

# Wildlife Whispers

Issue

15

Autumn

2023

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**Lace monitor**  
(*Varanus varius*)

BULLOCK PHOTOS



BULLOCK PHOTOS

*The fauna of Australia consists of a huge variety of animals; some 46% of birds, 69% of mammals, 94% of amphibians, and 93% of reptiles that inhabit the continent are endemic to it.*

*This high level of endemism can be attributed to the continent's long geographic isolation, tectonic stability, and the effects of a unique pattern of climate change on the soil and flora over geological time.*

*A unique feature of Australia's fauna is the relative scarcity of native placental mammals. Consequently, the marsupials – a group of mammals that raise their young in a pouch, including the macropods, possums and dasyuromorphs – occupy many of the ecological niches placental animals occupy elsewhere in the world.*

*Australia is home to two of the five known extant species of monotremes and has numerous venomous species, which include the platypus, spiders, scorpions, octopus, jellyfish, molluscs, stonefish and stingrays. Uniquely, Australia has more venomous than non-venomous species of snakes.*



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Wildlife Rescue, NATF Inc



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

# President's Report

Dear members

Firstly, thank you all for the great work you are all doing in rescuing and caring for our wildlife. I know many of you do many other roles in the group as well, so thank you as well.

You would have all received notice that we will be moving over to XMATTERS in April. It was not something we wanted to do but due to the lack of response in members offering to assist as phone operators it was the only way we could resolve the problem to allow us to keep the rescue phone line open.

Many of you were afraid we would lose our Hunter Wildlife Rescue name, but do not worry, this is not going to happen - this will still be retained while the new system is in use.

Please see this as a positive move for our wildlife. I wish to thank all our phone operators who have done such a wonderful job - some of you for many years, you have indeed been the backbone of our group in getting help to our wildlife. It has often not been an easy role to take on and has caused many great stresses when handling some of the many difficult calls but everyone did their very best and you should all be very proud of that.

Many of you are aware that HWR now has a Land Clearing Sub-committee who have been doing some great work dealing with development sites across Newcastle.

Our Education program headed by Alexis Ting is doing very well. The many talks being conducted at the schools have been received so well that Alexis can hardly keep up to the demand. Alexis has also visited many adult clubs and bushwalking groups across Newcastle as well.

Through the Wildlife Hero's grant program we were able to obtain a grant to build a soft release macropod pen in Lake Macquarie. Also because of fundraising on Facebook, donations and an LLS grant, we have raised enough money to put towards another soft release macropod pen to be built in the Upper Hunter with the addition of (IFAW) International Fund for Animal Welfare funds given to us through a grant that was needed to cover the costs to complete this pen.

The pen in Lake Macquarie is not finished yet, but the Upper Hunter one will start construction in about 3 or 4 weeks time.

Regards and thanks all  
Audrey Koosmen  
HWR President

# TOCAL FIELDDAYS

MAY 5, 6 & 7 2023

HWR has been given a free site to hold our Education stall at the Tocal Field Day event again this year with thanks to the Local Land Service giving us a free site in their education area.

We need members to give us a few hours of their time to help out on the stall and allow breaks for other workers throughout the three days of the event. After volunteering your time helping us - then you can go off and enjoy the rest of the day looking around the other interesting events being held there.

We have a morning shift and an afternoon shift. If you can spare two or three hours to come and help out - please contact either Audrey or Kate

Audrey at [president@hunterwildlife.org.au](mailto:president@hunterwildlife.org.au)

or

Kate at [vicepresident@hunterwildlife.org.au](mailto:vicepresident@hunterwildlife.org.au)

Your help would be most appreciated as this is our major fundraising event for the year.

It is also where we achieve intensive public awareness in educating the public community about our Hunter Wildlife Rescue group and wildlife and conservation in general.

