



WILD DAYS
WILDLIFE SHELTER
CARE · RESPECT · FREEDOM

WILD DAYS' BUMPER NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2022

Hi from the Wild Days' team!

It has been a while since the last Wild Days' Newsletter, however, it seems the last couple of years have passed quickly. Wild Days has been as busy as ever, with 2021 seeing 865 animals come through the doors. This year, we are on track for the same volume, having already reached over 350 by the start of June.

To make up for the wait, this newsletter is a bit long but is overloaded with cute photos from the last year and a half. This newsletter celebrates the wins in wildlife care which is needed when there is often sadness.

Family

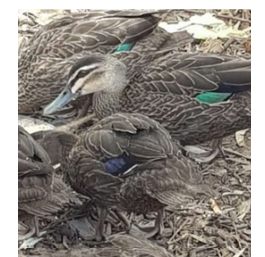
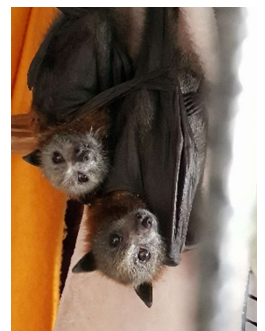
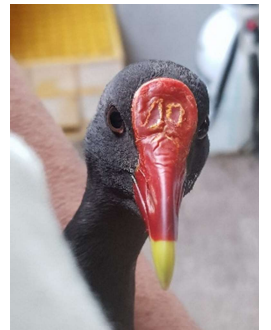
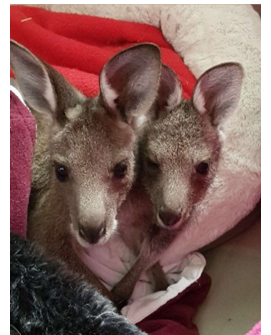
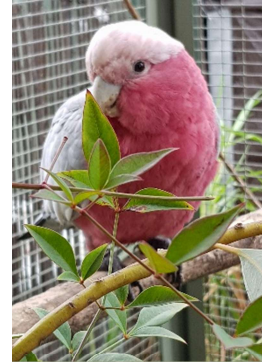
These are very strange times, with many people experiencing a lot of change in their daily lives and many working out that they are enjoying more time with the people they care for.

I am often asked how I deal with seeing so many animals suffering and scared, or how wildlife carers keep going when often a good outcome is relieving the suffering of an injured animal by having it humanely euthanized. My answer is always the same. It is the reward of being able to release animals that can be saved back to the wild. Then the next question is, isn't it hard to let them go. And my answer, no, that is the best part! The moment when an animal, who has been in care, returns to a place it knows is quite magical. Often there is a family waiting for it. That animal has been missing in the eyes of their family and the reunion when it is returned is often so wonderful to watch.

I had a busy morning recently, running around returning various birds to their homes after they had all recovered and were ready to go home. Thankfully all had come to me with the correct information so that I could find the exact location to take them.



First was an adult male Magpie. He had been in care for some time due to a severe wing injury. It is always a nervous time when a dominant animal is removed from his home for a period of time as you can never be sure if another male has moved in. When I arrived at the address, I saw a few other magpies foraging nearby. A closer look revealed an adult female (white beak/mottled back), and a juvenile male (black beak/part mottled part white back) and a younger one (black beak/mottled back). No other adult male to be seen. This was his family. As soon as I stopped the car, they all stopped what they were doing and watched me, curious to know what was in the carrier. Uncovering the carrier, the male immediately called, the female returned the call. I opened the carrier and he flew straight up to the tree. It is hard to explain the excitement shown by the rest of the family. They all flew up to be with him on the branch and were singing their hearts out. Their dad had been missing for a few weeks and now mysteriously he was back. It is hard to know what stories he will be telling his children about his adventures!



A second release was another magpie, this time a juvenile, a kidnapped fledgeling. After only a few days in care, released back to the parents who were waiting for it, probably wondering where it had got to. They sat both sides of their baby and sang to their hearts' content, happy their baby was home.



