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The Wild Connection
Issue 59 June 2014

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WILDLIFE RESCUE & INFORMATION NETWORK
[WRIN]



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Please see membership form in this issue
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THE WILD CONNECTION

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You can help our wildlife by joining WRIN or making a donation today and encouraging friends to do the same.

WRIN PUBLIC FUND

Don't forget tax deductible donations can be made to WRIN via our Public Fund.

Donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible. A receipt will be issued for your tax records.

*Membership fees are not regarded as a donation and are not tax deductible.

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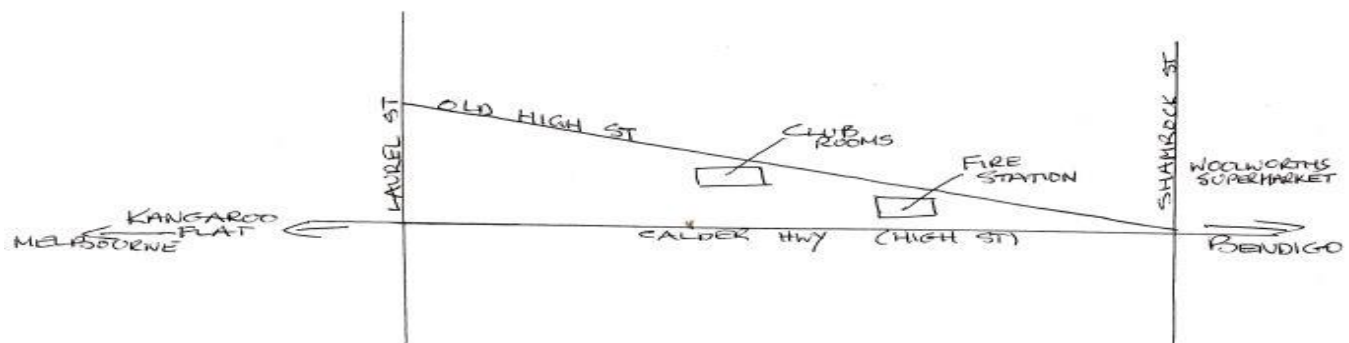
if you haven't remembered to renew your membership, please fill in the form in this newsletter and send it to our P.O. box. Your membership subscription is very important to us, it assists in our continuing efforts to help wildlife.

MEETINGS

Official meetings are held on the first Saturday of every second month : February, April, June, August [AGM], October and December which is our Christmas get together. For this special day we ask members and friends to arrive around 11.30am. Lunch is supplied for the Christmas get together. There is time for a chat and to get to know new chums. Committee meetings commence at 12 noon with the general meeting following about 1pm, there is no committee meeting prior to the Christmas meeting. There are also informal get-together meetings on the 1st Saturday of alternate months, for more information on these call our Secretary.

WHERE

Golden Square Senior Citizens Club rooms [Field Naturalists club rooms] Old High Street, Golden Square. Next to fire station.



THE NEXT OFFICIAL MEETING IS SATURDAY AUGUST 2ND COMMENCING 1pm. PLEASE BRING A PLATE FOR AFTERNOON TEA

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS REGARDING WILDLIFE OR THE ENVIRONMENT. WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO ANSWER THEM.

FROM THE EDITOR

Issue 59, 2014

The rain and much cooler weather earlier in the year was welcomed by most, certainly all wildlife across the region benefitted, not to mention the overheated and frazzled carers. What better start to the day than watching your young still in pouch and just out of pouch joeys doing their 'laps' before settling back into their pouches or a favoured place where the sun warms the ground and the beautiful fresh green grass.

The joeys that arrived for care from the Grampians fires early in the year have now been released but also enjoyed grazing on the grass instead of having to depend on the hay, lucerne chaff, pellets and steamed, rolled, barley. It was clear they also relished their time spent laying in the warm morning and afternoon sun instead of heading back under shelter to get out of the 40degrees+ afternoon temperatures. They did very well. All had good weight gains and well before release had sleek soft fur, rounded bodies, bright eyes and beautifully pink gums in stark contrast to their shocking appearance on arrival.

In during the second week of May was the first Brush-tailed Phascogale [Tuan] for the season in for care. A male, there was nothing that could be done for him, he was dying. As with all male phascogales, death is the result of the frenetic mating that takes place starting in May and continuing into June. The Phascogale is the emblem of WRIN and is featured in an article in this edition.

The Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference is over for another two years. Five WRIN members attended. Four of us travelled together on the Spirit of Tasmania after being picked up by our lovely Vice President Denise who got us safely aboard. Getting us from Devonport to Hobart took us off the proverbial beaten track but we did arrive safely at our hotel with time to check things out before getting ready for the evening get together. We caught up with our fifth member at the conference venue. These conferences bring together a huge number of people all involved in some way with wildlife. The presentations, as always, were interesting even those that seemed to go on for 3 times the allotted time limit are often thought provoking and at times end up with much discussion later in our rooms or over a meal. The best is seeing those familiar faces not seen since the previous conference and catching up with those that have become friends who write and call between times.

Many thanks to our Secretary Brenda Argus who will now be sending 'Secretary notes' for inclusion in each edition of **The Wild Connection**. The notes show us all what has been going on and what is to come making everything clear and easy to understand and follow. Thank you Brenda.

Any carers who had possums or gliders in care during those incredibly hot summer weeks are breathing easier now as the daily ritual of gathering browse and canopy for these creatures has become so much easier. The leaves have a much higher fluid content which obviously makes them look better – to humans only – as well as ensuring whatever is eating them has a higher food and fluid intake and judging from the number of branches I had, and still have, to gather each evening compared to when the heat was unbearable, the possums are thoroughly enjoying their meals and making up for the drier summer offerings.

The cup moth caterpillars completely skeletonised the leaves on large trees in most areas making it almost impossible at times to gather enough to sustain even small numbers of possums, when added to the time of day branches had to be collected to ensure they hadn't gone 'crispy-crunchy' before the possums left their hollows this daily ritual became a massive chore. Night after night I would trudge along the road, through forest and paddocks tramping in my rubber boots to warn snakes I was on my way only to find when I had reached what had looked to be a suitable tree that all the leaves on the lower branches were nothing more than leaf veins still attached to the branch, thanks to the caterpillars, and even with the aid of a cutter with an extendable handle it was sometimes impossible to reach the better leaves – I still wonder what anyone who saw me marching in the twilight in my bright blue boots carrying the extendable lopper thought I was up to, then again, if anyone did notice the odd sight probably deduced it was only me doing yet another of the funny things I'm seen to do regularly. The older trees will survive the attack by the caterpillars but most of the young saplings will die.

Contentment is not the fulfilment of what you want,

But the realisation of how much you already have.

NOT MORE BROWSE!!!!

Brenda

One morning I was sitting quietly with a cuppa after the second of the daily feeds and wondering just how much longer I would be tramping the neighbourhood looking for leaves when the phone rang “do you have room for a koala”? My first thought was ‘**the branches**’, where would I get enough branches for a koala, as well as those needed for the gliders and possums, not to mention, the gunyah and space for a koala. The only area I had still vacant no longer had a usable gunyah, it was laying on the ground in one of the large aviaries where it had been put when the shed used for koalas had its floor concreted. The koala was at the vet clinic being examined and the rescuer had called regarding questions the vet had regarding the injuries. I told the vet the koala would no doubt be very thin and also badly dehydrated. The vet confirmed these concerns as well as a description of the injuries sustained in the road accident. The injuries were diagnosed as probably fixable so the dehydration and starvations were possibly the major concerns. I explained the problems koalas in our region have during the very hot windy summer weather and that most often they are found on the ground having fallen out of their tree through dehydration and starvation. I asked for it to be given large amounts of fluids over the day and organised it to be left at the clinic overnight. There went the cuppa and relaxing hour and off I went to try to set up the gunyah which was spectacularly unsuccessful although I had most of the required bits and pieces when my rescuer arrived with the koala the following day and he set up the required seating arrangements for the patient.

