



*Rescue
Rehabilitate
Release*



**Newsletter of The Northern Tablelands
Wildlife Carers Issue NO 91 December 2011
Phone - 1800-008290 www.ntwc.org.au**

Honeyeaters Return to Rear Chicks

Jenni Drewitt

The honeyeater couple have



returned to my garden. However, this time they have chosen the cherry tree to nest in, probably because it has denser foliage than the grapevine.

They spent a week interweaving pale-green lichen and stringy-bark fibres to create a lovely cup-shaped nest (see photo).

For about a week they have been taking it in turns to sit on the eggs, with one of them (male?)

regularly singing loudly that this territory belongs to them. Any intruders, such as the Grey Shrike-Thrush are noisily driven away.

As I did last year, I've been gradually (so as not to freak them out) covering the cherry tree with wire mesh. By doing this, I hope that the two speckled eggs in the nest will hatch, and not fall prey to birds

like Currawongs, Shrike Thrushes and hawks.

One of the honeyeater parents taking a shift on their nest in the cherry tree.

Honeyeaters have a brush-tipped tongue designed to allow them to make the most of flowers' nectar and pollen.

An Echidna's progress

Jenni Drewitt

I came across an echidna in action. Initially, it tried to dig itself into the soil near a log. Then, when I talked to it, in a low-key, friendly voice, it started to go about its business checking out logs for ants/termites. It was a privilege to follow the echidna (at about 11/2 metres distance), and watch as it prodded logs. Being small it was probably a female or a young male – such small eyes.



It's a shame that people remove logs which provide hiding places for echidnas (from foxes etc), as well as habitat for lizards and invertebrates. Also, it's wonderful to see logs/branches on the ground breaking down to enrich the soil.

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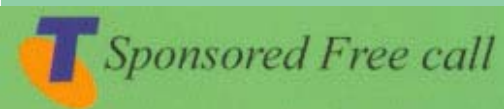
Write to NTWC PO Box 550Armidale 2350

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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Co-ordinators report Armidale area.

November 2011

by Julia Rose

Orphaned macropod joeys have kept us busy since my last report and a very big thank you to all the joey carers who are doing a great job. In just this area we have 15 at various stages. Di and Alan have had some help to make up a new pre-release pen but more help may be required for completion of 2nd stage. We are missing the wonderful set up at Dinner Flat and would love a macropod lover to live there one day, I think the property is still for sale. Harold is now working with his daughter at Fusspots Cafe, in Ebor, a great place for coffee so do stop in.

Snake calls have kept Richard on the go as well,



Soft release enclosure

mostly the eastern brown variety so far. Several cases have involved some very determined patience as heads pop out from winter spots for some warmth. Two mating sites have meant a



a young Possum

gathering of male snakes, far too many to relocate. One at the back of NERAM coincided with a childrens day so lots of OH&S came into play. Huge thanks to

Richard for keeping so many callers calm and

having successes. We hope some new members who will train and assist Richard who is thinking of moving to Adelaide as he likes the idea of doing this professionally. There would be lots of warmed up reptiles down there I should think. Meanwhile he and I are doing our best to cope with the 1800



calls and other rescues. The usual baby magpie problems and the 'L' plate injuries amongst the fledglings, the first Tawny nestling has arrived as well. One interesting Barn Owl with a massive head bump recovered and was released. My first emerging echidna arrived with nasty stab or claw? wound with maggots ++ didn't survive sadly. Then there are 3 'back pack' brush-tail possum joeys who are being cared for. Koalas are again being sighted in town and along the highway, 1 died, 1 rescued to wires, 4 sightings and another with a



Allan Wylie & Di Hansford

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

Main advantages of using the website

You can print out 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 venemous**
- **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 you email address with Colin at turton37@bigpond.com

problem yet to catch. Bats and parrots are expected this month as well.

I am still trying to get a bird care training day organised, desperately need more bird carers.

Allan Wylie and Di Hansford are building a enclosure (pictured P 3) to use as a soft release area for joeys and building possum cages for young and injured possums. Also photo of the sugar gliders - mother + 2 babies. Photograph of Alan and Todd erecting the fence out from the office at Baldersleigh.



Glen Innes Area Update

by Kelly Stumbles



Spotted-tail Quoll

It's been pretty busy up our way, especially now since it's basically myself along with Julie & Gary doing all the caring. I still have Tanya as well to help out with birds which is great this time of year. She's currently got a baby pardalote in care and has recently released some baby Magpies.



