



# NEWSLETTER

September 2010

[www.raptor.org.au](http://www.raptor.org.au)

• REHABILITATION • CONSERVATION • EDUCATION •

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## FROM THE PERCH OF THE EDITOR

Welcome to our new-look newsletter! It was time for a bit of an update and now we have one. Love it? Hate it? Let us know what you think.

The second quarter of 2010 was a busy time for the Society, especially when it came to providing continuing education for our colleagues in the challenging yet rewarding field of wildlife rehabilitation. Not only have we had our contract with the Department of Environment and Conservation for the provision of educational services for the Basic Courses in Wildlife Rehabilitation renewed for another year, we were also engaged by the Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Council Inc to present at the inaugural Intermediate Course in Wildlife Rehabilitation at Kirup.

It is heartening to see that so many wildlife rehabilitators these days are striving to become more professional in their practices. The introduction of minimum standards and the prospect of a DEC accreditation system on the horizon provides both opportunities and a framework for all of us to work toward being the best we can be. With the biennial National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conferences, DEC Advanced Topics and WAWRC workshops as well as the on-going training programme at Kanyana's new Paxwold facility, training is now both more advanced and more available than ever before. There's always an opportunity to work smarter and better, no matter how long we've been doing this. Training also provides what may be the best chance most of us get to network with our colleagues. It's one of the few ways to get a lot of wildlife rehabilitators together in once place, and when that happens, we all start talking with each other. We share experiences – the good, bad and the hilarious – and we share ideas.

Is there something you'd like to learn or know more about? Let us know and we'll see what we can do.

## 2010 PERTH ROYAL SHOW

The Royal Show is the Society's biggest event of the year. It is our opportunity to get our conservation message out there to more people at once than at any other time. This is where we get to dispel some of the myths and misconceptions about birds of prey and hopefully make people think twice before making decisions that could impact negatively on raptors, wildlife and the environment. As always, we need volunteers to help work the display, hand out pamphlets, answer questions and give out raptor fact sheets. Volunteers will also get to work closely with our licensed educators and the magnificent raptorial birds on exhibit.

If you can lend a hand, please contact Secretary Noelene Jenkins on (08) 9453 6567 as soon as possible so that Showground passes can be arranged for you.

## CODE OF PRACTICE

The Society's Code of Ethics has been reworked into a Code of Practice. The revised document was tabled for comment at the Annual General Meeting and accepted unanimously. Draft copies had been circulated among active members prior to the AGM and the draft presented included many suggestions and ideas from members. Thank you to those who contributed. The new Code of Practice is available on line at the Society's web site via the Downloads page. For hard copy, please contact Secretary Noelene Jenkins.

## DEC BASIC COURSE IN WILDLIFE REHABILITATION

Dates for Basic Courses in Wildlife Rehabilitation for the remainder of 2010 are as follows:

- Perth Metropolitan (Kensington): 11/12 September

For more information, or to book yourself a place, contact Judith Holmes, Project Officer – Volunteer Training at DEC's Community Involvement Unit on (08) 9334 0251.

## AROUND THE WEB – by Luke Jenkins

Sitting at my computer, I find it strange that for the first time in about a decade I am typing away at an article (well attempting to) that doesn't in some way shape or form relate to using a firearm or blowing something up (It's work – I'm not crazy... well maybe a little). It's actually really refreshing.

So, where to start and what to write about? It's been some years since I've played almost any role in the Society and lately I've found myself surfing the net and reading a few books so I figure that's as good a place to start as any. Plus it's always good to share things with others so I thought I'd do a little something on a few websites I'd come across in my travels.

Searchable Ornithological Research Archive - <http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/>

This website is online archive for the major ornithological societies in the US. It contained PDF copies of journals in some cases dating back to the 19th century. This site has literally hundreds of thousands of reports, articles and field notes all of which can be downloaded free. Of most interest to members would be the journals of the Raptor Research Foundation. The only drawback I have found with this site is that the PDF files are a little finicky to download and the files only go to 2005. All journals post 2005 are at BioOne.org which is a pay for view site.

