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# SNAPSHOT NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2019

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## **GREETINGS**

The year is nearly over. We have reptile training, the combined Xmas party and General Meeting and a committee meeting left to do and then we have our Xmas break and start up again in February with an Orientation. However, this is not a break for active members as this is the busiest time of the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a great Xmas in case you can't make it to the party and to congratulate all our members on another amazing year of breaking records and going above and beyond whatever is asked of us.

## **WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING**

### **Bushfires in the Tweed Valley**

With over 4,900ha burnt out, the Mt Nardi fire remains out of control and people are being evacuated from Commissioner's Creek Rd at Doon Doon as I write this newsletter. Some members' homes have been threatened there and at Mt Burrell but so far we have dodged a bullet.

The public response has been tremendous. TVWC would like to thank everyone for their kind offers of help. We are a bit rushed off our feet replying to the questions we have been asked on the hotline and on Facebook. We would like all donors to know that donations go directly to assist wildlife, whether it is buying food or medications for them or paying vet bills and supporting members with the equipment they need. We would like to thank all those wonderful people who have offered assistance of all kinds to support our efforts. We can't possibly respond to the huge number of contacts but we value each one.

We are currently assessing our needs, so we are asking the public not to donate to anyone who says that they are collecting for us or buying supplies for us, as we haven't authorised anyone to do so on our behalf. Sarah is raising money for us through Green Heroes and will be putting all the money that she raises directly into our account. We have received a few donated cages from Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and we have had offers of medicine from local vets and lots of donations from TS residents. We prefer people to donate directly into our account so that we can get exactly what we want as we need it. All donations are tax deductible.

We have not had any animals coming in affected by the fires yet. Our amazing and highly trained local firefighters are not allowed to let anyone into fire-affected areas until all the flames are totally out and that can take weeks. Unfortunately, wildlife survivors are vulnerable to predators in the meantime so we do not get a huge influx of rescued animals when fires occur. We expect that injured animals will be cared for by Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and local vets.

Our volunteers are familiar with the number of animals that we expect to come in over the next few weeks. We are well-equipped and our members are trained to handle affected wildlife and administer to their needs. Sometimes it is difficult to get members of the public to understand that all animal rehabilitation must be done by licensed and trained people, so we can't accept hands-on help from members of the public.

The long-term weather forecast is that drought conditions will prevail at least until the end of January. This record-breaking drought has caused severe shortages for all bird and animal species. Providing water for wildlife is a way the community can help these animals suffering an unprecedented undersupply of food and water. We would like to ask the general public to put out shallow and safe water dishes for wildlife and clean and replenish them regularly. New plastic cat litter trays, old baking dishes, plastic 10-litre water containers and small drums cut in half are all cheap and easily accessible containers for wildlife. Placing rocks and/or ramps for safety to save any animal getting stuck or drowned in water sources is recommended.

A lot of help will be needed down the track to help our wildlife that have survived to get back and stay in the wild. After previous fires, some wildlife groups were able to use community donations to provide a local wildlife food collection point for several months while grass and leaves grew back. We are looking at doing something similar for the surviving animals in burnt-out areas, so that they can be supported as the bush regenerates.

## NEW MEMBERS

A very warm welcome to: Judy Bray, Tara Alexander, Michael Davies, Rhiannon Francis, Brooke Udale, Claire Robinson, Sue O'Brien, Abby Johnson, Emma Peel, Sue Udale, Stacy Hilder and Les Weir.

We hope you enjoyed the Orientation and the Rescue Training and will love being a member of TVWC, despite the huge demands that the fire and the drought are adding to our normally busy spring season. If you can help with transporting, please get onto Viber ASAP and don't wait to be asked but just volunteer as we are currently run off our feet.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact Kerry, Jo or Ron. Contact numbers for office bearers can be found on the members' page of our website, or call the hotline and leave a message.

If you have trouble logging in, please contact Louise, our website administrator.

We desperately need new phonies so, if you can help, don't hesitate to contact Jo for induction and training.

