

Wildlife News



Issue 146 May -June 2017

Ms Prem

.....
Story and pictures by: Catriena N.



On the weekend of 11th and 12th February, Casino's flying fox colony was almost destroyed when temperatures reached 46 degrees on the Sunday. Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers were at the colony both days, assisting and rescuing as many flying foxes as we could. Meet Prem, no not short for premmie (or premature) but an Indian name meaning love and affection.

Prem was rescued by Wendy at the Casino colony on Sunday 12th February, Casino's hottest day on record. She was found on the ground with her placenta still attached and was looked after by Kay who gave her lifesaving fluids and Lorraine who started her on milk feeds until she was able to be sent to me at Ballina that night. Her weight was 52gms and she had forearm of 50mm and was approximately 4 weeks premature.

With lots of good advice, baby sitters, cuddlers and support little Prem has grown into a beautiful young baby girl bat of approx. 9 weeks old (equivalent of a 5 week full-term baby) and is starting to thermoregulate. Next week she really wants to spend some time out on the rack because after 9 weeks looking out from the inside of her humidicrib she would love to be part of the real world. She will probably be held over until next year as she is still too young for release.

Well done Ms Prem!

Catriena

Thorny Devil/Dragon



The thorny dragon or thorny devil (*Moloch horridus*) is an Australian Lizard, also known as the mountain devil, the thorny lizard, or the moloch. This is the sole species of genus *Moloch*. The thorny dragon grows up to 20 cm in length, and it can live for 15 to 20 years. Most of these lizards are coloured in camouflaging shades of desert browns and tans which change from pale colours during warm weather and to darker colours during cold weather. They are covered entirely with conical spines that are mostly uncalcified. Member Paul C and Jen caught up with this guy on their travels. (See page 14) Paul said: "I've been reading up about devil photography and all the experts agree that you need to take special care to accurately photograph the its tail - this tells a lot about the animal. In fact, you could say the "Devil is in de' tail!""



NRWC would like to welcome these new members into the fold and hope that you enjoy your time with us and the animals.

*Aimee T, Alicia G, Bronte S, Cassandra SF,
Deb C, Geoff H, Jessica T, Kevin H,
Lisa M, Marcus A, Marcus H,
Marta F, Mivah S, Nancy H, Nikki T,
Pam B, Peter C, Saina, Tim A, Vicki H.*

Contents:

May - June 2017

News and Information

Hygiene and Zoonoses	3-4
Hand Washing	5
Committee Report	12
Wildlife Quiz	13
Car-boot Fundraiser	13
NWC Update	15-16
Hotline Happenings	17
Quiz Answers	18

Rescues and Care

Ms Prem	1
Thorny Devil	2 and 14
Abominable Cruelty	7-8
Clever Dove Mum	8
Crèche and Release	9
Womy the Ice Snake	10-11

Training

Forthcoming Training	6
Training Report	14

Opinion

Editorial	18
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Administration

Membership Renewals	5
Pin-up Page	19

Wildlife News is the bi-monthly newsletter of the Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers Inc. Licensed by the Office of Environment and Heritage to rescue, rehabilitate and release native fauna. Licence No MWL000100243 Fundraising Authority CFN 14907
PO Box 6439 South Lismore NSW 2480
ABN 28 209 143 641
All submissions are welcome. Deadline for editions is the 15th of the month preceding publication.
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Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of NRWC Inc.

Hygiene and Zoonoses

By: Rowan W.

Zoonoses plural. Singular **zoonosis**; from the Greek words zoon “animal” and nosos “sickness”, are infectious diseases of animals that can naturally be transmitted to humans.

Many modern diseases and epidemics, started out as zoonotic diseases. While it may be difficult to say with certainty which diseases jumped from other animals to humans there is increasing evidence from DNA and RNA sequencing that measles, smallpox, influenza, HIV, and diphtheria came to humans this way. Various forms of the common cold and tuberculosis also are adaptations of strains originating in other species. Zoonoses can be caused by a range of disease pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, fungi and parasites.

Zoonoses have different modes of transmission. Direct zoonosis is transmission from animals to humans through media such as air or through bites and body fluids. Transmission can also occur via an intermediate species, referred to as a vector, which carry the disease pathogen without getting infected.

When humans infect animals, it is called reverse zoonosis or anthroponosis.

When we care for wildlife we place ourselves in the position of transmitting or receiving infections ourselves, acting as a vector or facilitating the spread of disease or parasites between animals in our care. All of these routes can be ameliorated or destroyed by following simple hygiene practices which are not expensive.

1. Wash your hands. This is probably stating the obvious but our hands are a popular route for diseases to travel. Everyone has germs. Our bodies are covered with germs that help us stay healthy. In addition to the germs that are usually present on our skin, we also pick up germs from contact with other people, animals or objects in our surroundings. These germs are easy to pick up and transfer. Although people usually think that germs are spread through the air, the fact is that germs are most easily spread through direct hand contact.

One of the best ways to stop the spread of germs is to wash or decontaminate your hands. Refer to the poster on page 5 for the correct hand-washing procedure.

Washing hands helps to physically remove germs by friction, and to rinse them down the drain, while decontaminating hands reduces the amount of germs present on hands through the use of special alcohol

based preparations, in the form of solutions, gels or foams.

Alcohol based preparations have one distinct advantage over soap and water: They kill many more germs.

But while alcohol based preparations reduce the germs on your hands, they cannot remove visible soil or contamination. It is always important to wash hands with soap and water any time they are visibly dirty.