The next stop was the release of a Crested Pigeon. It is funny because often releasing small birds is a bit of a non-event because they just fly off and disappear into the nearest bushes. This one was different. The Pigeon had been in my care for quite a while after it had been injured by a cat. It was in a pretty bad way but they are little fighters and he came through. I drove to the address where it had been found. It was not much of an address. Not many trees to be seen. It was along an industrial part of railway lines with a whole lot of concrete. I drove up and down the section of street to find an appropriate place to let him out but I was getting a feeling I should look a bit further. I drove further along the street which took me around a bend. Ahead of me on the footpath was a female Crested Pigeon just slowly walking around, looking a bit sad. You always see Crested Pigeons in pairs and this poor girl was obviously the mate of the one in my car. She had been alone for some time now. Just filling her days by herself. It was a gorgeous thing to watch. I stopped the car. Before I even got the carrier out of the car, the female came running up the footpath towards me. Her head was high and searching. As if she knew. The male started showing his eagerness to get out so I opened the carrier quickly and they both flew off together onto the powerlines and were clearly happy to see each other again. It was incredible that there was no calling to one another but they knew what was happening. You can't help but smile when you see this happening.



There have been many of those stories in the last couple of years. I could go on and on. Including this one. The exception!



A little Mudlark (or Magpie Lark). A family reunion that became a little frustrating. Wild winds and storms ripped through the area over a few days. Many trees came



down. Many young birds became displaced and injured. This little guy came into care during that time. He was pretty weak and very young. The trees he had been in had fallen. This little one joined some other young birds at Wild Days for a while until he reached flying age and then we were off to see if we could reunite him with his parents. Mudlarks are pretty loyal to their area. They



have a distinctive call. I drove to the street where the tree once was. I could hear Mudlarks calling but could not see any. I got the little one out of the car but left him in the carrier so that I could find mum and dad. There they were! At a nearby park. Flying from one side to another. Off we go. Oops, they have gone back the other way. Back we go. There they go again. Clearly I had no idea which new tree



they had chosen to be their own. I enlisted the help of the person who found the baby in the storm. A bit of a comical back and forth trying to reunite them. They showed interest in the baby but kept up the flying. We were in for the long haul. It may have



been danger in the area causing their behaviour, who knows. After several hours, I brought little one back to Wild Days and would try another day. Take two. Back to the spot. There they were, sitting on a roof top close to the tree next to the one that had fallen. I took the chance, put bubs on the branch. Bubs just sat there, did not call, did not seem interested in being free at all. After some time, the parents both flew to the tree, came down to bubs, then flew off to the roof top again! Well what to do. Bubs then hopped up through the branches to a higher spot in the tree.



Now out of reach if I was to decide to bring him home again. I sat and watched. I noticed there were other birds watching the goings on too. Nervous about the situation, I knocked on the door closest to the tree and asked the lovely people to keep an eye on bubs and gave them my number in case things went wrong. Well...I was not quite home when the phone went. Things had gone wrong. Not long after I left, the bubs flew onto a fence closer to the parents. At that time, two Crested Pigeons sitting on another roof top (which I had spotted previously watching) decided to come and attack him, pecking feathers and pulling his wings. He was on the ground bleeding. So back I went, rescued poor bubs and brought him back to Wild Days for a bit more care. You will be pleased to hear that he healed, grew, became stronger and went back home to his parents, who were still just going about their business as though nothing had happened. Just like many species, parenting is not always the same!



We have had a few swans in lately. This young swan was rescued and was in care for botulism (a toxin in the water caused by pollution that makes our waterbirds sick). Eating bucket loads of food every day, recovered and was reunited with the parents and two siblings, who call out with their necks waving high when they are reunited. The three young ones playing together clearly happy about the return.

It was Wild Days' volunteer Stef who released an adult Pacific Black Duck back home for me after it recovered from concussion. She was emotional when she called to tell me that after finding the right lake, which was full of Wood Ducks, one other Pacific Black duck came swimming from the other side of the lake towards her. It was the mate. She could not contain the emotion she felt when she saw them reunite and swim off together. Such a special moment.

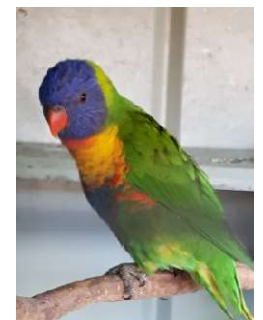


It is definitely an incredible feeling to help an animal to heal and then to be part of their happy moment of seeing their family again.

In Waves

Wild Days is a generalist wildlife rehabilitation shelter, meaning that we cater for whatever species needs our help. This is something that I am proud of and every year extend our knowledge and capacity to care for a wide range of animals.

Most years the species of animals that come into care change throughout the year and usually come in batches. There are 'baby seasons' for different animals at different times. Some baby seasons stretch through the year while others are only at a certain point each year.



