

March 2015



# Turtle Talk

E-news for members & friends of the



Our Network was formed in response to the turtle crisis caused by 2011'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.

Although our official name is Turtle *Oblonga* Rescue & Rehabilitation Network Inc., or TORRN for short, we will also be using Turtle *Oblonga* Network as a trading name.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS !!!

Tegan, Teanna, Sarah, Judy, Heather, Angela, Kristy, Rebecca, Ryan, Joanne, Ian, Sue-Ella, Bronny, Sofia, Martine, Klaas, Phil, Hamish, Michelle, Sarah, Rebecca, Jennifer & Clemency



**IF YOU HAVENT ALREADY PLEASE  
LIKE US ON FACEBOOK !!!**

**LIKE AND SHARE OUR POSTS WITH ALL  
OF YOUR FRIENDS !!!**

**YAY, WE HAVE ALMOST HIT 500 LIKES !!!**

### WHO KNEW?

**A U.S. FIRST DAUGHTER MUST HAVE.....?**



**HER TURTLE PHONE OF COURSE !!**



Also see last page ;)

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## EVENTS PAGES

### OBLONG TURTLE REHABILITATION COURSE

Within three weeks of advertising our second Turtle Rehabilitation Workshop, it was fully subscribed with 55 keen participants signing up for a day of practical and theoretical training in the lovely grounds of the Canning River Eco Education Centre. The workshop was so popular that we currently have a wait-list for the next one from people who missed out.

Attendees included vets, vet nurses, rehabilitators from around the State, representatives from Perth's major wildlife rescue and rehabilitation centres, and students from a variety of backgrounds including vet science, vet nursing and environmental science. We were very impressed by the enthusiasm of all attendees and their sincerity and commitment to wildlife rehabilitation.

Ruth Haight (RVN) was the main presenter for the day and shared her vast knowledge on all aspects of rescue and rehabilitation ranging from the emotional costs of being a rehabilitator, to husbandry, injuries and diseases, nursing, feeding, intensive care nursing and release. There were many displays and practical demonstrations including housing set-ups, feeding equipment, and bandaging, first aid techniques and for those who could stay a necropsy session.



Our turtle guru Ruth, discussing housing

Dr Gary Beilby from Animal Happiness Mobile Vet, shared his expert knowledge on treating shell fractures and took attendees through a fascinating presentation of the pros and cons of differing shell-repair techniques as well as talking about anaesthetics, antibiotics and pain relieving medications.

Karen Pye provided a basic chemistry lesson on the significance of good water quality in turtle rehabilitation and its application to the various housing set-ups including hospital tubs and rehabilitation ponds. This was followed by an expose on everything "hatchling" related and attendees were treated to footage of nesting, hatching and feeding; learning about all aspects of hatchling care.

Attendees were reminded that TORRN is available to provide advice to all rehabilitators whether they work from a veterinary practice, wildlife rescue centre or in the home setting.

Continued over page...

**A BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE  
WHO ATTENDED OUR WORKSHOP  
ON SUNDAY 15 MARCH !!!**

**We hope you all enjoyed yourself?  
Please remember to send your  
feedback to [Dianne](#)**

**DISAPPOINTED YOU COULDN'T  
GET A PLACE THIS TIME AROUND?**



Please email [Dianne](#) to express your interest for future TORRN courses.



## EVENTS PAGES

### Rehab Course Continued...

Lots of informative discussion was had, tips shared and phone-numbers swapped as well as many people signing up to participate in the important work of rescue and rehabilitation.

The day was a resounding success; by bringing together rehabilitators to share experiences and build knowledge we are better able to deliver on our commitment to ensure that every turtle receives professional and compassionate care.

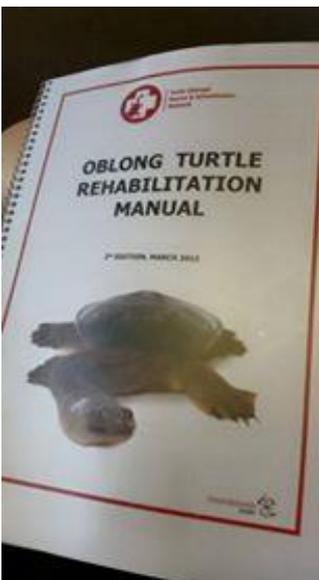
A big thank you to our special guest, Dr Gary Beilby  
<http://animalhappinessvet.com.au/>



Karen Pye discusses water quality



Ruth in her element during the practical session



Yum!



