

ACT Wildlife

Summer 2023

NEWSLETTER

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Message from the President

It's been exciting to see how many interactions ACT Wildlife volunteers are having with the community over the past three months.

The amazing effort delivered by our Events Coordinators has provided much needed exposure for ACT Wildlife through community stalls and events. Debra Thomas has done a wonderful job and has managed to get many of our volunteers rallying behind her. My sincere gratitude to Deb and all our volunteers who have supported her. If you would like to help out, please contact Deb on events@actwildlife.net as we could all do with more help as more events are coming up.



Yana del Valle

A draft discussion paper for securing Wildlife dedicated veterinarian services in the ACT was submitted to the Resilient Landscapes, EPSDD Environment, Heritage & Water Division for the 2024 budget consideration. We hope to hear back in the new year. Thank you to Lindy Butcher and Vanessa Barratt, for their efforts and contributions on the paper, and Jane Whyte for background research on Community vets.

ACT Wildlife has been invited to participate in the Kangaroo Management Plan review which will be held on 5 December. Tara Ward and I will be attending on behalf of ACT Wildlife.

On 1 February 2024, new model rules for incorporated associations will become effective. The new model rules include new provisions for dispute resolution; clearer provisions for disciplinary proceedings; clearer descriptions of roles of committee members; amongst other changes. To review the full list of changes you can obtain the new model rules at: <https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/sl/2023-25>

There are several roles available for consideration in both the operational and species care fields. The first round asking for candidates from active volunteers has been completed. If you are interested in volunteering for any of these roles or to find out more, please send your request to secretary@actwildlife.net email address.

The Strategic Plan has taken a back seat momentarily to deal with other priorities. Progress on the Mills Oakley recommendations has several documents, including

[continued next page](#)

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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policies, now in draft and we hope to share with you in the new year for feedback.

Our organisation is going through change and with this change stress will be experienced by some. I ask all members who have concerns to reach out to the Committee and suggest ways to make the process smoother.

The unpredictable weather has provided no relief for our carers and rescuers. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to extend my gratitude to all our volunteers, your effort and dedication is beyond appreciation. Thank you so very much one and all.

Yana del Valle

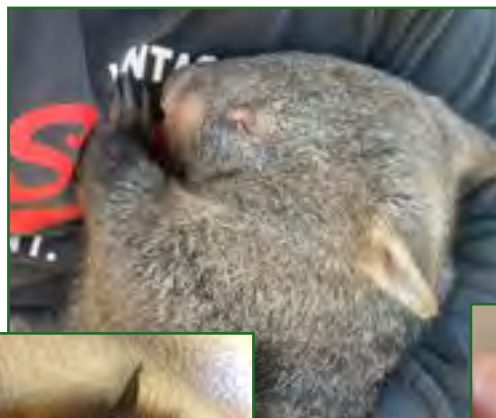


Membership Renewal for 2024



Members can now renew their membership for 2024 on the website. Follow this link [Membership Renewal 2024](#) | [ACT Wildlife](#) and complete the form by 1 January 2024. A new password will be issued to renewing members for access to the Member login portal on the website. The new password will be in effect from 1 January 2024.

We are very grateful to all our 2023 members and trust you will renew for 2024. We could not rescue, rehabilitate or release our beautiful wildlife without your support.



Ten Year Celebrations

This year ACT Wildlife (ACTW) celebrated 10 years of rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing wildlife in the ACT.

Throughout those 10 years we have maintained a 24/7 hotline for members of the public to report injured, sick or orphaned wildlife. We have now answered over 92,900 phone calls and for the first five years, all phone calls were answered by volunteers. In 2018 we employed our first phone operator and today we now have four employed phone operators. The numbers of calls has increased exponentially as more members of the public learn about how we can help.

The numbers of animals brought into care over the last ten years has been over 21,280 and continues to grow. All our carers are volunteers and give up their time to feed, clean and medicate animals in their care.

During December our Events Coordinator, Deb Thomas organised a celebration at Lennox Gardens which was attended by many of our current members. It was a great opportunity to connect with other members and celebrate the extraordinary achievement of the small group of committed individuals who met in 2013 to discuss the idea of an ACT dedicated wildlife organisation.

Congratulations to ACTW and with your help, we hope to continue growing for another 10 years at least!



Top left: Stephen Bartos, Vice President and Marg Peachey, addressing the attendees.

Top right: Deb Thomas and Tracey McNicol, who organised the celebrations.

Right: Members who attended the celebrations.

December 5 was International Volunteer Day



According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Aussies spend 1 hour 34 minutes a day volunteering.

ACT Wildlife recognises that our volunteers go above and beyond that number regularly and we are deeply grateful to all our amazing volunteers on call for the wildlife of Canberra and our team.

We could not do what we do without all of you and want to extend our warmest thank you to the carers, the phone operators, the rescuers, transporters, food transporters, browse and grass collectors, events team, marketing team, website and IT team, finance team, calendar team, fundraising team and all involved in keeping this organisation going strong.