Wash your hands:

When hands are visibly dirty,
Before you eat,
Before you prepare food items,
After touching raw meats like chicken or beef,
After contact with any body fluids like blood, urine or vomit,
After changing infant or adult nappies,
Before and after handling animals or pets,
After blowing your nose or sneezing,
After using the toilet.

When can you use alcohol based hand rubs?

For routine cleaning of hands anytime they are visibly clean.
If you have contact with contaminated objects in the environment eg. dirty tissues/nappies.
Whenever you want to decontaminate your hands.

2. Use clean equipment. Pillow-cases, towels, cloths, wraps, pouches, snake-bags and etc, should always be clean and used for one animal only. If an animal defecates or urinates on materials the bulk of the matter can be hosed off, the cloth rinsed and then soaked in a bucket containing 5 litres of water, one eighth of a cup (30ml approx) of household bleach and a few drips of dishwashing detergent. The detergent acts as a surfactant, reducing the surface tension of the water and allowing it to better “wet” the material. Allow overnight or longer to soak, wring and then wash in a machine on a normal or heavy wash. A cold wash will do but a 60°C or hotter wash is better. Dry in the sun. Napisan could also be used.

Continued ...

Hygiene and Zoonoses *Continued ...*



3. Keep enclosures/cages/containers spotlessly clean.

After an animal has vacated accommodation used during its care, any material or bedding should be removed and washed as described above or discarded either in the Red landfill bin or burned. Newspapers that have been soiled are definitely not wanted by recyclers! A few simple things are all you need to clean containers or aviaries; household bleach, dishwashing detergent, a bucket, safety goggles, a brush with a handle and a hose. If you get in the habit of cleaning as soon as an animal has vacated your enclosure it has the longest time to dry before the next patient. Aviaries that are in use continuously should be temporarily vacated and cleaned at regular intervals if this does not stress the animals.



Mix 30ml to 125ml of bleach with about a litre of water, add a few drips of detergent and brush this around all surfaces inside and out, and allow to sit for a minute or so. Discard the water or use on the next container if the water is not badly soiled. Rinse the container with a hose and place in the sun to dry. Your containers and enclosures should look like new and it is easier to keep them clean if they do. Older scratched baskets may be cleaned with mildly abrasive powder cleaners before being given the bleach treatment.

If you would prefer to use disinfectant a general household one should do or you could use the excellent F10 disinfectant (available from Sandy N for \$4 or 50c a refill treasurer@wildlifecarers.com) or the phenyl based one that used to be used in hospitals that is marketed now very cheaply as “wheelie-bin cleaner”. Phenyl does



have a strong odour and may be best reserved for outside aviaries and the like. Remember to follow the directions on the label of any commercial cleaners and do not mix chemicals. Bleach solutions should not be poured onto gardens or down toilets on a septic or home sewage treatment plant (HSTP). The enclosures should be completely dry before another animal occupies it and it should not smell of chemical

agents. If you would be happy to eat a meal off the surface then it is probably clean enough!

4. Parasites. The bleach and disinfectant solutions will kill some parasites such as nematodes (microscopic unsegmented roundworms) but mites may hide in crevices or under bark in branches used for natural enclosure perches or materials. After cleaning enclosures a spray of “Top-of-Descent” insecticide (so named as it is used for fumigation of aircraft as they commence descent into some countries) will despatch any mites or insects living in the enclosure and reptiles may be reintroduced to the enclosure shortly afterward if required. It is available on-line and at pet shops for about \$20 per can.



Rowan



Membership Renewals

Memberships expire at the end of June.

You may renew your membership on-line via our website and secure transaction site.

<http://www.wildlifecarers.com/members-page/membership-form/>

Or if you would prefer to print and mail a form with a cheque, you'll find the form here:

<http://www.wildlifecarers.com/wp-content/uploads/NRWC-membership-2016-17.pdf>

(If you have joined the group recently, your membership will expire in June 2018 as we give you the extra time as a bonus!)

Handwashing

Poster from Hand Hygiene Australia (hha.org.au)

WASH HANDS WHEN VISIBLY SOILED! OTHERWISE, USE HANDRUB

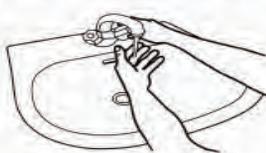


Duration of the handwash (steps 2-7): 15-20 seconds



Duration of the entire procedure: 40-60 seconds

0



Wet hands with water;

1



Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces;

2



Rub hands palm to palm;

3



Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa;

4



Palm to palm with fingers interlaced;

5



Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked;

6



Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa;

7



Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa;

8



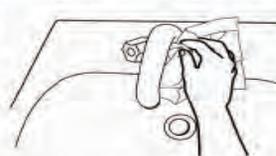
Rinse hands with water;

9



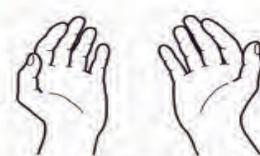
Dry hands thoroughly with a single use towel;

10



Use towel to turn off faucet;

11



Your hands are now safe.

Forthcoming Training

By Kate G.



Introduction to Echidnas

As the weather cools down, echidnas start to become active and this is the time that they will be coming into care. Make sure you're up to date with the latest information on rescuing and assessing injured echidnas by attending our upcoming training day. This course is recommended for new members, those who regularly rescue echidnas and hotline volunteers. Their needs are quite different and specific compared to other animals, so attending training on how to rescue and assess these animals is very important. If you're also interested in undertaking short term care of adults, you'll need to attend this course. You will learn about echidna biology, behaviour in the wild, how to rescue handle and transport echidnas, tips for conducting an assessment, caring for injured adults and raising puggles.