*"Squiggle" the puggle
Echidna*

Julie & Gary are caring for 7 macropods which range in size from little ones up to pre-release size; they are 3 Red-neck Wallabies and 4 Eastern

Greys. They also has 3 baby Brushtail Possums and the cheeky Wombat which is doing well.

I have a mixed bag of critters in my care at the moment. They range from a Blue Tongue Lizard which was stuck in a tar like substance, an Eastern Snake-necked Turtle, a Carpet Python, a juvenile Ringtail Possum, a Nankeen Kestrel, a Spotted-tailed



Nankeen Kestrel

Quoll and the Echinda puggle.

We've certainly had our share of macropod joeys this year along with possums,

we've had 6 baby Brushtails come in this season and one juv Ringtail. We either get none or a heap at once when it comes to baby possums in our area.

Birds of all sorts are never in short supply, I had a bad run this year with King Parrots coming into care in a very bad state due to a viral disease and a number of cases of birds with beak and feather decease as well. Not all were sad ending though, many were released including a pair of Eastern Rosellas I raised from little naked babies with their eyes shut Page 4.

There's always something in Glen that needs to be rescued or cared for which keeps myself and Julie & Gary on our toes. The fact that I work full time doesn't make this task easy. If only there wasn't a need for people like ourselves, if only the wildlife could stay safe and out of harm's way.

Fred's Story

StoryOn Friday 17 June 2011, I travelled to Brisbane for my usual trip to visit family. On Sunday 19 June 2011 whilst travelling back there was a particularly high number of dead roos on the side of the road. I tend to stop for most depending on how damaged they look.

I had just left Tenterfield, travelling south, when I came over a rise and there in front of me was a dead female Wallaroo right in the middle of the highway. I turned the car around, to find a better spot to stop. As I was about to cross the road to drag her off, I could hear a truck approaching on the opposite side of the hill. Luckily, the truckie decided to pull over to park. Once I heard it stop, I did the dash into the middle of the road and dragged her off.



As I began to pull her, I could hear stress calls coming from within her pouch, I reached in and found a male Joey. He was fully furred, often not the case, but a bit knocked round from the shock of it all. I

could see he had a few bits of hair missing from his head and grazes on his legs. I didn't notice his toe was bent at first but fairly soon after realised that it was broken, given the angle of the bones in his lower foot.

When I arrived home, we weighed and measured him and rang Jane, the macropod coordinator, to confirm our assessment was correct. He was a Wallaroo, with soft grey hair weighing 1180 grams, a tail 310mm and a foot 170mm long. We started Fred on a mixture of 0.7 + impact and between feeds gave him Lactade to counter

possible dehydration and constipation.

The next day, we called our vet and made an appointment to take him in to check his foot. After x-rays, it was confirmed, a break in the largest phalange bone in the foot. The x-ray showed that it was a break in the middle of this bone, so Sarah, (the vet on duty), after consulting with another vet at the practice, decided a splint was the best way to go.



Having experienced shock from the loss of his mother and the pain from his broken toe, Fred's

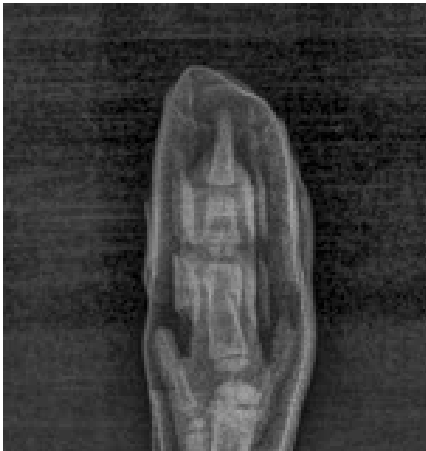
bowel movements were not great. His first passing of faeces looked normal but over the first week or so of shock and being in care, he was constipated and uncomfortable when toileted. We noticed blood and mucous in his stools and what looked to be worms. The stress he was under had allowed his normal worm burden to increase. After a call to Julie in Glen and Julia in Armidale, we dosed him with Ivomec sheep drench @ 0.1ml/kg. To counter the affect of the Ivomec, we gave him a ¼ teaspoon of Protexin in his milk along with the normal dose of Impact. It took several weeks for Fred's faeces to come back to normal.

perfect. He had a few sore spots from the splint but after applying a bit of Betadene and a gentle rub of Emu Oil, his sores have healed.

Why call him Fred, I hear you ask?

We called him Fred, because during the same trip to Brisbane, I also saved a Red Neck Wallaby whose mother was lying dead in the middle of the highway. Given her beautiful orange colour, (although very little fur), she had to be a Ginger and so Fred was the obvious choice of name.