Avian Biology - [http://people.eku.edu/ritchisong/avian\\_biology.htm](http://people.eku.edu/ritchisong/avian_biology.htm)

This is an overview of Avian Biology from Department of Biological Sciences at Eastern Kentucky University. It is in a well structured presentation format and covers fundamental topics of avian function. Although it is not raptor specific it is very worthwhile.

The internet IBC bird collection - <http://ibc.lynxeds.com>

This is a website dedicated to storing images and movie files of all birds. It is a treasure trove with over 4000 files just under Falconiformes alone.

Other sites worth a look are:

[www.birdlit.org/OWL/](http://www.birdlit.org/OWL/)

[www.globalraptors.org/grin/indexAlt.asp](http://www.globalraptors.org/grin/indexAlt.asp)

[www.bookfinder.com](http://www.bookfinder.com)

If you are after a book of type then chances are Bookfinder will have it with over 150 million items in their catalogue including new and second-hand. Basically Bookfinder is a go-between for book dealers all over the world. Prices listed include shipping to Australian and in most cases particularly if the book is more than a couple of years old then a copy can be picked up at fraction of the price. To give you an example the book *Eleonora's Falcon: Adaptations to Prey and Habitat in a Social Raptor* is available from the Nile Book store in Australia for A\$75.49 including postage. Through Bookfinder I purchased the same book second-hand but in good condition for A\$7.26 including postage. Even new books are generally cheaper, *The Eagle Watchers* (fresh off the press collaborative work by among others Penny Olsen) is about A\$50 from the Nile Book store but below A\$30 via Abebooks through Bookfinder. To purchase you will need a credit card as most suppliers are overseas. Prices do vary but I usually find books are about 50% to 70% of what we would pay locally. It's definitely worth checking out.

## TREATMENT OF BUMBLEFOOT IN RAPTORS

Bumblefoot is a condition which can develop from a lesion on a bird's foot, or from pressure applied over a period of time. It is a chronic condition which will not heal without intervention and can lead to potentially fatal complications. Bumblefoot occurs almost exclusively in captivity (eg: medium to long term rehabilitation or permanent housing of a non-releasable bird) and is often the result of environmental and/or behavioural factors.

Common causes of bumblefoot can often be traced back to perches: smooth, hard, narrow or inflexible perches can all contribute to the development of bumblefoot, as can concrete or sandy flooring, overgrown talons and behavioural factors.

Bumblefoot usually begins as a lesion or "hot spot" on a weight or pressure bearing part (usually the underside) of a raptor's foot. Pressure on the lesion (walking, standing and especially landing) aggravates the wound site. The wound site may ulcerate and may become infected.

This type of wound does not heal readily and becomes a chronic and persistent condition. In some cases, it may spread, even breaking through the top of the foot in extreme cases.

In other cases, the bumble does not break open but may become encapsulated. If an encapsulated bumble is infected, surgical intervention by a veterinarian experienced in the treatment of bumblefoot is required.

Open bumbles are more common than closed (encapsulated) bumbles. Open bumbles are similar in their nature to human pressure sores. There can be limited blood flow to the area, which leads to a slow rate of healing. The wound may be exuding with slough and pus, the latter of which indicates infection.

A vet check is recommended as the first step in treating bumblefoot. Surgical debridement may be required and antibiotics may be prescribed to combat any infection.

This is followed up by wound healing by secondary intention (the use of dressings and topical preparations.) As with all wounds, the bumble must be kept clean, warm and moist.

Bumblefoot heals slowly due to the structure of the raptor foot. The wound must be checked, cleaned, debrided and re-dressed at least once a week.

One of the most comfortable ways of dressing bumblefoot in a raptor is to use interdigital wraps. These are thin strips of adhesive dressing which hold the primary dressing in place without restricting movement of the toes. This method of dressing does not interfere with the bird's ability to perch or feed.

