

April 2012 Newsletter

From the Chair...

(Lorraine Vass, FOK)



Summer is particularly busy for wildlife carers. The impact of La Nina being experienced in parts of the State has presented additional problems for many. Very pleasing then that the Council's November and February meetings were so well attended with fourteen and sixteen groups represented respectively.

Of course we'd like to see more of our twenty-six members represented around the table but we acknowledge the voluntary nature of the sector and that involvement in the NWC is on top of the commitment to one's own group. Finding time to attend meetings, to develop and share ideas and to progress the Council's business is hard for all of us.

The Council's next quarterly meeting is scheduled for 22 May at NPWS in Hurstville. Reasonable expenses incurred in attendance are reimbursed and there is also the option of participating by teleconference phone. Should your group require more information, email secretary@nwc.org.au

Members of the Council's Management Committee met with Acting Chief Executive of OEHL, Sally Barnes and Acting Chief Executive, Parks & Wildlife Group, Bob Conroy recently to discuss several issues, perhaps the most contentious being the recent change by the NSW Police Firearms Registry to the issuing of firearms licences to wildlife rehabilitators.

Very briefly, the Registry has withdrawn wildlife rehabilitators from eligible applicants under the Animal Welfare Genuine Reason, giving assurance that new applications from rehabbers needing to obtain firearms for euthanasing injured native fauna will continue to be received via the Commissioner's Firearms Permit Legitimate Reason.

The Council is in consultation with the Firearms Registry, working to resolve the licensing situation appropriately.

Copies of the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Flying-foxes* have been distributed. It is also available on the OEHL website at:

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/wildlifelicences/RehabFanaGroupInfo.htm

The Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit is producing a CD to include the *Rehabilitation of Protected Fauna Policy*, the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Protected Fauna*, and the codes for koalas and flying-foxes. The CD will be available to groups later in the year.

Finally, it is an inspiration to see a fellow koala carer and conservationist receiving broader community recognition. Jill Taylor was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2012 Australia Day Honours List for services to wildlife conservation through the *Hunter Koala Preservation Society*. Well done Jill!

Before her retirement last year Jill had been the Society's president and representative on the Council. Her involvement with the Council is set to continue as she has kindly expressed interest in taking on membership of the proposed public fund management committee.

PPMV-1 Update - NSW

(George Arzey, DPI)

PPMV-1 (Pigeon Paramyxovirus – 1) is an exotic virus, which has affected 72 pigeon lofts in Melbourne and Shepparton and is now circulating in feral pigeons in Melbourne (76 incidents in wild pigeons).

It has also been detected in two isolated cases of sparrowhawk and spotted turtle dove in Melbourne. The outbreak started in August 2011 and remains confined to the Melbourne area - a point of considerable epidemiological significance.

There are currently controls on the movement of domestic pigeons in Victoria and restrictions on movements between Victoria and NSW. Efforts are being made to have an effective vaccine registered in Australia and currently poultry vaccines are being tested on pigeons to evaluate their effectiveness and safety.

The main clinical signs of PPMV-1 in pigeons are depression, nervous signs and difficult breathing. Initially birds show an increase in thirst and diarrhoea; loss of appetite; and a reluctance to move and fly. Nervous signs include trembling of the wings and head; tumbling on landing; partial paralysis of the wings and legs; and twisting of the neck. In some cases, birds attempting to feed may be unable to pick up grain.

Poultry that have been in close contact with infected pigeons remained healthy and contact with infected pigeons under experimental conditions resulted in no apparent clinical signs in chickens.

DPI is interested in being informed of clusters of mortality or illness in native birds, particularly in wild pigeons, falcons and sparrowhawks that are likely to contract PPMV-1 through a common habitat or dietary preferences.

Contact: george.arzey@dpi.nsw.gov.au

2012 National Wildlife Conference

(Lorraine Vass, FOK)

The 8th Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference will be held at Rydges Southbank, Townsville, FNQ, 16-20 July. Full registration is \$395 (early-bird \$335, payment prior to 1 April 2012).

