

Meeting dates

Fund Raising meeting 29th August 10.30am

Lunch 12noon BYO

Followed by;

General Meeting , Time 1.00pm Guest speaker Jackie Maisey , topic "Bats in care" ,

Come along and support your organisation

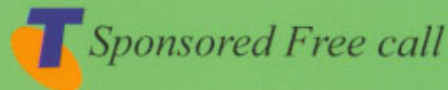
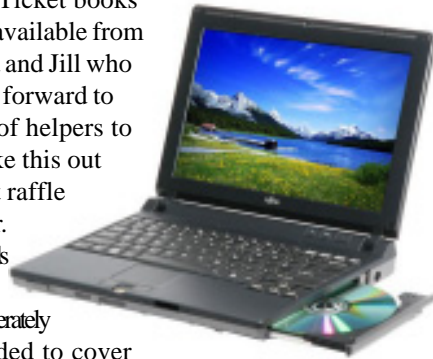
Venue; Armidale Tree Group Woodland centre , East Mann St. Armidale.



*** Ticket books are available from Julia and Jill who look forward to lots of helpers to make this out best raffle ever.

Funds are desperately needed to cover wombaroo milks which are such a big help for all our wonderful joey mums .

**** Huge thanks to John Donnelly for donating such great prizes. Last computer raffle ends in December



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England Mutual are proud to be sponsors of NT Wildlife Carers. Local people working together.

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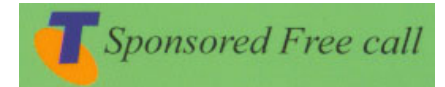
Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers

PO Box 550 Armidale 2350

www.ntwc.org.au



Rescue
Rehabilitate
Release



Newsletter of The Northern Tablelands
Wildlife Carers Issue No 86 August 2010
Phone - 1800-008290 www.ntwc.org.au

The Case of the Vanishing Lizards

Blue-tongue lizards were once the lords of Sydney's backyards, but high-density development is

highlight if you do see one," the general manager of the Australian Reptile Park said. "Some day

thinning out. The NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water said healthy blue-tongue populations survived in pockets of bushland. "[Yet] urbanisation, loss of backyard habitat and predation from family pets continue to have an impact on blue-tongue lizards and other animals across the greater metropolitan area," reports the department's biodiversity conservation section. "While there is increasing pressure on these animals and numbers are difficult to ascertain, there are things people can do to



banishing them to the city's fringe. Wildlife groups are reporting that blue-tongues and other natives, such as the tawny frogmouth, are being pushed to the edge of the city by more intense development and higher human population density. "Even 10 years ago so many backyards had a blue-tongue but nowadays, due to snail baits and dogs and cats, you hardly see them any more - it's a

people are just going to turn around and realise they haven't seen one for five years and they will wonder where they've gone." The reptile park, in Gosford, near Sydney, is running an "endangered species month", with daily exhibitions featuring native animals that are under threat. Blue-tongues are not yet classified as endangered but observers agree populations are

encourage wildlife in their backyards." The department recommends leaving at least part of a garden in a relatively natural state, with logs and rocks resting on the ground and bushy shrubs to provide cover for small animals. Instead of snail baits, which are toxic to many other animals too, people can use slug traps or physical barriers made up of sawdust, grit or eggshells.

Contacts for Northern Tableland Wildlife Carers (NTWC)

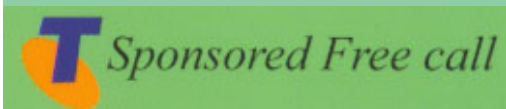
- ✦ **Chairman - Harold Heffernen 6778-1357**
 - ✦ **Vice Chairman - Colin Wood 67783329**
 - ✦ **Secretary -**
 - ✦ **Treasurer - Julia Rose - 1800-008290**
 - ✦ **Wombaroo - Jill Chetwynd 6772-5855**
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 - ✦ **Tenterfield - Pam Brice - 6736-2462**
 - ✦ **Glen Innes` Kelly Stumbles 67321838**
 - ✦ **Snake Co-ord - Kelly O'Shea - 6772 4648**
- Write to NTWC PO Box 550 Armidale 2350**

Northern Tableland Wildlife Carers is a network of trained volunteers licensed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. We rescue, rehabilitate and release injured, sick, orphaned & unwanted native fauna. Any assistance please call the above numbers in your area.