The major accident damage to the koala was around its mouth, however it was incredibly thin – the spine was prominent – and despite being given lots of fluids, the dehydration was still calculated as severe. The injury meant it was unable to eat leaves, so began the thrice daily routine of mixing and feeding special semi-liquid food, spoon by spoon which took almost an hour each time. This mix offers nutrition and fluid, both much needed. Over the next few days the koala was given more fluids and antibiotics and it began to lap the food straight out of the bowl taking the almost 3 hours each day eventually down to half that time. Leaves were also set up around the gunyah although only a few as it was unable to take any except new soft tips and these had to be hand fed and held until each leaf was well into the mouth. The hand feeding of the soft food continued for 3 weeks then reduced over a week until it was no longer given and the koala was close to release. It had begun gathering its own leaves after the first week but only soft premium young leaves were eaten - old dull dry leaves were simply not acceptable so the ‘leaf hunt’ was spreading further and further away. When Garry was home he would drive for 15 or 20mins from home to find trees, my lovely rescuer also called in a few times with fresh picked branches. Release day is always a mix of ‘but what ifs’ and relief at the lightened work load. This was no exception.

Currently we have no leaf eaters in care, the gliders canopy leaves don’t have to be lush and edible, just suitable for the 3 in care females to practice their bobbing, weaving, gliding and harvesting of insects and nectar before release in a short time and I’m very thankful for that but still find myself checking out every tree on the way anywhere and wondering just where I would be positioning myself with the loppers in order to cut a branch without dropping it directly on me.

BUT WAIT – I’M NOT FINISHED JUST YET WITH BROWSING

I’m not the only one with stealth and agility – well, these days maybe neither of us could boast much stealth or agility – who gathers browse for brushtails and ringtails in care, friend Cheryl has the same daily chore.

For both species, but more so for ringtails, as well as gathering leaves we also take note of flower buds, and blossom from native trees and shrubs and before too long know where we’ll be grocery shopping today and where it will be tomorrow and the next day and so on. Why? Because that particular shopping centre has native trees or shrubs with young leaves, blossom or buds and the next one has buds yet to open so its noted for later in the week. We can manoeuvre our way around housing estates in exactly the same way – the houses with flowers hanging over the fences are often our special targets.

Unlike me, Cheryl on occasion collects her browse after dark and related to me the adventures of a few weeks ago. After dining out she remembered one of ‘her’ special trees was close by and decided to give her possums some of the luscious offerings from this tree. Being a familiar tree, no light was needed so off she tripped with hubby in tow to the tree. Standing on tippy-toes and reaching high she gathered a large handful of small branches with what looked/felt to be suitable leaves which suddenly felt not quite right, it

felt as though something much more substantial than a handful of leaves had been gathered. Now, I'm listening to the tale and wondering what was to come when the laughter starts and I'm told about the very indignant magpie that had been ungraciously woken from its nightly slumber and dragged from its comfy leafy bough – I suggest it's probably just as well that we are yet to master magpie language but I gather it didn't sound complimentary. But yes, our intrepid leaf collector was successful and took home the spoils. I wonder if she also related the adventure to her beautiful charges and if the magpie ever slept in that tree again.



That's the last time I'll use the *Interne*st accommodation guide when I go on holidays. *Fabulous artwork courtesy of Tony*

COMING UP

Newstead 'bird' man Geoff Parkes will be talking at the October meeting. Anyone interested in our bird species will thoroughly enjoy this. Be there.

We are hoping reptile man Dale Gibbons will thrill us with more of his information on reptiles at a future meeting. Suggestions on speakers for the future would be appreciated.

A sausage sizzle at Bunnings, Kangaroo Flat, is being planned for early August, please contact our Secretary Brenda if you would like to help – as many hands as possible are needed to make this a success.

Arrangements for a fund raising venture which involves individuals selling their own items [new or secondhand] on their own stalls under the WRIN umbrella is being tentatively organised for November,

more – and better - information in the next newsletter but to find out what it's all about, please call Secretary Brenda 0419 582 102 or email argbrenda@gmail.com

BRUSH-TAILED PHASCOGALE (PHASCOGALE TAPOATAFA) TUAN

Brenda

The Brush-tailed Phascogale [Phascogale Tapoatafa], also known as a **Tuan** is classified in Australia as Uncommon and **Rare** in Victoria. It is listed under the Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act, 1988. Under wildlife shelter permit conditions, operators are required to inform DEPI if this species comes into a shelter.

Distribution in Victoria

Brush-tailed Phascogales were once more widespread in Victoria but are now found in a broad band across lowland Victoria from east of Tallangatta, south-west to the Apsley and Chetwynd areas of south-western Victoria.

The 500mm annual rainfall is the approximate northern limits of this species in Victoria and in most locations there is little difference in summer and winter rainfall.