# *Now it's Raining Bandicoots!* By Anne Williams

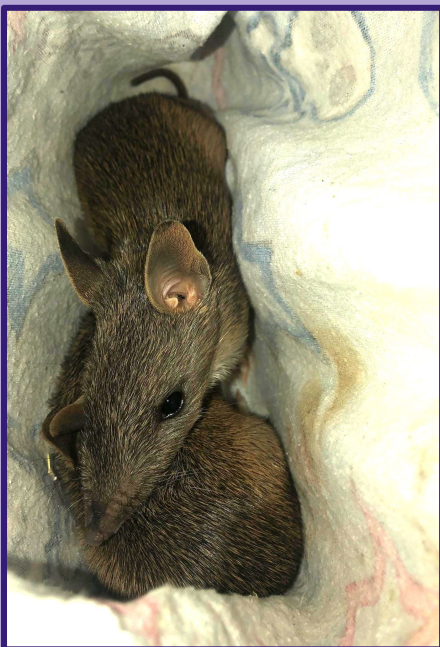
On the 24th January a female Northern Brown Bandicoot was unfortunately a vehicle victim in Cardiff. When the member of public looked in the pouch there were five little 55gram juveniles inside. We were very surprised to find that they were all females. If this incident had happened a week later these poor young would not have survived as they would have been left in a nest and mum would not have returned to feed them.

When they were brought to me they had very short fur, but within a week they had a very thick coverage of course brown and black fur. By this time they were lapping milk from a dish and by the 8th Feb they weighed 120 gms and starting to eat solid food like chopped banana and mealworms. A week later they were weaned off milk and eating insectivore/mince mix, crickets and a little bit of mixed fresh fruit and their favourite mealworms/superworms and earthworms and grubs.

Bandicoots have the fastest growth rate of all the marsupials. Their gestation is 12.5 days and they have 8 teats in their pouch. In general, they give birth to 2 to 4 young but this one obviously gave birth to 5. Newborn young are 1.3cms long and weigh only a quarter of a gram and clamber into the mother's backward facing pouch. Wombats and Koalas are the only other marsupials with backward facing pouches. They only spend 56 days in the pouch and then they are weaned within two weeks after that.



On the 10th February two Long-nosed Bandicoot juveniles came to me. When they were found they were standing next to their dead mother on the road. They were old enough to be out foraging with their mum – the male weighed 135 gms and the female weighed 126 gms as they were too large to still be in the pouch. These were a perfect weight to go in with my other little bandies.



When they weigh 200 – 250 grams they are ready to be released. Adult Long-nosed Bandicoots weigh between 850 – 1,100 grams. Adult male Northern Brown Bandicoots weigh up to 2,100 grams and females 1,100 grams. They feed on earthworms, grubs, crickets and any other insects they come across and also berries and grass seeds.

They can have 2 or 3 litters per breeding season in Spring and Summer. They make nests by digging a shallow hole under leaf litter and they will also shelter in hollow logs or under large grass tussocks. Long-nosed Bandicoots are common and widespread and range along the coastal areas from Townsville to Victoria.

Northern Brown Bandicoots commonly range along coastal areas right across northern Australia and Queensland down to the Hawkesbury River in New South Wales.

The Southern Brown Bandicoot ranges from the Hawkesbury River down to southern Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia but unfortunately is listed as a threatened species. In addition to having these seven youngsters in care - an adult female Northern Brown Bandicoot came into my care from Mt. Hutton Vets with an abscess on her head. I had her in care giving her medication twice a day for 16 days and about 3 days after she came in she actually gave birth to 3 babies. So she was relaxed enough in care to give birth successfully which was great. She ate mince/insectivore mix, banana and superworms during her successful recovery.

# An Interesting Rescue

A challenging rescue this afternoon of a magnificent Eastern Brown Snake (*Pseudonaja textilis*) that found itself well-entangled in netting.

The mesh had cut right through the snakes skin causing extensive swelling of his neck, head and jaw which was no doubt exacerbated by the heat. Removing it all from his mouth and head was a difficult and time-consuming process but he has now received fluids and had his wounds dressed. Hopefully after a short stint in care he can be released near to where he was captured.

Bonus highlight was the kids coming out repeatedly to harass me about playing Nintendo while I'm trying to concentrate on the task at hand!



Story told by  
HWR Member  
Dan Reardon  
Feb 2023



## Danger to humans

Because the Eastern Brown Snake can cope and even thrive in areas of human disturbance, and its natural range happens to include some of the most populated parts of the country, this species is probably encountered more than any other type of snake. Being an alert, nervous species they often react defensively if surprised or cornered, putting on a fierce display and striking with little hesitation. However, if approached over a distance, they will usually choose to flee or else remain stationary, hoping to avoid detection.

# Wildlife Rescue Equipment

***We have Rescue baskets back in stock!***

If you'd like to place an order, please message Chriss Beer on 0407011389 to arrange collection.

