



O.N.A.R.R.

NEWSLETTER NO.87



DECEMBER 2025



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News from the President - Lindy D'Arcy

Hi Everyone,

As Christmas 2025 arrives, it's clear this has been an incredibly full year. We began with a rush of Lorikeet Paralysis Syndrome (LPS) cases in our lorries and then in our bats, and even now a few still come through. We cared for countless birds and possums, and even winter gave us little rest. Spring brought more animals in need, and the storms were especially hard on our bats, with many coming down in the hail.

We enjoyed several wonderful workshops with Martin from Geckos, learning about birds and reptiles. Our bat carers also had a valuable training day with Trish, gaining hands-on experience feeding babies and rescuing little ones left in trees when their mums were injured. A reminder that when taking animals to Dee, please give her fifty dollars for each bat to help with their care until they go on to Trish and soft release.

A huge thank-you to Bev for her tireless work securing grants to keep us stocked with the food and supplies we need. And thank you to the committee for working together to keep O.N.A.R.R running strong.

Wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and a safe New Year.

Yours in caring,
Linda D'Arcy

Fairy Martins

Fairy Martins are tiny members of the swallow family, passerine songbirds.

They travel in winter and are even smaller than welcome swallows. They open their beaks wide and take food easily, but they need feeding often.

When I receive a swallow, a fairy martin often follows!

They rely on their parents to feed them on the wing, so they need food more often than other birds and a moist mix helps keep their energy up.

A very lean fine mince with lots of insectivore mix works well. I give small amounts until they stop opening their beaks. Adults usually grow to around the 10-12 gms.

As they get older, they begin taking food from tweezers held up for them. Once they manage this on their own, they are ready for release.

Their homes are usually forests, grasslands, and open woodland.

Keeping trees nearby helps keep them safe from predators.

Article by Linda D'Arcy



Welcome Swallow



Fairy Martin

Marion Wall (Vice President)

Welcome to the new look of our newsletter. I hope you enjoy it.
I've stepped in as editor so Beverley can focus on her ONARR work and caring for her animals.

If you have any feedback or comments please, however small, email them to me at redape11@optusnet.com.au

A short introduction:-

I arrived from Kent, England on a year-long working holiday in 1980 and chose to make Australia home. While working as a Civil Drafter, I discovered many chances to volunteer, including the RSPCA and Australia Zoo. I later, after retiring, completed a Vet Nursing Certificate IV and spent more than three years in the Wildlife Hospital at the RSPCA.

I volunteered in a desexing, medical support and vaccination mission in Cambodia in 2019 and I continue to support street cats and dogs with medical supplies. My love for wildlife also led me to Borneo in 1998, where I joined Orangutan Welfare programs and now represent Orangutan Veterinary Aid in Australia, raising funds for vet teams in Sumatra and Indonesia.

I joined ONARR and have been caring and rescuing bats since 2005.
And I love to travel.....

"Merry Christmas from the team!

A special thank you to our volunteers who have been working tirelessly to rescue and rehabilitate animals. We couldn't do it without you.

I hope you have a wonderful holiday filled with love and fun."



Exudative Dermatitis in Possums

Exudative Dermatitis is possibly the nastiest disease that our possums have to deal with. It is a severe skin condition that is characterized by ulcerations, fur loss and potentially secondary infections, and it requires treatment of antibiotics.

