



**ACT Wildlife**

Rescue • Rehabilitate • Release

# 2015 Annual Report

## Message from the President

It has been a challenging year with taking on majority of the wildlife related business from the RSPCA and TAMS. Access Canberra (formally Canberra Connect) has now diverted all wildlife related calls to us, which has resulted in an increase of 266% of phone calls and 238% increase of animal intake. This is an extraordinary increase for the current number of volunteers we have.

Normally good advice via the phone can reduce the number of animals entering the vet and carer system but unfortunately we will move the increase of workload to our transport people and carers until the phone service issue is addressed. Addressing the lack of volunteers to run an effective service we need to be mindful not to over commit our current volunteers. A main focus next year is to stabilise our volunteer numbers to run an effective phone service.

Our relationship with TAMS is continuing well. We worked together over the Christmas break sharing incoming phone calls. In acknowledgement of our continuing help TAMS funded a business plan to help us prepare to secure government funding. This plan will be utilised in 2016 during the ACT election year to demonstrate our need for government funding and premises.



On a lighter note in November this year I was honoured to accept an award from IFAW. IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) sponsored ACT Wildlife last year and this year acknowledged the hard work we have achieved. IFAW's Animal Action Awards recognises outstanding achievements in the field of animal welfare. Check out the article.

<http://www.ifaw.org/australia/news/canberra-resident-honoured-wildlife-protection-work>

A BIG thank you to volunteers for helping throughout the year!

Yours in caring,

Marg Peachey, President

## Vision

The welfare and biodiversity of native wildlife in the ACT is protected and maintained

## Mission

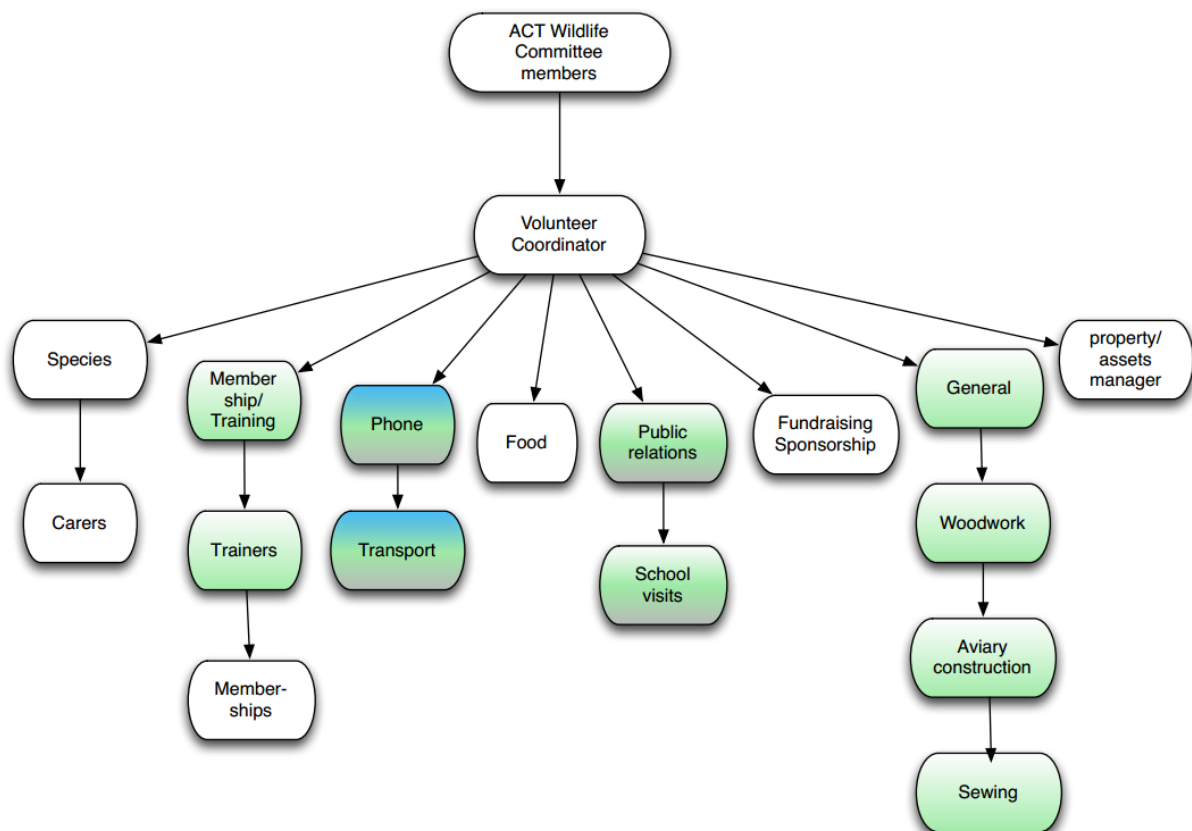
The purpose of ACT Wildlife is to:

- Rescue, rehabilitate and release injured, sick and orphaned native wildlife
- Educate the public about sharing the urban interface with native wildlife
- Provide professional training to carers to ensure a high standard of welfare for wildlife in care.



# ACT Wildlife Structure

The business structure is still under development. Currently the structure is based around coordinators who can focus on one area of the business. Coordinators have the responsibility to ensure their group is running efficiently and to report to the Committee on progress. There are coordinators for species groups in care and coordinators for other volunteering activities. This will be refined as we understand what works and what doesn't work.



## Program Impacts

ACT Wildlife has become well known within the local community. In 2015 we increased the volume of animal intake and phone calls by about 250%! This clearly demonstrates the expectations and demand from the community.

Both TAMS and the RSPCA continue to have interest in ACT Wildlife succeeding. Discussions throughout the year have led to Access Canberra (previously Canberra Connect) diverting all wildlife related phone calls (except for kangaroos/wombats on roads and snakes) to ACT Wildlife. This frees up the RSPCA to concentrate on animal welfare issues and TAMS to concentrate on other ACT conservation needs.

With the combination of RSPCA relinquishing their wildlife intake and TAMS reducing their wildlife duties has meant ACT Wildlife now manages a larger influx of phone calls and animals. Unfortunately, the volunteer capacity ACT Wildlife requires to manage this increase is not yet there. The number of volunteers manning the 24 hour phone and the number of carers to house the animals has not kept up with the demand.

This increase is currently being addressed and may result in a temporary automatic voicemail message during the evening. The message will provide advice to the public or if necessary to take animals to the afterhours Animal Referral Hospital (ARH) in Fyshwick. ARH will call ACT Wildlife the following day to pick up wildlife needing care.

This stresses the need to continue to build capacity within ACT Wildlife to keep up with demand. This includes; training carers and phone operators, having enough people to man the 24/7 helpline and provide a rescue/transport service, as well as fundraising activities to finance our work.

It will probably take another year to realise the full potential of animal intake and a few more years before we have a real appreciation on the level of service we are providing and the scale of support expected by the ACT Community.



## Wildlife Statistics

During 2015 we received 1,916 animals – that's a 238% increase since 2014. Although this sounds like a big increase it is expected we'll receive a further 1,000 animals in 2016. That's a total of nearly 3,000 animals each year!

The number of animals received is directly correlated with the number of phone calls taken each month. The phone calls have risen by 247%, from 350 per month to 800 per month. A comparison between 2014 and 2015 is a 266% increase, from 1407 calls to 5150 calls. The ratio of phone calls answered between day and afterhours has also increased by 205% and 375% respectively since 2014.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 shows the increase between the first two years of operation.

The first half of 2015 is unlikely to represent the number of animals or phone calls we'll expect to receive in early 2016. This is based on the change of roles between the RSPCA and TAMS that commenced in April 2015. Already we've seen an increase of the minimum number of animals in care at any one time from 20 to 70 animals.