Membership \$20 single and \$25 family year for authorised and support members All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

This Newsletter is designed by Colin Wood and printed by New England Credit Union.

Telstra Country Wide are also proud to be a sponsor of NTWC



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Julia Rose

From what I have read it looks like another effort to save habitat for native animals.

The concept was recommended to Federal environment minister in 2002 under the National Heritage Trust *Bushcare Project*. A worthwhile project which is close to the Land for Wildlife scheme already operating in NSW.

My only concern is once your property is 'advertised' and you may possibly have extra visitors dropping in to admire or assist, but a benefit could be from grants which could be available. Joining WLT is entirely voluntary, with no legal obligations or costs involved. Membership begins with a non-binding 'letter of agreement' which spells out a joint commitment to protecting wildlife on your property/ sanctuary. This is followed with a certificate of membership, regular newsletters, news items and signs. Your property will also be featured on the members page of the WLT website www.hsi.org.au and

<http://www.wlt.org/australia.asp> Postal contact is Wildlife Land Trust , P.O. Box 439, Avalon, NSW 2107.

History;

The Humane Society of United States established WLT in 1993 with the primary aim of encouraging as many landholders as possible to join this national and international program for wildlife and habitat protection.

The Wildlife Land Trust Australia has been operational under the auspices of Humane Society International since 2007. Since then it has grown to incorporate 53 properties protecting nearly 9100 hectares of wildlife habitat. The Trust invites you to become part of the vital mission to create a global sanctuary system based on the principle of humane stewardship.

Australia's vanishing habitat and wildlife

As one of the most naturally diverse countries on the planet, Australia is home to more than one million species of plants and animals, with more than 80 percent of these species being endemic - found nowhere else on Earth.

Unfortunately, drastic changes to the landscape and native habitat resulting from years of uncontrolled human clearing and expansion have put many of these unique species at serious risk. In the time that it takes to read this website thousands of acres of critical wildlife habitat across Australia will have been lost. This loss of habitat has had a horrendous impact on Australia's wildlife. In the last 200 odd years since European settlement, many of the nations plant and animal species have become extinct – that is, lost forever. In addition, 427 species of animals and 1343 species of plants are now considered to be extinct, critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable under the Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

The crisis is real and grows more urgent every day. Something must be done. Something can be done. Protecting and preserving Australia's streams, grasslands, forests and wetlands is essential to wildlife's survival. Every acre protected safeguards wildlife that desperately needs our help to survive.

The Wildlife Land Trust Australia program is an extremely important part of on-going efforts to protect biological diversity across the country, complementing the activities of other private individuals, non-government organizations and government authorities. As new threats to species and habitats appear, such as the ominous affects of climate change, developing new linked corridors of viable habitats becomes a crucial and urgent action. It is our hope that the Trust can make a significant contribution to conservation in Australia.

Newsletter of The Northern Tabllands Wildlife Carers emerged in the form of a predator which had been stalking the colony. "The refuge is protected by a two-and-a-half metre high fence but a feral cat has been prowling the refuge at night," she said. "It's



not an immediate threat to the colony but rangers have their eye on it. "The cat has so far evaded attempts to remove it."

Ms Jones said the population of northern hairy-nosed wombats was estimated to be as low as 138, making the species more endangered than the Sumatran Tiger and China's Giant Panda. "It was critical that we established a second home to ensure their survival and to protect the species from a catastrophic event such as flood or fire," she said. "Though the program contains an element of managed risk, it is worth it to protect the species from extinction." Corporate partner Xstrata has provided \$3 million over three years to help DERM set up the new site. Up to a total of 12 Northern Hairy-Nosed Wombats are to be re-introduced as part of this year's program, with the next stage scheduled in Spring.

Video footage available upon request

Background

The first group of Northern Hairy-Nosed Wombats was re-introduced to the Richard Underwood Nature Refuge in July last year. This year's reintroduction program occurred after testing showed that no infectious diseases were present at the nature refuge. Two apparently healthy male wombats from the first translocated group last year died, with snakebite identified as a possible cause. To ensure the new environment was as safe as possible for the newcomers, tests were conducted on a male wombat living in the refuge to confirm that no disease was present.

The St George area had been originally part of the northern hairy-nosed wombat's range but over the past 100 years the population had shrunk to a small number in the Epping Forest National Park in

central Queensland, making the re-introduction program significant on a world-scale.

