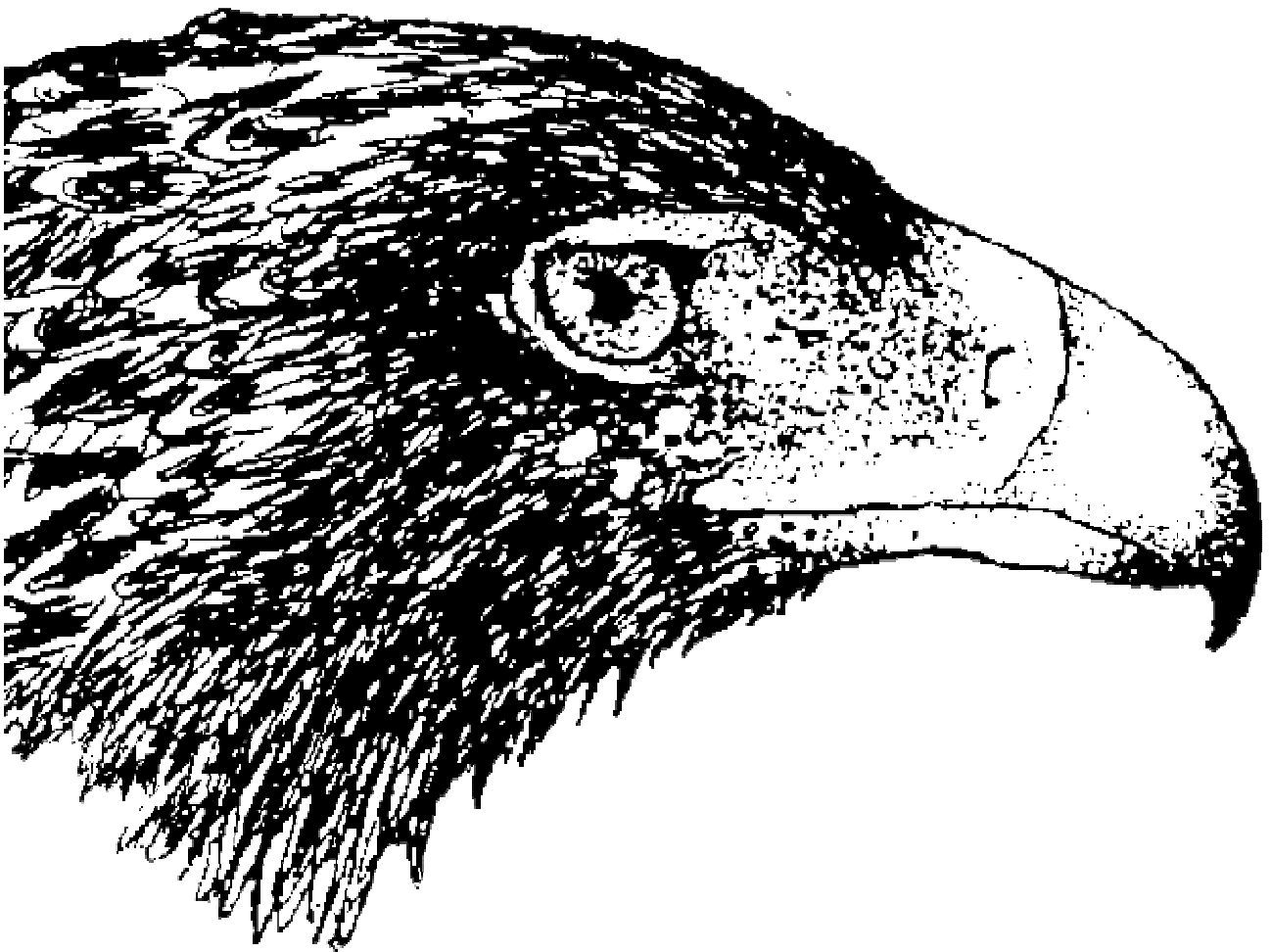


• REHABILITATION • CONSERVATION • EDUCATION •

SOCIETY for the PRESERVATION of RAPTORS (Inc.)