## EVENTS PAGES

### GENERAL MEETING

Our next General Meeting will be held on **Sunday 12 April 2015** at **Canning River Eco Education Centre, Wilson**. More details will follow via email.

### WORLD TURTLE DAY

Join us to celebrate the best day of the year!!  
Maybe you could help man our stall on the day...?

#### Rockingham Regional Environment Centre

49 Safety Bay Road

Peron

Opposite Lake Richmond

**naragabup**



*in conjunction with*



and



Turtle Oblonga  
Rescue & Rehabilitation  
Network

*will be celebrating*

# World Turtle Day

**Saturday 23rd May**

10am—3pm

Entry \$5 per person (including members)

Learn all about our endangered Marine Turtles,  
Western Swamp Tortoises and Oblong Turtles

- ♦ Sausage sizzle
- ♦ Informative turtle talks  
including video footage
- ♦ Interactive displays
- ♦ Free raffle
- ♦ Turtle merchandise
- ♦ Wriggly reptiles display
- ♦ Turtle games
- ♦ Turtle colouring sheets
- ♦ Turtle mosaic-making
- ♦ Access to all displays in Centre

*No live turtles will be on display*



# EVENTS PAGES

## MAYBE YOU'RE INTERESTED IN SEA TURTLE REHAB?

The Sea Turtle Foundation and James Cook University are pleased to announce the **2015 Sea Turtle Health and Rehabilitation Workshop**.

This year's theme is Progress through Partnerships; the preliminary schedule is below.

### Sea Turtle Health and Rehabilitation Workshop

Cairns, Queensland

10-12 June 2015



### Preliminary Program Schedule

Day	Time	Location
Wednesday, 10 June	9:00 AM-5:00 PM	James Cook University (Cairns)
8:30	Registration	
9:00-5:00	Welcome/Keynote Session--Indigenous Voices Session--Strandings and Rehabilitations Session--Disease Outbreaks and Investigations Session--Student Presentations Session--Population Management <i>Morning and afternoon tea and lunch provided</i>	
6:00-8:00	Evening Mixer <i>Drinks and nibbles provided</i>	
Thursday, 11 June	9:00 AM-5:00 PM	James Cook University (Cairns)/QPWS
9:00-5:00	Concurrent Workshops: Grant Writing Permit Applications Permit Reporting Satellite Tag Application Necropsy and Anatomy (limited)	
7:00-10:00	Dinner, Venue TBD <i>Dinner provided, Cash bar</i>	
Friday, 12 June	9:00 AM-5:00 PM	Fitzroy Island
9:00	Meet at ferry terminal	
9:00-4:30	Nesting, rehabilitation, and stranding response workshops	



Registration fees and details will be announced shortly.

Updates can be found at

<http://seaturtlefoundation.org/workshop>

### QUESTIONS?

contact Julie at [julie.traweek@seaturtlefoundation.org](mailto:julie.traweek@seaturtlefoundation.org)

or Ellen at [ellen.ariel@jcu.edu.au](mailto:ellen.ariel@jcu.edu.au)

## THANK YOU !!!



As many of you know, rehabilitating turtles is equipment intensive and requires us to have large quantities of rescue and rehabilitation tubs, vivariums, water heaters and filters. Over time, and through generous public donations, we amassed a large volume of this equipment and needed a shed in which to store it all.

Earlier this year, we wrote to Stratco to see if they could help and within 24 hours received the generous offer of a Garden Master Shed - perfect in which to store our equipment.

Our special thanks in particular to Sean Cross and his team at Canning Vale, who organised collection of the shed, loaned us a trailer and took great care in loading the shed onto the trailer.



Sean Cross the Store Manager at Stratco Canningvale presents TORRN Chair Karen Pye with the Garden Master Shed that was kindly donated.