I will put our new office bearer list in this Snapshot, just until everyone gets used to contacting them. Here is it is:

### TVWC Officers 2019-20

Position	Name
President	Jan Pilgrim
Vice President	Jo Cabale
Treasurer	Peter Hurst
Secretary	Yvonne Gardiner
Committee	Ron Potter

Members	Jasmine Pereira
	Kerryn Fuller
Phone Coordinator	Jo Cabale
Macropod Coordinator	Corrina Lever
Bird Coordinator	Michelle Phillips
Seabird Coordinator	Mary Grant
Small Mammal Coordinator	Jan Pilgrim
Reptile Coordinator	Max Walker
Bat Coordinator	Corrina Lever
Rescue & Transport Coordinator	Ron Potter
Membership Officer	Kerryn Fuller
Training Officer	Rachael Lebeter
Website Manager	Louise Bally
Records Officer	Robyn Gommers
Supplies Officer	Peter Hurst
Fundraising Officer	Kerryn Fuller
Grants	Rachael Lebeter
Facebook Administrator	Jasmine Pereira
Viber Administrator	Maya Sapir
NWC Rep.	Garry Gnapp
Alt. NWC Rep.	Jenny Weston
Catering Officer	Lewis Rassaby
Public Officer	Peter Hurst
Public Fund	Peter Hurst
Committee of Management	Jan Pilgrim
	Lewis Rassaby

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHRISTMAS PARTY and GENERAL MEETING

**When?** Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2019

**Times?** 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

**Where?** Murwillumbah Community Centre  
Nullum Rd, Murwillumbah

**Catering:** Please bring a plate to share. Drinks and lucky door prizes provided.

Come and meet your fellow volunteers and please help us celebrate surviving another year.

A quiet area will be provided for the wildlife that also needs to be fed.

### FACEBOOK AND TWEED VALLEY WEEKLY

Our Facebook page continues to be a great success, as does the fortnightly column in the Tweed Weekly newspaper. Please contact Rachael for the column or Jasmine for Facebook if you have any interesting stories, photos or videos. Please consider taking good quality photos or videos of interesting rescues, caring, releasing, etc.

### MEETINGS WE HAVE HAD

#### **1.10.19 Banora Point Garden Club**

Great session with a highly appreciative audience of about 50 people.

#### **8.10.19 Meeting with Pottsville children**

The children waited impatiently for 10.30am. Sue Johnson arrived to talk to the kids about snakes. Sue showed them snake eggs and talked about what to do if you see a snake. Sue brought her pet snake, a carpet python 1.5 metres long. The kids had been having a

guessing competition to guess her pet snake's name which was Caesar. Thanks to Sharron Hillman for this information.

### **20.10.2019 Bat Heat Drop Meeting**

This was a highly valuable meeting of stakeholders to hear Linda Collins discuss impending heat stress events. Linda has been present during 19 Heat Stress Events (HSE's) from 1994-2019; ranging from severe (4000 deaths) to moderate (200 deaths); from Kyogle, Cabramatta, Emu Plains and Adelaide. Fifty-four (54) high temperature days ( $\geq 42^{\circ}$ ) have also been monitored from 2000 - 2019.

### **21.10.19 Meeting with the SES Tweed Heads**

This very enjoyable meeting, attended by Jan, Jo and Geoff, discussed local wildlife and their needs with SES members and led to us being invited to repeat the event for Pottsville SES. It turns out SES members are primarily worried about snakes and they benefitted immensely from Jo and Lloydie, our educational python, as this photo attests. Jo was amazing.

### **9.11.19 Meeting with Tracy Stinson and Jane Lofthouse from Tweed Shire Council**

Tracey Stinson, director, and Jane Lofthouse, co-ordinator, of Sustainable Communities & Environment, discussed current issues and challenges and provided an update on activities that council is currently undertaking. It was encouraging to learn how successful their hollows for wildlife drive has been since TVWC suggested it last year.



## **NWC NEWS**

The AGM of our peak body, the NSW Wildlife Council, attended by our rep, Garry, was cancelled due to the NSW fires.