During 2015 many different species of wildlife came into care over the last 12 months for many different reasons. The main species being birds (78%), followed by possums (13%) and lizards (4%). These are highlighted in the animal report section.



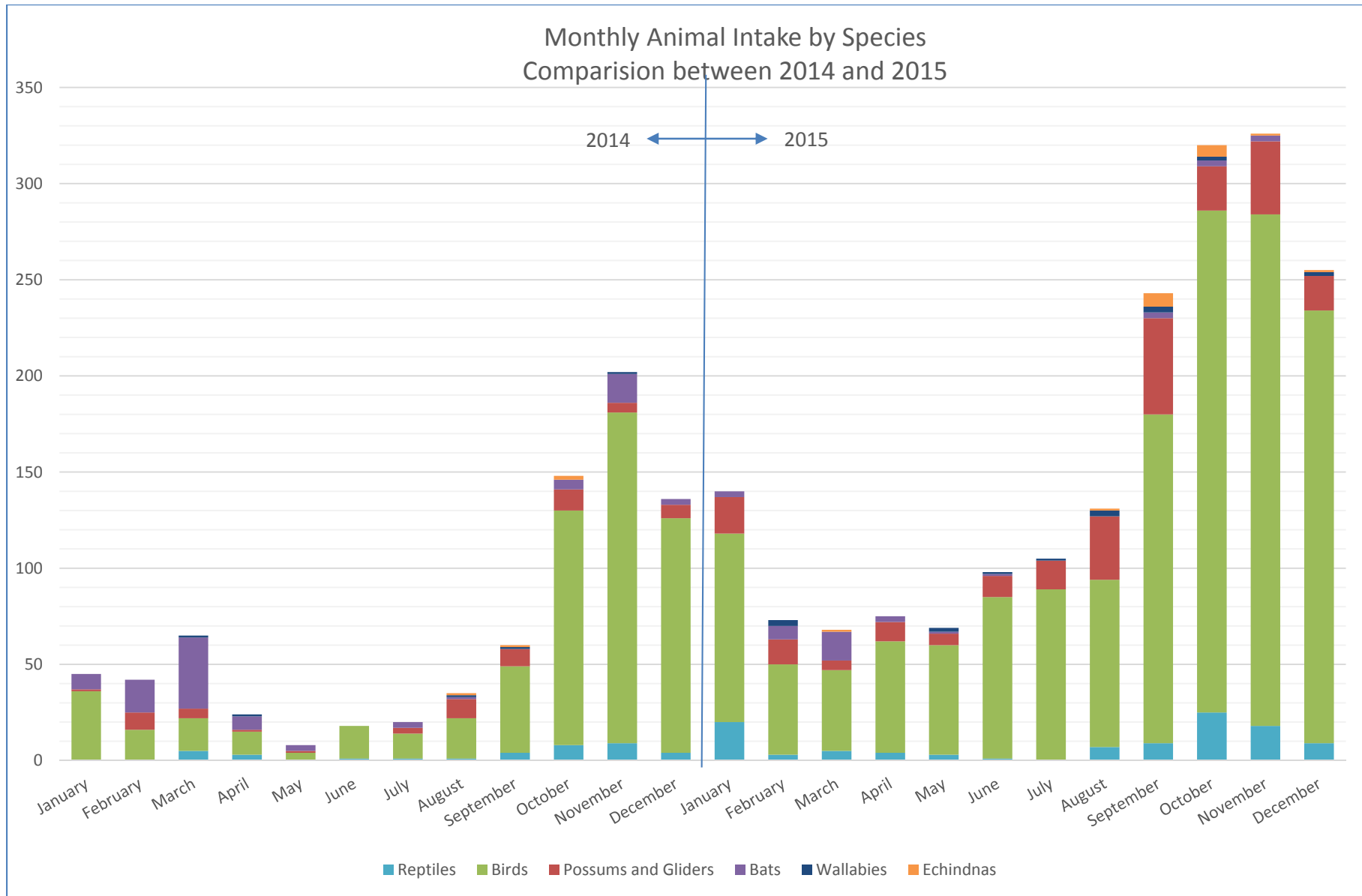


Figure 1: Monthly Comparison between 2014 and 2015 for Animal intake

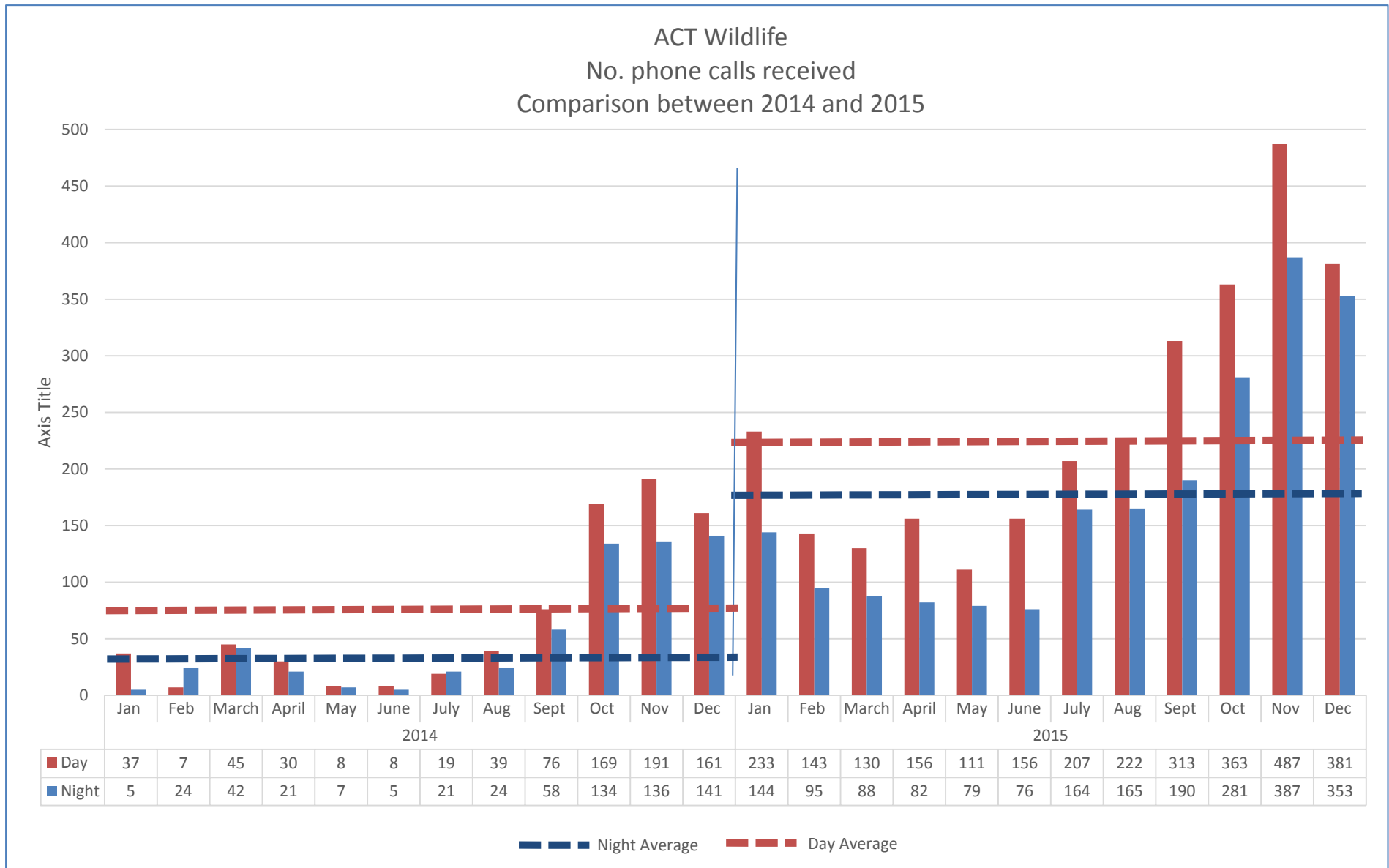
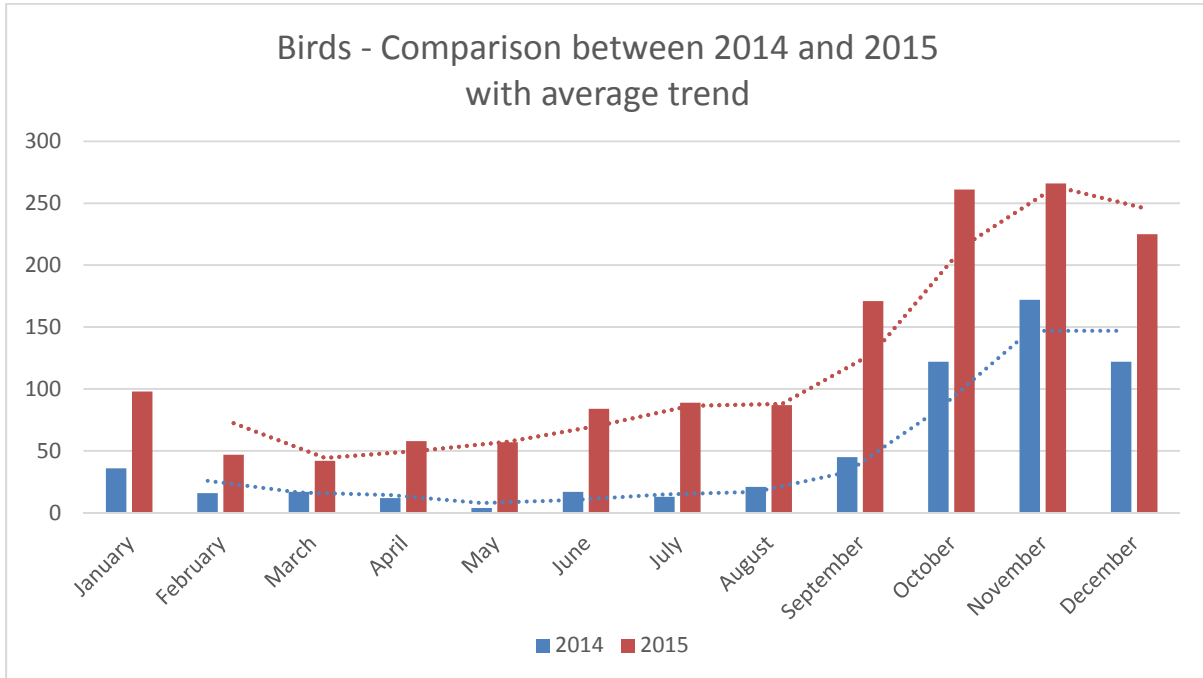


