

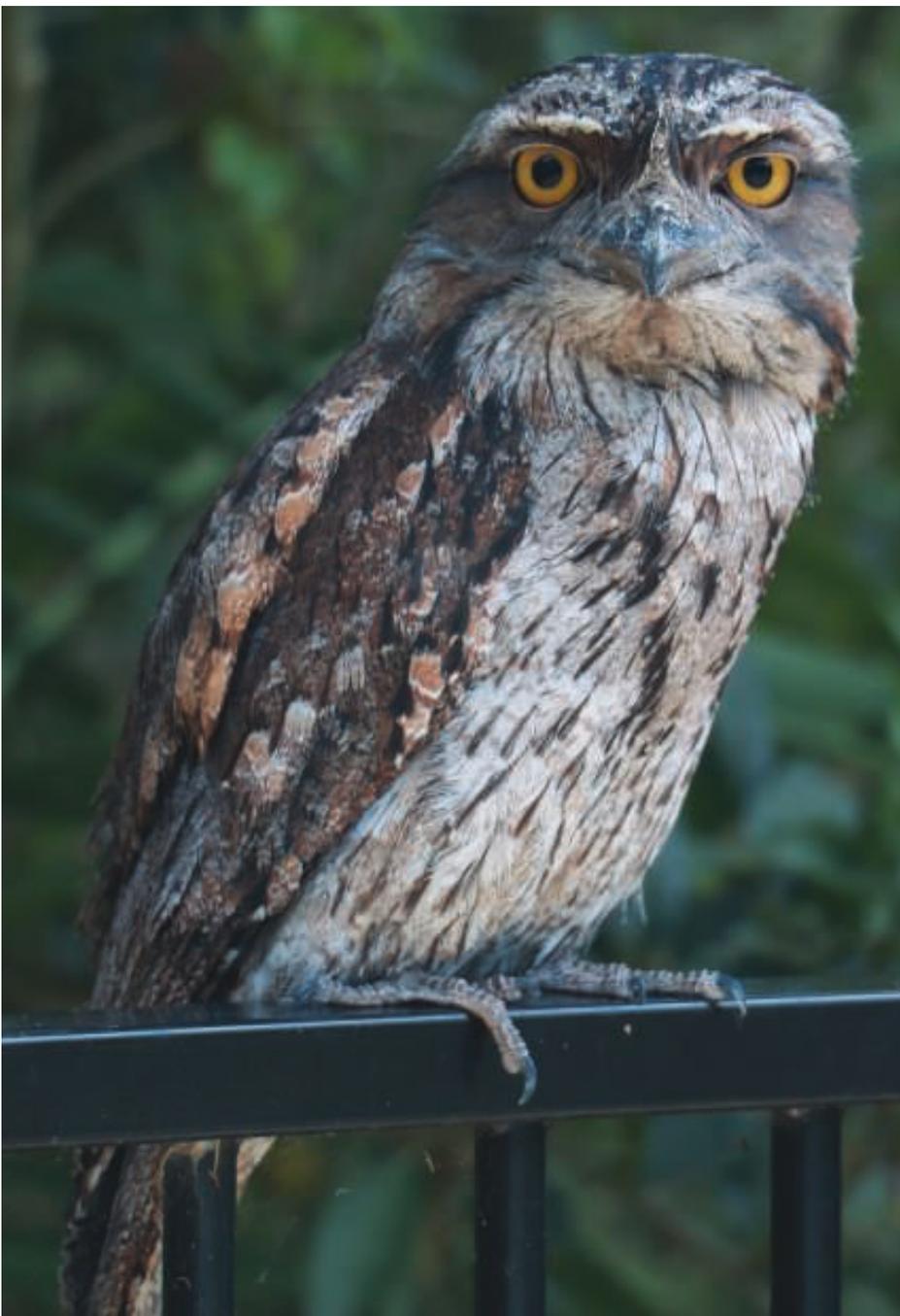
Wildlife News



Issue 143 November - December 2016

Home to Roost

Story and pictures by Kate G.



Our first bird to care for came in the form of a little bundle of tawny fluff last December. We named it Bird. It looked so very small and vulnerable. We completely fell in love with it. Soon enough it was learning to fly and moved into the bigger flight aviary, where upon it was joined by another tawny of a similar age - Frankie. I'd go to feed them of a summer evening and they'd be zooming around my head, getting ready for the Big World. At the beginning of the New Year, Cheryl told me it was nearly time to release them. They may well have been ready, but I was most definitely not. I was quite unprepared for the wrench that I felt and my fear for their safety. As wildlife carers we are all too aware of the risks, let alone for two such unstreetwise specimens.

