



## A note from the President

Time marches on too quickly these days, we never seem to catch up.

The committee has been working hard to ensure that things are going smoothly. ACT Wildlife continues to expand and become more complicated.

The minister responsible for the environment, Mick Gentleman, facilitated a media release before our last Orientation session. I gave three radio interviews and the Canberra Times and Riot Act ran articles. So our name and reputation is getting 'out there'.

We are receiving increasing donations from the public and we had a successful grant application last year to furnish the Jerrabomberra wetlands centre. The licence to use the building was only granted very recently so now we are about to start spending the money. We initially thought we would be working from the centre by February. The wheels of government move slowly.

Have you ever considered a recurring monthly donation?

Lindy Butcher is appealing for crafty people to make and donate handmade animals and any other things for a fundraising stall: details below.

Marg Peachey

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## **CHRISTMAS MARKET FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY**

### **Calling all you Arty and Crafty wildlife people**

I'm keen to put together a fundraising craft stall with a variety of arts and crafts that I know a lot of you are already making. We have been very generously given a stand at the Christmas Markets at EPIC on 8 and 9 December. Thank

you to Cathie and Steven from the Canberra Markets.

We would need to have a bit of a committee to coordinate items and work out such things as how much each artist/craftsperson would contribute back to ACT Wildlife as funds donated/raised. I know that some craft items incur a substantial cost to the maker and that needs to be considered.

See the article in this newsletter about making a wildlife calendar to use as a fundraiser, both at our Market stall and before and after.

I'm making handbags from recycled jeans and other fabrics, as well as stuffed kangaroo toys, complete with a "pocket" pouch, also made from old jeans. I've also made possum door stops, again from recycled fabrics. Happy to share fabrics and patterns with those who'd like to help.

Some of us have made stuffed wombat toys from new and reused fabrics.

Another idea is that we have a good number of different sized pouches, bat "mummas", bird nest boxes, possum boxes, that members of the public can "sponsor" at a price that reflects the cost of caring for the relevant animal and have their name added to that item. It would be classed as a donation.

An idea for those artists among us is to make a good quality copy of a painting (if you don't want to sell the original) and put the copy onto cardstock to sell as greeting cards.

I'm sure that others of you have lots of ideas as well.

Start setting seeds and taking cuttings so we have a nice range of pot plants to include.

If anyone is handy with woodworking there are some great garden items such as pot plant stands and simple crates that can be made from reclaimed timber pallets.

I have a lovely pattern for a crocheted wombat and the owner of the pattern has kindly allowed us to make it for sale. Anyone crochet?

I have a pattern for a knitted koala and other wildlife for those of you who knit.

We can also sell home made Christmas food like shortbreads. I have some great wildlife cutters people can borrow.

If you are interested in being involved with this, either with planning and coordinating or with making items for sale can you please let me know via email

and we can start to make some plans.

Those who are interested in finding out more or helping in any way (PLEASE???) meet at my home at 2 Schey Place SPENCE on Saturday 25 August at 2.00pm. Please RSVP by Friday 24th. The more people who commit to contributing and running this the more we can raise for our wildlife.

Many thanks

Lindy Butcher

Wombats and Wallabies Coordinator

[lindy@bigblue.net.au](mailto:lindy@bigblue.net.au)

0430 931 003





## GOOD NEWS OF AN UNLIKELY SUCCESS

Often when we rehabilitate and release an animal we have no way of knowing how it has managed out in its natural environment. But recently, we were delighted to see a brush tail possum named Hope, (because she had no hope of surviving) raised by possum coordinator Cheryle over 5 months from January last year and released in my garden in July of that year. The photos below show what can be achieved with great care and a lot of good luck.





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## **PINKIE TRAINING WITH WILDCARE**

I was fortunate to attend a Pinkie training course run by Suzie Nethercott-Watson (of Wildcare) on Saturday 14 July in her home just over the border in NSW.

