

Wildlife Whispers

Double Issue

3 & 4

April/May
2021



Australian Magpies
(*Gymnorhina tibicen*)

HOW YOU CAN IMPROVE BIODIVERSITY IN YOUR GARDEN

Attracting Australian wildlife isn't always an easy task. Natural wildlife visiting our homes and gardens is a rareness that we all enjoy. You can increase biodiversity and attract some of the unique wildlife Australia has to offer.

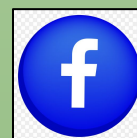
When building your garden, the main factors for increasing biodiversity is providing shelter from predators, a water source, plants that attract insect prey, plants that provide food and adjoining bushland to your property. Try to avoid the temptation of 'cleaning up' fallen branches, rocks and hollow logs and limbs, these provide habitat and shelter for small wildlife.

Below is a link to a great resource from Gardners about how to make this happen...

[How you can improve the biodiversity in your garden.](#)

You never know what might turn up in your garden

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The Native Animal Trust Fund Inc. Hunter Wildlife Rescue is a non-profit incorporated association, licensed by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

Presidents Report

Dear Members,

Well, we are looking forward to getting back to normal again after a terrible year of not being able to meet or conduct training courses, so now we will hold our Annual General Meeting in June.

Before the **AGM** on **26th June** we will hold our **General Meeting** at **10am** at our Education Centre at Shortland.

All members were emailed the material for the AGM last week, please let me know if you have not received it. Also sent was nomination material for Species Coordinators and Portfolio holders as well as nomination form for Committee positions.

I ask you all to think long and hard if you nominate for any role, will you have the time to fill that role? are you skilled? in a role you may like to take on.

Our training courses are now able to be conducted which is wonderful. Anne Williams has been conducting very small bird training courses at her house over the past Summer which has helped us get more bird carers activated.

Please see in this Newsletter the upcoming training courses. I hope you all take the time to come along and learn more about our wildlife.

We have run over 5 new member courses and found some very good new members who are helping with our rescue phone line, transporting and rescue which has taken a load off others very much, so thank you to those new members.

We are still in need again for Phone Operators, please contact Chriss Beer if you can help. Without the phone operators our wildlife does not get into care fast enough so we can provide the help needed. I thank all the phone operators for their great work, they do this so well that many animals have been saved and given the care needed.

Another reminder is that your **fauna data** must be emailed to Peter, our Fauna Data Officer by **30th June** as our report must go to NPWS as a condition of our General Licence. Last year the reporting was very poor. Many of you did not send in any fauna data which was disappointing. I understand we have all had a bad few years but your data is most important. Please get your data into Peter as soon as possible at faunadata@hunterwildlife.org.au

Again this year Total was on and thanks to the Local Land Services who gave HWR a free site area we had a very successful 3 days. I thank all the members who attended and helped on the stall. This year we had our non-releasable blue tongue lizard on display who was quite a hit with everyone as well as our snake and flying fox Lacy. People attending our stall left with a much better understanding of how wonderful these animals are and the need to save them.

Stay safe all, we now live in a very different world which can see things change daily, thank you all for supporting and caring for our beloved wildlife.

Warm regards
Audrey Koosmen
President HWR



Hunter Wildlife Rescue Members Stall *at the Huntlee Easter Fair*

Our dedicated Hunter Wildlife Rescue volunteers **Connie, Alana, Jenny and Cat** were invited by Huntlee Mums to have a stall free of charge at The Huntlee Easter Fair in March 2021.

The fair was hosted in a park in North Rothbury, this fun-filled event on Sunday 28th March featured free activities for children; face-painting, food and refreshments, an Easter Scavenger Hunt and market stalls.

Our members had the opportunity to chat to the local community and promote Hunter Wildlife Rescue. The HWR volunteers enjoyed educating the visitors about what HWR volunteers do and the types of native wildlife species HWR rescue, rehabilitate and release.

