

SUMMER 2009/2010 NEWSLETTER

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Coordinator's Report

Christmas, New Year and the Summer newsletter have come around really fast! It has been a busy Spring in many ways. Young wildlife has been coming in thick and fast. Home carers for marsupials and birds certainly have their hands full. Shelter shift members have been busy keeping up with the constant needs of wildlife on-site. Young and growing wildlife want constant feeding and cleaning. There certainly isn't an admission that just requires a clean and a feed – everything needs monitoring to make sure their water bowls are clean and tummies full. Some of our wildlife, like the ducklings, want their water changed at least three times each shift!

As warmer weather approaches we have previously expected a

drop in the number of young admissions. This, however, no longer seems to be the trend. Due to variations in weather patterns we still expect to be admitting unusually young wildlife for some time yet.

Members have been very busy going out to public events to display our beautiful wildlife and educate Australian residents and overseas visitors about the needs and plight of our wildlife. The small group who attended the cocktail party for the APCCA Conference at the Hyatt were surprised by the massive interest in wildlife displayed by foreign guests. Cathy was very pleased to oblige when some guests asked if they could have their photographs taken holding the baby crocodiles – our fierce Shingleback Skinks!



Our resident Shinglebacks will be receiving an exciting new enclosure for 2010! The outdoor enclosure is looking fantastic and just waiting for some finishing touches. A few lovely plants for shade and overhead netting to prevent birds taking food will make it complete. Alan and Paul have made amazing progress over the past months and produced a real feature.

Anyway, here is wishing everyone a wonderful Christmas and all the very best for the New Year. See you in 2010!

Michelle H

Fire Awareness Sessions

Following the purchase of our emergency and fire equipment, we have been privileged to have Jim Sheridan running sessions on fire safety and emergency equipment use. Jim has over 20 years' experience with fire and emergency services as both a volunteer and paid professional.

The sessions were really well supported by our members. Jim covered basic fire

awareness, equipment use and ongoing equipment maintenance.

Jim has offered to run more sessions in 2010 and dates will be advertised once known. The session is well worth attending for all members of DRWS. Those who reside or spend time in the Perth Hills would also appreciate Jim sharing his knowledge and experience.



Jim and our new emergency/fire trailer

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Jan K, Marianne and Beryl with Jim

Magpies, magpies and more magpies.

Every Spring the Shelter becomes heavily involved with calls and rescues relating to young magpies. There is nothing more cute and appealing than a magpie nestling or fledgling. They seem to constantly find themselves on the ground and in front of someone who has to 'rescue' them.

Often these birds require treatment for throat worm. This is a simple process involving an anti-parasitic medication called Moxycyctin. Only a very small amount – literally two drops – is required as the initial treatment. DRWS uses an oral formulation. The medication is given weekly and the nodules, within the bird's oral cavity, are monitored for improvement.

Strength training can be taking place in conjunction with the parasite treatment. Then the birds should be returned to their family group.

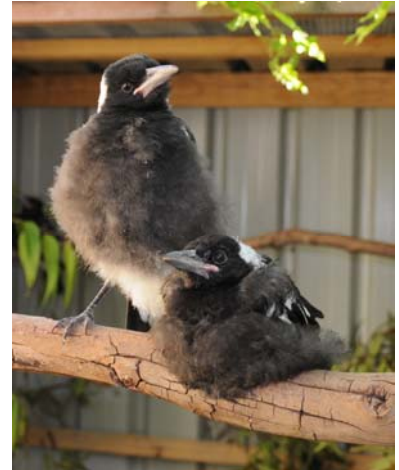
Sometimes the magpies don't require treatment for parasites or strength development and should have been put on a branch and left in their

own environment. Shift members taking phone calls and queries about magpies are advised to encourage the public to make every effort to ensure birds are not removed from their families or natural environment. Magpies have a distinct home range which they actively protect. This area provides all they need in the way of food, breeding, nesting and roosting sites. A displaced magpie will have extreme difficulty finding a niche elsewhere once taken into care for a period of time.

Unfortunately, the number of displaced magpies is an issue each year. Details are not taken from rescuers when the birds are taken to local clinics. There have been situations where Shelter members have taken magpies from rescuers who have not left their details. This leaves the magpie in a very sad and difficult situation. Release success for displaced magpies is variable. There are two likely outcomes – they survive as a fringe dweller in a foreign territory or they

'disappear'.