## GRANTS, FUNDING AND DONATIONS

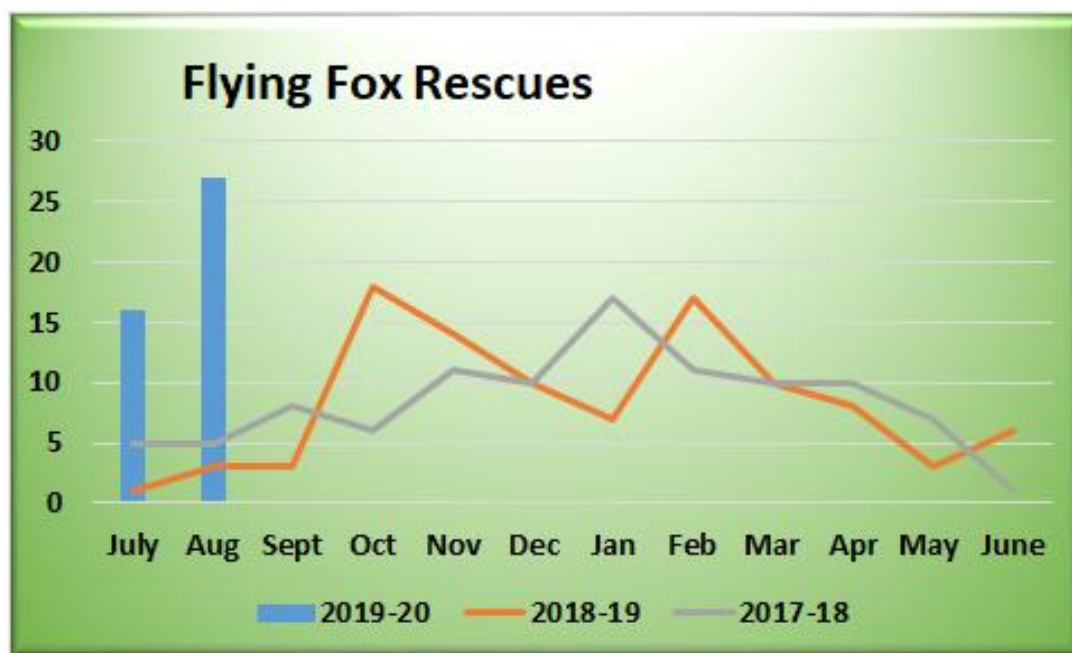
Thanks to Rachael and her amazing grant-writing skills and also useful contacts, we have another grant from ITV for \$2334.99 towards our project “Living with Wildlife” and \$2,248.20 from the Gold Coast law firm Minter Ellison.

Another one of our members, Marta, was responsible for \$220 which was raised by the auction of her artwork at Uki.

## ANIMAL NEWS

### BATS

From July to the beginning of October we had 183 flying fox rescues due to extreme malnutrition caused by the drought.



It has been impossible to ignore the dead bats along the main roads.

We have an influx of flying foxes needing to be rescued in numbers never seen before. They are coming into care severely dehydrated and malnourished just at the beginning of the breeding season. If you would like to help, please contact Corrina, our bat co-ordinator.

There are large influxes of flying foxes to the south coast of NSW and into Centennial Park. OEH has engaged a communications agency to develop materials to help council staff and



affected residents in the case of severe stress resulting from flying fox camp increases in numbers. Tweed Shire Council is testing the completed model for communication for shire staff.

Six flying-foxes have tested positive for ABLV so far this year, more than all 2018. All exposures were to vaccinated carers. They were two little reds and a GHFF in the Hunter, two in the Illawarra, one GHFF from the Tablelands and one on the Mid North Coast.

The first case of Hendra was confirmed in a horse in the Hunter Region. DPI may host a local workshop for vets and horse owners. This is the first case outside the known area. It is unknown whether a black flying fox was involved.

OEH has funded the CSIRO for the 2019-20 year for monitoring of colonies. Source NWC.

## BIRDS

### **Leave that baby bird alone! Our Hotline is being overwhelmed by an epidemic of calls caused by the kindness of local residents and visitors**

Due to climate change, we are seeing a prolonged breeding season and lots of baby birds. If you see a fluffy chick on the ground, you should resist the urge to rescue it. If it is not visibly injured or in real danger of being killed or injured, leave it alone because removing a baby bird from its environment is not always in its best interests.

Sometimes baby birds land on the ground when they're learning to fly, but that doesn't mean that they need your assistance. Usually their parents are nearby, waiting to feed and look after their young once you've left the scene.

