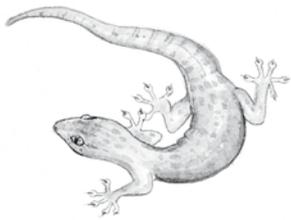


# RnR Rehabilitate and Release

keeping carers informed

Issue 9 • March 2006



## Minister signs Memorandum of Understanding

The Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (QWRC) committee have been hard at work developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between QWRC and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). The MOU was signed on 28 November, 2005 by the Chairperson of QWRC and the Minister for Environment, Desley Boyle.

The MOU provides a framework for on-going co-operation between QWRC and QPWS with the aim of improving welfare, rehabilitation and conservation outcomes for native wildlife in Queensland. Importantly, the MOU states that QWRC will operate independently. The relationship between QWRC and QPWS is defined as a partnership approach, with co-operative follow-up on mutually agreed issues. Two representatives from QWRC and QPWS will meet twice a year to monitor the progress of joint activities.

Two major undertakings by QWRC will be to establish an electronic communication network among wildlife rehabilitators across Queensland, and to produce *RnR*. The production of *RnR* is underway, and the development of a QWRC website is not far behind. These processes are being supported by QPWS, and their advice and co-operation have been invaluable. All bodes well for a long and productive association between QWRC and QPWS.



Annie Saunders, chair of QWRC and Desley Boyle, Minister for Environment sign the Memorandum of Understanding in the presence of other QWRC councillors.

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This is a landmark edition of *RnR* - the first published by the Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council. Being the first, there are people to thank, the biggest "thank you" going to Debra Hotchkis from QPWS for all the hours she put into getting the first eight issues of *RnR* out to carers. Thanks too, to the many carers who have contributed to the newsletter. You don't have to be a Rhodes Scholar to write for *RnR*, you just need an interesting story. So keep them coming.

We hope to have a 'theme' running through each edition. This edition, the theme is feral or introduced species. There are articles on foxes, cats and red-eared sliders - please take time to read these so you can better understand their impacts on natives and the environment. The next edition will focus on 'rescues'. If you have any funny, sad or interesting rescue tales then send them in. The cut-off date for stories for the next issue will be 15 July, 2006. At this stage Debra Hotchkis is still collecting stories for us so send your stories to her. Her contact details are on page 11.

In the middle of the newsletter is a tear-out flying fox survey. If you are a bat carer please take the time to complete and return this survey. Establishing a data-base of carers will help put needy animals into the hands of carers more efficiently.

cheers, Reg (*RnR* editorial group)



## QWRC Chair's report

Well here we are with the first totally QWRC edition of *RnR*.

I am writing this at a time when all rehabbers are very busy, both with animals coming in requiring assistance and with the busy lead up to Christmas and the end of yet another year.

QWRC has come such a long way since our first meeting in May 2003. It is gratifying to see our member numbers steadily growing as more and more of you realise what benefits there are in being a member of a state wide peak body. We at QWRC are not here to replace your local groups but to assist all rehabilitators by being the unified voice to push for the changes all rehabbers have wanted for so long. You should be hearing from your local representative in the next few weeks to organise a meeting of rehabbers in your local district. This meeting will be the first step towards setting up local QWRC committees and the elections of new district reps.

It was with great pleasure and pride that we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with QPWS on 28th November 2005. Through this MOU, QWRC and QPWS agree to work together to advance all issues relating to rescue, rehabilitation, welfare and release of native wildlife.

A QWRC sub-committee is busily working on the minimum standards required for training packages. When the work is completed individuals and groups will be able to submit their training packages to QWRC to be checked against these standards. If these minimum standards are met the package will be given a QWRC stamp of approval in recognition that it meets the minimum criteria. This will mean that all rehabbers can be confident that the course they are about to undertake will give them a good understanding of the subject.

I hope that you have all had a Happy Christmas and are looking forward to a prosperous New Year. We at QWRC look forward to welcoming more rehabbers from around the state to our ranks throughout the year.

Best wishes to you all, Annie Saunders (Chair QWRC)

Dear Wildlife Carer

As you are probably aware, fine mono-filament netting when used on backyard fruit trees, kills hundreds, if not thousands of wildlife every year in Qld.

This is an ever increasing problem as this unsuitable type of netting becomes more and more accessible to the public as hardware companies sell vast quantities by the meter from huge rolls or in convenient compact packages.

NSW and Victorian carers are currently keeping data on the number of rescues they perform due to netting. Also the outcome for the animals caught, whether they were released, euthanased or rehabilitated. We need the same data in Queensland. If you could, please record this information and send it to [louisesaunders@bigpond.net.au](mailto:louisesaunders@bigpond.net.au) or call Louise on (07) 3821 0166.

