



Fauna Rescue Whitsundays Association Inc.

Caring for Queensland's Wildlife

PO BOX 806 Cannonvale QLD 4802 Ph. 4947 3389

Newletter 38 July/August/September 2007

Committe Members

President : Sue McLeod

4947 3075

Vice President: Jacqui Webb

4947 3308

Secretary: Sandy Cleeland

49473324

Treasurer: Le-Anne Dinnie

4947 1967 (w)

Membership Steward: Lynne Clarke

4946 5736

Fundraising Officer: Maren

Matthew

4945 7116

Cheryl Dean

4945 5326

Food Supplies Officer: Linden Baker

4946 1198

HOUDINI THE SULPHUR CRESTED COCKATOO....

The Sulphur-crested cockatoo is an impressive sight especially when they raise their yellow crest, it amazes me how they remain so very white. So I was very pleased when I got the opportunity to care for one. A very nice person called Fauna Rescue saying they had picked up a Cockatoo that was unable to fly. I collected the bird and took it to the vet in Cannonvale who told me to keep the bird in a small cage for at least 5 days then into my aviary until it was fit for release.

Well that's when the fun started, Houdini as I nicknamed the bird is a wild bird and didn't take kindly to being locked in a small cage. If you didn't know Sulphur-crested cockatoos like to chew things, every thing. They have the most powerful beak. My nice wooden perches I set up were demolished and the love leafy branches I put on and in the cage were destroyed.

Soon some bird friends arrived on my balcony, which help Houdini settle into his/her new environment and a cover (which also got chewed) over part of the cage made the bird feel more secure.

I try to explain to Houdini that he/she was in the cage for a reason but the bird didn't seem to understand and all I got for my trouble was hissed at and if I wasn't careful Houdini would have had my finger for lunch.

Over time Houdini got used to me, associating me with food, and even started to communicate answering my ruck ruck calls.

Houdini is now in the aviary and much happier, again as with all my bird care, I have enjoyed the privilege of having such a close association with a wild bird.

Story by Di Jessop.

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS....

JEAN NEAL, SHEILA FIRTH & REBECCA ADAMSON



Presidents Report

The last 3 months have proved to be very busy for the committee. A considerable amount of time has been spent dealing with a number of governance and compliance issues. It is hoped that these matters are now close to resolution.

Our display and stall at the Whitsundays Garden Expo proved to be a success. Sandy Cleeland has found a real winner with a good stock of quality second hand books available for sale. We were also fortunate to have raffle prizes donated by Barb McLennan, Kerry Aspland and Whitsunday Garden World. A total of \$244.20 was raised on the day. A considerable amount of time and effort was put into making the day the success it was. Thanks to Sandy Cleeland, Cathie Shoesmith and Bill Dinnie.

The Federal Government's Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs have approved our application for total funding of \$480.00 to purchase some portable lightweight tables and chairs. These will be very useful and make displays, market stalls and workshops that much quicker, easier and safer for our volunteers in future.

Sandy Cleeland represented Fauna Rescue at the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference held in Perth 6th -9th August. Thanks to Whitsunday Shire Council who provided \$1000 Community Assistance Grant funding to assist with the cost of attending.

I would like to thank our Bird Co-ordinator Jacqui Webb for organising the bird carers workshop held at the end of July with Dr Jim Pollock as the presenter. Thanks also to Macropod Co-ordinator Lois Trapp and Cathie Shoesmith for the training session they held in August for new wallaby carers.

Tina Janssen in company with "Wiggles" the wombat was guest speaker at our last General Meeting. Tina gave a very informative presentation about the Northern Hairy nosed wombats and the recovery program for bridled naitailed wallabies. Sadly the population of northern hairy nosed wombats is down to only 115. Tina's talk was motivating, inspiring and very very sobering.

Arrangements have been made with Proserpine High School for the wood working students to build possum boxes for Fauna Rescue Whitsundays. In addition to developing students woodworking skills it is hoped to increase their awareness about the needs of our local wildlife.

I would like to remind all carers that it is essential "animal care records" are kept and submitted to the relevant Co-ordinator monthly. Records should include details such as a date found, progress, diet, weight, release dates and any other significant information.

Looking forward there are a number of key elements that underpin our effectiveness- a pool of dedicated carers, facilities, equipment supplies, appropriate food, up to date knowledge and animal husbandry skills. If we focus on one element at the expense of the others then our long term viability is at risk. Short term needs need to be balanced against our long term goals. The committee is working hard to develop a strategy to address these matters in a fair, balanced and sustainable manner. Can you help? We urgently need more volunteers to man the telephone hotline service. If you can spare one day per week, fortnight or even monthly we would love to hear from you. Also the number of possums, wallabies and birds coming into care continues to grow at a faster rate than our carer base. So please give me a call if you can help us by becoming a carer. Together we can make a difference.