Altitude range is from 20m to 700m although they have been recorded to 1500m in central NSW.

They once occurred on the Gippsland Plain and nearby foothills, the Bellarine Peninsula and at Mallacoota Inlet. Records from these areas are all pre 1970. Despite many fauna surveys being conducted in the East Gippsland area over the past 25 years there are no recent records.

The Box-Ironbark forests of Central Victoria are a significant proportion of its range.

Some areas Brush-tailed Phascogales have been reported from are – Chiltern Box-Ironbark NP, Reef Hills SP, Rushworth SF, Whipstick SP, Taradale, Brisbane Ranges NP, Paddy's Ranges SP, Kara Kara SP, and Mt Alexander.

Habitat Preference & Requirements

The Brush-tailed Phascogale inhabits dry open forest and woodland with a sparse understorey and ground cover.

In Central Victoria the preferred habitat is the Box-Ironbark forests and in southern Victoria they use mixed Stringybark-Box Forests.

Common eucalypt species in their habitats include Red Stringybark, Red Box, Long-leaf Box, Grey Box, Yellow Box, Red Ironbark, Mugga Ironbark, Yellow Gum and Messmate.

Understorey and ground cover may be sparse often consisting of scattered grass tussocks and forest litter. Brush-tailed Phascogales prefer to forage in larger trees with trees <25cm diameter rarely being used. Ironbark and Box trees are the preferred foraging trees with Stringybarks rarely being used if the others are present, however the bark of Stringybarks is required for nest construction. Smooth barked trees such as Yellow Gum are often present but they are rarely used as Brush-tailed Phascogales have difficulty climbing smooth barked trees. Dead and malformed trees with rotten wood and hollows are also important foraging and nesting sites.

Individual Phascogales have been recorded using between 10 and 40 different nest sites each year. Sites may be in tree stumps, hollows in dead or living trees, under flaking bark or in old babblers nests. Sites such as flaking bark, babblers nests and low tree stumps offer little protection from predators and in some cases the weather. Where natural hollows are uncommon artificial hollows are quickly accepted by phascogales as den and nursery sites. Ceilings of houses and sheds have also been used.

Females are particular in their selection of nursery nests requiring a large cavity accessible by a small hole (30-40mm wide) competition for such hollows is intense with species such as Sugar and Squirrel Gliders also requiring hollows and with feral honey bees using them for hives.

The home range of Phascogales is large, over 100ha for males and 20-70ha for females.

Breeding

The frenzied mating season occurs in May and June after which (about July) all male Brush-tailed Phascogales die at an age of 11-12 months. The frenzied mating season appears to leave them susceptible to stress induced diseases that kills them. This must be taken into account with males brought

into shelters at this time of year. Births occur from mid June to early August after a gestation of about 30 days. Females have 8 teats although a small percentage have only 7. Females commonly carry litters of less than the number of teats, one study found a mean litter size of 6.6 at midway to weaning. The young are permanently attached to the teats until they are about 7 weeks old. At this stage they weigh only 2.3 to 4.2g. they are now left in the nursery nest while the mother forages at night. For the first few days she returns to the nest frequently to suckle and warm the young.

Lactation lasts for up to 25 weeks and weaning to solid foods begins at about 14 weeks and is a gradual process extending over 6 or 7 weeks.

Juveniles disperse in early summer. Females commonly abandon their home range to their litter with the females establishing territories in or near the maternal home range (within 2km) and the males dispersing widely. One male is known to have travelled 15km over a 6-week period.

Females seldom survive 2 years and usually succeed in raising only one litter.

Diet

The Brush-tailed Phascogale is a carnivore that predominantly feeds on arthropods such as beetles, spiders, centipedes and ants, which they extract from crevices in the bark of trunks and large branches of trees and rotten wood of dead and living trees, occasionally they also feed on the ground. Nestlings and House Mice caught in traps are also known to have been taken.

Flowering eucalypts, particularly Ironbarks and Boxes are also visited where they feed on nectar.

Threats

In much of the preferred habitat of the Brush-tailed Phascogale natural hollows are scarce forcing them to use less protected nest sites where they are more vulnerable to introduced predators such as Foxes and Cats (both feral and domestic). There is also predation by Goannas and Owls.

Feral bees invade hollows making them unsuitable for native species.