Most people know WIRES as the main wildlife rescue organisation and this is who they usually call as the first point of contact when a rescue is needed. This gave the volunteers the chance to promote HWR by giving out our cards with our contact details on them and by asking people to call HWR for any native wildlife rescues, advice or information.

While the aim of the day was to educate visitors about HWR, the volunteers also managed to fundraise \$90! We thank our wonderful volunteers for their support, and the ladies also look great in their HWR shirts!



Connie, Alana, Jenny and Cat (L-R) at the HWR stand

Hunter Wildlife Rescue

Training Courses 2021

➤ Introduction to Care, Management and Release of Macropods - Sunday, 13th June 2021

For new members and refresher course for active members

Speakers: Anne Williams and Margaret Howley

Venue: HWR Education Centre, Shortland

Time: 10am - 3pm

Cost: \$10 to HWR members. \$20 to non members but must a member of a wildlife group.

Closing date to register: Monday, 7 June. Please send registration forms to Training officer by 7 June. [Training Application](#)

Payment: To the Treasurer by 7 June using the above Training Application form. If anyone wishes to buy Caring for Kangaroo and Wallabies book written by Ray and Anne Williams bring \$10 to the course to pay for the published book.



➤ Rescue and Rehabilitation of Wombats - Sunday, 27th June 2021

For new members and refresher for active members

Speaker: Judy Hopper

Venue: HWR Education Centre Shortland

Time: 10am - 3pm

Cost: \$10 for HWR members. \$20 non member but must a member of a wildlife group.

Closing date to register: Monday, 21st June 2021. Please send registration form to the Training Officer by 21 June. [Training Application](#)

Payment: To the Treasurer by 21 June using the above Training Application form.



➤ Care, Treatment Management & Release of Brushtails and Ringtail Possums Sunday, 11th July 2021

For new members and refresher course for active Members.

Speaker: Audrey Koosmen.

Venue: HWR Education Centre, Shortland.

Time: 10am - 3pm.

Cost: \$10 for HWR members. \$20 for non members but must be a member of a wildlife group.

Closing date to register: Monday 5 July 2021. Please send registration form to Training Officer by 5 July. [Training Application](#)

Payment: To the Treasurer by 5 July using the above Training Application form.



➤ **New Member Introduction Course - Saturday, 17th July 2021**

An informative one day course outlining: The National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS) wildlife rehabilitation licence conditions required to be an active rescuer or rehabilitator.

➤ **Advanced Wound Management - 25th July 2021**

Open to all members

Speaker: Judy Hooper

Venue: HWR Education Centre Shortland

Cost: \$10 HWR members. \$20 non members but must be a member of a wildlife group.

Closing date: 19th July to register. Please send registration form to Training Officer by 19th July [Training Application](#)

Payment: to the Treasurer by 19th July using the above Training Application form.

➤ **Care, Management and Release of Microbats - Sunday, 22nd August 2021**

For Vaccinated Members

Speakers: Anne Williams.

Venue: HWR Education Centre, Shortland.

Time: 10am - 3pm.

Cost: \$10 HWR members. \$20 non members but must be a member of a wildlife group.

Closing date to register: Monday 16 August.

Please send registration form to Training Officer by 16 August [Training Application](#)

Payment: Treasurer by 16 August using the above Training Application form.



This Course will also give some insight into just how these small creatures live in the wild. Anne and her daughter Amy and son Nara have studied these creatures for many years by trapping and monitoring their ways and looking at their nightly activities in many research projects they have conducted.

➤ **Heat Stress Effects in Flying Foxes, Heat Stress Management Plan, dealing with volunteers on ground in an event - Sunday, 29th August 2021**

Open to Vaccinated and Unvaccinated Members.

Speakers: Judy Hooper and Audrey Koosmen

Venue: HWR Education Centre, Shortland.

Time: 10am - 3pm.

Cost: No cost to this course.

Closing date to register: Monday, 23 August.

Please send in registration form to Training Officer by 23 August. [Training Application](#)

Payment: Treasurer by 23 August using the above Training Application form.

This course is most important to give you all some insight on what happens in such an events remembering we need you all to help in these effects. Non vaccinated members are very important, to give support and help.





