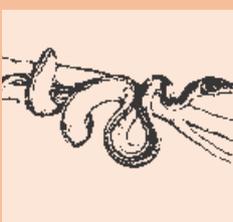


# RnR

A newsletter for  
wildlife carers

Issue 6 • July 2004

## Rehabilitate and Release



## What happened to Lulu?



Rockhampton wildlife carer Annie Saunders was raising Lulu, a southern hairy-nosed wombat as part of a QPWS-lead recovery project for northern hairy-nosed wombats. Northern hairy-nosed wombats are one of our most endangered mammals, with about 110 left in the wild. Full story page 6

## Carer council up and running

Carers and QPWS staff from Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville and Cairns were the first to attend a series of information sessions on the progress being made by the Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (QWRC).

The sessions are a joint Council, RSPCA and QPWS initiative. Presentations are planned for southeast and western Queensland with other areas to follow.

Feedback from the meetings has been positive with carers contributing to QWRC's direction.

### What is QWRC?

QWRC is the peak representative organisation for the wildlife rehabilitation "industry" in

Queensland and provides a collective voice for its members.

It will focus on ensuring excellent welfare for native animals during and after rehabilitation to complement and improve conservation benefits and outcomes.

The Council has up to 15 members. Eleven of those members are carers.

The other four seats are held by representatives from the RSPCA, Wildlife Preservation Society, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI) and QPWS.

### Council members

Dr Annabelle Olsson,  
Cairns

Eleanor Pollock, Townsville

Annie Saunders,  
Rockhampton (Chair)

Pat Hendrickson, Mackay

Mike Holmes, Esk

Len Beikoff, Brisbane

Gail Gipp, Gold Coast (Vice-chair)

Vicky Dawson, Brisbane/  
Outback

Greg McDougall, DPI

Janet Gamble, RSPCA

Julie Furkins, WPSQ

Debra Hotchkis, QPWS

Please contact your local representatives (details inside) if you have any further enquiries regarding QWRC or other issues relating to wildlife rehabilitation.

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## Contributions

Please forward all correspondence and contributions to:  
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Wildlife Ranger,  
QPWS, PO Box 3454,  
Burleigh Town LPO,  
Burleigh Heads QLD 4220.  
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debra.hotchkis@epa.qld.gov.au

## Disclaimer

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Environment Minister, the Environmental Protection Agency or the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

# Editorial

As I read through the articles for this edition, I couldn't help but notice a pattern forming. In almost all the stories, the carers mentioned the same thing – their local vets.

We all recognise what an important role vets play in the care of sick, injured and orphaned animals (and other living things).

This incredible group of dedicated professionals provide treatment (sometimes at no charge or at greatly discounted cost), advice and support for a wide variety of species.

There are many vets who have contributed to wildlife care, including Dr Annabelle Olsson, the far north Queensland rep on the Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (QWRC) and our very own Rosie Booth who writes Rosie's Wrap for *R'n'R*.

Not to forget vets employed at zoos, such as Jon Hangar at Australia Zoo and David Blyde at Seaworld (to name just two), who use their considerable wildlife veterinary skills to support the wider community of critters too.

It's an important relationship between carers, carer groups and wildlife sometimes not recognised enough in the wider scheme of things.

With the start of the new financial year, our thoughts are usually on our finances ... and grants!

While rewarding, caring for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife can be draining on the hip pocket. But through the generosity of corporate and community organisations, help is at hand.

The Queensland Wildlife Hospital is offering grants to cover care costs. If you are interested, turn to page 3 and get writing!

Or you may like to try the Queensland Government Gambling Community Benefit Fund, as many care groups, like Bat Rescue, have done to recoup some of the equipment costs of wildlife care.

To see what else is available, take a minute to visit the EPA's grants website <[www.epa.qld.gov.au/about\\_the\\_epa/grants\\_and\\_funding/eagle/](http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/about_the_epa/grants_and_funding/eagle/)> or the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy's grant website at

<[www.nrme.qld.gov.au/regional\\_planning/funding/index.html](http://www.nrme.qld.gov.au/regional_planning/funding/index.html)>.

Insurance remains a common topic of discussion with carer groups and QWRC. In today's society ensuring you are adequately protected against injury, or impacts on others as a result of your wildlife caring is increasingly important.

One of the benefits of joining a wildlife group is the insurance cover you will receive. QWRC is currently exploring options for group insurance in an effort to reduce costs for groups.

As a last note, I'm very impressed at the determined effort that the QWRC steering committee has made in getting the Council up and running in Queensland.

I urge you to get behind the good work of QWRC. Their commitment will ensure a strong voice for a professional and co-ordinated wildlife care community in Queensland. 'til next time,  
Leslie Shirreffs.

## Bridled nail-tail wallaby project wins award

A dedicated working group, which included wildlife carers, from Emerald has won the inaugural Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia's Community Wildlife Conservation Award 2004.

Bringing Back the Flashjack project (saving the bridled nailtail wallaby from extinction – empowering landholders and community groups to recover a threatened species in the Central Highlands of Queensland) was selected from a wide range of nominations received from across Australia.



*Yvonne Thompson and Janelle Lowry accept the award*

QPWS Senior Conservation Officer Janelle Lowry and wildlife carer Yvonne Thompson accepted the engraved crystal trophy and \$2500 from New South Wales Governor Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir at a ceremony in the Parliament House dining room on 18 February.

The flashjack was believed extinct for 36 years until rediscovered in 1973 on a cattle property in central Queensland.

Anyone wishing to sponsor the breeding of a flashjack for release into the wild can contact Janelle at:

**Bringing Back the Flashjack Appeal**

**PO Box 3130**

**Rockhampton Shopping Fair QLD 4701**

or phone (07) 4936 0569.

## Minister's message



Since becoming Environment Minister, I have been impressed by the dedication of Queensland's hard working wildlife carers.

In March, I met a small group of Rockhampton-based carers who have been caring for threatened species such as Lulu, who is featured in this edition of *RnR*.

These caring Queenslanders (and the many hundreds more like them) are making a worthwhile contribution to the environment, rehabilitating and releasing a wide variety of species back to nature. I greatly appreciate their efforts and so does my department.

As we are all aware, wildlife care in Queensland is taking a new direction.