NEWSLETTER

October 2008

www.raptor.org.au

EDITORIAL

It has been a while since we last went to print. Unfortunately, factors such as illness can keep contributors from contributing and editors from editing, but we're back on deck now with another issue of the Society's newsletter.

The National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference has come around again, this time in the national capital of Canberra. Our delegate this year was Brian Mawby-Brown.

Also in this newsletter is an article on hints and tips for the thrifty rehabber. Where to find things, products that work well for others, and how to save a bit here and there on supplies.

With changes in technology and a recent upgrade to the Society's internet access (partially donated by EarthWings and partially funded by the Society, thus making it cheaper than it would otherwise be) we are now in a position to distribute the newsletter electronically and save paper, thus reducing our environmental footprint.

If you would like to receive your copy of the Society's newsletter via e-mail as a PDF, please drop us a line at info@raptor.org.au to enable us to add you to the e-mailing list. Please be assured, as always, that the Society will not release your e-mail address to a third party, and we won't send you any annoying e-mails trying to sell you dodgy surgical procedures or strange pharmaceuticals from Mexico.

On the subject of e-mail, should you send an e-mail to the Society and not get a reply, it has probably been eaten by the spam filter. Please try again with a different subject line. Please do not include smileys or other such symbols in the subject line as these will definitely be eaten by the spam filter.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

The Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Council Inc (WAWRC for short) is having its annual general meeting on Sunday, November 16th 2008 at Piney Lakes starting at 2 pm.

WAWRC is setting up as a state wide network linking individual wildlife rehabilitators and groups to aid in communication right around Western Australia. For more information go to www.wawrc.org.au

THANK YOU

I would like to thank all those who sent their condolences on the recent death of Kevin. Dad was always fascinated by our beautiful birds of prey and used to donate dressings for us to use in our work. He was one of WA's longest surviving dialysis patients but not even today's medical marvels can put off the inevitable forever. Special thanks to Noelene for looking after Echo and Cikala while I rushed off to deal with family things and for representing the Society at Dad's service. It was the second Show in a row that I'd missed (apart from a few hours when I was able to pop in on Wednesday afternoon) due to unforeseen circumstances. Hopefully next year will be really boring.

- Nancy Tang

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL TERMS and HOLIDAYS 2008

Term 4

Tuesday 16 Oct - Thursday 13 Dec

Break

Friday 14 Dec 2007 - Monday 3 Feb 2008

Information obtained from the Western Australian Education Department website.

2008 PERTH ROYAL SHOW

Once again a successful educational campaign was waged at the Perth Royal Show. A feature of this year's display was a set of four beautiful posters designed by our interpretive specialist Marra, who used a combination of Society funds and grant monies from the Department of Environment and Conservation to complete the project.

Fridge magnets featuring Society birds were produced and sold as an experiment this year and were a success.

There were a great many visitors to the Show and the Animal Nursery and as usual, many of Perth's children now know that our local Barn Owls do not go, "Hoo-Hoo!" (the call of the North American Great Horned Owl) or "Tu-wit, tu-wu" (the call of the British Tawny Owl.) Many a surprised adult has also learned that Nankeen Kestrels are not actually baby Wedge Tailed Eagles.

Sometimes, the education is a bit on the basic side, but you have to start somewhere.

Thanks (and mice) to the magnificent birds who made the display possible: Amazing Grace the Wedge Tailed Eagle, Arrow the Peregrine, Cikala the Southern Boobook, Echo the Barn Owl, Ellee the Little Eagle, Hillary the Little Falcon, Kelda the Barking Owl, Leo the Masked Owl and Shadow the Barn Owl.

