



WILDCARE QUEANBEYAN INC

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

Year in Review

Phone Statistics

From 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2008 Wildcare received a total of 2314 calls. They were divided into the following categories –

- Birds 542
- Mammals 902
- Reptiles..... 224
- Information 275
- ACT calls 345
- *No records..... 24 (There were 24 call numbers unaccounted for)

The busiest month was October with a total of 379 calls received which is an average of a little over 12 calls per day.

The number of members who volunteer for phone roster is normally approx 30 people a month. When we split each day into two shifts that means we are falling short as much as we are filling. Day time shifts are the most critically short. We have about 30% of members (counted based on 'in area' and family groups as one) filling the roster.

There were a number of odd ball calls but Chris has awarded first prize to the lady who rang and asked if we could remove a spider from behind a neighbour's fridge.

Chris would like to thank everyone for their cooperation in sending in their stats as soon as possible after their phone roster shift. It really makes life a lot easier if data can be entered on a daily basis and it also reduces the possibility of mistakes with call numbers

Training

139 people undertook Wildcare training this year. They were divided amongst the courses as follows:

- Young Adv Mac Cse approx 20
- Snake Handling 25
- Snake Refresher 8
- Orientation Course February 16
- Rescue and First Aid Course 20
- Shooters Course 6
- Orientation Course May 5
- Introduction to Macropods 5
- Advanced Macropod Course 12
- Bird Forum 8
- Bird Course 4
- Reptile Husbandry (1st day) 15
- Advanced Reptile Husbandry (2nd day) 10
- Vegetation ID 5

Displays

These were coordinated by Lesley Machin this year and involved displays at:

- Queanbeyan Show;
- Queanbeyan Pound Open Day;
- Bungendore Show (newly elected local member Mike Kelly stopped to talk);
- Bungendore Spring Fair;
- Sutton School Fair; and
- a new venue - the Gundaroo Bush Festival

The intention next year is to target new areas such as Gundaroo and places where Wildcare needs new members and exposure

Education/Community Awareness

Although no dedicated Education Officer there has been a great response to the various requests for school and community group talks

These have included:

- Gold Creek Senior and Primary Schools,
- Lyneham High,
- Daramalan College,
- Forrest Pre-School,
- Trinity College,
- the YMCA Holiday Program,
- Gungahlin After School Care,
- the Wonderful Women of Wamboin,
- two View Clubs in the Bungendore district,
- the Jerrabomberra Joey Cub group
- two talks for the World Youth gathering at Bungendore - this was to a group of Papuan and Samoans and then an Italian group

Outside of schools and formal group talks Lesley has also provided talks to groups at her home including:

- the Defence Force Military Staff College
- the Defence Attaches wives group
- Lord and Lady Band (UK First Sea Lord)

Many of these groups have provided donations

Grateful for the opportunities these provide for awareness raising and the lovely bonus of donations

Our permanent care reptiles play a big part in the displays

Fundraising

Wildcare continues to have a wide variety of fundraising activities. This past year they have included:

- Major yearly raffle;
- Chocolates;
- Trivia night (+raffles);
- Christmas cards;
- Garage sale;
- General donations (through rescues, member donations or from the public);
- Donation Boxes;
- Member dinner;
- Barrels;
- Grants (3 applied for two not accepted and still awaiting third); and
- Letterbox drop

Finances

Trading Account:

- Sales versus milk and other animal product purchases \$5K deficit (stock at hand is approx half that value, remainder is accounted for in accounts not yet paid, subsidies)
- Sales of chocolates worth noting with approx a 80% return (there is some lag from the sales in the previous year and similarly at the end of this year that becomes accounted for in the actual year sold not when bought by Wildcare)
- Difference in outcome for the year overall was as a result of less income rather than more expenditure

Income and Expenditure Account:

- subscriptions similar
- Trivia night and major raffle run over the year are amounts not included in this financial year
- Donations cash are down but DECC gave an extra donation last year which was a one off and did not reoccur this year. Less from general public donations as well though
- Training courses income is down but these are charged at cost so should not be compared and considered in a true 'income' sense
- Insurance difference (less cost) was a big windfall – helped out by the NWC
- Less expenditure on vets and minor equipment

Overall:

- A 'quiet' year less outflows and inflows than last year
- Outflows though were still more than inflows so are 'eating' into our reserves
- Fundraising really make a difference especially chocolates
- Wildcare is a cash based system please keep it coming through in terms of payment of accounts

Reports

Vice President

Each time the Wildcare AGM comes around it seems to be more quickly than the year before. 2007/08 has been a bit of a roller coaster for me personally and for Wildcare as well.