The establishment of QWRC signals that caring is now in the hands of carers — a most appropriate move.

I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the new council members and thank the steering committee which undertook 12 months of groundwork to bring QWRC to fruition.

The council is a positive initiative for carers. It will

bring about greater self-regulation and a chance to shape wildlife care policy. Through QWRC, carer groups will have a greater opportunity to have a say in issues that affect them.

The EPA has had a long partnership with carers and care groups.

I wish to thank our carers for their work at Moggill Koala Hospital and Daisy Hill Koala Centre, where they spend innumerable hours medicating, feeding, cleaning and generally caring for this iconic species which was recently reclassified as vulnerable in the south east bioregion.

There are also positive arrangements with threatened species recovery programs, such as the Bridled naitail wallaby and at Epping Forest Reserve. (Dr Alan Horsup has written a great story about the link between volunteers and our northern hairy-nosed wombat recovery project).

I look forward to a strong working relationship with QWRC and the continuing commitment of Queensland's many dedicated carers to our native species.

John Mickel  
Environment Minister

**Grant, anyone? ...** *The Queensland Wildlife Hospital invites carers to apply for a grant to cover out-of-pocket expenses.*

*To apply, submit a short letter together with recent documentation supporting your claims for veterinary, produce or material expenses directly related to wildlife care.*

*The funding, which becomes available twice a year, will not rebate any administration, vehicle or telephone costs or anything of a similar nature.*

*Submissions should be sent to PO Box 250 Burpengary QLD 4505. The submissions must be received by 1 September 2004 or 1 March 2005.*

*For more information, please write to the above address, e-mail [Stowin@bigpond.com](mailto:Stowin@bigpond.com) or phone (07) 3391 2330 between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday.*

## Narrow escape for Fanta



by Jane Powell

It was almost the end of another hectic Saturday morning on 3 April this year, but if no emergencies arrived in the next 15 minutes, the girls stood a good chance of finishing work on time — a rarity on a Saturday.

The bell rang as a customer pushed the door open. A tall, young man wandered casually in. He leant on the counter and when Rae greeted him said, "Hi, love. I've got a koala in me [sic] truck".

Of course, koalas arriving at Noosa Veterinary Surgery is not unusual, so Rae followed the man to his truck.

### Unusual passenger

To her astonishment, there was a koala, fully conscious, sitting beside a Fanta bottle in the passenger's seat of the man's truck.

The windows were down, the radio was blaring, as if it is a perfectly normal thing for a koala to hitch a ride in a truck!

Rae quickly assessed the situation and darted back inside to grab a catch bag and cage. She called for Kathy to help and together

they gently bundled the little animal and carried her into a consulting room.

The koala had been hit by a car at Sunshine Beach. She was sitting, dazed beside the road when her rescuer saw her.

Kathy anaesthetised her little patient and began to examine her. It was her turn to be astonished when she discovered a tiny unfurred joey koala snuggled in the pouch. The mother koala, who we named Fanta, didn't appear to have any serious injuries.

Fanta stayed in the koala compound at our home for several days, enchanting us with her antics as she convalesced. She ate voraciously, an indication she was searching for food when she was hit.

### Fond farewell

Fanta was released in Noosa National Park a fortnight after she arrived. She bounded straight up the tree trunk without hesitation.

At about 4m off the ground she paused to gaze at us and her surroundings, then was off up to a comfortable branch where she wedged her rump and sampled the tender, rain damp leaves within her reach.

# Battysearch results

by Helen Matthews

It was the right time of year again (April full moon) for the flying foxes of south-east Queensland to receive a bit of calculated attention from volunteers and staff (and this includes some dedicated staff who were volunteering).

Two hundred dedicated bat lovers spent 3-4 April counting thousands of flying foxes as part of Battysearch, an annual activity of the Queensland NatureSearch program and part of the National Grey-headed Flying Fox Count.

Volunteers and QPWS staff from Maryborough to the border put their hand-held "counters" to use, counting 65,000 bats in 18 colonies.

This figure represented 12 percent of the total Australian count.

The largest colonies in south-east Queensland were at Tallebudgera Creek (Gold Coast) 12,000; Canungera (Beaudesert Shire) 12,000; Kinmond Creek (Kin Kin, Noosa Shire) 7000.

At Sparkes Hill it was about 6pm when the first brave flying fox flew overhead and out of the camp. Within 20 minutes more than 2000 others had followed.

This number was just the emergence over one side of the hill because the total number currently living in the Sparkes Hill colony was estimated to be 7000.

Closer examination of the camp showed the colony consisted of 40 percent grey-headed flying fox and

60 percent black flying foxes.

For Sparkes Hill the total average count for each station for both nights was 7833 individuals, which means it is likely that this camp is currently home to roughly 3000 grey-heads.

While Brisbane colonies host three different species of flying foxes, Battysearchers were targeting the grey-headed flying fox due to a decline in numbers and its national status of vulnerable.

The annual population estimates assist the State and Commonwealth agencies manage the conservation of the species.

If you are interested in participating next year contact the QPWS Moggill Office on 3202 0200.

what do you call a group of...?

bats?  
a colony  
cats?  
a clowder, a pounce  
kittens?  
a kindle, litter, intrigue  
finches?  
a charm  
lapwings?  
a deceit  
owls?  
a parliament  
sharks?  
shiver  
coots?  
cover  
comorants?  
a gulp  
cockroaches?  
an intrusion  
tigers?  
a streak

## Profile

*David Dique (pictured) is a Senior Conservation Officer with the QPWS Wildlife Conservation Unit in Southern Region.*

I still remember my first day at work with QPWS in 1995.

I had just graduated from an Honours program at university and I was bursting with what I call "youthful conservation enthusiasm".

It is the sort of enthusiasm that comes from the best conservation intentions, coupled with a naivety that young university graduates often possess.

I started my first day at Moggill as a member of a five-person team involved in establishing a koala conservation research program in the Koala Coast, a region in south-east Queensland that includes parts of Redland Shire and



Brisbane and Logan Cities.

It was only a few months later that the team were conducting surveys of koalas throughout the Koala Coast — walking through eucalypt forests and woodlands searching for one of Australia's icon fauna species.