If you find a nest that's been blown onto the ground, replace it and its contents in a nearby shrub or tree so that the parent birds can continue to attend it. They will find it.

If you find a young Tawny Frogmouth on the ground, simply replace it in a nearby tree. It's the safest place for it.

If you find a baby Masked Lapwing or plover on the ground, leave it where it is; after all, the ground is where it lives. Its parents will be nearby (they're probably swooping you right now).

If you find a chick on the ground and it is:

- (1) clearly unattended by its parents (watch this from a distance for some time so you're not keeping them away); and (2) it's in imminent danger from cats, dogs or traffic; and (3) it can't be left in a safe place nearby: do not attempt to look after the bird on your own. Place it in a dark, warm, dry place (such as a cardboard box with plenty of air holes, and padding such as a towel inside), keep it safe from the family cats and dogs, and then contact Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers on 02 6672 4789 right away.

Tiny featherless birds can only survive for a very short time without warmth and food.



Adapted from Birdlife Australia.

## Backyard Bird Count Result



## Bird of the Year

Black Throated Finch, a critically endangered bird.

Runner up: Our favourite - the Tawny Frogmouth!



### Prevention of Bird Strikes

If you need to prevent birds from striking your windows, watch this video to see how to do it! Just copy and paste this link into google:<https://youtu.be/UC9xQkUtQ98>

## REPTILES

A huge thanks to Sue Johnson for running a one-day non-venomous snake training day at Crabbes Creek Community Hall at the end of October. The course was well attended by existing snake handlers seeking a refresher and people new to snakes. The morning was given over to theory with practical snake handling in the afternoon. We were fortunate in having a number of Coastal Carpet Pythons as well as two Brown Tree Snakes and a Green Tree Snake to catch. Thanks to all those who attended and especially Luke, who assisted Sue with practical training.

The new members wishing to assist with non-venomous snake rescues have been paired up with one of the existing snake handlers who will act as a mentor. Once the new member is confident to act on their own and has all the necessary equipment, they will be added to the non-venomous snake rescue list. A slow process but necessary for the member and the snakes.





Attendees at Sue's reptile workshop at Crabbies Creek.

There are currently lots of reptile calls on the hotline. See the training section for more reptile training this year.

## MAMMALS

Australian Water Rats might be instrumental in the eradication of the cane toad. Rakali have been feasting on the poisonous toads in the Kimberley but have somehow lived to tell the tale. Weighing over one kilogram, Rakali are the biggest rats in Australia. They carry their prey to a feeding platform, often leaving leftovers behind and cane toad bodies have been discovered on these platforms. Rakali are very intelligent and they dissect the cane toads, eating the harmless organs and leaving the poisonous glands. No one knows how they worked out this behaviour, but there is hope that the knowledge could be passed on to future generations. There are now over two million cane toads in Australia, and they're spreading southwards at a rate of 60 kilometres per year. This has had devastating effects on many local species like the endangered Northern Quoll which are killed when they ingest the poisonous toad. The Rakali are the first native mammal to work out how to eat the toad without dying and could be key to suppressing cane toad populations in future.

## WHAT'S COMING UP



*Nature Explorers wishes to thank and show our appreciation to all our partners in the community that support us to provide a unique sustainability education program to our local area.*

*We invite you to join us for a bite to eat, a cuppa and a chat.*



*Our get together will also allow each group to chat for a minute to the larger group and share a little about what we each do. We hope that this will support the different groups to put faces to the names, connect with each other, understand their role in the community and maybe there will opportunities to work together in the future. We want to connect community.*



*We also invite anyone to join us on a walk through the Environment Park paths to the boardwalk at the end of the morning tea. (optional)*

**LOCATION:** Environment Park, Centennial Drive, Pottsville

**WHEN:** Saturday 23rd November, 10-11am  
Optional walk afterward

**WHO:** Everyone is welcome!

**RSVP:** Email [info@natureexplorers.com.au](mailto:info@natureexplorers.com.au)

*Bring your own Keep Cup*

## NEXT ORIENTATION

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 at the Community Centre, Nullum St, Murwillumbah.

## NEXT GENERAL MEETING

Our next general meeting will be held at the Christmas Party.