For those of us working to get mandatory labelling on these lethal products it is critical we get this information from you.

Yours sincerely  
Louise Saunders, Flying fox sub-committee member, QWRC

**Do you like the line drawings on the front and scattered throughout the newsletter? A wonderful set of drawings was donated to QWRC for exclusive use in RnR. It is the only place you will see them. The generous artist is Louise Saunders. THANK YOU Louise!**

### It's the lingo, by jingo!

Do you know what a Gram stain is? What about co-prophagy? Do you know what the following abbreviations stand for?

HBC	BID
IM	NAD

Find the answers on page 9.

## Bat Rescue Gold Coast

Bat Rescue Inc., Gold Coast (a branch of Bat Rescue Inc. based on the Sunshine Coast) is a small group with big ideals. Although bat rescues and rehabilitation are important parts of the group's activities, their main focus is to assist local flying fox colonies by promoting their ecological importance through a range of education and conservation activities. Members believe that by looking after the colonies the animals will look after themselves, hopefully resulting in a reduction in the number of rescues needed.



Photo: Gary & Vicki Bressan and Bob James at the Cascade Gardens site.

The first major project undertaken by the group was "Cascades Gardens Flying Fox Colony Enhancement and Management Project". With the imminent construction of the new Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre (which is adjacent to the Cascades Gardens colony in Broadbeach, near Surfers Paradise), a proposal for a fly-out observation deck and interpretative signage was submitted to Jupiters Limited. Once agreement in principle was received from Jupiters, work on the finer details of the project commenced culminating in a project plan with a total value of \$60,000. Funding for the project was sought through Threatened Species Network for the interpretative signage and bushcare aspects of the plan and a total grant of \$16,000 was approved. The balance of the funding was made up of in-kind donations by other agencies.

Positive feedback and keen interest has already been expressed by other wildlife groups who are keen to replicate the signage and project methodology at their own local colonies.

The Cascades Project was undertaken by BRGC members Robert and Jenny James, Gary and Vicki Bressan who wish to gratefully acknowledge the input and support of the following: Craig Devlin, Development Executive Jupiters Limited; Scott Hetherington, Wildlife Ranger QPWS; Dr Greg Richards, Greg Richards & Associates Pty Ltd; Nicola Markus Ph.D, National Coordinator Threatened Species Network; Ron Jacobs & Phil Watts, Gold Coast City Council; Dr Adrian Volders, Natural Resource Management SE Qld; Sally Spain & Doug White, WPSQ Gold Coast & Hinterland Branch; Bat Rescue Inc Sunshine Coast.

## Time well spent

Robyn Millington from Bundaberg is celebrating her decision to sacrifice three days (and evenings) to attend a workshop on Macropods. The workshop was hosted by the Gympie branch of Wild-care Australia, and presented by Lynda Staker who shared her wealth of knowledge and experience in the care of macropods.

The workshop covered a wide array of topics including the diagnosis of disease, fluid therapy in macropods, emergency care when a vet is not at hand and, of course, raising pinkies. The presentation was well supported with visual aides.

The 'little things' were well taken care of too, including meals, and those other little things - the babies. A nursery was set up and, with the exception of a few escapees, all the youngsters were very well behaved.

Along with the workshop, a manual written by Lynda was available. As with all such events, the networking with other carers also provided a source of learning.

## Robyn goes wild



Ranger Stacey and the crew from Totally Wild dropped in on Robyn Millington to check on the progress of Noah, an eight month old eastern grey joey that had been mauled by a dog.

Noah was one of the lucky ones to survive such an ordeal and there is no argument that this is a situation where prevention is definitely better than cure. Cat and dog attacks are avoidable if people care enough to control their pets. Making a TV star out of some of our charges is one way of educating the public about some of the perils facing our wildlife, and hopefully people will begin to change their behaviour as a result.

## Congratulations!

Congratulations to Jenny McLean on being presented with the prestigious Cassowary Award for community conservation work. This award acknowledges outstanding contributions by members of the community to conservation in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Jenny's work includes the establishment and running of the Tolga Bat Hospital, caring for flying foxes (in particular the spectacled flying fox), and raising community awareness and understanding. Well done Jenny.

## Positions Vacant

**Grants Officer** - The grants officer will assist the Treasurer with seeking and applying for grants. Experience with grant application is preferred but not necessary. If you are interested, contact the Treasurer.

