

ACT Wildlife

Spring 2023

NEWSLETTER

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Message from the President

Finally, the cold winter days and nights are hopefully behind us and it's great to see the trees are blooming. Or is it? Our busy season is about to commence with Spring and Summer seeing the bulk of babies born and juveniles becoming independent.

Your new Committee has achieved some wins during the darker months. ACT Wildlife can now legally remove native vegetation from public lands including reserves. It's important for carers and those collecting browse to follow the regulations as outlined in the amended licence. Our trainers will incorporate these into our courses so its important to attend the refresher sessions.

Our financials welcomed the generosity from our community with end of financial year donations providing much needed funds for the winter months.

Some policy changes include our Rescuers and Transporters now requiring a Working With Vulnerable People (WWVP) cards as part of their training and compliance.

The Committee agreed to host the Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference in 2025 ([see page 3 for more](#)). Our new Events Coordinator, Debra Thomas, will need your support with the conference and the many events she has/is planning ([see page 5 for more](#)).

The ACT Government will be banning non-compliant fruit-tree netting in the near future. ACT Wildlife has been granted funds to provide the community with animal friendly compliant netting through a swapping program, launching in September – great work by Clare Wynter and the team ([see page 4 for more](#)).

The collective actions from our rescuers have seen the ACT Government make the much needed changes to the Yerrabi Spillway which has made it safer for wildlife and rescuers.

The Committee has met over several sessions to review the Strategic Plan. Special thanks to Fiona Johnstone for providing excellent note taking and documenting the contributions. Also, Madelene (Maddie) Gardner for facilitating one of

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Yana del Valle

Acknowledgement of Country

ACT Wildlife acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they and their Elders, past, present and emerging, make to the life of this city and this region.

Message from the President *cont'd*

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the workshops. Next Steps: Circulate the draft strategy overview to the coordinators and staff for input, before circulating it more broadly for feedback.

Don't forget to contact our Training Coordinator, [Adam Coppard](#), and enrol in the FREE WIRES online course before 31 December 2023. It's a great way to get back to basics and be reminded of simple techniques and methods when working with wildlife.

I look forward to springing into action in the coming months and hope you all support each other and work together to help our most vulnerable...our native wildlife.

Yana del Valle
President



Yerrabi Spillway. Photos courtesy Jono McLaren



Fledgling Bird Calls

Welcome to fledging time, usual advice is to leave if parents are in attendance, but please don't assume every fledgling is OK. Some may have injuries resulting from landing on hard surfaces such as roads, concrete driveways etc, some have been removed from their nest by bad weather or predators and are still nestlings so additional questions should be asked

Is the bird able to stand up?

Is the bird able to walk even if it is a bit unsteady?

Is there anything you notice that doesn't seem right?

Has it been sitting in the same spot for a long time?

Asking the MOP if they are able to send photos and/or videos

Sometimes they are not ok to leave!

National Press Gallery Midwinter Ball



The [National Press Gallery Midwinter Ball](#), held on 21 June, raised \$35,000 for ACT Wildlife and in August a cheque was presented by Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese to ACT Wildlife President Yana del Valle.

The money will go to support veterinary care, medication and food for wildlife rehabilitation.

Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference

CANBERRA 2025



Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation CONFERENCE INC

ACT Wildlife has agreed to hold the Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference (AWRC) in Canberra in 2025. It will be an important event for ACTW to network and meet many other carers from around Australia. The 2023 conference was held during August in Perth and Adam Coppard attended to represent ACTW and invite attendees to the Canberra conference in 2025.

Talks from this year's conference are available to view on the AWRC website from end of September at <https://www.awrc.org.au/perth-2023.html>. Click on the 'Past Conferences' link to view the talks and all previous conferences.

If you are interested in assisting with organising the conference in Canberra, please contact Deb Thomas at events@actwildlife.net.

Net Swap Program

Minister Vassaroti launched the Net Swap program on September 3 and since then we have swapped 373 nets, with 84 ACT home gardeners taking advantage the swap offer.

Legislation to ban harmful netting for fruit trees was introduced into the Legislative Assembly on 17 September. The ACT will be the second jurisdiction, after Victoria to introduce a ban on unsafe wildlife netting. There will be fines for people who are found to be using unsafe netting. Sale of unsafe netting will still be allowed but if retailers choose to sell it they will have to display signs saying use of the nets is prohibited in the ACT.

ACT Wildlife will replace backyard gardeners' unsafe fruit tree netting with nets that cause less harm to wildlife. This service is available for free, thanks to a grant from the ACT Government.

We are swapping approximately one for one. For example, if you bring in netting for two trees, we'll give you two 4m x 4m nets or some net sleeves or bags.

When nets have large holes, animals foraging for fruit can become trapped and entangled, leading to serious injury or death. Animals most likely to suffer are fruit bats, birds, lizards, and snakes.