One clear, moonlit evening we opened the aviary - and they sat there for quite a while on their perches. Eventually they gained the courage to enter the outside world. They flew around after each other, from branch to branch, and I watched them until it was too dark to see any more. I said a little blessing for their safety and came inside. The next few days they were spotted around the neighbourhood,

Continued ...

Home to Roost *Continued ...*

.....

mostly at odd locations such as swing sets, mowers and ping pong tables. And then after a week or so, I didn't see them again.

Until about a month ago, when I was enjoying lunch in the spring sunshine and I saw a familiar form on a nearby fence post. I went over to inspect it and as I suspected, it allowed me to walk straight up to it. I was thrilled to know that at least one of them was still alive and looking healthy, though maybe not quite getting the hang of being nocturnal yet.

A couple of weeks later I found a nest about 20 metres from the front door and easily visible through the window. We now have two new fluff balls Fluffy and Puffy and I feel so honoured to watch them grow and I will keep a good eye out for them this storm season.



Kate

members

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

*Ashley W, Dale R,
Gemma M, Joanne C,
Linda A, Mark A,
Penny B, Rachel A,
Sabina C, Sarah H and
Suzette F*

Contents:

November - December 2016

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News and Information

Welcome to New Members	2
Committee Report	7
Wildlife Quiz	7
Quiz Answers	10
Hotline Happenings	11
NWC Grant	12
Relocatable Aviaries	14
Big Scrub Rainforest Day ...	16

Rescues and Care

Home to Roost.....	1-2
Alex the Seal	3-4
Raptor Report	5
Magpie Rescue	6
Byron-Snaky	8-10
Why did the Ducks	13

Opinion

Editorial	15
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Administration

Basket Case	6
NWC Newsletter	10
2017 Calendars	14
Pin-up Page	17

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All submissions are welcome. Deadline for editions is the 15th of the month preceding publication.

Email: nrwc@iinet.net.au

Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of NRWC Inc.

Alex the Seal

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Story and pictures by Rowan W.



I've never been all that keen on looking after eastern water-dragons. Not because I don't like them, I think that they are awesome creatures, graceful swimmers, great climbers and are tough little fellows but they are notoriously hard to feed in captivity if they have been wild. Such was the case with this little chap.

On the 13th of August one of our new members, Doug called me to say that he had a young water-dragon that had been hit by a car and was found in the middle of the road by his daughter. The animal was seemingly alright with a small amount of blood in the mouth but otherwise behaving ok. I recommended keeping him in a warm quiet and dark place and to take him to a vet in the morning. I gave Doug some Pain-stop to administer orally but that was unsuccessful.

Next day I collected the dragon from the vets and spoke with the doctor about him. His disposition was well and he seemed to be ok so it was suggested that he be kept in care for a few days and observed closely. I was optimistic of an early release but reptiles can hide their symptoms. Overnight he went downhill fast and was not looking at all well the next day so I decided to get him to Currumbin for assessment.

The lizard was diagnosed with a fractured palate and a fractured jaw and was in intensive care at Currumbin from the 15th of August to the 11th of September. He was fitted with an oesophagostomy feeding-tube in the neck and was not allowed anything by mouth to allow the fractures to heal. I received him back minus the tube and with staples in the neck, with instructions to feed soft food only and continue oral medications, recheck in four weeks. They had named him "Alex" as he was found on Alexandra Parade outside the Lismore showgrounds.

By now you are probably wondering why a lizard was called a seal. In 1981 a group called "The Go-Gos" released a song called "Our Lips are Sealed"* which was widely misheard as "Alex the Seal" and was often requested by radio listeners by the latter name. So I extended his name which was quite fitting, because when it came to putting anything in his mouth his lips were sealed!

Feeding Alex was a palaver most days. I tried all sorts of fruit and veggies, mince with and without insectivore and banana with raw egg but Alex would have none of it. I was unable to pry his mouth open because of the injury so every feeding time was a game of "Here comes the aeroplane!" or whatever I could do to get him to open up. I had success

Continued ...

Alex the Seal *Continued ...*

with tickling his comb or whatever that piece of skin behind the head is called and getting him to open wide. 3ml of recovery mixture sometimes with egg and his medicine could then be squirted down his throat which he would swallow. Repeating the process until he was full but being very careful that the syringe or my fingers never got close enough for him to bite them and damage his jaw. Sometimes feeding could be a very long process!

I quite enjoyed having Alex stay as he had heaps of personality. I gave him free range of our bathroom and he loved the water and was able to climb in or out of the bath at will courtesy of a strategically placed towel. One day I went to retrieve him and he was nowhere to be found. Panic stations! After turning the cupboards inside out I eventually found him curled up in the bottom of the waste bin hiding under some paper. I was sure he was chuckling at me!

