

ACT Wildlife

Winter 2024

NEWSLETTER

Contents

[Message from the President](#)

[End of Financial Year](#)

[Joan McKay](#)

[Exhibition](#)

[Bird Perches](#)

[Calling all Members!!](#)

[Australian Wildlife](#)

[Rehabilitation](#)

[Conference](#)

[Events](#)

[A Day in the Life of a Volunteer](#)

[Does my Bat look Fat this Season?](#)

[Stephen and Gordon](#)

[Sponsors](#)

Message from the President

Yuma Native Wildlifers

Whilst I am unable to confirm our funding position from the ACT Government grant, I am confident that the funding will be forthcoming. This funding will secure our staff at Jerrabomberra Wetlands, and the potential to advance the work to engage dedicated wildlife veterinarian services. The committee are all on the edge of our chairs waiting for the announcement expected in late June 2024.

The ACT Government is currently conducting a 10-year review of the [Nature Conservation Act 2014](#) and I encourage anyone interested in the protection of native plants, animals and the landscape to 'have your say' on how well the ACT has achieved its objectives over the past decade.

Our license to take, rehabilitate and release wildlife from the ACT environment has been updated with two minor changes. Primarily, Clause 12 relating to the installation of nesting boxes for brushtail possums across Canberra Nature Reserves, has been removed. Secondly, wombat release locations will now need to be reported regularly. A new Possum Release policy was tabled in the May 2024 Committee meeting and will be released in June as part of a strategy seeking for ACTW to be exempted from the latest Government position on the protection of Reserves.

We are still short of a few roles, including an Events Coordinator, Macropod Coordinator, Fundraising Chair, and assistant coordinators across most species. If you are interested and would like to find out more please contact the secretary@actwildlife.net.

Until an Events Coordinator is appointed, ACTW can still run events, so if there's an upcoming event you are keen on, I encourage you to nominate yourself as the coordinator for that one event. Also, please consider nominating for any of the roles available.

Finally, please make sure you take care of yourself over the coming cold months and reach out if you need support. On behalf of the Committee, I thank the work and effort carried out by our volunteers every day, every night and all year round.



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.

End of Financial Year

ACT Wildlife receives more than 10,000 calls annually to its wildlife rescue hotline from the community seeking help and advice for injured, displaced or orphaned native animals.

Thank you for your membership contribution which ensures our unique wildlife has ongoing rapid rescue, expert care and the best chance to return to the wild.

ACT Wildlife relies on donations to help pay for our annual operating costs and to supplement expensive veterinary medications, equipment and food bills.

For the upcoming end of financial year (EOFY) 2023-2024, please consider donating to ACT Wildlife for a fully tax-deductible end of financial year transaction.

This can easily be made through our website actwildlife.net/donate/ or through the QR code below.

Donate QR Code



Joan McKay Exhibition

Touched by our fauna

22 May to 16 June, 2024

Artist and ACT Wildlife carer, Joan McKay, will be exhibiting her work at Strathnairn Gallery, Homestead 2 from 22 May to 16 June 2024. Joan's exhibition is of local wildlife rendered on scratchboards. The delicate work of birds, wallabies and many other species are beautifully crafted. Find out more here www.strathnairn.com.au/joan-mckay-2024

joanmck.weebly.com

instagram.com/joanmck31

Snowy' (right) was created from a reference photo Joan took of Snowy found orphaned near Brayshaws Hut in Namadgi. The bare trees in the background symbolise finding food in the wild. They are the tiny sprigs of ironbark eucalyptus she left near her food bowl after eating the leaves.



Joan McKay 2023 "Ironbark Snowy" scratchboard.

Bird Perches

Our bird carers are very low on perches for their babies. These bird perches are used in cages when transporting birds and help them stay upright. They need to be made from old branches, no splinters or dangerous things & should fit into carry cages.

If you can help in making perches, contact Denise Kay at denisekay49@gmail.com or Marg Peachey at margpeachey@gmail.com



Calling all Members!!

During the winter months, despite the cold and shorter days, we still receive many calls to rescue wildlife in distress. The staff at our Jerrabomberra office are often overwhelmed with calls and rescues and reach out to members to assist.