News from Committee Members

Update on the HWR Food Bank

Lisa Thompson is our new Food Bank Coordinator. I thank Anne Williams very much for doing this for as long as she did, but when Anne became ill we had to move that task and Lisa was kind enough to take the role on, our thanks to Lisa.

We now have food bankers in five areas.

Food Banker for areas

- Maitland Lisa Thompson
- Cessnock Julie Kirkwood
- Port Stephens Anne Williams
- East Lake Macquarie Lisa Lowe
- West Lake Macquarie Chriss Beer
- Teresa Purnell will be now hold the Live Food Bank for carers

Thanks to the International Fund for Animal Welfare who have provided us with more funding to be able to buy food. Additionally, from the donations received from devastating fires, we will still be able to give all food and extra materials out to our members for free.

We want this to last as long as we can as this is a great help to our approved active carers.

Audrey
HWR President

Glowing Testimonial about HWR Training Courses.

"On the 17th and 18th of April 2021, Hunter Wildlife Rescue held the Advanced Macropod Course. The course was presented by Suzy Nethercott-Watson, who is a Senior Macropod carer for Wildcare Queanbeyan and founder and Managing Director at Two Green Threads.

The course was fabulous, and Suzy is a knowledgeable, passionate and engaging presenter. The course explored detailed aspects of the gastrointestinal tract of a Macropod, a framework that carers can use to gather information on a sick joey and fluid management plans.

Other topics included gut and butt care, pinkie management and caring for the carer. I enjoyed the course immensely and have learnt so many new skills that I will be able to put into practice for most of our wildlife that comes into care.

The training team have received many positive reviews about the course, and I believe everyone who attended thoroughly enjoyed it."

*Kate Randolph
HWR Secretary*

Profile on:

Short-beaked Echidna

Scientific name: *Tachyglossus aculeatus*

Collective noun: A PARADE of Echidnas

Identification

The Short-beaked Echidna is the only species of echidna in Australia. The Short-beaked Echidna is easily recognised by its sharp spines, short legs and long snout. Size Range: 40-55 cm

Distribution

The Short-beaked Echidna is the only species of echidna in Australia. The Short-beaked Echidna is found throughout Australia, including Tasmania. Although it is found all over Australia, it is not as common in Sydney as it once was.

Feeding and diet

Using its pointed snout and sharp claws, the Short-beaked Echidna breaks into ant and termite nests and catches its prey by flicking its long sticky tongue in and out. It also catches a lot of dirt in the process and this is expelled in the droppings.

Life history cycle

Like the Platypus, the Short-beaked Echidna is an egg-laying mammal or monotreme and lays one egg at a time. The eggs hatch after about 10 days and the young, emerge blind and hairless. Clinging to hairs inside the mother's pouch, the young echidna suckles for two or three months. Once it develops spines and becomes too prickly, the mother removes it from her pouch and builds a burrow for it. It continues to suckle for the next six months.

Predators

The Short-beaked Echidna has few natural enemies, but it may be killed by cars, dogs, foxes and occasionally goannas, and cats may take the young.



A (love) echidna train is composed of a female in front, with three or four males following head to tail behind, forming an echidna conga line. An echidna train may have as many as 11 males! Echidna trains last for about six weeks. The males get very excited at this point and start digging a trench around the female.

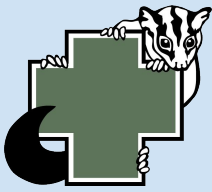


After mating, the female deposits a single, soft-shelled, leathery egg into her pouch.



Baby echidnas are called puggles





Hunter Wildlife Rescues



Rescue at Congewai By Michelle Bowen

HWR member Connie Osifelo was driving back home when she spotted a juvenile Grey-headed Flying fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) which is classed as vulnerable on overhead power lines. Connie called Ausgrid to assist and I went to help and to take poor Connie bottles of water.

Jerry from AusGrid did a marvellous rescue by getting her to climb onto the extension pole and then safely lowering her to Connie. Jerry has named this sweet little girl at about five weeks old, Sarah.