Alex was with me for nearly four weeks as the site where the tube went in his neck needed to heal and Alex's two punky piercings (two metal staples) could then be removed. I took him to Currumbin a few days early as he was very keen to leave. X-rays showed that his jaw and palate were fused perfectly and he had put on a little weight. Given a clean bill of health the plucky fellow was released on the 7th of October, some 66 days after his altercation with a car. - somewhat further from the road on which he was found.

Rowan

*<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3kQlzOj27M>



*Upper: just prior to release
Lower: Enjoying a bath.*

Raptor Report

Article and pictures by: Wendy L.

Not long after returning home in September, Joe handed over the barn owl he had in care. This was the one with the broken coracoid bone mentioned in his raptor report in the last newsletter. He had had it for three weeks of cage rest and now it was ready to regain flight fitness.

The owl was looking good and after three weeks of flying in two different sized aviaries and eating ravenously, it was time for release. I took the owl back to where it was found, close to Kingsford Smith Park in Ballina. It was a lovely calm, quiet night with no human activity, barking dogs or roaming cats to be seen. The owl flew silently and strongly and within seconds was invisible.

A beautiful female peregrine falcon was found on Weis Lane, Rous one Saturday afternoon. It was unable to move and magpies were attacking its head, especially the left eye. The reason it couldn't move was because it had a huge engorged paralysis tick attached to its right eyelid. The falcon was very unwell and breathing with its beak open.

I took the falcon to North Coast Emergency vets at Ballina where it was given tick serum, eye drops and kept overnight. Miraculously, it was alive in the morning. Joe collected and kept it for the next 24 hours as I had to be in Brisbane.

Vet Alisa had asked for the bird's eye to be checked on my return. The falcon still looked really sick but the pecked eye was of great concern because of damage to the cornea. Antibiotics were prescribed and eye drops given six times a day for two days. Then back to Mike for a check up.

By this time the falcon was better and had managed to get herself on to a perch. Very sadly, the eye was a lot worse and so there was no option but to euthanase the gorgeous bird.

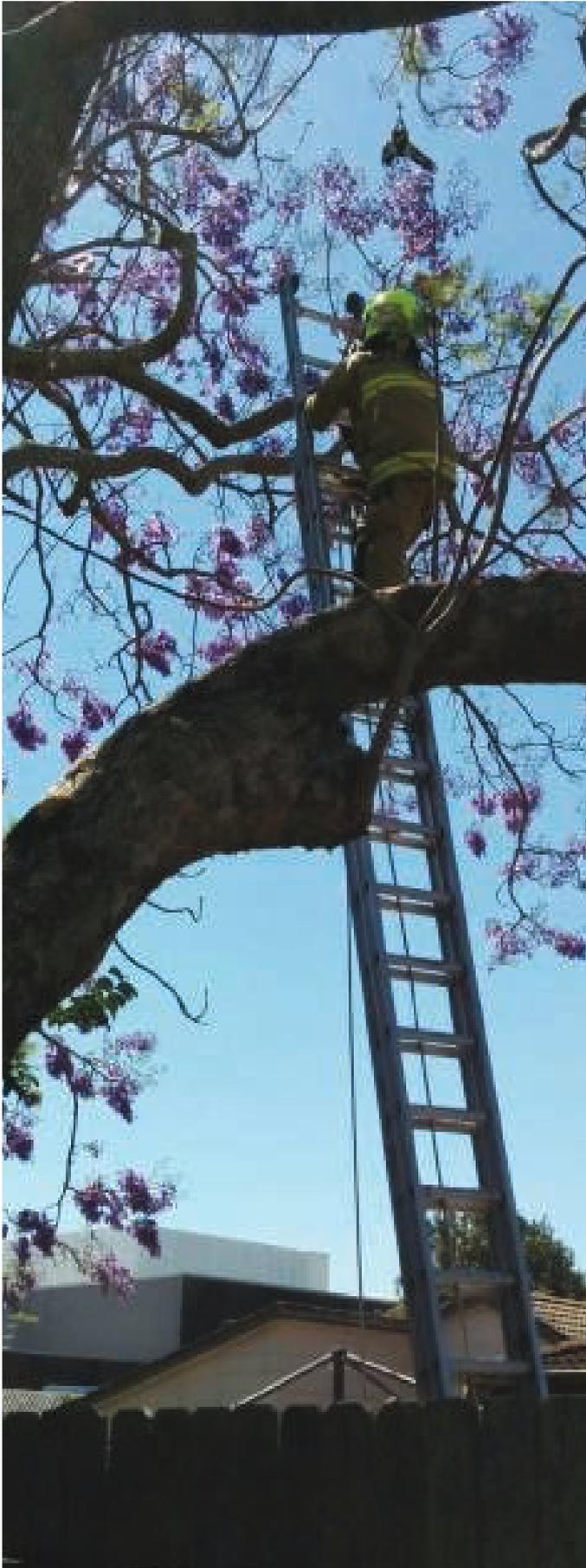
Thanks, Joe, for filling my shoes in all areas whilst I was away and to vets Alisa and Mike for their help with the peregrine falcon.

