

# AUTUMN 2010 NEWSLETTER

**DARLING RANGE WILDLIFE SHELTER INC.**  
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## Coordinator's Report

We are definitely well into the 'new' year. I hope everyone has enjoyed their summer of lots of public holidays and time to catch up with family and friends.

The past few months (and years) have been particularly busy for the members of our management committee. We need to express our gratitude to all management and active members who continue to offer so much of their time and effort even when already busy with other commitments. It is frequently challenging to be involved in management positions. We sincerely thank all members of our management team who really are the pulse of the Shelter.

There are a number of movements within the management team. We will miss Racheal's enthusiasm and commitment to the Shelter and wish her the best of luck in relocating to Laos with her family. Iris has returned to work full time and is extremely busy with family

commitments. The management team certainly will not be the same!

During 2010 I would encourage everyone to consider the 'bigger picture' of the running of the Shelter. There are so many projects and tasks requiring some level of coordination - shift members might forget some of the issues that are addressed by management and active members on a daily basis. The Shelter is amazingly fortunate to have such a committed group of people supporting it. But we would like more!

In saying this we are looking for new people to actively assist with management projects. We are currently asking for members to express an interest in becoming a part of the management of the Shelter. Do approach a member of the management team if you are interested.

Members continue to be very busy attending public events



with some of our wildlife and taking advantage of the opportunities to educate people about the needs and difficulties faced by our native creatures. Please do come along if you are available. There are notices going up asking for volunteers so keep your eyes peeled.

The issues faced by our wildlife are ever increasing and there are so few places remaining where wildlife is truly safe. The opportunity for public education is extremely important. I am sure we all hope, given we are now well and truly into 2010, that this year brings increased safety and security for all animals both at home and in other parts of the world.

Michelle H

## New Snake Bite Kits

While we are expecting the cooler months to soon be upon us, we must still be mindful of our silent 'Rodent Police' - the few dugites living nearby and onsite. New snake bite kits have been placed around the Shelter grounds. The kits are near the vegetable garden, on the gate between A and B Pens and on

the gate between C and D Pens. Please be sensible when you come across a snake. They generally practise an avoidance of human activity and noise - for good reason. If you are working in an isolated area of the Shelter please take a mobile phone or the Shelter phone with you.



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## Emergency and Fire Awareness Sessions

Jim Sheridan is again running sessions advising members on what to do during fires and other emergencies. Importantly Jim covers the use and maintenance of equipment on the DRWS emergency trailer. There are two sessions on Saturday 20 March. Please record your interest in attending on the notice posted in the Administration Building.

## Giardia in Wildlife



**Please don't forget to return money collected from the sale of the Cadbury's Fundraising Chocolates! Money can be left for Pam K.**

Over the last six months the shelter has recorded several cases of giardia infection in magpies and bobtails.

Giardia is a single celled protozoan parasite that attaches to the small intestine of its host. The organism moves around using four pairs of whip-like structures called flagella. Symptoms of giardiasis include diarrhoea and weight loss. Severe cases in birds, however, can result in feather plucking and digging the beak into the skin.

Once giardia have attached to the intestinal duodenum they absorb food (mainly glucose) within the small intestine. Encystment of giardia also occurs periodically and these cysts are passed in the faeces of the animal along with free roaming giardia (called the trophozoite). The cysts themselves can survive in cold water for months even if the water has been moderately chlorinated. Infection occurs when an individual drinks

contaminated water or via the oral faecal route.

Many animals are potentially susceptible to giardia infections, including humans. There is some debate whether zoonotic transmission occurs in respect to giardia, however it appears likely that the giardia species infecting birds and reptiles cannot be transmitted to mammals. Human giardia outbreaks are very common throughout the world; it is estimated that 20% of the world's population is currently infected with the parasite, one of the reasons why excellent hygiene is necessary at all times.