I was thinking at the time that I had perhaps found the perfect job. It was certainly a far cry from the demands of my Honours year at university.

But it wasn't long before I realised that the five-year

koala research program we had embarked on had a great list of demands.

We soon had a radio tracking program up and running, with 120 koalas requiring monthly monitoring.

Add to that about 150 koala captures each year, koala faecal pellet surveys, vegetation surveys and more koala surveys — the field component of the study was certainly challenging to say the least.

And it didn't end there. After about 12 months in the job, I realised that conserving koalas was not just about obtaining quality information from sound scientific research programs, it was also about working with non-government groups, conservation groups, the community and other government agencies.

Having been with QPWS now for nine years, my

interests in conservation have broadened and I am still enthusiastic.

The Koala Coast research program has been completed and my involvement in the research program has helped me recently complete a PhD.

I have also conducted koala research in Pine Rivers and been involved in collaborative projects with the University of Queensland.

The results of the research work, and information obtained by the Moggill Koala Hospital, contributed to the reclassification of the koala to "vulnerable" in the Southeast Queensland Bioregion.

In many ways, I can reflect on the experiences I have had so far with QPWS with gratitude and look forward to the future with a sense of "mature conservation enthusiasm".

# Be alert for bird flu

Carers are being asked to keep an eye out for mass mortalities of native birds. These deaths could be the result of avian influenza.

Avian influenza is usually a non-apparent or non-clinical viral infection in wild birds, especially in migratory aquatic birds.

While migratory aquatic birds do not die from the viruses, they often pass it on to other species.

Avian influenza may also transfer to mammals and in rare cases, humans.

Not all infected birds display symptoms of influenza.

The signs can be highly variable depending on the strain of virus, the species of bird affected, and other factors including age and sex.

Signs of the disease may include decreased activity and decreased food consumption; respiratory infection as indicated by coughing and sneezing; ruffled feathers; diarrhoea and tremors.

Decreased egg production has also been associated with influenza infection in domestic birds.

There appears to be no information on symptoms displayed by wild birds.

There is currently a serious outbreak of avian influenza in Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam, which has spread to humans resulting in a number of deaths.

Avian influenza may also be present in Thailand and Indonesia.

Given the proximity of Indonesia to Australia and the movement of migratory birds from many parts of Asia to Australia, there is a risk of disease outbreaks in Australian domestic and wild birds.

Impacts on rare or threatened native birds should be monitored in the event that an outbreak of avian influenza.

## More information

[www.isid.org](http://www.isid.org)

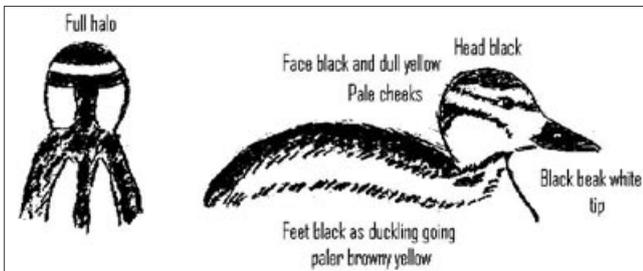
[www.aahc.com.au/ausvetplan/hpaifinal.pdf](http://www.aahc.com.au/ausvetplan/hpaifinal.pdf)

## What to do

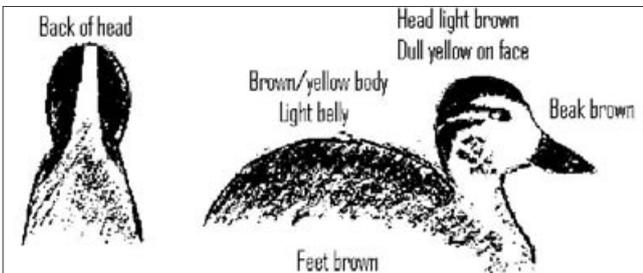
**If you find a large number of dead native birds in one area, please call your local QPWS office**

## Fast duck identification

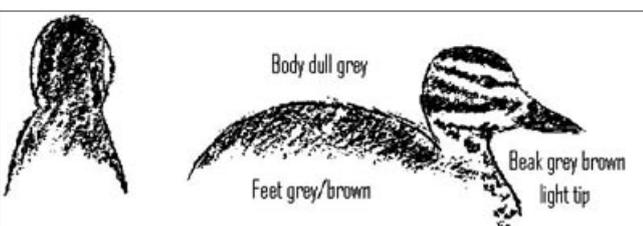
Here's six of the most common ducklings that come into care.



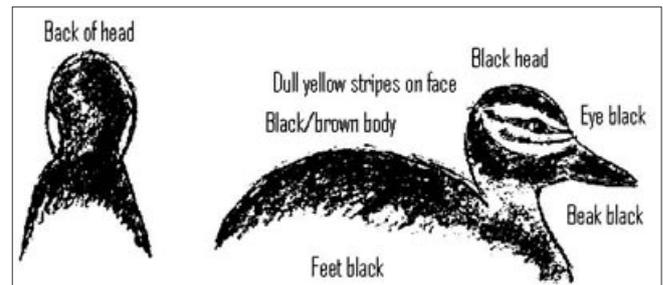
Grass whistling duck



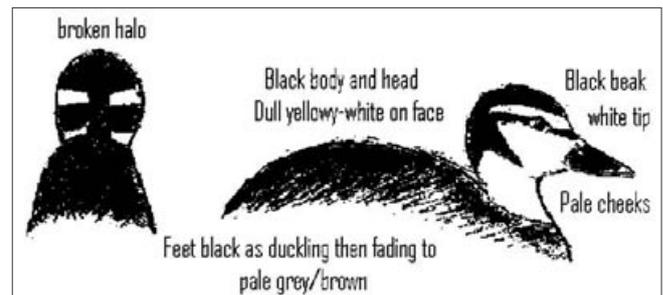
Hardhead or white-eyed duck



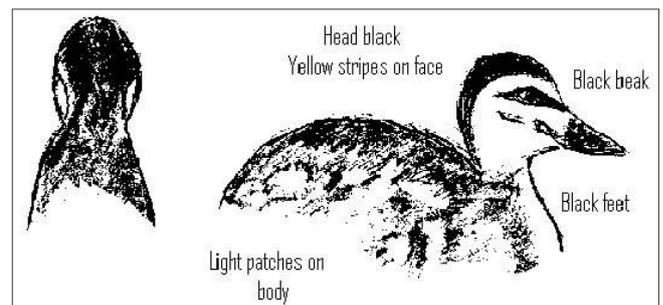
Wood duck



Grey teal duck



Water or wandering whistle-duck



black duck

# A hair-raising experience!

*Annie Saunders was asked to raise a southern hairy-nosed wombat as part of research for the northern hairy-nosed wombat program.*

by Annie Saunders

Kooloola (commonly known as Lulu) arrived in Rockhampton late on Thursday afternoon on 11 April 2002.