I can highly recommend this for any carer wishing to become proficient and confident with caring for tiny orphaned macropods. Suzie spent a lot of time talking about the importance of rehydration, a factor that really dictates the future survival of tiny orphans that come into care. Much of what she said can also be applied to pinkie wombats and possums.

If you would like to find out more about caring for pinkie marsupials we would love to meet you and help you obtain the necessary training and equipment for this to happen.

See the notice below for details for this.

Follow the link to see the video of all the little orphans hanging in Suzie's "nursery" while their carers attended the course. There were more in another room.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAQq4Sr2-C0>

**SEEKING INTEREST IN PINKY MARSUPIAL CARE**

I'd like to introduce myself -  
I'm Lindy, Wombat and Macropod Coordinator with ACT Wildlife.

If you have an interest in caring for wombats and wallabies and/or pinky wombats and wallabies (and short term pinky Eastern grey kangaroos) I would love to meet you and answer any questions you may have about what is involved with caring for these delightful little animals.

I am holding an information session at my home ....

Saturday 28 July  
2:00 pm  
2 Schey Place  
SPENCE  
0430931003  
[lindy@bigblue.net.au](mailto:lindy@bigblue.net.au)

... where you can meet the little wombat joeys in my care at the moment, get an idea for the type of equipment and commitment that is needed, then, we can arrange for more training should you decide to become more actively involved.

Other wombat and macropod carers will be there to share their experiences as well.

[Please RSVP by Friday 27 July](#)

Looking forward to meeting you all.  
Kind regards  
Lindy

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## THANK YOU TO JANE AND PETER

Volunteers are such lovely people. Recently one of our sewing volunteers, Jane Halsey, delivered to my place some beautiful and practical animal pouches that she made for us. She brought her father, Peter with her, and while getting my little wombat Spud to test run the pouches, I showed them the recently (almost) completed extension to my wombat enclosure. All it needed was a couple of gates. "No problems", announced Peter, "I can start those for you today!" And, he did. After making a start and taking measurements Peter and Jane came back the next day to hang the gate they'd constructed. Spud is now enjoying a couple of hours each afternoon in the extended enclosure. My sincere thanks to two very kind and generous people.



**PHOTOGRAPHER AVAILABLE TO CAPTURE IMAGES OF OUR ANIMALS  
FOR A CALENDAR.**

One of the nice things about being a volunteer in any organisation, but in particular with ACT Wildlife, is that you get to meet some really nice people. This week I met Mitchell Baskys and Christine Fernance after they rescued a tiny pinkie wombat ( named Ridgi Didge – now with Kristie ) from the pouch of his dead mother. <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/national/act/wombat-joeey-found-on-side-of-canberra-road-on-the-mend-20180714-p4zrim.html> They came to my house to meet the other tiny pinkie in my care and it transpires that they are enthusiastic photographers of wildlife. Their business

name “Swimming Wombat Photographics” is testament to their passion for our native animals.

Mitchell and Christine have kindly offered to take professional photos of our animals in care over the next few months and put them together in a calendar which we can then have printed to sell as a fundraiser at our Christmas Market stall and at other times.

They have invited carers who have an animal in care that they would like included in the calendar to call them or email them on the contact details listed below and they will make a time to take the photos. Please take advantage of this very generous offer. It is a lovely opportunity to showcase the beautiful wildlife with which we have the privilege of interacting.

Swimming Wombat Photographics

[swimmingwombat@outlook.com](mailto:swimmingwombat@outlook.com)

0432807232

Photo supplied by Mitchell Baskys



### **SNAKE SEEN EATING A FISH**

I and another CR Staff were undertaking some snorkel surveys in an ACT river in 2015 for juvenile fish and encountered something that I have never seen before.

While snorkelling up one pool I saw a red bellied black snake moving on the bottom of the pool in 2 m 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 spine 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 1.5 m long and pretty solid.

The snake didn't eat the fish while we were there possibly because it didn't want the attention.

Two Spine 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 1.2 m of water. Although very common in this river, blackfish are not found in nearby rivers although are found in upland areas from the ACT to Victoria.