ACT residents -not businesses - who bring in old unsafe netting to the **ACT Wildlife office in Dairy Flat Road** can swap it for better netting – or alternatives such as sleeves and bags – for no charge at the times below.

Net Swap Calendar:

Every Saturday September & October, 10am – 3pm

Wednesday 4th & 11th October, 11am – 2pm

Sunday 8th October, 11am-2pm

We are looking for members who can offer a few hours to help with the Net Swap. If you can please add your name to the events sheet below (see second tab at the bottom of the ACT Wildlife - Spring event volunteers for the [Net Swap calendar sheet](#)). We have swapped about 25% of the netting purchased under the grant thus far and anticipate we'll need to roster additional swap times at Jerra during November and December. These dates will be added to the Roster sheet in October.

Sad facts: Over the last 10 years 376 vulnerable grey-headed flying-foxes came into care in the ACT after being entangled in netting. This is almost half of the 800 rescued. 80 of these did not survive as a result of the injuries inflicted.

Many birds, lizards, possums and snakes also become entangled every year.



Yana del Valle with Minister Vassarotti.



Steven Bartos and Clare Wynter at Tuggeranong Bunnings ready to swap bad netting for wildlife safe netting.

New Events Coordinator



Above: Deb wearing the new ACTW bucket hat.

Below: Deb's twin sister, Tracey, at the Mulligans Flat Community Day wearing the new cap and t-shirt.

The new merchandise can be purchased from the Jerrabomberra office.

Caps/Hats \$25

T-Shirts (XS-3XL) \$30



Welcome to Deb Thomas who has volunteered as our new Events coordinator. Deb has been a passionate member of ACT Wildlife since 2022 and is also a possum carer. Deb can be contacted at events@actwildlife.net

Deb has already organised a number of events during September including:

Sunday 3 September 9am-4pm: Bunnings Tuggeranong Sausage Sizzle

Saturday 9 September 10am-4pm: Mulligans Flat Community Day

Saturday 23 September 9am-4pm: Bunnings Gungahlin Sausage Sizzle

Sunday 24 September 10am-2pm: Tidbinbilla Open Day

Deb has set up a Volunteer Event Roster: docs.google.com/spreadsheets

If you are able to help out in any way at any of the events, please add your name to the roster and Deb will be in touch.

If you have any ideas about events ACTW could be a part of, please let Deb know. There are also a couple of big events in the future: the ACT Wildlife 10 Year Gala Ball will be held in March 2024, and the Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference in 2025. Let Deb know if you would like to help out with organising these events. An email will be sent with more details.

For your diary

There is going to be a **10 year anniversary celebration** for our members on **Saturday 2 December**. It will be combined with our Christmas party. We're planning at the moment to include some lawn games, trivia and a bbq lunch, with champagne to celebrate of course.



If you have a story about wildlife in your care that you would like to share in the next newsletter, forward it with photos, to newsletters@actwildlife.net and to Evan Croker at evan@croker.com.au to be included in our social media.

ACT Wildlife Calendar 2024 Available Now

The 2024 calendar is now available for purchase on the ACT Wildlife website shop <https://actwildlife.net/shop/>. The calendar recognises the work undertaken by our volunteers in rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing the diversity of amazing wildlife that come into our care for a variety of reasons.

The ACT Wildlife calendar has been recognised as a quality product thanks to the dedicated work of the Calendar Sub-committee; is one of the key fundraisers for our organisation; and is purchased by wildlife supporters around the globe. Production cost of the calendar was covered by our highly valued sponsors who we thank for their support.

Cost for a calendar remains the same as last year at \$13 including GST, with postage added where required. The calendars can be shipped to any address including overseas. Please allow time for the package to arrive if it is intended as a Christmas gift. All profits from the calendars go directly to caring for wildlife in care.



Above: The 2024 calendar cover.

New Habitat at Duffy

Thanks to the ACT Government Nature in the City grant which ACT Wildlife received, we have created a new habitat at our Duffy grounds. Recently there was a pair of Brown quails wandering in the grasses near the building. Thanks to Michael Fisher for the photo.



Sponsor a Species Meet and Greet

In August it was great touching base with Wildlife Warriors in the Sponsor a Species program meet-and-greet! Snake guru Gavin actsnakeremovals.com showed us a blue-tongue lizard, shingleback and python; carer Corin spoke about her wallaby Marla and possum Patricia, and carer Sharon showed us cute little wombat joeys Acacia and Banksy. Visit our [Facebook](#) page for more photos.

Become a sponsor today and we'll see you at the next meet and greet! <https://actwildlife.net/sponsor-a-species/>

If you'd like to become involved in Sponsor a Species, or ACT Wildlife's social media, contact Evan on sas@actwildlife.net.



Equipment for Current and Future Carers Supporting the group.

With Spring now here we are heading into our busy season for wildlife care. With new carers coming onboard, or with existing carers potentially able to take on more, now is the time to check what you have that could be used more broadly across the ACT Wildlife community.