She weighed just 224g, was 190mm long, pink, furless and her eyes were sealed shut. We estimated she was only 110 days old (3.6 months).

My first thought was “How am I ever going to love this ugly little bundle?”

## The adventure begins

Unlike most marsupial joeys Lulu had to be kept at about 28 deg and not to get any hotter than 30 deg (unlike macropods of this size which need to be about 32 deg).

I started her on Wombaroo 0.4 Wombat milk at four feeds a day as suggested by wombat carers in the southern states.

Within 18 hours she had started to show signs of stress and/or not tolerating the milk.

I stopped the milk and fed her Lactade for the next two feeds, then half-and-half Di-Vetelact and Lactade for two feeds before straight Di-Vetelact.

Good results were attained in a short time and by day four she was doing well.

After six weeks I had changed her slowly on to Wombaroo milk.

At this time she was 150 days old, her eyes were open, she had a good covering of fine downy fur and weighed 582g.

One interesting difference I found between macropods and wombats was that



macropods can stand from an early age. Wombats, on the other hand, seem more like humans.

Lulu was not able to stand at all in the beginning but when she did finally start to walk it was in reverse and in circles! It was a great day when at about 164 days (5.4 months) she finally went forward and (into the bargain) back into her pouch.

She was now 836g.

This was the beginning of the end of our quiet existence. Within three days she had worked out how to get out of her basket on her own.

It was time for a cage! It was about this time that she made her first sound — a soft, repeated “pft, pft, pft” when she got tangled in her bedding.

By the time she had been in care for two months she weighed just over a kilo and had a lovely sheen to the short dark coat on her shoulders and lighter grey of her rump.

She was starting to investigate around the house but then would be really tired and sleep for hours. She didn't pee or poo at each feed at this stage.

After three months in care

(6.5 months old, 1700gms) she could get in and out of her pouch and was starting to eat/nuzzle at solid food.

Four months in care and our 7.7-month-old charge weighed in at almost 3kg. She was eating small amounts of grated apple, carrot and grass three times a day.

## Troubled times ahead

September and five months in care (8.7 months old and 4120gms) brought the first signs of problems.

When feeding her I found that she had swollen lymph glands in her groin and under her “armpits”.

I took her to the vet, who did some blood tests.

The results were normal apart from atypical lymphocytes being present.

After seven months in care and at almost 11 months of age Lulu weighed 6320g. She loved rolled oats, Vitabrits, sweet corn and the dry grain mix (also fed to the wombats at the zoo) and grass.

Unfortunately, her mobility had reduced and you could see a dip in at her waist.

I took her off to the vet again, who checked for osteoporosis. While it did not show up, the vet suggested I bring her back



*Annie (above) cuddles Lulu (who was to remain in captivity as part of the research program. Left: Annie feeds Lulu*

the next day for sedation and more x-rays.

The news was all bad.

Lulu had gross bone degeneration in her hip joints and her shoulders were going the same way. Her spine was showing signs of three vertebrae collapsing at about waist level too.

There was nothing that could be done. Our beautiful Lulu had to be euthanased.

After just over nine months in care and at 13.06 months, Lulu weighed 9.5kg and was 755mm long. She was taken to the vet on 21 January 2003.

No firm conclusions could be drawn from the autopsy. At present, all we know is that it was a bone growth problem that was possibly metabolic and non-infectious, but there may have been a toxic insult at some time.

At the time of writing we are still waiting on further results and the case is not closed.

Hopefully one day we will all finally know what was the cause of Kooloola's condition.

# Volunteers help rescue wombat

by Dr Alan Horsup

Saving the northern hairy-nosed wombat is a complex task and there are many components of the recovery program.

These range from developing captive breeding techniques on the closely related southern hairy-nosed wombat to maintaining a dingo-proof fence around the last population at Epping Forest National Park near Clermont.

Volunteers have played a crucial role in many of these projects. For instance, Annie Saunders' wonderful care of Lulu, while sadly unsuccessful, has added to our understanding of juvenile care.

Volunteers at the Wombat Research Centre at Rockhampton Zoo help maintain the enclosures and undertake research on 13 southern hairy-nosed wombats being kept to develop reproductive and husbandry techniques for the northern hairy-nosed wombat.

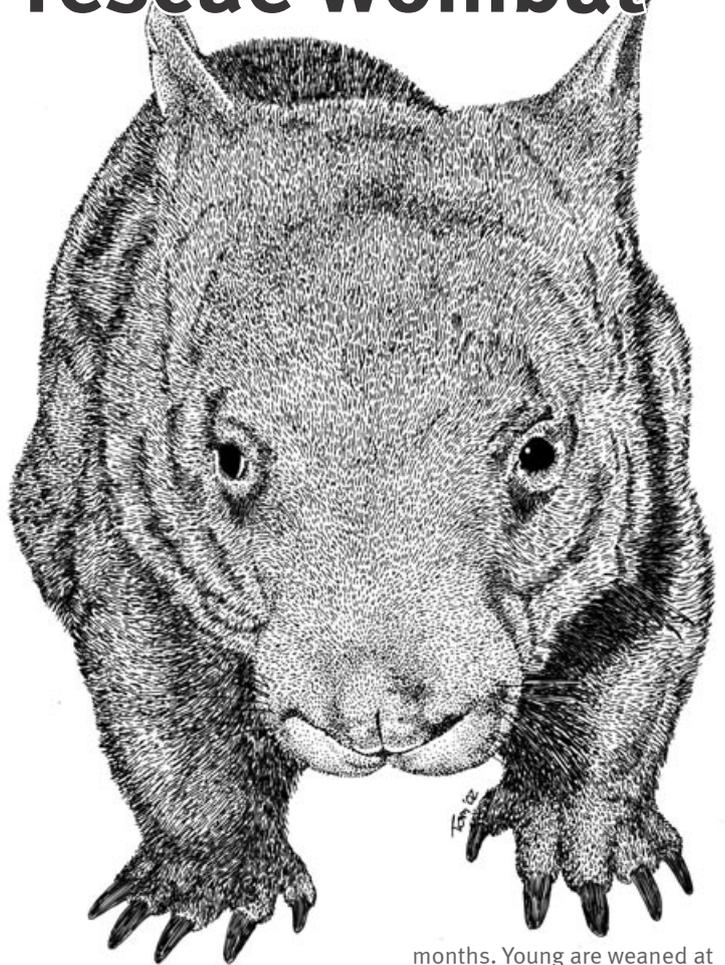
Volunteers also play an essential role at Epping Forest National Park. During my 13 years working on the northern hairy-nosed wombat, I have been assisted by literally hundreds of volunteers. Their duties have included