12 May, 2010

MEDIA CONTACT: 3239 0818



Picture shows Armidale Centre Manager Brett Varcoe & Harold Heffernan drawing the raffle which was won by Emily Ingram of Armidale. Centro has been a great supporter of us, Letting NTWC to frequently use their centre to sell raffle tickets

News from Kelly Stumbles & the Glen Innes Area.

I've had some interesting animals during the last six months. They've included two Little Red Flying foxes that were both caught in barb wire fences - one had to be euthanased due to its injuries; plus a

dying.

I've also had two Spotted-tailed Quolls, one appeared to be an old fellow and died after a week in care; the other had an abscess on his shoulder which healed well.

A Little Eagle and a Wedge tailed Eagle also spent some time at my place, but after quite some time in care their injuries didn't heal well enough for release which was a shame.

Recently I had a call about three Feathertail Gliders, whose tree was unfortunately cut down. I set them up in a new hollow and relocated them out at Karen & Trevor's place where they have plenty of habitat that won't be cut down.

Currently I have a Carpet Python in care which was under weight and will be housed over winter before it's released back down the Old Grafton Rd.

Have also had quite a few Kookaburra and Brushtail Possum calls during this time. However macropods top the call list.

Thankfully though, it's been quiet the last few months as I've been busy with work, so it's made things easier for me. There's still a number of macropods in care up this way, Julie & Gary have the most with about six followed by Vanya with four,



Grey Headed Flying fox juv who was left behind by his colony. We don't get many Flying foxes in the Glen area but this year was a busy one.

I also had two other barb wire injuries, one was a Wood Duck caught by the neck which healed fine and the other was a Greater Glider caught by the tail. He'd been hanging there for god knows how long as he was extremely thin, he survived in care for three weeks before



Do you utilise Our Website as much as you could? www.ntwc.org.au

Main advantages of using the website
You can print out and fill in on-line your

- Membership form
 - Foster Care report
 - Milk request form
 - Animal transfer form
 - Animal report form
 - You can have access to most carer organisation throughout Australia
 - Have access to lots of useful links for education and help for native animals
 - Read the latest and older issues of you newsletter
 - See lots of photos of animals in care and those that have been released
 - Lots of stuff to help you care for our native animals
 - Check out the snakes in our area and see which are non; partly or very venomous
 - Leave a message for our committee
- In future, to save on postage and paper we will be sending out emails with the website address of the latest newsletter to all who have internet access.
Please register your email address with Colin at turton37@bigpond.com

Kerryn with two. Many thanks goes to Carmell & Yvonne for taking a number of macropods for me over the last few months, it's been a big help.

I'd also like to thank the UNE for the rats and mice they give NTWC, as they've helped feed various animals up this way like the quolls, raptors, kookaburras, tawny frogmouths and the carpet



Carpet Python ~ Phoro Kelly

python.

At the moment I have a lovely Eastern Grey Kangaroo called Linky, a cheeky Brushtail Possum called Beanie, a Tawny Frogmouth and the Carpet Python.

I have my fingers crossed that it remains quiet and that our native critters stay safe and uninjured and with their Mums. I love what I do, but wish there wasn't a need for it. Happy caring everybody.

Kelly Stumbles

role in pollination and seed dispersal in our native forests. Protecting this species is therefore very important to our biodiversity," Mr Garrett said. Details of the approval decision and conditions can be found at www.environment.gov.au

Media contact: Ben Pratt, 0419 968 734

These poor harmless creatures have suffered poorly in the media in recent years, with scare campaigns of disease being at the fore. The Hendra Virus, a disease known to be carried by bats, was first recorded in humans in Australia in 1994 and since then only 7 people have been effected and 4 of those have died. However, it seems that the bats aren't really to blame. Scientists have discovered that the Hendra Virus is a symptom of stress in bats, brought on by changes humans have made to their environment. A large scale move, such as this approved relocation at the Royal Botanic Gardens is likely to create deep distress for the bats involved. So the question begs to be asked, why is our government replacing one perceived problem with another more definite and drastic one? Why isn't our government embracing our wonderful wildlife and advocating on their behalf? We can all learn to live with wildlife, what we need is for those in power to advocate wildlife education rather than wildlife eradication.