Figure 2: Monthly Comparison between 2014 and 2015 for Phone calls (day and night)

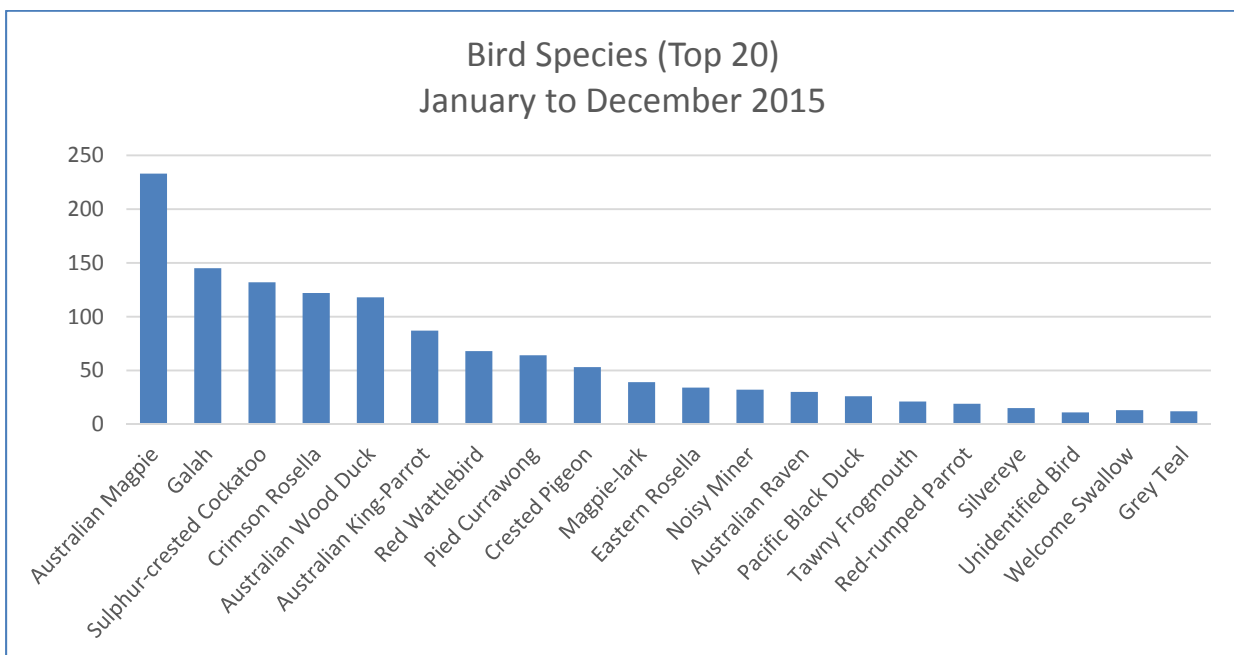


# Birds

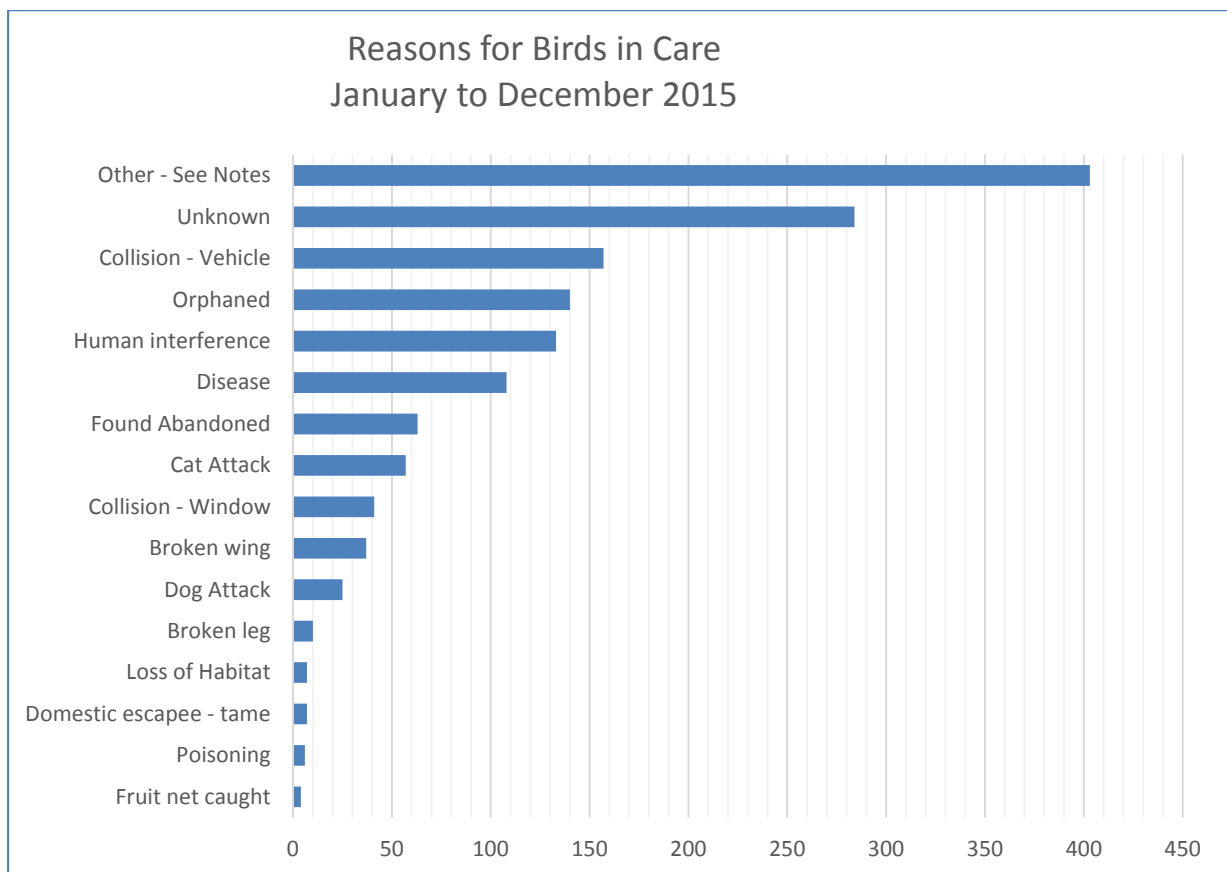
A total of 1,477 birds (89 species) came into care during 2015. This is an astounding 130% increase to birds that came into care during 2014.