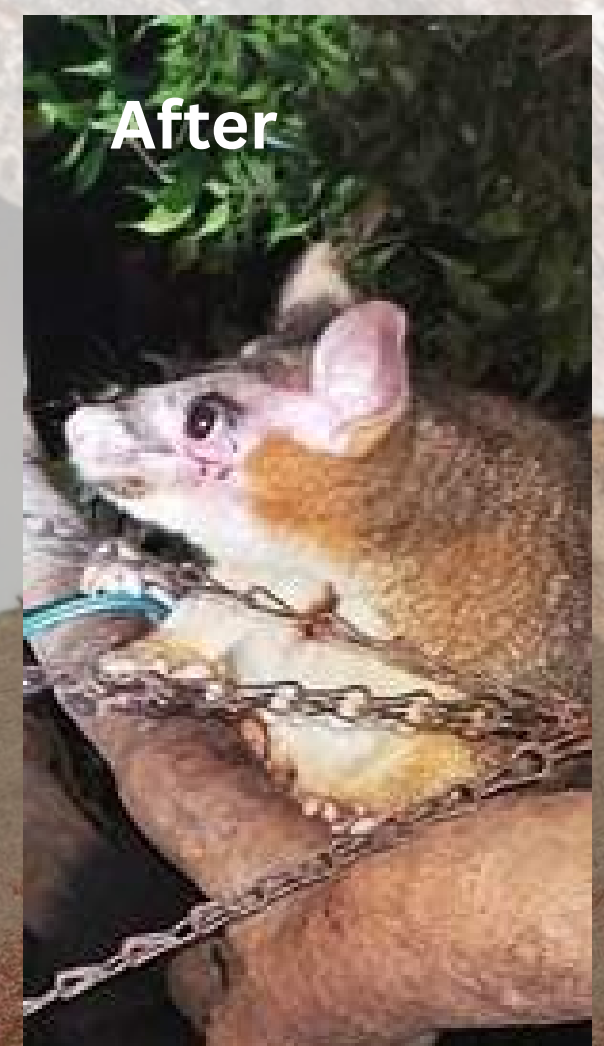
If the disease is not too far advanced, then a course of antibiotics can be used usually with positive results. However, the condition of the animal needs to be taken into account, as it is unkind to try to treat a severe case as the animal is usually in considerable pain.

Some years we barely see the disease manifest itself, and other years, usually the hot and muggy ones, the animals seem to come in in droves. It is more common in the tropics as the high humidity, rain and temperature combine to make a suitable environment for maximum bacterial growth.

An overabundance of animals in one area can create a stressful environment, and it is then that we are more likely to see it manifest. Because brushtail possums are solitary animals, when there is an increase in territorial disputes, competition for food and nesting sites, we see more brushtails and sometimes short eared possums come in with it.

If the animal has more than 30% of the body showing the disease, euthanising is the best alternative. I have successfully supported MOP's to treat animals in their backyards (under vet supervision), but they need the full course of antibiotic to be successful.

Article by Beverley Clarke



Macropod Article by Melissa Arkell

Over the past year or two, there have been a number of wildlife carer groups reporting on an illness in the Red Necked Wallaby population in Eastern Australia. There is very limited information available regarding the disease or if there has been an increase or decrease in the mortality numbers in care. I have, however found a notice of a study being conducted by the Byron Bay Wildlife hospital.

The following is a exert from their study notice.

Red-necked wallabies in care are developing central nervous system or neuromuscular signs and many die. The cause of this disease is unclear, and there may be more than one reason for animals to die with these signs. Testing of live animals has been limited, but at least one biochemistry profile suggested that the affected animal had marked electrolyte imbalances. Post-mortem findings to date have not been specific nor consistent. Initially this study will be confined to red-necked wallabies. However, if other species of macropods demonstrate signs previously described in red-necked wallabies the host range will be expanded with the agreement of all investigators. While some of the affected animals develop progressive seizure activity, others present after a single episode of neurological illness. Common differential diagnoses for neurological dysfunction in macropods include: toxoplasmosis, babesiosis, bacterial or fungal infection (brain abscess), viral infection (orbiviruses), renal dysfunction, liver dysfunction, low blood glucose concentrations, altered electrolyte concentrations, and intoxication. The investigative plan detailed below attempts to provide a thorough and systematic basis to simultaneously rule-in and rule-out each potential diagnosis in a cost-effective manner.

My experience has been harsh.