We are extremely lucky to have a few Shelter members who spend days upon days at sites where magpies have been 'rescued' from. We are extremely grateful to rescuers who assist in returning magpies to their home range. The process for returning a magpie to its family can be intensive. The magpie is set-up in a cage in a protected area where it can be observed. When the local flock arrives the observer must watch for signs of aggression that might be displayed by swooping the cage, pecking at the bird inside the cage, strutting and 'fluffing up' behaviour by birds outside the cage. If there are signs of aggression the magpie and cage should be removed. Further attempts can be made later as it can take several attempts to successfully release a magpie. The observer must also watch for signs of acceptance which might be displayed by an adult bird picking up some meat and attempting to feed the bird inside the cage or just by the other birds



hanging about and displaying no aggressive behaviour. The cage should be opened and the bird should be allowed to join its family. Some further monitoring is required to ensure all is well.

Magpies are extremely interesting and likeable birds. Certainly our suburbs wouldn't be the same without their presence and beautiful caroling. We do, however, need to make a conscious effort to educate everyone on the need to support healthy individuals in their natural environment.

(For more information relating to the Shelter's admission, care and treatment of magpies please refer to the Magpie Policy)

Summer Diary 2009/2010

December

Friday 4th
Saturday 5th
Saturday 12th
Tuesday 15th

Sunday 20th

Friday 25th

January

Friday 1st
Tuesday 12th
Saturday 30th

February

Saturday TBC
Tuesday 2nd
Tuesday 9th
Tuesday 23rd
Saturday 27th and
Sunday 28th

DRWS Christmas Dinner at Elizabethan Village
International Volunteer Day
Walk Against Warming
Forrestdale Lakes Cygnet Project
Management Meeting
DRWS Family Christmas Get-Together

Merry Christmas!

Welcome to 2010!
Management Meeting
Shift Communication (Monthly) Meeting

Development Morning
World Wetlands Day
Management Meeting
Shift Communication (Monthly) Meeting
Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation Course, DEC



* Bird Care Coordination Meetings every Thursday 1pm on-site

Red Kangaroo Travels

During November two long road trips took place to ensure a number of our red kangaroo orphans could be soft released in suitable locations.

Mouse and Sandy were relocated to Wiluna. We are extremely grateful to Caroline and Chris of Lake Violet Station who always open their home and roo paddock to us. This is the third year we have made the trip.

Paddy, Eddy, Buddy, Chrissy, Sandy and Angel were relocated to Kalgoorlie. We are again immensely grateful to the Goldfields Wildlife Rehabilitation network. Rowena and Lyn have supported us over the years by taking on the immense task of releasing groups of kangaroos from the Shelter. We certainly appreciate their assistance. The relocation of the kangaroos made the front page of the Kalgoorlie Miner!



Kalgoorlie Miner, front page Monday 30th November

Last Call of the Christmas Island Pipistrelle



Presumed extinct: Christmas Island Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus murrayi*)

Photo: Robin Chapple

During September 2009 a diminutive Christmas Island pipistrelle bat left its call on an ultrasonic detector for the final time. It was the last of its kind and the latest in Australia's mammal extinctions.

Of all mammal species extinctions recorded globally over the past 200 years, nearly half were losses of Australian mammals. Our record was improving, as prior to the pipistrelle it had been five decades since the last documented mammal extinction. What is really disturbing is that potentially this creature could have been saved.

The first surveys of Christmas Island bats in the mid-1980s found that the pipistrelle was widespread across most habitats. The population was apparently still healthy in 1998 but subsequent surveys indicated a steep decline in numbers and a contraction in the distribution of colonies to the western parts of the island. In 2004, as part of a Christmas Island Biodiversity Survey pipistrelle bats were restricted to a small area near the detention centre and a nearby part of the Christmas island

National Park. A subsequent report warned that the pipistrelle, along with most of the island's endemic reptiles, were in deep trouble and intervention was needed immediately.

The pipistrelle has moved from 'critically endangered' to 'presumed extinct' and Parks Australia North are now belatedly recovering some endemic reptile species and moving them into captivity to avoid them sharing the same fate.

In January 2009, bat ecologist Dr Lindy Lumsden repeated the pipistrelle bat survey using ultrasonic detectors. She found that the population consisted of one colony of about 16 individuals. With media assistance she called for these animals to be rescued and maintained as a captive population.

The Federal Minister for the Environment took advice and decided that it was too risky to remove the 'critically endangered' species from the wild without knowing whether they could be maintained in captivity. A project to capture and house the closely related

Pipistrellus westralis from northern Australia was initiated as a trial. Unfortunately none were captured and critical months were lost.

Dr Lumsden returned to Christmas Island in August 2009 in the hope of salvaging a captive breeding population. However, regrettably, it was only to witness the end of a species, the last call of the Christmas Island pipistrelle.