They cost \$16 each. Please transfer money into our account:

Westpac 14-2209  
BSB 032-524

use your surname and 'Basket' as reference.



## **Fleecy Jacket**

Colour: Navy blue

Logo: Hunter Wildlife Rescue

Sizes: S, M, L, XL etc

Cost \$35.00

If you'd like to place an order, please message Chriss Beer on 0407011389 to arrange collection.

Please transfer money into our account:

Westpac 14-2209  
BSB 032-524

Use your surname and 'Fleecy Jacket' as reference.

# HUNTER WILDLIFE RESCUE

## TRAINING & EDUCATION COURSES FOR 2023

This year all training courses will be held in our Education Centre at the Wetlands. There will be limited numbers as the seating space can only accommodate 18 spaces. There will also be more basic information and introduction to our wildlife on rescue, care, handling, treatment, management and release.

All courses will be inline with NSW NPWS Species Codes of Practice. The courses will be mostly for our new members but of course all activated approved carers can also attend to upgrade their training.

To be an approved carer you must have attended training courses and be activated even if you have done one on one with an experienced member. We are also asking those attending courses to please give very good thought to becoming activated carers if you attend. Last year we had a full house at every course but sadly many did not get activated.

Seats will be limited and we will need to cut off numbers when seats are full. We will hold a cancellation list should anyone miss a seat and let you know if a vacant seat comes up but it will be first in, first served.

For all courses you must park in CAR PARK 2 not inside the gates or in NPWS parking area, should anyone need to be closer due to health reasons or injuries, please contact the training team so we can sort out something for you.

Courses this year will be at a cost of \$10 to all HWR members only as we do not have funding this year to support training. You will need to bring your own lunches. Tea and coffee, cakes and biscuits will be served free of charge.

Last year we had a funding grant from IFAW to hold such great training courses, this year we don't have that funding so some of us were very lucky to have had free courses.

For Bird training courses this year we are doing different species on different dates, courses will cover one or two species in the morning and afternoon. We feel this is better so that more can be said in training on the species dealt with. Having all species on one day was found to be overwhelming to some as some only wanted to do say meat eaters or interested in seed eaters.

Baby birds will be done later on in the year as will species not mentioned in the calendar being sent out.

Our courses this year will mainly be for HWR MEMBERS and will only be open to outside group members if we have the space after our members register first.

**REMEMBER YOU MUST REGISTER FOR THE COURSES ONLINE TO THE TRAINING EMAIL OR YOU MAY BE REFUSED ENTRY ON THE DAY IF YOU DON'T ! Click on the [link](#) below**

**[Training Calendar – Hunter Wildlife Rescue](#)**

*If you have any issues using the HWR site let us know please via the training email on our website.*

Kind Regards  
HWR Training Team

# Training and Development Calendar 2023

Course Date	Course Title, Content &	Speaker & Venue	Time	Cost HWR Members	Cost to Other Wildlife Group Members	Close Date to Register	Payment Due Date
18th March 2023 – Saturday	<b>Introduction to Brushtail &amp; Ringtail Possums</b> Rescue, handling, care, treatment, feeding, management, housing & release.	Audrey Koosmen  Wetland Centre, Shortland	0930 till 1500	\$10 per member	\$10 per member	10th March 2023 – Friday	10th March 2023 – Friday
Postponed TBA <del>25th March 2023 – Saturday</del>	<b>Bird Training Course</b> Meat Eaters in the morning. Then Ducks and Plovers. Rescue, handling, care, feeding, management & release.	HWR Bird Team  Wetland Centre, Shortland	0900 till 1500	\$10 per member	\$10 per member	17th March 2023 – Friday	17th March 2023 – Friday
1st April 2023 – Saturday	<b>Bird Training Course</b> Seed Eaters in the morning. Honey & Fruit Eaters in the afternoon. Rescue, handling, care, feeding, management & release.	HWR Bird Team  Wetland Centre, Shortland	0900 till 1500	\$10 per member	\$10 per member	24th March 2023 – Friday	24th March 2023 – Friday
15th April 2023 – Saturday	<b>Hand Rearing Brushtails and Ringtail Possums</b> Rescue, handling, care, feeding management, housing & release.	Audrey Koosmen  Wetland Centre, Shortland	0900 till 1500	\$10 per member	\$10 per member	7th April 2023 – Friday	7th April 2023 – Friday