We could not do

Possum Care at Jerra: We need your help!

ACT Wildlife now has more possums than our carers have aviaries, and 6 possums currently reside on site at our Jerra Headquarters at Dairy Road. Have you taken our possum care course but don't have the time or space to care for possums at home? This is a great opportunity to start down the possum care path!

It just requires stopping by Dairy Road in the evening to change water, fruit and browse and clean up old fruit that has dropped. Debra, Stephanie or Amanda can meet you the first time to walk you through if necessary. Link to the sign-up as follows:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/14ZjO8Bb9U-a6FdB3xeKj_lTgDwW9Q1eeyg8OgxfTqA/edit?usp=sharing



Flying-foxes in Canberra

Flying-foxes are a type of bat. The four species on Australia's mainland are Australia's largest bats, sociable vegetarians who mainly eat native fruit and blossom.

The grey-headed flying-fox is the one we see most commonly in the ACT. It is a keystone species for Australia's ecology, flying up to 100 kilometres a night to pollinate native forests. Many eucalypts rely entirely on them. Due to habitat loss and climate change flying fox numbers have declined and they are now listed as a vulnerable species.

In the ACT we are lucky enough to have a large seasonal camp of these important native animals in Commonwealth Park. It's seasonal because they are smart – they fly off to northern NSW or Queensland to escape the cold of the Canberra winter (although there was one year where a few hardy bats stayed on all through winter).

Flying-foxes start returning to the camp in September or October.

This year they have arrived in record numbers.

Volunteers from the Australasian Bat Society counted 6,139 flying foxes in the camp on 3rd December, up from more than 4,500 in mid-November. If the trend continues we will break new records when the camp population peaks in March next year.

The influx of flying-foxes has posed challenges for ACT Wildlife rescuers and volunteers.

We started November with a manageable number of three flying-foxes in care. But during November flying foxes started dropping out of the sky (literally) all over Canberra. Fifty-four flying foxes came into care, most of them pups.

The orphan pups were either found on the ground or with electrocuted mothers on power lines.

Mums and pups fly out at night, so the mum can forage for food. The pup hangs on for dear life, digging sharp claws into mum's thick tummy fur as she flies through the sky. Unfortunately, a pup can sometimes lose their grip and fall off. If the mum can't find them, they become an orphan.

Members of the public who have found pups on the ground have called ACTW so the pups can come into care.

If a mother and pup hit a power line, almost always the mother dies but sometimes her pup will survive. These also come into care.

The number of electrocutions is also at record highs – for reasons that are not entirely clear. ACTW has contacted Evo energy to see if we can share our statistics and work out a strategy for reducing the number of flying fox electrocution deaths.

We have a limited number of carers due to the requirement for carers to be vaccinated against rabies. The flying foxes don't carry rabies, but a very similar disease called Australian Bat Lyssavirus (ABLV).

ABLV is very rare – according to Wildlife Health Australia the prevalence among flying foxes is less than 1% - but dangerous. The WHA factsheet says that since the disease was discovered there have been three cases of ABLV disease in humans following a bite or scratch from a bat, all of which have been fatal. Vaccination is a sensible precaution.

Unfortunately, there is a long wait time for rabies vaccines in Australia at present, which means people who want to become carers can't start immediately. But if there are former flying fox carers reading this who would like to help, please get in touch.

Similarly, there may be ACTW members who have a rabies vaccination but are not identified as bat carers. If that's you, we can organise training and help you get set up for caring.

Net Swap Program Update

The ACT Government provided ACT Wildlife with a grant of \$25,000 for us to swap households' unsuitable netting with wildlife safe netting.

The Net Swap program has been very successful! As of Saturday 28 October, 259 households from Canberra had participated in the net swap and received a total of 1113 nets from us (each 4mx4m).

There are no further net swap calendar dates set at this time, however demand still exists, and we expect netting legislation will be passed later this month. We expect that media about the ban may create some demand.

Due to the increasing number of flying foxes and pups in care, Clare Wynter is stepping down as the Net Swap Coordinator and we need a new person to coordinate swaps, organise the roster and rally the troops! If you could help us organise Net Swaps in 2024 starting the end of January please contact Clare Wynter at bats@actwildlife.net.

You would be doing our wildlife a huge service.



Safe Netting for Wildlife

**Is fruit netting absolutely necessary?
How much produce is harvested?
How much is wasted?**

Consider sharing and enjoying the visiting wildlife to your garden.

Flying foxes and native birds are particularly prone to entanglement in netting. They can become so entangled that they can no longer fly and have to be euthanased. The grey-headed flying-fox is protected under the Commonwealth Environment & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Flying foxes and native birds are also protected in the ACT under the Nature Conservation Strategy 2014. ACT abides by the Animal Welfare Act of 1992.

Flying foxes and native birds are a keystone species in the Australian environment they play an important role in keeping our ecosystem healthy. They pollinate flowers and disperse seeds as they forage on nectar and pollen of eucalypts, melaleucas & banksias and the fruits of forest trees and vines.