Details:

Date: **Sunday 7 May 2017**

Time: 10am - 2.30 (registrations and refreshments from 9.30)

Venue: Southern Cross University - Room Z181B - Lismore

Cost: \$15

Provided: morning tea and notes

What to bring: Lunch and cash if you wish to purchase any equipment.

RSVP: Register your interest by emailing training@wildlifecarers.com or calling the hotline **6628 1866**



Raising Juvenile Possums

A course for new members and experienced carers alike. Come and learn about the possums that live in the Northern Rivers - some species of which are rare or threatened and how to provide suitable care, housing and feed. Hear what is involved with raising orphaned possums. Discover what equipment you need, the time required and common problems you can encounter along the way. You will learn about what equipment and facilities are required, how to feed and care for your possum, how to recognise common illnesses and the soft release process.

Note. Existing possum carers - you must attend this course every two years to keep your training up to date. Seeing we didn't hold this course last year, that means we should see all existing carers on the day.

Note. New Members - This course is suitable for those who have previously attended Introduction to Possums and Small Marsupials

Details:

Date: **Sunday 28 May 2017**

Time: 9:30am to 3pm (registrations and refreshments from 9.00)

Venue: Southern Cross University - Room Z181B - Lismore

Cost: \$15

Provided: morning tea and notes

What to bring: Lunch and cash if you wish to purchase any equipment

RSVP: Register your interest by emailing training@wildlifecarers.com or calling the hotline **6628 1866**

Kate

Abominable Cruelty

Article and pictures by: Rowan W

On the 22nd of December I was called to look at an injured python at the Lismore Information Centre near Molesworth St and Ballina Rd.

On arrival the python had been placed in a cardboard box by a council worker that was doing maintenance in the park. Speaking to him and the centre worker that called the hotline I ascertained that the snake was found on their entry ramp and that no pythons had been observed in the area before. There was blood in the box and it appeared to have come from the snake's mouth. The animal was cold, virtually unresponsive and it had recently eaten a large meal which was making a huge lump in its belly.

I took the snake immediately to a local vet that will treat snakes and he surmised that the animal had a couple of broken teeth causing the blood in its mouth but was otherwise fine and could be released after digestion had completed. The vet noted that the animal was quite "feisty" but I had not observed that behaviour at all. I took "Lumpy" home and was going to place him/her in a warm enclosure.

When I lifted the snake I supported the animal around the large meal and thought that he/she had most likely consumed a chicken by the feel of it, but would a chicken be in the park? The snake drank 200ml of water on the first night. Next day I gave Lumpy a warm bath which allowed the snake to absorb some heat, move freely in the water and for me to wash off the dried blood and examine the body more closely. It was only then that I realised that something was not right at all with this python.

Apart from the distension in stomach area with two "tents" formed by large bones in meal, digestion appeared to be as normal. In the bath I noticed that the musculature in mid section was soft to touch and a bubble - like air trapped under skin evident in mid section, disappeared on touch. Digestion had progressed and the snake's tail was bulging as if full of food but not passing. Lumpy was allowed to roam and strong breathing/loud hissing evident as it moved by own accord. I suspected that he/she was in a lot of pain so it was off to Currumbin for assessment.

Friends of the Koala were doing regular trips to Currumbin and I was fortunate that they were doing so next day. Susannah kindly took Lumpy up for assessment and I was shocked at the report from the vets.



"Lumpy" on release day.

The blood was coming from the respiratory tract. Two areas of emphysema were overlying the stomach which filled on inspiration. (This was the bubble that I had observed) There was mid-body trauma, fractured ribs, three head fractures including one to the palate and a ruptured lung.

According to the Currumbin vets, there was only one way that a snake could get these sorts of injuries and that was at the hand of a human.

At about the same time as this incident the local newspapers carried stories of some abhorrent cases of animal cruelty in the local area. You may remember hearing about Polly the pig in Nimbin with her horrible injuries and the killing of several other animals at the same time. Then there was a puppy at Casino whose body was found skinned. Lumpy too had suffered but for some reason a snake's injury might not seem newsworthy. I wrote a letter to the Northern Star and it was published on the on-line edition. If you like you can read it here:

<https://www.northernstar.com.au/news/why-wont-this-act-of-animal-cruelty-make-headlines/3133355/>

Continued on page 8.

Clever Dove Mum

Article and pictures by: Sandy N



These two little emerald doves have a very clever mum, who must have known that their nest would be above the flood water. Albeit, just above the flood water!

When the water went down from across our culvert, there they were, quite exposed as the fast flowing water had pushed the vegetation down around them.

We put branches back up around them, and before long mum was back home to look after them.

Sandy

Abominable Cruelty *Continued ...*

Lumpy was treated with a number of drugs over several weeks and returned to Currumbin for assessment at the end of January. By this time he/she had recovered well and was a lovely snake to handle and have around. On the 22nd of February a slough (skin shedding) had happened and Lumpy was a new snake and ready for release. But where?

I gave the snake's circumstances a lot of thought - agonising thought and concluded that the most likely scenario was that snake had consumed someone's chook and been beaten for doing so. They then dumped the animal in the park. If Lumpy was taken back to the park then he/she would try to get home, wherever that was, and may meet their demise on Ballina Rd. In terms of release sites there was no right answer as pythons have a greater than 80% mortality rate if taken from their home range.

