



## President's Report



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Look forward to lots of fascinating information from Derek , our WAIF vet. All contributions by December 15th please.

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to our lovely new newsletter. I'd like to offer a major thank-you to Joanne Meader for creating it. The WAIF Board is not the easiest group of people to organise – like herding cats really. Joanne is happy to source interesting articles for us so if you know of something you think we would all like to read or you want information on a particular topic please contact her.

I have had a busy year but managed to fit in a trip to Turkey – absolutely stunning even without flying-foxes. My Master's thesis is due in the next few months (and I don't want to talk about it). I had over 30 research bats in this last season, not to mention normal rehabilitation bats and creche. My thanks to WAIF members Ann Morgan, Merinda Air and Will Corbridge for their immense help in treating, feeding and cleaning up after them all. My thanks also to Derek for treating a constant stream of bats through the surgery (not all mine) and fielding panic phone calls about dying bats. I lost a few but, with Derek's advice, saved some I wouldn't have thought possible.

Derek has a way of turning accepted practice on its head – which is very good news for wildlife survival rates if

a little difficult to keep up with as a rehabilitator. None-the-less we all have to grow if we are going to improve and there a several animals running around in the wild this year which would normally have been euthanised. It's time to stop and question what "everyone knows".

I attended the Australasian Bat Society Conference and the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference and WAIF had a stand at each to raise awareness and money. Quite a lot of wistful envy over our vet clinic.

We have engaged a Marketing expert to help us revamp our image and relaunch ourselves (funded by C.A.T. Success) – Mary Shellens from Strategic Marketing Analysis and Consultancy. She has helped develop our new letterhead and business cards and plan our promotions and public events – hence the new workshops we are running. We are seeking grant money – anyone who knows of suitable grants or could assist with applications please contact Ann Morgan.

Will Corbridge wants to organise a market stall at some point so if anyone has crafts suitable for sale please contact me.

As usual if you have an area of expertise or interest in which you are willing to volunteer please contact me or Ann Morgan. Anyone to run the web site – our next major marketing revamp? So many people at the conferences wanted to know if they could buy our products via our web site.

Regards to you all,

*Judy*

*President*



## BEST POSSUM BASA TURNS SIX

*His Furriness Basa smooching up to the two visiting birthday girls. "Mmm I wonder if they have any possum treats in their pockets?"*

*From left - Nat aged 10, Basa aged 6 and Ebony aged 10 all celebrated their August birthdays at Basa's hideaway.*

*Next Issue - pictures from the WAIF Clinic.*

Derek reports.....

### FROM THE VET CLINIC

Due to technical difficulties, mainly one computer format not being compatible with another we were unable to publish the clinic report and pictures this issue. Look forward to it next month.

#### WAIF VET CLINIC

351 Mona Vale Road, St. Ives,

Ph: 02 9456 0452

#### CLINIC DATES & HOURS

Every second Monday 6 pm to 7 pm  
- 22 Sept, 6 Oct, 20 Oct, 3 Nov, 17 Nov  
1 Dec, 15 Dec, 29 Dec

Every second Sunday 9 am to 11 am  
- 28 Sept, 12 Oct, 26 Oct, 9 Nov, 23  
Nov, 7 Dec, 21 Dec.

### The Head of Administration reports.....

Judy, Derek and I recently attended the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Conference in Canberra and thoroughly enjoyed four very hectic days.

WAIF had a trade table at the conference and I am proud to say we raised over \$600. A fantastic result, and I would like to thank Judy's mother, Margaret Hopper, who was responsible for the craft sold ie;

knitted and crocheted wildlife –frogs, bats, possums, lizards (all virtually sold out) and rescue box/cage covers.

A donation of \$100 was also received to help buy equipment for the Clinic. A big thank you to Jan Virgo from Food for Wildlife in Queensland.

The Science of Wildlife Rehabilitation Course is on again this year and we have ten students. Again this is money in the WAIF coffers.

We have also this year received a grant from IFAW for \$1,000 to buy surgical equipment for the clinic

which as I write this has been ordered and due for delivery next week.

I would like everyone to think about how they can help out, there is lots to do and even a little bit will make a difference. The clinic is very busy and with the course running it is a very hectic time. If you think there is something you may be able to help with please give me a call.

Ann Morgan  
Head of Administration

### The Head of Education reports.....

The Science of Rehabilitation General course has kicked off again for the third year in a row. This time it is running at Sydney University with their wonderful facilities. Lots of vet students in the course which is nice to see. Future vets with an interest and knowledge of wildlife! Of course I am making sure that they all are in-love with flying-foxes.

This year the two workshops, which are part of the course are also available to all. See details on page 4.

The first workshop is a pain and stress management seminar in the morning and an autopsy and

specimen collection practical in the afternoon – so plenty of variety.

The second workshop is 19/10/08. Details still in the planning stage.

Anyone who wants to help out on either day please call me. I always need help with setting up, packing up and lunch etc. Even an hour would make a big difference.

We are also arranging a bat treatment seminar day on the Central Coast in November – 16/11/08. All the stuff I have learnt through my research and from Derek at the clinic and information from other experienced rehabilitators. Contact me if you are interested for the details.

We are also looking at some way of making the Science of Rehabilitation course available to people outside of Sydney, e.g. weekends, correspondence, on-line etc. If

anyone has any ideas or wants to help please contact me.

Ann Morgan, Derek and I attended the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference in Canberra in July. This is the fifth year it has been running. Both Derek and I presented. Derek's talk was on genetics (one of his many areas of expertise) and the implications for release of wildlife, which was extremely interesting. I spoke on busting treatment myths using case studies from the clinic.