There is little doubt the demise of the pipistrelle, the island's endemic reptiles and numerous endemic forest invertebrate species will be linked to the impact of the introduced yellow crazy ant. The ants directly and indirectly have removed the dominant land crabs. The strongholds for the island's introduced rats, cats, wolf-snakes and giant centipedes are areas where crabs are scarce. To save the forest and its natural inhabitants we must protect and bring back the Christmas Island's land-crabs.

(Article taken from *The Greener Times*, Summer 2009, Published by the Conservation Council of WA.)

Volunteer Profile—Elizabeth Rose

I am originally from Germany and was travelling in Australia when I, kind of, became 'stuck' here! I met my husband Murray! My travels now involve heading home to Germany instead of visiting exotic countries.

I have been at the Shelter for about five years now on the Tuesday afternoon shift. I came across an advertisement in the Community Newspaper asking for volunteers and responded. I haven't really ever looked back.

Definitely my more memorable moments relate to the first time I ever experienced a particular species – the first possum, bandicoot, echidna – all of these creatures are very special to me and it is amazing to have contact with one for the very first time.

I will always remember my first pelican. He was a beautiful and gentle creature – very easy to hand feed. I would go out and dangle a fish for him and he would gently take it from my hand. I realise now he was one of a kind as I was so excited when we had another pelican on-site. I offered to organise its feed—thinking that it would be just as easy as the previous bird. Pelicans are obviously individuals as this guy nearly ate my entire arm! I'm not sure who was more frightened – me with my arm missing down its bill or it with me screaming!



I really enjoy my Tuesday afternoons and I am totally committed to coming along. Tuesdays at the Shelter are definitely 'my' time. I love caring for the wildlife. I am always experiencing and learning something new. The other members of my shift are great company and we work really well together.

Bits and Pieces

All members are invited to attend the Christmas Dinner at Elizabethan Village Pub in Bedforddale on Friday 4th December. We always have a wonderful time. This will be the second Christmas celebration at this venue and we thank the Pub's owners for their support. A further family BBQ will be held on-site on 20th December.

Thank you to all who attended our Annual General Meeting in September. We had a great turn-out and all were captivated by Harmony the Black Cockatoo and friends. Glenn Dewhurst, of the Black Cockatoo Preservation Society, gave an insightful presentation as to his work and the work of the society to preserve these magnificent creatures. As with all our wildlife the Black Cockatoos are certainly facing difficult times in their natural habitat. We are extremely appreciative to Glenn for accepting our invitation to come along. The 2009 Raffle was drawn at the AGM. Every single one of the tickets had been sold which is definite reflection of the quality prizes on offer. Certainly Pam Key was a most deserving winner of first prize – the gorgeous originally designed and hand-made quilt donated by the Roleystone Friendship Quilters. Pam ran the raffle and we

were all really pleased to see her as a winner. We are extremely grateful to Lorraine Madden and David Markovich for donating prizes of Dunsborough accommodation and wine.

A Reptile and Snake Handling Course to be conducted by the Armadale Reptile Centre is in the process of being arranged for this quarter. Please keep your eyes peeled for a notice and email advertising dates and times. Racheal K will be circulating the information as soon the course is confirmed.

The need for a further rescue and relocation of cygnets from Forestdale Lake has been identified. Despite good rains the water level has started to decrease rapidly. Concerns that unfledged cygnets will suffer from lack of food and predation remain the primary reason for the project. These reasons are directly related to the low water level. If anyone is available to assist, starting 6am on Tuesday 15th December, please contact Michelle H direct. The project is expected to last the entire morning. In early 2009 DRWS members demonstrated their commitment to wildlife and the difficulties wildlife face with a very

strong contingent of volunteers present.

DRWS has released to the media a statement in relation to the need for baby birds to be supported in their own environment rather than 'rescued' by members of the public. Baby birds may not fly extremely well upon leaving the nest or hollow. Some need time before being strong enough to achieve good lift and ongoing flight. An interview on RTR FM 92.1 took place and we hope to see the message spread via local newspapers.

During September we were lucky enough to receive a \$7 000 grant from Trust Foundation to support the team of people who do so much in relation to our grounds maintenance and site development. We have new rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows, toolboxes, a 'Garden Goat' branch mulcher and heaps of other stuff on-site and in the pipeline.

For those of you who missed Cathy's presentation on Common Conditions in Wildlife, and due to the extremely positive feedback, we will be running the presentation again in 2010. Keep your eyes peeled for dates.