Wendy



Magpie Rescue

By: Roy F.



Emergency fire department came to the rescue of a juvenile magpie in Ballina who was tangled in fishing line that was used to make its nest, high in a Jacaranda tree.

Unfortunately it wasn't the best outcome for the bird as by the time it was rescued the poor bird had suffered too much trauma and didn't make it.

Roy

Basket Case

By: Sandy N.

Did you purchase a rescue basket through NRWC in the last 12 months?

I borrowed one recently from a new carer and noticed that the lid was not fitting well when closed, which could potentially allow animals to escape!

For anyone who bought a new basket, it would be a good idea to stuff it full of towels or something similar so that the lid fits snugly onto the base and then leave it in the sun or your car on a hot day to hopefully encourage the plastic to reset to match the lid.

Please feel free to contact me (See pin-up page) if you need any assistance with this.

Sandy

WILDLIFE STORY SUBMISSIONS
nrwc@iinet.net.au

Send digital pictures full size please with the name of the photographer.

All stories welcome no matter how small.

Committee Report

By: Jenny S.



Our Committee meeting for September was held at the Lismore Workers Club. Apart from the usual secretary and treasurer's reports we discussed a wide range of topics.

Bookings for the upcoming training days for birds and venomous and non-venomous snakes are underway. It was decided that as the group is in need of snake catchers that the committee agreed to supplement the costs of the carers who are attending the venomous snake training in Queensland if a grant which we have applied for is not successful.

The group participated in the Big Scrub Environment Day at Rocky Creek Dam on Sunday the 16th of October. At the meeting we decided our info stall would have a theme of Wildlife injured on the roads.

Sandy and Cheryl reported that the recent government audit went well and hopefully this will result in some good outcomes for wildlife in general. (Don't forget that all members are required to keep records of the animals that they deal with including pickup and deliveries to vet or MoPs. Just a sentence in an exercise book, especially for wildlife, would be sufficient with details of date, animal and situation. So if you haven't been doing this now is the time to start.)

Sandy is working on producing another yearly calendar for 2017 with new and amazing photos of our gorgeous animals taken into care. We do need a few more people or businesses to sponsor a page so if you can help please contact her. Sandy also showed us a great poster on flying foxes that will be displayed by Kyogle NPWS.

Our group previously gained funding for two relocatable flight aviaries, one of which has been completed and delivered to Janet and Zack's property. (See page 14 - Ed) The aviary was designed as a flat pack for easy erection and removal if necessary, by my husband Terry and he will soon be starting the second one.

Lastly, our group's Annual General Meeting was on Sunday 30th Oct at Rocky Creek Dam so by the time you read this there will be new faces on the committee.

Thank you, members, carers and supporters for all your enthusiasm and assistance throughout the year and we look forward to 2017 being even better for our wonderful wildlife.

Wildlife Quiz

By: Rowan W.



1. The Portuguese man-of-war jellyfish is often known as what?
2. How many people die from snake bites each year in Australia?
3. In what year was the last reported death from the Sydney funnel-web spider?
4. How many deaths have occurred from sharks in Australian waters in the past 12 months?
5. Where are you most likely to encounter a Bull shark?
6. How many species of funnel-web spiders are there in Australia?
7. How many species of funnel-web spiders are dangerous to humans?
8. Since the 1880s, how many people have jellyfish killed in Australia?
9. What is the second-deadliest animal in Australia?
10. The small blue-ringed octopus is so poisonous that a single creature has enough venom to kill how many people?

(Answers on page 10)

Byron-snaky

Article and pictures by: Rowan W.

The first I heard about this snake was a call on the 4th of February asking if I could collect him/her from the Lennox Head Vet Clinic, but the story began earlier. The python had been the subject of a dog attack in Byron Bay the previous day and as is so often the case, no-one was available to rescue the poor creature. Or should I say no trained snake handler was available so our intrepid new member Jools M said that she would help. This was a momentous act of compassion and courage to agree to capture an injured snake when she had not undergone any training in the handling of reptiles. Armed with a container and some instructions from the Hotline Jools was able to find the python which then thwarted her attempts to catch it by choosing to hide under a nearby house. Undeterred she stayed with the snake until it eventually was able to be caught. I'm sure that there was more to that part of the story! After spending a considerable amount of time at the house she then agreed to transport the snake to Lennox Head for treatment.

