



MALUBILLAI WILDLIFE CARERS NETWORK INC.

Newsletter No: 54
2017

March

MOPOKE

Welcome to the autumn and first edition of Mopoke for 2017. As usual I trust all was lovely over Xmas, which seems forever ago and that you are all back into the hustle and bustle of 2017.

Our spring/summer busy time has all but finished, giving our carers a break and a welcome change from the constant feeding and high level care required for the very young when they come into our care.

The 2016 season was a long one, or it seemed to be. Ducklings started arriving in late May and continued right thru until December, and I must say I held my breath after that unseasonal and heavy rain in February, as adult Ducks may have thought we were back to winter and maybe they should get a head start with ducklings, fortunately that did not eventuate!

Of the many birds which needed our help this season Tawny Frogmouths figured quite high, at this stage not sure of the reasons but the continuing expansion to the urban sprawl in the northern suburbs and the extensions to the freeway north are more than likely the reasons for this increase. Of course we will never know how the true numbers of these birds which did not make it as many would not be lucky enough to get the help they required.

Personally, I had many Tree Martins come into my care this season, these little delights are often mistaken for Swallows, but their wide 'smile' is a giveaway. They are beautiful birds and I love looking after them, they are so trusting and not at all difficult to hand rear, the only down side to these little guys is they will readily self-release if you are not extra careful, and this has happened to me.

We had the usual numbers of Wattlebirds, Honeyeaters, Doves, Galahs, Magpies and Ravens along with an assortment of the other native birds which inhabit our suburbs. In regards to the Magpies we were able to locate many of them back to their families, we along with other care facilities, have been educating the public on the need to leave these babies alone, and I think we finally have made an impact on this practice. Having said that sometimes it is impossible for us to get the correct information and are therefore unable to do anything but take the babies into care. These ones mostly end up in Kellerberrin with Kathy.

One of our lovely carers, Sue, (and her husband) have purchased a large parcel of land near and around Coorow, this is very exciting not only for them but this land may well end up being a very useful release site for some of Malubillai's wildlife. We wish Sue all the very best with this venture and no doubt there may well be a few busy bee weekends ahead.

On a different note altogether, our beautiful Jan McPheat left us 12 months ago, it has been a long road adjusting to Malubillai without Jan. She has and always will hold a very special place in our hearts. Thank you to you Jan for all you did to help our native wildlife, I know you and Les will be together and happy once again.

Heather Seear President – Malubillai Wildlife Carers Network Inc.

SAUSAGE SIZZLE.

Malubillai are planning another fund raising Sausage Sizzle at the amazing new Bunnings Warehouse on the corner of Liege Street and Albany Highway, Cannington commencing at 8.00am. 21st May 2017 is the allotted date and any helpers would be most welcome, please contact Heather 0410638882 or Ronda 0471092059, also if anyone would like to make a donation of cash or goods again it would be most appreciated. We hold these events usually twice a year, one to cover our Public Liability Insurance Premium and the other to help cover the costs food for our sick and injured wildlife.



PLEASE COME ALONG AND HELP US OUT WITH EITHER YOUR TIME, A PURCHASE OR DONATION

A DREAM COME TRUE

Our swimming pool had been leaking for some time and was a total waste of water, we had the pool leaking detector people in, however they could not pinpoint where the leak was coming from. So plugged up all the inlet/outlet pipes, then opened them one by one to find the pesky leak.

We went away for six weeks, on returning I was hoping to find it full of tadpoles, but no such luck. The frog calls were increasing every day, so when Annie come up for lunch I threw some pond weeds in and we watched the frogs go for it.

Within two days there was frog spawn hanging off the weed, on the steps and on the creepy crawly hose, after about 10 days the tadpoles hatched, they were everywhere – fantastic.

We removed and rehomed as many as we could. The pool is now a pool again for human use. I would bet the neighbours are relieved as the frog chorus was very loud.

I LOVE FROGS.

Sharron Burns



Birdlife Australia

Rainbow Lorikeets are gorgeous birds but they are also a serious pest in Western Australia. According to BirdLife Western Australia, the population in Perth has skyrocketed since the 1960s, when 10 birds were released, and now over 40,000 Rainbow Lorikeets are present from Yanchep to Mandurah and east to Chidlow.



