

SPRING 2008 NEWSLETTER

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Coordinator's Report

Wow...Spring 2008! It has been two years since the last newsletter. I know this because I produced the last one just before Serene was born and she has just turned two years old. I don't know where the time has gone but I do know there has been significant progress in all areas at DRWS. I don't think I could do justice in describing the changes and developments during this time. For those of us who have been around we can see the proof before our eyes.

There is more in store for the facility in relation to site, management and practice progress and developments. I am sure everyone will see something new week to week.

If anyone is interested in assisting with producing future newsletters then do get in touch with me! It would be great to see the seasonal newsletters produced again.



Remember everyone is encouraged and most welcome to come along to the monthly general meetings, represent your shift at the quarterly skipper meetings or join the web-forum. (Contact Celeste on webmaster@darlingrangewildlife.com.au for access to the form.)

Michelle H



Many thanks to Cheryl Bettridge who recently retired as DRWS Treasurer. We sincerely thank Cheryl for her many years in the role during which time she did an amazing job!

Visit by Minister



It was coincidental that the Minister for the Environment, Mr David Templeman, visited us on our third birthday, presenting an \$11 000 cheque. The grant is the first of its kind and it is fantastic to see good financial support from the State for wildlife rehabilitation.

The funding will be put towards a number of projects, including the development of our on-site library. I am sure all volunteers

will find the new resources most useful.

It was great to see so many volunteers, some who had never met, gather for the afternoon tea. We all had a great time and it was lovely to sit around and enjoy tea and cake with such an approachable Minister with some experience of the issues faced by the environment and our wildlife.

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More DRWS Members participate in DEC Course

We were successful with a City of Gosnells Community Sponsorship Grant which has allowed us to pay \$100 each towards the cost of seven of our volunteers attending the DEC Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation Course this year. This is great as it means more and more of our volunteers are developing their basic wildlife care and rehabilitation skills.

Short-Beaked Echidna



To place an order for a DRWS polar fleece please put your name and size on the order sheet or advise Iris S. The order will be placed very soon!

It was a pleasure to care for the sub-adult echidna recently admitted. Land clearing is placing increased pressure on all our wildlife so this little guy was in some ways lucky to be found and relocated prior to coming to any harm. Ideally it should have been returned to its home range. Unfortunately this was not possible.

The short-beaked echidna is an insectivore, enjoying ants and termites as its natural diet. Strong front claws make them great diggers enabling them to break into ant and termite nests and quick bury themselves in soil to rest and hide. Any container or enclosure must be solid as they are able to dig, climb and push their way out of many situations.

Echidnas suffer heat stress and can rapidly overheat. They should not be provided with artificial heat, even as initial first aid. In hot weather it might even be necessary to provide cooling.

They are one of only two mammals to lay eggs – the platypus is also a monotreme. The 'puggle' hatches after 10 days and is carried around by the mother for around three months in a pouch-like skin fold. The mother carries the puggle until it starts to develop spines. At this stage the mother will leave it in a burrow, returning to feed it every five to seven days. Echidnas are weaned between 800g to 1300g or when they are around seven months old.

Adult echidnas are admitted usually due to road trauma. Sub adults might be subject to injuries sustained by accidents with garden tools or a predator such as dogs.

Echidnas are solitary but mutually tolerant. They do not have a territory as such but a home range within which they spend most of their life. There is high variation in the literature suggesting the home range for a single echidna in Western Australia could be from 65ha to 200ha. The area must

have termites and safe resting sites under boulders or in large hollow logs.

No captive bred echidna (of which there has only been nine in Australia) has survived to maturity. Although the ninth was only born ('hatched') during August 2007 at the Perth Zoo!

While captive breeding is currently not necessary for the survival of the short-beaked echidna, it will have a role to play in the conservation of the rare Long-Beaked Echidna which has never been bred in captivity.

At DRWS, the echidnas' natural diet is supplemented with a meat mix comprised of – mince-meat, eggs, glucose, olive oil, calcium, wheat bran and vitamins.

Given echidnas have been reported to live at least 30 years (and one at the Philadelphia Zoo lived 50 years) it is hoped our relocated little guy has many safe years ahead in its new environment.