When I collected the python I was aghast to see that the wounds were still open but I was told this was often done with dog bite wounds as the germs in a dog's mouth do not survive in a wound open to the air and stitching would just lock them within. My task was to bathe the wounds daily or more often and return the snake four days later for surgery.

Byron-snaky as he/she became known was not a happy customer. Although I was told that a long-term pain-killer was administered the snake was quite feisty and difficult to deal with which to me means it was in pain. I chose to bathe the wounds and administer Solosite twice daily as a compromise between acceptable wound care and annoyance to the animal. It was clear by the next day that the pain-killers had worn off. (I understand the legal implications of carers being given painkilling drugs for animals but to not do so is a stupid law which does nothing to enhance animal well-being in my opinion.) All I could issue was some Pain-Stop orally. – Not easy with a wounded python!

The fact that the snake was clearly in pain and that wound cleaning added to this caused me to rethink the regularity of treatment. Too often was torturous and too sparse meant that the wounds would dry. We had a run going to Currumbin on the Saturday and I seriously regret my decision not to send the snake then. My reasoning was that we had recently sent a number of animals there, I didn't want to overload them, the wounds had to stay open for the germs to die and that surgery was booked in



Lennox for the following week. On the 9th, a Tuesday, because the vet was unavailable on the Monday, the python was taken to Lennox Head for surgery. The wounds were clean and moist and I expected the snake to be stitched that day. Due to the surgery being busy, Byron-snaky was not attended to until the Thursday morning. I collected him/her in the afternoon and saw that one small wound was healing well itself and the two larger ones were neatly stitched. No medication was prescribed.

Next day the python looked much better having recovered from the anaesthetic and was bright but clearly preferring to do little but rest. It was a different story over the next weekend when he/she appeared listless in the Sunday and worse on the following Monday. Thankfully Fiona was going to Currumbin on Tuesday so I decided to send the snake for assessment. They found infection which was probably to be expected with a dog bite and treated the snake for several days before returning him/her to me at the end of February with medication to be injected regularly.

First day of March the snake was fed and passed a satisfactory urate the following day. Fed again on 10th of March. Byron-snaky went again to Currumbin on the 22nd to have stitches removed and was in the process of a slough (Skin shed). The skin was papery and easily torn but came away from the wounds ok except for lifting in the corner of one. The snake still didn't seem ok to me. He/she was still a little snappy and was not at all

Continued ...

Byron-snaky *Continued ...*

invigorated by the slough. I fed him/her again on 23rd. On the 26th I was starting to get concerned as the snake should have passed the meal eaten on the 10th by the 17th. Next day, during some free-time roaming my bathroom the snake passed the rat consumed on the 10th entirely intact! In fact if I had hosed it clean it would have looked just like it did before eating – not digested at all! I had just learned that a python's cloaca can stretch as much as its mouth! Clearly passing food intact was not right and neither was the smell!

I contacted Currumbin and snakey went with Jessica next day and was returned on 12th of April. Currumbin had fed him/her on the 4th and 8th. Byron-snaky was still not right to me, I thought that there must be some issue affecting digestion but on 16th the rat-bulge started to decline. On the 18th Snaky was having another bathroom-day and passed diarrhoea which was unbelievably putrid, but the rat bulge in the bowel area was not moving. Back to Currumbin again!

Snaky had surgery on 28th and a bowel obstruction in the form of bird remains was removed. I rang to check on his/her progress on the 16th and was told that more surgery was scheduled for the following day. I spoke with vet Andrew and asked him whether it was really worth putting this snake through yet another procedure after all that had happened to it. I re-read my notes and this poor animal had been through such a lot. Andrew agreed but said that the surgery was just a minor procedure associated with the previous one and would not be an issue.

May 27th saw Byron-snaky return to me somewhat underweight but otherwise ok. The vets had said that food could be given so I started with a sub-adult rat that had been injected with recovery mixture. June 6th the abdominal stitches were removed, well actually just the termination knots as it was a really neat subcutaneous stitching, and as Snaky had put on some weight, another skin shed occurred neatly around the wound.

Byron-snaky had really improved post-op and was a delight to have in care. He/she enjoyed the food on offer and would be alert and itching to get at it when warm-rat smell was in the air! Handling the snake was easier and I was never snapped at. We used to take Snaky into the garden on sunny days for some real UV light and he/she had regular days in the bathroom coinciding with urate passing 5 days from eating and a bowel movement 7 days from eating. We were becoming very fond of our guest but knew that soon that the nights would warm and we could release Snaky back home.



Food that wouldn't pass.