Matt Beitzel, an Aquatic Ecologist with the ACT Government

The photo was taken probably 5 minutes after the snake was spotted.



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### **Three Months with Bailey - a Swampie**

Last March, rangers near Tidbinbilla rescued a tiny 370g swamp wallaby, who I named Bailey, ears stuck down, eyes open, no fur. We were lucky to look after him for just on 3 months.

From the beginning he was a very slow feeder, lethargic at times, but he was doing almost all the right things. He grew his fur, learnt to hop and race around like a hooligan and increased his weight, although not quite as quickly as he should have. I made sure he drank all of his milk, gently pressing the teat to get

the last few drops in each time, some feeds taking half an hour. Compared with other wallabies I had to work a bit harder keeping him warm. I closely monitored his weight and had to give extra water between each daytime feed as he needed more fluid to stop dehydration. His stomach always sounded gurgly at feed times.

On his last day Bailey refused a feed. We took him straight to Tracey, Canberra Emergency Veterinary Services. She gave him subcutaneous fluids, pain killer and something for the stomach gurgles. At home an hour later he stretched up, nose high, hissing, clearly distressed. We drove quickly back to Tracey, who found on an ultrasound a liver shunt, a congenital problem which she has seen previously in cats and dogs.

So Bailey was born with it and had no viable future. It had to be euthanasia as his liver could not function to clean out toxins.

We remember so many good things about Bailey, happy times, and the happiness people showed when they saw him. When you lose a bird or an animal in your care, you often never learn why it died, what was going on inside, but giving it a chance is what it is all about. We were fortunate to learn why Bailey could not have survived. It helped a little.

Photo and story by Joan Mackay - Wallaby carer



## WOMBAT UPDATE

While Winter gives the bird and bat carers a bit of breathing space, those with possums, wombats and wallabies in care are still busy with their charges. Wombats and Wallabies are in care for over a year - a big commitment for their carers.

The wombat people have been particularly busy this year, with 9 still in care. Four of these are very tiny, requiring night time feeds. Some are big enough to be outside in their enclosures all the time, their body mass enabling them to stay warm through the night. But some are a bit young or fragile and it is necessary to keep them in the house or a warm store room at night, protected from Canberra's bitter night time temperatures.

We released two more adolescent males at Bendorra Dam last week, where they join the two wombats released over the last 18 months.

Two of our wallabies are in a pre release enclosure with a carer near Royalla. they will be released fully at the end of Winter.

We are looking for more carers to take on raising wallabies. We only have a newly arrived wallaroo in care at the moment following the sad loss of little Bailey, but there will be more. If you have an enclosed yard, no domestic animals (or separated from the garden area) and lots of shrubs and space for wallabies to stretch their legs and get strong and fit it would be lovely to hear from you. Wallabies are delightful little animals to care for and after they are weaned they will require relatively little of your time while they finish their growing in your garden.

Photo newly arrived 2kg wallaroo.



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## **Northern Corroboree Frog captive breeding at Tidbinbilla**

*By Mandy Conway*

Corroboree frogs, with their black and yellow stripes, are one of Australia's most distinctive and easily recognisable frogs. They are found only in the higher elevation areas of the Australian Alps, including the Brindabella Ranges (ACT) and Snowy Mountains (NSW) - they occur only where there are sphagnum moss bogs.



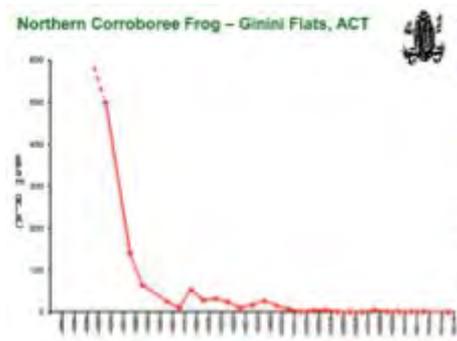
### **There are two species of Corroboree frog**

The **Northern Corroboree Frog**, *Pseudophryne pengilleyi* is found in the Brindabella Ranges in the ACT and adjacent Bogong Mountains and Fiery Ranges in NSW. They occur as three main populations that are genetically distinct from one another.