The top 10 species in 2015 is the same as the previous year, and are; Australian Magpie (233), Galah (145), Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (132), Crimson Rosella (122), Australian Wood Duck (118), Australian King-Parrot (87), Red Wattlebird (68), Pied Currawong (64), Crested Pigeon (53), Magpie-Lark (39). Below shows the top 20 bird species.



Birds came into care primarily because of; trauma (collisions with cars and windows), attacked by cats and dogs, diseased, or orphaned. The graph below is not entirely accurate with the 'causes'. Once the database has been tailored to suit ACT Wildlife's reporting needs these causes will be more precise. For example, a bird may be reported as coming into care because of a broken leg or wing, but may have also been hit by a car or caught by a dog.

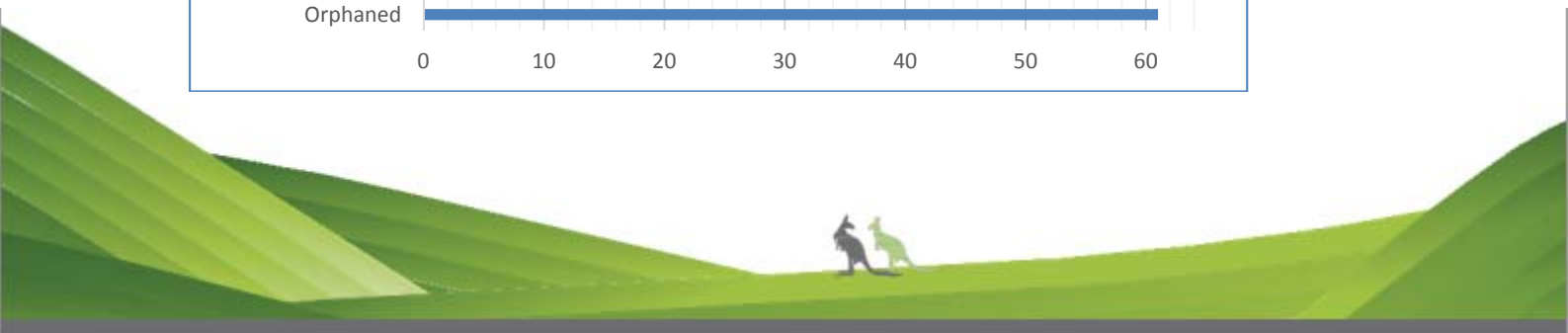
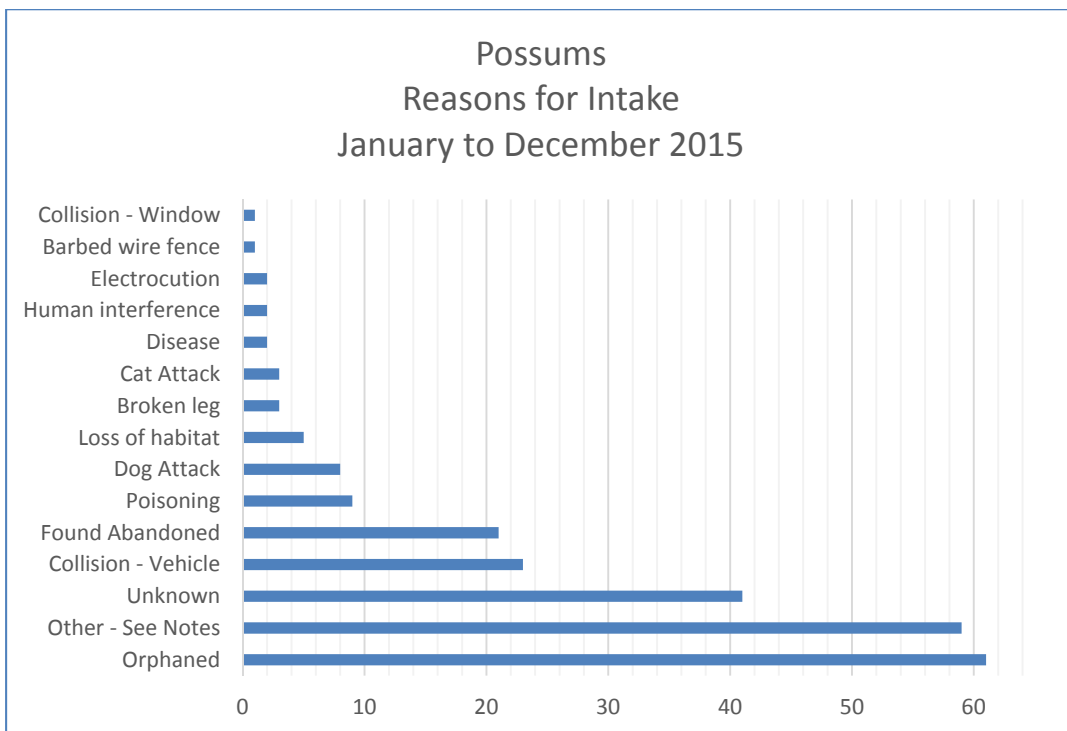
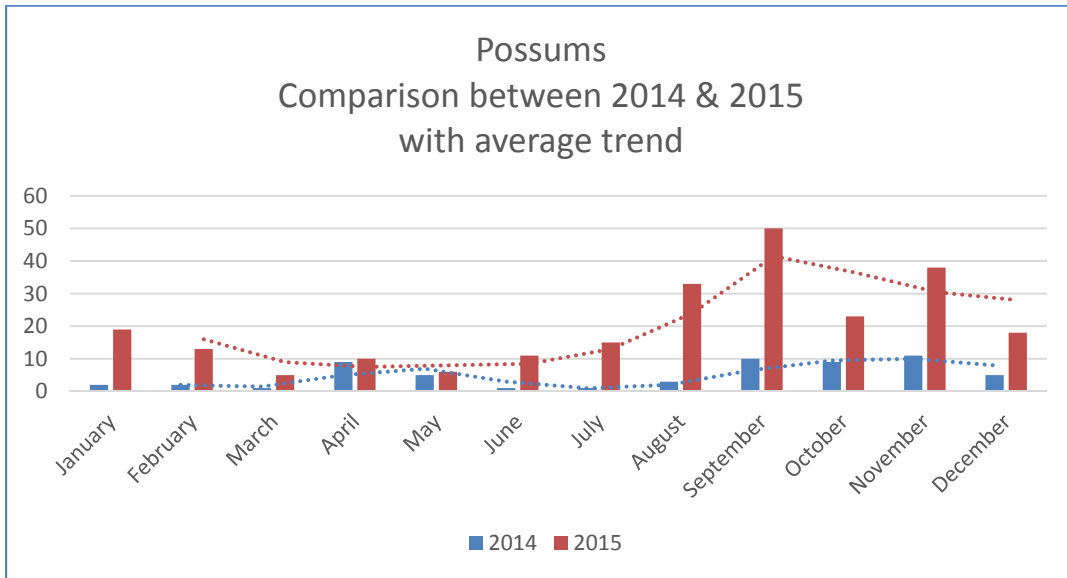