Regards
Sue McLeod



MULCH FOR AN ECHIDNA

By Jacqui Webb



On the 16/4/07 I received a young echidna from one of our other Fauna Rescue Carers. Cathie had to go away so needed someone to take over the care of him. Cathie had been caring for the puggles (baby echidna) since 3/3/07 after he was attacked by a dog. He was just 'spined'.

Spike, as we proceeded to call him was very easy to feed, lapping his wombaroo milk from a bowl, mixed with some small carnivore mix. Spike lived in a large plastic container filled part way with mulch in my office.

Photo by Sandy Cleland

As I did not have an outside enclosure for echidnas, we rapidly started building. Linden donated her old pool for the walls we lined the bottom with wire and then wired this to the pool wall. It worked out to be about 3m x3m.

I was so grateful for the free mulch from Whitsunday Catchment Landcare (WCL), which we picked up free of charge, being Land for Wildlife members. The mulch had been weathered well in a pile in my garden. It was breaking down nicely and full of bark and wood chips. It also had an abundant supply of bugs throughout, ideal for an echidna. We filled the enclosure (after many wheelbarrow loads) about 60cm thick, then layered with dry leaves placed in some rotting logs and other bits of wood and created a few hidey holes for the echidna.

Spike was introduced slowly to his new home, a few hours a day to start with, until now he is outside all the time. He has a lovely time foraging in the mulch for the bugs and burying deep into the mulch and leaf litter.

Many thanks to WCL, for providing the mulch to landowners, not only has it helped in my garden, for the plants that help to feed not only our rescue animals, but also the wild birds and butterflies, it is also helping to create a natural environment for Spike while he is in care. Spike will be released soon, back to where he was found, but I'm sure this enclosure and future loads of mulch will come in very handy for future echidnas.



Photos by Gerry O'Connor.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE CONFERENCE WESTERN AUSTRALIA 2007.

Sandy Cleeland attended the 2007 National Wildlife Conference held at the Esplanade Hotel in Fremantle 6 – 9 August. Sandy would like to thank the Whitsunday Shire Council for a grant of \$1,000.00 towards the cost of attending. The topics and the speakers were varied and here are some samples of those I was inspired by. There was a very brief but tear jerking speech by Gail Gipp, of the Wildlife Warriors on work started by Steve Irwin that is continuing all around the world. The new hospital at Australia Zoo is due for completion in 2008. Gail also talked on the platypi she had raised, Finn, Trey and Zeek.

(Zeke)



(Finn and Trey)



Dr Sarah Brett, who is a vet and an organizer of the 'Toad Busters' spoke on the cane toad and how they are trying to halt the advance on Kakadu. Dettol she suggested as the best eradicator, extremely quick and efficient.

Dr Jim Pollock from Townsville spoke about autopsies ('It's died, I think I killed it and I feel guilty'). He spoke on how various animals had died and the difference a diagnosis based on the autopsy performed as against what the carer thought they had died from. Jim also recommended 5 in 1 solution as routine vaccination.

We attended the local cinema to see a Wedgetailed Eagle that unfortunately had a bad case of dementia. He appeared quite happy, but has to have his food cut into small pieces as he has forgotten how to tear things apart, he also had a fear of heights so sat on a sheet on the floor, he let anyone touch him but not on the head. He is so placid he is used in the schools for educational purposes.

Anne Fowler gave two talks. The first was on fluid therapy in wildlife and the need for sub cutaneous fluid in rehydrating our charges. Anne also spoke on Zoonosis and the 20, 20, 20 rule, wet the hands and soap to the count of twenty, wash to the count of twenty, dry to the count of twenty. June Butcher spoke on how we can all make a difference. At Kanyana their Endangered Breeding Program have bred and released to date 80 Bilbies. They will be moving shortly into a newly renovated hospital which was a disused Girl Guide camp on some hundred acres. They can't wait to move in and have volunteers queuing up to study and to help them with their programs.

There was also a speaker, Shirley Lack who had spent time at the Epping State Forest monitoring the endangered northern hairy nosed wombats. Renee Chamberlin spoke on a fulltime course for carers Certificate III in Native Animal Rehabilitation that is being held down in Brisbane and expressions of interest are being sort from anyone wanting to do an online course. Email: Renee.Chamberlin@deta.qld.gov.au. There were trade stalls during morning and afternoon teas with Werribee TAFE in Victoria offering a course that is operating at the moment, next semester 2008 they have on offer the same courses, they can be done online. Cost in 2007 was around \$450 so will possibly be a similar cost in the New Year. I'm afraid I don't have the gentleman's contact details on hand at the moment but if anyone is interested please send me an email : sandyc18@bordnet.com.au

IFAW Tania Duratovic spoke on projects they are doing worldwide. In Australia, IFAW's work is focused on both natural and man made disasters one of which included the recent bush fire relief in Faversham National Park Victoria. IFAW is also supporting the establishment and operation of State Wildlife Rehabilitation Councils across Australia and encouraging the development of National councils to work for the interests and needs of wildlife rehabilitators.