Looking back, what had really happened to this snake? From discussions with the vets either the bowel problem was pre-existing or happened as a result of the dog attack where internal trauma caused the snake to shutdown that part of the body. The obstruction was causing infection to spread through the bowel into the bloodstream causing the "off-colour" behaviour and poor skin condition I witnessed. Throughout Snaky's care I was told on several occasions that he/she was ok to release. I am so glad that I kept the snake for observation until I was sure that he/she was 100%.

Byron-snaky was a wonderful winter guest and Richard helped me with his/her care by administering the injections while I held the "bitey end". Snaky was such a

Continued ...



Abdominal wound - all healed

Byron-snaky *Continued ...*

good ambassador for the species that Richard's ophidiophobia (fear of snakes) soon went and he displayed a lot of affection for the animal. Releasing would not be easy for both of us.

Looking at a suitable release site on satellite pictures and maps of Byron Bay revealed nothing within range. I shuddered at the thought of this lovely animal going back to a house surrounded by busy roads. My fears were lessened when I saw the house which was an old wooden one with open eaves and an established garden with big trees. If Snaky could stay off the road this would be a good habitat. Given that he/she had lived here for some time and that this was home, I felt a little better.

I wanted Jools to be there for the release as without her none of this would have happened but unfortunately she was overseas. Richard did the release and was able to pick up Snaky and place him/her in a tree. Byron-snaky gave us one last look as if to say goodbye and then climbed the tree. Through tear-filled eyes we wished him/her well. Live long and prosper Byron-snaky, we will miss you.

Rowan



Quiz Answers



1. Blue bottle
2. 5
3. 1980 the year antivenom was produced.
4. 5
5. River or estuary
6. 40
7. 6
8. 80 Box jellyfish did all of them.
9. Honey bee. About 20 people a year die from horse riding accidents. Around 10 people per year in Australia die from European Honey Bee stings after going into anaphylactic shock and around 300 people a year drown. 1,205 by motor vehicle last year.
10. 26

NWC Newsletter

By Sandy N.

For anyone interested, here is the link to the FAWNA Spring 2016 Newsletter from the NSW Wildlife Council
https://gallery.mailchimp.com/273834a8a2e9e0bbb302e3f1e/files/16SpringNews_Print_Version.pdf



Happenings

Spring has sprung with the hotline getting busy over the last few weeks. Some days the hotline is really busy then we get a cooler day and it is quiet again.

Snake calls are numerous but are usually just for snakes in an undesirable place such as backyards although we have had to send some snakes up to Currumbin Wildlife Hospital with injuries. Thanks to the kind members who help with transporting animals there. Just in the last few days I have had two calls from people with pythons in nesting boxes both on the side of the house walls. The people involved always want the snake removed and taken away as their birds need the box for breeding. We have to explain that the babies have probably been eaten so best to leave the snake alone to move away then close up the box for a while. It will otherwise come back for another easy feast. We always need new snake catchers so it is great to see keen members wanting to do the upcoming snake handling courses.

Baby bird calls are also common at this time of the year, many of you have probably been asked to pick up chicks from the public or vets. It is lovely when we can take them back to the parents if possible and see the family reunited again. I always find the babies so interesting with their mouths wide open waiting to have food popped in. It's amazing how quickly they grow and start wanting to fly.

This week I have been busy with baby possums. Boris, my big baby brushy, is charging around the big cage and then there is Leroy Brown a gorgeous 600gms brushtail who came in recently. I also had two ring tails from different places, one female found in a boot and a little male found by Fiona in Main Arm running across the road. Both these are with Cath at Georgica and being well looked after.

Echidnas are on the move as well and unfortunately a few have come to grief with cars. Chrisy, our Echidna Co-ordinator, has been doing a wonderful job with caring for these little guys over a number of years. Some have been sent up to Currumbin Wildlife Hospital for assessment and treatment. Unfortunately not all return to us to go back into the wild.

We had an unusual request on the hotline recently. A lady from Bangalow rang asking if we could help her organise an Animal Rescue Party for her six year old son. I assume she wanted us to bring along our animals in care to share around. For obvious reasons we were unable to oblige. Maybe there is an outlet for some enterprising person to pursue?

Some weeks our hotline is looking vacant of names and I have to fill in where needed. I also would like to cut back on the wildlife time. I need to find a kind keen member who would be willing to be my assistant or even take over the job of Hotline Co-ordinator with me as the backup/assistant. I know the other half of the Staples team would be very grateful and this would make things much easier when I go away. The job can be made so much easier if we have more people involved on the roster so please contact me if you are trained and can fill a slot or would like to do the training for hotline. It only takes a few hours to learn. The hotline is our vital link with the public and we are proud of the fact that it is available 24/7 every day of the year.