Birds make up 74% of the total animals received by ACT Wildlife. Of those that come into care we have achieved a 44% release rate. This figure is buoyed by the success in raising orphans rather than success of overcoming acute trauma of injured birds and the fact that our phone operators are able to divert seriously injured animals to veterinary practices.



# Possums

A total number of 241 possums entered into care during 2015. This is a 265% increase to the number in care during 2014. Of these, 94% were Brushtail possums and 6% sugar gliders and ringtail possums. The intake throughout the year followed a similar trend as the previous year, although with a higher spike in Spring.



One third of the possums entering care were either orphaned or found abandoned, and were still dependent on their mothers.

Approximately a quarter of the total number received had injuries or illnesses arising directly from living in close proximity to humans, particularly in an urban environment. The types of injuries include; collisions with vehicles, cat or dog attacks, poisoning and electrocution.

The hard work and dedication of our volunteer carers was reflected in the subsequent release of almost half (47%) of possums coming into care. In the 16% cases euthanasia and 18% cases died was unavoidable due to excessive poisoning or injury in adults and juveniles.

Possums remained in care for varying lengths of time. Just over a half the possums (56%) were in care for less than a week, and 11% were in care for over 3 months.



## Releasing Possums

Did you know Possums are territorial? Common Brushtail possums usually rely on vocalisation and scent to establish their territory and den ownership to avoid any close and sometimes aggressive contact with neighbouring possums. They are also generally shy and not aggressive to humans.

Availability of dens is a critical factor limiting the number of possums in an area and, with few mature trees with hollow branches left in suburban areas, Brushtail possums have adapted by moving into the ceilings of our homes.

Available dens are fully occupied by adult possums and a possum without a den will not survive. This means, as juvenile possums become independent and disperse, many will die from being unable to establish a home range. It also means that if a possum is removed from an area another one will soon fill the available den.

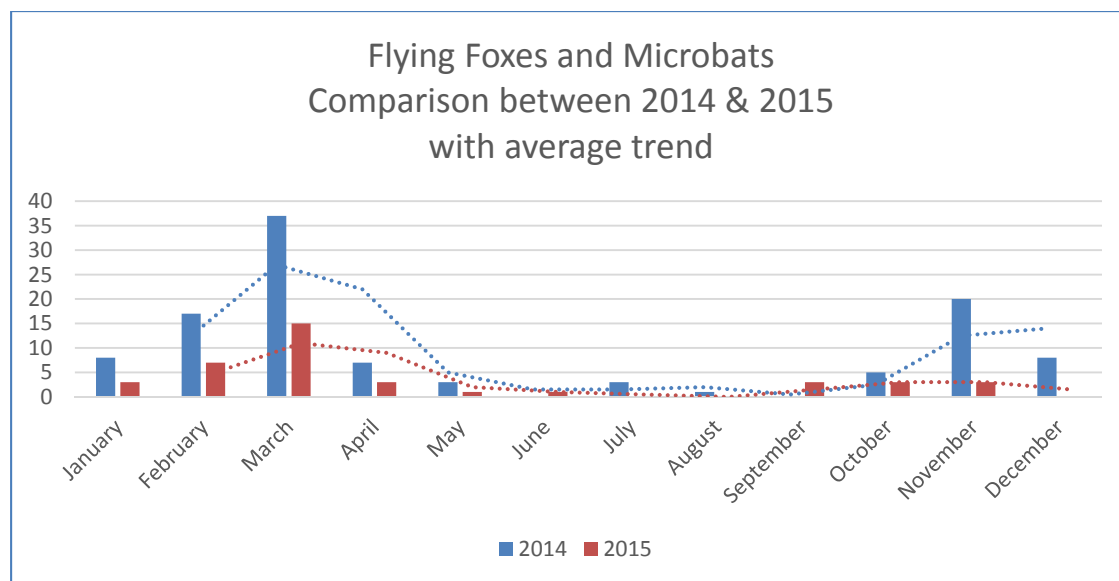
In ACT possums legally must be released 50 metres from where they were found for the very reasons mentioned above. To help support the community, who no longer want possums living in their ceiling, we offer them an opportunity to place a possum box in their backyard.

We have also successfully negotiated with TAMS for a licence allowing us to release possums, who are in care since they were joeys or juveniles, in 'ACT Wildlife' marked possum boxes located throughout the Canberra Nature Reserves.

Possum boxes can be a temporary or permanent den for the possum when they are released back to the wild.

# Bats

Generally you expect to see an increase of bats between September and March when the weather is warm. The bat numbers in 2015 was 64% less than we received in 2014. This decrease is due to Flying Foxes being temporary residents, who migrate all over Eastern Australia, and settle where there is sufficient food and roosting sites. The Microbat numbers in 2015 were similar to 2014. Microbats are local, are mainly located in areas surrounding suburbia and their interaction with humans don't differ significantly.



## Flying Foxes

Two species of flying foxes came into care during 2015; Grey-headed (44%) and Black (2%). The main reason the Grey-headed and the Black flying foxes came into care was entanglement in fruit nets. For more information on good fruit nets and how to erect them, visit <http://www.actwildlife.net/resources.html>

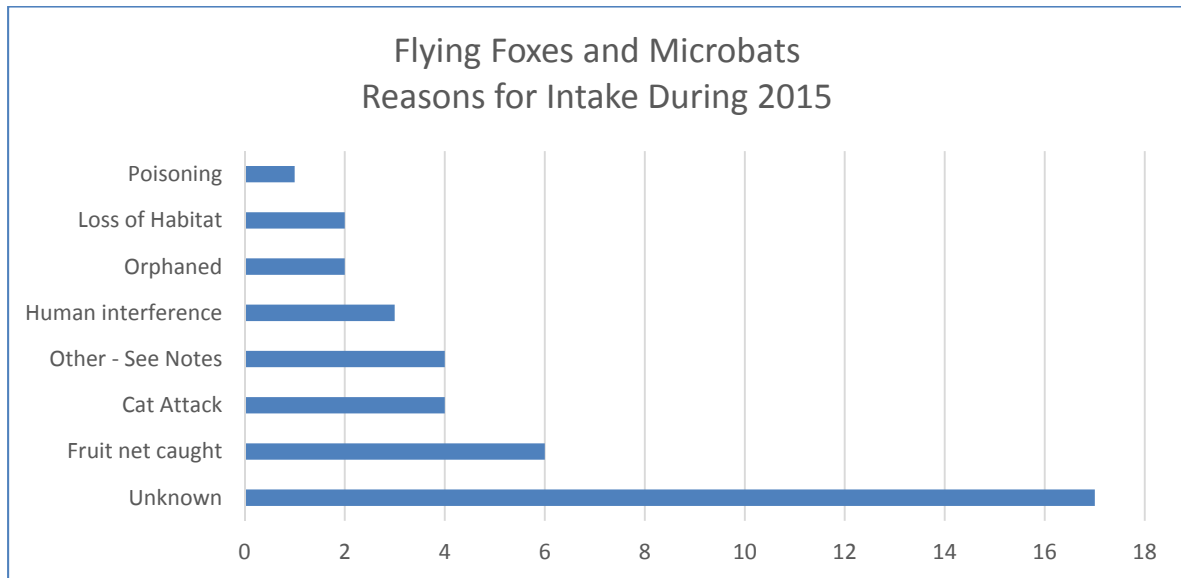
## Microbats

Seven species of microbats came into care; Goulds Wattled Bat (13%), Chocolate Wattled Bat (13%), Goulds Long Eared Bat (10%), Lesser Long-eared Bat (5%), Little Forest Bat (5%), Southern Freetail-Bat (3%), and the Large Forest Bat (3%).

