

Newsletter

March 2018

ACT Wildlife

Rescue • Rehabilitate • Release

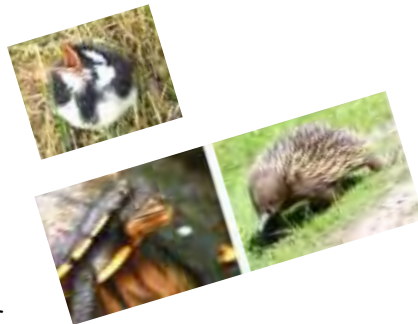


www.actwildlife.net

Upcoming events

These are the training courses planned for this year and as you can see there are several opportunities to join other members in learning new skills.

- Orientation** Sat, 7th April
- Basic Birds** Sat, 28th April
- Reptiles** Sat, 12th May
- Possums** Sun, 20th May
- Orientation** Sun, 15th July
- Basic Birds** Sun, 29th July
- Advanced Birds** Sun, 19th August
- Reptiles** Sun, 21st October
- Orientation** Sat, 24th November
- Possums** Sat, 1st December



Little Spud came into care on 10 March after a very kind gentleman checked the dead mother wombat's pouch. Spud weighs 1.8 kg and is about 6 and a half months old. He'll stay in care until he's old enough to be released at between 18 months and 2 years, depending on his readiness. If you would you like to donate to the raising of Spud, go to <http://www.actwildlife.net/donation-info.html> for bank details.



Right: a very obese Green Tree Frog and Below: what they probably should look like!



Credit: Gavin Flynn

ACT Wildlife Annual General Meeting

*Held on 18th February, 2018
at Jerrabomberra Wetlands*

Marg Peachey, President, welcomed everyone to our 5th AGM, being held at our potential new headquarters.

Marg said, in part:

"ACT Wildlife is going from strength to strength. Each year we conduct many training sessions on various species care and general introduction (Orientation) to ACT Wildlife and how we work within the community. Caring for wildlife is really a 'different reality', as a lot of you know, where you are tied to the animals, some for 24 hours a day and some for many months.

(cont'd overleaf)



Credit: Bluewater News, Townsville



(AGM, cont'd,...)

"We are getting better at giving advice for members of the public. For instance, with 'abandoned' baby animals we quiz the caller more thoroughly about the whereabouts of the parents and encourage them to return the youngster to its parents.

"Of course we could not do without the help from all the Canberra vet practices. All injured animals are sent straight to a vet and unfortunately we do not see many of these animals coming into care, insinuating that they needed to be euthanased. This in return shows our release rate in a good light.

"In 2017 we saw the conclusion of the Wombat Mange Project where we established that Cydectin (Ivomec) was successful in eradicating mange from wombats and burrows along the Murrumbidgee River near Lanyon Homestead. The ACT Government grant for this was one of our first.

"In 2017 ACT Wildlife secured a second grant from the ACT Government for outfitting our new building, to turn it into a wildlife center where we may eventually receive animals.

"The 2nd grant we received was \$1500 from the ACT Herpetological Association. This was to obtain a microscope to establish testing for normal and pathological flora of ACT reptiles and other species down the track. Turns out, from a stroke of good luck, we were donated a microscope from The University of Sydney and were able to use the funds for a microscope mountable camera and consumables.

"I would like to thank the Committee members who diligently attend meetings and spend so much time helping the Organisation grow and mature.

"We have received assistance from various Government departments throughout the past year, including ACT Fire and Rescue to rescue the many birds left hanging by string from high branches, ACTEW has helped with flying foxes on power lines and animals in drains, and Brad Green from Parks, Conservation and Lands is always happy to help with rescuing any animal in distress.

"A BIG thank you to all ACT Wildlife volunteers for helping throughout the year! Without phone operators, transport volunteers, those who attend events, sewing people, carers, and more, we would not be able to do the great job we do. The Canberra community now expects the service that we strive to provide."

