

Animal Tracks



Official Newsletter of Wildlife Carers Network Central West

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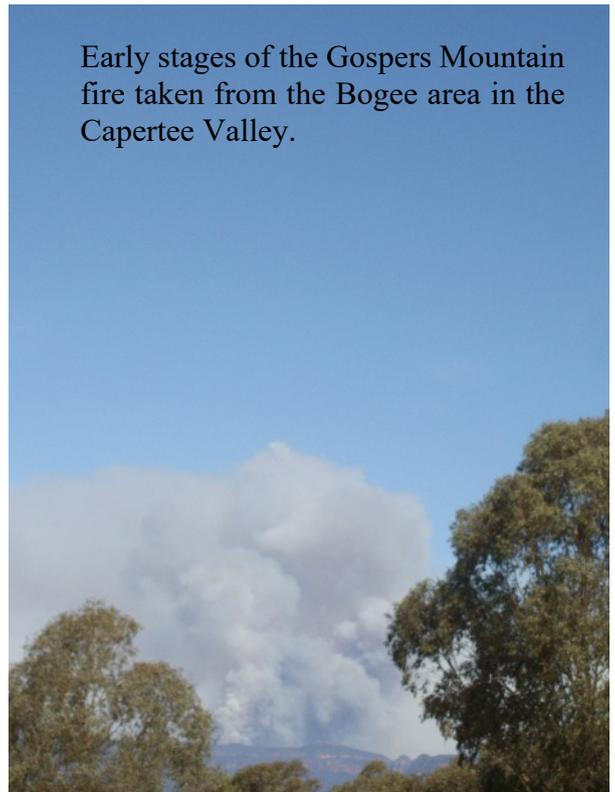


I LOVE A SUNBURNT COUNTRY - BUT NOT A FIREBURNT COUNTRY AS WE HAVE WITNESSED LATELY!



On the actual firefront taken at Bogee after the Gospers fire had entered the Capertee Valley.

We dedicate this edition, in the aftermath of such devastation caused in our state by the 2019 / 2020 bushfires, to the loss of habitat for our native animals, the loss of millions of our animals, the mental things we as carers and emergency services have to deal with, the horrific scenes we have witnessed will remain with us for a lifetime. A special mention also goes to our public population that have lost homes, memories, live stock and the trauma they have suffered during the onset of the fires in their local areas.



Early stages of the Gospers Mountain fire taken from the Bogee area in the Capertee Valley.



Glen Davis under threat!



On the front line - as a Rural Firefighter and Native Animal Carer with our group. JM.

Over a twelve week period, that my Brigade was involved in the recent fires, I have seen the worst and cruel things that nature does, and have seen many special events, of human endurance and mateship, also the beauty of nature as it repairs and regenerates what it has destroyed.

Nature started these fires and nature put them out, we only slowed up what was inevitable. My main operations were with the Gospers Mountain / Wollemi National Park fire that destroyed the largest area of land in any bushfire experienced in NSW. It started on Gospers Mountain, east of the Capertee Valley, by two lightning strikes on the 26th. October, 2019 and was declared officially extinguished on 10th. February, 2020.

I witnessed the destruction of numerous native animals whilst active on these fires, but prefer not to dwell on that, only to say that most of the ones rescued on the firefront were not viable and either died or were euthanased.

Possoms were in the largest numbers that I saw affected, with echidnas and some of the slower moving land based animals were also numerous in numbers. Possoms unfortunately due to tree dwelling, often came out after the fire had passed and were suffering burns and smoke inhalation, very distressing. Macropods generally moved in front of the fire where possible, however many had burnt feet. I remember one night when we were protecting the township of Glen Davis the macropods and wombats moved to a grassed area within the town, mingled with humans who they probably outnumbered, and they stayed for many weeks within the town boundaries.

Checking burnt areas when safe to do so, many wombats were found dead in the entrance to their burrows, not showing signs of burns, possibly lack of oxygen or smoke being the cause of death.

On a lighter side I would like to relate a couple of meetings I had that lifted the spirit and helped one to carry on.

