

We hope this e-news will become a regular occurrence.

This Network was formed in response to the turtle crisis caused by last year's very hot Summer when many of Perth's metropolitan lakes dried up resulting in widespread turtle deaths and a mass rescue of debilitated turtles.



**Turtle Oblonga
Rescue & Rehabilitation
Network**

Membership is free but you'll still need to fill out a membership form to become a member.

Latest News

We're about to write a letter of introduction to all the appropriate organisations we can think of - to advise about the formation of the Network and our aims. If you can think of any local groups you think we should contact, please let us know.

Although our official name is Turtle *Oblonga* Rescue and Rehabilitation Network Inc, we will also be using Turtle *Oblonga* Network as a trading name



Website

Although our website is now *live*, it's still a work in progress for which we'd welcome your suggestions and comments as we want the website to be informative, accurate and accessible.

Turtle Deaths at Lake Yangebup

Lake Yangebup is, south of the river, down North Lake Road and part of the Beiliar Wetlands. After a report that several dead turtles had been found. Cathy and Dianne picked one of the hottest days to walk around this large lake, finding another two bodies in the process. Unfortunately, we didn't hear about the deaths until after the event when it was too late to do post-mortems. A reminder to everyone that we also want to know about turtle deaths as soon as possible, particularly clusters of deaths such as this. We'd also like to be able to measure and sex all dead animals to build up a body of data.

Turtle Deaths at Bibra Lake

These deaths were attributable to car accidents and were "opposite" Adventure world. It's not known how many deaths occurred although we receive word of two animals being transferred to Murdoch which we assume were euthanased (records are not kept for wildlife admissions). As is usual in these situations we receive information after the event, and the information we receive is vague as to the exact location and number of animals involved. Had we been able to look at the dead bodies we may have been able to determine the sex of the animals which may have given us an idea as to why the turtles were on the move. It is hoped that once we get the word out we will become the first point of call for turtle events such as this.

Blue Gum Lake

Blue Gum Lake, south of the river, in Mt Pleasant is a small, shallow lake and which is drying out quickly with the extended warm weather we're currently experiencing. Cathy and Dianne are keeping an eye on it. We don't anticipate that the Lake will dry up although a downpour anytime soon would be appreciated.

Stephanie Downs' Mission to Prevent Highway Deaths; How One Woman Made a Difference

We found this great turtle story from the US on the Internet. Stephanie Downs saw a turtle injured on a highway and stopped to help . . . which led to *Operation Turtle*. The problem had existed for years but it took one person to say, *I'm going to make a difference*.

. . . and she never gave up. What Stephanie says she learned was that refusing to take **no** for an answer can get you far . . . just having a Plan B, a Plan C, a Plan D; just keeping on it.

Operation Turtle has been a success. Casualties have dropped from perhaps 150 each summer to about 20 in the last two years. To read the full story go to

http://www.humanesociety.org/news/magazines/2012/03-04/turtle_patrol_stephanie_downs.html

Bota Kanan River Terrapin (Tuntung) Conservation Centre in Perak in Malaysia

While Dianne was in Malaysia she took the opportunity to visit this Centre which is about 250 kms north west of Kuala Lumpur. The Centre which was established in the 60s is impressive as are its reptilian occupants – *Batagur baska* which weigh in at around 40 kilos. Turtles throughout Asia are under threat through illegal poaching, smuggling and the harvesting of eggs for human consumption. The Bota Kanan Centre has a large number of mature breeding animals which are housed in large ponds with sandy beaches where the turtles can lay their eggs. The eggs are then removed and relocated to a secure sand-filled hatching enclosure from which the hatchlings can access their own pond. The hatchlings are released into the nearby Perak river at around 1-2 years old. As with our turtles, the sex is determined by tail length and cloaca position although after the age of five years the sex is readily determined by eye colour – males have a white eye, females brown as pictured.



As you can see from the picture these turtles are definitely enjoying the good life. The girl in the foreground isn't going to starve anytime soon.

Dates for 2012

We've worked out some meeting dates for this year but have yet to decide on venues so if anyone's got any ideas for free venues we'd love to hear from you. We are required to have three General Meetings each year but can have more if wanted. Our list of priorities just keeps growing but we have planned a talk on Turtle Housing for the first General Meeting in May. This information is now on the website

WHEN			WHERE	WHAT
JAN	9	Mon	Department of Commerce, WA	Turtle <i>Oblonga</i> Network's Birthday
FEB	15	10am	Craftsman Cafe, Carousel Shopping Centre, Albany Highway opposite Harvey Norman	Turtle <i>Oblonga</i> Network Committee Meeting
MAY	6	Sun 10 – 4pm	Kanyana Wildlife, Lesmurdie	Turtle <i>Oblonga</i> Network Open Day Display
MAY	9	Wed 10am	Craftsman Cafe, Carousel Shopping Centre, Albany Highway opposite Harvey Norman	Turtle <i>Oblonga</i> Network Committee Meeting
MAY	20	Sun 10am	Kanyana Wildlife, Lesmurdie	Turtle <i>Oblonga</i> Network General Meeting Talk – Basic Turtle Housing
AUG	1	Wed 10am	Craftsman Cafe, Carousel Shopping Centre, Albany Highway opposite Harvey Norman	Turtle <i>Oblonga</i> Network Committee Meeting
AUG	12	10am	venue tbc	Turtle <i>Oblonga</i> Network Annual General Meeting Talk - tbc
NOV	7	Wed, 10am	venue tbc	Turtle <i>Oblonga</i> Network Committee Meeting
NOV	18	Sun, 10am	venue tbc	Turtle <i>Oblonga</i> Network General Meeting 2013 Planning

Our first public event will be a display at Kanyana's Open Day on Sunday 6 May where we're planning to sell fund-raising turtle-themed jewellery - a great opportunity to test the market. Look out for our sign !



