

Lorikeet and Flying Fox Paralysis,  
Possums Reunited and Wildlife  
Sector Support

No images? [Click here](#)



NATIONAL  
WILDLIFE  
NETWORK

## NATIONAL WILDLIFE NETWORK ENEWS

### Dear Friend,

Well 2024 has certainly let itself be known to wildlife carers! With heat waves and storms causing havoc, lorikeets and flying foxes in strife, there is no doubt that this year hasn't been a walk in the park for many of us.

However, amongst the chaos we are reminded of the positives in wildlife rescue as well. Many groups have been working together to support and share the load during crisis, we've seen innovation and teamwork triumph over adversity.

Whether it's sharing a morning tea, offering a helping hand or simply calling a fellow rescuer to check in, these moments can make a big difference to the collective spirit. An example of this is the collaborative efforts between WIRES and NSW Wildlife Council (NWC) who recently joined forces to meet with government officials and strongly state their collective case for better support from NSW government.

The stories this month are of the recent lorikeet paralysis event and continuing plight of flying foxes, as well as some big wins for little possums from South Australia. As always, please let me know if you have feedback or if there are any stories you'd like to share with the network.

**Paralysis events on east coast**

# continues to puzzle wildlife carers and researchers

## Lorikeet Paralysis Syndrome (LPS)

This season was particularly devastating for LPS, with an increase of cases from January onwards. Collaboration efforts between WIRES Emergency Response, vet practices, EPA, Wildlife Health Australia, RSPCA, and Vets Beyond Borders worked to manage the hundreds of lorikeets coming into care in NSW.

Thankfully there has been a significant reduction in the number of lorikeets reported with LPS in New South Wales over the last few weeks, although flying fox cases have also been reported across Queensland and New South Wales.



## Flying Fox Paralysis Syndrome (FFPS)

Flying foxes are also usually affected during these events, although usually in much smaller numbers.

Sue Morris of Bat Rescue Inc in Queensland experienced their last paralysis event two years ago, and says that this year the number of bats affected, and severity of illness has been significantly greater.

Sue says that the survival rate among her rescues this year has been 30%, (compared to 80% in 2021-22) and she has noticed that they are slower to recover. She says that previously, those that survived to the point of hanging and self-feeding have eventually recovered fully, but can take 3 months or more before they are fit for release, even the mild cases.

This is on top of an already [very challenging season](#) for flying foxes, which has seen most organisations at or beyond capacity.

The [Queensland](#) and Victorian governments have both pledged further funding for their plight, and several other organisations and community groups have worked together to support the starvation, heat and FFPS events across Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. This includes WIRES recent collaborations with the NSW Wildlife Council.

Despite these recent wins, flying foxes across Australia are still under significant threat and face many environmental issues; leading to devastating and concerning losses.

For more INFORMATION on LPS

Request a treatment plan for LPS

READ: Sydney Uni LPS citizen scientist project

Contribute to FFPS data

## **A second chance at a wild life: The benefits and success factors of possum reuniting**

*"In circumstances where the mother has died, being hand-raised by a trained carer is the best thing, but nothing is better for wild animals than being raised by their own mothers for the best chance at survival in the wild." Dr. Tania Bishop*

WIRES wildlife vet, Dr Tania Bishop emphasises the health advantages of reuniting whenever possible:

*"All marsupials are born with premature immune systems and absorb maternal antibodies over a far longer time than most other animals.*

*When an orphaned possum comes into care, as trained and skilled as carers are, we can't replace that immunity that the possums would get from their mothers' milk over time and the life-long advantages those offer.*

*The socialisation with mothers is also vital in young possums, especially ringtails as they must obtain pap to seed their own caecum to be able to digest the complex diet they must eat.*

*Hand-raised joeys must either have this sourced by carers or can have a lot of health complications due to not being able to develop this gut flora in care."*



Although reunions aren't always possible, and it takes a lot of hard work, every success story is something to be celebrated. Kerrie Kelly from Fauna Rescue of SA Inc. has been working on a program initiative reuniting brushtail and ringtail possums since 2019. She shares her journey and experience with us:

*"In the beginning, attempting to reunite was very challenging as I didn't know what to expect and didn't want to lose a joey up the tree if I couldn't find its mother.*

*At times I was disheartened at the number of unsuccessful attempts BUT that one successful reunite was so rewarding to watch that it kept me striving to go out every night and continue to reunite and research factors for success.*



*One of the very first memorable reunites was a ringtail male joey weighing 62gm that had fallen out of mum's pouch.*

*Unfortunately, the weather was not favourable, and the first night was aborted due to wind and rain.*

*After 2 hours on the second night, it was looking to be unsuccessful, I was about to call it a night when we heard mum jump into a tree from the powerlines. She must have come from down the street.*

*The joey was a pouch young, so required mum to come to the*

*pouch and mum climbed back up the tree.”*

Kerrie has learned a lot since then, she says that thanks to the many hours committed to learning, researching and attempting reunites, that the small Fauna Rescue team can now usually locate possums relatively quickly in the trees, determine if they are female or male, assess the mannerisms to ascertain if it is mum, and know which method of reunite to utilise depending on the age of the joey.