Vicky Dawson

100 Chadwick Drive, Maclean 4280

Home Ph: 3200 0592 Mob: 0419 675 437

Email: vicky@rockpres.com.au

**Story Collectors** - *RnR* is an avenue for carers to share their experiences. To facilitate the story collection process we would like a number of story collectors from across the state. You don't need to write the stories, just collect them from other carers and send them in to the editor. Contact Debra Hotchkis if you can help.

Debra Hotchkis

Wildlife Ranger, QPWS

PO Box 3454, Burleigh Heads Q 4220

debra.hotchkis@epa.qld.gov.au

The QWRC executive committee would like to thank the Queensland Government Community Benefit Fund for their financial support.



Gambling

**Community  
Benefit Fund**

Queensland Government

# The humble moggy - friend or foe?

*Irene and Fran are wildlife carers in Brisbane. Both see the results of interactions between free-roaming cats and wildlife but they do not blame the cats ...*

Cats are instinctive hunters, and keeping them well-fed will not stop them killing wildlife, but keeping them inside will. You can't train it out of the cat or teach it not to hunt, but it is usually just as happy to 'hunt' a ball of paper on a piece of string. Wildlife carers know these things. They see thousands of cat attack victims each year from cats that are allowed to roam freely in the great outdoors where wildlife live.

Cats do not always eat the animals they catch, and they do not always take them home. This possum or bird is probably not the first the cat has caught, and no it won't be all right just because you can't see any blood!

Cats do not always kill outright, they may bite the animal, carry it around then play with it for a while. This means the animal will be very stressed and may have puncture wounds, scratches and bruising. There may be damage to internal organs, nerves and muscles. Wounds easily become infected and must be well cleaned. A course of antibiotics is usually required, and the deadly effect of stress cannot be underestimated. Irene is honest with people about the prospects of survival - that there is a high likelihood the animal will die as result of the cat attack., "I don't ease their conscience, and I ring them when the animal dies or is euthanased". Sometimes it makes a difference and people will take steps to be more responsible for their pet's behaviour.

So, try to educate people about being more responsible eco-friendly cat owners. It's the owners, not the cats who are the cause of the problem. Not only will

**There are three types of cats: feral, free-roaming domestic and indoor. Feral cats have no 'owner', live and breed on the streets, and may be riddled with parasites or disease.**

**Free-roaming cats have 'owners' but are often found on the streets. They are allowed to roam free during the day, at night, or both. Free-roaming cats may inter-breed with feral cats, incur injuries from fights with other cats or acquire disease. Both feral and free-roaming cats are a hazard to wildlife.**

**Indoor cats are wildlife-friendly. Their owners are responsible for their cats and keep them either inside or in a cat-run. Sometimes they may be allowed outside for a short period of supervised play. Indoor cats cause no problems for wildlife.**

responsible owners be saving wildlife, they will also be reducing the chance their pet will be injured or contract a disease from other free-roaming cats.

Don't just kick the cat out for the night (or day). Keep it inside the house or in a cat-run. These can be home made or a commercial custom built version. Just make sure it is secure so the cat does not injure itself trying to get out and wildlife cannot get in. If the cat is allowed outside time, put bells on it's collar - under the chin and on the back of the neck. A desexed cat is less likely to roam, particularly male cats, so encourage people to have their cats desexed. This also helps reduce the number of unwanted kittens. People sometimes dump unwanted kittens, and any survivors will grow up to become feral cats.

Cats quickly adjust to being inside animals if they are given appropriate toys to keep them busy. A cat that has been kept inside from the very beginning will not miss being outside and will be just as healthy and contented as a cat that is allowed to roam free.

by Irene Robertson  
& Fran Sanders.

## Australian Animal Welfare Strategy

The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) is a \$6 million national strategy aimed at improving standards of animal welfare. Action plans will be developed for six categories, including animals in the wild, companion and production animals and those used for entertainment or research. QWRC (and our friends at the RSPCA) will be following the development of the 'animals in the wild' category with interest.

Find out more at: [www.daff.gov.au/aaws](http://www.daff.gov.au/aaws)

*Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council*

There is no rule that says wildlife carers cannot have pet cats, but wildlife and domestic animals must be kept well separated from each other. If wildlife associates the sight, sound or smell of cats (or dogs) with a safe environment in which they are fed and nurtured, they will not recognise domestic pets as potential predators and their safety on release will be compromised.

## The impact of introduced species on biodiversity

by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines

Pest animals are estimated to have a national impact of \$720 million annually on our environment and industries. There is recognition within the community that we must do more to combat the problem.

Anecdotal evidence, and confirmed reports, suggest that some pest species are handed into carers as injured or orphaned animals; they are then cared for and released back into the wild. This is both illegal and irresponsible when you consider the bigger picture of our unique native fauna and flora.