Tassie Devils Claw Their Way Back

The Tasmanian devil, under threat from infectious facial tumours, could claw its way back from the brink of extinction at a new refuge to be created in NSW's Hunter Valley. The Australian



Reptile Park (ARP) at Gosford near Sydney, has teamed up with the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered species (FAME) to develop the "Devil's Ark" refuge in a bid to boost the marsupial carnivore's dwindling population. The proposed ark will be established at a separate facility in about 350 hectares of private bushland at Barrington Tops, in the upper Hunter Valley. A group of 48 devils is due to arrive at the facility later this year and they hope for a captive bred population of 900 devils by 2020.

First Footage Shows Wombats Like Their New Digs

New video footage of the second colony of endangered northern hairy-nosed wombats near St George show the new female residents are settling in well.

Climate Change and Sustainability Minister Kate Jones said the six wombats had been captured on infra-red camera moving from one burrow to another.

She said last month's trapping at their first home near Clermont, central Queensland, saw three females flown 600km south at a nature refuge where the State Government has established a second colony to help safeguard the species from extinction. "The new female wombats are just like anyone who moves to a new area," Ms Jones said. "They are checking out their surroundings and deciding where to live. "In this case, it's a question of which burrow on the Richard Underwood Nature Refuge on Yarran Downs. "Introducing these three females helps balance the sex ratio at the refuge, which is now home to four females and two males.

"The area currently has an abundance of food and water due to recent heavy rains in the St George area, so plenty of feed is available for the wombats and their competitor for food, swamp wallabies." Ms Jones said a danger had recently

A Training day will be announced soon. possible dates 18th or 25th September

All members need to have the up-to-date traing to be able to care for native animals

Wombaroo milk subsidy will only be available if training is current
Authorised Carers' are only licensed to hold native animals when training is up-to-date

""Travel refunds are again available for those financial members travelling to training courses and animal rescue "".

Proposed amendments to National Parks Act threaten natural areas

The NSW government is expected to introduce amendments to the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* in this session of parliament, which could allow larger impact facilities such as supermarkets and fast food outlets in the state's precious national parks, according to the state's peak environment group. 'Tourism' could become enshrined in national park management principles, following the recommendations of the Tourism Taskforce. However, the Nature Conservation Council of NSW has serious concerns that inappropriate tourist development could damage or destroy natural areas designated for protection as national parks. "This legislation is not coming from an agenda of nature conservation but from an

agenda of increasing revenue from tourist accommodation and other commercial ventures in national parks. The Minister wishes to present it as a 'strengthening' of the Act, but in reality we see it as a weakening," said Acting Chief Executive Officer Haydn Washington.

"Why enshrine tourism in the management principles for national parks if you are not seeking to allow more accommodation into parks? "We support people visiting and enjoying our wonderful national parks in a sustainable, low-impact way. "The planned Bill has proposed sustainability criteria, but in the end these are at the whim of the Minister and can be ignored. They are also not in the Act themselves and can be changed. "If the NSW government is fair dinkum about protecting our unique national parks, it should abandon these amendments to the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*. "Our national parks represent many decades of community groups seeking to protect the unique heritage of Australia. They deserve better than the current

proposed Bill" Dr Washington said.

More information: Jane Garcia 0402 757 342

Relocation of Flying Foxes From Sydney Botanic Gardens Approved

Environment Protection Minister Peter Garrett has approved, with strict conditions, the relocation of protected grey-headed flying foxes at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney. "After a thorough environmental assessment the relocation can go ahead and I am confident that there will be no unacceptable impacts on protected grey-headed flying foxes," Mr Garrett said.

"I have imposed strict conditions to ensure the dispersal happens in a way that minimises impacts. "The dispersal activity must happen within a limited timeframe to avoid disrupting the camp during the



sensitive breeding and roosting season. "An independent observer group and panel with expertise in animal biology and grey-headed flying foxes must oversee all aspects of the operation, and report back to my department.