To work out the exact population and range of this pest species, Birdlife Western Australia and the Department of Food and Agriculture Western Australia have launched Operation Rainbow Roost, supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State Natural Resource Management Program.

“Rainbow Lorikeets are very aggressive, and are out competing the local parrots,” said Mike Bamford, Chair of BirdLife Western Australia. “The Red-capped Parrot is now almost extinct from a large part of the Perth metropolitan area, and it’s likely that the Rainbow Lorikeets have been a significant contributor to this loss.”

The lorikeets are also a threat to the Endangered Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo—both species nest in tree hollows, and the aggressive lorikeets displace the larger cockatoos.

Rainbow Lorikeets have been declared a pest in South - Western Australia. It has been estimated that they damage about \$3 million of commercial fruit crops each year in the state, and can also spread bird diseases. BirdLife Western Australia is asking the public to report any sites where Rainbow Lorikeets roost at night.

They usually gather at communal roost sites at sunset and this information will allow us to estimate their numbers.

Please also report any Rainbow Lorikeets you see in the outer Perth metropolitan area: you can head to the website, email us at rainbowroost@birdlife.org.au, or phone BirdLife Western Australia on (08)9383 7749

11 January 2017

Elephant Nature Park

Article by Lesley Watson (Docent at Perth Zoo)

I have just returned from a week volunteering at this sanctuary in Chiang Mai and would like to record my experience.

The park was established in 1990 by Sangduen "Lek" Chailert who was named Asian of the Year by Time Magazine in 2005 and the park has received numerous awards and has been included in National Geographic magazine as well as many documentaries including BBC, Animal Planet, Discovery Channel and many others.

The work at the park is well documented but it is not until you experience it first-hand that you can appreciate the enormous success of this enterprise.

It is home to seventy elephants, four hundred dogs, two hundred cats, about fifty water buffalo, assorted horses, goats and pigs but as a volunteer your primary work is with the elephants.

All the information and the different volunteering projects can be found on the website as well as the individual stories of each elephant and some of them are heart rending.

The park itself is in Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand and is located in a valley surrounded by lush vegetation with a river running through the middle where the elephants often enjoy a bath.

The atmosphere is serene and happy and, at the risk of sounding sloppy, you can feel the love surrounding the place, except when a dog fight breaks out which happens quite regularly between the twenty or so free range dogs that live separate from the dog compound.

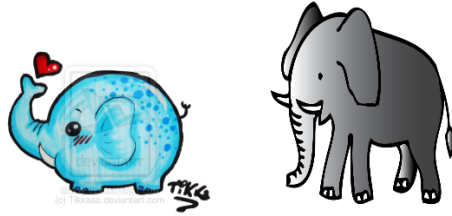
On our arrival we are asked to watch videos showing how the spirit of the animals is broken as well as the torment and abuse they are subjected to in the logging industry, giving rides, circuses and performing tricks for tourists. It is horrible and some volunteers had to leave the room in tears. There were sixty volunteers on my trip of various ages and nationality although many were from America and some from UK, there were only about five of us from Australia.

The accommodation is shared mostly with humans but sometimes you feel like you are intruding on a cat's bed! The rooms are rustic and wooden but do have their own bathroom, often with resident wildlife! All food is included and is vegan, it is cooked fresh and included loads of fresh salads and fruit, the only thing is you need to queue and don't plan on going up for seconds because once it is gone, it is gone! We were split into three groups so that our work roster rotated, so one day we would be cleaning poo from the night quarters, or going out into the country to chop corn for food, or offloading truckloads of pumpkin and water melon, washing and stacking them. Any spare time we had was spent walking with the elephants, feeding them or splashing them in the river so there was lots of fun mixed in with the quite hard physical work.

You do pay \$400 a week so if you are too tired or sick to work or find the work too strenuous you are not beaten with a stick or removed from the park! There is always something you can do including helping with the dog haven by walking them or just going into their enclosure and playing with them.

The first elephant I sighted on my arrival stole my heart immediately and she became my favourite. As I watched her making her painstakingly slow way to the feeding platform I soon realised that her front leg was horribly deformed. Her name was Kabu and her mother worked in the logging industry. As a baby Kabu's leg was broken by a log and never fixed, she then suffered the horrible abuse of breaking and was put to work herself as a logger. Her leg became more and more deformed but despite her horrendous life she has the most beautiful soul and spends her life in the park in her special spot with her Mahout.