On the firefront I witnessed a large Lace Monitor sheltering in a water filled cattle trough, with just its head above the water. I sat on the trough, has a small conversation with the reptile, wished it well and continued on. It showed no fear of me, but as I left I am sure I heard it say “ We are both Aussies mate, we will get through this”.

With bushland burning in front of me I witnessed a Eastern Longneck Turtle walk out of the flames, then another and another. What they were doing in the bush I do not know, there was no water in the area for at least one kilometre. The Fire Tanker in the photo above ended up with numerous turtles in the cabin. *Only had to put up with the smell for a few hours before I had time to find a dam and release them.*

Deep in the Upper Nile Valley, as the fire approached Kookaburras started to gather, in numbers, in the low shrubs. (Usually they are very territorial). Shortly bugs and reptiles started to emerge from the bush in front of the fire. Feast time for the birds, and they took no notice of us. A Willywag Tail took offence to one Kooka and attacked it. Last seen in full retreat with the Willy riding on its' shoulders like a chariot driver from a movie. Nature has a way of fixing things.

AFTER THE FIRES - A LOT OF WORK NEEDED.



A meeting was organised by Capertee Valley Landcare, to be held at the Glen Davis Community hall, open to all residents and visitors with concerns for the welfare of our native animals, after the horrific loss of their habitat during the recent bushfires. Three sides of the Capertee Valley and surrounding districts were heavily impacted by the events, with massive loss of flora & fauna in the area. Two items of concern were the loss of food and water sources.

The meeting was attended by 46 people, with two Wildlife Care Groups, members of the public with an interest in the preservation of our animals, and several speakers from various authorities in attendance.

Information was supplied at the meeting, and questions answered, with input from the following:

Capertee Valley Landcare, National Parks NSW, Local Land Services, A Senior Ecologist, WIRES, Wildlife Carers Network Central West, A Regent Honeyeater & Woodland bird expert, a volunteer water station builder.

Plans were put in place for the correct feeding and watering systems within the area, with more concerted efforts made in the particular scorched environment, and lesser operations involving the untouched lands that border onto the fire area. A large number of donations of food and other goods was made available to all attendees that were going to be involved in the project, and in some areas this is still ongoing.

New growth is now becoming apparent in the affected areas, particularly after good falls of rain in recent weeks. With this growth gradually the need for feeding etc., will lessen until such a time supplementary feeding will no longer be required.



[Very welcome donation from Capertee Valley Landcare. After holding a community night on a local private property, thanks to Edwina & Neil, the Landcare Group made a substantial donation for our operations in the Capertee Valley to support our efforts in rescuing, rehabilitation and release of local native animals.](#)

The donation will also be used for the treatment program our group has running in the Capertee Valley involving mange in wombats.

New requirements under the Data Base Recording that now need to be added to information we , as a group, must supply to National Parks - [Know how to obtain your Latitudes & Longitudes.](#)

New rules now apply to information we must supply to National Parks, for inclusion in the spreadsheet our group has to supply to them. This will allow the statistics to be added to the data base, showing species, location rescued from and the rescue release site. Care will have to be taken by our members, as the capture and release sites, and the distance the animal can be released from the capture point, under the rules, can easily be crossed checked by the authority that issues our license.

E.G - Possums can only be released from their capture point a distance of 150 metres. Reptiles the distance is up to 20 kilometres, provided the species is endemic to the release area. Macropods is 100 kilometres.

Latitude is generally expressed as - 32.99513 Longitude - 150.091 as an example.



**NO NEED TO PANIC
REALLY EASY!**

SMART PHONE - OK. So mobile reception can be a problem in large areas of our Group's responsibility and Google Maps are out. SO! Download an App. Called Emergency +, this one works off satellites and once you open the App., It shows Lat /Long on the bottom of the screen. Don't worry it will not automatically dial 000 and get your into trouble. This is a good one if you require emergency help also and do not know your exact location.

HOME COMPUTER - Once you have done the rescue, remember approximately where you were, road name and location etc. When back home go to Google Maps and enter the location in the search bar. On the map that shows locate the spot where the rescue was completed. Change from the map vision to the satellite view, place the mouse pointer on the position of rescue and right click. The Lat / Long will show on the screen.



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