I was speaking to members Brendan and Jo from Kyogle and they described an almost perfect place they had on their property where Lumpy could live and thrive with other pythons. It was the best solution we had. On the 4th of March, after over 70 days in care, Lumpy was freed in a near-perfect environment and hopefully will never encounter another human for the rest of his/her life.

Rowan

Crèche and Release

Article and pictures by: Wendy A

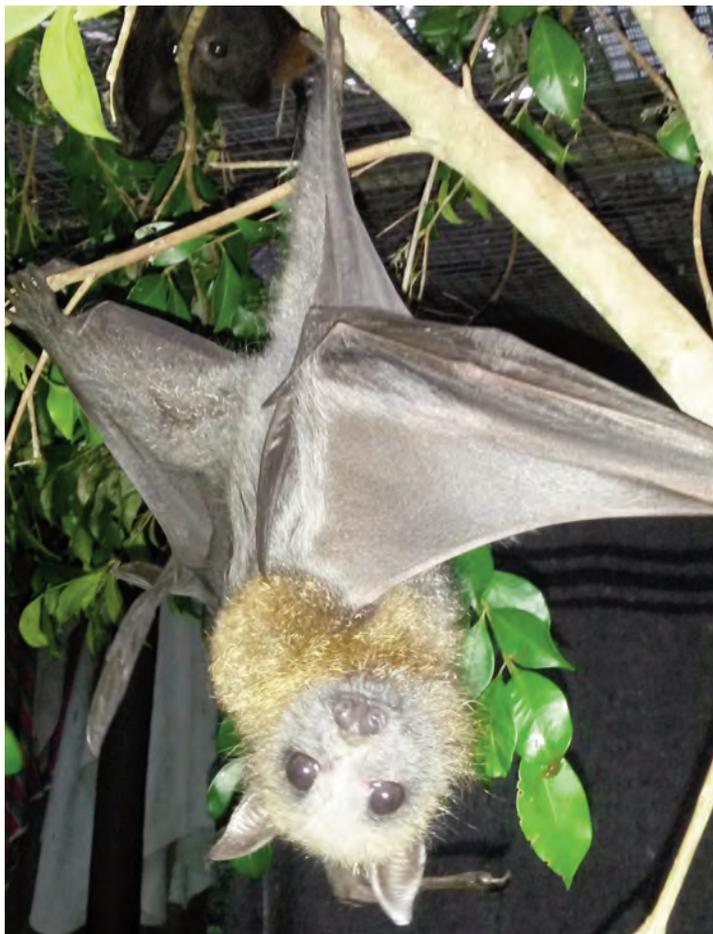
It's a big year for bat feeders and because so many orphan flying foxes came into in care, we have had to have four releases of bats from our Alstonville aviary. NRWC have had so many flying fox orphans in care sadly due to two major events, a food shortage at the end of last year, that saw many flying foxes abandoned in colonies, caught on barbed wire fences or netting, with mums carrying young babies (pups); and the catastrophic heat event in Casino in February, where thousands of flying foxes died.

Thankfully NRWC saved more than 60 juveniles. Due to the numbers that came into care, including the huge amount at once from the Casino event, crèche has been held at Sandy and my place as well as Valerie's.

In crèche they learn how to be little batties, where they can fly and interact with others and for us batty parents to learn that they no longer need us around! Once they've reached a certain weight, they go to the release site at Alstonville, where they will stay in the aviary there for four weeks until release, where they are fed every day, by an amazing team of dedicated carers. We release at Alstonville as Lumley Park, which has a flying fox colony is only 400 m away, and the added bonus is that it's right next to a wonderful flying fox carer! So far there has been more than 70 bats released, and there is about that number to be released in the next two releases. So all help is appreciated!

Although adult flying foxes mostly die in heat events, one mum was lucky enough to come into care, with her pup. Mum bat was an absolute delight to care for, a cool character from the start and was front and centre when food was put out. Mum bat and pup spent a month at Alstonville and then were released 8 April, where mum

climbed high in the pecan tree - leaving her rather larger pup with the other released kids, and she took off flying around a few times, stretching her wings. It was a wonderful sight. We were also blessed to have John Gough present at that release.



We are always looking for more people to help as we are feeding bats within the aviary and the released ones. We will continue to support feed released bats until they no longer need it - this will depend on climatic and flowering conditions.

Help is needed cutting up fruit at Wollongbar and washing dishes then putting fruit out at Alstonville. You don't need to be vaccinated for Australian Bat Lyssavirus to assist in helping these gorgeous creatures, but when you meet them I'm sure you're going to want to be a bat carer.

Please contact me if you can assist in feeding bellbird74@gmail.com

If you can, please consider donating to NRWC as it costs \$100 for a flying fox to be raised and released. To donate, please visit:

<https://www.givenow.com.au/northernriverswildlifecarers> and put flying fox care as your reason.

Thank you to the wonderful bat carers and bat feeders, as because of you, 140 flying foxes have been saved!

Wendy

Womy the Ice Snake

Story and pictures by Rowan W



An unusual snake that came from unusual circumstances. I received a call from one of our carers that she had assisted the police with a raid on premises in Casino. How exciting I thought! It appears that when the police were searching the locations as part of state-wide drug investigations they came across an unidentified snake in the process. Not willing to proceed further until the reptile was in safe hands they engaged the help of NRWC.