Removal of standing dead and large live trees for firewood and other uses reduces available foraging sites and potential nest/den sites.

Clearing, degradation and fragmentation of preferred habitat may leave populations stranded, or in a situation where they have to cross open ground where they are more vulnerable.

Fire is also a threat particularly in isolated populations. If isolated populations are to survive some males must reach maturity each year.

The large home ranges, low population density, short life span and male die-off period make this species particularly vulnerable to local extinctions.

There are a number of reports of Brush-tailed Phascogales drowning in water tanks. Entry and outlet points to tanks should be covered to prevent these and other species entering.

Ed. note : Release requirements

Details that are collected when this species arrives at a shelter are most important and may mean the difference in the survival or death of the released animal.

Phascogales exist in very low-density populations due to the small amount of prey available (which necessitates large home ranges). Due to the territorial nature of females, the exact location where the animal was found is crucial for its release. Unless there is some factor e.g. found on busy road or brought in by cat or dog, animals must be released where they were picked up or in suitable habitat very close by. Homework may have to be done to find a suitable release point. If for some reason this isn't possible, DEPI should be consulted as to the closest records of the species to the pick up point, local field naturalists may also be of help in this regard. Call Garry on 54 612970, he knows local areas and can find out where they are located close to their pick-up spot. . Always remember that the released animal will need a large patch of bush to survive or corridors between patches.

Always release in the hollow that the animal has been in whilst in care. Another hollow that has been in their enclosure and marked with their scent should be placed some distance away. Hollows should be placed high enough to be out of harms way.

An important point to remember is that male phascogales only live for one year so release as soon as possible is essential to give it the chance to establish its own territory and mate before it dies.

An environment as natural as possible needs to be created in the phascogales rehabilitation area.

As phascogale nails are not as sharp as some of our other arboreal mammals, it is important to place their release hollows in rough barked rather than gum barked trees, and as part of the preparation for release at least part of the natural food being offered to the animal/s in care should be hidden in crevices or rotten wood in their enclosure. *Remember there won't be bowls of food in the bush for them.*

BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The status of our fauna species comes under several categories, you need to note the status of any wildlife that comes into care as species listed from the Threatened status upwards should be reported to DEPI and always must be returned from the area they came.

THREATENED is the collective term used to denote taxa that fall into the first three categories below

1. **CRITICALLY ENDANGERED** : This is the category for anything facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future
2. **ENDANGERED** : When a species is not critically endangered but is facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future
3. **VULNERABLE** : When a species is not critically endangered or endangered but is facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term future

LOWER RISK : Near Threatened : when it has been evaluated but does not satisfy the criteria for any of the above but which comes close to qualifying as vulnerable. In practice these species are most likely to move into a threatened category should current declines continue or catastrophes occur

DATA DEFICIENT : Is the term used when there is inadequate information to make a direct or indirect assessment of its risk of extinction based on distribution or population status. More information is required.

AN UNUSUAL RESCUE IN BENDIGO Ken

A member of the public called the WRIN phone and reported that they had sighted a wombat walking down a road on the outskirts of Kangaroo Flat! Member Jenny was sent out to rescue it but could not find anything resembling a wombat. She door knocked, left our WRIN cards and waited for an actual sighting of a wombat.

Later that day Jenny received a call to say the wombat was under one of the callers cars in their driveway and called to ask me to help her with the rescue and had asked our DEPI wildlife officer for advice on what to do. He said if it was a wombat and was not injured at all release it in a suitable wombat area. Because we don't get a lot of wombats in Bendigo we took what we thought would be needed as our rescue gear, a heavy blanket, gloves and very large bin [and hoped it would be enough!].

We arrived to find, sure enough, an adult wombat under a car. After some poking and making lots of noise it just dug into the gravel drive and stayed wedged under the car. Plan 'B' was to start the car and hope it would frighten it out. Sure enough not long and out came a big wombat with a rush towards Jenny holding the blanket and me with the bin. Into the bin it went which must have looked like a safe. dark hiding place. We gently and slowly tipped the bin up and covered it with the blanket, quickly loaded wombat, bin, blanket, Jenny and me into the vehicle and drove to where it was to be checked and a release organised.

We asked the caller to check and call if he or any neighbours sighted a wombat again. So far no more sightings.