It is pretty common to get a few echidnas (the Houdini's of the wildlife world) getting themselves injured when out and about at the first sign of warmer weather, the collection of fledgeling birds who have run into trouble learning to fly, the blue tongue lizards who are played with by pet dogs when they take the risk of basking on a backyard rock, baby birds with concussion after being blown from nests in wild wilds, and many other common situations.



Other times, for some reason that appears unknown to most, we will receive an unusual number of one species, where in other years there were very few. Often some change in the weather, food source,



habitat or other factors such as distant natural events, may result in more than normal numbers of certain animals needing help.



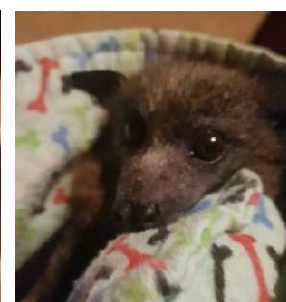
A few years back, the unusual weather patterns resulted in ducks breeding repeatedly all year, resulting in an endless supply of orphaned ducklings (and their mess) most of the year!



I must mention one duckling with whom I had a weird eye to eye non-verbal communication with every day and to this day do not know what she was trying to tell me. While she was in with a group of other orphans, she never really joined in. She grew and was healthy and released with them but I often wonder what she was trying to say all that time.

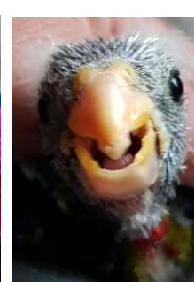


The extreme weather usually also brings an influx of heat stressed animals. In particular, the endangered Grey Headed Flying Foxes suffer during extreme heat events, usually when it coincides with young pups in the trees unable to fly yet. An unusual change this year was the cold snap. Sadly some the pups were dying in the trees unable to keep warm. Thankfully we found these two little ones (Butterfly and Caramel) who were close to death but were saved. Snug and warm in their mumma rolls.



Another young Grey Headed Flying Fox (or fruit bat) came to Wild Days after a wonderfully kind garbage man spotted her in the gutter and stopped to save her. She then hitched a ride in the truck cabin to meet up with me. It was revealed that the truck completed the route just a bit slower than usual as each bump the bat was swinging and bumping into the cabin window and the only way to avoid that was to drive extra slow! Lucky little bat.

Through 2021 and 2022 we have seen a wide range of animals needing our help. Many birds, some more common than others, both chick, young and adult. Many ducklings and adult ducks.



Thankfully young birds are happy to share their space at Wild Days.



Watching young birds grow is always fascinating and rewarding. These two Pied Currawong chicks were found after a storm and their nest was destroyed. They accepted their replacement woven nest and settled in nicely.



Tawny Frogmouths never fail to be entertaining! They start as pompoms. Each with their own character.



It was funny when the tiny Tawny and a tiny Silver Gull first met and seemed confused at each other's strange beaks! The Gull quickly rose to his feet and checked out the Tawny from all sides trying to solve the mystery.



Ringtail Possums and Brushtail Possums who are orphaned when their mums are killed by cars and cats and as these animals are carried in the pouch and nurtured by their mums for many months, they spend a long time in care at Wild Days until they are ready for the wild.



Each have their own personality and are buddied with other orphans the same age, to grow and develop over time, moving through different stages and cages to learn their survival skills before release. The buddies form bonds and rely on one another to get through their ordeal.



The Brushies named John, Paul, Ringo, George, Jude, Penny and Abby, clearly all arrived at Wild Days around the same time, Christof at Christmas and Baz and Paris both arrived at the time I had seen Moulin Rouge!

Mountain Brushtail possums have also shown themselves recently with a few adults needing time in care. These are bigger more docile brushtail possums with beautiful faces and quick to acknowledge the help.

A special encounter was with a mother and baby Mountain Brushtail in care. Such beautiful interactions between them just like watching any toddler harassing their mum and receiving only caring guidance in return.