We immediately gave Sarah water that she drank gratefully. She was dehydrated and underweight but with no obvious injuries. Sarah could have lost her mum to a predator and the power line was where she made it to. She is too young to survive without mum, the chances are Sarah may have slowly perished on those lines. Flying foxes sunburn badly when overexposed to the sun.

Thank you to Ausgrid for their amazing service. Now safely on her way to care and nutrition to Connie's before being buddied to another orphan girl Grey-headed Flying fox, named Mandabat who is with Judith Hopper and Bev Marsh. She will be raised on formula, gradually transitioned to fruit and juice until she is big enough to be with other pre release babies in care.

Sarah will learn to fly and transition again to a life of freedom as a wild bat.

#HunterWildlifeRescue

#hunterwildliferescuebushfeeding



An Important Message for HWR Rescuers

Possum Rescues

If you are called for any possum species that are out in the day sitting/cuddled up on the ground or anywhere similar.

For example, the possum in the photo on the right, the possum is on a verandah, this possum must be rescued. This possum has either fallen or was hit by a car and had punctured lungs with blood pouring into them. Sadly this possum had to be euthanised. She had an unrearable joey on board who was also euthanised.

I am so pleased that a possum rescuer contacted me for advice, she then went and rescued and took the possum straight to a vet, sadly she was euthanised but because she was suffering and in pain, this was her best fate.

We must never leave possums sitting out during the day, a healthy or well possum would not do this.

This only occurs when possums are sick, injured, displaced or have lost their mother.

Also, please don't ever try to reunite or leave a baby possum unless you have very good experience as this does not work most times. Contact me about this please. All joeys and back-young must be brought into care. Please do not give advice to leave a possum at the base of a tree or in a tree alone. Possum mums don't always come back for their young. Pinkie or pouch-young often cannot get back into the pouches, so they must come into care immediately.



Audrey Koosmen
HWR Senior Possum Coordinator.

Reminders for HWR members

- Membership renewals are due on 30th June 2021.
You have until the 31st July 2021 to renew your membership
[Join & Renew Membership – Hunter Wildlife Rescue](#)
- Your Fauna Data for 2021 must be submitted to the HWR Fauna Database Officer by 30th June 2021.
faunadata@hunterwildlife.org.au

TOCAL FIELD DAYS

Our exhibition stall is all about raising awareness and educating the members of the public about our volunteers and our native wildlife, it is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.



HWR Volunteers



Hunter Wildlife Rescue (NATF) stall



John from HWR and Lacey



Lacey the Flying Fox was very popular!

Feral cats

Feral cats are a **major threat** to biodiversity and have caused the extinction of several species of Australian native mammals and birds.

Cats (*Felis catus*) are an introduced predator that has devastated native animal populations. Feral cats are the same species as domestic cats but live, hunt and breed in the wild, they are solitary animals and mainly nocturnal. Feral cats prey on small native and exotic mammals, birds, lizards and insects. An estimated 80 endangered and threatened species are preyed on by wild cats. The Australian National University published an article in July 2019 that states pet and feral cats kill 1.5 billion animals per year.

Feral cats can also spread and carry diseases that affect humans and other animals.