To save time and phone calls could all members be mindful of letting us know if you change your availability or are going away for a few days or more so we can update the rescue list. This is important with the end of year break coming. You can contact us at nrwcholine@gmail.com or phone 6628 1866 and we will get back to you.

With this being the last issue for the year, may I thank you all for your work and dedication to helping our wildlife and we look forward to another great year in 2017.

Jenny

NWC Grant

Article and pictures by: Rowan W.

Recently the NSW Wildlife Council (NWC) offered grants to wildlife carers to use for infrastructure in their care of animals. The grants were of up to \$1000 each and were given to the individual, not the organisation, for a specific project although it hoped that if the individual ceased doing wildlife care that he/she would forward the project to the organisation for further use.

I had never completed a grant application before and it seemed a reasonably straightforward task that I should have been able to complete in an hour or so. Thankfully our “grants guru” Kate offered to assist with it and I soon found that I had a lot to learn about application writing! After a few re-writes I submitted the application and waited.

I was pleased to hear that not only was my application successful, it was ranked in the top three, (Well done Kate!) and I set to work on my project. – A snake enclosure.

The OEH enclosure guidelines for a large python in long-term care are huge – an aviary would be more suitable, but a smaller enclosure suits one in intensive care, all other snakes and small lizards. So that is what I decided to build. I had never had a large python in care in any case and if I did it would most likely be an “intensive care” situation.

First stop was to obtain the timber for the enclosure. Lismore Joinery Works had generously donated marine ply cut-to-size for my current enclosure so they were first stop for my to-be-paid-for one. Sid Page, the owner again offered the timber free of charge with sufficient to build two enclosures! Such generosity was greatly appreciated and I soon collected my timber pieces and ordered the glass doors and electrical fittings. After obtaining some resources from the donation of wildlife equipment that Currumbin Wildlife Hospital had received and passed on to wildlife groups, it soon became apparent that two enclosures were feasible, if not slightly over-budget by \$203.

The enclosures were completed and the documentation submitted to the NWC to show the work. All that they needed was a tenant. I didn't have to wait long as I retrieved an injured python from a car engine bay in Casino. “Atomic Betty” (named after a huge reticulated python on Bondi Vet) is the first resident and she/he is huge at over 5kgs and more than 3 metres and will be in care for six weeks until stitches are removed from her many wounds.

Many thanks to the NWC for the grant, Kate for her expertise and patience, Sid at Lismore Joinery Works for his very generous donation yet again and Rolf, our equipment officer, for the donated reptile equipment.



*Pictures from top down:
Timber with 5 coats of polyurethane, box assembled,
lights and doors on, shelf in and first guest : “Atomic
Betty”*

Rowan

Why did the Ducks cross the road?

Article by Annabel F.

Pictures: Annabel F and Wendy A.

On October 12 NRW received a call to help with the rescue of a large brood of wood ducklings that had fallen through a drain grille on the corner of Rous Road and Pleasant Street, Goonellabah.

The majority had already been rescued from the drain by passers-by, but the caller was worried that there were still some trapped in the drain that ran across the corner which was several metres long.

There were two access holes, and she hoped we would be able to herd any ducklings to one end. The mother was in a nearby yard with the rest of her very large brood.

A family was there to help, and another three ducklings were found. Xavier and Axel W are shown here with two of the ducklings.

Several hours later, NRW received another call from a lady in Wyreema Avenue, several blocks away from the drain. She had found two ducklings on Fisher Street.

I guessed they were from the same brood but couldn't find the family of ducks, so these two were taken into care.

Yet another duckling was found the following day in the same area, and will join the other two.



Above : Mum and survivors.



Right: Xavier and Axel are holding two small ducklings which they rescued.



Three ducklings in care.

Annabel



**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

Relocatable Flight Aviaries

By Kate G

Picture Jenny S.



In recent months we have had the good fortune to have been awarded funding to build, not one, but two flight aviaries.

These aviaries have been custom designed by the NRWC. They can be packed up and relocated to wherever the greatest need is at any time. *(Picture is Janet and Zac with Terry doing some finishing touches.)*

They will both be of great benefit to our group and the wildlife we serve, over the years ahead, particularly given the increase in bird rescues we've experience over recent years . The first aviary has been constructed and set up at Janet's place in Wardell. I think you'll agree, it looks great.

Many thanks to Lismore City Council and the Department of Social Services who provided the funding for these projects and to Terry who has done an fantastic job constructing them. *(And to Kate for applying for the grants! - Ed)*

Kate

2017 Calendars

by: Sandy N.

The 2017 NRWC Wall Calendar is now available! On behalf of NRWC, Wendy A. and I have produced the fundraising NRWC wall calendar for 2017. Thanks to the NRWC committee for their support and to Jo Shepherd for proof reading it.