If you have completed our Phone and/ or Rescue and Transport training, please consider volunteering especially during the hours when the office is not staffed. Answering the phone is a great way to connect with the public and educate them in the handling of wildlife. It's also a great way to learn about our amazing wildlife from any of the coordinators who are only too willing to give advice if you don't know an answer to a question.

Rescue and Transport are vital to our organisation. If a call is received about an animal in distress and no one is able to rescue or transport it, it will continue to suffer.

If you would like to volunteer but have not completed the training, find out the dates of our next training on our [Training Calendar](#).

Please consider doing a Phone or Rescue and Transport shift even if you can only do an hour or two, it will make a world of difference to an animal in distress.

The roster can be found [here](#) or you can contact the Phone Coordinator at phone@actwildlife.net or the Rescue and Transport Coordinator at transport@actwildlife.net



Events

Volunteer Expo

This year's Volunteer Expo was held on May 18 in the University of Canberra Refectory and was well attended by many members of the public looking for opportunities to volunteer.

ACT Wildlife had a table looked after by volunteers who gave up their Saturday morning or afternoon and we thank them for volunteering.

There were many people who took information sheets and eight who signed up for more information. This is a positive sign despite the economic pressures on individuals and families at present.



Tracey McNicol, Deb Thomas and Denise Kay looking after the table.

Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference



Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation
CONFERENCE INC

the work we do to keep our precious wildlife safe.

All members are invited to attend to hear about the latest work being done by carers, vets and scientists around Australia. ACT Wildlife is also looking for volunteers to help coordinate the conference. It will be held over three days in August (dates to be confirmed). If you would like to assist in any way, please contact Marg Peachey at margpeachey@gmail.com.

Find out about the last conference here www.awrc.org.au/perth-2023.html

The Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference (AWRC) is held every second year and in 2025, ACT Wildlife will be hosting the conference in Canberra. This is a great opportunity to show to the public and local politicians

A Day in the Life of a Volunteer

Denise Kay

In 2024 I became a committee member, again. I have been an ACT Wildlife member since the 1st November 2013 and an early committee member. I am member number 5.

Why did I join ACTW?

To give back to my community, specifically our wildlife community. I was born in the ACT on the Molongolo in 1949. My father & grandmother infused me with respect for our unique Australian wildlife found in the backyard and beyond.

After joining ACTW did your main expectation change?

Yes, I became a bird carer with RSPCA in 2009 and continued onto ACTW in 2013. As a founding member of ACTW it enabled me to follow the passion to defend, repair or raise orphan birds.

Flying foxes started to become an entanglement issue and we had to remove injured Flying foxes from fruit tree netting and look after Flying fox pups. I vaccinated myself against the bat Lyssavirus and when our first Flying fox coordinator left Canberra, I took over.

A typical day in the life of a wildlife carer in the ACT

There are no typical days when there can be nothing or there can be absolute disaster or absolute satisfaction.

A hailstorm on 20/01/20 demolished the Flying fox colony in Commonwealth Park. This was the most horrendous experience. Broken bodies, broken babies we (ARH vets came in first then the ACT Government vets), euthanised more than 300 Grey Headed Flying foxes and a spatter of Little Red Flying foxes. On the day we took into care more than 50 pups and nearly 40 injured adults. For the weeks following, our dedicated and diligent Flying fox carers rescued and cleaned up the lingering injured from one end of town to the other. Our volunteers sourced food and chopped fruit for the bats in care. A 'village' in action if there ever was one.

The highlight is far more practical than emotional. Fruit Tree netting legislation is now in place and with supporting penalties. The success of this legislation is owned and should be celebrated by the many people involved. It started with Lindy who received and acted on the original proposal from Lawrence Pope (Bats and Bush care Victoria) to the Greens members of the Legislative Assembly Clay and Vanessa Vassaroti. Lindy handed down the proposal to me and from there we had many meetings with the Department of Environment (EPSDD) thrashing out grants and developing the whole net swap process. The inaugural meetings started in late 2021; Dorothy, Marg, Sandra, Susan, Clare & myself to blossom into the fabulous system we now have in place and into the future sustained by Clare, Stephen, Dorothy and Ingrid. We have a lot to be proud of.

What makes you happiest when volunteering?

Releasing rehabilitated animals back into their habitat safely.

What lessons has volunteering with ACTW given you?