She happily bagged the snake and identified it as a Woma python. These normally reside in central Australia and may be kept as pets by licenced reptile keepers. Where this snake came from was anyone's guess as it was not micro-chipped and no licence or papers relating to it turned up during the investigation. NSW Parks and Wildlife were notified about the snake's circumstances.

On my venomous snake handling course, Martin mentioned that snakes and in particular venomous ones, are often found by the police during drug raids and that sadly a lot of the reptiles are in poor condition or unable to be released back into the wild as their home range is unable to be determined. Euthanasia is generally the only option in those cases. Additionally because of the association with drugs, anyone that the police come across that has snakes in their possession needs to be able to justify why. It is for that reason that we ask carers to carry their membership card, a windscreen sign and notify a reptile coordinator when ferrying animals to or from Currumbin hospital.

I was asked by our carer if I would be able to look after the python and I readily agreed as fortuitously an enclosure became vacant the previous day. She delivered the snake to me and what a pretty snake it was. "Womes" was a little underweight and dehydrated but otherwise fine. I had done some research and found that they are generally of a quiet and docile disposition. I was about to find out otherwise! I handled Womes the next day and he/she was showing a dark side striking out and generally being an obstreperous guest. On some occasions he/she would strike out at the enclosure glass when I walked past. Had the snake been mistreated in the past and made to be aggressive or was there another reason? If the snake had been near crystal-methamphetamine it is possible that he/she had absorbed it and was displaying drug-affected behaviour. The attitude and sleep habits of the snake certainly gave some support to that hypothesis. Given the strength of that drug only a miniscule amount would be needed to affect a small animal. Such an

Continued ...

Womy the Ice Snake *Continued ...*

amount could easily transfer through snakeskin or be inhaled as a vapour. Did I have an addicted snake? How would Womes fare going cold-turkey? (As Homer Simpson once said "It is not as delicious as it sounds!".)

Womes fed well and was eating "fuzzy" rats that are between 50 and 90gms. I was reluctant to handle him/her but noticed that over the weeks the python was becoming more used to me and less angry. I fed him/her at weekly intervals and started visits to the garden where the snake could roam freely and get some sunlight and mental stimulation. All done under the closest supervision! He/she seemed to like their new home and was a gentler happier snake than when I originally took possession.

I informed the NSW Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) that I had the snake in possession and asked what needs to be done to find a home. They advised that no-one had reported a Woma lost or stolen and that when the police advise that it is no longer needed as evidence in their investigation, Womes would be "balloted" amongst nearby licenced carers and a name of someone that had registered an interest in keeping the snake would be drawn at random and they would receive the snake. Eventually this happened, but for various reasons the first four in the random list were unable to accommodate the snake or were no longer interested. I was advised by NPWS that one person was yet to return



their call but if they did not Womes would need to be euthanased. I immediately contacted several people that I thought might like to look after him/her and all said that they were interested but were not contacted in the ballot. I wonder what happened there? I relayed this to NPWS and they replied that they had made contact with a person from the ballot and the python would be going to a reptile keeper at The Channon.

It worked out well for Womes as he/she would be sharing a large outdoor enclosure with two other rescued womas being looked after by a reptile carer that volunteers with WIRES. I was sad to see the little chap go as I had become attached, as I do with all of my long-term care animals, but very happy that he/she has found a good home and its sad past-life is now well behind it. I contacted the carer a week later and was delighted to hear that Womes was getting along well with the other womas and had settled in well.

As this issue was being prepared the Northern Star had an article about a python that had been affected by ice. You can read about it here:

<https://www.northernstar.com.au/news/snake-scariest-meth-addict-all-time/3165475/>

Rowan



Wildlife Food for Carers

Byron:	Caroline Sutherland:	6685 1580
Casino:	Sue Higgins:	6662 6613
Lismore:	Natalie Wunsch:	04 3165 4157
	Pam Mitchell (<i>Reptile food</i>):	6624 8870

Committee Report



Our March committee meeting was eventually held after being postponed twice due to bad weather and flooding in Lismore. As it was at the Workers Club we were a bit worried that we would not be able to have it as the building had been inundated on the ground floor. However they were able to accommodate us so we could get on with discussing the important agenda items.

Apart from the usual reports from treasurer Sandy and secretary Cheryl, we thanked Kate on her good work for the previous Introductory and Basic Rescue training held in March. It was great to meet a new group of enthusiastic members. We hope they all enjoy caring and being involved in our organisation.

Our Media Officer, Wendy, is unable to continue in this position and has stepped down so we are looking for an enthusiastic person to take on the job. If anyone is interested in this please contact any of the committee members and we would be pleased to talk to you about it.

For members who buy their wildlife food from Nat's in Lismore, we are introducing a new petty cash form to help keep track of the sales. Buyers fill in the details of the purchase and cost and place it with money in the envelope and slip under the door.

Wendy is also working on a new rescue information sheet that can be used when members pick up animals from MoPs and at vets. This would stay with the animal as it is passed on to other carers until release. These will be sent to members by email and be available at food outlets and training days. More info will be sent out later.

We are also looking for members who would be willing to help with the website and Facebook page. Anyone who could assist please contact Cheryl or Sandy. Their numbers are on the back page.

If you are trying to phone Cheryl please use her mobile number from now on or ring the hotline so that a message can be passed on.

Our next training day is coming up in May which should be an interesting one as it is on echidnas and possums. You can enrol by contacting Kate on the training email or phoning the hotline. I hope to see a lot of you there.

