

SUMMER 2008/9 NEWSLETTER

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Coordinator's Report

It is difficult to believe it is nearly Christmas and soon it will be 2009. Spring has passed by and has meant a busy but enjoyable time for most of us.

Improved admission and treatment sheets for wildlife (and the occasional domestic or feral) has meant better recording of information – all shifts and volunteers should now be familiar with the forms and system which are mandatory. Please do speak with a member of the management team if there are any queries.

The information from these sheets will become hotly sought after as we start entering and using information in the new database. All volunteers are asked to assist by completing forms as required rather than

needing to be chased up.

Our team of sausage sizzle experts has been very busy at a number of community events. Not only do they do a fantastic job fundraising but they also ensure someone is on hand to provide information to the public about wildlife issues. There are a number of events planned for 2009 and any assistance would be greatly appreciated. Keep your eyes peeled for information posted on the notice boards and on the web forum.

The Christmas dinner on the 28th November was a great night. With about 60 volunteers and some partners present we had a lovely time at Elizabethan Village. It was great to see Dr Rachel, Glenda, Michelle and Tracey. We had decided that



given some of the gorgeous items which had been donated to us for fundraising that we would offer them to ourselves for purchase and conducted a silent auction. All items were sold at above reserve price. Thank you to our generous donors and also the amazing volunteers who purchased the items. Julie S did an amazing job organising the dinner – thank you Julie!

Merry Christmas!

Michelle H

DRWS Wins Christmas Party

We have been lucky enough to win a \$1 000 Woolworths WISH Voucher through a competition run by the Comment News paper.

Given we have recorded nearly 9 000 volunteer hours of service for 2007/2008 and helped hundreds of wildlife we certainly have something to celebrate.

The Christmas Party Morning

Tea will be held Monday 22nd December on-site. A Woolworths representative will be present to congratulate us as well as someone from the Comment News to find out more about what we do. Come and enjoy a catch-up with volunteers and supporters while enjoying some morning tea. All are welcome and we hope to see you there.



Tea-Towels. A new fundraiser for the Shelter at \$12 each.

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An important December Memo for all volunteers is being circulated to every shift. It contains information relating to some significant wildlife admission, treatment and tracking procedures in addition to a development day. Please ensure you and everyone on your shift is up to date with this information.

Black Swans and Photosensitisation



Carolyn L is hard at it again thinking of new ways to raise money for an extension to her veggie garden: Muffins and quiches for sale from \$4 to \$7 for half a dozen. See the order sheet in the Volunteers' Cabin for more information.

Black Swans are iconic to Western Australia and most of us have a soft spot for them. Their honking, hissing and neck waving are all endearing traits...most of the time.

No doubt everyone will have met our most recent swan admissions and become aware of the condition – photosensitisation - suffered by the larger male.

Since 2005, photosensitisation has become a major health issue for Black Swans from Lake Monger. No other waterbirds have been affected.

The symptoms of the condition are – ulceration and inflammation to the eyes, beak and feet; bleaching of the beak; an accumulation of

fluid to the beak and feet; dehydration and gastric disturbance. Many of the birds are suffering from bumble-foot, however, this is considered incidental to the photosensitisation.

Annie Coppins and Lyn Manuel from the Malubillai Wildlife Carers' Network have been working closely with the Perth Zoo Veterinary Department in gathering information and treating the condition. The condition was referred to the Australian Wildlife Health Network, and it is believed that photosensitisation had not been documented until this time.

The treatment is intensive, with swans needing to be handled twice daily for ointments and oral medications. With so many people at the Shelter willing to assist and wanting to gain experience in handling birds we have been very lucky that this regime has been easy to adhere to. We have also been very lucky to have such a fantastic patient!

More information about the condition and its history can be found in Annie and Lyn's paper from the National Wild-

life Rehabilitation Conference Proceedings from 2007 – 'Lesions in Black Swans – New Condition?'

Black Swans can be found over most of Australia, except the dry interior of central Western Australia. They can be found in any area of shallow, fresh, brackish or salt water. They generally avoid areas of fast water flow or strong wave action where there is an absence of deeper plant growth in the water or where thick overgrowth prevents flight take-off. Water depth is not critical while there is sufficient water to supply adequate food. Black swans are almost entirely herbivorous and might incidentally consume insects with plant material. They love to graze or will up-end themselves to reach plants under water. Captive birds can be maintained on large grains, poultry pellets and greens such as leafy vegetables. Black swans are long-lived and have been recorded as living up to 30 years of age.

Snake and Reptile Workshops



Workshops relating to reptile and snake awareness and handling have been organized for DRWS volunteers.

On the 21st December at 12.30pm a one hour snake awareness presentation will be conducted at the Armadale Reptile Centre, 304-308 South Western Hwy, Wungong. This presentation will cover basic first aid and

identification. All volunteers are encouraged to go along for some useful tips and reminders.

A further Snake and Reptile Capture and Advanced Identification Workshop is planned for January 2009. Meike and Klaas from the Armadale Reptile Centre have generously reduced the cost of the workshop for DRWS volunteers to \$44. DRWS will reimburse

volunteers up to \$20 if they wish to do the course. Volunteers need to be actively involved in at least one shift a fortnight to be eligible for reimbursement.