For more information, the draft program, and registration form see: www.2012awrc.org.au



A 60c postage stamp has been issued to mark the event.

Oily Wrap

(Rochelle Ferris, ASR)

ASR was first called into assist in an oil spill response in 1995 at the Iron Baron incident in Tasmania. Since then

our members have attended spills as participants or observers around the world.

The message they brought home has raised concerns about the low levels of investment into training and infrastructure to respond to a major spill in NSW.

As a result, ASR has been campaigning to source funding investments from the state government into oil spill response, and has learned a great deal about the potential for primary wildlife care from the Californian Oiled Wildlife Network, www.owcn.org.



Oily Pelican being treated

During winter 2011, ASR ran five marine incident for wildlife workshops down the NSW coastline.

The results of a survey completed by over 100 wildlife carers across 39 different agencies were presented to a large group of stakeholders including government, non-government and private organisations.

As a result, Shadow Minister for the Environment Luke Foley seized an opportunity to amend the Marine Pollution Bill to include the development of a statewide oiled wildlife care network, and investment plan. The Bill has now passed Legislative Council.

The plan has three key elements:

- Amendment of the Marine Pollution Bill 2011 to assign revenues from fines and penalties to the creation of environmental and wildlife cleanup procedures and infrastructure.
- Creation of a new stakeholder group to lead and coordinate spill responses amongst government departments and non-government organisations and deliver training and infrastructure to prepare the state for a spill.
- Preparation of clear plans and resources for each region and ecosystem potentially affected by any spill, which may occur.

Also relating to marine pollution is ASR's ongoing marine plastic debris project motivated by the high

incidence of sea turtles in care suffering the effects of plastic ingestion.

The most recent community education component is a six minute documentary, "Kill Plastic Not Wildlife", an emotional six minute journey across our creeks, rivers, beaches and oceans, following our plastic rubbish right into the stomachs of marine wildlife.

The documentary premiered at the Byron Bay Film Festival in March 2012, and has received international acclaim from academics and sea turtle rehabilitators alike.

You can help turn the tide, *Kill Plastic Not Wildlife* - check out:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTQywfYECs0>

Macropod Mortality – Feedback

(Tiggi Grillo, AWHN)

You may have seen a recent notice requesting information about juvenile macropods (notably Eastern Grey Kangaroos) presenting with lethargy and neurological signs, including blindness. The Australian Registry of Wildlife Health (the Registry) is undertaking an investigation to further understand this syndrome and would like to hear of any similar cases.

We understand that the circumstances surrounding these incidences are quite stressful for carers, however the information you collect for us is invaluable. We would encourage that incident reports be coordinated through each wildlife group animal or macropod coordinator, so that the duplication of information we receive is reduced. It would be useful if each coordinator could use the following submission form to standardise the information:

<http://www.wildlifehealth.org.au/AWHN/Report/ReportIncident.aspx>

Forms can be sent to either tgrillo@zoo.nsw.gov.au or jhall@zoo.nsw.gov.au.

If you are unfortunate enough to lose an animal exhibiting lethargy or neurological signs, we would encourage you, or your referring veterinarian, to contact the Registry immediately to discuss appropriate sample collection for these animals - Jane Hall at 02 9978 4749 or email arwh@zoo.nsw.gov.au.

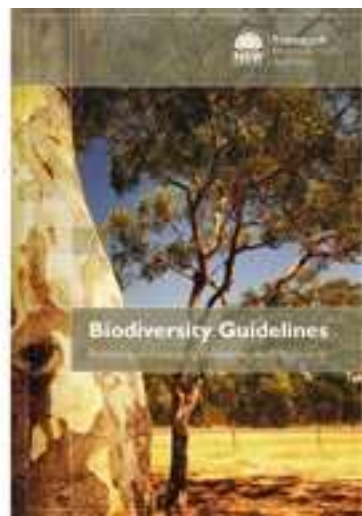
Whilst we hope to be able to confirm a diagnosis, it is not always possible to determine the specific causative agent in these events. All information and samples received however will aid us in our investigations, help us manage similar incidents in the future and increase awareness among the wildlife health community of this problem.