Queensland has a large number of introduced exotic and naturalised species which will potentially impact on our biodiversity, economy, social and human health values.

Under the Natural Resources & Mines (NR&M) Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002, there are schedules of various classes of pest animals; breaches of the Act can attract fines of up to \$60,000 per offence. Unless you have a permit, it is an offence under the Act to feed, keep or release a declared pest animal. Animals that are not declared under state legislation may have control requirements imposed by local governments.

In conclusion, as a group of dedicated wildlife carers, you can see the problem is far greater than just nursing an injured animal back to health and releasing it. At the top of the food chain we have a lot to answer for with the introduction of these and other species to Australia's unique environment. NR&M has the responsibility in Queensland for the control of these and other exotic species and we are asking for your help.

If you have had a declared pest animal handed into you or have seen one and wish to report its location please contact your local Council Pest Management /Environmental Officer or NR&M on 1800 999367. The animal will be collected and humanely disposed of.

### EUROPEAN FOXES

Fox predation is the greatest threat to the long-term survival of many small marsupial species in Australia. Next to wild dogs, foxes are the largest land-dwelling carnivorous mammal in Australia.

Introduced to Australia in 1845 near Melbourne for sporting purposes, foxes spread rapidly to become a nuisance by 1893, occupying most of southern Australia by 1930. Today, foxes are found as far north as world heritage listed Daintree National Park.

The fox is an adaptable mammal, thriving in a range of habitats from desert to urban environments.

They have played a major role in the decline of a number of native species such as ground nesting birds, green turtles, small to medium sized mammals such as the greater bilby and quolls. It is thought that they have caused severe reductions in populations of many other threatened species including the bridge nail-tail wallaby and the night parrot. Fox predation also impacts on farmers, as lambs and goat kids are a target species of the fox.

Foxes, like other feral animals have the potential to spread diseases such as rabies or hydatid tape worm that can impact on human health. Rabies is not established in Australia, but is present in Asia. In the Northern Hemisphere foxes are the principle vectors of rabies with millions culled in attempts to control the disease. Once symptoms appear the virus is fatal to both humans and animals.

Foxes are a Class 2 declared pest in Queensland, they cannot be kept or introduced without a permit. Control is the responsibility of landholders.



PESTS, FERALS, EXOTICS, INTRODUCED, VERMIN, PESTS, FERALS, EXOTICS,

## **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

### Spectacled flying fox breeding season

Dear Wildlife Carer

The 2004/05 breeding season of the nationally threatened spectacled flying fox in far north Queensland (FNQ) coincided with one of its worst tick paralysis seasons ever experienced. An extremely high number of orphaned spectacled flying fox came into care at the Tolga Bat Hospital. This overwhelming number of orphans far exceeded local carer capacity and many were sent to carers in Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane. A total of 90 orphans were reared in southeast Queensland with 25 in Rockhampton and 50 Townsville, all were returned to FNQ for release.

As a result of this event, the Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (QWRC) has established a flying fox sub-committee (FFSC) to develop relevant guidelines to deal with any future crisis situations involving spectacled flying foxes.

The guidelines include identifying in advance those carers who may be able to assist by caring for orphaned spectacled flying fox should the need arise. It is necessary to implement protocols and guidelines for the rearing of orphaned spectacled flying fox out of their geographical range. This will maximise the efficiency of the rescue effort, as well as ensuring the animals receive optimal care without compromising the health or welfare of local flying fox species. This document or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be an agreement between QWRC, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the Tolga Bat Hospital.

Carers who volunteer to participate in rearing an orphaned spectacled flying fox will be required to sign the MOU. This document will contain a number of conditions and carers must sign this agreement prior to receiving any spectacled flying fox.

- Yes - I would like to assist in an SFF crisis situation
- No - I do not wish to assist in an SFF crisis situation
- Yes - I would like to assist in a crisis situation that affects local species.

Do you agree that the information you provide relating to spectacled flying fox may be added to the flying fox carer network database.       Yes       No

### **FLYING FOX CARER NETWORK DATABASE**

Dear Wildlife Carer

This survey is an initiative of the flying fox sub-committee (FFSC) operating under the Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (QWRC).

The purpose of the survey is to create a statewide database of flying fox carers that will allow more efficient networking and co-ordination of effort throughout the bat season across Queensland (Qld).

It is important to set in motion a rapid response to any crisis situation that may occur, for this we require assistance from carers across many carer groups. Examples of this might be heat stress within a colony or a high tick season in Far North Qld. Any number of situations may arise that require the network to be contacted, and this database will facilitate this requirement.