As an organization and as individuals we made quite an impact over the last two years in our attempts to save the kangaroos at the Belconnen Naval Transmitter Station. Sadly, all the best efforts and intentions of our committed members and others did not in the end save those beautiful kangaroos but hopefully we have learnt from the events that have passed and are able to be more effective in the future when a similar situation will arise.

I gave a presentation recently about Wildcare to another organisation and while scrolling through the slideshow realised just how much good work we do actually do. I want to congratulate and thank all our members who are so committed to the animals they rescue and care for. At the same time, I really do worry about the way that some of our members treat others and some of the infighting within Wildcare. As an organisation, we cannot afford to lose valuable and committed members because they feel alienated by others. People will do what they can and should never be berated for not doing what others consider not to be enough.

Hopefully in the next six months or so, Wildcare will finally have a tranquilliser gun to help us with the capture of large macropods. This will be made possible through generous donations from members and also from donations received through the fundraising "widget" on the Wildcare website.

Finally, I would like to thank all our hard working Committee members, Particularly Suzy who took on the President's role reluctantly and has worked extremely hard in the Position. Thanks also to Fiona and Laurel for their never ending work; they have been the backbone of Wildcare for a long time and a great support to those who have needed it. Thanks also to Brett for his work in the Communications role. He has made Wildcare's presence on the web far more professional than it has been in the past and continued to do so despite considerable work pressure. I would also like to thank Naomi Henry for all her efforts related to the BNTS issue and Coralie for all her support and her efforts.

I may not be continuing in this role after the AGM, after a few years in the job maybe it is time for someone else to fill the role and give it a new injection of enthusiasm. The same goes for other Committee positions, please have a think about what you can do in one of the Committee roles over the next year. Our Committee doesn't need to change the world, just give the organisation a firm footing to work from.

Greg
Vice President

Animal Coordinator

Where to start?

The year has been a busy one with lots of calls and animals coming into care, eg 516 eastern grey calls, 58 wombat, 28 echidna and 24 brown snake, to name a few.

I know the species co-ordinators have been hugely busy, so much so that I haven't heard from them, I can only assume that everything is OK, either that or I have become a mushroom.

We have had a busy training year, thanks to Mel, well done! I have enjoyed being part of the training courses that I have attended and met some lovely new and enthusiastic members, it was also good to catch up with some of our older members too.

Thank you to Caroline Carter who helped me with our new range of Christmas cards, we had fun doing them together. You will notice that Friends of the Koala are alongside our logo on the back of the cards, this was a joint venture to help them out as well. It meant we could get a good price because of the volume printed and didn't have to outlay too much money.

Thank you also to Val and Suzy who helped me with the organizing of the Trivia night. Michael Gill, Chris Payne and their friends, Michelle and Aaron were spectacular Quizmasters, thank you, it was a fun and enjoyable evening.

Also a big thank you to our sponsors of the evening, their generous donations helped us to raise \$ 1700. Thank you also to those people that helped out on the night and with the cleaning up, many hands made light work..

On a sad note and our caring is often tinged with sadness as not all of our charges make it, dear Sam our famous python, died a few weeks ago. Sam had been in care for about 16 years and we have no idea how old she was when she came to us, she was a great ambassador for Wildcare, participating in lots of shows and exhibits. She had a great life and our condolences go to all who cared for her, she will be missed.

Thank you also to Suzy and the committee for all their hard work.

Cheers Di
Animal Species Administrator

Reptile and Frog Coordinator

2007/2008 has been yet again been another busy year.

I would like to thank Mark Oliver who has lightened the load for me by co-ordinating snakes coming into care and their care and release.

Thanks also goes to Lesley Machin who has assisted many times with emergency assessment and care of lizards during especially busy days.

Working in the type of industry as I do makes it very difficult to have the flexibility to make phone calls or leave work to sort out the various situations reptiles get into and so backup is critical for me.

Our vets, especially Hamish Cameron at West Queanbeyan have as usual been fantastic and I am grateful also to Peter Wright at Goulburn.

We have run 3 very successful courses, the Snake (Reptile) Handling course in February at Googong and the 2 day Reptile Husbandry/Advanced Reptile course September in Queanbeyan.

I want to thank our wonderful snake handlers who frequently have to travel long distances at very short notice to rescue our snakes and members of the public in distress.