"The Botanic Gardens Trust will be responsible and accountable for all aspects of the relocation. This includes ensuring the colony relocates to an appropriate site. "Similarly, the trust is responsible and must be accountable for any safety risks associated with this operation and must conduct a public health risk analysis before the dispersal action can proceed. "The grey-headed flying foxes are a threatened species protected under both state and national environment law. They play a crucial

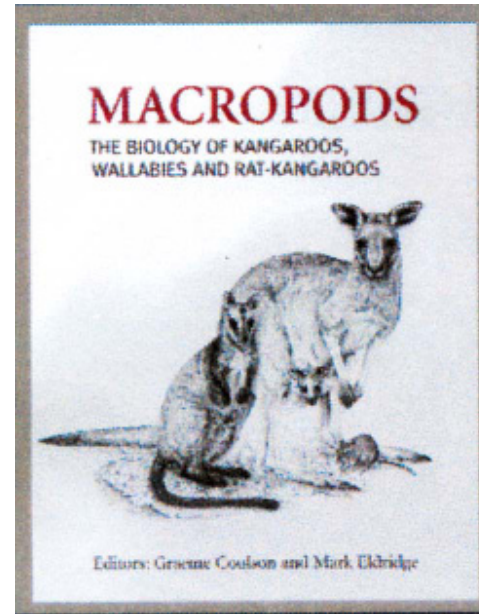
Book review *Macropods*

The Biology of Kangaroos, Wallabies and Rat-kangaroos

edited by Graeme Coulson & Mark Eldridge

Brings together the many recent advances in the biology of this diverse group of marsupials.

This book covers the proceedings of a major 2006 symposium on macropods that brought



together the many recent advances in the biology of this diverse group of marsupials, including research on some of the much neglected macropods such as the antilopine wallaroo, the swamp wallaby and tree-kangaroos. More than 80 authors have contributed 32 chapters, which are grouped into four themes: genetics, reproduction and development; morphology and physiology; ecology; and management. *Macropods* examines such topics as embryonic development, immune function, molar progression and mesial drift, locomotory energetics, non-shivering thermogenesis, mycophagy, habitat preferences, population dynamics, juvenile mortality in drought, harvesting, overabundant species, road-kills, fertility control,

threatened species, cross-fostering, translocation and reintroduction. It also highlights the application of new techniques, from genomics to GIS. *Macropods* is an important reference for academics and students, researchers in molecular and ecological sciences, wildlife and park managers, and naturalists.

About The Editors

Graeme Coulson is a Senior Lecturer in Zoology at The University of Melbourne. He has been researching macropods since 1973, with interests in behavioural ecology and population management.

Mark Eldridge is a Senior Research Scientist at the Australian Museum. He has been researching macropods since 1986 using molecular genetics to study population biology, evolution, ecology and conservation.

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Open Garden SLEX stall @ "Carwell" Help needed!!

"Carwell" is listed in the Aust Open gardens magazine as being Open in conjunction with Slex expo. We need committed members to help.

Members will need to be able to do half days at least. If it is not possible then open gardens scheme needs to know so they can hand it on to rotary etc.

Dates are ; Friday 29th, Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st October.

Can Preening Contribute to Influenza A Virus Infection in Wild Waterbirds? [PUBLICATION]

Can Preening Contribute to Influenza A Virus Infection in Wild Waterbirds?

Numerous studies have reported the isolation of



Australian Shoveller

with preen oil, when soaked in AIV-contaminated waters, attracted and concentrated AIVs on their surfaces. The data presented herein provide information that expands our understanding of AIV ecology in the wild bird reservoir system.”

Just a thought ;..... This research highlights a possible transmission method of AIV . As it is a habit of many people to collect feathers and keep them at home (I used to do it too) I would suggest all feathers be placed into a plastic bag and placed into a deep freezer for at least a month to reduce some of the possible pathogens. Julia

Water birds are a large and varied group of birds. Most are exclusive to fresh water sources such as rivers, lakes, dams and wetlands, however many sea and shore birds can also be regularly found in fresh water, e.g. cormorants and many migratory waders. Water birds include: ducks, geese and swans (Order Anseriformes); grebes (Order Podicipediformes); pelicans, darters and many cormorants (Order Pelecaniformes); herons, ibises, spoonbills and storks (Order Ciconiiformes); cranes, rails, moorhens and coots (Order Gruiformes); and several waders (Order Charadriiformes).e and varied group of birds. Most are exclusive to fresh water sources such as rivers, lakes, dams and wetlands, however many sea and shore birds can also be regularly found in fresh water, e.g. cormorants and many migratory waders. Water birds include: ducks, geese and swans (Order Anseriformes); grebes (Order Podicipediformes); pelicans, darters and many cormorants (Order Pelecaniformes); herons, ibises, spoonbills and storks (Order Ciconiiformes); cranes, rails, moorhens and coots (Order Gruiformes); and several waders (Order Charadriiformes).