The 2018 ACT Wildlife Committee was voted in as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| President | Marg Peachey |
| Vice President | Martin Lind |
| Secretary | Dorothy Brown |
| Treasurer/ Public Officer | Jim Peachey |
| Media Liaison | Marg Peachey & Martin Lind |

Committee Members:

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Dee Harmer | Heather Peachey |
| Luke Robbie | Agnes Mesple |
| Ashley Sloan | Corin Pennock |
| Felicity Eylward | |

Food Coordinator Dorothy Brown

Events Coordinator Dee Harmer

Phone & Transport

Coordinator Marg Peachey

Fundraising Vacant / Heather Peachey*
[temp]

Training Elisa Holgate

Volunteer Liaison

Officer Corin Pennock & Nathan Perring

Species Coordinators:

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| Bats | Denise Kay |
| Birds | Marg Peachey* |
| Possums nth | Cheryle Le Fevre |
| Possums sth | Michelle Johnson* |
| Reptiles | Ingrid Singh* |
| Amphibians | Dorothy Brown |
| Wallabies | Lindy Butcher |
| Wombats | Lindy Butcher |

NB There are several filled positions* which the incumbent person has occupied for up to 5 years, and they would really like someone to take over their roles. These are important roles within the Organisation so if you feel you would like to undertake one of these positions then **please do not hesitate to initially contact Marg on 0450 961 530**



Spotlight on a Volunteer

Kate Hallett describes her family's take on volunteering within our Organisation.

What made you join our Organisation? 'I wanted to give back to the community, and help our beautiful wildlife! The thing I really miss when overseas has always been the beautiful song of our birds, and the hilarious antics of our magpies and cockatoos. I remember one morning my husband was at the bus stop waiting for his bus.. he realised he had gum nuts hitting him on the head from a hooligan Cockatoo!'

Did you join to meet like minded people, or care for wildlife? 'I love to see animals each and every day, and really, how could you be anything but a kind and caring person if you choose to work with animals?!'

Have you made some good friends? 'Yes, I have found the training I've done has always been very good, with some good laughs. People and carers I've met are all so very happy to help with information and tricks of the trade. Marg in particular is just incredible, the amount of time and care she takes with each and every animal that crosses her path. She is also so very welcoming and treats everyone as another extended family member.'

What is your favourite Australian animal? 'All Birds - especially Kingfishers, blue wrens, parrots, magpies etc. I have a soft spot for possums, wallabies and wombats too. My son Liam particularly loves lizards, (shingle-backs, bearded dragons and blue tongues).'

Does your family help care and feed the the birds in your care? 'Yes, Liam and Ben are always happy to feed the baby birds with one eye shut...'

Do you enjoy interacting with the members of the public? 'Well, that's a bit of a loaded question ... there are mostly just great people that want the best for the injured/orphaned animals. But you do also get some that have lost their grasp on reality and expect you to dance on a hot tin roof to ensure that whatever they want to happen, happens with certain animals.'

What have you found so far, has the group met your expectations? 'I started doing the Wombat Mange Program 12 months or so ago, and really enjoyed the enthusiasm of all the volunteers. Lindy puts so much into rearing her babies, as do all the carers. But hearing how she had to put on a garbage bin with the bottom cut out, steel cap boots and heavy trousers just to clean out the wild teenage wombats enclosure was hilarious.'

What are some of the things you would like to see our Organisation do in the future? 'Promote ACT Wildlife to

children of all ages, in the hope that as they grow up they take responsibility for the care of the beautiful animals in our region for future generations. I personally would like to be able to take a selection of our animals in care to show school students how some care and kindness can make a huge difference to an animals life.'

We hear you like pot plants. Would you get cranky if a possum attacked them? 'Not at all! I have grapes, figs , olives and an apple tree which I purposely don't net so all those animals that need some food have a safe feeding spot and we enjoy seeing them daily. What I do get cranky about are people who do not bother to net their trees properly, and hence so many animals being injured for no reason.

Just loving my new job and friends :)'

Below: we sometimes get Lorikeets into care.



And from one species to the other end of the spectrum! Juvenile flying foxes currently in care.



2018 Royal Canberra Show

The Royal Canberra Show has come and gone for another year

Once again ACT Wildlife was invited to setup a stall to provide information to the general public on what we do and to answer questions about the native wildlife that calls Canberra home; typically, what people can do if they find an injured native animal.

Our species specific pamphlets packed with information were available, as well as material about our Organisation.

This Editor once again searched high and low for native animal toys to sell to raise funds for us. There were some beauties available, with the wombat being the firm favourite! Just under \$200 was raised selling the toys and gathered as kind donations.



Many thanks to Dee and family for setting everything up, as well as the team of volunteers who managed the stall throughout the 3 day event. Hope you all also enjoyed having a look around the Show!

We'll endeavour to have some of the left over toys available for a quick sale at future Training sessions!

Spotlight on a Volunteer

Tabitha Plovits describes her take on volunteering within our Organisation.

What made you join our Organisation?