lugging heavy traps around to capture wombats (at all hours of the day and night!), collecting wombat hairs on double-sided sticky tape to extract DNA for new population estimates, and living on the park for a month at a time as Volunteer Caretakers.

The main role of Volunteer Caretakers is to monitor the security of the 20km-long dingo fence, which was built in 2002 after 10 wombats were killed by dingoes. The caretakers also assist with maintaining park equipment and infrastructure and with routine monitoring and research projects.

The caretaker program has been a win-win situation – the caretakers, mostly retired couples, gain a great deal of satisfaction in helping such a worthwhile project and the wombats and QPWS benefit.

Without the assistance of the community as carers or volunteers, many of the essential steps in the recovery of this unique species would not be possible. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of these unsung heroes.



## Species

**Description:** the largest of the three wombat species, it weighs an average 33kg and is one metre long. The hair is silky grey; the ears are large and upright. The nose is a broad muzzle covered in fine hairs. The eyes have dark patches around them.

**Behaviour:** mainly nocturnal, although it will sun at the burrow entrance on cool winter mornings and afternoons. Mostly solitary, its burrow is usually only shared when breeding. Time spent above ground is higher (six hours average) in the dry season (May to October) when food is scarcer and of poorer quality than in the wet season (two hours).

**Diet:** primarily grasses.

**Reproduction:** appears to breed all year round, switching off in droughts. Gestation is 33 days and pouch life is 8-9

months. Young are weaned at about 12 months but remain with the mother until about 18 months of age. Sexual maturity is at 2.5-3 years.

**Distribution:** Epping Forest National Park in central Queensland.

**Predators:** dingoes, feral dogs.

**Status:** endangered. There are only 113 left in one population, of which only 25 may be breeding females.

**Threatening processes:** competition for food with cattle, sheep and rabbits, particularly during droughts is probably the main reason the species disappeared so rapidly after European arrival in Australia. Current threats are the small size of the population and the fact that all individuals occur in one population, the skewed sex ratio (78 males: 25 females), disease, wildfire, and competition with kangaroos.

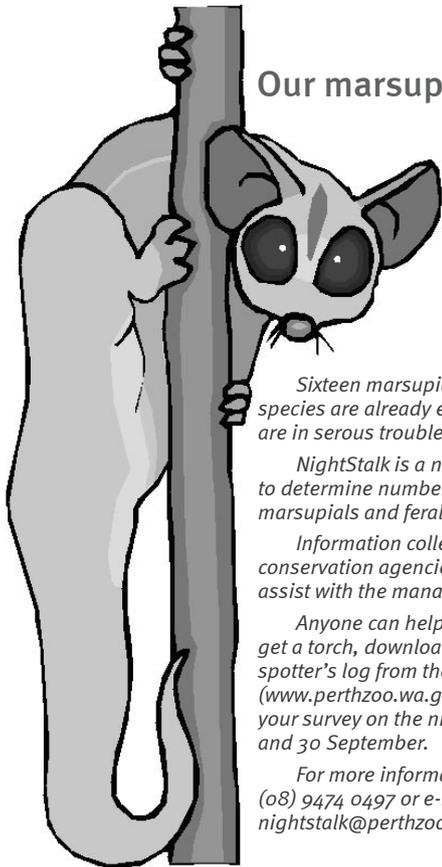
## Recovery work rewarded

Dr Alan Horsup has received the Australian Geographic Society's 2004 Conservation Award for his work on northern hairy-nosed wombats.

Dr Horsup, the co-ordinator of the northern hairy-nosed wombat recovery program,

received the prestigious award on 9 June.

Dr Horsup is the second QPWS employee to win the award – "Bilby Brother" Frank Manthey received the 2002 award.



## Our marsupials need help!

*Sixteen marsupial species or sub-species are already extinct and another 55 are in serious trouble.*

*NightStalk is a national spotlight survey to determine numbers and distribution of marsupials and feral pests.*

*Information collected is provided to conservation agencies across Australia to assist with the management of our wildlife.*

*Anyone can help. All you need to do is get a torch, download the instructions and a spotter's log from the Perth Zoo website ([www.perthzoo.wa.gov.au](http://www.perthzoo.wa.gov.au)) and complete your survey on the nights between 16 August and 30 September.*

*For more information please call (08) 9474 0497 or e-mail [nightstalk@perthzoo.wa.gov.au](mailto:nightstalk@perthzoo.wa.gov.au)*

## Praise for uni clinic

Brisbane wildlife carer Penelope Hacker recently took her wallaby to the University of Queensland after hours emergency service.

“My lovely 4.5kg wallaby Annie ate a small piece of the fruit of a native north Queensland poisonous plant (maybe I should re-christen her Eve...).

I found her at about 7.30pm, salivating, grinding her teeth in pain and obviously very ill.

I took her straight to UQ where the vet, Dr Lisa Bubb, put her on a drip.

Lisa didn't think Annie had much chance of survival but treated her anyway.

Next morning I rang expecting to hear the worst, but Lisa reported that she was a lot better and that I could collect her later in the morning.