It is anticipated that the database will be maintained by QWRC and accessed upon legitimate requests by FFSC members or delegates. Your co-operation in completing this survey is much appreciated and you will become a valuable resource for flying fox welfare in Queensland.

Do you agree that the information you have provided may become part of a working database of flying-fox carers?       Yes       No

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

To be returned to: Flying Fox Survey, QWRC, PO Box 1481, Capalaba Q 4157

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Name: .....  
Residential Address: .....  
Postal Address: .....  
Contact No's Home: ..... Work: .....  
Mobile: ..... Fax: .....  
Email Address: .....

Do you hold an individual rehabilitation permit, which includes bats?

- No
- Yes Permit No: .....  
Issuing Office: .....

Are you a member of a wildlife care group? Yes / No

Please list name(s) of group and their contact details .....

If there is an area flying fox coordinator, please supply their name and contact details: .....

Are you vaccinated for rabies?

- No
- Yes, date and result of last titre level .....

**EXPERIENCE IN FLYING FOX CARING**

How many years have you been caring for flying foxes? .....

Have you undertaken any training workshops relating to the rescue, rehabilitation and release of flying foxes?

- No
- Yes Approximate date of last workshop .....  
Name of trainer or group .....

Do you follow a specific caring manual?

- No
- Yes Please state which one(s) .....

Which milk formula is your preference for rearing orphaned flying foxes? .....

Do you undertake weekly weight and forearm measurements of orphaned young in care?

- No
- Yes

Do you submit any data to your group/EPA/ other?

- No
- Yes Please state: .....

Please tick the boxes that relates to your present circumstances:

- rear orphaned young flying-foxes
- rescue, stabilise orphaned young flying foxes
- rescue & rehabilitate adult flying-foxes
- Other, please explain .....

Have you reared multiple flying foxes before?

- No
- Yes - how many (maximum) .....

Do you feel that there are enough flying fox carers in your area?

- No
- Yes

Do you think there is a coordinated approach to flying fox caring?

- Yes
- No

If no, why do you believe so?

.....  
.....

If you rehabilitate adult or sub-adult flying foxes please give details of experience and caging facilities that you have .....

.....

Have you undertaken any study/research or have information related to flying foxes that may be useful in this database? If so please give details .....

.....

### **HOUSING DETAILS**

Do you have a room or cage set up in which your orphaned young flying fox can be housed securely in the earlier stages of flight development?

- No
- Yes - please give details .....

.....

Do you have outside caging that can be used for crèching?

- No
- Yes

What are the dimensions of the cage?

Height (m) ..... Width (m) ..... Length (m) .....

From what materials is the cage made? .....

Is the cage in part protected from the weather and snake proof?

- No
- Yes

How many flying foxes can it comfortably hold? .....

Have you grouped bats together for crèche/release before?

- No
- Yes, my last crèche was held ..... (year) and how many have you grouped? .....

### **OTHER ANIMALS**

Do you have any permanent wildlife species in care?

- No
- Yes, please specify species and number .....

.....

Do you have any domestic animals?

- No
- Yes please specify species and number .....
- .....

Do you care for other species of wildlife during flying-fox orphan season?

- No
- Yes, please specify .....
- .....

**COST OF CARING**

Do you currently pay a fee for taking your bat to crèche, release or both?

- No
- Yes If yes, how much?
  - \$\_\_\_\_\_ crèche per bat
  - \$\_\_\_\_\_ release per bat
  - \$\_\_\_\_\_ crèche and release per bat

Do you pay a reduced fee for multiple bats?

- No
- Yes, please specify

**RELEASE SITES**

Where do you expect to release your orphans for the 2005-2006 season? .....

.....

Have you been satisfied with the release procedures of past years? .....

.....

**OTHER ACTIVITIES**

Would you be interested in participating in any of the following? (please tick)

- Public Education
- BattySearch
- Colony Monitoring
- Carer Education
- Publicity
- Colony re-vegetation
- Other conservation activities

If you live near a colony, are you interested in or do you monitor flying fox behaviour i.e., birthing, mating, increase and decreases in populations, ibis impact etc.?

- Yes
- No

Comment .....

Do you have any other comments you would like to make in regards to flying foxes that you would like added to this database e.g. mortality rates/injuries/environmental concerns in your area? .....

.....

.....

Thank you for your assistance and co-operation in completing this survey  
Please returned by the 31/03/06 to:  
Flying Fox Survey, QWRC, PO Box 1481, Capalaba Q 4157

## RED EARED SLIDER TURTLES



In Queensland, red-eared slider turtles (REST) were first reported to NR&M in January 2004. Initial reports involved two specimens from Kallangur and Mango Hill in Pine Rivers Shire, near Brisbane. Subsequent investigations found infestations at a number of locations in the area.