Thanks also to the human handlers, educators and assistants: Marra, Dion, Phil, Noelene, Warren, Vanessa, Jack, Sharon, Caleb, Jake, Carl and Nancy.

2008 ARA CONFERENCE

The 2008 Australasian Raptor Association National Conference was held in Coff's Harbour over two days from 30-31 August this year. Our coordinator Philip Pain attended.

There is a great deal of conservation work being done to protect and preserve the Barking Owl in Victoria and New South Wales. There were several presentations on the topic including a video by local scientist Simon Cherriman who also presented a paper on predation by Wedge Tailed Eagles in south west WA.

The Osprey Recovery Programme was also discussed and there was an excellent article on the dangers posed to raptors by wind farms.

Overall the conference provided an excellent overview of the wonderful work being carried out by raptorphiles right across Australasia.

PEREGRINES IN PRINT

Australian publisher Echidna Books has released a new children's non-fiction title called *Finding Out About Peregrine Falcons* by Greg Pyers. The new book features a section on rehabilitation with a photo of our very own Philip Pain and Arrow the Peregrine tiercel. It's great to see an Australian book for Australian kids about Australian raptors!

The Society has been acknowledged as a contributor and Echidna Books were kind enough to send us a complimentary copy for our library. A big thank you to Phil and Arrow for putting up with your editor in her role as Awkward and Demanding Photographer for this project.

RAPTOR ROAD TOLL

We have been approached by new member Mark Taylor, a travelling sales rep for mining products, about the heavy road toll inflicted on scavenging Wedge Tailed Eagles in the northern Goldfields. Mark will be at our next meeting where we will discuss the issue and explore ways in which we may be able to try to cut the toll. If you have ideas, input or are interested, please come to the next meeting. See the back page for details

SHOPPING AROUND

We've all been there: we need some product or other and don't know where to find it. A supplier has moved or closed up shop, or we're faced with shelling out big dollars for something that would really help our pointy little patients.

In this article, we will discuss various hints, tips and ideas that can help to preserve harmony in the home and keep some of your hard earned money in your wallet.

Around the house: the nature of our work means that there are times when we're going to get various substances on clothes, towels, upholstery and floor coverings.

To remove bloodstains without scrubbing, try Preen Oxy Action. It's hard to miss at the supermarket because the trigger pack and refill are both a rather violent shade of pink, just short of being puce. Packaging aside, the product uses peroxide to effectively remove stains of a biological origin.

Preen also make a carpet cleaner in a similar shade of pink. Do not get the two mixed up. The carpet cleaner will remove bird mites from carpet, rugs and furniture. Also effective for spot cleaning on the carpet is Chem Dry carpet cleaner in the tall blue aerosol. Follow the directions carefully.

Like dissolves like, so when cleaning mites from bird boxes, an ammonia-based product will be the best one for the job. Windex Surface and Glass will dissolve most urates. For really stubborn mites such as those produced by Brahminy Kites, Ospreys and Sea Eagles, try cloudy ammonia. Remember to follow all safety directions and use in a well-ventilated area. Ammonia is a great remover of bird poo but it is really bad for you if you breathe it in. Also, if you mix it with chlorine, it produces a highly toxic gas, so don't even think about it. Wear latex or rubber gloves.

If you are in the habit of using latex gloves, check out the ones available from the local chemist. You can get them in small, medium, large and extra-large. They are a bit more expensive, but if the supermarket gloves don't fit your hand snugly for whatever reason, using gloves that do fit just make the job that little bit easier.

The medicine and dressing cabinet: this can be one of the most expensive aspects of wildlife care. There are a few little things you can do to keep costs down, however.

SAM splint is an excellent product but is also rather pricey. Birds tend to be fairly smallish animals, with a few obvious exceptions, and there is a way to make your own SAM splint by using the foil you've saved off the top of coffee or Milo tins. Yes, there *is* a use for that stuff! After you've cut it out of the can, wipe the foil on both sides with alcohol and then store it away flat. When needed, you can sandwich it with gauze and cotton wool, just like SAM splint, and cut it and shape it to size. Even the smaller foils can be handy, for example as a hock support.