Our sponsors

Most papers can be downloaded at www.nwrc.com.au

Sandy Cleeland.

HENRIETTA

Fauna Rescue Christmas party 2005, in addition to the usual jolly Carers a young figbird was there seeking help. So we got Frank, who became Frankie, then Frank again and finally, Frankie once more. (If you think we have trouble with 'the birds', you should see what we do with the bees.) Some 4 weeks after receiving Frank(ie) we received another young figbird – Johnny. Johnny was successfully released some 6 weeks later and has no further part to play in our story.

It soon became obvious that Frank had trouble flying. A trip to the vet confirmed that her/his flight feathers had broken, probably caused by an inadequate diet because of our inexperience. Would they re-grow? Yes! When? After the first moult. How long would that take? Hard to say, maybe 6 months, maybe longer OR we could have her euthanised. The last alternative was rejected, she was quite healthy and there was an excellent chance that given time, she would be able to take her rightful place in the wild and as it was our fault that she was the way she was, we kept her – for 445 days when she was successfully released. She plays no further part in our story.

(We seem to have run out of characters! Oh! No! We've still got Henrietta!).

Watching Frank during that time, we wondered what happens in the wild? Eggs are laid, nestlings hatch and start to grow feathers. The first flight must inevitably be down. What happens then? They're on the ground with any number of predators plus hawks and others circling around above. There's a suggestion that the Big Carer up in the sky, looking down at our ineptitude, searched the heavens for the best figbird parents and directed them to build a nest in a place, so obvious that even Sue & Al couldn't fail to see them.

And so it came to pass that one morning, a nest was spotted in a tree some 13 metres away from our front door and about 15 metres up. Two tiny heads clearly visible, necks outstretched in the characteristic figbird pose saying, "Feed me now or I shall surely die". It was early in January, 2007. Over the next few days the rains came and the winds blew. Over 4 inches of rain with very strong winds. The nest was near the end of quite a long branch with twigs and leaves around it but with little protection overhead. From the security of the verandah, we watched as the rain poured down and the branch with the nest, was whipped around in the wind.

OF COURSE WE WERE WORRIED!!! How could anything made of grass and twigs possibly survive? What of its tiny, little tenants? Our birds! Finally, the rains ended (No, it wasn't 40 days and 40 nights. You're spoiling a good story) and there were the 2 little heads, still there, with Mum & Dad in regular attendance.

Checking from the verandah a few mornings later, we were alarmed to find that, search as we may, we could only see one head. So we focused on Mum & Dad, hoping that, even though they were only figbirds, they might be smarter than us and knew where our baby had gone. Mum made a number of short flights until she eventually flew down to the ground. Quickly going to where she had last disappeared, we found Henrietta. For her maiden flight she had come about as far horizontally as she had vertically and had fairly well hidden herself in a bougainvillea. As you can see she has no tail and her head and neck are almost bereft of feathers. Isn't she beautiful???? (Yes! Well! What would you know, anyway?)

The female would call softly and Henrietta would answer, the female trying to lead her along the ground towards some trees. The young bird wouldn't follow, finally spending most of the day on a palm frond on the ground where she was fed, finally making her way into a tree. Couldn't find her next morning although the parents were still around.

It seems that the young bird's instinct is to get off the ground and into a tree where there is some protection, as soon as it can.

I learnt the language of the birds, A new St Francis I would be;

But when I understood their words, The birds were preaching unto me. (Victor Daley)



MEMOS:



Don't forget to send your animal records to the species co-ordinator at the end of each month!



FRQLD License: If you rescue, transport or care for wildlife you should have a copy of our blanket permit on hand at all times!



Thankyou to all our members that contacted Shelley and contributed stories to the newsletter, keep them coming!

RnR Magazine

This is a bi annual magazine produced by Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (QWRC) and available to Fauna Rescue's members. Please let our secretary know if you do not wish your e-mail/snail mail address to be given to QWRC for this purpose.

ON THE DRAWING BOARD AND COMING SOON TO A VENUE NEAR YOU:

Possum Workshop.....Hotline Training.....Christmas Party.....

Barrow of Cheer Christmas Raffle – Any donations of goods to stock the barrow would be most appreciated.

Address bar