Please register your interest on the information sheet in the Volunteers' Cabin notice board or on the web forum as soon as possible.

The Year That Was 2008

It has been an amazing year during which we have celebrated our third birthday at Hayward Road. The administration building is up and running. The verandah construction, supervised by Terry Dawson, makes the structure look like it has been there all along.

The concreting, kindly donated by CEMEX, provides a lovely tea and coffee area. It is difficult to imagine the area with the slabs which we sat our table and chairs on until recently.

The overall presentation of the site has improved considerably since Carolyn L took on the

massive task of green-ing and caring for the land. She has organised so many projects and so much labour that it is hard to keep track of which community group has done what project. Who would have thought garden beds with kangaroo paws, bottlebrush and roses?

We have had uplifting, exciting, sad and unusual wildlife admissions. It is impossible to comment on just some admissions given all of our admissions are so special. It is unfortunate and sad that Bobbi passed away earlier in the year. She had helped with showing many members of the public how very special these reptiles are.

And as always, we have had some amazing volunteers who have offered much more than the basics – while smiling! Volunteering is a special commitment. Our feathered, furry and scaled friends are all very grateful for the effort that people put in to keep their enclosures clean, noxious weed free and environmentally stimulating. And for when our admissions are feeling low they appreciate the care which goes into keeping them clean, comfortable, hydrated, warm and fed. So thank you to everyone who happily plays a role in the care of our wildlife.



February
The Admin Building Arrives



October
Concreting of the tea area



Congratulations to Maria and Nick who were married in November.

Diary 2008/2009

December

Tuesday 9th
Sunday 14th
Sunday 21st
Monday 22nd

Management Meeting
Acorn Theatre Open Day
Snake Awareness Course for all DRWS Volunteers
DRWS Christmas Morning Tea

Tuesday 30th

NO Monthly Meeting

January

Tuesday 13th
Monday 26th
Tuesday 27th

Management Meeting
Working Bee and BBQ
Monthly Meeting

February

Saturday 7th
Tuesday 10th
Tuesday 24th

Development Day and Shift Skipper's Meeting
Management Meeting
Monthly Meeting



November
Some of the rowdy bunch at the Christmas dinner

VOLUNTEER PROFILE—RACHEAL KIMBER



Racheal with Bradley the Bandicoot

I have been involved with DRWS since October 2007. I found out about DRWS through a friend of my neighbour. I have always had an interest in working with animals. Ever since a child I was always bringing home the local strays! Before joining DRWS I had been caring for the odd injured/stray bird, dog or cat much to my husband's frustration! I wanted to do more for our native wildlife and since I was already active in land conservation, decided to join DRWS!

My current role at DRWS is as Volunteer Coordinator. I love a challenge and love to keep busy! Being Volunteer Coordinator has certainly proven to be both but I wouldn't have it any other way! Who wouldn't want their whole home office consumed with paperwork where a Joey comes in and messes up the neat piles or a bird learning to fly decides to use it as a toilet! Just a normal day for me!

Apart from being a carer for both birds and marsupials I also do the odd animal rescue here and there! Oh, and I shouldn't forget being a wife and mother to two boys!! Without family support doing what I do wouldn't be possible!

I think so much has been achieved at DRWS since moving to the new site and it's great to have visitors come back and comment on how fantastic the place looks! I love the community spirit at DRWS. Since being at DRWS I have found each shift to be different and each with their own strengths. Even though some shifts have never met I think we all work well as a team!

I hope in the New Year to run some more courses for those like myself who love learning more about our native wildlife and how to care for them! I would also really love to see more people at the monthly meetings as it's always great to hear from volunteers who want to share their ideas and experiences! Most of all I want to continue as a volunteer at DRWS as I'm very passionate about the wildlife and my role as Volunteer Coordinator.

Bits and Pieces

As the warmer weather arrives our resident dugites become more active. Please be aware that there are snakes on-site and ensure you wear enclosed shoes and long trousers. As an additional precaution please ensure all sheds are kept closed when not in use. Snakes and people generally prefer to not be confined in small areas together. Whilst many humans are fearful of the snakes they do a very important job in keeping any rodent population under control.

The Forrestdale Lakes Project is looking for volunteers interested in assisting with the 'directing', handling and transportation of

cygnets. This is a collaborative effort between DEC, Perth Zoo and various wildlife carers and facilities. Should the water level at the Lake reach critical an evacuation of the flightless birds is planned. Please contact Bob H or Michelle H if interested in being involved.

On a Monday or Thursday we are lucky enough to have a group of people from Community Corrections come on-site to carry out grounds maintenance. Carolyn Lewis is working with this group. If you have any jobs you would like considered please contact Carolyn on a Monday or Thursday morning at DRWS.

Don't forget that all minutes from meetings, policies, pro-

cedures and training information can be found on the DRWS web forum. If you would like to join the forum please email Celeste at web-master@darlingrangewildlife.com.au for registration.

We have a new database which we are trialing. Information relating to membership, volunteers, rescuers and wildlife admissions can be entered. If anyone is interested in committing time to entering admission data please contact Michelle H.

Dates for the 2009 Introduction to Wildlife Rehabilitation Courses are available on the DEC Naturebase Website. It is an important introductory course for all volunteers interested in wildlife care.