The **Southern Corroboree Frog**, *Pseudophryne corroboree*, occurs in Kosciuszko National Park at a higher elevation of between 1300 and 1760m.

Surveys for the Northern Corroboree Frog have been undertaken for many years,

usually by lines of people walking across the large bogs and calling out to them using the 'hey frog!', otherwise known as the shout response technique. The frogs could be found around many of the ephemeral pools.



In the 1960s and 70s these frogs were common animals and bushwalkers often saw them in the moss when putting their gas stoves down. When the stove heated up the frogs could be seen walking out from beneath trying to avoid the heat. They were thought to be the most abundant vertebrates in the bog system at that time.

In the late 70s and early 80s people started saying they weren't seeing as many as they used to. There was some evidence to suggest the species was in decline. The spread of the Chytrid fungus was eventually identified as the major cause. This fungus also caused the decline or extinction of many hundreds of species worldwide not otherwise threatened. Scientists and conservationists were literally running ahead of this wave of extinction and scooping up frogs, placing them into shipping containers which have been turned into breeding facilities.

**Chytrid fungus** starts life as a waterborne spore, which lands on skin that has keratin. The spores set down roots, which grow into a capsule that then produces thousands more of these spores.

A frog's egg is free of chytrid because the keratin cells have not yet developed, hence the eggs can be brought into the laboratory chytrid free. However the tadpoles have a little keratin present in their mouth scales, and this is where the first free-swimming chytrid spores attach themselves. The tadpole can do alright with that, but as soon as it metamorphoses and the rest of its body turns into keratin skin, chytrid fungus spreads all over it. The frog usually dies post metamorphosis of systemic issues.

The Common Eastern Froglet carries chytrid fungus but is not affected. Unfortunately it passes the fungus on to anything it bumps into in the water.

**In 2002 a facility at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve** was established to house a captive 'insurance' colony of the Northern Corroboree Frog. The facility comprises of refrigerated shipping containers placed on concrete slabs, which enables the frogs to be kept in the cool, moist conditions found in their natural habitat. The ACT Government was ready to collect eggs, and then the unthinkable happened. The January 2003 bushfires came through. Then, a few days later on Sunday the 18th of January, the fire storm went through and reburnt the area and this time 70 - 90% of the bogs.

**But some areas had survived!** Once ecologists were given access, they collected some 300 eggs from those few remaining nests amongst wet tussocks in the Mt Ginini area, although only about one-third of eggs were taken to minimise further impact on a population that could hopefully continue when the sphagnum bogs recovered. These eggs established the captive population at Tidbinbilla. Each year

ecologists returned to collect more eggs until 2007, when no more nests could be found. Luckily they collected enough eggs for a broad genetic base.

### **How do we hatch and raise them?!**

The first successful captive breeding of a Corroboree frog occurred in 2008, when those first eggs had developed into mature frogs of breeding age (at 5 years). Ecologists had managed to re-create the right conditions to stimulate breeding. The tadpoles develop inside these eggs and



then wait for the water levels to rise. The eggs absorb water and then, when they have become tadpoles, they wriggle into the water.

Corroboree frogs in the wild can live for nine years. There are still frogs, wild founders, which are breeding and were collected in 2003. There are currently around 1000 Corroboree frogs in the captive population from eggs collected in 2003 and 2004.

In 2011 the first captive-bred frogs were released back to the wild; 2,000 frogs have been released at Namadgi National Park to date.

This year, 2017, some of the frogs that had been released have returned to breed. Sadly only 9 males were heard calling, and with presumably 9 females in the vicinity, add a few extras that didn't call and there are probably only 20-30 frogs in the wild from those released frogs.