The infected magpies and bobtails at DRWS were treated with the antibiotic Flagyl, once a day for 5-7 days. In addition to giardia, all infected individuals also carried coccidia burdens to a varying degree. It appears that background levels of giardia and coccidia in wildlife is quite normal, most likely due to a compromised

immune system from factors such as stress enabling the parasite to get the upper hand.

Giardia and coccidia infections in these individuals were observed using the new DRWS microscope and confirmed by the Riseley St Veterinary Centre in Applecross. The giardia trophozoite is easily observed using a 400x magnification due to the flailing of its eight flagella moving the organism around in an erratic manner. Detecting coccidia is more difficult as only the oocysts of the parasite are visible. Distinguishing oocysts from other background material such as pollen does take some practice. Other methods of coccidia detection such as faecal float procedures can make the job a little easier. Early diagnosis of heavy burdens of giardia and/or coccidia using DRWS equipment onsite will improve the survival prospects of future bird and reptile admissions.

Scott J

## National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference 2010

The 7<sup>th</sup> National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference is being held in Adelaide, SA. A pre-registration and welcome function marks the commencement of the Conference on Monday 21st June and it concludes on Friday 25th June.

Over the years, conference delegates have had the opportunity to access current information relating to

the rescue, rehabilitation and release of Australian native wildlife. The conferences have provided a fantastic forum for the development and building of relationships between those dedicated to the welfare of Australian wildlife.

Registration is now open and more information can be found on the website - [www.nwrc.com.au](http://www.nwrc.com.au)



**Extreme weather likely cause of bird deaths**

Heat stress remains the most likely cause of death for more than 200 native birds in Hopetoun and Munglinup on the State's south coast.

The birds perished during extreme weather conditions on Wednesday 6 January, when temperatures reached 47°C in the Hopetoun area with strong, hot northerly winds, while temperatures of 50°C to 53°C were reported by landowners in Munglinup.

At least 115 dead Carnaby's black cockatoos were found at the Hopetoun golf course and a further 37 Carnaby's cockatoos, six regent parrots, two galahs, three mudlarks, three ravens, four yellow throated miners and one kestrel were found to have died on the same day at Munglinup about 75 kilometres east of Hopetoun.

DEC Senior Wildlife Officer Kevin Morrison said laboratory tests had

not revealed any obvious cause of death.

"The Department of Agriculture and Food's Animal Health Laboratories conducted examinations and tested samples for infection and a range of diseases. These results were negative", he said.

"The examination of tissues found no significant changes, although this process was hampered by the degree of decomposition that had already occurred due to the extreme weather conditions.

"Tests conducted by the Chemistry Centre on tissue samples from the dead birds have ruled out pesticides and chemicals such as organophosphates, organochlorines and heavy metals as possible causes of death.

"The process of ruling out possible causes enables us to narrow down what may have



killed the birds, as there is no definite test that can be done to establish whether heat stress was the actual cause. Therefore the cause of the bird deaths remains inconclusive."

Kevin said that this was not the first time an event such as this had occurred.

"A similar bird death incident occurred in February 2007 between Yealering and Cunderdin when more than 200 ringneck parrots are believed to have died of heat stress caused by

high temperatures (45°C) and strong winds," he said.

Carnaby's black cockatoos are endangered species with up to 40 000 birds remaining in the wild in WA. Numbers have declined dramatically over recent decades due to habitat decline, illegal shooting and wildlife trafficking.

(Article taken from *Environment and Conservation News*, Issue 3/10, 9 February 2010. Published by the Department of Environment and Conservation.)