This year's calendar has beautiful photos of threatened species from our region taken by Northern Rivers & Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers members who have either cared for or seen these species in the wild. Individual pages have been sponsored by national & local businesses to assist with production costs.

Our wonderful sponsors for this year are: Vegan Wares, Greg Alderson & Associates , Cruelty Free Super, Luke Blackstock Plumbers & Gasfitters (Northern Rivers Region), Joe Oram & Associates, Lismore Car-boot Market, Ballina Honey, Keen Street Veterinary Clinic, The Garden Plate Cafe, Richmond Water Laboratories and The Horse Herbalist.

The calendars are a great Christmas gift idea for your family & friends and will be for sale at \$15 each, plus \$3.50 postage (for up to 2 calendars). They'll be available online via paypal or you can email treasurer@wildlifecarers.com if you would like to place an order.

Sandy

A licence to kill native animals (S121) has been labelled red tape by the Baird government and will be abolished, prompting warnings the move will declare open season on kangaroos, emus, wombats and cockatoos. The Office of Environment and Heritage (yes that's the same department that oversees wildlife care) was keen to remove S121 licences, which had been ranked by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal as 32nd on a list of 776 licences that were impeding business due to red tape.

Last year the office issued permits for 34 species, or a total of 145,550 animals and birds to be killed in 2015-16. This included more than 100,000 eastern grey kangaroos, almost 9000 corellas, 6500 sulphur crested cockatoos, 5500 galahs, 655 emus, 175 swamp wallabies, 113 wombats and 83 magpies. (Think about that next time you rescue an animal! I think that this diminishes our role and devalues the great work that wildlife carers do.) Each licence currently controls the number of animals permitted to be killed, and requires data to be lodged with the Office of Environment and Heritage. An application to kill kookaburras at North Head by a lessee in Sydney Harbour National Park was refused. Who would want to shoot a kookaburra?

This annual list will be the last published, as the Baird government prepares to introduce a controversial Biodiversity Conservation Act to NSW Parliament. The Royal Zoological Society of NSW has warned that removing the licence will cause the neglect of three-quarters of protected fauna in NSW and will almost certainly offer no protection for the species that are sliding towards threatened status.

Ending the recording of native species being harmed, numbers killed, and the location thereof is to abandon global-standard wildlife management practices.

The NSW Opposition claims wombats, kangaroos, emus, possums, wallabies, kookaburras and parrots will lose protection if the licensing system is dropped - effectively any wildlife can be destroyed by those who seek to kill without any oversight, control or recording. According to the government's biodiversity reform website, the new law will take a "risk-based approach" to wildlife, with low-risk activities no longer requiring a licence or record keeping. It said an example of this is "harming of locally abundant animals". Who declares whether an animal is "abundant" is unclear. Species to be exempt from offences relating to harming animals will include sulphur-crested cockatoos, galahs, purple swamp hens, ravens and crows. However a complete list of exempt animals and birds was not provided.

Harming a native animal during land clearing will also no longer be an offence if the property owner was unaware of the animal. Not great news for echidnas and their puggles, possums, koalas and reptiles that may have no means of escape in winter during torpor. How many property owners know how an echidna puggle is raised by its parents?

The proposal also takes no account of the needs of animals and birds flocking to an area with water in times of drought.

If you are in the "business" of wildlife annihilation the proposal is great news. If you have just a skerrick of compassion for wildlife then the proposed law should be abandoned. I'm at a loss to explain why this legislation would ever have been considered in the first place.

Rowan

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Big Scrub Rainforest Open Day

Article by: Valerie M.

Pictures: Wendy A and Sandy N.



Sunshine and a good turn out on Sunday 16th October for the 30th annual Big Scrub Rainforest Open Day at Rocky Creek Dam. There was lots of interest in the Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers stall. Piri, the Grey Headed Flying Fox, proved to be a hit with everyone as she spent the day cleaning and grooming and eating blossom. Piri has spent her 15 years in captivity being raised from a very young bat but unable to be released. It was great to watch the faces of the children as they watched her, mesmerised.

There were many great speakers and stalls. Bob Brown's keynote address was an inspiration to everyone as he encouraged us all to get active and stand up for our environment. Although he is no longer a politician he remains a warrior for the environment. I was fortunate enough to meet Bob and shake his hand as he did a round of the stalls speaking with people involved. It was a good day to get together with other wildlife carers and people passionate about preserving the Big Scrub Rainforest we have in this region.

I came home with several understorey plants for my garden and there was no shortage of people to discuss planting and regeneration ideas. There was a range of speakers with so many topics from Changes to the Biodiversity Laws and Private Land Conservation to Seed collection and Native Bee keeping. The rainforest walks were also popular.

If you missed it this year, there's always 2017.

Valerie