I am grateful for a dedicated and flexible team of carers who don't complain when I give them very short notice to take on a new animal. I welcome Maryanne Gates as a new carer who did the 2 day course in September and already has 3 setups ready for reptiles, one setup complete with turtle!

Since the last AGM to the time of writing this report I have added 300 lines on my Wildcare statistics spreadsheet which means in the year there have been 300 events which includes relocations, releases, euthanasias and phone calls.

And these are just the recorded events. I am sure that some have been missed.

Over winter we had 19 reptiles in temporary care.

Calls regarding frogs are each year becoming less frequent. Is this due to the drought, decline in frog populations or something else one wonders?

Lesley and Phil have continued over the year to do various displays and talks advertising Wildcare and educating the public about our amazing wildlife. And of course our permanent care reptiles and frogs have been a vital part of these displays and talks.

Let me tell you a little bit about a few of the animals we have had the privilege of caring for.

- Jill Fox called me saying she had picked up a green tree frog from "Food Lovers" in Bungendore. The frog turned out to be a very skinny White-Lipped Tree Frog (we rarely get any green tree frogs these days - let alone one of these amazing big beauties). The frog is doing very well and will be transferred to a fauna park in the future.
- A Jacky Dragon was brought to us during winter. It had fallen out of a log, been "warmed" up by a well meaning member of the public and would not go back into hibernation. I noticed the head colour was abnormally dark for a Jacky and wondered why. Some time later deep layers of scales lifted off the head showing bone beneath. At some stage this little lizard had been injured. The scales are growing back and at this time of writing my hope is that soon the lizard will be released.
- A turtle fell from a pergola 2.5 metres on to concrete. There was no physical sign of injury but "Angie" could not float correctly as the impact had caused damage to her airsacs affecting her balance. Slowly she improved and a year later "she" was released.

Karen Guillen
Reptile and Frog Coordinator

Macropod Release Site Coordinator and Member Representative

Gabi and I were appointed macropod coordinators in May of this year, so we were busy planning and caring for animals from day one. Gabi and Juta did a great job raising the pinkies. Notably, Juta successfully raised Bruiser from less than 300grams – a great achievement.

I presented a paper this year at the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference in Canberra on Macropod Fence Injuries. This paper described the outcomes of fifty consecutive fence injured macropod rescues and also described the types of injuries sustained and their treatment. I can provide copies to those who are interested.

We do not have enough sites where macropods can be raised and safely released. Because of this we have been looking at other methods of release. We have a number of locations with enclosures where joeys can be raised but not released. By raising joeys at other locations and then bringing them together to form a mob at a release site reduces the work load for our release sites. If we can devise successful relocatable enclosures then the choice of release sites is greatly increased. The design and construction or purchase of relocatable enclosures is a work-in-progress and any ideas or help would be greatly appreciated.

This year Steve and I have cared for about 100 macropods – many of them injured. This was achieved with help especially from Glennis, a member from the Young area. Thank you also to Joanna Pagan, Heather Langfield, a Young area member, and Robyn Kibblewhite (WIRES Glenfield) for their invaluable help in caring for these macropods.

Thank you to all the macropod carers for helping with these wonderful animals. Thank you for the euthanasia team for their important work in reducing the suffering of our severely injured native animals.

Areas that still require attention are:

- (1) relocatable enclosures and identification and listing of release sites;
- (2) re-introduction of carer-buddy manuals; and
- (3) protocols for management of macropod problems (eg. diarrhoea)

Rosemary Garlick

Bird Coordinator

This past year has been very busy with 213 birds released, 125 died, 186 euthanased and 49 are in care.

Since the new system for keeping stats has been operating more birds have been coming to my attention.

We really need people with aviaries who can feed morning and night for soft release for our birds.

Laurel Rosin
Bird Co-ordinator

Communications Coordinator

The Year in Hindsight

In many ways it has been a difficult and heartbreaking year. I'm personally deeply scarred by what happened to the kangaroos at the BNTS, and I didn't – couldn't – even witness the worst of it. I don't know how those who did will ever be able to get over it. It occurs to me that Wildcare could really use the services of a professional trauma counsellor to help some of our members deal with the more tragic incidents they've had to witness.