When I went to pay the bill I was told there would be no charge.

She said the vets had monitored Annie throughout the night in the Intensive Care Unit.

The staff were professional, skilled and very kind.”

## Profile

by Sharon Oakley

In 1996 my husband Mark and I purchased a pet store in Cleveland. During that time people saw us as an “animal sanctuary”, giving us many and varied animals.

After two years, we decided to juggle wildlife care with our pet store life and joined Birds Injured Rehabilitated Orphaned (B.I.R.O) & Orphaned Native Animals Rear and Release (O.N.A.R.R).

These groups provided us with information, support and an opportunity to network.

The very first mammal I received through O.N.A.R.R. was a flying fox, which we named Battitude.

I was so overwhelmed by Battitude's eyes and personality that I am still the contact for the QPWS for bats emergencies in Brisbane after six years.

We closed our pet store in



2000 and became full-time wildlife carers.

Over the years we have rescued, raised and rehabilitated bats, flying foxes, ringtail and brushtail possums, wallabies, a variety of birds (my favourites are lorikeets, tawnys and magpies), gliders and lizards.

Recently we cared for three orphaned bandicoots, which are dream critters!

While it's sad to see animals go, I am relieved when we get our house back again and all the chairs and beds are dry! I regularly take the after hours phone calls for QPWS, which I enjoy immensely.

It's a pleasure to help the public by sharing our wildlife care knowledge.

I think one of my proudest moments was the release of a juvenile brushy. He came to me feeling flat and, as usual, it was a long weekend with not a vet to be seen.

I gave him fluids on day one and some Divet with baby cereal in a syringe on day two. By day three he was sitting up and interested in the Divet mix in his bowl.

On day four he was lapping and chewing mushed fruit and baby food. On day five he bit me! By day six he was eating solid food and was ready to be released.

To think I considered euthanasing him on the first day!

My favourite rescue was a female baby flying fox that was caught about 20m up a jacaranda tree. Together with fellow carer Jo Brooks (I used her as a ladder to the fork of the tree!), I tapped the branch and the baby came to me.

My favourite “pinkie” to date has to be my granddaughter Kortnie-Lee, born last November. She lives with us and her mum. Who'd have thought that being a “granny” at 44 could be so enjoyable?

And yes, she loves the wildlife!



## Who am I?

*Often called something I'm not*

*Although I have similar features,*

*Large talons I have not got*

*Yet I am one of the night's creatures.*

Send your answer to Debra Hotchkis, whose contact details appear on page 2.

Good luck!

# Group is mad about bats

by Sylvia Hood

In June 2002 a small group of bat carers on the Sunshine Coast decided to form a wildlife care group specialising in bats.

Our group, Bat Rescue Inc, felt that general wildlife organisations did not give bats the attention they needed and the funding required to really help their plight.

Our membership ranges from the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane, Gold Coast and Toowoomba.

Some of our members are also carers for general wildlife organisations, which is fantastic as we work in very closely with the other groups. For example, we provide Wildlife Volunteer Association (Wilvos) with our contact details because we don't have a 24-hour hotline and they direct their bat enquiries to our bat vaccinated carers.

We also provide a bat-rescue roster from October to November.

A grant from the Queensland Government's Gaming Community Benefit Fund really got us up and running.

We built a release facility, which is managed by Jan Davey, and we've bought equipment for up to five new carers to lend in their first year. -



Left to right: Megan Vella, Sylvia Hood, Leanne Baird (chair), Lyn Boston

The grant also provided us with the funds for high quality, portable display boards.

Apart from the hands-on caring, we believe the only way to beat misconceptions about bats is through education.

We have participated in more than a dozen displays at various festivals and workshops around the Sunshine Coast.

We have just received our second grant from the Community Benefit Fund. We have \$4656 to buy equipment and fund ABL vaccinations.

We will buy a shed to house our display materials etc and a digital camera, which will enable us to build a library of pictures for ID, education and research.

Last year we ran our first beginner's training course.

Our training is based on the teachings of Linda Collins.

Our aim is continue training new carers and offer advanced sessions every other year for carers who have completed their first bat season.

Our work with microbats usually involves microbat removal, which is a free service. However, we do insist the home or building owner provides an alternative roost site such as a microbat nest box. Alan and Stacey Franks from Hollowlog Homes have designed a bat box especially for bat removals.

We would be lost without our bat-vaccinated vets including Drs Vicki and Brendan Barker of Nambour, Drs Mark Powell and Mark Nicolas of Noosaville, and Dr Jon Hangar from Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital. One of

Australia's leading bat experts, Dr Les Hall, has helped us enormously with microbat ID workshops and public talks.

In 2002-03 we rescued 20 orphans, 14 juveniles/subadults and 47 adults. This year to date there has been 37 orphans (figures are not finalised for the other age groups). However, last year bats were coming into care very underweight, a sure sign of problems in the wild.

By collecting this type of data, we are starting to be able to predict what sort of bat season we will experience and be prepared.

Our weight analysis on the orphans is also very useful and, when combined with like data from other groups, is a very useful database. If good quality data were available from wildlife care organisations we would have some great information to share with researchers, government bodies and funding organisations about the health of our bat populations.

## Paper on bloat available

by Deborah Turnbull

On 19 May this year a group of about 30 carers had the opportunity to listen to the views of experienced wildlife vet David Blyde on a possible cause of bloat and sudden death in hand-raised mammals.

Sudden death is when an animal is perfectly healthy when you go to bed at night and dead in the morning.

*Clostridium perfringens* is a well-known and significant disease in some domesticated livestock.

*Clostridium perfringens* is a common bacterium that is a normal inhabitant of the gastro-intestinal tract in a number of animals, and under normal circumstances does not cause problems.

However, under certain

circumstances *Clostridium perfringens* produces a severe toxin that causes disease and can have devastating effects, including bloat and sudden death.

Diagnosis may be difficult, but there is a commercially available vaccine known as Ultravac 5 in 1 that has been used on domestic livestock for more than 15 years.

In his talk, David provided far more information than

is possible to include here. If you are a mammal carer and you are interested in reading a more detailed paper based on David's talk and viewing a vaccination schedule, e-mail me at [d.turnbull@griffith.edu.au](mailto:d.turnbull@griffith.edu.au) with "send clostridium paper" in the subject line.