Cataracts and Kangaroo Pinkies



Ruth
July 2008

Marg Lerner has been collating information relating to the hand-rearing of kangaroo pinkies from over Australia and recently provided feedback as to how cataract problems might be reduced.

A significant relationship has been found between high temperatures and cataract development. It is recommended that pinkies not be maintained above 32o C.

The skin of a pinkie requires lubrication by a moisturising cream. Commonly used creams are Paw Paw Ointment,

Sorbolene and Ungvita. It is important that the skin covering the eyes of a pinkie also be moisturised. The eye development of joeys who suffer from dry skin is severely compromised as often the eyes will open prematurely. A moisturising eye cream or ointment such as lacrilube poly visco which can be purchased from a Chemist or Pharmacy should be applied twice daily.

Wombaroo 0.4 is the recommended milk formula, changing to a formula of choice once fur

has started to develop and the joey's eyes are well open. It is strongly felt that there is a fat to protein imbalance in some of the milk formulas for the very young on the market which is not apparent in Wombaroo. Vitamin E drops are a good additive to the bottle feeds. Oral *Micelle E* has been recommended by some rehabilitators.

The research is ongoing and information about pinkies with sight problems can be forwarded to Marg.

NWRC, Canberra 2008 by Cheryl B

The Conference was enjoyed by all who attended, in the freezing temperatures (-5 each morning, picture Iris running along jumping up and down on the frozen grass whilst Yvonne and Cheryl pretend not to know her!) of our nation's capital. Luckily we went nowhere near a politician and so had no opportunity to be bored!!

Every speaker imparted something of interest. Some of the highlights in the Conference's diverse presentations were:

As usual, a riveting and frightening update from Sarah Brett, Kununurra Vet on the relentless advance of the cane toad

The showcasing of several databases that will be interesting to look in to for future use

As well as new techniques for treatment of pain relief

many methods of natural pain relief (and physiotherapy) that are effective for use with wildlife

Eira Battaglia who spoke on the Volunteer Penguin Warden programme to protect Manly's (very cute) penguins, who come right up on to the beach at night in full public view

The very effective campaign to eradicate the Indian Myna (which is a pest over there a bit like our Rainbow Lorikeet is here)

The very nasty (and fatal) mange afflicting the wombat population over East

Following on from the talk on saving the Corroboree Frog, we ventured out to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, where we enjoyed being educated on the breeding programme and their fabulous new facilities. The biggest mistake

they made was only allowing a short time at the shop, that was filled with many wonderful things. The day included a BBQ in a beautiful part of the reserve. Unfortunately there was no time allocated for us to visit the koalas, another creature we don't get to work with here.

Another highlight for Cheryl, Yvonne and Iris was the Necropsy session on Saturday morning. At the university we were divided into groups and allocated a Vet to assist us in the autopsies. Even though her name escapes me I would still like to thank our Vet for being so brilliant! She stepped us through the dissection and what to look for, in possums and a swan. We learnt so much, including the discovery of two hoof-like pads in the swan's

stomach that grind together to break up what it has eaten. We walked away with a brilliant manual and the feeling that we could actually perform an autopsy if we had to!

The best part of the week was being able to socialise with people from across Australia, to eat together, go out for dinner, attend the conference dinner and generally bond over a wine (or three). From the opening welcome drinks to the very last speaker, everyone concerned did a great job and we would like to thank Marg Peachey and her team for looking after everything so meticulously. Fellow DRWS member, how about YOU come along next year?!! Probably December, in Hobart – beautiful!

Cheryl Bettridge, Yvonne Giblett, Michelle Hazelwood, Iris Swallow

The next Shift Skipper's Meeting is on Saturday 4th October at 12 noon. All shifts should be represented at the meeting.