There are many local species of microbats living in Canberra and our skill at identifying the different species is improving. This year mystery bats were labelled 'Chocolate Wattled Bats'.

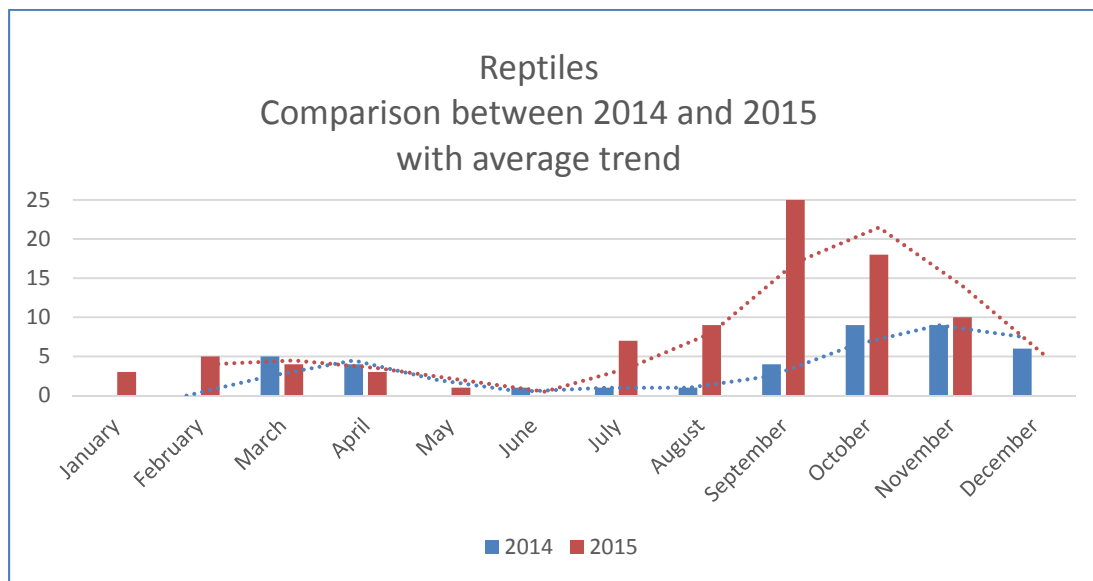


The reasons for Flying Foxes and Microbats that come into care is generally unknown. Flying Foxes require housing for at least 15-20 days before their Injuries show.



## Reptiles and Amphibians

Six species came into care totalling 105 individuals, which is an increase of 162% that entered into care in 2014. This was made up of lizards, skinks, turtles and a frog. The most common to come into care were the; Eastern Blue Tongued Lizard (63%), followed by the Eastern Long Necked Turtle (25%). Other species cared for were the Bearded Dragons (5%) and Shingleback lizards (3%).

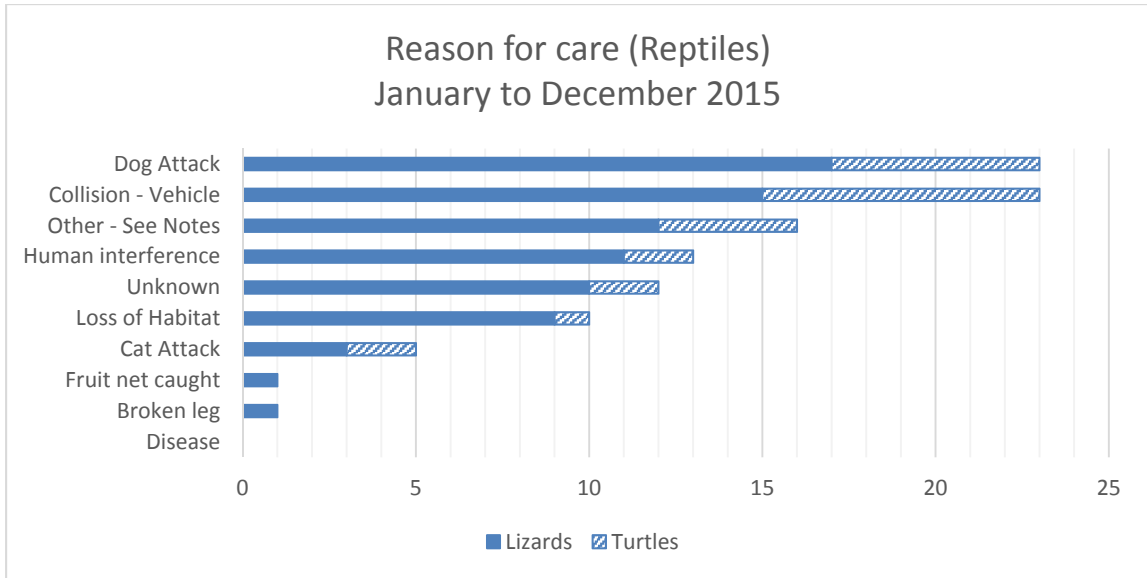


Reptiles that came into care were mainly dog attacks and vehicle strikes, of which only 47% were released.

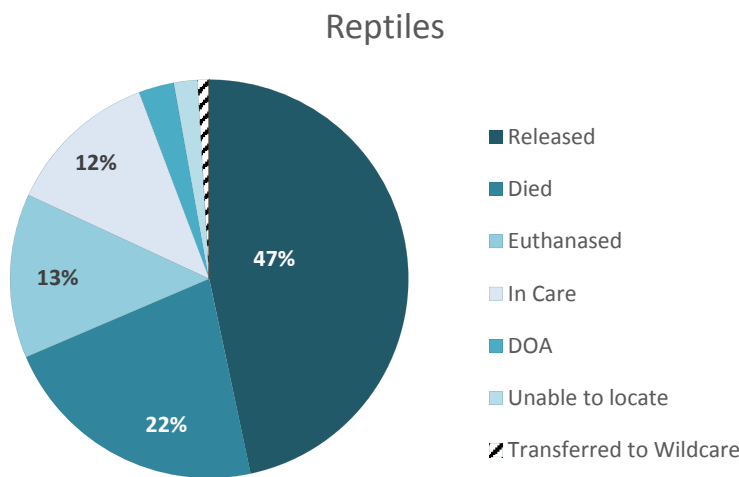
Other reasons included habitat loss, which was increased this year due to one family of Eastern Blue Tongue Lizards (mother and babies) crushed and killed as a result of road construction. The concrete block they were hiding under fell on them before the machinery driver could stop it.







Many members of the public call requesting the re-location of a lizard in their yard or garage. Lizards generally retreat from high summer temperatures to these locations. They are territorial and have most likely lived in the same area since they were born.



The 13% euthanased were mainly contributed to dog attacks on Lizards. They are so severely injured they are quickly taken to a vet to be euthanased. There is a greater chance of recovery with the other reasons of injury. Reptiles do have a good chance of recovery if their injuries are not bad. Reptiles are hardy and can recover from significant injuries, but do tend to take a long time to recover. This means carers are required to house reptiles for up to 6 months but only require minimal daily needs once its injury has begun to heal.



