is a non profit group dedicated to rescuing and caring for sick, injured and orphaned native wildlife in the Granite Belt area of SE Qld.

Native wildlife can become victims from gunshot, collisions with overhead wires, windows and moving vehicles, contact with pesticides and other poisons, attack by domestic and feral animals, plus a variety of other hazards. With our wildlife in danger from so many of man's activities, Granite Belt Wildlife Carers are prepared to do their utmost to aid them in their time of unfortunate suffering.

If you find wildlife in distress, please call a registered wildlife rescuer as soon as possible. Telephone numbers are on the front of this leaflet and in the Granite Belt Informer.



Not quite the same as being fed by Mum, but hey it works!

What's Happening!

Wombat Watch

Saturday - 17 May, 2008

The annual wombat search will be taking place in Girraween National Park, involving teams of people looking for and recording signs of wombats (holes and scats) in designated areas throughout the park. Holes are tagged, photographed and their location recorded on GPS. This information is collated in a report on how healthy our local wombat population is, or whether there are trends or issues we need to be on the look out for.

Whilst wombat watching requires a fairly good level of fitness, if you would like to help, contact Liz Bourne on 4683 6374 or batmaps@halenet.com.au

General Meeting

Sunday - 22 June, 2008

Our next general meeting will be held on , commencing at 10:00 am at the Amiens Discovery Centre, Post Office Lane, Amiens.

New and existing members welcome.



**Ringtail possums
Gemma and Mikey**

National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference

July 21- 25, National Convention Centre, Canberra

This years RSPCA wildlife conference is being held in Canberra hosted by RSPCA Wildlife (ACT) and Wildcare Queenbeyan (NSW).

The aim of this annual conference is to disseminate the latest scientific and practical information about rescue, rehabilitation and release of Australian native fauna.

Itinerary, registration form and speakers papers available from: www.nwrc.com.au.