In November, I lost 3 young Red necks, all around 2kg and all three within 4 days. In hindsight, they may have been off their milk.

Being that they were all eating lots of grass and still moving well, I wrongly assumed the lack of desire to take a full bottle was due to age and the alternate foods satisfying them.

All three died of seizures. My smaller Red Necked Wallaby and Swamp wallaby were also unwell and their temperatures were raised. I was able to keep the temperature of the smaller ones down and the swamp wallaby did not get the seizures but the Red Necked wallaby did but with Panadol keeping his temperature down, he came through without any further signs of problems. He is currently 1900gms.

If you are a macropod carer, please keep in touch with RSPCA or Australia Zoo if you notice any temperatures or seizures in your macropods in care. If you prefer, call me and I will pass your carer stories on for you. (0407030457)

Have a hoppy Christmas and an even hoppier New Year

This picture is my Baby Nicko. He was released a few years ago but comes to say hi every now and then. I know he is my boy due to a nick in his ear he came into care with.

This photo was taken last week. He is such a handsome man.



Flying-Fox News by Dee Smith

Nature can be cruel!

Recent storms with heavy rain and hail hit 4 flying-fox camps in the Scenic rim area leaving dead, injured and orphaned bats. Pictured is the size of hail at the Hillview camp.



ONARR carers helped out at the Hillview camp with fruit cutting and feeding orphan pups.

Two of our carers Nicole and Silvia were at the forefront of the affected camps doing retrieval of injured adults and orphaned pups. Thank you ladies, a very hard job indeed.

Some carers have taken in orphaned pups from the Hillview and Kooralbyn camps, and they're all doing well. A warm thank you to everyone who's given these little ones care, love, and a fresh start. And a special thanks to Trish for her tireless work to protect the bats.

These camps were predominantly Grey-headed flying-foxes, listed Federally as Vulnerable.

Pictured are some of the little Grey pups being multiple fed.



***RSPCA UPDATE

Bats will no longer be transported to carers unless the driver has been vaccinated.

A vampire bat arrives back at the roost with his face, mouth and teeth covered in blood. All the other bats get excited and ask where he got it all from. Follow me he says & off they flew over the hills, over the river and into the dark forest. See that tree over there .. yes yes they reply - Well I didn't.

Species and numbers registered for the last quarter

BIRDS:

Rainbow Lorikeets 57
Scaley Breasted Lorikeets 10
Noisy Miners 15
Australian Magpies 8
Fig bird 2
Friar Bird (Noisy) 1
Galah 7
Ibi 3
Thrush 1
Wood Ducks 15
Teal Ducks 6
Little Corella -
Crested Pigeon 8
Torresian Crow 6
Currawong 9
Pacific Black Ducks 10
Tawny Frogmouth 7
Welcome Swallow 15
Pale Headed Rosella 3
Black face Cuckoo Shrikes 4
Blue Faced Honey Eaters 9
Brown Honey eaters 2
Bush Stone Curlews 9
Butcher bird (grey) 17
Butcher bird (pied) 18
Kookaburras 2
Magpie larks 6
Masked Lapwing 3
Spangled Drongos 2
Tree Martins 1
Fairy Martin 1
Kingfisher 1
Spotted Dove 1
Willy Wagtail 2
Double Bar Finches -
Purple Swamphen -
Brush Turkey -
Pheasant Coucal -

MACROPODS:

Eastern Grey Kangaroos 1
Red-Necked Wallabies 2
Swamp Wallaby 1
Red-Necked Pademelon -

MARSUPIALS:

Possums Brushtail Possums 5
Ringtail Possums 20
Mountain Brushtail Possums 1
Sugar Gliders -
Squirrel Gliders 3
Feathertail Gliders
Other Fauna Northern Brown Bandicoot 5
Long Nosed Bandicoots -
Bush rats -

REPTILES:

AMPHIBIANS:

Green Tree Frog 1

FLYING -FOXES:

Greys 24
Blacks 7

Australia's Annual Bird Count for 2025 - 5193159

THROAT WORM

Have you ever seen a juvenile Australian Magpie being pecked by its tribe, or not fed by its parents?