avian influenza viruses (AIVs) from surface water at aquatic bird habitats. These isolations indicate aquatic environments have an important role in the transmission of AIV among wild aquatic birds. However, the progressive dilution of infectious feces in water could decrease the likelihood of virus/host interactions. To evaluate whether alternate mechanisms facilitate AIV transmission in aquatic bird populations, we investigated whether the preen oil gland secretions by which all aquatic birds make their feathers waterproof could support a natural mechanism that concentrates AIVs from water onto birds' bodies, thus, representing a possible source of infection by preening activity. We consistently detected both viral RNA and infectious AIVs on swabs of preened feathers of 345 wild mallards by using reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) and virus-isolation (VI) assays. Additionally, in two laboratory experiments using a quantitative real-time (qR) RT-PCR assay, we demonstrated that feather samples (n = 5) and cotton swabs (n = 24) experimentally impregnated



The light will be quite dim by the time the exit is in full swing, but you will still be able to see where they are emerging from. Regardless of the nature of the gaps, they need to be filled. Modern gap-filling products are ideal and the work can be carried out in the daytime, but it is vital that a section of the gap is left unfilled to allow the bats to escape. You need to make sure that the unfilled section is selected from a part of the flyout that bats were definitely seen to emerging from. The most used section is the best to pick and leave untreated.

Q. How do I Know When all the Bats are Out? A. You don't and they won't.

This is the tricky bit. The microbats, unlike most other nocturnal animals, don't go out and stay out all night. Some emerge, fly around and feed then return to the roost to rest while others take their turn in the sky. At any one time it has been estimated that as much as one third of the total colony will be in the roost site. So if the flyouts are blocked up even at night, about one third of the bats will be fatally trapped inside.

Q. So How do I Get Them All Out? A. With a bat-valve.

The bat-valve is designed to allow the bats to emerge from the roost but prevent them from getting back in. A bat valve can be made from a plastic garbage bag. One layer of the plastic is taped immediately above the flyout and the lower lip taped to the lower edge. The bottom of the bag then cut open to form a wide plastic tube through which the bats can slide down and fly out but not be able to

get back up and into the roost. The bag should be trimmed to provide about a 600mm length of tubing. The valve should be left in place for a few days and the presence/absence of the bats monitored if there is any doubt that some might remain. If the familiar sounds are still being heard in the wall, it is certain that not all the flyout area has been correctly identified and you will have to look elsewhere around the wall or house. When the wall is clear of bat sounds, the valve is removed and the remaining

escape hatch filled.

Q. Can I do This at Any Time of the Year? A. No.

It is important to be certain that no dependent, non-flying young are in the roost. The young of microbats are born in late spring and remain with their mothers until the end of January. Part of this time is spent as a non-flying bat when they remain behind when Mum goes outside. If roost sites are closed off at this time they are doomed. The best time to undertake the gentle bat eviction method is in autumn, or at least after February and before June when we are sure that all living bats are fully aerodynamic.

Q. Where Will They Go if I Evict Them? A. We don't know, but we do care.

Most zoologists worry that at least some of the bats will perish if alternative roosting is not provided. This is not known for certain and it may be that most, if not all, will actually survive by simply finding little nooks and crannies in trees nearby. But to be on the safe side I would recommend that an alternative bat-house be set up in a nearby tree if this is possible. Several may be needed depending on the size of the camp. I would recommend contacting Hollow Log Homes at Kenilworth, Queensland for a bat-house design that really works. www.hollowloghomes.com.au.

Jackie

Few modern houses sport a belfry, but the phenomenon of a wall full (or roof full) of microbats is not all that unusual.

Q. There's Something in the Wall of our House - it Sounds as if There are Hundreds of Them.

A. These are the tiny bats of the night that do an enormous service to humans from their insect feeding habit.

They are very different from the giant bats or flying-foxes which roost in large conspicuous camps in trees. The little bats are a rather flattened arrangement and if the head will fit, the rest will too. In any given region there are usually a few species that are happy to colonise a cavity wall in a house if they can get in.