If there is any topic you would like to see WAIF address in a course, seminar or publication please let me know.

Happy Learning

Judy  
Head of Education (acting)



## A - Z of WILDLIFE

This column features Australian native animals and introduces some of the wildlife organisations that look after their interests.

### PLATYPUS

Our wonderful and unique Platypus was recently featured on ABC Catalyst. These strange little creatures have baffled scientists with their reptilian like egg laying but mammal like milk nurturing of their young, sharing this method with the only other Monotreme, the Echidna.

They have always been thought of as cute but now we know they are also very sexy! Recent research, including the mapping of their genes, has revealed that they have 10 sex chromosomes, 5 X chromosomes and 5 Y chromosomes. They have all the same genes as the bird sex chromosomes.

They don't have an immune system of thymus, lymph nodes and they can't produce antibodies. Gene mapping has revealed a series of anti-microbial genes that enable the mother platypus to produce milk with built in protection against microbes. The result of this discovery are 20 anti-microbial peptides that might be able to kill bacteria that we don't have effective drugs for.

The male platypus gene that controls the venom in the spurs on their hind legs is also of interest to scientists. Understanding the pathways in the pain produced by this venom could lead to the development of novel pain killers.

Read the full transcript at [www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/2349094.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/2349094.htm).



### AUSTRALIAN PLATYPUS CONSERVANCY

The Australian Platypus Conservancy is an independent organisation dedicated to conserving the platypus and its freshwater habitats. In particular, the Conservancy is conducting a wide range of research projects to:

- (1) learn more about the current status of platypus populations
- (2) establish what factors are chiefly responsible for the animals disappearing from certain areas
- (3) identify what can be done to ensure the long-term conservation of this unique mammal.

To find out more visit [www.platypus.asn.au](http://www.platypus.asn.au)

The Conservancy conducts a wide-range of project and has won a number of awards for its contribution to wildlife conservation. It is a non-profit environmental charity, with tax deductibility.

## QandA

### From a visitor to the vet clinic.....

"I've heard about rat lung worm disease and that it is found in rats, transmitted by snails and that tawny frogmouths often seem to die from it. Can it be passed onto any other animals and what are the issues for carers dealing with these animals? Do blue tongue lizards get infected if they eat infected snails? Can humans get infected and what are the symptoms and outcomes?"

### Derek answers.....

*Angiostrongylus cantonensis* is the scientific name for the rat lung worm. It cycles between snails and rats, spending time in rats' brains and lungs. Other hosts can be affected by accidentally eating snails or eating plant matter (including vegetables and fruit) over which heavily infected snails have crawled. This makes organic produce particularly risky and

these should always be washed thoroughly before being eaten. The worms migrate to the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) where they can cause meningitis or meningo-encephalitis (e.g. in dogs). The worm may migrate along the spinal cord causing paralysis. Many mammalian and bird species can be affected, including humans, but I don't know of any cases where reptiles have been affected. The species most obviously affected are tawny frogmouths and brushtail possums. Signs associated with larval damage include neurological dysfunctions (e.g., paresis, paralysis, ataxia, blindness) depending on which parts of the central nervous system are affected and how severe the damage is. Humans are affected if they eat raw contaminated vegetables or fruit, infested snails or slugs, or infested intermediate hosts. So don't eat raw snails or slugs and don't eat other uncooked animals.

Dr Derek Spielman



# HABITAT

## Ma Supial reports

### Food Glorious Food

Some of you may call it habitat, the bush or just plain plants, but for a lot of my fellow natives it is FOOD. We really appreciate you planting more food for us and to encourage you I am contributing to a column on Native Animal Foods. They might not always be native plants because we understand the need you have for planting exotics and we have adapted so well to many of them that we often prefer them to natives.

There are some wonderful websites that you can use to select, identify and learn about native

plants. One of my favorites is the Australian National Botanic Gardens site for Growing Native Plants. Look them up at [www.anbg.gov.au/gnp](http://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp).

The website includes the meaning of plant names which you may find interesting. Here's one that I quite like to eat. *Melaleuca* - from two Greek words, melas, black, and leukos, white, as the first *Melaleuca* discovered had white branches but a black trunk, possibly from fire. Another opinion contrasts the white bark with the very dark foliage of some species.

Yum Yum....



## WAIF Workshop No 1 2008

### Pain and Stress Management Seminar

A morning seminar on treating and managing pain and stress in injured wildlife. Keynote speakers are Dr Howard Ralph and Dr Derek Spielman.

### Voucher Specimen Collection Workshop

An afternoon hands on practical workshop teaching correct methods for autopsies and the collection of tissue samples for examination. Essential skills for helping determine the cause of death.

**Date: 21 Sept. 08**

*Cost:*  
\$25 for a single session or \$50 for two sessions including lunch.

*Bookings:*  
Phone: **WAIF** on 9456 0452  
Email: [education@waif.org.au](mailto:education@waif.org.au)

*Venue:*  
University of Sydney,  
Camperdown Campus

**WAIF** members - please call for your discounted rate.

## WAIF

Wildlife Assistance & Information Foundation Inc. is a non profit organisation.

### Board Members

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All contributions will be gratefully received and considered for publication. Please email to [enquiries@waif.org.au](mailto:enquiries@waif.org.au) or post to the address below.

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While all care has been taken in producing the information contained in this newsletter WAIF does not guarantee that it is 100% accurate. Issue

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