



Possum Tales

Far North Queensland Wildlife Rescue Association Inc. Newsletter

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Hello to all our existing and many new members. It has been a busy wet season with the intermittent strong winds and weather taking a toll on our native wildlife. There have been many calls for juvenile birds separated from their nest and estranged bats tangled up in human dwellings.

Many thanks to all our carers; we would not be functioning without you. If you would like to help in any way, be it immediate rescues, caring for wildlife, fundraising, photography or sharing our news to the general public, please contact us on 07 4053 4467.

Management Committee

All the Far North Queensland Wildlife Rescue personnel are volunteers, taking time out of their day to promote the wellbeing of native wildlife. Congratulations to our appointed acting President and acting Vice President.

General Enquiries & Fauna Records: fnqwr@bigpond.com

President: Renee Pitcher president@fnqwr.com.au

Vice President: Mecky Schamberger vice-president@fnqwr.com.au

Secretary: Robyn Taske secretary@bigpond.com.au

Treasurer: Aline Sheehan treasurer@fnqwr.com.au

First Aid/Caring – Animal Capture in Natural Surroundings

You have been called to a wildlife situation. You have assessed the dangers to you and the stress the capture will place on the injured animal. You have also determined the animal is in need of assistance. So how does a person safely and swiftly capture a wild animal??

Each species is different and each situation has its own environmental conditions. Some animals are easily captured with nets or blankets, while others require the use of body protection. It also takes experience to perfect these techniques, and even with years of experience, you may still be subject to scratches, bites or kicks.

A common capture method is described below as the box-over method, which can apply to mammals, reptiles and birds.



The best way to protect yourself and injured animals is to minimise direct contact. By using the box over method, one can capture most animals without touching the animal, and the animal never captures the carer.

To capture an animal using this method an appropriately sized container, such as a cardboard box that is large enough to snugly keep the animal in, is preferred. The box needs to be strong enough to keep the animal from escaping. Cunning mammals such as native mice or birds such as cockatoos should be placed in a strong plastic box instead. As the capture box will also be used for transport, the container will need to have adequate ventilation. Most cardboard boxes breathe without additional ventilation, but if you are planning on using an airtight container, place several small holes at the top of the container to allow for air exchange.

Approach the animal slowly. If the animal is mobile, you may require several people to corner its escape routes. Ensure the direction away from you does not have any hazards such as traffic, water or other hazards which may cause additional injury. When your container is quickly placed over the injured animal, quietly wait until the animal stops struggling. Slowly work the thin, stiff board underneath the box. Ensure to work slowly until the opening of the box is fully secured with the board.

Now completed, the animal has been successfully contained without human touch. Ensure to report any required details with our group, so we can report the information, including animal species, capture location and presumed injury to our Rehabilitation Permit facilitator.

Other capture suggestions:

- Choose a container that is large enough to facilitate some movement, but yet not so much movement that the animal may be additionally stressed;
- Native animals will feel more secure if they cannot see directly outside of the container. This is done by covering with a thin towel or blanket;
- Keep baby animals together to preserve body heat. One way to transport juvenile mammals is by keeping them grouped in a pillowcase. Tie the pillowcase shut and place it inside the transport box;
- Never lay an unconscious animal on its back, Lay the animal face down and slightly on its side;
- Give an animal something to hold on to or warm up to. A jumper, blanket or t-shirt is preferred; and
- The biggest danger in transporting an animal is the risk of escape. Many mammals and parrots are able to chew their way out to escape within minutes. Be sure to ensure the container is secure enough to confine the animal.

Newsletter Coordinator

The Committee would like to welcome Julie Byrd who has recently joined the group and jumped right in to take on the job of revitalizing the member's newsletter. We hope you enjoy this edition and we look forward to receiving many emails from members with stories, hints and tips and other wildlife relevant matters. We thank Julie for a fresh and interesting communication.



Animal of the Month - Echidna

Did you know the juvenile version of an Echidna is called a Puggle? What a cute name!

Recently a Puggle has been taken into care by a volunteer. Infant and juvenile echidnas are rescued for various reasons. These can include habitat loss, orphaning, domestic animal attack/predation and trauma from motor vehicles.



The Echidna is a monotreme, hatching the Puggle in 10 to 11 days. It is less than 1.3 centimeters long and around 0.3 of a gram, smaller than the size of a jellybean! Luckily for the mother, the Puggle is not born with spines; instead it is a tiny mass of pink flesh. The little Puggle will suck at milk that is excreted from special glands on her skin in her mother's pouch. A carer can emulate a more natural feeding to the Puggle by designing something to let it feed upside down.