## TRAINING

Max Walker and Sue Johnson will be running a Reptile Rehabilitation and First Aid Training course on 30th November at Crabbes Creek Community Hall. TVWC would like to invite any members who wish to attend. Cost will be \$20 for non-members and free to members.

The course runs from 9am until 3pm. It covers basic first aid for reptiles and how to care for a reptile up to release. Please bring your own food and drink – we will provide tea and coffee.

This course is great for rescue and transport people (who often come across injured water dragons, bearded dragons, blue tongue lizards and pink tongue lizards). Anybody can come - you do not need to have completed the Snake Handling course first. Great also for snake rescuers who want to start caring for snakes.

Please let me know via email or phone if you would like to attend.

Regards,

TVWC Reptile Co-ordinator

**For Phone training** and **Record training** please contact Jo Cabale.

Other training contacts:

TVWC	TVWC members Non-members	FREE \$20	<b>Bookings:</b> Rachael Lebeter
Bats Qld	BQ members Non-members	FREE \$10/yr	<b>Bookings:</b> committee@batsqld.org.au
Wildcare	Wildcare members Non-members	FREE \$20 full day, \$10 half day	<b>Bookings:</b> Cathy education@wildcare.org.au
WIRES NR	TVWC members	2 day - \$65 incl Lunch	<b>Bookings :</b> Suzanne Ulyatt <a href="mailto:Susie_u@bigpond.com">Susie_u@bigpond.com</a> Or <a href="mailto:wiresnr@wiresnr.org">wiresnr@wiresnr.org</a>



Training dates and venues may be altered due to unforeseen circumstances – please check Viber and the latest Snapshot for updates.

**TVWC Workshops** are at Murwillumbah Community Centre  
(Nullum St, Murwillumbah, near the netball courts at Knox Park)



## CURRUMBIN WILDLIFE HOSPITAL

### Recheck Admission Forms

We will ask carers to complete a recheck admission form when an animal comes back for a recheck. Feel free to print the form off and complete it at home to save time when you arrive at the hospital. It's especially important that we get this information where the carer is not the person transporting the animal to the hospital. Please give as much detail as possible on the form, as this will help achieve the best possible outcome for the animal.

### Transport Cages/Baskets

Wherever possible, we would prefer that transport carriers are not left at the hospital for collection at a later date due to a lack of storage space. When carriers are required to be left here, please ensure that it's clearly labelled with your name, and ensure it's collected within a few days.

### Post-mortems

Please be aware that while we are happy to carry out post-mortem exams on deceased animals, we may not always have time to do so, as live animals will always take priority. Also, please understand that post-mortems are often inconclusive. We can look for signs of

trauma in deceased animals which would indicate an event (such as a vehicle hit) has caused injury leading to death. We can also assess the body condition of the animal, where an animal in good condition is likely to have succumbed to an acute event, while an animal in poor condition is likely to have been unwell for some time.

Chronic conditions are very difficult to diagnose on post-mortem exams. In cases of large numbers, or clusters of deceased animals, Biosecurity may be willing to test the bodies, but even then, it's often inconclusive. In cases of suspected poisoning, Biosecurity would need to know specifically what poison to test for to get a positive diagnosis. So, while we are happy to accept deceased animals for post-mortem, please don't be offended if it doesn't occur, or if it doesn't establish a cause of death.

### **Calling the Hospital for Outcomes**

During spring and summer, please wait until the following day to call for patient outcomes, as the vet notes are often not typed up until late in the day. Please also try to call after 9am, as the first hour of the day can be very hectic at the hospital.

### **Providing the Hospital with Outcomes**

For those that don't know, the hospital would like to be informed when foster patients have an outcome, i.e. released, died etc. Some carers update us immediately, whilst others send monthly updates. We would really appreciate if you could flick a quick email to [vets@cws.org.au](mailto:vets@cws.org.au) with your updates.

## **COPIES OF DOCUMENTS/CONTACT LISTS**

All members may access Minutes of Committee and General Meetings as well as contacts of committee members. Please contact Secretary via [committee@twwc.org.au](mailto:committee@twwc.org.au)

## **FEEDBACK**

If you have anything you would like to say about the group, good bad or indifferent, please call Jan or Yvonne.

- *Contact numbers for office bearers can be found on the members' page of our website, or call the hotline and leave a message.*