**Autumn Diary 2010**

**March**

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>  
Saturday 20<sup>th</sup>

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>  
Saturday 27<sup>th</sup>

**April**

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> and Monday 5<sup>th</sup>  
Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup>  
Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>

**May**

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> and Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>  
Monday 10<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 16<sup>th</sup>  
Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>  
Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup>  
Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>  
Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>

Management Meeting

**Serpentine Jarrahdale Fair \*\***

**Roleystone School Fair (Autumn Festival)\*\***

DRWS Fire and Emergency Equipment Use  
DEC, Basic Course in Wildlife Rehabilitation  
Shift Communication Meeting 12.30 pm  
DEC, Advanced Topic, Care and Rehabilitation of Ringtail Possums 9-12

**Café on the Dam Easter Display\*\***

Management Meeting  
Shift Communication Meeting 7pm

**Hills Heartbeat Festival\*\***

**Bunnings Sausage Sizzle Fundraiser\*\***

National Volunteer Week  
Management Meeting  
Youth in Volunteering Celebration  
DRWS Common Conditions in Wildlife Presentation 7 pm  
DRWS Common Conditions in Wildlife Presentation 9.15 for 9.30  
Shift Communication Meeting 12.30 pm  
DEC, Basic Course in Wildlife Rehabilitation

\* Bird Care Coordination Meetings every Thursday 1pm onsite

**\*\* Volunteers needed to support the stall**

## **Volunteer Profile—Laura Triner**



I originally joined the Thursday afternoon shift at DRWS in 2008 for additional experiences in working with animals for entry into the veterinary science course at Murdoch University. I am now on a different path - my final year of marine science and conservation and wildlife biology. But I have enjoyed the experience so much that I have continued on at the shelter.

Having previously worked at an aquaria and reptile store, I arrived on my first day at the shelter to be greeted with questions from Racheal and Michelle on how to care for a long-neck turtle that had just arrived. Needless to say it was a daunting first task.

It provided me with an opportunity to get into the reptile side of our admissions though, as small as it is. I get to go to different places to do show and tell with our two resident bobtails, which is always great fun - even with their tendency to pee on me.

I love working with wildlife and plan on working with native fauna breeding programmes once my course is complete.

I have to admit, my favourite 'patient' was definitely Casper, the long-billed corella. No matter how many horror stories I heard about him biting people and ripping out piercings, one look at him melted my heart. I struggled to understand how this beautiful bird, who snuggled into my shoulder whenever I visited, could be a man-eater, until the other volunteers tried to come near me, and Casper went straight into guard dog mode.

### **Bits and Pieces**

Carolyn has recently resigned and given the huge number of hours she spent in the garden and around the grounds she will be very much missed. All shifts are asked to assist by watering plants and trees when they find time. The roo poo compost pile is likely to be cleaned out over the next few months. Poo and branches can be disposed of in the green waste garden bags and in small amounts in the green Council waste bins. We wish Carolyn all the best in her endeavours!

**Orders for Entertainment Books are currently being taken. Please let Pam K know if you are interested in purchasing a book or if you can sell any to family, friends or work colleagues. A percentage of book sales goes directly towards the Shelter.**

For those of you who missed

Cathy's presentation on Common Conditions in Wildlife, and due to the extremely positive feedback, the presentation will be run on Tuesday 18 May at 7 pm and Saturday 22 May at 1.30 pm at DRWS. Everyone welcome and encouraged to come along.

**What an amazing experience it was for us to have Andy onsite last year each weekday! Our next Cultural Exchange Student - Luci - certainly has some big shoes to fill! We're confident she will be a treasure to have on board, and look forward to meeting her towards the end of March. Please make Luci feel welcome.**

Thanks to Jan K who has suggested a slight modification to the 'Outcomes' section of our Admission Forms! A reminder to all of our volunteers that it is YOUR responsibility to ensure forms are updated as required for our statistician, Cathy. Please help Cathy with maintaining accurate data by

ensuring forms are up to date at all times. Most importantly the forms assist each shift with knowing how to best care and treat all of our onsite admissions.

**There are a number of good skill and knowledge development opportunities scheduled during the next three months. Registration forms are either onsite, on the DRWS web forum or available via the DEC Naturebase website.**

If you have not yet participated in the DEC Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation Course then now is the time to do so. Consider registering through Racheal for a discount off the total fee. For long-standing DRWS members we do have funding available to further subsidise the total cost of the course.

**Wildcare is in need of committed phone operators. Please contact Sonia Chalmers at DEC if available to assist.**