Following investigations by NR&M's Compliance Unit, 22 specimens were seized from a private residence in Lawton, which resulted in a successful prosecution of a General Practitioner at the Petrie Magistrates Court and fine of \$5,000.

REST are thought to have been introduced into Australia as a pet in the 1960's. Today there is evidence of a continuing illegal pet trade in exotic species including these turtles, other reptiles and mammals. The turtle when small is an attractive aquarium pet; however as they mature and become more aggressive they eventually dominate the aquarium. As a mature adult they will inflict a painful bite and subsequently are often irresponsibly dumped in our waterways.

REST pose a serious threat to our biodiversity. In some locations REST have displaced all native species of turtles and tortoises.

In a pest assessment they are classified as an Extreme Risk scoring 13 out of a possible 14 points to establish itself in Queensland.

This pest is now a well-established problem in many parts of the world. It has been nominated among the 'world's 100 worst' invaders by the World Conservation Union and is considered a major threat to biodiversity.

They are prolific breeders laying multiple clutches of eggs per annum, they may carry diseases and large specimens may inflict a painful bite.

In excess of 150 REST, including pregnant females carrying viable eggs, have been captured in various

*Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council*

locations in the Pine Rivers Shire. REST were located in the environmentally sensitive areas adjacent to the Tinchi Tamba Wetlands and Einbunpin Lagoon in Brisbane's north as well as specimens being handed in by residents of the Gold and Sunshine Coast. A specimen was also intercepted at Brisbane Airport.

To address this threat a REST Taskforce was established with NR&M as the lead agency and involving Pine Rivers Shire Council, Brisbane City Council and Caloundra City Council, QPWS, Queensland Museum and Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F).

The taskforce has dealt with a number of issues including:

- Animal welfare ie humane disposal of the animals
- Effective trapping methods including the development and manufacture of a basking trap as well as the draining and filling of farm dams that were no longer used
- Training and introduction of 'Angus' a sniffer dog to the program
- Extensive survey work
- Community consultation and involvement of community groups.

To date in excess of \$300,000 has been spent in eradicating this environmental vandal.

In coming months the taskforce members will intensify ongoing survey and trapping in a number of locations in south-east Queensland.

The red-eared slider turtle could become a serious ecological pest with the potential to cause significant damage to native turtles, fish, frogs and other fauna. This turtle can be a carrier of disease such as Salmonella.

The sliders have few natural predators in Australia. When a fish swallows it whole, it will hold its breath and eat at the fish's stomach until it is regurgitated. Permitted trappings and surveys in south-east Queensland to determine the extent of the incursion are ongoing by the task force.



The map shows the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service's regions and districts that have been adopted by QWRC. There are three regions that divide into eleven districts. District boundaries are determined by local government shire boundaries.



Vacancies exist for councillors in the following districts:

- Wet Tropics/Cairns Marine
- Longreach
- South West
- Toowoomba

Absent:

- Penny Johnson, Cape York/Dry Tropics/Gulf.
- Pat Hendrickson, Mackay/Whitsunday.
- Judy Elliott, Wide Bay Burnett/Great Sandy.
- Greg Mc Dougall, representing DPI&F

If you live in one of the districts that does not currently have a representative, why not consider putting your hand up? The committee meets six times a year, with as many people as possible meeting in Brisbane. Those who cannot make it to Brisbane are linked up via a telephone conference call. A councillor must have good communication skills, be organised, and have an interest in some of the 'big picture' issues. E-mail access is essential and you must be a member of QWRC.

If this sounds like you, send your CV to the Secretary, Julie Firkins, at PO Box 1481, Capalaba Q 4157; fax (07) 3822 2248; or e-mail [wildlife@bigpond.net.au](mailto:wildlife@bigpond.net.au)



# Meet QWRC

Meet the QWRC team, including district councillors and our buddies from QPWS, RSPCA, WPSQ and DPI&F. The following list provides the person's name, the district (or outside group) they represent and their position on QWRC.

Standing (from left):

- Julie Firkins, representing Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, and Secretary.
- Glendell Appleford, Sunshine Coast/Southern Marine, and Minutes Secretary.
- Annie Saunders, Capricorn/Gladstone, and Chair.
- Gail Gipp, South East/Moreton Bay, and Vice-Chair.
- Vicky Dawson, South East/Moreton Bay, and Treasurer.
- Len Beikhoff, South East/Moreton Bay.
- Eleanor Pollock, Savannah/Townsville Marine.

Seated (from left):

- Debra Hotchkis, representing QPWS
- Janet Gamble, representing RSPCA.