Your local St John's ambulance depot throws away hundreds of dollars worth of gear every year when it gets close to code. Some things can still be used by wildlife rehabbers, however. Ask your local coordinator if they'll save you their throwaways and collect them on a regular basis. You must dispose of anything you don't use in a responsible manner. Your local GP may also be able to assist with things like saline and chlorhex/cetrimide that is approaching its best-before date.

Food: the price of mice has increased way beyond anything that could be accounted for by inflation or fuel prices. Since the introduction of reptile licensing, it has become a seller's market. The canny rehabber can save a bit here and there, however, without compromising on quality. Mice are a lot cheaper from the Animal Resources Centre than from pet shops, and day old chickens are cheaper the more you buy. Getting together with other rehabbers to share larger purchases and the cost of transport (fuel, freight etc) can save you quite a lot of money.

If you have a neighbour with a country/rural property, ask if they shoot rabbits. If they do, you may wish to offer them a few dollars for every head-shot, field dressed rabbit they can bring back for you. We regularly get gifts of bunnies that have strayed into the sights of our neighbour's .22 magnum. Because we live in the bush, he brings them to us very fresh and it only takes a minute or two to field dress each bunny. If I am feeling particularly diligent, I may joint it into raptor meals before putting it in the freezer. It is not a good idea to accept frozen rabbits that have not been field dressed. The smell when the animal is defrosted can be extremely off-putting if not downright offensive. Rabbit guts do not freeze well! Always check shot game for exit wounds. If you can't find an exit wound, you need to find the bullet. Don't risk a bird eating it!

Best of luck, and remember, you can share hints and tips with other members at the Society's web community – http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/raptors_wa/

CARING FOR GLOVES AND FURNITURE

Those of us who use gloves for rehabilitation and education know that they don't come cheap. It's important to care for gloves and also for the furniture that we use for our feathered charges.

Keeping leather clean and conditioned is important, especially for the comfort of our birds. Keeping anklets soft and pliable means the bird is subject to less stress in its life.

When handling a manned bird, a weekly application of jess grease to leather anklets keeps leather flexible and waterproof. This keeps it from going hard and rubbing against the bird's legs and feet.

Gloves should be conditioned at least weekly or even more frequently if a lot of feeding is being done on any particular glove. Blood food and other detritus should be cleaned off the glove with a damp cloth, then the glove should be cleaned using saddle soap and a damp sponge. This should be followed up with an application of jess grease.

Saddle soap is available from saddlers, boot makers and shoe-repair kiosks. Jess grease is another matter. There are various commercial products that can be purchased for conditioning leather, but this one is safe, non-toxic, easy to use and cheap:

Melt together 30g of beeswax (available from apiarists and craft shops) with 70g of ordinary white household candles. Fish out the wicks and discard them, then when all solids have melted, stir in the contents of one 200g bottle of medicinal liquid paraffin (available from the supermarket.) Pour into a clean, dry tin and allow to set. If anyone you know enjoys those boiled travel sweets, ask them to save the tins for you as these are ideal for this purpose.

This recipe makes a nice silky jess grease.

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

Every now and then, we'll come across a food item that we haven't previously encountered, such as six week cockerels, quail, or large adult rats. These can be a little bit daunting when we first try to come to grips with them, but the principles of dressing fowl, rodent and game are all pretty much consistent, with a few variations here and there, mostly to do with size.

Day Old Chickens – a simple and cheap source of protein and water with little calcium and generally low in nutrients. DOCs are a great 'filler' and a good stepping stone when reintroducing solid food into a sick bird's diet. They're also good for bringing down weight in birds that are being flown or used for education. The yolk sac can be rather fatty and is relatively high in cholesterol, so it can be a good idea to remove this.