Also coming up is the Car-boot Market in Lismore on Car Boot Market on Sunday 21st of May. We will require someone to coordinate the day, with the help of the committee and a number of helpers to staff the collection buckets. Please consider donating your time to this worthwhile fundraiser. Please email Sandy: treasurer@wildlifecarers.com

Jenny



Taking Care With Wood

If you use wood to heat your home this winter please check that:

- Your heater is clean and no animals are in the flue,
- Your flue is screened to prevent animals entering,
- Your timber is sustainably sourced,
- No animals are in logs or under bark,
- No animals are using your wood-pile as a home.

Car-boot Fundraiser

By: Sandy N

NRWC is Charity of the Day at Lismore Car Boot Market on Sunday 21st of May. This is always a good day for us. We get to raise some funds, pass on information about living with wildlife and raise our profile in the community.

Volunteer coordinator

We are looking for a volunteer/s to coordinate this on behalf of our organisation. If you're able to help, please contact Sandy; treasurer@wildlifecarers.com ASAP as we are only a month away and need to get started. The coordinator will need to: contact the market manager to get details of the site and requirements we need to comply with; contact members to arrange bucket and stall roster for the day; organise getting publicity materials to the site on the day; coordinate the stall and collectors on the day. You will be supported in this role by the NRWC committee.

Volunteer collectors

On market day we are asking for only one hour of your time to hold a bucket and collect donations. We will be collecting from 8.30 am to 12.30 pm. Collect for one hour, meet your fellow members, have something yummy to eat and drink and perhaps pick up a bargain! Please email Sandy treasurer@wildlifecarers.com if you are able to collect and let me know your preferred time. This information will then be passed onto the coordinator.

Wildlife Quiz

By: Paul C.



1. What is the most widespread Eucalyptus in Australia?
2. True or false: there are more Australian birds with Little in their name than are described as Great or Grand or Giant.
3. True or false: there are more Australian birds called Shy than are called Noisy.
4. Australia has had various long fences built to prevent the movement of certain animals into agricultural or pastoral areas? Which animals? Clue: there are three.
5. How many feral camels are there estimated to be in Australia? a) 100,000 b) 5 million c) 300,000 d) 1 million
6. What is the meaning of Nankeen in the name of the Nankeen Night Heron? a) a description of their weird keening call, b) an archaic English word referring to their cap and jaunty plume, c) from the HMS Nankeen which first collected (shot) the species) d) their colour being similar to a cheap cloth imported from Nanking, China.
7. Who first commercially distilled Eucalyptus oil in Australia?
8. Which Australian states or territories have Kangaroos in their coat of arms?
9. Who am I? I was born in 1911 in New Zealand. I was a beekeeper and floriculturist. I came to Australia in 1944. In 1947 at my family property I started feeding the local wild lorikeets to distract them from my flower crops. This turned into a tourist attraction with people holding plates of bread and honey to feed the lorikeets. Visitor numbers really increased after National Geographic published a story about it in 1956. In 1976 I donated the property, the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary to the people of Queensland.
10. All of the following regions have had reported sightings of Tasmanian Tigers. Which of them is currently the location of a scientific study into these sightings? a) the SW corner of WA b) Cape York c) SW Tasmania d) Gippsland Victoria.

Training Day

By: Kate G

Welcome to all our new members who participated at the recent training day! We hope you will all find an opportunity to practice your new skills soon. Wildlife caring can be incredibly rewarding and can really open your eyes to the natural world around you.

We had a terrific group of about 20 people, who all took a chance on the weather holding out - which thankfully it did. The group were very engaged and many people there were clearly passionate about wildlife and we feel sure will go on to become a great asset to our group.

Our lovely trainer received fantastic feedback as always 'Chrisy's presentation was excellent, informative, practical, well paced and good humoured'. People also said that they valued the 'honest, experience-based learning' and that the training was insightful, interesting and practical. NRWC's legendary morning tea also got a few mentions on the feedback forms.

A Thorny Little Devil

Article and pictures by: Paul C.



Yesterday, 12 April 2017, was a good day, and a strange day. We saw our first thorny devil probably about 10 kms east of Wave Rock. So unexpected. Sitting on a dirt road that climbed up a sandhill. It was in the manner of all dreams - once realised it seemed earthly. We photographed the animal and then Jen startled it and it moved. It moved! I decided it was best to herd it off the road and it waggled from side to side as it scurried. I was taken by the massive thorns on it - perhaps more appropriate on the trunk of some tropical tree guarding itself from herbivores. Its different colours also surprised me – yellows and whites and greys. The most surprising photo taken, though a little fuzzy, was of Jen's from in front of it. (On page 2) It looks truly alien from that angle.

Paul

NSW Wildlife Council Update

By: Sandy N

The following notes are from the February 2017 meeting. I hope you find it interesting.

Evan Quartermain came to the meeting as a guest speaker from Humane Society International to speak about the Wildlife Land Trust. In 2007 Humane Society International launched the Wildlife Land Trust (WLT) Australia in an effort to preserve and protect our vital native habitats and the animals that depend on them, in a network of sanctuaries both throughout the country and internationally. The programme is completely voluntary and there are absolutely no costs or legal obligations involved - becoming a member of the WLT will effectively complement any current arrangements landowners already have on their properties, legal or otherwise. I'd encourage members interested to check out the website for more information. <https://www.wildlifelandtrust.org.au/>

Kelly Simpson came from Sydney University "Salmonella and wildlife – how you can help" NRWC will be providing samples to Kelly for testing as part of her study

Josey and Rebekka from IFAW gave an Update on Wildlife Rescue Mobile Phone App – the App is at testing stage and publicity/promotion opportunities discussed. We have a couple of members currently testing the updated app.