## Carer Profile

Meet Margaret Christison - she might be a relatively new carer, but she is already a dab hand with birds, possums, flying foxes ...



Margaret with Abby the brushtail possum.

Margaret has been a registered wildlife carer for 18 months, and during that short time she has been kept busy with the full suite of carer activities - rescues, rehabilitation, releases, and rearing orphaned babies.

Countless possum rescues have resulted in Margaret raising seven brushtails and five ringtails, so far ... She is in a fortunate position that enables her to take her babies to work, so those 2-4 hourly feeds are not a problem. Margaret has experienced the delight at getting a baby on to six hourly feeds (and some sleep), just to have another tiny one come in and be back on the two-hourly feeds! She has also discovered the

essential wildlife caring skill of tree-climbing, having returned baby ringtails to their drey and carrying out some running repairs to the drey while she was there.

While predominantly a mammal carer, Margaret has cared for a few birds along the way as well. Not having a flight aviary does not deter her, she just lets them have the odd flight practice in the house. One thing you get with birds is diversity - from a little friarbird to a young crow, with a Pacific black duck in between. The duckling came in to Margaret's care when it was about 2 days old, and stayed until it was big enough to fend for itself. It was released in a pond area at Murrarie near Brisbane's gateway bridge, a perfect duck area with plenty of water and plenty of other Pacific blacks.

As all carers discover, Margaret quickly found that the public's idea of 'small bat' and 'big bat' can be quite different from a carer's understanding of size. She now attends rescues with several cages of varying size.

Like many other carers, Margaret has pets of her own - two cats. Of course they are well controlled and kept well away from the wildlife. It is a real frustration for Margaret when people call and say, "My cat just brought in a baby possum, but it didn't hurt it." She wonders what the attitude of irresponsible cat owners would be if possums were doing the same to cats, as cats are to possums! (Editor's note: read more about the humble moggy on page 5)

There have been times when Margaret wonders why she is doing this, but then she realises that there are far more good times than bad times. Like most carers, she just wants to 'do her bit' for wildlife.

## It's the lingo, by jingo! (answers)

**Gram stain:** Developed by Hans Christian Gram in 1884, the gram stain is a differential stain that divides bacteria into two groups, gram-positive and gram-negative. A smear (e.g. faecal sample) is heat-fixed to a microscope slide and passed through a series of stains and washes. The result is an image with two different coloured groups of bacteria - gram-positive (purple) and gram-negative (pink).

**Coprophagy:** The behaviour of eating your own faeces! Some mammals (e.g. ringtail possums) produce two types of faeces - large soft day-time pellets, and hard night-time pellets. The soft faeces are passed from the caecum and immediately re-ingested. Second time through more nutrients are absorbed and the resultant harder, drier pellets are then passed at night.

**NAD:** no abnormalities detected

**BID:** twice daily

**IM:** intra-muscular

**HBC:** hit by car



## Avian Influenza

A note for wildlife carers

(information supplied by Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries)

### What is avian Influenza?

Avian influenza is a highly contagious viral infection of birds. While different strains of the virus produce disease of varying severity, the H5N1 strain that is currently common in Asia and parts of Europe is a very severe strain.

### Which birds does it infect?

All commercial, domestic and wild bird species are susceptible to infection but disease outbreaks occur more frequently in chickens and turkeys—avian influenza can cause up to 100% mortality in domestic fowls. Many species of waterfowl, especially geese, ducks and swans carry the virus but generally show no signs of disease. There are some exceptions to this however, with the current H5N1 virus causing occasional deaths in wild waterbirds in China and parts of Europe.

### What signs do I look for in birds?

The clinical signs are variable, ranging from sudden death to loss of appetite or a depressed look. There may be watery diarrhoea, laboured respiration, swelling of the face, decreased egg production, and possibly some nervous signs.

### What is the risk of catching Avian influenza from birds in my care?

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (the term given to strains that cause sickness and death in birds) is currently not known to be in Australia. Low pathogenic avian influenza (a bird can be infected but show no signs) may be in Australia but not causing any problems. It is expected that from time to time, avian influenza may enter Australian wild bird populations from contact with migratory birds. The level of circulating avian influenza viruses in wild birds is thought to be very low so while handling wild birds does pose some risk, this is thought to be very small.

Normally the risk of contracting avian influenza from wild birds would be very low. However, overseas experience shows that close contact with infected birds may increase the risk of a person becoming infected. Therefore, use of appropriate personal protective equipment and hygienic handling procedures is strongly recommended to minimise the risk of contracting avian influenza from a bird in your care. These procedures will also minimise risks of contracting other diseases such as psittacosis.