Q. Will They do Any Harm in There? A. Yes, unfortunately they can.

As much as I love them, a large colony of



Juvenile Micro-bat

microbats in the wall can eventually lead to serious problems. The bats begin to fly out after dusk and immediately begin feeding. To rest they return to the roost site in the wall and that's where the fun begins. As their food is digested and becomes waste it now has to be excreted and this they do in the wall. Whilst this doesn't sound great to us, it is all part of their grand plan as the scent of the latrine

section at the bottom of the wall is an aid to their relocating the campsite. If the species is one of the larger ones that form big roosting groups of five or six hundred animals, the latrine soon grows. There is nothing unhealthy for them in this, but there can be for us. Dried bat droppings can form an aerosol that if inhaled, has disease problems for humans. The build up of guano can also do a great deal of damage to the wall

depending of the material it's constructed from.

Q. Can We Get a Pest Controller to Fix the Problem? A. A very experienced pest controller yes, but I would check their method before engaging them.

Solving this problem needs special care and experience. They are also fully protected in all States of Australia which might raise the issue penalties if any are in fact harmed. If done correctly, the walls can be freed of bats; the bats provided with an alternative roost site and be retained in the backyard to go about their insect feeding work which is of great benefit to all of us.

Q. Where do you Start? A. You need to identify the flyout points.

A 7-8 mm gap is all that it takes to allow the passage of the small bats. These can occur as a result of the slight buckling of weatherboards over the years and can be seen from below, looking up the walls. The best method of searching for them is to go to the outside of the wall that the bats are heard in. On dusk, the occupants will be seen emerging from the gaps and flitting off into the sky. Sometimes the flyouts have been created by the design or execution of the building when the sloping gable roof fits over horizontal weatherboards or fibre-cement manufactured to resemble weatherboards.

Please don't feed the animals

Why not?

When you feed native animals you're giving them the wildlife equivalent of junk food. Instead of eating a wide range of natural foods, they become dependent on processed seeds, bread and other foods that are not part of their natural diet. This can make them very sick.

They may also lose their ability to forage for

their quest for food. Remember, they have sharp claws and a strong kick.

At night, possums and gliders come out to forage among the treetops for leaves, fruits and flowers. If they get used to being fed by humans, they spend less time foraging and more time raiding your tent or kitchen.

Goannas find it difficult to distinguish between your hand and the food in it. A goanna bite or scratch is very painful and prone to infection as these animals are scavengers. Never feed a goanna - they are dangerous animals.

Remember that kangaroos, wallabies, possums and goannas are wild animals.

Not even birds?

Hand-fed birds become a nuisance - you may start feeding one or two birds but, within a short space of time, great flocks can descend. This can be a frightening experience



natural foods and become dependent on people. Animals that expect to be fed by people can become aggressive, harassing people for food when they are hungry.

Think twice before you feed wild animals - a moment's pleasure for you may lead to junk food addiction for the animal you feed.

What about kangaroos, possums and goannas?

Kangaroos and wallabies eat a range of native grasses and herbs and are adapted to chewing and digesting these grasses. Other foods just aren't the same! Roo pellets can also be harmful.

When kangaroos and wallabies become used to being hand-fed, they sometimes attack people in

especially or small children. Hand-fed sulphur crested cockatoos like to chew cedar houses when the occupants aren't around to feed them.

Hand-fed birds are susceptible to illnesses that can be transferred to other birds. Young birds lose the ability to forage for food and when not fed by humans may starve. Hand feeding can also affect bird breeding cycles.

Hand-fed birds take over - populations of some birds such as crimson rosellas increase, displacing other birds and mammals that shelter in tree hollows. When currawongs and ravens are hand-fed they breed up and prey on smaller birds, causing an imbalance in bird populations.

Feeding native animals

Providing food for possums can trigger territory disputes that can leave one, or both possums, seriously injured. Just a few little breadcrumbs won't hurt them... or will it?

Whether it is leaving food scraps on a backyard feeder for the neighbourhood possum or throwing a crust of bread to a family of ducks in a suburban



park, wildlife feeding is something that many people do and enjoy.

While it may be fun to get close to a wild animal feeding is not always as innocent as it seems - and may actually be harming the wildlife being fed.

This information aims to help you understand the issues surrounding wildlife feeding and how you can enjoy encounters with wildlife in a more natural way.

Wildlife - what's the attraction?

Many people are drawn to wild animals; trying to get as close to them as they can - and feeding can often be the easiest option to make this happen.

But what's the attraction? Studies all over the world have shown that people find animals

fascinating to watch and get close to, particularly where the person goes on to develop a bond with an individual animal. This bond often involves caring for the animal and this in turn can mean providing food and even a place to live.