Any echidna that has bruising, broken quills or a damaged beak can have other problems internally and deeper than visually present. These animals should be immediately taken to the vet and possibly x-rayed to ensure that there are no fractures. Documentation shows that echidnas with fractures may still attempt to burrow. Echidnas brought into care are often dehydrated and will require rehydrating sooner rather than later. This may require intravenous fluids to be administered by the vet. Echidnas can go into torpor (similar to short term hibernation) in cooler winter months.

Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council

This year is a celebration of ten years since the Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council was first incorporated as the peak body representing wildlife rehabilitators in Queensland.

The Queensland Department of Transport has given the Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council with a grant to provide free booklets to interested members of the public. Councillors have also shared these free booklets to local Council offices and information centres across the State. If you feel you would like one of these guides, please contact fnqwr@bigpond.com and your request will be handled.

The 2014 Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference will be facilitated at Hobart, Tasmania, from May 26th May 30th. A packed programme has been arranged and can be viewed on <http://www.awrc.org.au>. There are five half-day tours on the Thursday afternoon. The remainder of the four days is filled with the favourites, some very interesting new speakers, renewing the old friendships and viewing various trade exhibits. The theme of the conference is "New directions: Accommodating change". Full conference registration is \$415.00 for the four-day programme.



Volunteer Photos / Stories

Thank you kindly to Terry Carey, who has dedicated his time to native bird rehabilitation, as well as supplying these photos for our first 2014 edition of Possum Tales.



Pied Imperial Pigeon In the 1980's Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service assumed responsibility for annual surveys. The project is one of the longest, continuous wildlife monitoring surveys in Australia and the records show an amazing success story with numbers rising from a low point of 1600 birds (following a large scale shoot in 1968) to a pre-Yasi total of between 35,000 and 47,000 birds.



The Spangled Drongo is a glossy black bird with a greenish sheen. The juvenile Drongo is a dusky black colour (refer to photo), with a brown eye and chevrons (stripes) on the under tail.



Here is a juvenile Fig Bird. Fig Birds breed from October to February, and lay 2-3 eggs each. Both parents care for young. When they are not breeding, they move around in flocks of mostly immature birds, looking for food in tree foliage.



This Sulfur-crested Cockatoo unfortunately has beak and feather disease. This disease is endemic in Australia's wild parrot populations. It has the potential to impact on several endangered Australian parrot populations. PCD occurs throughout the country and is caused by a DNA virus.

Letter from a Local Protégé

I'm Louise, I am just an ordinary 11 year old with a big heart for animals, my goal is to become an animal savior and raise heaps of money for the rhinos, white tigers and all the other animals that are close to extinction. FNQ Wildlife Rescue are helping me get that one step closer to my dream. This weekend instead of sitting in front of the TV or playing X box, I did something different. This weekend I went to the FNQ Wildlife Rescue Centre and I participated in the bird caring for beginners work shop. This is a subject that I am very passionate about, I love animals and when I grow up I would love to become the female version of Steve Irwin or Steve Backshall!



When I got there I was very impressed about how much work the committee had put into this work shop and all the committed people in Cairns. A special lady Dianne brought in six baby finches that she had been looking after and hand feeding for about three weeks. At the session I learned about birds, their feed, their habitat and how to recognize them. I learned how to find an injury and the steps if you find a bird. 1- check for injuries, 2- get the bird warm 3- Electrolytes 4- identify.

FNQ Wildlife Rescue has a very inspiring committee and that is why I think more kids should get involved.

I even got a private cuddle with a joey!

Thank you so much for your time and effort I really enjoyed it.

Louise

The joey above is in care with the lovely Robyn Taske, after being orphaned when her mum had a fatal accident by a motor vehicle near the Edmonton Boat Ramp. The joey's nickname is "Midget".



FNQWR Updates

Keep a watch of the bulletin board notices regularly posted by the Committee. These emails provide information on training courses, available caring equipment and other pieces of interest.

We are going to have a question / answer section in newsletters to come, so please email any questions you may have to fnqwr@bigpond.com. Only send non-urgent questions. Urgent queries should be directed to your Mentor or local Vet.

- The next FNQWR meeting is scheduled for Wed 9th of April 2014 at 7.00pm at the Centre
- Basics for Beginners Macropod Workshop details will be advised by Bulletin Board Notice.

A shortage in flight aviaries has been identified by volunteers in our group. If anyone is interested in building a flight aviary in their yard to care for birds requiring flight practice prior to release, please contact fnqwr@bigpond.com

Photo Competition

FNQWR is running a photo competition! The prize is a \$50 fuel voucher!

Now is the time to dig out your camera and take photos of any animals you may have in care. The photo topic is native wildlife rehabilitation. One entry per person and photos have to be submitted by the 2nd of April 2014.

Sponsors

Acknowledgements to our corporate sponsors, we greatly appreciate your support!



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