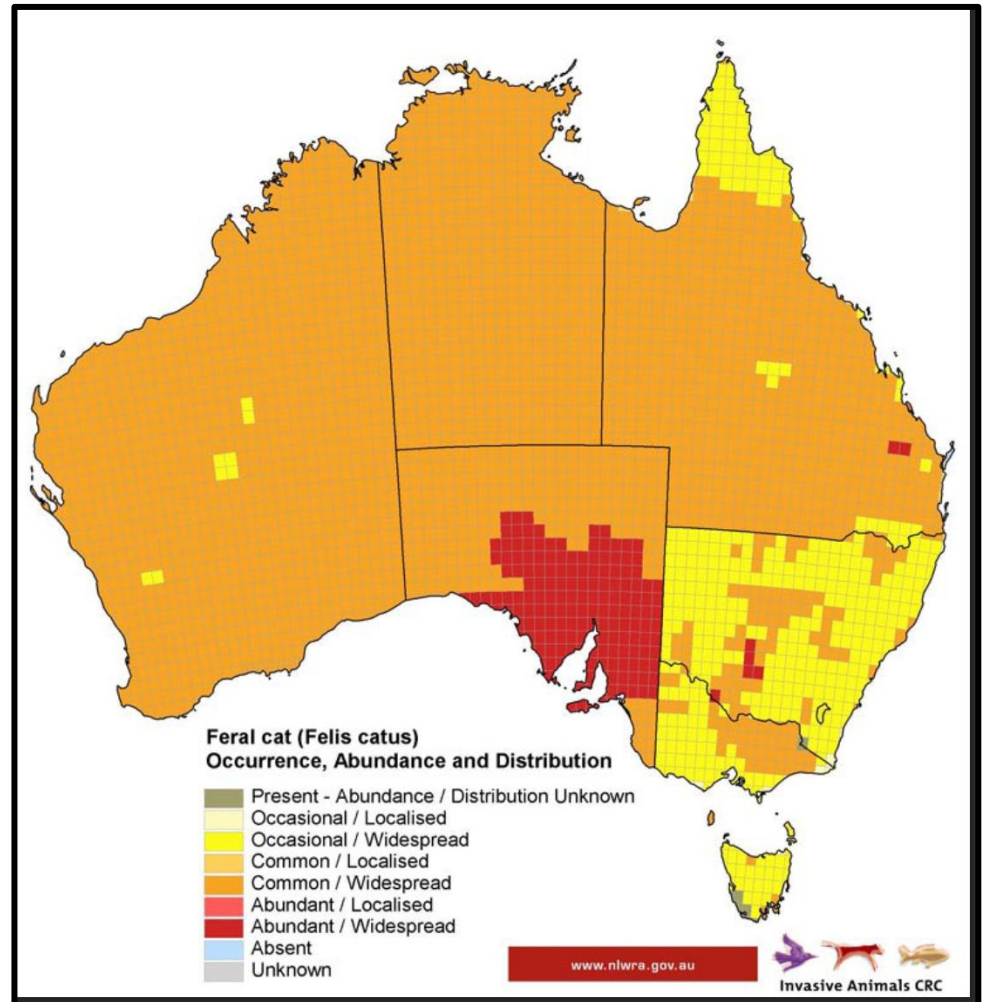


Managing feral cats in our national parks

Small scale control methods include trapping, shooting and exclusion fencing.

Suitable - efficient, humane and target specific - broad scale control methods are in development but not yet available.

As cats are widespread, management focuses on the reduction of impacts in priority areas.



We encourage landholders to report feral cat management activity via Feral Scan and participate in any research into new control options. For more information on pest species and biosecurity, [visit Pestsmart](#) and the [Department of Primary Industries](#). Otherwise, [please contact your local Biosecurity Officer](#) if you require feral cat pest animal management advice.

Birds on beaches are under attack from dogs, photographers and four-wheel drives.

Here's how you can help...

Each year, oystercatchers, plovers and terns flock to beaches all over Australia's coastline to lay eggs in a shallow scrape in the sand. They typically nest through spring and summer until the chicks are ready to take flight.

Spring and summer, however, are also when most people visit the beach. Human disturbances have increased breeding failure, contributing to the local contraction and decline of many beach-nesting bird populations.

Take Australian fairy terns (*Sternula nereis nereis*) in Western Australia, their 2020-21 breeding season is coming to an end, and has been relatively poor.

Fox predation and flooding from tidal inundation wiped out several colonies. Unfathomably, a colony was also lost after a four-wheel drive performed bog-laps in a sign-posted nesting area. Unleashed dogs chased incubating adults from their nests, and photographers entered restricted access sites and climbed fragile dunes to photograph nesting birds.

These human-related disturbances highlight the need for ongoing education. So let's take a closer look at the issue, and how communities and individuals can make a big difference.