<b>Course Date</b>	<b>Course Title, Content &amp;</b>	<b>Speaker &amp; Venue</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Cost HWR Members</b>	<b>Cost to Other Wildlife Group Members</b>	<b>Close Date to Register</b>	<b>Payment Due Date</b>
27th May 2023 – Saturday	<b>Rearing Live Food Workshop</b> How to house insects; feed, grow and harvest. <i>(If numbers are too large for this workshop we will do a morning &amp; afternoon session)</i>	Teresa Purnell Wetland Centre, Shortland	1000 till 1300	\$10 per member	\$10 per member	19th May 2023 – Friday	19th May 2023 – Friday
17th June 2023 – Saturday	<b>Reptile Course</b> Land turtles as well as reptiles (not snakes.) Rescue, handling, care, treatment, feeding management, housing & release.	HWR Reptile Team Wetland Centre, Shortland	0900 till 1500	\$10 per member	\$10 per member	9th June 2023 – Friday	9th June 2023 – Friday
Dates to be Confirmed	<b>Other Courses</b> Kangaroos, Wallabies, Echidna, Native Rodents, Gliders, Baby Birds and Disaster Training courses will be conducted in later months.	Wetland Centre, Shortland	To be Advised	To be Advised	To be Advised	To be Advised	To be Advised

\*\*Our courses this year will be prioritised for HWR Members and will only be open to other group members if there is available space.

Hunter Wildlife Rescue (NATF) provides a broad range of training and development for its members to support the high standards of wildlife rehabilitation required under OEH's Code of Practice for Injured & Orphaned Protected Fauna and to ensure the successful return of such fauna back to the wild environment.

Any member of an OEH licensed rehabilitation group\*\* is welcome to attend.

# LACE MONITOR

## (*Varanus varius*)



**Range:** Commonly called Goannas, Lace Monitors range from Cape York Peninsula Queensland to southeastern South Australia on both open and closed forests. They are often found in River Red Gums and other large trees, but are also found in mallee habitats with smaller trees and forage over long distances (up to 3 km a day).

**Size:** Lace monitors are the second-largest monitor in Australia after the Perentie. They can be as long as 2.1 m (over 6.8 ft). The maximum weight of lace monitor can be over 15 kg, but most adults are much smaller.

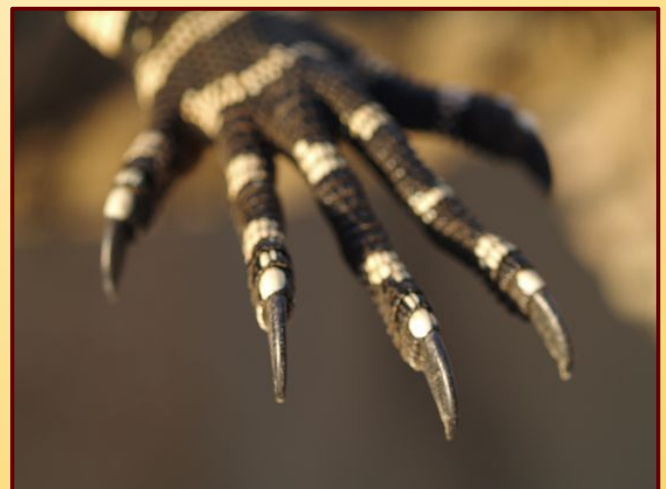
**Diet:** Their diets typically consist of insects, reptiles, small mammals, birds, and birds' eggs. They are also carrion eaters, feeding on already dead carcasses of other wildlife. Lace monitors will also forage in areas inhabited by people, raiding chicken coops for poultry and eggs, rummaging through unprotected domestic garbage bags, and trash cans in picnic and recreational areas.

**Characteristics:** They occur in two distinct colour forms, with some variation in pattern and colour within the forms. The predominant being dark grey to black with a fine pattern of cream to yellow bands or spots. Southern animals tend to be more banded and northern more spotted.

Lace Monitors rely heavily on their strong claws and agility. When threatened they head for the nearest tree and climb to safety. Its strong jaws contain very long, sharp teeth that can inflict serious injury. Recent work by Brian Fry at the University of Melbourne shows that monitors actually produce mild venom similar to rattlesnake venom. While this toxin has only a slight effect on people, it may help subdue small prey animals.

They are mainly active from September to May, but are inactive in cooler weather and shelter in tree hollows or under fallen trees or large rocks.