Fred now weighs just over 7000grams and his fur is getting darker and coarser. He spends his afternoons and mornings grazing in our house paddock and during the middle of the day is happy finding a spot in the sun, often inside the shed or the kitchen! He has a routine during his 'Mad Half Hour' of charging up one fence line, then back, and up the other. His toe certainly seems to have strengthened and there is no sign of discomfort or pain. He has settled down now with his two new mates Tamarind and Saffron. Although, depending on who is being fed, he can be a bit demanding but I understand from other more experienced carers, that Wallies tend to be a bit this way!



With the splint and the bandages on, Fred's foot was quite large and awkward for him to move. After some practice, he was able to hop around quite well but sometimes got caught on the way. The splint had to stay on for 6 – 8 weeks but on 3 August it was removed. An xray or two later, showed that the bone had set well, and while not perfectly straight, it was near



Fred with Tamarind & Saffron

at the heart of our community



Help raise money for us and open an Community Partnership Account with New England Mutual'

The New England Mutual' offers you a Community Partnership Account (CPA) which assists community-based organisations

a Community Partnership Account.

On 30 June each year we calculate the average annual balance of accounts held by supporters of each recipient organisation. This amount is then used by us to make a

1% bonus payment to the chosen Organisation.

What can community groups do?

Community Groups can encourage Community Partnership Accounts to be opened by letting supporters know about it through their own newsletters, meetings and functions. Community Groups can also distribute these brochures to their supporters. When a whole community gets behind their favourite charity, sporting club or community organisation, small amounts saved by individuals can become significant to their fundraising goals.

How can you support your favourite community group?

You can support your chosen community organisation without it

costing you anything. As long as you have money in your account, your chosen organisation will receive an annual bonus from us. Thanks to supporters choosing their favourite community organisation, the recipient can continue to enjoy this bonus payment each year.

The more supporters an organisation obtains the more they will receive in their annual bonus payment—encourage your relatives and friends to become supporters today.

How can I access funds in the CPA?

The Community Partnership Account is an everyday transaction account with a variety of access methods to suit you! Access your funds at call through a cheque book, EFTPOS, ATM, Web Access (Internet Banking), Swift Access (telephone banking), VISA Debit card and BPAY®.

Who can I support? Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers

Disclaimer New England Credit Union Ltd is the issuer of the Community Partnership Account.



with their fundraising activities. The CPA is a full access savings account that offers a competitive interest rate and a guarantee that we will reward the account holder's nominated community group with an annual bonus payment. The Account holder WINS with a competitive transaction account, the community group WINS with financial support and we WIN as we are able to direct more funds back into the communities in which we operate!

How does it work?

Interested Community Groups need to register with New England Mutual to become a Recipient Organisation. We will then place the organisation's name on our list of recipient organisations and individual members can elect to support their favourite groups by opening

Get a Leaf

There are creatures in the undergrowth
That I swear, by God, upon my oath
(Though you may stare in disbelief)
That have never lived inside a leaf!
How could a creature face the world
Without a leaf in which to curl?

Some live in bark, or under a stone,
Or hide in the ground like a buried bone,
And then there are those that roam at large
Entirely dependent on camouflage
Which serves them well, I do not doubt it,
But a leaf - how on earth could they do without it?

Inside a leaf I've not a care,
No predator would think I'm there,
Do *not* be in the slightest doubt
If you want to know what leaf's about,
For Nature has itself equipped us
With leaves the like of eucalyptus.

It's such a cold and cruel planet-
Get a leaf and curl up in it,
You'll find your fears will all disperse,
You'll be master of your universe.
I swear the truth is plain and gospel,
To live without a leaf's not possible!

New Raffle

We have had this very cute/unusual metal sculpture donated to us by a new member from Walcha. It was being sold for \$80 at Armidale markets, we got to talking to him and his son who is a avid snake collector and breeder. So there and then he just gave this 50cm high sculpture to raffle it proved very popular with buyers at the markets. It will be drawn at easter. He also said he would donate another to us then.



A brown's demise

I was called out by a snake lover to a brown snake which had been run over by a car. When I got there she had been waiting patiently for about 20 minutes unusual for someone port be concerned about a snake on the side of the road. It looked a



bit sick and was not at all interested in biting me as I put it in my bag I called our snake expert Richard, and met him on the road, we both examined this female and realised it had lost an eye and by its movements had some brain damage. The best thing for it was to euthanase it. **This story is not so much about an injured snake it's about the concern shown by some members of the general public for our native wildlife.** The lady concerned was interested in joining our group, she was given information.