An effective topical application for open bumbles is *Lotagen* gel, which is only available from a veterinarian. The gel should be applied directly to the wound site using a swab. Always follow the safety directions in the enclosed leaflet.

Over the *Lotagen* gel a small piece of foam-backed hydrocolloid (the type of dressing used on pressure sores in humans such as *DuoDERM CGF*) provides cushioning and protection for the wound. This is further held in place by strips of breathable polyacrylate fixation sheet dressing (eg: *Fixomull*.)

If necessary, the polyacrylate strips can be further secured by a strip of electrical tape around the top of the foot to prevent the bird tearing the dressing off. Additionally, "worry tags" – small pieces of tape with little tabs that the bird can tear at without damaging the dressing – may be added.



Figure A



Figure B



Figure C



Figure D

The series of illustrations show the application of the *Lotagen* gel, followed by the dressing pad, the polyacrylate strips and electrical tape on the foot of a Lesser Sooty Owl with early-onset bumblefoot. Note the worry tag visible to the right of the bird's foot in Figure C.

It can take several weeks to treat bumblefoot with the time taken for recovery being dependent on the severity of the case. Following the treatment regimen described above generally leads to a successful outcome.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held at Eagles Heritage on Saturday, 14 August. Elections were held and all our office-bearers were re-elected unanimously.

The meeting also passed a motion to introduce another class of membership: Life. To qualify as a Life Member you need to have contributed a minimum of twenty years of exemplary service to the Society. Three people qualify so far: Phil Pain, Kathy Pain and Noelene Jenkins, all of whom have been office bearers for well over that time. Congratulations to our new Life Members.

Overall we had a decent turnout of members who came to visit Eagles Heritage, attend the loop-leash making workshop and participate in the AGM. Thank you to all who came along.

## GRANT APPLICATIONS

It is our intention to apply to LotteryWest for a grant to fund the purchase of equipment in the next few months. Input is being sought from members as to what we need, such as the new model neonate/ICU brooders, transportable aviaries and materials for eagle-sized hospital boxes. We are also looking at applying for a FAHCSIA grant in the 2011 round to update our computer equipment which is now ten years old and starting to struggle.

Members who would like to participate in discussions on what we're going to apply for can join in at the on-line members-only e-mail group. If you're not already registered, simply send an e-mail with your details to: [raptors\\_wa-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:raptors_wa-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). Please note that you will need to be a Society member to join the group.

## NOTICE OF MEETING

The next General Meeting of the Society will be held at 8pm on Friday, 22 October 2010. The meeting will be hosted by Marra and Dion at Perth Raptor Care, 17 Wellaton Street, Midvale. As this is an evening meeting, attendees will have the option of participating in Pizza Night. Cost will depend on what each person orders.

RSVP to Secretary Noelene Jenkins on (08) 9453 6567.

## HOW TO CONTACT THE SOCIETY

### General inquiries (including membership and newsletters)

- e-Mail: via the website
- Website: [www.raptor.org.au](http://www.raptor.org.au)
- Telephone: (08) 9453 6567 (Perth)
- Post: PO Box 415, Forrestfield WA 6058

### Coordinator – Philip Pain

- Telephone: (08) 9757 2960 (Margaret River)
- Fax: (08) 9757 2964

## Emergency assistance

### Perth Metropolitan Area

- Marra Apgar – Perth Raptor Care, Midvale Ph: (08) 6369 0705
- John and Lyn Frings – Fur & Feathers Wildlife Rescue and Release Inc, Mandurah Ph: 0419 395 114

### Country WA

- Philip Pain – Co-ordinator SPR, Eagles Heritage Raptor Wildlife Centre, Margaret River Ph: (08) 9757 2960
- Brian Mawby-Brown and Nancy Tang – EarthWings, Nannup Ph: (08) 9756 0669
- Rose Best – Pilbara Wildlife Carers Association Inc, Karratha Ph: 0438 924 842