RAT POISON

Rats and mice are around again in fairly large numbers going by the number of calls being received and comments made. There are many poisons available these days for getting rid of these unwanted pests but

the good old rat pellets with Warfarin are still often used. All poisons are toxic but this is probably one of the worst and this is the time of year when it is often placed in sheds and any other locations where mice and rats are deemed to be a problem. Sadly it is not only used for this purpose but also for deliberately poisoning other species including domestic animals.

The brushtail is one of the more common native species that arrives for care having been found on the ground either inside or outside unable or unwilling to move. Diagnosing ingesting poison can be difficult but there are a few tell-tale signs that can be looked for. Lethargy and pale gums as well as being white around the area around the vulva in a female brushy; the paleness in the genitals of a male may not be so obvious. The poison causes internal bleeding and this is why there is such paleness in the mentioned areas. If a lot of the bait has been ingested over time then you may hear gurgling in the chest which means blood in the lungs. If this is the case then there is nothing that can be done and the animal should be euthanised.

If a possum arrives with these symptoms and rat poison being ingested is suspected the possum needs treatment immediately, if treatment begins soon enough Vitamin K1 will, in most cases, stop the internal bleeding and the possum should be saved. **Treatment must begin immediately.** If possums suspected of having taken poison have arrived at your shelter before then it is a good idea to have Vitamin K1 on hand just in case. Injectable, tablets or syrup are available although injectable will probably be easier to administer. The tablets can be crushed and given in milk if the possum will lap, the syrup can be given in this manner also. Vitamin K is excreted so it can be given if you suspect poisoning. If you have caught it in time then some signs of improvement should be seen within very few hours [2-3] but continue to dose for at least 3 days. If giving Vitamin K1 the dose rate will be 0.5mg/per kilo of bodyweight. This is the same regardless of whether you use injectable, tablets or syrup.

BARN OWLS, RATS AND POISON

Still on poisons, I wonder how many of us are unknowingly also guilty of causing death. Take owls for instance, at some time in their life most will eat rats and mice. Rats and mice eat the baits we put out for them and are in turn taken by owls.

A study in England some years ago found that the number of barn owls with anti-coagulant rodenticides in their livers increased from 5% in 1983-84 to 36% in 1995-96. These figures were based on over 700 barn owl carcasses found dead during these periods. About half the owls were taken from the road and it is assumed were killed by vehicles, it is also thought that it is possible some of them had been weakened by the poison in their system and this had contributed to their becoming road victims. Only 5% of the owls had actually been killed by the rodenticides but it is felt that the mortality is much higher as the poisoned birds become lethargic and creep away and die in places where they are not likely to be found.

Owls ingesting poison is not new but as rats and mice are becoming more and more resistant to the anti-coagulant poisons, they consume much more before dying. As the rats become weaker they are more easily caught by the owls. The major threat now is that in the long term the anti-coagulant poisons will impact more on owls than on rats and mice. As their resistance to poisons increase and threat from the owls decrease, rats would seem to have a very bright future indeed.

Two hundred years ago the barn owl was the most common owl in Britain, now it is amongst the rarest. Farmers once appreciated their good work in controlling mice and rats and to help protect it built special owl holes in their barns so the owls had access to safe breeding and roosting sites; in the second half of the 19th century the tables turned on these beautiful birds and stuffed owls became popular as did shooting and trapping as it was thought that game was being killed by the birds. By the 1930's concern as to the decline in numbers began and, in a first for a British breeding bird, a census was organised which concluded that there were about 12,000 breeding pairs of barn owls. Survey results announced in January 1999 showed that only about 1000 pairs remained in Britain. If anyone has updates on this it would be appreciated if you could forward the information to me. Ed.

ECHIDNAS

Currently we are receiving echidnas in for care regularly, at least one every fortnight, all are road accident victims and, luckily, all have survived which, for these victims is good as most often the injuries are so

severe they have to be euthanised. Thanks must go to my carer who has taken on the last 3, one was huge weighing in at close to 7kg, no way was it going to fit into the cage I had taken to bring it home in, we had to borrow a much larger one from the clinic and arrange other transport as the friend I had gone with to collect it couldn't fit the large cage in her car. It has been our experience that many echidnas that have been judged as not badly injured – mostly with some minor beak or other visible damage – have massive internal damage even though externally nothing is visible. It is a good idea to keep any echidna that arrives for care with any signs of having been hit or run over by a car for several days to see if it deteriorates. The beautiful echidna picture was sent in by Brenda Argus.