Oil threat to Australia wildlife

By Phil Mercer BBC News, Sydney Environmentalists fear oil is heading towards an area where whales breed

Environmentalists have warned that an oil slick caused by an accident on a rig in the Timor Sea is threatening wildlife in Australian waters.

Oil has been flowing from the West Atlas platform for three weeks.

Safety authorities have been using chemicals to try to break up the spill but warn it could be at least two more weeks before the leak is plugged.

Up to 400 barrels of oil per day have been pouring into the Timor Sea to Australia's north.

An emergency rig has arrived

from Singapore to repair the damage and aircraft and boats have been dousing the slick with dispersants.

Fragile environment

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority has said that this has helped to contain the spread of oil, the bulk of which remains around the drilling platform thanks, in part, to benign weather conditions.

Officials have stated that the slick is about 170km (100 miles) from the Australian coast.

Environmental groups believe the contamination poses a significant threat to wildlife and is heading towards land.

Piers Verstegen, from the Conservation Council of Western Australia, says the spill - off the north coast of the Kimberley region where whales congregate - is an ecological disaster.

"Humpback whales, an endangered species, go to that area and that region to calf and give birth and this oil spill is happening just off the Kimberley coast," Mr Verstegen said.

"The oil, as far as we are aware, is travelling towards the Kimberley coastline but it is definitely affecting areas that are used by these whales and dolphins."



Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital installs new reptile pits

The Reptile ICU at the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital has recently expanded with the construction of six reptile pits.

Fishermen have reported seeing endangered flatback turtles covered in oil.

There have also been claims that fish and sea-snakes have been poisoned.

Conservationists believe that, in its rush to exploit abundant natural resources, Australia risks inflicting irreparable damage on its fragile environment.



A Short Training course' How to assist on the 1800 number.

At (? best time) Julia will run through the protocols of manning the 1800 Rescue line.

Have some fun going through some recent call information, see how interesting it can be to talk to some very caring callers and some 'different' ones.

Richard and Julia have managed to cope with the Spring rush but need some days off so are asking for members to help. The 1800 number can be call forwarded to your home number or mobile. Information sheets help with contact details. And on your first day we will stand by to assist with any tricky calls until you get the hang of it. If you can help call the 1800-008290 number

The new enclosures are excellent for reptiles requiring intensive care, allowing them outdoor space with dirt to forage through and natural sunlight to bask in.

General Manager Gail Gipp would ideally like to see the addition of three more grass pits to accommodate patients not yet well enough for dirt flooring. We need your help to do this!

Each pit costs around \$350 to construct, and we have put the challenge to our Joey Ambassadors to raise enough money to cover the cost of all nine pits. Please visit their Everyday Hero fundraising page to donate.

The black rat - a feral pest

Suzanne Medway

The black rat (*Rattus rattus*) is listed among the world's ten worst vertebrate pests and is notorious for its economic impacts on agriculture and environmental impacts on native wildlife.

- scaly tail, much longer than head and body
- body 165-205 millimetres, tail 185-255 millimetres, weight 95-340 grams. Juveniles (also those of the brown rat) are sometimes mistaken for marsupials or mice.



The black rat has now spread throughout much of coastal Australia and is most commonly seen in urban environments, but also in undisturbed areas around the coast.

Introduced in 1788 with European settlement, the black rat quickly replaced the native rat which has coevolved with Australia's bushland for thousands of years. Europeans disturbed the environment, making it more suitable for the pest rodent. The species' fast breeding helped the opportunistic black rat to take over quickly.

Despite its name, the black rat is usually brown or grey. A prominent characteristic of rats that helps distinguish them from similarly sized carnivorous marsupials is their front teeth: a pair of chisel-shaped incisors with hard yellow enamel on the front surfaces. Other characteristics that identify a black rat from other rats include the following:

- long pointed head (can be more rounded in juvenile)
- large thin ears (20+ millimetres) which reach middle of eye when bent forward
- Sleek, smooth coat – charcoal grey to black or light brown above, cream or white below

Black rats are very closely associated with humans; hence they commonly live in urban areas. They prefer to live in roofs, wall cavities, trees, scrapes or burrows around farms, making nests of shredded materials. Black rats are very

agile climbers. Although they are predominantly nocturnal, they are often seen during the day.

The black rat has successfully adapted to human urbanisation partly because it eats just about anything. It is also a prolific breeder. Females have litters of about five to ten young and may have up to six litters per year. The young are born blind but develop rapidly and are weaned after twenty days.