OEH Audit update - Peter Stathis and Ron Haering summarised the Scope of Works which have to date included more than 50 Compliance Audits, Group Executive Surveys, a Rehabilitator Survey and a survey on the NWC.

The Biodiversity Conservation Act start date is 1 July 2017 but it is expected that existing General licences will be renewed for 12 months, aiming for the accreditation process to be implemented by 1/7/2018. The meeting was informed that data responses related to individual groups will be advised to groups on a group by group basis, and already one group has been advised of matters that need rectifying/attention.

Within the NWC meeting, there was acknowledgment of the death of Robyn Gough. Sympathy extended to her group Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers and to her family.

Wildlife Rehabilitation Grants 2017-18 The annual \$1000 NWC Grant Application round will open on 1 May and close on 31 July 2017 at 5pm. (I'll send an email around the time they open as a reminder.)

As part of the NWC Strategic Plan Review, a working group are looking into sharing of Group Policies and resources for the purpose of helping groups support and enhance governance by having resources available on the NWC Webpage.

Don Eagleton from Australian Seabird Rescue spoke on The North Coast Shark Net trial. I have included Don's points in full. The data is shocking and disturbing and I'd encourage you to read and act. Local member Tamara Smith has a petition which all members are urged to support. www.tamarasmith.com.au/stop_shark_nets

Report to February 2017 NWC meeting on North Coast Shark Net Trials from ASR perspective.

1. The announcement of North Coast Shark Net Trial by the Premier back in November 2016 was originally planned for the main wharf in Ballina. This is the wharf which was dedicated to Lance Ferris Wharf in 2009, in recognition of the work by the founder of ASR, the late Lance Ferris. Thankfully, common sense prevailed, and DPI after prompting from Rochelle Ferris, Kath Southwell (ASR GM) and others, and after discussions with the Premiers team, moved the announcement to the North Wall of the Richmond River next to the new Marine Rescue Tower. Lance would have turned in his grave if the announcement had been made at his wharf after the work that he had done to protect marine life.

2. The Minister, at the time (The Hon. Niall Blair), announced in Parliament around 10th November 2016 that "The nets will be removed at night, when marine life is more active" (see ELO Hansard Review 8-10 November). The nets are not being removed at night.

NSW Wildlife Council Update *Continued ...*

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3. Ballina Shire Council voted in favour of the Shark Net Trial (two significant dissenters: one being Keith Williams and the other being his running mate at the last council elections). For those of you who don't know, Keith is Rochelle Ferris's husband and Vice-President of ASR. Byron Shire Council instead voted against the Shark Net Trail and instead opted for a trial of the Shark Watch program.
 4. Turtle releases by ASR normally occur at a number of local Ballina beaches and sometimes at Lennox Head or Byron Bay (Main beach and The Pass). Due to the installation of the Shark nets in and around Evans Head, Ballina and Lennox Heads, and as long as they are there, future turtle releases will only occur at Byron Bay, which is net free and within the Cape Byron Marine Park. This is Ballina and Lennox Heads loss and a potential negative for tourism. Note: On 23rd January 2017, ASR released 4 turtles (3 Green and 1 Hawksbill) at Main Beach, Byron Bay.
 5. Around 17th January, two dead Loggerhead Turtles (estimated age of around 25 years plus) were found washed up on Ballina beaches. Both displayed signs of having drowned. Had these turtles possibly been entangled in the nets and either escaped or were released and subsequently died? Three Loggerheads and one unknown marine turtle species were released from the nets in the initial monthly trial period. Subsequently, DPI contractors have been trained by ASR in the tagging of turtles and any turtle released by them will easily be identified should they end of any beaches.
 6. You will note from the answer to the following question, from the DPI web site: How will DPI evaluate this trial – what is success? that it is not entirely scientific, but is based to a large extent on public reaction, i.e. “Two types of information will be used to evaluate the trial. First, how effective are the nets at catching target sharks with minimal impact on other marine animals. Second, how acceptable the approach is to the community in terms of reducing risk of shark bites.” Based on the results from the first two months (see stats below) of the trial, the first criteria has been a complete failure.
 7. The report by DPI on the first month of the trial shows, with the exception of the Evans Head net, that the majority of nets were only checked once a day. ASR was lead to believe that the nets would be checked at least twice per day. This is still not good enough as by DPIs own estimates an entangled dolphin or green turtle is unlikely to survive for more than 30 minutes.
 8. The statistics from the trial for the first two months are as follows: 8th December 2016 to 7th January 2017
 - 43 animals across 12 species were entangled in the nets.
 - 31 (72%) were released alive.
 - 12 (28%) were deceased. This included one Bottlenose Dolphin and one Green Turtle.
 - Of the 12 that were deceased, only one was a target species.
 - Only 4 individuals from the target species (White, Tiger and Bull Sharks) were entangled. Three of these were released. One died.
 - DPI expressed that they were encouraged by the 72% that were released, ASR was saddened by the 28% that died.
 - 8th January 2017 to 7th February 2017 –
 - 72 animals across 11 species were entangled in the nets.
 - 40 (56%) were released alive.
 - 32 (44%) were deceased. This included one Bottlenose Dolphin, one Green Turtle, one Loggerhead Turtle and 6 Manta Rays.
 - Of the 32 that were deceased, only one was a target species (White).
 - Only 1 individual from the target species (White, Tiger and Bull Sharks) was entangled. This died.
 9. On Wednesday 25th January, Ballina Shire Council voted 6 to 4 (a reduced majority compared with the original vote) to approach the NSW Government to install an additional shark net in front of the surf club at Lennox Head beach.