Adult Mice – a good, nutritious food which can be a bit on the fatty side, but full of iron, calcium and other valuable nutrients. Adult mice are a good foundation for a balanced diet. Sometimes, if a bird is in recovery or when hand rearing young birds, it is a good idea to gut them.

Quail – quail are sometimes described as a complete food because of the balance of lean meat and high nutritive value that these little birds have. The breast meat is wonderful for putting on condition, while the wings and legs make good tirings and the frame is great for keeping beaks in trim as well. They are usually given gutted. Depending on how you like to keep your aviary, it can be a good idea to remove the primary feathers. If your bird is on light food for any reason, skinning the quail will remove a good part of its fat content.

Adult Rats – these can be expensive but are a very high value meal, especially for the larger birds. They have quite a high fat content (usually deposited in the abdomen) but this can be removed on gutting. It is recommended that rats be gutted for aesthetic reasons unless your aviary is a long way from the house.

Pigeons – these birds have a rich dark red meat high in iron and other nutrients. They need to be frozen and de-cropped to remove any chance of spreading diseases such as trichomaniasis.

Grown-on Chickens – the larger the chicken, the harder the job of dressing it. Six week birds are much more nutritious than day old chickens but are more difficult to pluck and gut. The principle remains the same, however. Bantam culls that have been grown on for six weeks are a good source of food.

Road Kill – apart from the fact that it's not legal to take road kill, you don't really know how fresh road kill was, or whether it was carrying pathogens or parasites at the time it lost its argument with a car, so our recommendation is that you resist temptation and leave it for the local scavengers. If it's on a busy road, you may wish to either drag it off to the side or report it to the local Ranger who can have it removed.

GUTTING A DAY OLD CHICKEN

New rehabilitators are sometimes daunted by some of the tasks we have to carry out as we care for our birds. This step-by-step guide takes the guesswork out of gutting a day old chicken.



STEP 1: Position the chick on its back on a clean cutting board with the legs clear of the abdomen.



STEP 2: Hold the chick in place on the cutting board.



STEP 3: Place the blade of a sharp knife immediately below the posterior end of the sternum and angle it down and away from the rib cage.



STEP 4: Slice down and away from the rib cage.



STEP 5: Scrape away the yolk sac and the lower gastrointestinal tract in one smooth motion.



STEP 6: Sever the very end to remove the tail and cloaca. This leaves no trailing bits, which can be messy if feeding on the glove.

UNACCUSTOMED AS I AM TO PUBLIC SPEAKING...

Earlier this year, the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) put out a Request for Quote (RFQ) for the provision of lectures and educational material for the Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation Course. The Society responded to the RFQ and was awarded the contract for the presentation of the raptor module.

While we have a number of trained and competent presenters and educators within our ranks, there is always room for more, and the best way to learn something well is to teach it. If any member is interested in assisting with the presentation of the raptor module, be it through holding a bird or operating the PowerPoint software while the presenter gives the talk, we are willing to train you.

Also, don't forget, if you are looking at applying for a Wildlife Display licence, the Society can support you in preparing your education package and honing your public speaking skills.

It is important to have good, sound information to impart, and it is equally important to deliver that information in an effective way. Humans have three ways of learning: Visual, Aural and Kinaesthetic.

When we learn visually we are learning from what we see. When we learn aurally we are learning from what we hear, and when we learn kinaesthetically we are learning from what we do. When presenting an educational package we need to balance the three types of learning. Studies have shown that adults take away approximately 7-10% of what they hear, so it's important to reinforce key points in any talk with visual aids and kinaesthetic components if it is safe and practical to do so.

For more information on how you can get more practice and improve your skills as an educator, contact the Society.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Membership renewals fall due on July 1 of every year. If you have not yet renewed your membership, please send your renewal to the Society at PO Box 1462, Margaret River WA 6285. Don't forget to include your name and current mailing address. If you would like to receive newsletters as PDFs, please also include a note to that effect and provide your e-mail address so we can add you to the list.