### What can I do to protect myself?

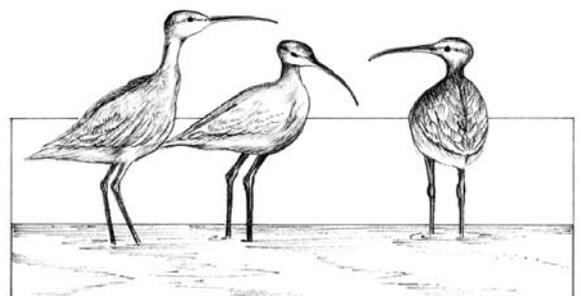
- Consult an avian veterinarian about any case in wild birds involving respiratory signs and unusual levels of sickness or death. Especially if waterbirds are involved.
- Don't house or handle birds in residences, especially not in kitchens or dining areas. Don't eat, drink or smoke while handling birds.
- Handle birds in well ventilated areas.
- Ensure adequate protection, including use of protective clothing, P2 respirator mask, disposable gloves and eye protection
- Clean and disinfect surfaces where birds are handled with household bleach (diluted at the rate of one part bleach to five parts of water) chlorhexidine products or any other suitable disinfectant.
- After handling birds, wash hands, arms and any exposed skin.
- If you experience flu like symptoms you should contact your doctor and mention that you have close contact with birds.

### Further Information:

<http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/avian-influenza/>

or Contact the DPI&F Call Centre on 132523

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website also provides up-to-date information. Go to [www.daff.gov.au](http://www.daff.gov.au), click on 'product integrity', then 'animal and plant health'. You will get distracted! There is a mountain of good information on this website.



# WHO AM I?

If my picture is not enough, the limerick might give some extra clues. When you think you've got the answer send it to:

Debra Hotchkis  
Wildlife Ranger  
QPWS  
PO Box 3454  
BURLEIGH HEADS QLD 4220  
debra.hotchkis@epa.qld.gov.au



My beak and my legs are both yellow  
And my favourite abode is a hollow.  
With a chocolate brown coat  
And a bright yellow throat.  
But they say I'm a nasty young fellow.

The prize (12 months QWRC membership) for last edition's 'Who am I?' goes to Rota Dally of Meadowbrook. Congratulations! The answer was a channel-billed cuckoo.

## QWRC Mission Statement

*To direct, guide and improve standards and outcomes of native wildlife rehabilitation and release throughout Queensland.*

If you wish to become a member of QWRC, contact your local QWRC representative, make further enquiries about QWRC or raise further issues relating to wildlife rehabilitation, please contact the Secretary at:

PO Box 1481  
Capalaba Q 4157  
Phone: (07) 3822 4143  
Fax: (07) 3822 2248  
e-mail: [wildlife@bigpond.net.au](mailto:wildlife@bigpond.net.au)

Members will receive a membership card and a twice-yearly newsletter (in between RnR issues). Members are eligible to nominate for a position as district representative on QWRC and to vote at such elections.

As a member you will also be helping to build a strong council that will be able to better support its members, and to advocate on their behalf.

Membership application forms should be sent to the Secretary.



### Membership Application Form

send to: QWRC Secretary  
PO Box 1481, CAPALABA Q 4157

Surname .....  
First Name .....  
Date of Birth .....  
Residential Address.....  
.....  
Postal address.....  
.....  
Telephone (H) (.....) .....  
(Mob)..... (W).....  
Email .....

Group Name .....  
I, the above named, understand and agree that my name and contact details will be stored on a member data base by QWRC for its use and may be circulated to all other members of QWRC around the state. I further understand that these details will not be sold or used for any other purpose.

Signed.....Dated.....

Annual Membership \$20 (per financial year)

Payment options:

I enclose Cheque / money order for \$..... made payable to QWRC.

OR \*please charge my:  Bankcard  MasterCard  Visa

Card number \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Expiry date \_\_/\_\_\_

Cardholder's name .....

Card holder's signature .....

\*small surcharge on credit card payments

**rehabilitation conference**

The 2005 National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference was very successful and a mountain of information was gathered by participants. Thanks to the organising committee and the presenters, most of the conference papers are now available on-line from the conference web-site.

There is something for everyone, with topics including: radio-tracking koalas, capturing pelicans, psittacine beak and feather disease, tetany in hand-raised brushtail possums, wild bird assessment, and diseases in flying foxes. So where-ever your rehabilitation interests lie, hop on the web-site and download a paper or two.

Add the web-site to your favourites and keep up-to-date with information on the 2006 conference to be held in the Northern Territory.

The National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference web-site is:

[www.nwrc.com.au](http://www.nwrc.com.au)

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