Volunteering for ACT Wildlife has taught me patience with people (with animals it is infinite). I can hear some people laugh but it has. We have some fabulous and dedicated people in our organisation, varied and diverse. Our volunteers are sensitive and tough, we are strong but vulnerable, and they should be celebrated and supported.



Does my Bat look Fat this Season?

by Ingrid Singh

Hello Nature lovers!

You'll have noticed winter has arrived, so we should let you know some facts about microbats that will help you look out for them in the cold season environment. By the time you get this it will be coming up to the cold winter (Magarawangga in Ngunnawal language). Microbats are not normally out and about at this time, instead they are in a torpor, which is a state where their bodies slow down and they 'sleep'.



Occasionally on warmer winter nights, bats will wake up and fly around but they will then return to torpor until spring. When it is below 7 degrees Celcius overnight, it is unusual to see a bat.

Sometimes you might disturb torpid 'sleeping' bats in a winter clean up, or when moving firewood. If you can, leave the item they are sleeping in undisturbed. The bats should move on in springtime when the weather warms up, when there are more flying insects available for them to eat. If you would like some advice about this, ACT Wildlife volunteers might be able to assist.

If you do see a bat in a state of torpor (sleeping) outdoors in the daytime in this period, please call for a rescuer or carer to collect it, as it is in the wrong place and won't be able to hide itself from predators. Remember never to handle it yourself, only trained, Australian bat lyssavirus (ABLV) vaccinated handlers may touch bats. While ABLV is a disease that is rare even among bats, it is transmitted by bites or scratches. By not handling the bat yourself, you will stay completely safe.

I've included a picture of some microbats that were recently relocated into a batbox from the place they had chosen for their torpor, a dartboard! We have had several calls over the years from people who found a wonderful surprise when bats have moved into their dartboards: a nice secure hollow to hide in, until games night arrives... If you are interested in providing homes for microbats, the best thing you can do is plant a large eucalypt that will form the hollows of the future. If you can't do that, there are some bat box ideas available from the [Australasian Bat Society](#)

Dealing with these bats, I found a handy tip for carers. To help me keep records, I photographed each of the group and recorded their weight in the metadata for the photo. That way, I could tell them apart and avoid mixing up the weights for each bat.

If you want to learn more about Australian microbats, please look for local resources like the Australasian Bat Society. Information from other countries will usually not be applicable to Australian bats.

[See next page for more photos.](#)

Happy wildcaring until next time!



Photos of some of the Chalinolobus gouldii from the dartboard. These are all the same species and look very similar when you see them with your own eye but because of how they were photographed, it would be easy to think they are different species.



CHIVES

Carer Janine in Bomaderry called ACT Wildlife to say she had rescued a large male grey-headed flying-fox weighing a great 917gms! He had ventured into her aviary to find some fruit and she was able to close the door, so she could assess him. He is in good condition other than a growth on his neck. So he's off to Sydney for vet care.



His band identifies him as Chives, an orphan that was raised in Canberra in late 2018 and then sent to creche and released into the Bomaderry camp in January 2019. We are unable to identify which carer raised him, but hopefully you're reading this story. It's wonderful that he made it through the black summer and has been successfully pollinating our native trees all this time.

Get well Chives.

Stephen and Gordon

by Stephen Bartos

As overnight temperatures drop, Canberra's flying foxes leave for warmer parts of the country. Fewer numbers in the camp mean fewer rescues, but they are still happening. Two recent rescues were of Stephen and Gordon.

Stephen (named that by the members of the public who called ACTW) was rescued from a fifth-floor apartment in Dickson. The couple who lived in the apartment noticed their cat meowing and prowling in an unusual way. They investigated and found a bat clinging to the back of the TV.



This family keep their cat indoors (excellent!) but open the balcony door for it to get fresh air. What must have happened is Stephen accidentally flew into the apartment the night before and could not work out how to escape. He was a young bat, new to flying – youngsters can get confused and frightened – and this was obviously a problem he'd never experienced before.

He was taken from behind the TV, wrapped up warmly, given subcutaneous fluids and glucose water to drink.