'Animals have always been a huge part of my life, having the standard family pets while growing up to having snakes and horses as an adult. While living in Darwin and the East Kimberley I used to both work with and rehabilitate mistreated and neglected horses. Being new to Canberra I was very disheartened seeing all our wonderful wildlife dead on the side of our roads. It was when I saw my first live wombat and echidna crossing the road on a dirt track that I decided to look into becoming a volunteer to help our native wildlife so that many more people can experience the excitement of seeing them in their natural habitat.'

Did you join to meet like minded people, or care for wildlife?

'Since joining Act wildlife I have had the pleasure of meeting many like minded people who are very passionate about our wildlife, who are only too happy to share their wealth of knowledge and experience when it comes to all aspects of caring and other rolls that are available to volunteer in within ACT wildlife. My family is very supportive of this decision

Some of the roles I volunteer in are manning the 24hr phone service for members of the public to report sick, injured or orphaned wildlife. It has taken a little while to gain my confidence in taking calls from the public as when I first started there was a lot to learn, but with the support of other members it soon became quite easy. I really enjoy being on the phone as there is such a variety of calls that come through, some very funny ones where I can have a laugh with the rescuer and member of the public.

Transport is another role, where I pick up animals that have been taken to local vets to receive treatment and get taken to the carer that suits the animals needs. This has been a great way to not only meet other members but also to establish friendships with different veterinary practices around Canberra. One time while on transport I was called to an elderly gentleman's house because he had a possum stuck at the top of the downpipe on his roof. Up the ladder I went only to have a possum see me then jump out of the downpipe onto the ground, then straight up the gumtree in the yard. I really don't know who was startled most, me or the possum! But I can tell you my heart went through my chest as did the



(Spotlight on a Volunteer, cont'd...)

gentleman's, who was holding the ladder for me. Once I got to the bottom of the ladder with my feet firmly on solid ground we both had a chuckle and very glad it wasn't stuck at all. I suggested that he cover up the large entrance with mesh so no other possums could get through.

Caring for injured, sick and orphaned wildlife is a huge part of what we do. It is the most satisfying feeling when I get to release an animal that has come into my care. Being a new carer I have a mentor who has been a huge wealth of information and support. I was really worried about what I thought was expanding decolourisation of the wings of the

King Parrots I currently have in care. The wing colour changes were actually due to the juvenile parrots maturing. Man I felt like a dill, because I thought oh no what's wrong now, they're doing so well?! We both had a laugh and boy was I relieved.

We hear you like bonsais. Would you get cranky if a possum attacked them? My husband and I share a joint interest in Bonsais. I replied to the question with "I would see it as an opportunity for the tree to be styled in a different direction as bonsais are forever evolving due to changes within their lives." My husband agreed.



Kookaburras and Tawny Frogmouths: what's not to love?!



Mealworm Colony Starter Kits available

There is a large number of these little worms available for anyone willing to start their own family colony.

They don't need much fuss, just a **deep plastic 'drawer' or two with a layer of unprocessed bran** (which is included with the critters) and a layer of newspaper on top to give them some privacy.

Then? you just need to put **2 handfuls of chopped leafy green vegies over the bran** (under the newspaper) and within no time you will discover **the joy of watching little mealworms grow** and turn into beetles who will lay eggs and so the cycle begins again!

Try it! the kids will love it.



These items were left behind at a recent Training Course. Yours?

Pls contact Marg on 0450 961 530 to arrange their return.



Coming soon! Calling Arty & Crafty people

Lindy Butcher has been playing with FREE clothing gathered from the Green Shed in Mitchell to produce these amazing pouches and toys.

Stay tuned for details of a possible new initiative involving our crafty members which could raise much needed funds for our Organisation.



From Matt Beitzel, Aquatic Ecologist, ACT Government

'While conducting snorkelling surveys in an ACT river I saw a Red-bellied Black Snake moving on the bottom of the pool in 2m of water. I have seen black snakes regularly on water and know they dive when startled and didn't think much of it. However, in the next pool (approximately 100m upstream) another black snake surfaced in the middle of a deep run. It had a live 15-18cm (adult) Two-spined Blackfish in its mouth. The snake swam to the edge of the river where it held the fish and continued to pump venom into it. The snake was approximately 1.5m long and pretty solid. This photo was taken probably 5 minutes after the snake was spotted.

Two-spined Blackfish are a particularly cryptic native fish species and generally hide under rocks in the bottom of the river. So in order to catch the fish, the snake (maybe both of them) must have been actively hunting blackfish in and under rocks on the bottom in at least 1.2m of water. Although very common in this river, blackfish are not found in nearby rivers.



From Denise, 7 March '18

One of the easier Grey Headed Flying Fox rescue, beautiful Japanese Ornamental Maple, poor batty didn't have any where else to go, surrounded by cement.