We often have young magpies brought into care with bald heads and wounds, after being mistreated by their fellow magpies.

One of the most common reasons for this type of rejection is throat worm , or *Cheilospirura gymnorhina*. Throat worm is picked up by magpies when they eat invertebrates such as snails , earthworms and slugs. The worms burrow their heads into the bird's mouth and throat, and the bird's immune system responds by creating a fibrous nodule around the parasite. Adult birds see the nodules in the young birds' throats during feeding and often respond by attacking them.

Throat worm are painful and can cause difficulty with breathing or swallowing, a wheezing cough, weight loss and a pale gape. Light throat worm burdens can be self-limiting - but severe infestations, if untreated, will eventually block the trachea or oesophagus and become fatal.

Roughly 20% of our magpie admissions have some degree of throat worm infestation. We also see it in butcherbirds, ravens, cuckoo-shrikes, boobook owls and other insect-eaters.

Luckily, we are able to help our throat worm patients by treating with oral worming medications and then physically plucking the dead worms out under pain relief. We also use topical gels such as Bonjela or SM33, so the bird is able to eat without pain.

Parasites (and magpies!) can be tricky to treat for many reasons, so please take any affected birds straight to a wildlife hospital or vet, so experienced volunteers can assess, treat and rehabilitate these birds and successfully release them back to their families!

Kanyana Wildlife Facebook 28/11/2025
Article Sourced by Randy Le-Bherz



Spangled Drongos in care by Randy Le-Bherz

The spangled drongo (*Dicrurus bracteatus*) is a bird of the family Dicruridae. It is the only drongo to be found in Australia, where it can be recognised by its black, iridescent plumage and its characteristic forked tail. It feeds on insects and small vertebrates. It has complex and varied calls and is a mimic of the sounds it hears. It arrives in Queensland in late spring and breeds high in an isolated tree, producing three to five young each year.



The spangled drongo displays uninhibited and sometimes comical behaviour as it swoops and perches in search of insects, small birds, and occasionally, small skinks. When it seasonally visits urban areas, it is easily tamed by throwing small pieces of raw meat into the air, when it will accurately swoop and catch them midair.

Whilst this bird is often silent, it sometimes makes astonishingly loud, complex, and entertaining calls that may sound like a "sneeze". The spangled drongo is an amazing mimic, taking most of its vocabulary from the sounds heard in the vicinity and weaving them into a song.



It's heartwarming to hear that these two fledglings, pictured left, found in StringyBark Creek Dog Park are now under the attentive care of Wildlife Carer Randy.

While the reason for their discovery in the park remains a mystery, it's reassuring to know that they are in capable hands.

Randy's dedication to their well-being is evident as the fledglings are actively seeking food, a positive sign of their vitality.

With their initial weights recorded at 52g and 54g upon release from the RSPCA, there's optimism that they will quickly gain weight and thrive under Randy's nurturing care.

Photo by Randy Le-Bherz

The Great Cane Toad Bust for 2026

Cane toads are Australia's worst invasive species. They are toxic at every stage of development and can produce up to 35,000 eggs per reproductive cycle. From the 17-25 January 2026 invite your family to participate in a Cane Toad Bust.

What does this involve?

Getting on a pair of gardening or plastic gloves, a good strong plastic bag, and a torch. Go outside after dark, I find around 8.30 is a good time to go. Scan the grounds and gardens for toads, pick up and put in your plastic bag – then search for the next little pest, and repeat. It is recommended that toads are placed in an escape proof container with holes in the lid in the fridge overnight to cool down before being placed in the freezer for 24-48 hours. I do my hunts two nights before the dust bins are collected, so that I can dispose of them on bin day.



If you prefer not to do this step at home, Watergum offers community drop off points where toads are collected and handled for you.