All of the frogs in the colony and the frogs released to the wild have had their **belly patterns photographed and entered into a database.**



This enables individual identification; belly patterns are much like a fingerprint. There are two thoughts to get the Corroboree frog over chytrid fungus: facilities such as the University of Wollongong will continue lab based work to determine the mechanisms of chytrid, and secondly ecologists hope to re-establish breeding populations to develop natural resistance to chytrid.

**Outdoor ring tanks** appear to have promise for a longer term solution to breeding the frogs economically and were trialled in 2015/16. The tanks are designed to enclose Corroboree frogs in a natural habitat whilst excluding other chytrid carrying frogs.

If one of these enclosures becomes contaminated, by a Peron's Tree Frog for example, then it is cleaned out, sterilised and the process is started again. These ring tanks were installed at Tidbinbilla, with mesh tops to prevent other frog species entering. Pools are included so that eggs can be put in there to allow



tadpoles to metamorphose. The one year old frogs will then be collected and

dispersed into the wild. A challenge has been to provide uncontaminated water, particularly bore water.



This is a new app for echidna sightings to help an echidna study.  
Go to their Facebook page to find out about it.  
Facebook page name is EchidnaCSI

## Training Calendar for 2018

**Basic Birds:** Sunday 29th July

**Advanced Birds:** Sunday 19th August

**Reptiles:** Sunday 21st October

**Orientation:** Sunday 25th November

**Possums:** Saturday 1st December

Training has been revamped and peer reviewed. Sessions are available for new members and non-members. Carers needing to upgrade training are encouraged to come along to one or more sessions. Carers from other wildlife groups are welcome. Orientation is free, all other courses \$25 for members, \$35 for non-members.

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## **SEWING GROUP**

We welcome Jane Halsey as our new sewing group coordinator.

Anyone who would like to lend a hand sewing, knitting, crocheting or more: the sewing group meets fortnightly. This is a nice social gathering and you are able to help with making articles for carers to use as well as items for our Christmas stall.

## **FUNDRAISING**

### Cadbury chocolate FUNDRAISER

Heather is again holding chocolates for those of you who would like to sell chocolates on behalf of ACT Wildlife. Give her a call if you have chocoholics at your workplace or interest group.

Heather 0407 494 680

Give Jane a call if you have any questions. 0408 581 233

Big thanks to Paula Edmondson who coordinated for over a year.



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Support ACT Wildlife and enjoy a nice glass of wine at the same time.

Go to

[www.goodwillwine.com.au](http://www.goodwillwine.com.au)

select ACT Wildlife as your charity and choose your wine.

So far we have been given **\$510** by Goodwill Wines, a donation from wine sales where our charity is chosen.

The Peachey family has probably contributed to this in a big way. The wine is very drinkable!

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## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

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### Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference - Sydney 2018

Martin, Dorothy, Marg, Jim, Dee and Mandy attended the recent conference at Sydney University. The venue was a huge lecture theatre that easily held the (approx) 400 delegates. Wildlife carers, vets, vet nurses and academics were amongst those who attended.

There were three days of talks and a final day of excursions. The talks were on a very wide range of wildlife topics, from carer mental health, tracking released animals, Coccidia and anaesthesia (not of carers!).

Those of us who regularly attend the biennial conferences have made many friends and contacts. There

is much catching up and networking.

The excursion I attended was a walk-through the wildlife clinic at Taronga Zoo. There is an external entrance to the clinic where members of the public can take injured animals. We saw turtles, a penguin being cared for. The turtles were found in Sydney Harbour as very small sea turtles that could not fend for themselves. They have been raised in the clinic and are nearly ready for release. We were given a very thorough talk about how they operate and saw the various enclosures for different species and were able to ask lots of questions. Lots of ideas were gleaned in case we ever get a wildlife hospital.

I can highly recommend attending these conferences. It is primarily about wildlife rehabilitation and every time we learn something new that we can incorporate into our training.

The program can be seen [here](#) and the papers will be on the AWRC website soon

Marg Peachey

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ACT Wildlife Inc is a charity with DGR status. Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.

Your donation will go directly to help orphaned, injured and sick wildlife in our care

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MailChimp.