**Breeding:** Sexual maturity is reached typically around 2-3 years in captivity. The breeding cycle is triggered by the increase in temperatures and food availability, associated with spring in southern Australia. Once females have entered into the receptive phase of the breeding cycle the males will pursue them relentlessly with constant tongue flicking and jerky movements and they will copulate regularly over a week or two.





# Hunter Wildlife Rescue

Fauna data compilation 2018 to 2022

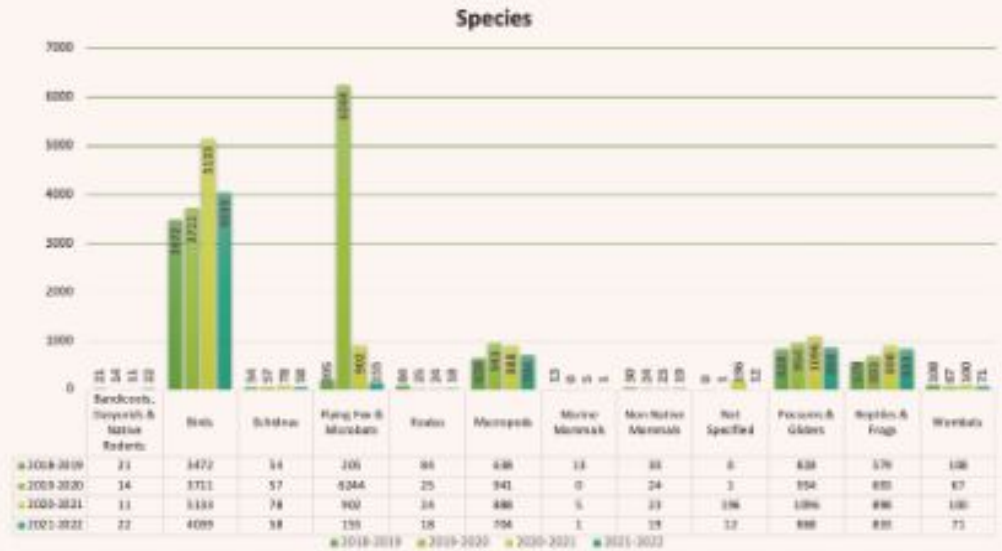


## Species

Fauna data is recorded in financial years - July to June

Fauna per year:  
 2018-2019 = 5924  
 2019-2020 = 12664  
 2020-2021 = 9254  
 2021-2022 = 6800

NB: the high fauna numbers seen in 2019-2020 was due to extreme heat conditions, resulting in catastrophic effects on the Hunter's flying fox colonies



## Encounter Reason

Top 9 - listed in order



- Unknown
- Collision -car/building
- Orphaned
- Weather event
- Unsuitable environment
- Animal attack -cat, dog, fox, bird, some species
- Entangled/trapped
- Negative interaction/intentional harm
- Disease

## Animal Condition

Top 9 - listed in order



- Injured
- Not apparent injury
- Orphaned
- Heat stress/Hyperthermia
- Unknown
- Multiple health issues
- Concussed
- Cold stress/Hyperthermia
- Moribund -close to death

## Age



- 47% Adult
- 17.5% Young
- 0.5% Egg
- 35% Unknown

## Sex

- ♀ 8.5%
- ♂ 9.5%
- ? 82%



## Fate



Did not come into care = dead on arrival, unable to locate/capture, left & observed  
 Out from care = released, reunited with parents or owner, relocated, escape from care, rehomed  
 Transferred out = to other wildlife group for rehabilitation

## Pouch Condition



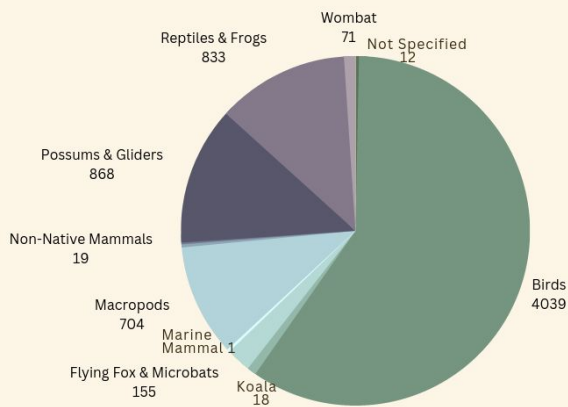
- 0.5% lactating but no offspring present
- 1.5% pouch or back riding joey
- 98% non-marsupial fauna, or male or immature marsupial species