Our native wildlife who are injured or orphaned are brought into the care system by our phone operators, rescuers, carers and transporters. They all get to experience the palliative nature of wildlife care through assisting a member of the public to get a seriously injured animal to vet care as quickly and comfortably as possible and to ensure it does not suffer longer than necessary before getting relief.

The amount of wildlife coming into care shows some of the ways that Canberra's expansion can impact on native wildlife.





## Memberships

By the end of our second financial year ACT Wildlife has 126 members. A single membership is defined as a household, so the number of people is actually larger.

Anyone who comes to us as a volunteers is encouraged to become a member and all people caring for animals must be a member. The membership fee is minimal (\$20) in recognition of the time volunteers give.

## Training

It was a busy year of training for ACT Wildlife. We provided 20 courses with over 240 people attending. It has been a great investment in time and we now have 75 households that are qualified to care for our wildlife.

|           | Orientation & First Aid | Adv Birds | Basic Birds | Basic Possums | Reptile | Phone, Rescue & Transport | Total |
|-----------|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|---------|---------------------------|-------|
| Run       | 5                       | 1         | 2           | 2             | 1       | 3                         | 14    |
| Attendees | 98                      | 24        | 38          | 34            | 20      | 32                        | 246   |

We work well with Wildcare Queanbeyan with members from both organisations taking advantage of training sessions in the ACT and across the border.

All training courses scheduled are listed on our website so please keep an eye on this.

We provide both formal and informal training to support the various activities across our organisation. To become a carer, we require attendance to both the orientation and species specific formal course to ensure volunteers are provided the background knowledge to support their ongoing learning as a qualified carer. In addition new carers are always allocated a more experienced mentor for support and advice.

To keep the information fresh for new carers we try to provide specialised training just before the busy season for that species.

Carers are only able to care for the species they have trained for, and each qualified carer is allocated a 'mentor', a more experienced carer who guides and advises the new carer.



Our Formal course outline:

- Orientation Session - to provide new members with information on our organisation and our main role and outlines the various activities volunteers can become involved
- Species Specific Courses – practical demonstrations are given on examining wildlife to determine why they may have come into care and what treatment or rearing information that may apply. The course also covers identification, diet, husbandry and basic first aid.

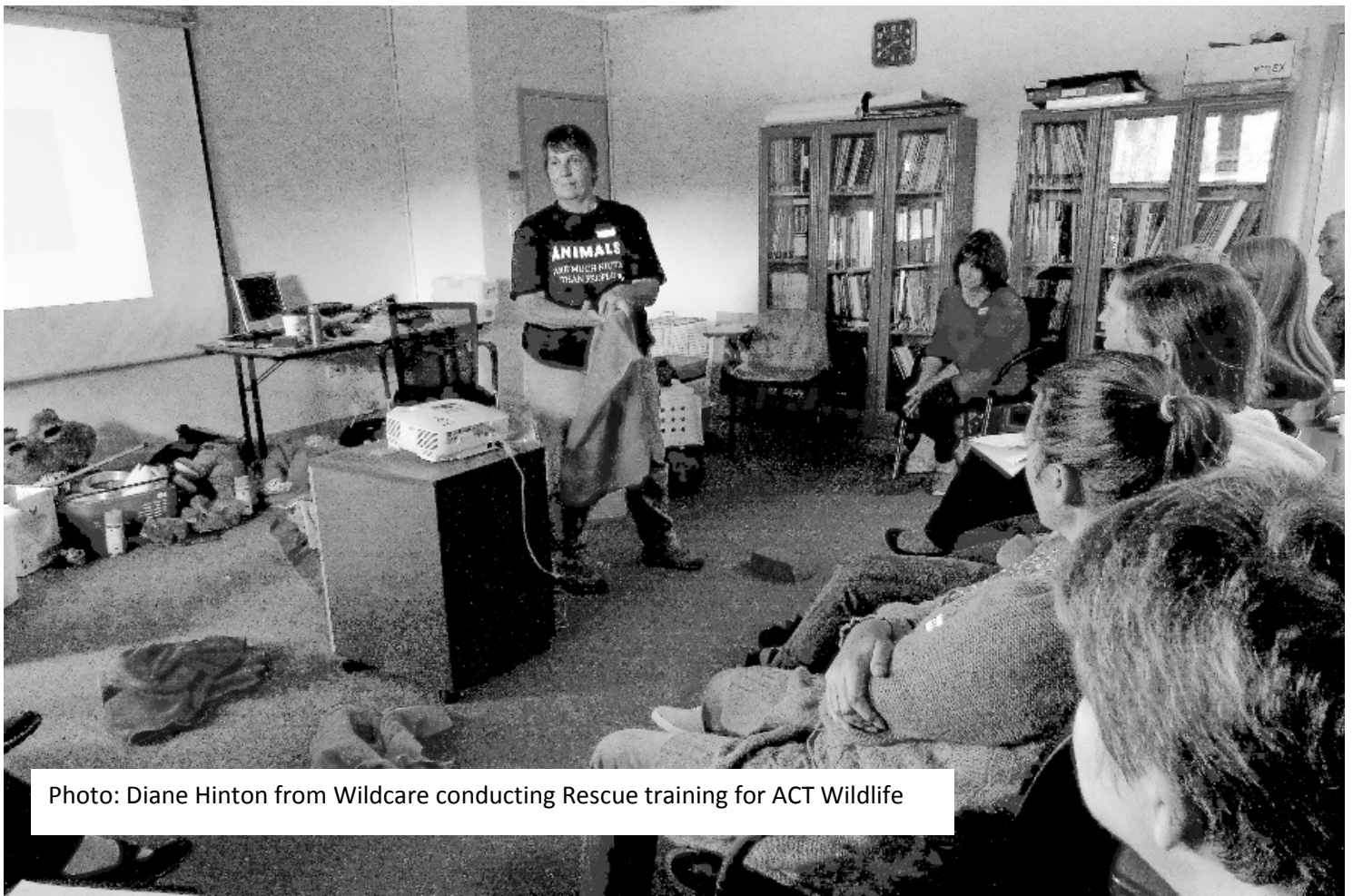


Photo: Diane Hinton from Wildcare conducting Rescue training for ACT Wildlife

# Events, Media and Education

## Events

It was a busy year of events for ACT Wildlife, getting out in the community and talking to people about what we do and how people can volunteer with us. These events are essential to ACT Wildlife, as they raise funds, educate the public, and encourage new carers and volunteers. At each event we talked to people who passionately spoke of the wildlife living in their backyard.

The events and stalls that were attended by our volunteers were;

- Snakes Alive (January)
- Canberra Show (February)
- Connect and Participate Volunteers Expo (March)
- Belconnen Bunnings Family and Community Day (March)
- Reptile Inc Festival (April)
- Volunteers Expo (September)
- Living Green Festival (October) – photo below
- Tidbinbilla Extravaganza (October)

Photo: Volunteers manning the stall at the Living Green Festival



Each event attracted different types of people to ACT Wildlife and many have joined our ranks as volunteers.

Thank you to our volunteers who donated plants and books to sell at stalls and those who went that extra mile to hand-make jewellery, cards, magnets and egg carton sunflower seedlings.

### **Factsheets**

Printable factsheets have been developed for the website and published for distribution at events. Thank you Agnes Mesple for your patience in developing these and Chris Shepherd for setting them up for printing.

### **Education**

The education program is under development. However we have given ad hoc presentations to Scout and Guide groups and a primary school class during the year.