The animals we have today as companions and pets are examples of this bond, a bond that has not only brought these animals closer to their human companions through thousands of years of domestication but has also been responsible for changing their physical appearance and even their behaviour. We need to question what the long-term impacts are on any wild animals that we are feeding today as well as the possibility of any immediate harm.

Questioning the need to feed

When it comes to feeding wildlife it can be difficult to see how it could harm the animals being fed. An easy meal is surely a welcome addition to an animal's diet, saving it the trouble of finding its own food and, on the surface, this may appear to be the case. But there is much more to an individual animal's life than eating.

When thinking about the wellbeing of a wild animal it is important to look beyond the short-term benefits of having a 'free feed' and start to question what the broader implications of feeding might be:

Case study

A kookaburra that regularly stole food from campers at a popular national park injured a visitor when it flew into her face while trying to take the food she was eating. Feeding large dangerous animals like cassowaries and dingoes has the potential to create dangerous situations that could result in serious injuries and even fatal attacks. Feeding dangerous animals in the wild is also illegal.

Is feeding attracting all wild animals or is it just benefiting the opportunists that take advantage of the food? Will feeding affect the animal's role in the natural ecosystem and what flow-on effects will this have on the other plants and animals that make up that system?

Getting close to wildlife (and letting it feed itself)

Wildlife Advocate

Wildlife Advocate is a not-for-profit community-based organisation dedicated to ensuring the needs of Australian native wildlife are taken into account in the development and enforcement of policies and practices affecting the safety, freedom and independence of native Australian wildlife.

Mission

To be The Primary Source of Information, Public Education and Advice on Native Australian Wildlife

Strategy

We will achieve our mission by: developing and maintaining a membership of dedicated volunteers, affiliated region/issue/species specific associations and corporate bodies with a keen interest in the sustainability of Australia's unique wildlife establishing and maintaining an Experts Advisory Panel comprising nationally/internationally recognised experts in the fields of animal behaviour, care and rehabilitation, animal population monitoring and impact analysis and persons with extensive experience in allied fields providing information, education and advice regarding the impact of policies and practices on Australian native wildlife establishing and maintaining productive links with similar organisations in Australia and overseas building cordial relations and encourage a spirit of cooperation between individuals/organisations with an interest in the plight of Australia's native fauna and relevant government authorities and agencies, private landholders and the general community ensuring the donations we receive are put to the most effective use in ensuring the needs of native Australian wildlife are taken into account in the development and implementation of government and private sector policies and practices.

Wildlife Advocate's immediate focus is on:

- * the slaughter of kangaroos and wallabies;
- * the commercial harvesting of possums;
- * safari hunting of native animals, including the NT saltwater crocodile; and
- * the use of 1080 poison as a animal control method.

Whether it's in a national park or your own backyard, having a close encounter with a wild animal is an experience made special by the fact that wild animals, by their nature, keep away from people. These experiences are also special because getting close to a wild animal is a challenge. The challenge is best met where a person:

Knows enough about the local wildlife to identify where an animal is likely to be and when it will be active;

Has the patience and skill to find and watch an animal (with a pair of binoculars on hand); and

Is lucky enough to interact with the animal in some way that makes the experience both special and memorable.

And without the artificial lure of feeding, wildlife encounters can become "the real thing" - true wildlife interactions where the animal decides how close it will come.

Encountering wildlife without feeding

By far the best way to ensure you have the company of wildlife is to go to natural places like national parks and take up the challenge of encountering a wild animal on its own terms.

Even at home you can create your own wildlife habitat. Grow native plants that provide nectar-rich flowers, fruits and leaves that local wildlife will feed on. In time these plants will form part of a wildlife-friendly garden that provides patches of shelter and habitat for native birds, mammals, reptiles, frogs and invertebrates. Add a comfortable seat to watch from and you can start to enjoy meeting some of your wild neighbours in a wildlife-friendly way.

A couple of good quotes about feeding

"Those who wish to pet and baby wild animals love them, but those who respect their natures and wish to let them live normal lives love them more" Edwin Way Teale, Circle of the seasons, 1953

"When we return wild animals to nature we merely return them to what is already theirs. For man cannot give wild animals freedom, they can only take it away." Jacques Costeau

Janet Wheeler