Sandy



Happenings

By: Jenny S.

I hope you all survived the recent terrible rainy weather we had over the past few weeks. I had my first real look at the effects of the Lismore flood today and it sure was devastating for many of the residents in the area as well as the CBD businesses. This was the biggest flood I have seen in the 40 years we have lived here.

It has been hard to gauge the impact on the wildlife from our calls as we don't seem to have been really busy with injured or drenched animals coming into care. A few birds have come in covered in mud however not as many as expected. Maybe they were lucky or just not saved with all the turmoil going on around the Northern Rivers. There would have to be a number that were drowned.

I did hear an interesting story from one of our neighbours that a cow was found at the river mouth at Pimlico grazing on the grass and had been swept 20kms down the river from Lismore. I'm sure the farmer was thrilled to have a least one of his cows back. Hopefully some of our wild creatures fared just as well.

With the decline in the number of calls over the last few weeks this gives our carers a chance for a break. There have been some interesting calls and rescues lately. A few snake calls have come in, mostly from people sighting them outside at night or sunning themselves. The callers ask if we could relocate the snake but are told 'no' as snake catchers generally do not relocate snakes that are outside and left alone the snake would probably disappear during the night.

Other calls include the usual birds hit by cars. One lucky galah had a fortunate outcome when he/she was discovered stuck in the grille of a car at Broadwater. New members, Jennie and her husband were able to assist in removing the bird and getting him/her to Currumbin Wildlife Hospital. Despite having a cut which had to be stitched and feather damage the bird recovered and was collected by one of our Ballina carers. He/she then came to live with Chrisy at Wyrallah for some R and R. The driver of the car had no idea where he had collected the galah and was mostly concerned that he had damaged his new car so Chrisy had to send out an SOS to find a suitable spot that had a permanent flock of galahs for release. The little guy ended up going to Jo and Brendan place at Cougal, west of Kyogle. - A nice place to live.

It is interesting to check on the calls in our database and in March only we had 175 entries. Of these 81 were for birds, 22 for snake calls, 7 for lizards, 14 for possums and gliders, 7 for macropods 6 for other natives (mainly echidnas) and 6 for pet animals. The remainder were for admin and training. Luckily many of these were advice.

Following the Intro and Basic Rescue course held last month we have a number of new members who are keen to do the hotline training. I will be contacting them very soon to arrange a suitable date for this. If there is anyone else who would like to join them please contact me. You can ring the hotline number or phone me on the number which is on the back info page. We are always in need of new people to help in this vital task and it is done at your home as the hotline phone number is simply diverted to your mobile or home phone. Now is a good time to start while calls are quiet.

Now I am off to enjoy the beautiful sunshine. Happy caring everyone!

Jenny

Ed by Rowan

Firstly my thoughts are with the people that suffered losses during the flood and for all of the killed and displaced wildlife, domestic and farm animals. Floods are part of life in the Northern Rivers and we learn from each one.

Currumbin Wildlife Hospital told me that they were very busy with sick or injured animals during the floods but NRWC seemed to have a relatively quiet time. This may be because few animals got into trouble but it could be that we humans were more preoccupied at the time. I hope it was the former.

I did have a couple of snake calls locally and one was most likely due to seeking drier refuge after the flood. The first was an eastern brown snake caught in netting and unfortunately he/she had de-gloved a couple of areas of skin trying to extricate itself and would need surgery. I left this one in my snake bag while I attended to a “snake-in-bedroom” call. These are generally arboreal snakes so I wasn’t too concerned about not having my bag, imagining that I would simply pick it up with a pillowcase. It turned out to be a red-bellied black. I was able to restrain the snake with my grippers but when I went to open the sliding doors to get out they were locked and bolted and the people at the house were reluctant to help. Eventually the snake was released outside but it had become increasingly irritated at being held for some time. He/she commenced displaying displeasure by hissing and inflating the neck area, then it was striking at air and the gripper itself. Some time later it did a well-placed bite to the spongy area of the gripper and I saw for the first time; snake venom. What looked like saliva poured from the mouth with each muscular contraction of its head. So it is true that venomous snakes envenomate as an absolute last resort and it takes a lot to get one to that stage!

I was sorry to upset the snake but grateful to learn first-hand that we have less to fear from venomous snakes than we might at first have thought.

Rowan

Quiz Answers

1. The River Red Gum occurs in all mainland Australian States and Territories. Only one River Red Gum survives in the ACT.
2. True – there are many more birds with a reference to Little in their name.
3. False – it is very close but more birds are referred to as Noisy.
4. Rabbits, Dingoes, Emus.
5. Will accept C or D. Last estimate was 300,000 in 2010, could well have reached 1 million.
6. D. Also used for the Nankeen Kestrel.
7. Yorkshire pharmacist Joseph Bosisto in 1852.
8. Four. NSW, Victoria, WA and NT.
9. Alexander Morris Griffiths AM
10. James Cook University will use more than 50 cameras to monitor sites on Cape York where Thylacines are believed to have been spotted.