Find locations at Watergum.org.au

The collected toads are then used to make 'toadpole' traps to collect more of these unwanted invaders.

Cane toads remain toxic after death, so to avoid hurting our wildlife, you need to dispose of them responsibly. Either place them in your RED lid bin or bury them at least 50 cm deep, or put them in a hot compost system.

If the opportunity arises for me to collect toads at other times, I do that too!

Article from Beverley Clarke



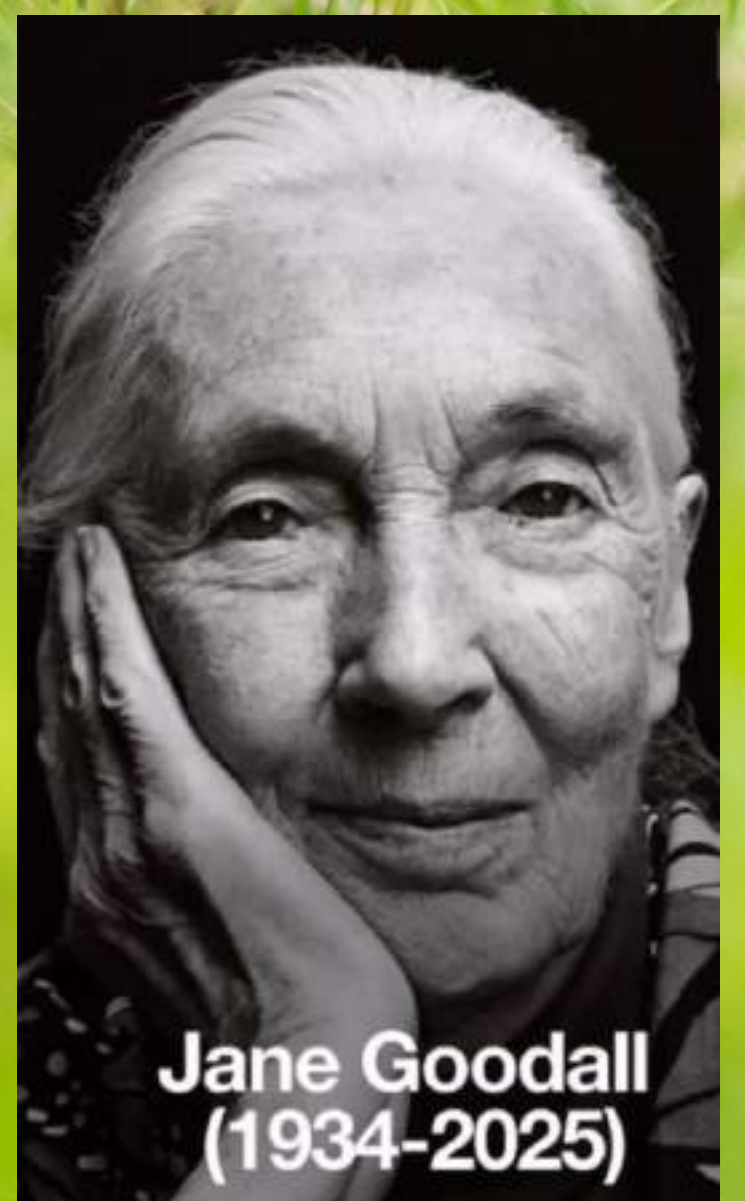
Summer is here, holidaymakers are gearing up for long trips, and wildlife is stirring. Wildlife Queensland warns that hot summers and increased traffic threaten wildlife, so extra vigilance is in order.

With every decision you make, as an individual or as a family, it can have a direct impact on the health of our planet!



"I like to envision the whole world as a jigsaw puzzle... If you look at the whole picture, it is overwhelming and terrifying, but if you work on your little part of the jigsaw and know that people all over the world are working on their little bits, that's what will give you hope."

JANE GOODALL



Jane Goodall
(1934-2025)