Nesting on the open beach

Beach-nesting birds typically breed, feed and rest in coastal habitats all year round. During the breeding season, which varies between species, they establish their nests above the high-water mark (high tide), just 20 to 30 millimetres deep in the sand.

Some species, such as the fairy tern, incorporate beach shells, small stones and organic material like seaweed in and around the nest to help camouflage their eggs and chicks so predators, such as gulls and ravens, don't detect them easily. While nests are exposed and vulnerable on the open beach, it allows the birds to spot predators early and to remain close to productive foraging areas.

Still, beach-nesting birds live a harsh lifestyle. Breeding efforts are often characterised by low reproductive success and multiple nesting attempts may be undertaken each season.



Eggs and chicks remain vulnerable until chicks can fly. This takes around 43 days for fairy terns and about 63 days for hooded plovers (*Thinornis rubricollis rubricollis*).

Birds see people and dogs as predators. When they approach, nesting adult birds distance themselves from the nest and chicks. For example, terns typically take flight, while plovers run ahead of the threat, "leading" it away from the area.

When eggs and chicks are left unattended, they're vulnerable to predation by other birds, they can suffer thermal stress (overheating or cooling) or be trampled as their cryptic colouration makes them difficult to spot.

So what can you do to protect beach-nesting birds?

- Share the space and be respectful of signage and fencing. These temporary measures help protect birds and increase their chance of breeding success
- keep dogs leashed and away from known feeding and breeding areas
- avoid driving four-wheel drive vehicles on the beach, particularly at high tide
- keep cats indoors or in a cat run (enclosure)
- if you see a bird nesting on the beach, report it to local authorities and maintain your distance
- avoid walking through flocks of birds or causing them to take flight. Disturbance burns energy, which could have implications for breeding and migration.

<https://theconversation.com/birds-on-beaches-are-under-attack-from-dogs-photographers-and-four-wheel-drives-heres-how-you-can-help-them-155962>

*Hunter Wildlife Rescue give thanks to the
International Fund to Animal Welfare
who funded us getting our Fauna HUB*

FAUNA HUB was used during our Advanced Macropod Course. It was wonderful for carers to place their fauna in a safe, calm and quiet area to feed and attended to their animals.



*and for the funding of our new
Wombat Traps we had built.*



Have you seen a Red-eared slider turtle or a Corn Snake?

Record sightings into the FeralScan website:

www.feralscan.org.au/newpests



The FeralScan website now contains a new community resource for reporting and mapping high-risk non-native animals. Please read the following instructions:

www.feralscan.org.au/newpests/pagecontent.aspx?page=newpests_instructions

Download the FeralScan App



If you have seen a red-eared slider turtle or American corn snake, record your sighting today!!

Find out more

https://www.feralscan.org.au/newpests/pagecontent.aspx?page=newpests_downloadresourceshere



Contact us for assistance

Email: feralscan@feralscan.org.au

Phone: 0407 622 191

Proud supporters



John and Susan



Jason installing the possum box



Generous Donation of possum boxes

At 94 years old Jack Neubeck loves working with wood. So when I asked my great-uncle if he could kindly build me a couple of possum boxes he was happy to help. I was so happy and surprised when he called to say that he had six boxes to collect!

HWR member, Susan Nunn went to pick them up as she had a member of the public needing a possum box for the relocated neighbourhood possum. Susan's husband Jason did all the high work!