I will send the paper by return e-mail. Please do not ask me any questions — I am just the messenger, not the expert!

# Profile

*Kingston carer Trixie Benbrook (pictured) is known as the Crow Lady.*

by Trixie Benbrook

I had promised to hold a garage sale to raise funds for wildlife. The day before the sale, someone left a beer carton (among miscellaneous sale items) on my doorstep.

Squawking drew my attention to the carton. Inside were four baby birds – I was horrified! These were **not** wind-up toys. I contacted the QPWS for help, but, by late afternoon, no-one had arrived. I rang again...

“Hi, what’s happening?” I asked.

“Sorry, I can’t locate the carer. Would you please look after them until tomorrow?” the QPWS officer said.

“But the garage sale’s tomorrow! I haven’t got time – besides I know nothing about birds,” I said.

From my description, they were identified. Crows!



The garage sale came and went but the birds didn’t! By Monday, I was desperate!

The phone rang – “The carer is away and there’s no-one else. Have you thought about becoming a carer?” the officer said.

“Who, me?” I asked.

“Nothing to it. Just feed them, house them, and release them,” the officer said.

I organised my permit and bought a 5’ x 4’ aviary. Practically overnight, I was swamped with calls to help sick and injured birds. Joe Public had found me!

Time passed and I blamed myself when birds died, couldn’t sleep and grew to

detest the phone as it meant more birds!

The vet couldn’t help me as he lacked wildlife knowledge. So much for “feed, house and release them” – what about all the “in between bits”? I was floundering, my confidence zero.

More time passed and my “black beauties” were growing. Their juvenile antics amused me, as did their attempts to expand their repertoire.

Bit by bit, they captured my heart... My anxiety waned and my passion grew.

The 5x4 aviary was just too small. I bought a 20’ x 20’ aviary. As I moved the four originals (plus 3 more, added over time) into the “palace”, hubby remarked, “I hope you guys appreciate your new home!” and patted his hip pocket... They did, and so did I.

Nine years on, aviaries cover our 900sq.m block. The patio, previously used for entertaining, houses spring babies.

I’ve found a great wildlife vet who’s also a great teacher. The stress of those “in between bits” has

lessened as my knowledge grew, gained from observation, research and other carers.

To pay the bills (aviaries, food, medication, petrol), I take photographs for greeting cards and wrote my first book *Something to Crow About*, which captures my feelings about crows in prose.

I frequently address schools, clubs and local government associations on wildlife and the environment.

Two television appearances have helped too, and a good rapport with the Logan City Council has led to some winning outcomes for the environment.

This year, I was honoured with an Australia Day award for service to the environment and wildlife.

Today I care for all kinds of birds from silver-eyes to kookaburras – and crows, of course. It began with a noisy beer carton. It was truly a rocky start. And I haven’t held a garage sale since...

*To buy Trixie’s work, write to 11 Antares Ave Kingston Qld 4112 or phone 07 3208 3512.*

## Warning about tick fever

by Rose-marie Maughan

My husband Bob and I are wildlife carers at Woodgate Beach, east of Childers.

In April we lost a female grey from “tick fever”.

During a routine inspection we removed a tick from behind her ear but did not consider it a problem.

In hindsight, perhaps we should have been more cautious as this tick was quite fat and bloated with blood.

Eightpence (pictured) soon became lethargic, began gnashing her teeth, ate little formula and was extremely reluctant to leave the pouch.

Two days after the tick was found, she was so lethargic that we carried out a detailed inspection and discovered she had pallid pink gums. This discovery promptly rang an alarm that screamed “anaemia”.

We took her to our vet in Bundaberg, who took blood tests. The vet also consulted Western Plains Zoo, who told her that in NSW a blood parasite had been found that is passed on by ticks.

It is a protozoan that lives in red blood cells.

On hearing the blood test results (PCV – 10, Protein 30g/dl), the zoo

recommended a plasma transfusion, but warned there was a slim chance of survival.

Because of the prognosis and the fact that we did not wish to subject on of our other roos to the trauma of supplying blood, we returned home and gave Eightpence some Panacur.

We also rang Australia Zoo to see if they could possibly provide a solution.

Australia Zoo informed us that they had recently euthanased an animal with similar symptoms.

They also told us that if this “tick fever” was found in time, the animal could be treated with Imizol, which is normally used on cattle.



This treatment is provided by a vet.

We are passing this on so that all carers are aware of this potential tick fever problem.

Learning from our experience, we have now examining the gums of all of our animals on a very regular basis.

*Rosie-marie and Bob have been ill with Q Fever. We wish them a speedy recovery. For information on Q Fever, see our January 2003 edition*

# Rosie's wrap

by Rosie Booth

Many people are unaware that the disease-causing organism salmonella can be transmitted from reptiles and amphibians to people, particularly to children under five years of age.

In the United States, with their larger population density, reptile-associated salmonella is seen as a serious public health issue and there is excellent information on this disease available on the website of the CDC (Centre for Disease Control) [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

Salmonella infection can cause a severe and potentially fatal gastroenteritis, especially in very young or very old people. Reptiles are commonly colonised with

salmonella and shed the organism intermittently in their faeces.

Attempts to treat reptiles with antibiotics to eliminate salmonella carriage have been unsuccessful.

Salmonella survives well in the environment and can be isolated for prolonged periods from surfaces contaminated by reptile faeces. For this reason, even minimal indirect contact with reptiles can result in illness.

Many kinds of animals can pass salmonellosis to people. Usually, people get salmonellosis by eating contaminated food, such as chicken or eggs. Reptiles (lizards, snakes, and turtles), baby chicks and ducklings are especially likely to pass salmonellosis to people. Dogs, cats, birds (including pet birds),



horses, and farm animals can also pass salmonella in their faeces.

Some people are more likely than others to get salmonellosis. People who are more likely to get salmonellosis include infants, children younger than five, organ transplant patients, people with HIV/AIDS, and people receiving treatment for cancer.

There are also a range of other diseases that can be transmitted from pets to their owners. A list of diseases and their links can be found at [www.cdc.gov/healthypets/browse\\_by\\_diseases.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/browse_by_diseases.htm).