Our second event will be a General Meeting and the first of what we hope will be many training sessions. We're beginning at the beginning with **Turtle Housing** and this presentation which will be given by Ruth Haight, RVN, will be held at Kanyana on Sunday 13 May between 1000-1200. The cost of \$10 will include notes and morning tea with the revenue split between Kanyana and the Turtle Oblong Network. We'll have a variety of housing and husbandry items on display to illustrate the session. Please register with Ruth – secretaryoblonga@iinet.net.au – if you'd like to attend.

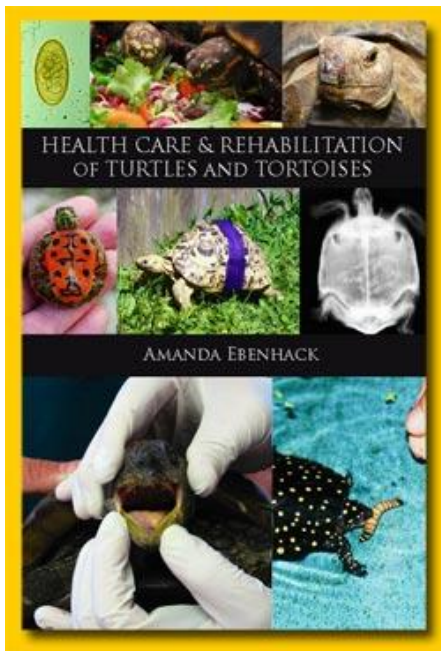
Swapmeets and Carpark Markets

If you frequent these markets you'll know what treasures can be found. If you don't frequent these markets you don't know what you're missing. Highly desirable items for turtles are those small plastic step stools designed for toddlers which, when new, retail for around \$20. These, if they have the cut-outs as shown, are ideal as turtle hides which double as turtle basking platforms if you keep the water level at the top of the stool. The tops of these stools are usually covered with a non-slip rubbery-type covering which is ideal for basking turtles. **Postscript:** Crazy Clarks are currently selling the stools pictured for \$10 each. If buying these go for dark colours like blue or black.



Turtle Tubs

We've found some great 220 litre heavy-duty black tubs at Bunnings which are ideal for rehabilitating 2-3 turtles (if they're all compatible which turtles usually are, but not always). Don't be alarmed by the thought of dealing with 220 litres of water as you don't fill the tubs more than about 15-20cm deep. The depth of these containers also means that they're escape proof (if you keep the water level at 15-20cm deep). However, you do need to predator-proof the top with some heavy duty mesh fastened with strong clips/clamps. These tubs retail at \$60 dollars each. The Turtle Oblong Network hopes to be able to obtain a grant to buy quantity of these which could be loaned out as necessary. However if, in the meantime, you'd like to grab one or two of these containers you have the information needed. **Note: Not all Bunnings stock these tubs so phone beforehand. We saw them at Bunnings, Cnr Leach Highway and Norma Road in Myaree.**



New publication on turtles & tortoises

Ruth recently ordered a copy of *Health Care and Rehabilitation of Turtles and Tortoises* by Amanda Ebenhack. This book was published late last year so is the most current book on the market. I've just read it and wish that we'd had a copy of this book a year ago when we were dealing with the Blue Gum Lake turtles; it would have been such a help.

Although there's a lot in the book about tortoises, the book is still very much pertinent to the needs of turtles. The increasing trend in the US is to keep tortoises and turtles in outdoor enclosures in more natural conditions so there're lots of ideas for enclosures which could be adapted for rehabilitation purposes. There's a wealth of practical, useful rehabilitation information in this book and I plan to buy my own copy. Ruth made the comment that there's a lot of repetition in the book. I agree but given the way a lot of people "read" such books by dipping into perhaps only one chapter which interests them rather than reading the whole book, I think that the repetition is necessary so that critical information is not missed.

If you'd like to order a copy of this book you'll find details on our website www.turtleoblonganetwork.org.au

Digital Turtle/Tortoise Tracker

Dianne says that, as someone who has temporarily lost turtles in a large garden, she can see the sense of this idea. She had to rake the entire garden before finding the missing turtle(s) but philosophically said that the garden needed cleaning up anyway.

This is Hannah the Tortoise. Her US owner came up the idea so that Hannah could stay outside on sunny Autumn days but easily be found and retrieved in order to be brought in on cold nights. All the owner has to do is call Hannah's mobile and head for sound of the *Indiana Jones* theme-tune emanating from the undergrowth.



The analogue version of this involves a small flag attached to the tortoise's back.