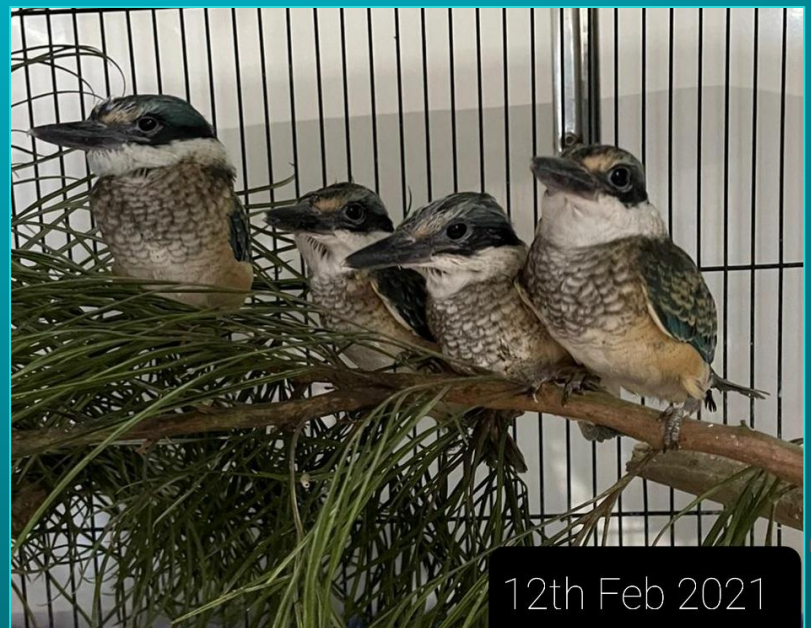
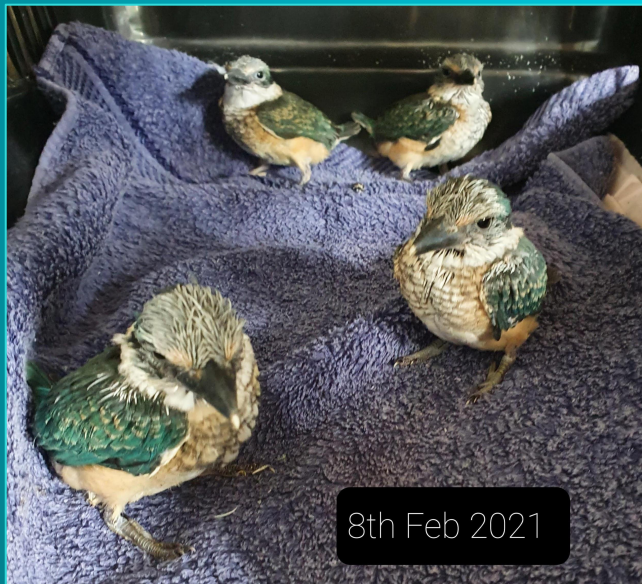
Story by Donna Hucker. March 2021