### **Media**

The media we have participated in this year have been;

- Facebook page coverage <https://www.facebook.com/ACTwildlife/>
- Several newspaper articles in the Canberra Times,
- Radio interviews with 2XXFM ACT community radio and ABC 666, and
- Better Homes and Gardens, who filmed magpies that were rescued by the Fire Brigade from a nest too high for our rescuers. The segment should be shown in early 2016.

### **Fundraising**

The fundraising events consisted of selling chocolates and Bunnings BBQ's. Both events are about public relations with the general ACT community whilst raising funds.



# Financial Report

We have had another very successful year with a total of \$21,451 in the cash book (includes \$10,000 is in a term deposit). We also have an excess of assets over liabilities of \$33,790.

In 2014 we successfully won a government grant of \$12,768 to purchase aviaries. This amount was managed by the Southern ACT Catchment Group (SACTCG) on our behalf and is not reflected in our books. The purchase of aviaries were completed in 2015 and will be acquitted early 2016. The aviaries have been distributed to carers on loan during the life of their role to care under ACT Wildlife.

| <b>Income</b>            |               |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Membership subscriptions | 2,630         |
| Donations                | 3,510         |
| Training                 | 4,520         |
| Fund raising             | 7,827         |
| Chocolate sales          | 3,532         |
| Interest                 | 137           |
| Miscellaneous            | 622           |
| <b>Total Income</b>      | <b>22,778</b> |

| <b>Expenses</b>               |               |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Carry cages possum boxes etc. | 807           |
| Printing                      | 1,239         |
| Stationery                    | 194           |
| Mobile Phone                  | 2,389         |
| Food/consumables              | 1,136         |
| Flying fox food               | 1,139         |
| Miscellaneous                 | 1,909         |
| Insurance                     | 370           |
| Depreciation                  | 1,726         |
| T-Shirts                      | 418           |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>         | <b>11,327</b> |

|                                    |               |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Total Income minus Expenses</b> | <b>11,451</b> |
|------------------------------------|---------------|





We have finished second year with a healthy bank balance through the efforts of our hard working committee, our fundraising committee did a fantastic job in raising net \$11,359 through BBQs, chocolate sales, garage sales, raffles etc and deserve our thanks. Training raised \$4,520 through a lot of hard work and our trainers and helpers also deserve a pat on the back.

We did not receive any government funding in 2015. This means a big thank you to all our volunteers for the support you have provided – which is vital for our existence. We are hoping to secure some form of government funding in 2016 which will allow us either subsidise or provide many items, such as food to carers, for free.

Much was achieved this year through enthusiasm and hard work, our challenge this year is to consolidate our gains and maintain our momentum.



## Looking Forward

By working alongside TAMS and the RSPCA we aim to provide an opportunity for both organisations to focus on their core business. ACT Wildlife complements those organisations, providing care for injured, sick and orphaned native animals, whilst TAMS concentrates on conservation and the RSPCA with animal welfare.

We continue to advocate for government funding to support this service. The ACT election will be underway in 2016 and this will be a great opportunity to talk to the local MLA's for their support and rallying the need for this service.

Currently all members of ACT Wildlife are contributing from their own pocket in the pursuit of rehabilitating native animals with the care they require. We intend for all carers to be partly or fully subsidised for these costs – especially the cost to purchase specialised foods. This will definitely come to fruition if we receive government funding.

We would also ideally like to occupy premises from which we can operate a veterinary service and administration. This is a long term goal we would like to achieve in the next 5 years.

We expect to increase funding by a significant amount by sourcing online donations and attracting corporate sponsorship. We will continue to apply for wildlife and environment grants for the purchase of new equipment and training resources. We can also source funding through Google Ads and solicit donations once we have received Deductible Gift Recipient status.

The business structure will be tested and refined so we can move closer to becoming a well-functioning not-for-profit organisation.

Thank you again to all ACT Wildlife volunteers - It's safe to say that we as volunteers are making larger contributions by our actions everyday as we grow.



## The Committee Members

Thank you to the Committee Members who have unofficially taken the roles to see ACT Wildlife move forward in 2015.

|                  |                               |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Marg Peachey     | - President                   |
| Martin Lind      | - Vice President              |
| Denise Kay       | - Secretary                   |
| Jim Peachey      | - Treasurer                   |
| Megan Wyllie     | - Public Officer              |
| Judy Tett        | - Training Coordinator        |
| Michelle Johnson | - Acting Training Coordinator |
| Dorothy Brown    | - Member                      |
| Agnes Maples     | - Member                      |
| Kristy Price     | - Member                      |
| Heather Peachey  | - Member, Fundraising         |
| Emily Birks      | - Member, Public Relations    |
| Alicia Ozanne    | - Member, Ass. Treasurer      |

## Species Coordinators

Thank you to the Species Coordinators who have unofficially taken the roles to see ACT Wildlife move forward in 2015.

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Kumiko Callaway  | - Birds                  |
| Ingrid Singh   | - Microbats and Reptiles |
| Kirstie Hawkins  | - Flying Foxes           |
| Martin Lind, Michelle Johnson,<br>And Cheryle Le Fevre | - Possums                |



## We Need Your Help in 2016

If you would like to gain a better understanding on how a not-for-profit organisation works please feel free to contact the Committee or a Coordinator. We will welcome any contribution you can offer; either on the committee or as a coordinator of a group.

You can find out what coordinator roles have been developed by visiting <http://www.actwildlife.net/resources.html> and then asking the Committee which ones are vacant.

You can also add your name to help within a group – such as the fundraising group or sewing group. The coordinator for that group will contact you periodically during the year requesting your help and providing ideas on the yearly activities.



Photo: Baby Jack. Facebook page raised his profile

## Wish Lists

To keep costs down we are always looking to recycle old items that you no longer need.

The main items are;

- Flannelette sheets and wool for making pouches for orphaned marsupials,
- Old towels – these are used for capturing animals, wrapping up animals for transport, holding animals for assessments, and protecting you from their poo!
- Carry cages – a must for transporting animals. The open top lids are the most convenient.
- Plastic tennis court grass – fantastic for placing on the bottom of carry cages. This provides the animals with a less slippery surface and helps with the cleaning of carry cages.
- Small plastic or glass bottles – great for feeding joeys

To enable ACT Wildlife grow into bigger not-for-profit organisation we are looking for;

- A venue – to be a drop off location for the public, vet clinic, and office
- An honorary veterinarian – who can provide services free of charge
- A well-equipped transport vehicle - so volunteers have all the necessary equipment on hand and do not have to use their own vehicle.
- An administration person – part time or full time – to keep all administration up to date, and
- Annual funding – to pay for the above items

A paid administration person would enable ACT Wildlife would undertake the following tasks:

- Answer the phone during a short period of time during the day
- Follow up with new members on their role as a volunteer
- Develop and maintain a communication/media plan
- Improve the organizational profile, Seek sponsorship, and
- Maintain records (assets, grants etc) as required



## Thank you to....

- The Southern ACT Catchment Group for helping ACT Wildlife to become incorporated and managing large grants on our behalf, for photocopying facilities and the use of a data projector for all of our training sessions. For providing a meeting space every month, and the use of the Landcare tent for the Canberra Show stall.
- The Lions Youth Haven and TAMS (Mitchell Depot) for providing training course venues free of charge
- TAMS for support with phone calls and the challenging animal rescues
- ACT Fire and Rescue for hard to reach animal rescues
- The Tuggeranong Mens Shed and the Kambah Men's Shed for making Possum boxes
- Bimberi Youth Detention Centre for making a large number of possum boxes
- To Steve Kraus for providing all ACT Wildlife members IT support for ACT Wildlife members' personal computers.

And of course to all the ACT Wildlife volunteers who have contributed to making 2015 a success. We look forward to your involvement in 2016.



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# RESCUE



# REHABILITATION



# RELEASE