I cannot look back on the year without that very public massacre of more than 500 kangaroos overshadowing all our hard won victories for the wildlife we have saved. But like the starfish on the beach in the parable (see Spring 2007 Issue of Possum Post), what we do still makes an enormous difference to the individual animals we are able to rescue and rehabilitated. That, and looking into the big brown eyes of any of the one of the kangaroo joeys and juveniles currently in my care, keeps me going and, for them, I won't ever be throwing in the towel.

What does this have to do with the Communications Coordinator's role specifically? Well, not a lot. Except that on a personal level, the post-BNTS period coincided with my taking on a reasonable sized property and I've since been so busy with the 50+ "starfish" in my care (wild and otherwise) when I've been home that I've not had time to actually do the actual communicating I was tasked to do!

My apologies to anyone I've let down in the process. This is why I won't be nominating for a Committee position for the coming year.

On to the actual specifics of the communications "portfolio"...

General Communications

On our eMailing list we now have 161 members, representing the vast majority of Wildcare members.

The major change since the last AGM is that all members are now on an online mailing list, accessible via the email address possumpost@wildcare.com.au, which any member on the list to contact all members at once, which is fine as long as the posting is relevant to the majority of members. If necessary, the list can be moderated but I'm happy to report that there's been no misuse of the facility to date (other than the accidental message sent to that address when in fact they were only trying to reply to me)

We can also set up other subject-based mailing lists as required; or for specific sub-groups, eg. committee@wildcare.com.au; etc.

Besides this list, email correspondence in general has been overwhelming and I've had very little time to process them unfortunately, which can be quite distressing when I've found a relatively urgent message buried in my in-box a month after it was sent. At one point I had over 2000 unread emails in my in-box which was simply untenable and it was easy to overlook something important when scrolling through the list (mostly from other wildlife related mailing lists).

The Possum Post newsletter remains our most prominent communication tool. I hope that whoever takes on this role is able to continue this. The majority of members receive it as a soft copy online now with fewer printed copies needing to be distributed.

Media Articles

Many thanks to Phil Machin, who regularly submitted articles to the following local newsletters and newspapers on behalf of Wildcare:

- Palerang Bulletin
- Bungendore Mirror (occasional)
- Burra Intermittent
- Fernleigh Flyer
- Gundaroo Gazette
- Korra Chat (Young)
- Queanbeyan Age
- Queanbeyan Chronicle
- Stoney Creek Gazette

- Sutton Chatter
- Murrumbateman Messenger
- Wamboin Whisper
- Yass Tribune
- Young Witness

Many of the articles submitted were extracts from issues of Possum Post – a story about Amy the puggle raised by Coralie early in the year appeared in several locations (Amy even features in her own book by Kevin Baker “A Puggle in Pocket”). Other articles describe what to do a different times of the year, animal incidents and topical stories. It is not always possible to know if articles are printed, but I believe we have a high hit rate. Phil reports that the Palerang Bulletin has been particularly wildlife friendly and has published significant stories that include the Wildcare work. Naomi Henry has also contributed to the Palerang Bulletin to good effect.

Internationally, we received mention in a three hour Japanese documentary special on Climate Change in April this year, starring Catherine Bennett in Cowra. And of course, there were various quote and misquotes of Wildcare members made in the international press in our attempts to save the Belconnen kangaroos around the same time.

Possum Post

We published three issues of Possum Post, in Autumn, Winter and Spring. All back issues are of course available in the Member’s section of the Wildcare website. Thank you especially to all who contributed to these editions.

Wildcare Promotional Video

I hope that we will have the opportunity at the AGM to view the Wildcare promotional video John Waterhouse has finished after many hundreds of hours of filming and editing, which was delivered last month. I have not had the opportunity to see it yet myself but have heard good things about it so I look forward to seeing it too.

Wildcare Website

I did not make much progress on the website this year unfortunately, so the content is starting to get a little dated and is in need of a fresh material.

Some highlights from the website statistics over the year to date:

- 2008 Visitor numbers peaked in March with 895 unique visitors visiting 1301 times, double the 2007 peak which was in August ‘07 - both periods coincided with BNTS activity
- website visits have eased back since then, averaging 450 unique visitors per month, which is still equivalent to the 2007 peak.

The bottom line: there’s still so much more that can be done, if only I had more time to put into it. Even though I will be continuing in this role in the next 12 months, I would be happy to come to some arrangement with my successor to assist with the website at least.

Thank you for your assistance and patience over the past two years. I hope that my successor(s) can revitalise the communications channels I’ve not been able to make the most of this year and I’ll be happy to assist in the transition where-ever possible.

Brett Clifton
Communications Coordinator