Saved Sacred Kingfishers

Scientific name: *Todiramphus sanctus*

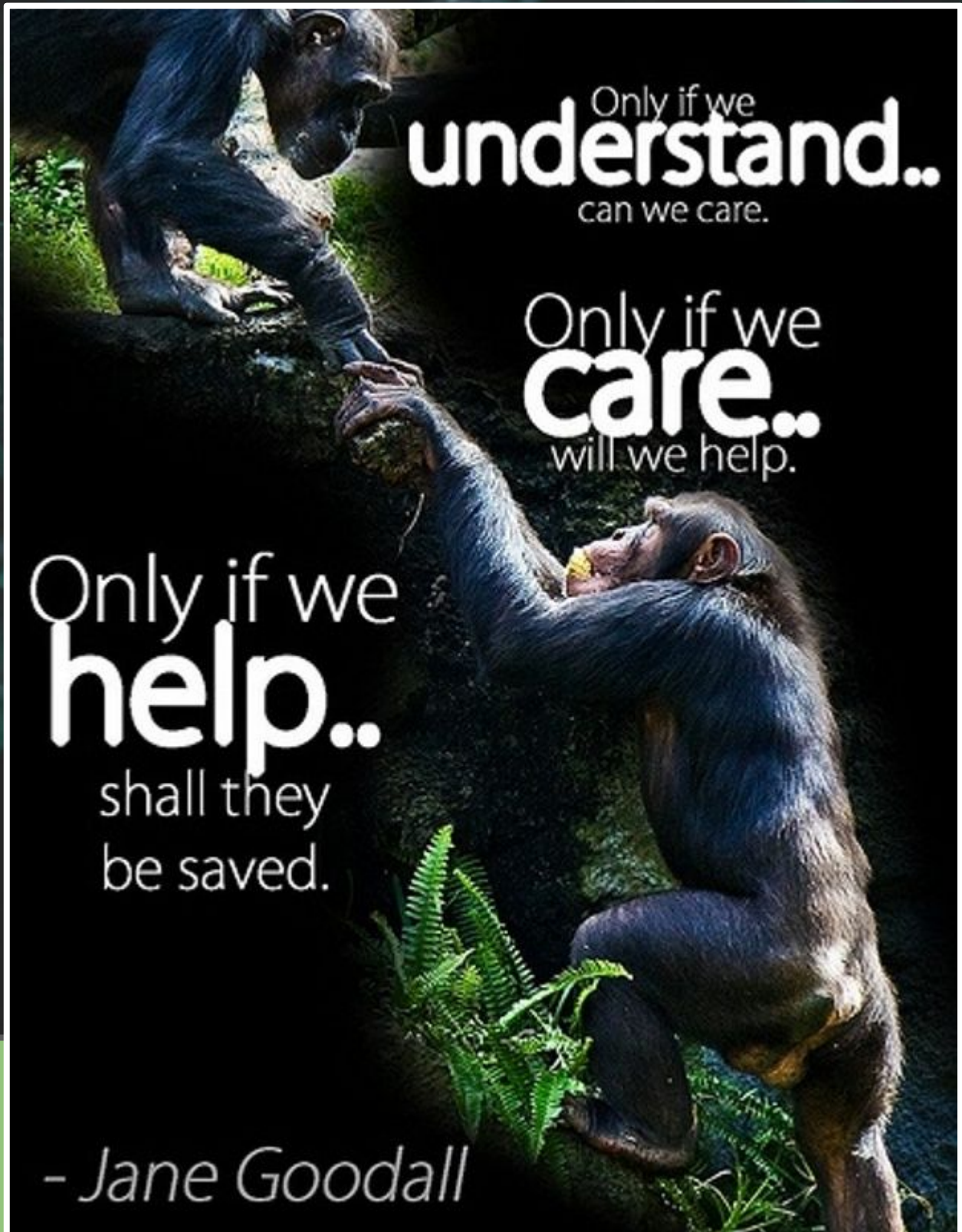
These four Kingfisher hatchlings came from a development site in Cameron Park. A number of trees were knocked down and these poor little ones were in amongst the tree loppings. The birds were taken to Sugarloaf Vets where Nicole Bell works as a vet nurse. Nicole took the Kingfishers home where her and daughter Lillian helped hand-rear them. Lillian was a great help with the feeding & the cleaning of their 'nest'.



The Kingfishers were transferred to HWR member Anne Williams on 20 February for flight practice and to learn to feed on free-ranging crickets, wood roaches and mealworms. The birds were released on 28 February, when they were flying beautifully when tested in the 15 metre aviary. *Many thanks to all involved*



Inspirational Quote



Hunter Wildlife Rescue & Release



Blue-tongue Skinks (*Tiliqua scincoides*)

Sadly pregnant Blue-tongued Mum was attacked and killed by a dog. The devastated dog owners, who knew the skink (lizard) as a regular visitor to their garden, rushed in to save the Blue-tongued but it was too late for her, she gave birth prematurely.



The babies were brought to me. Luckily reptile expert and HWR member Jason Hodges was able to assist with the rearing of them. The preemie babies have been growing fast and strong. They especially love eating bananas and boiled eggs.

They have been released in a safe location by the time of publishing.

Story by Michelle Cox HWR member. March 2021

Facts: The Eastern blue-tongue skink is a stout and slow lizard with brown to grey scales and a barred pattern across the body and tail. The underside is usually pale.

Common throughout eastern Australia, often found in bushland and suburban areas where conditions are suitable.

They give birth to live young, between six and a record 20 per litter. The young consume the egg sac immediately after birth. They resemble the adult form closely.