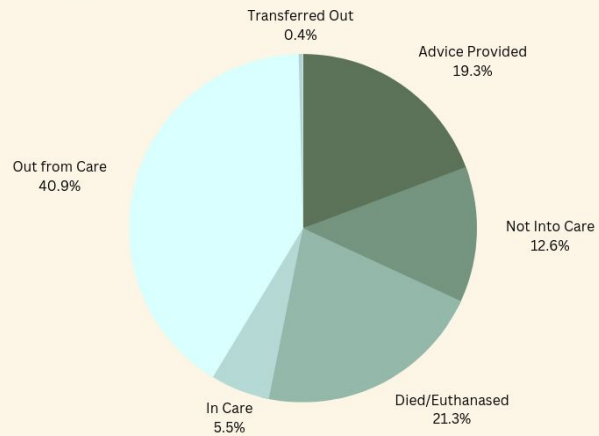
# HUNTER WILDLIFE RESCUE

FAUNA DATA SUMMARY JULY 2021-JUNE 2022

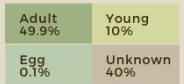
Species Encountered = 6800



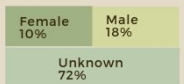
Fate



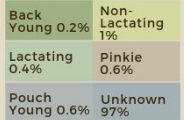
Age



Sex



Pouch Condition



Top 5 encounter reasons

- Unknown
- Abandoned/Orphaned
- Unsuitable Environment
- Collision
- Attacked

Encounter Type

Abandoned/Orphaned 1370	Attacked 622	Collision 542	Disease 297
Domestic Pet 55	Electrocution 20	Entangled/Trapped 201	Fouled by substance 14
Habitat Alteration 68	Ingestion Foreign Object 3	Negative Interaction 141	Poisoned 31
Unsuitable Environment 957	Unknown 1465	Weather 43	

Top 5 animal conditions

- Injury
- Nil apparent
- Unknown
- Orphaned
- Multiple Health issues

Animal Condition

Abnormal Behaviour 78	Burnt 5	Concussed 367	Dehydrated 35	Difficulty Breathing 37
Disease/Infection 141	Exhausted 46	Feather/Fur Damage 18	Geriatric 11	Hyperthermia 2
Hypothermia 23	Injury 1562	Mal-nourished 106	Moribund 125	Multiple Issues 583
Neurological 31	Nil apparent 1549	Orphaned 855	Shock 57	Unknown 1147
Water-logged 22				

HUNTERWILDLIFE.ORG.AU | FAUNADATA@HUNTERWILDLIFE.ORG.AU

## Wildlife rehabilitation reporting

Volunteers make a valuable contribution to the Government's knowledge about wildlife.

Information collected from wildlife rehabilitation volunteers about the animals they rescue and rehabilitate helps understand and appreciate the positive impacts of this work. It can also provide insights into the threats to particular species and help prioritise actions to minimise those threats.

## Record keeping

All wildlife rehabilitation providers must maintain records of the animals they rescue and submit them to the National Parks and Wildlife Service annually. These records are to be provided in a standard data collection spreadsheet.

## Annual reports

Each year volunteers rescue about 80,000 sick, injured and orphaned native animals across 400 different species and report this information to the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Our annual reports give an insight into the work of wildlife rehabilitation volunteers and observed trends in volunteer membership numbers and the rescue and rehabilitation of injured, sick and orphaned wildlife. The data is acquired from reports submitted by each volunteer wildlife rehabilitation provider in accordance with their Biodiversity Conservation Licence and our Codes of Practice.

**HWR is very fortunate to have a dedicated and committed Data Analyst, Peter who collects and collates all of HWR's fauna data every year and has done so for many years. Thank you!**



## **Feedback**

*The Hunter Wildlife Rescue is committed to the ongoing improvement of our organisation dedicated to assisting the Hunter's injured, sick or orphaned wildlife.*

*We value all feedback on the advice or assistance our volunteers have provided and we use this information to inform the organisation on progress or alternatively, you can help us identify gaps in service provision in setting annual improvement targets.*

*Please forward any feedback to: [president@hunterwildlife.org.au](mailto:president@hunterwildlife.org.au)*

*Any news, suggestions or photos for Wildlife Whispers?*

*Please email to: [donna.hucker18@gmail.com](mailto:donna.hucker18@gmail.com)*