Sometimes she is with another female but mostly she is on her own. She is only twenty five so she has a long life ahead of her but my heart ached when she allowed me to hug her.



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There are so many similar stories of these individuals and all of them are on the web site so I won't go into them here except to mention the herd that is the family of the youngest member of the park, Dok Rak who was born in April. Just like all youngsters he is adorable and boisterous and has his sister and nannies chasing after him every day while he gets up to mischief.

I was so entertained one day when I watched the herd at a drinking trough, little Dok Rak decided he would rather climb in, so when no one was watching he managed to get his front legs over the rim then clambered up with his little back legs. Next thing he was enjoying his bath until the others realised where he was and suddenly three or four of his carers used their trunks to scoop him out. He cried indignantly which was very cute.

Just standing watching their natural behaviour was such a privilege.

I'll just mention something about the mahouts which is an interesting part of Lek's philosophy. The Mahouts who have an elephant in their care have strict rules about how they are allowed to treat that animal. The traditional hooks are absolutely not allowed nor is any kind of harsh language or threatening behaviour. In return the mahout's family are allowed to live at the sanctuary and their children's education is paid for.

What I noticed was the affection between the elephant and her mahout. These animals have suffered the most traumatic injuries and abuse by mahouts in the past but they have the capacity to accept another human, to trust implicitly and to love unconditionally. It was almost incomprehensible to believe in the depth of emotion and feeling within these wonderful creatures, their ability to forgive and still give love was one of the most moving sights I have ever seen.

The elephant's love, affection and emotion is quite visible to see both within their family group and with their mahout. To know what they have been through and to witness this behaviour is overwhelming and it is an experience that I can't wait to repeat next year. If you are wanting a holiday with a difference or are thinking of a volunteering holiday I can thoroughly recommend this. You will never forget it. If anyone wants more information please feel free to email me at:

ayasha_au@yahoo.com

Editor: Thank you Lesley for allowing Malubillai to use your article, we wish Lek all the best with her Amazing Elephant Nature Park.

MEETINGS

Malubillai meetings are held on the third Saturday of each month with the exception of December, commencing at 1.00pm, held at 22 Durban Street Victoria Park, which is alongside Langley Park on the Swan foreshore. New members or interested members of the public are welcome to attend.

March meeting scheduled for the 18th, April meeting 15th, May meeting 20th



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New members/carers are most welcome



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Willy Wagtails new food source.....

I always seem to have at least one pair of these cheeky little birds in my garden, they are pretty keen on the free mealworms and will chatter noisily on the back veranda for food when they know I am around, especially late evenings.

However, I have recently swapped the food recycling and compost bins around and now use one which is out the front, this one swings on its frame as you are meant to move the compost around to help it break-down quicker. This in itself is hardly newsworthy, but I have found that the wagtails have realised this is something to take note of. They happily sit under the bin and enjoy the little flies and insects which are attracted to the compost. This really is a funny sight and often there can be 3 or 4 birds there at any one time, no-one seems to have an issue sharing the goodies. Just a little story but once again illustrates just how adaptable and clever out wildlife can be.



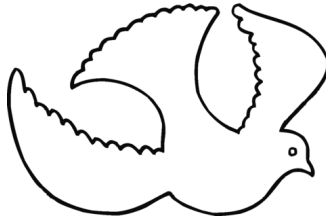
Heather

I've learnt another language. It's called Pigeon English. I've recently ended up with a large white pigeon, quite by accident. I think it's a male and I've named him "El Blanco". In the beginning he was quite timid and would "attack" me if I put my hands near him.

Two weeks later, we are conversing....the minute he hears my voice he starts to coo, strut and turns around in tight circles. I do the same back, thank goodness there are no cameras around! Each morning I also converse with Billy, my extremely talkative rainbow lorikeet.

I've had to put my new neighbour in the picture, as he sits outside with his coffee early in the morning and must have wondering about the strange noises coming over the fence!

Jackie Boucheix



PO BOX 595 VICTORIA PARK 6979 22 GARLAND STREET, VICTORIA PARK 6100

MOBILE: 0412 609 104