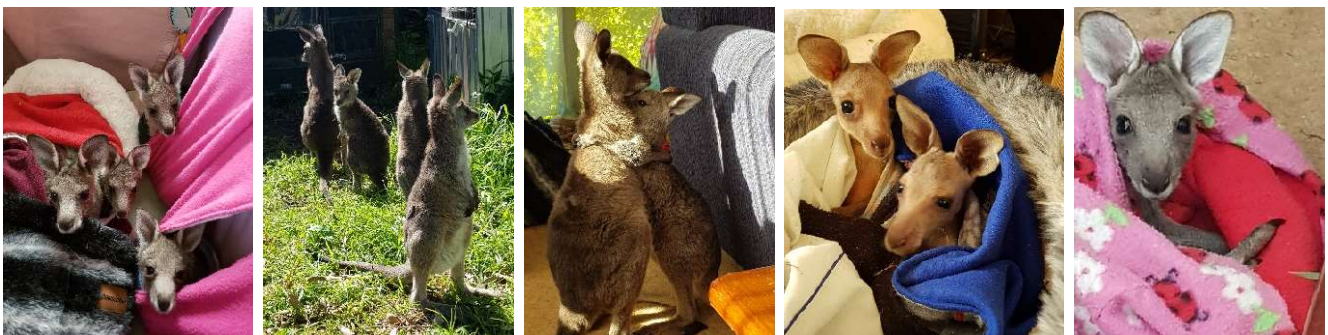
These couple of years there seem to be more of the Musk Lorikeets, Boobook Owls, Ravens ...



Sugar Gliders/Krefts Gliders (some very tiny)...



...and the Kangaroos taking the limelight at Wild Days. The Eastern Grey Kangaroos: Sky, Star, Comet, ... you get the drift!



And the wallabies, well Dorothy is leading the way at being a terror at the shelter teaching Toto all the tricks.

The Team



I am pleased that Wild Days now has two new Foster Carers (trainee Wildlife Carers), Kim and Maddi, who have been volunteering with us since August last year. They will be great carers and have notebooks ready as there is a lot to learn.

Being an essential service during lockdown has provided a bit of an escape for some people. New volunteers joined the team at Wild Days. Thanks to some of our long termers who finished up and to others who keep on turning up to lend a well needed hand, rain hail or shine. I am always grateful for the generosity of volunteers. We would not be able to do what we do without you.

We have a great team of regular volunteers at the moment (Jo, Anna, Kim, Maddi, Richard, Stef, Steph, Zed, Vicki, Tracie and including fortnightly junior volunteers Lucy (with mum Jacqui), Jasmine (with mum Amy) and new junior volunteers Sage and Capal (with mum Dalia), Max and Anton. Hayley and Manuel are often to be seen and we are also lucky to have Sharon, Tracey and Sally come to volunteer when they can.



We have had some major projects taking place at Wild Days that have stretched out over some time but have only been possible due to very dedicated Working Bee Volunteer teams, led by Hayley and Manuel. Amazing stuff. Thanks to you all. Manuel is a legend.

The talented mask making sewing team of Mum, Sharon, Hayley and Manuel for fundraising and for Sharon's ongoing fundraising effort.

Incredible work.



A bit of a celebration took place at Mt Rothwell Biodiversity Centre as a thanks for the work the volunteers do. The City of Casey contributed to the outing by providing food, a bit of an acknowledgement of our volunteers.

All Wild Days' volunteers also need to be thanked for their ability to remain interested when I am giving them an earful of interesting bug facts 😊.



An Honour and Thanks



I was humbled to receive the City of Casey Australia Day Award this year: 2022 Casey Local Hero of the Year. The award was in recognition of fifteen years of wildlife care and rehabilitation and a dedication to the education of the community and young people on the issues surrounding wildlife.

I would like to thank everyone for their words of support and kindness. It was a great honour to receive this acknowledgement.



Teamwork makes the dream work! Wild Days' ongoing supporters are the reason we can assist so many animals throughout the year. So many more names I could mention.

You all play a part - regular and occasional volunteers, working bee teams, collection of newspapers, fundraising, donation of goods, transport of animals, collection of browse, planting native grass pots or dropping of those few things you thought might be useful.

Huge thanks to the financial donors, particularly ones who donate on a regular basis, providing peace of mind in coping with the costs of caring and rehabilitating the animals at Wild Days.

Thanks too to Woolworths Berwick for the Food for Wildlife Program, Berwick Opportunity Shop and Warren Opp Shop for ongoing support.



Special thanks to the vets, notably Lynbrook Vets (Wildlife champions), Casey Pet Emergency, Berwick Vet, VRH, AECs, Greencross Narre Warren, Dandenong Vet Hospital and in the last few months Wild Days has been lucky to be included in a pilot of the Wildlife Victoria Travelling Vet Program (Dr Tash & Dr Alisdair) providing access and assistance otherwise not available.

I just had to share this X-ray of a Laughing Kookaburra! Amazing.

Thanks to you all!



I hope you were able to relax and enjoy reading some of the stories and pictures from Wild Days. There is always more, check out the website or Facebook page.

That is it for now,

Kay Taranto, BSc

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Wild Days' mascot wild "Mum with baby 2022"

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Donations always welcome, thanks!

www.wilddaysws.org