So this is just a quick reminder to all those that have recently attended training around caring for wildlife and are looking to take on an animal, or for those having already taken the step into caring, that ACT Wildlife can assist by providing suitable enclosures or other items to ensure your success with the rehabilitation of your species of choice. As per the species training, if you have attended to be a carer, you are always able to ask for items to assist in getting you setup and ready to receive an animal into care. If you are unsure what additional items you need or are able to take on more responsibility, it is just a matter of asking for additional assets (cages, hotboxes etc).

These items unfortunately are limited in supply which leads to the next point.

If you have been a carer in the past, have received additional items (cages, hotboxes, avery's) during a peak period in pervious years, or are now unable to care for the same number of animals as before, then now is the time to let us know what items you have that could be redistributed or donated to ACT Wildlife. Items can be collected, or dropped off at the Jerra offices (please call first). If you need to arrange pickup, please call and someone will I am sure will be able to assist.

Sponsors

Ziggys Fresh 10% Discount



ACT Wildlife member Deb Thomas, has secured a contract with [Ziggys Fresh](#) to provide a 10% discount on fruit and vegetable purchases for our wildlife. When you shop at Ziggys Fresh, show your membership card and you will be given the discount.

Ziggys Fresh is one of Canberra's oldest fruit market stores and the longest-running fruit and veg shop at the Fyshwick Fresh Food Markets.

Goodwill Wines

When you order wine from Goodwill Wines, 50% of the profits from your order will go to your selected charity. You can select ACT Wildlife as your selected charity.

Goodwill Wines have raised \$504,822 for Australian charities so far.

Orders can be placed here goodwillwine.com.au/

Kindpeople

The vision of Kindpeople is to create garments that deliver kindness around the world. Their guiding principles are kindness, generosity and love for all.

They pledge to donate \$5 from every garment sold to a charity and have generously included ACT Wildlife as one of their charities.

Visit their website www.kindpeople.au/

ACTW Container Deposit Scheme

ACT Wildlife is now a preferred charity for the ACT Container Deposit Scheme. You can now drop a bag of 10c bottles or cans at depots across Canberra and donate directly and easily to ACTW. Just use the touch screen to select "Donate" and then select the ACTW logo. It is as simple as that! Spread the word!



Puffins and Pufflings by Marg Peachey

Recently I was lucky enough to do a tour of Newfoundland. It is part of the Newfoundland and Labrador province of Canada. Situated at the far east of Canada it is closer to Ireland than Vancouver.

My highlight was seeing Puffins. We saw them on an offshore island (Gull Island) near Witless Bay. The island is a sanctuary and no one is able to land there. The hillsides have many burrows that currently have 'pufflings' in them. The burrows are about 1.75 metres long. What other birds nest in burrows?



I was expecting puffins to be larger than they actually are (a bit like penguins) but they are small birds, a bit like a fat magpie. Their colourful beaks are only like that in the breeding season. Puffins mate for life and have an average lifespan of 25 years.



Photo from PBS Nature

Puffins spend most of the year on, in and over the ocean. They meet their partners at the same place they were born every breeding season. They are found all over the north Atlantic. Once they mate both puffins share incubation of their egg and caring for their single chick. Incubation is 36-45 days and the chick does not leave the burrow for a further 38-44 days.

It is interesting that the adults feed the chicks until they are ready to fledge. Then the adults give their chick a huge feed of fish and then fly away and spend the rest of the year somewhere else over water. The chicks come out of the

burrow when they are hungry and fly off over the water and know what to do to feed themselves. It seems amazing to me that they just know!

Puffins feed on small fish like herrings and can hold many fish in their beaks. They fly extremely fast over the water, roughly 80km/hr and flap at about 400 beats per minute.

If you visit interesting wildlife places and would like to share your experience in the next newsletter, contact Heather at newsletters@actwildlife.net

Stop Press: Email from the President.

Recently our President emailed members urgently calling for more carers. The email is reprinted here with permission.

As the days warm up (finally), our wildlife are on the move, babies of most species increase in numbers and of course, people and pets are out and about much more.

According to our records (Roster) we currently have approx. 82 Carers of which only 26 are bird carers and 20 are possum carers (NB: some carers do multiple species). These two species (birds and possums) are consistently the highest cases that need rescuing, transporting and rehabilitation.

If you have been considering volunteering as a Carer, we would like to encourage you to attend the training for the species you are interested in most and contact the Species Coordinator so they can buddy you up with an experienced Carer.

You don't have to do this full-time or for months-on-end, but we will need as much of your help during October 2023 to March 2024. There are several opportunities for Transporters (contained animals) and Phone Operators for those who prefer to not be hands on.

Please check the training calendar to register for upcoming training on courses for Birds, Wombats, Phones, Rescue and more. <https://actwildlife.net/training-calendar/>

Thank you for helping our wildlife in any capacity you are most comfortable and able to provide.