SECRETARY NOTES:

Brenda Argus

Start off with a reminder that membership will be due for the next financial year by the 1st August, 2014. Our membership numbers are down, so if you know of a wildlife supporter who would like to join us, please forward them our details. Membership can be paid online www.wrin.asn.au or by post (fill out the form at the back of the WRIN newsletter).

Our next meeting is Saturday July 5th at 1:00pm for all to attend. Some of the ladies who attended the Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference will be giving a report on their adventures to Hobart and highlights of the conference.

Our next official meeting is Saturday August 2nd [AGM]. A committee meeting will be held at 12:00pm followed with a general meeting at 1:00pm for all to attend. Your thoughts and suggestions are welcome and can be made personally at the meeting or drop a note in the suggestion box at the entrance or email secretary@wrin.asn.au.

WRIN is currently looking for speakers/workshops for our meetings. If you would like to organise a speaker/ workshop one month or can suggest a speaker or topic, please contact Brenda Argus on 0419 582 102 or argbrenda@gmail.com.

Unfortunately, WRIN lost two phone operators over the last few months. Thank you to Jasmine and Mandy for your time answering calls. Phone operation is a vital part of our network and injured animals would face a slow and painful death without it. Phone operation can be very time consuming with very little recognition, so I would also like to thank our current operators for their time as well. If you can volunteer 4 hours or more of phone duty a month, please contact Michelle Mead on 0437 669 239 or michellemead@impulse.net.au.

April Meeting

There was a good attendance at the April meeting with lots to discuss.

WRIN received a Certificate of Recognition for International Volunteers Day and it was handed to WRIN president Garry Cheers.

WRIN was involved in Grill'd Bendigo 'Local Matters' program for December. WRIN received the most votes from Grill'd patrons, winning WRIN a \$300 donation. Thank you Grill'd, those who voted for us and to Myree Handley for nominating WRIN into the programme.

Donations were also received from the public and from Andy's Earthmovers. Thank you. These donations are a great help in the rehabilitation of injured wildlife.

A letter of interest to hold a fundraiser sausage sizzle was sent to Bunnings by Myree H. Volunteers will be needed for this occasion. Please inform a committee member if you are interested in helping.

A restructured Victorian Wildlife Council has been formed and WRIN was asked to consider accepting a seat on the council. WRIN has accepted with Denise Bridges representing us. For any enquiries regarding the Victorian Wildlife Council, please contact Denise on 0427 541 102 or mcintyrewildlife@gmail.com.

Copies of the treasurers report was handed out and reviewed. If you wish to view this report or any treasury bookwork, please contact Myree H. on 0421 717 084 or myreelen@bigpond.com.

WRIN rescuers and shelter operators assisted DEPI with heat stressed grey headed flying foxes during the two heat waves in February. Rescuers were involved with cooling low hanging bats with water sprays, observing and collecting stressed bats from low branches and on the ground. Cooling down, rehydrating and transporting weak bats to shelters. Most of the bats rescued were young or mothers with young. We were able to save many bats but lost about 10% of the Bendigo flying fox population.

Our website, www.wrin.asn.au, is being updated regularly now with new information and fact sheets soon to be added. The website has a forum up and running for WRIN members only. The forum is available for discussions, questions and sharing of information. So have a look at our website and register into our forum now.

There was no guest speaker for April.

May Social Meeting:

May social meeting was mainly attended by shelter operators. We had a good catch up and shared some valuable information and experiences.

There was no guest speaker for May.

On Sunday 18th May WRIN took part in the Million Paws Walk at Castlemaine. Thank you to all who assisted. We received some donations and one new member. There didn't appear to be a great deal of interest regarding wildlife, any suggestions to make the day more wildlife aware would be appreciated.

Coming up:

*Saturday 5th July – WRIN Social Meeting, 1:00pm
Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference report
Afternoon tea supplied.
Golden Square Senior Citizens Club/Bendigo Field Naturalist Club
Old High Street, Golden Square.

*Saturday 2nd August – WRIN AGM. Committee Meeting 12:00pm & General Meeting 1:00pm
Nomination and election of all committee positions.
Afternoon tea supplied.
Golden Square Senior Citizens Club/Bendigo Field Naturalist Club
Old High Street, Golden Square.