These two examples show how to correctly place netting over trees so wildlife cannot enter.

Before you put up any netting follow these guidelines:

- Don't put netting on until the fruit has been fertilised.
- Before covering the trees make sure there are no holes in the nets stored from last year.
- Some examples of preferred fruit tree netting with an aperture 5mmx5mm / 70GSM fully stretched as in the photos below.
- Netting needs to be tied tightly around the trunk or over a frame and if nets are sewn together make sure there are no gaps.
- Gaps must be smaller than being able to put your finger through.



This example show BAD netting, the gaps are too large and a finger can pass through.

Three good nets which pass the 'finger test':

		
Fruitsaver 2 sizes for small or medium trees	Hail Guard Off 6m roll	Veg net 2 sizes, 6m x 10m and 6m x 20m

For more information or advice contact ACT Wildlife Inc. on **0432 300 033** or visit our website www.actwildlife.net

WARNING:
Do not attempt to cut wildlife from the netting, call ACT Wildlife on **0432 300 033**. Our volunteers are vaccinated and trained in rescuing flying-foxes, birds and snakes. If someone is bitten or scratched by a flying-fox, thoroughly wash the site and contact your doctor immediately.

Download this brochure from the website here
<https://actwildlife.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Safe-netting-for-Wildlife.pdf>

New Merchandise and Events

With the significant increase in the number of public events ACT Wildlife attends, it is an opportunity to not just increase our exposure but to expand our range of saleable merchandise to raise much needed funds to support our mission. Since September we have made \$4,800!

Through December we have a few great opportunities leading up to the festive season.

- RSPCA Shelter Christmas Market (Weston) – Friday 8 December
- Westfield Belconnen community engagement stall for Christmas shoppers – Saturday 9 December
- Westfield Belconnen gift wrapping stand – Sunday 17 December

We are excited to expand our merchandise beyond the great new t-shirts and caps. We now have a large range of native animal soft toys. We had noticed during previous events many people wanting to buy the toys we had on our stand as decoration.

Leading up to Christmas is a great time to trial what is popular. It can help build future generations of those who fondly remember their childhood toy that started their love of native wildlife.



A selection of beautiful toys available for sale on our stands.



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 – selling fast!

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 (see below) who we thank for their support.

2024 Sponsors			
January <u>Avcorp Solutions</u>	February Patricia Abbott (Private Sponsor)	March <u>Capital Chemist Curtin</u>	April <u>KPMG</u>
May <u>Australian International Student Tours</u>	June <u>Mindbox</u>	July <u>Manteena</u>	August <u>Wildtalk</u>
September <u>Trove Canberra</u>	October <u>Catalan Group</u>	November <u>Canberra Granny Flat Builders</u>	December <u>Mista PR</u>



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.

Left: The 2024 calendar cover.

Wildlife Raffle

[Aarwun Gallery](#) and award winning pastel artist [Janet Thatcher](#) have teamed with ACT Wildlife to raise funds.

Janet Thatcher donated an original artwork in a raffle. The artwork (right) is of Rose, the beautiful brushtail possum who is the 'cover girl' for our 2024 calendar. Rose's story can be found on the 2024 calendar. The artwork was created especially for ACT Wildlife to raise much needed funds.

Janet's art has been exhibited at Aarwun Gallery throughout December. Tickets can be purchased here <https://aarwungallery.com.au/online-gallery/p/suj7kjsslbdos96hq07uqlwjl9jt0>



Training

Training is an essential part of ACT Wildlife and without it we could not care for wildlife in the ACT.

This year has seen a resurgence of people registering for our training. This is due to members of the public hearing of the work we do and also the easing of Covid restrictions.

Most attendees came to the two free training days, Orientation and Phone and Transport. Orientation is a prerequisite before anyone is able to volunteer with us so it is encouraging to see most of the numbers here.

The species training are paid days and are run by our species coordinators. The money raised from the paid training assists in paying the rent at Duffy.

Training is a commitment coordinators take on as part of their role as coordinator. The number of training sessions conducted this year was 42 on weekends and nights for Wildman training between February and November. Over 10 months this is an average of almost four sessions per month.

We extend our thanks to all our coordinators for the amazing job they do and the effort they put into contributing to training ACTW members and interested members of the public.

Following are the attendee numbers for this years' training:

Orientation	8 sessions	99 attendees
Phone and Transport	6 sessions	43 attendees
Rescue	4 sessions	46 attendees
Basic Birds	3 sessions	47 attendees
Advanced Birds	1 session	8 attendees
Baby Birds	1 session	10 attendees
Basic Bats	1 session	11 attendees
Possums	1 session	11 attendees
Advanced Possums	1 session	8 attendees
Reptiles	2 sessions	24 attendees
Wombats	2 sessions	33 attendees
Wildman Phone and Animals	12 sessions	77 ATTENDEES
TOTAL	42 SESSIONS	417 ATTENDEES



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!



Wishing you a safe and happy holiday season.