Managing roadwork damage

(Lorraine Vass, FOK based on information in the NSW REC Newsletter, Feb.2012)

The NSW Roads and Maritime Services' Biodiversity Guidelines, which were the subject of a presentation to the Council by Kevin Roberts and Josie Stokes from the Services' Environment Branch in August 2010, have now been released.

Building new roads involves clearing land with consequential habitat loss and creation of barriers to faunal movement. Increased expectations for minimal or at least reduced habitat loss from the community and from regulators have been the drivers for this important project.



The *Biodiversity Guidelines: Protecting and managing biodiversity on RTA projects* seek to minimise impacts on biodiversity during construction projects and maintenance works by identifying and addressing risks at an early stage. They are intended for RMS project managers, staff and contractors (including ecologists and landscape designers).

The Guidelines will assist with preparation of preliminary environmental investigations or environmental assessments under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and can be referred to when preparing environmental specifications and developing construction environmental management plans (CEMPs), including flora and fauna management sub-plans.

Filled with useful photos and information boxes, the Biodiversity Guidelines provide a clear understanding of the management issues surrounding construction and maintenance works. They are comprised of 10 separate guides covering:

1. Pre-clearing process
2. Exclusion zones
3. Re-establishment of native vegetation

4. Clearing of vegetation and removal of bushrock
5. Re-use of woody debris and bushrock
6. Weed management
7. Pathogen management
8. Nest boxes
9. Fauna handling
10. Aquatic habitats and riparian zones.

Other guidelines soon to be released will include:

- Wildlife connectivity guidelines
- Guidelines for biodiversity offsets
- Management of microbats in bridges and other structures.

The Biodiversity Guidelines are available at:
http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/biodiversity_guidelines.html

NSW Wildlife Council, Inc.

Representing the State's network of volunteer wildlife rescue and rehabilitation groups

Code of Ethics

A wildlife rehabilitator should strive to achieve high standards of animal care through knowledge and an understanding of the field. Continuing efforts must be made to keep informed of current rehabilitation information, methods, and regulations.

A wildlife rehabilitator should be responsible, conscientious, and dedicated, and should continuously work toward improving the quality of care given to native fauna undergoing rehabilitation.

A wildlife rehabilitator must abide by local, state, and federal laws concerning wildlife, wildlife rehabilitation and associated activities.

A wildlife rehabilitator should establish and maintain safe working habits and conditions.

A wildlife rehabilitator should acknowledge limitations and enlist the assistance of a veterinarian or other trained professional when appropriate.

A wildlife rehabilitator should respect other rehabilitators and persons in related fields, sharing skills and knowledge in the spirit of cooperation for the welfare of animals.

A wildlife rehabilitator should place optimum animal care above personal gain.

A wildlife rehabilitator should strive to provide professional and humane care in all phases of wildlife rehabilitation, respecting the wildness and maintaining the dignity of each animal in life and in death. Releasable animals should be maintained in a wild condition and released as soon as appropriate. Non-releasable animals which are inappropriate for education, foster-parenting, or captive breeding have a right to euthanasia.

A wildlife rehabilitator should encourage community support and involvement through volunteer training and public education. The common goal should be to promote a responsible concern for living beings and the welfare of the environment.

A wildlife rehabilitator should work on the basis of sound ecological principles, incorporating appropriate conservation ethics and an attitude of stewardship. In particular, there must be a focus on the preservation of habitat for native fauna.

A wildlife rehabilitator should conduct all business and activities in a professional manner, with honesty, integrity, compassion, and commitment, realizing that an individual's conduct reflects on the entire field of wildlife rehabilitation.

NWC Management Committee



(Left to right: Caroline Enfield WIRES (Vice Chair); Ilona Roberts TVWC (General Member); Shirley Lack NARG (Treasurer); James Fitzgerald LAOKO (Media Officer); Audrey Koosmen NATF (General Member); Rochelle Ferris ASR (Secretary); and Lorraine Vass FOK (Chair).

(This newsletter is compiled by Philip Machin (machin4@bigpond.com). Please distribute it widely.)