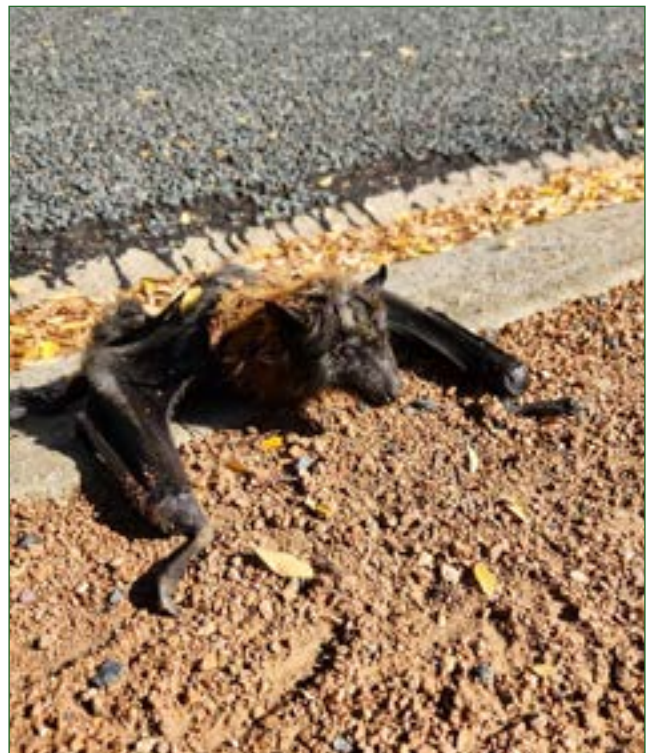
After a few days in care, he had fully recovered from his big adventure, eating fruit and behaving like a proper bat.

In the meantime, he'd become a media star. Evan Croker dubbed him a "flying Foxtel" – and the name caught on. He was featured on Facebook, ABC radio and other social media – with a number of social media commenters vowing to check behind their televisions from now on.

Our second flying fox had a much harder time. Rescuer John Bosch collected him off the ground in the Tuggeranong suburb of Gordon.

He was not in a good way. Little Gordon (named after his suburb) had been electrocuted. He had burns to both wings down the length of his major bones – that's how electrocution burns present themselves in bats. Moreover, he was blinded by ulcers in both eyes, had burned his furry trousers, and the tips of his ears were crisped.

[continued next page](#)



[continued from previous page](#)

When he first came into care he could not eat and survived on glucose water at first, and lay on a sling rather than hanging. Gradually Clare introduced him to nutritious fruit smoothies (fruit yoghurt, protein powder and juice) and soft pawpaw, patiently hand feeding him every few hours. It was a super day when he worked out how to lap up his smoothie for himself.

Gordon though was determined to survive. After another week he was strong enough to hang for some time each day and was eating more soft fruit.

We treated his wounds every day, gave him analgesics for the pain, and put ointment on his wing membrane and burned extremities. Amazingly, he kept his ears – the outer layer was burnt and came off but there was enough ear tissue left to regrow. Clare did much of the work of medicating him, but the whole family helped.

Slowly he got better, regaining some of his sight and miraculously turning into a bright eyed and bushy tailed (ruffed?) flying-fox with some attitude. After 3 weeks in care Gordon was well enough to go to Sydney to be with a larger group of young bats and prepare for release.



At this time of year we send bats to Sydney for several reasons: flying foxes are much happier in a large group; a warmer climate helps them recuperate better; and they are generally still weak from their trauma, so it's harder for them to fly with the other bats when the last few in the Canberra camp finally decide to move to the coast.

Gordon and Stephen are now happily roosting with other juvenile bats in a release aviary before being released to a suitable camp in Sydney or northern NSW.

If you see a bat on it's own in the daytime, it may need help. Please don't touch the bat and give us a call immediately on

0432 300 033

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



Sponsors

Ziggys Fresh 10% Discount

[Ziggys Fresh](#) are providing 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/

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!

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/

Stop Press

There is an Important New Koala Documentary screening at Canberra's Dendy Cinema on the 20th of June. The Koala documentary is being released around Australia in June 2024.

A small part of the koala documentary was filmed in the Canberra Region, about 100km south of Canberra (Peak View NSW) & north of Braidwood rescuing koalas from the Black Summer Bushfires and Australian National University koala research.

The link below takes you to a trailer for the New Koala Documentary <https://vimeo.com/934663581>

You can book tickets to the Dendy Canberra screening via the below link <https://canberra.dendy.com.au/checkout/showing/the-koalas/363059>