**Kerrie explains that there are many important factors to consider before attempting a reunite and here are just a few:**

- You must have the exact address where the orphaned joey came from. It is really useful if the MOP can take photos of the location and/or send a Google location dropped pin.
- The orphaned joey must have no injuries, be hydrated, strong and able to grip/ climb and know that the mother was alive (not deceased) when the orphaned joey was found.
  
- Weather plays a huge part in the reunite process so always check before venturing out.
- Time of day to reunite is important usually from dusk. Allow for a window of 3 hours.
- Mother’s milk ceasing provides only a limited number of days to attempt a reunite.
- Reunites are not always successful nor are they successful on the first attempt- it may take a few nights.

By sharing stories, resources and expertise throughout

the wildlife sector, we hope to increase awareness and communication to see more success stories and reap the many advantages of reuniting possum joeys.

**More information on the Fauna Rescue Reuniting / Ringtail  
Wildling Release Program**

**Start the conversation** ~ If you have any comments or questions for Kerrie or Dr. Tania, or would like to share your own experiences with reuniting possums, please email [wildlifenet@wires.org.au](mailto:wildlifenet@wires.org.au).

## **Nature Positive Plan - Have your Say**

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water held public webinars on proposed new Nature Positive laws in November 2023. Recordings and transcripts are now available and you are invited to have your say by completing a survey.

**Submit your comments by 30 March 2024**

**Black Dog Institute Information  
Sessions**



The National Emergency Worker Support Service (NEWSS) provides free and confidential mental health support to keep you mentally strong on the job.

The Black Dog Institute team are hosting information sessions to help emergency service workers, including wildlife rescuers and carers, better understand the service and support available.

These info sessions are most suitable for those in leadership or executive roles.

**Click the buttons below to register.**

**Wednesday 6th March, 2-2:30pm AEST**

**Thursday 7th March, 10-10:30am AEST**

## **Are you treating wombat mange? FREE Bravecto available**

Bravecto has partnered with WIRES and together we are committed to improving the welfare of mange affected wombats by distributing Bravecto Spot-On for Dogs treatment, free of charge, to hard-working volunteers and wildlife rescue organisations around Australia to combat this horrific disease.

If you or your organisation are treating wombats with mange and would like access to complimentary Bravecto

please email [wildlifenetw@wires.org.au](mailto:wildlifenetw@wires.org.au)

## **New online course**

### **Lizard and Turtle Care Course**

This course is designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to safely rescue and rehabilitate lizards (with the exception of monitors) and freshwater turtles.

You will learn about lizard and turtle identification and biology, how to safely rescue, transport and provide first aid to these animals, how to house and feed lizards and turtles, as well as common injuries and diseases that you are likely to encounter when rescuing these species and how to manage them appropriately.

\$40 per person for approved participants.

[\*\*Learn More or Register Your Interest\*\*](#)

## **WIRES Disaster Relief Program**

## Contact WIRES

The program provides immediate emergency aid including:

- Wildlife food
- Wildlife First Aid
- Rescue Equipment
- Care Equipment
- PPE

## Grant Opportunities

Across Australia, there are many Government and NFP grants available to carers and rescuers in the wildlife sector.

**Wildlife Acoustics - Australia Wide Wildlife  
Research Grant**

**Royal Automotive Club of Queensland Foundation  
Grants (QLD)**

**Wildcare Tasmania Conservation Fund Grants  
(TAS)**

**Green Adelaide's Grassroots Grants (SA)**

## **WIRES Rescue Food Program Seeking Wildlife Partner in Hunter Region**

Through our Rescue Food program, there is a Woolworths store seeking a wildlife partner in the upper Hunter region of Muswellbrook. Woolworths Muswellbrook is seeking a wildlife partner to collect surplus eggs and prepacked frozen raw seafood.

If these food items will be of use to wildlife in your care, please email [rescuefood@wires.org.au](mailto:rescuefood@wires.org.au).

## **WIRES Rescue Food Program Seeking Wildlife Partner in Southeast Gippsland**

Through our Rescue Food program, there is a Woolworths

store seeking a wildlife partner in Southeast Gippsland. Woolworths Yarram is seeking a wildlife partner to collect surplus fruit and vegetable donations from 2 to 4 times a week.

If these food items will be of use to wildlife in your care, please email [rescuefood@wires.org.au](mailto:rescuefood@wires.org.au).

I'd love to share your stories and experiences in the newsletter, to inform and inspire other carers around Australia.

If you have an event, fun project, recent triumph or ongoing research that you'd like to share or start a discussion around, please email me at [wildlifenetw@wires.org.au](mailto:wildlifenetw@wires.org.au).

I love to have a chat so always reach out if you have any questions about any of the stories or opportunities in the newsletter.

Until next time,

Hunter





WIRES, PO Box 7276, Warringah Mall, NSW, 2100

*WIRES acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land and recognises their connection to native wildlife. We pay respects to their Elders, past and present.*

*WIRES, NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue & Education Service Inc. collects & uses personal information in accordance with our charitable objectives, including wildlife rescue & education, fundraising & volunteer recruitment. For more details, read our [privacy policy](#), and you can choose to opt out via the unsubscribe link below or by calling 02 8977 3396.*

[Update my preferences](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)