In Australia, predation by black rats on off shore islands has recently been listed federally as a key threatening process. Despite this, very little is known of its impacts or potential impacts on biodiversity in mainland Australian ecosystems. Understanding this is vital, as with its wide dietary niche and preference for complex habitat structure the species is a potential competitor of small native mammals, such as the bush rat (*Rattus fuscipes*), that have similar resource requirements.

Black rats threaten not only native wildlife but also humans through the range of pathogens they

carry. Among these are *Angiostrongylus cantonensis* and pathogens causing leptospirosis and cryptosporidiosis, all of which are a health concern in metropolitan areas in Australia. Helminthes, bacteria and viruses are spread by rat faeces contaminating human food while rat urine can transmit bacteria such as *Leptospira* and *Salmonella*. Disturbingly, due to the high numbers of black rats, there is a potential for the species to act as a reservoir for diseases coming into the county, consequently helping those diseases become established

The presence of black rats in Sydney Harbour National Park is of particular concern because of the high conservation value of the area and its high public profile. For example, North Head supports endangered populations of long-nosed bandicoots (*Perameles nasuta*), little penguins (*Eudyptula minor*), and sunshine wattle (*Acacia terminalis*), along with an additional 119 species of native fauna, 547 species of flora and an endangered ecological community of eastern suburbs banksia scrub. As a result of preferential grazing on seedlings, black rats negatively impact on the population recruitment in some plants and substantially increase plant mortality.

With regards to fauna, survey work across the park suggests that native small mammal communities (bush rats, antechinus, and pygmy possums) are largely extinct in this area and have been replaced with black rats. Black rats are also the most abundant feral animal species throughout Sydney Harbour National Park, probably aided by the extensive urban areas that surround the park, where black rats are common. Black rats have been implicated in the extinction of two native *Rattus* species on Christmas Island: bulldog rat (*Rattus nativitatis*) and Maclear's rat (*Rattus macleari*). There is also circumstantial evidence of negative spatial relationships between black rats and native rodents on mainland sites. This can lead to severe ecosystem dysfunction with significant flow-on effects for local and regional biodiversity.

Lake Inverell's bat hazard

The power lines over Lake Inverell have been causing a lot of bat deaths. The local authorities have been contacted to put something on lines to enable bats to detect them.



**General Meeting
and Christmas
get-together
4th December at
1.30 PM.
Tree Group Mann
St Armidale**



Sustainable Living Expo

Oct 22-24

The SLEX this year was a great success for all who had a stall. The weather was kind to all, unlike



"Ranger" Stacey with school children

do. "Ranger" Stacey was a great hit with both children and adults who attended her talks. The gazebo was a centre of our stall and made things easy to have our displays.

previous years where we had to put up with strong wind and rain. The 'Creeklands' is a great place to have the SLEX.

NTWC had a good supply of helpers and a few of our carers came along to show people what we



"Ranger" Stacey with school children



"Ranger" Stacey with carers

Queensland Bilby Recovery Program

Al Mucci - General Manager Life Sciences,
Dreamworld

Bilby release

In May 2010, Dreamworld staff Al Mucci and

Editor's note: Dreamworld is one of South East Queensland's largest native wildlife parks, caring for over 500 native animals and birds, many of which are critically endangered. Dreamworld has



developed a conservation strategic plan to guide the co-ordination management and communication with regard to its support of conservation and research initiatives.

Tina Niblock travelled to Currawinya National Park to release two important captive-bred female bilbies. These two females named Summa and Wyarra are genetically important introductions to the current bilbies inside the predator-proof fenced area. The conditions for the release in this harsh arid landscape were absolutely perfect: lots of rain has provided much needed plant growth and invertebrate feed for the bilbies to forage on. This was the second release of bilbies from Dreamworld.



As part of the release program, in collaboration with the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) and Save the Bilby Fund, a monitoring program exists which the staff assisted on. Six bilbies were spotlighted over the course of the release and these two females will make a welcome addition to the existing males looking for mates. Future investigations are well underway for future release sites without a predator-free fenced area. This is the next major goal to be achieved if this program is to be successful in the long term.

**Support your group
and buy and sell
raffle tickets for
our Christmas
raffle. Contact
Julia Rose.**

Meeting dates & times

**Committee meeting
11am**

**12 noon Fund Raising
meeting**

**1.30PM General
meeting & Xmas**



Telstra country Wide and New England Mutual are proud to be sponsors of NT Wildlife Carers...Local people working together.



**Support your group
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Christmas raffle.
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Northern rTablelands Wildlife Carers

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