*Sunday 24th August – Sausage Sizzle Fundraiser at Bunnings, 9am – 4pm.
Volunteers required.

BATS 'OUT OF HELL'

Myree

In the middle of January this year [2014] there was a heat wave which, as well as stressing our human population, many species of animals were stressed as well. It was the first time in Bendigo since the Grey-Headed Flying-foxes [GHFF] first settled in the fernery at Rosalind Park that we were able to observe how they fared. It is believed that about 85 GHFF's died during the heat stress, which is approximately 10% of those present in the Bendigo colony at the time. Almost all these were juveniles. It is assumed that in being very young they had not yet developed the ability to cope with excessive heat. Observations suggest that they start fanning their wings and panting when temperatures get to the mid 30's, but this is a normal cooling mechanism and doesn't necessarily suggest that they are distressed. The cumulative stress of several consecutive days of extreme heat seems to have been the critical factor in the Bendigo colony – Monday was 39C, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday were 43C and Friday was 40C. Most deaths occurred on the Wednesday and Thursday. Eleven GHFF's were taken to wildlife shelters, a further 4 died at the triage area and another 4 were released on the day of capture following rehydration therapy.

A number of dedicated WRIN members attended the area at different times over the heat wave in an effort to help the DEPI team which had set up the triage area at the entrance to the fernery. The DEPI team, headed by Karly Loughnane and Brady Childs was very professional and caring providing shelter, drinks and food to volunteers as well as advising on safety measures to follow and what appropriate clothing should be worn to avoid any scratches from the flying foxes, they also stressed the importance of the volunteers being immunised against the Lyssa virus. The team took extensive notes and statistics. Being the first time a heat event like this had been experienced a lot was learnt and will help to clarify how processes for future events will have to be managed.

On a personal note, I took home 5 young GHFF's and they were kept in care for about 6 weeks until they were considered strong enough to be released back into the Rosalind Park fernery with the rest of their group. Also by then the weather was a lot cooler. Their diet consisted of apples, grapes, watermelon and cantaloupe. As I had no previous experience with caring for GHFF's before, I was often on the phone to Bev Brown in Melbourne for advice. Bev is a well respected and knowledgeable carer of GHFF's and was very helpful to me. On the hot days it was a full time job spraying the flying foxes with cool water to prevent further stress. They are wonderful little characters and I loved every minute of caring for them as well as learning a lot about them.

DID YOU KNOW?

In the last 400 years no new animal have been domesticated

Clouds fly higher during the day than at night

1.5 billion kilos of chocolate are consumed worldwide each year

The King of Hearts is the only king without a moustache

A foetus acquires fingerprints at the age of 3 months

The average person's left hand does 56% of the typing

You burn more calories sleeping than you do watching TV

Leonardo DaVinci invented scissors

Babies are born without kneecaps. They don't appear until the child reaches 2-6 years

Because of the rotation of the earth, an object can be thrown further if it is thrown West

The average human body contains enough fat to make 7 bars of soap

The strongest muscle in the body is the tongue

A baby hawk is called an eyas

A young shark is called a cub

A young salmon is known as a smolt



OCTOBER IS WILDLIFE AWARENESS MONTH. How about some suggestions on something to promote Wildlife Awareness Month this year?



A 'FRIENDLY REMINDER' to those people who have not paid their Membership!! If you haven't got around to renewing yet, please fill in the form below and send it to our P.O. box.

PLEASE NOTE : Membership fees are NOT tax deductible, therefore please do NOT make your membership cheques out to the Public Fund. Thank you.

Please cut along line



Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.

A35498T

Ph: 0419 356 433

Email: secretary@wrin.asn.au

Web: <http://www.wrin.asn.au>

Annual Membership Renewal

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received:

Receipt No:

Membership No:

NAME:

Address:

Postcode:

TELEPHONE: MOBILE:

Email:

I can contribute to WRIN INC. by:

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.....
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Personal \$15.00 ☐

Family \$20.00 ☐

Associate \$25.00 ☐

Corporate \$50.00 ☐

Donation \$ ☐

Donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.
Donations paid by cheque should be
made out to the Wrin Public Fund.

Postal Address: P O. Box 2412
Deborah Street MC