As a member of the Society for the Preservation of Raptors (Inc) you can:

- Learn more about raptors
- Participate in wildlife rescue, care and rehabilitation programmes
- Participate in community education programmes
- Support the Society's aims of care, rehabilitation, conservation and education

Membership of the Society for the Preservation of Raptors (Inc) costs:

- \$15.00 per annum for individuals
- \$12.00 for concessions (unwaged)
- \$10.00 for junior members (individuals under the age of eighteen years)
- \$25.00 per annum for families.

As a financial member of the Society, you can:

- Attend regular meetings
- Receive quarterly newsletters
- Participate in social events
- Participate in educational activities
- Attend workshops
- Access a considerable knowledge and resource base
- Obtain training in wildlife rescue, care, and rehabilitation relating to birds of prey
- Access a state wide support network for your activities as a volunteer wildlife rehabilitator
- Apply for financial support for veterinary costs incurred as a volunteer wildlife rehabilitator.

ON THE WEB

We have revised our **Raptor Fact Sheet** on rodent control and added another on alternatives to insecticides with the aim of educating people about secondary poisoning and how they can reduce their contribution to the risk to our wildlife.

Visit the web site at www.raptor.org.au

Spam, that bane of the net, has been particularly horrible of late, with some dreadful subject lines that are definitely not suitable for children. We're currently trialling SPAMfighter (www.spamfighter.com) on the Society's inbox. There is a freeware version and a "pro" version. Your editor currently has one \$5 discount voucher for the pro version of SPAMfighter so if you want it, first in best dressed.

National Geographic has posted an excerpt from the amazing video documentary *Terminal Velocity* featuring Frightful the high speed Peregrine Falcon on their website. Check it out at –

http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/animals/birds-animals/birds-of-prey/falcon_peregrine_velocity.html

What can we say but, "Wow!" (Not only the falcon but what a long url!)

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

The Society's next meeting will be held on 22 November, at 1:30pm. The venue will probably be Whiteman Park but booking details are yet to be confirmed, so please contact Marra on (08) 9250 4759 to RSVP and get more information closer to the date. Come along to meet your colleagues and talk about raptor stuff.

A special discussion topic for this meeting will be the Wedge Tail road toll in the northern goldfields.

We will have our usual end of year social at Eagles Heritage in December, details to be determined.

HOW TO CONTACT THE SOCIETY

General inquiries

- e-Mail: [info @ raptor.org.au](mailto:info@raptor.org.au)
- Post: PO Box 1462, Margaret River WA 6285
- Website: www.raptor.org.au

Coordinator – Philip Pain

- Telephone: (08) 9757 2960 (Margaret River)
- Fax: (08) 9757 2964
- Post: PO Box 1462, Margaret River WA 6285

Secretary – Noelene Jenkins (membership inquiries)

- Telephone: (08) 9453 6567

Newsletter submissions and distribution – Nancy Tang / Marra Apgar

- Phone: (08) 9756 0669 (Nancy) / (08) 9250 4759 (Marra)
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- Fax: (08) 9756 0697 (Nancy)

Emergency assistance

- Marra Apgar and Dion Mendel – Perth Raptor Care, Midvale Ph: (08) 9250 4759
- Caleb Delamare – Raptor Centre, Shenton Park Ph: 0412 622 176
- Yvonne Sitko – Western Australian Bird of Prey Centre, Herne Hill Ph: 0438 388 383
- Philip Pain – Co-ordinator SPR, Eagles Heritage, Margaret River Ph: (08) 9757 2960
- Brian Mawby-Brown and Nancy Tang – EarthWings, Nannup Ph: (08) 9756 0669
- Janelle and Glenn Ende – Just Raptors, Geraldton Ph: (08) 9938 1447