DEC Wildlife Officers and National Geographic camera man at DRWS to dart kangaroos for relocation

Diary - Spring 2008

September
Saturday 6th

Sunday 7th
Tuesday 9th
Saturday 13th thru Monday 15th
Saturday 20th & Sunday 21st

Tuesday 23rd

October
Saturday 4th
Sunday 5th (TBC)
Tuesday 14th
Tuesday 28th

November
Tuesday 11th
Tuesday 25th
Friday 20th until Thursday 29th

DEC, Special Interest Topic — 'Pest Birds and other invasive species occurring in WA'
National Threatened Species Day
Management Meeting
Red Kangaroo Release, Wiluna
Bunnings BBQ Fundraiser &
DEC, Basic Wildlife Rehabilitators Course
Monthly Meeting

Shift Skipper Meeting
(Recently started) Volunteers Orientation Day
Management Meeting
Monthly Meeting

Management Meeting
Monthly Meeting
WA Seabird Rescue Workshops (TBC)

VOLUNTEER PROFILE - CAROLYN LEWIS



I have been involved with the Shelter for over two years now. I am a member of the Monday morning group but enjoy doing a lot of the site development and maintenance jobs. At the moment I am also coming up on a Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning. This is mainly because the rains have stopped and I need to water my plants.

I live locally and became involved with the Shelter because I have always had a love of wildlife and the environment. I was raised in the bush and my grandmother and mother were real conservationists – although at the time the conservation movement and recycling didn't really exist. I remember my mum having a pair of silk stockings which she took such good care of during the war and when she could no longer wear them they were turned into a doll for me! I carried that doll around everywhere. We always had animals around and loved our wildlife. I have hand-reared kangaroo joeys and loved doing it.

I really think the Shelter can be more self-sufficient in relation to feed for the wildlife and with just general around the grounds things, like water and power. I don't think I can keep working as physically hard as I have been for another ten years but I am sure I can get a lot of projects underway. I have worked at getting the vege garden producing and developing and maintaining the pasture in the pens. I've got heaps of other things in the pipeline. I am coordinating the Community Corrections Crew and the corporate and community groups which have been coming on-site. It is great fun working with everyone and I think we have done really well.

Bits and Pieces

We have been successful with a Trust Foundation grant to microchip all of our kangaroo admissions. This project will enable veterinary staff and our volunteers to carefully monitor all of our kangaroos through the rehabilitation process. Accurate tracking will assist future decision-making in relation to the hand-rearing and release of individual admissions. It will also provide invaluable data concerning orphaned kangaroo development. We have started with our juveniles in A Pen and home care. Please contact a member of the Marsupial Care Group to ensure your joey is chipped (and given tetanus shots) at an appropriate age.

Tremendous effort is put into identifying, assessing and supporting release sites. Release success is carefully monitored via direct observation and we have a solid pool of sites for all species. This year we advertised in the Land for Wildlife newsletter which resulted in an excellent response from landholders offering 'homes' for displaced wild-

life. Please contact Michelle H for more information or if you have a site you would like listed.

Whilst we have not had the involvement of the Work for the Dole team this year, we have secured the services of Community Corrections. This group will be attending the shelter weekly, providing labour and some materials for various projects. The Community Corrections crew attends on a Monday. Please contact Carolyn L or Yvonne G if you have any queries or jobs you would like considered.

Due to the generosity of MIRVAC, Aristocat Limousines and Susan Savage we were able to conduct our second ever fundraising raffle which was really successful. The winners were – (from first to third prize) – Mark Edmonds, Jo Ascott and Mark Brayshaw. Congratulations!

The Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation in Western Australia document was released during August and we were asked to play a

significant role in the joint media release of the document and new Main Roads road signage. The document is a benchmark and the first of its kind in Western Australia and the new road signage will advertise the Wildcare Helpline, advising members of the public of who to contact to assist wildlife in need. Our furry friends looked great on the Channel 10 news that evening.

During June we had a National Geographic film crew on-site with a team of DEC Wildlife Officers. The wildlife officers were assisting us with the sedation and relocation for the release of two large male grey kangaroos. Importantly, we were providing them with experience in darting kangaroos and National Geographic the opportunity to see wildlife rehabilitation in action.

The Wildcare Helpline is looking for people to assist with the roster. Training will be provided and non-registered rehabilitators can help from the Kensington Office Monday to Friday. Please contact Sonia Chalmers on 9334 0279 or via email at sonia.chalmers@dec.wa.gov.au