## safety tips

- Keep reptiles and amphibians out of households that include children under five years of age or someone who is immuno-compromised.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling reptiles and amphibians or their cages.
- Do not wash reptiles or amphibians or their dishes, cages or aquariums in the kitchen sink. Clean the bathtub with disinfectant if you use that instead.

# Profile

by Julie "Chook" Larson

I joined the EPA in 1999 as a Trainer/Youth Worker with the Youth Conservation Corps, later moving to the Conservation Employment Initiatives (CEI) unit.

Having extensive experience as a youth worker and a passion for the environment this was an exciting new chapter in my career path.

I thoroughly enjoyed working in the field and was fortunate enough to be welcomed into many park management units from Carnarvon Gorge to Fraser Island.

The highlight of my experience was my on-site involvement in project work at Palm Grove National Park, Tamborine Mountain. I must say a special thanks to my co-worker John Grayson who supported



my learning and skill development.

I was appointed Senior Ranger (Wildlife) at Daisy Hill Koala Centre in August 2003.

The centre is a well-established educational facility with a focus on koala conservation.

Rangers run quality holiday programs and many visitors come to the centre.

Being new to the wildlife team I have experienced a huge learning curve in dealing with sick, injured and orphaned wildlife.

My on-the-ground experience with the rescue

service at Daisy Hill has given me a greater appreciation for the work done by dedicated carers and volunteers.

To gain a greater understanding of wildlife, I raised two brushtail possums, a few ringtail possums and a red-necked wallaby. Needless to say my home life had a dramatic change!

I have met with various carers, wildlife groups and volunteers who have demonstrated a wealth of knowledge and experience in wildlife rescue and rehabilitation.

It is evident that these dedicated people have many ideas to improve service delivery and I believe that the establishment of QWRC will foster positive involvement.

I encourage carers to participate in any QWRC initiatives to promote their ideas.

## QWRC contacts

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**Debra Hotchkiss**  
Ph: 5520 9643

# Herbert melts Stacey's heart



by Stacey Gordon

The story of Herbert (above) the bush-hen started one afternoon when my daughter Melanie and I were tending to our horses. I found the egg on the track. I picked it up and took it back to the car, placing it carefully in a face washer and handing it to Melanie saying, "Here, you hold Herbert".

The name stuck.

## Discovering Herbert

I candled the egg and saw that it was fresh, probably laid that day. Candling is when you shine a light, usually a small torch, through the egg to view its contents. This has to be done in darkness or under a blanket.

I incubated the egg between 36-37.5 deg. in an electric frypan. I set up our camp oven to sit the egg on and used two 12mm blocks of wood to lift the lid for ventilation. Pouring water into the pan provided humidity.

Getting the temperature right took two days. I used a common household thermometer I purchased from the hardware store. Keeping the temperature stable through the incubation of three weeks was the most difficult part.

I put the egg in the incubator in the afternoon and did not turn it for 24

hours, although I checked the temperature regularly. I drew a cross in pencil on one side of the egg and a circle on the other so that I could turn it all the way round. This helps to keep the embryo from sticking to one side.

I turned the egg every three hours and at the same time added water to the pan to keep the humidity constant. I was careful not to wet the egg as eggs are porous and water contains bacteria.

## A breakthrough

Day five I decided to candle the egg. To my astonishment an embryo was developing inside. I instantly became clucky.

I kept the temperature, humidity and ventilation consistent through the next few weeks. I candled it a few times to check that it was still growing. Into the third week I noticed slight movement when turning it. I became even cluckier!

Day 22 I heard cheeping coming from the egg and noticed the movement had increased. There was a small crack visible in the larger end of the egg. Although there was movement and cheeping, the chick was not breaking his way out. This should not continue longer than 12 hours. If it does the chick is weak and needs help.

I started picking open the egg slowly and with extreme care. Over the next four hours, I picked away pieces of eggshell and rolled back the membranes, resting the egg in the incubator to see if Herbert could bust out himself. I had picked away half of the shell when Herbert gave a little weak push and flopped out into the palm of my hand.

## Nursing the newborn

The brooder box I had prepared was not warm

enough and Herbert got cold. I held him in my hands to warm him and slept on the couch with him on my chest. In the morning I put him in a smaller box with a desk lamp providing warmth. He was very weak.

I phoned our vet Annabelle Olsson. She said to give him one or two drops of honey and water (1 teaspoon honey to 1 cup water) every hour. Three hours later Herbert was gaining strength and I gave him a mix of finely minced kangaroo meat, high protein farex, insectivore mix with vitamins, protexin (for gut problems) and calcium.

Herbert's feet grew rapidly until his toes were 5cm long and his legs were about 10cm long, he had a duckling shaped body and a chicken's head. When he was glad to see you he would wiggle his little wings up and down. He chattered incessantly and I spent many nights on the couch with Herbert snuggled on my chest so that the other members of the house could sleep.

## The family grows

I received a little rail chick when Herbert was 10 days old. He wouldn't have anything to do with it for days, but they did become friends. I received two more bush-hen chicks over the next few weeks.

When chick number four came along I bought a second-hand cat aviary. I also had borrowed a small enclosure from another carer. The rail became aggressive towards the bush-hens, so I took him to Kuranda where he was released.

The three bush-hens played in the garden and ventured into the rainforest throughout the day and at night they came into the house and slept in the

bathroom. I miss them but that is what caring for wildlife is all about: rehabilitation and release.

Note: Herbert has since found a mate and has a family!

## hope for hoppy



Shayne Allanson and Hoppy

A young cassowary mentioned in our January edition is being tracked by the QPWS in north Queensland.

Hoppy spent nine months in the QPWS Garner Beach Cassowary Rehabilitation Facility before being released prior to Christmas last year.

He was found with a broken leg when he was two days old.

QPWS Ranger-in-Charge of the cassowary facility Shayne Allanson said rangers using a radio-tracking device on board a charter flight over the area in mid May had picked up a signal.

It told them that Hoppy was alive and well and living at Seymour Range near Mission Beach.

Hoppy was released north of Innisfail in November but had not been detected for some time.

Tracking Hoppy's signal will help improve knowledge of these endangered birds and that rehabilitation efforts are worthwhile.