## TURTLE RESCUES

### THE POWER OF NETWORKING



The Turtle Oblonga Network works collaboratively with Councils and government agencies. Dianne had been talking to Nick from the Friends of Lake Claremont about the issue of Raven attacks on turtles at Lake Claremont. A few days later Nick found two Ravens attacking a turtle so rescued it and called Dianne. As it was late in the day (i.e. peak-hour traffic) and Dianne was south of the river, she knew she couldn't respond quickly enough so called the Network's Chair, KP, who was about to leave her city office.

Fortunately, KP like many of us always keeps her turtle rescue gear in the car, so was well prepared albeit somewhat overdressed in her corporate clothing, for a turtle rescue. Sadly, the turtle had to be taken to a vet for euthanasia.

Two Ravens had flipped the small juvenile turtle over and each had penetrated the front and rear left leg openings. Each of the Ravens was at least double the size and weight of the turtle, so it didn't stand a chance. Ravens are large enough, and intelligent enough, to carry out co-ordinated attacks such as this. It would seem that their collective description - a *murder of Ravens* - is apt. Ravens, although in pest numbers in some areas, are native birds and as such are protected.



What is not so natural is that Raven numbers are out of proportion in some areas where unnatural food sources are readily available egg shopping centres, fast food outlets and in the vicinity of schools. If these food sources can be eliminated, the number of Ravens should reduce. Ravens are omnivores which means they'll eat just about anything - meat, fruit, seeds, dog/cat food, rodents, lizards, frogs, eggs, baby birds and fast food scraps.

Whilst it's normal in nature for sick and injured animal to be preyed upon, it's concerning that Ravens are attacking healthy animals.

### TURTLE TAXI TRAINING

About two years ago TORRN established the role of Turtle Taxis - specially trained members who are equipped to assess and collect turtles in trouble from their rescuers. There's no heroic wading, or kayaking, in wetlands involved.

Turtle Taxis are a very important part of the chain in the rehabilitation process, a bit like an ambulance driver. They receive a call from "central despatch" (one of our three 7-day Turtle Rescue phones) to attend a turtle in need of help. An on-site assessment is conducted and a decision is made about whether or not the turtle requires immediate veterinary attention, rehabilitation or release. If a turtle is rescued late in the day, it may have to be held overnight.

The Network is looking for Turtle Taxis (think turtle ambulance) in all suburbs. We can't provide you with a siren or a flashing lights but we can train you to assess turtles in trouble, and how to administer emergency first aid.

Our busiest months are July-August for hatchlings, and October-November for nesting females (usually shell fractures).





We guarantee that you will meet some incredibly interesting and compassionate people who go to all sorts of lengths to help turtles in trouble. You'll also hear some very funny stories along the way.

If you have the inclination, time\* and an aptitude for dealing with members of the public please let us know via [email](#). The next Turtle Taxi Training session is expected to be held on a Sunday around the end of April.

\*Most of our calls come in during the day on weekends and public holidays when people are out and about, and when people get home from work and find a turtle on their doorstep, or in their garage, or the garden etc. This is why we need members who can be available at these times, and readily contactable.

## TRUE CONFESSIONS OF A TURTLE TAXI

- I've just got up and there's a turtle at my front door!
- I was standing in the Goose pen when a hatchling fell out of the sky!
- There's a turtle in my laundry (came in through the cat door) and I'm too scared to pick it up.
- I was backing out of my driveway when I spotted the turtle in the rear vision mirror.
- There's a turtle in my fishpond. Will it eat my fish ?
- There's a turtle digging in my lawn.
- A turtle came under the back fence.
- We've been away for the weekend and found a turtle in the carport when we got back
- A turtle has appeared in our loading dock. We're a freight company with lots of big trucks everywhere.
- I've just found some turtle hatchlings in my swimming pool.
- There's a turtle in my neighbour's garden.
- I rescued a turtle from a highway roundabout. It's in my bath and I don't know what to do with it.
- The turtle was trying to get under the gate; the missus saw the head and neck and thought it was a snake. You should have heard her scream.

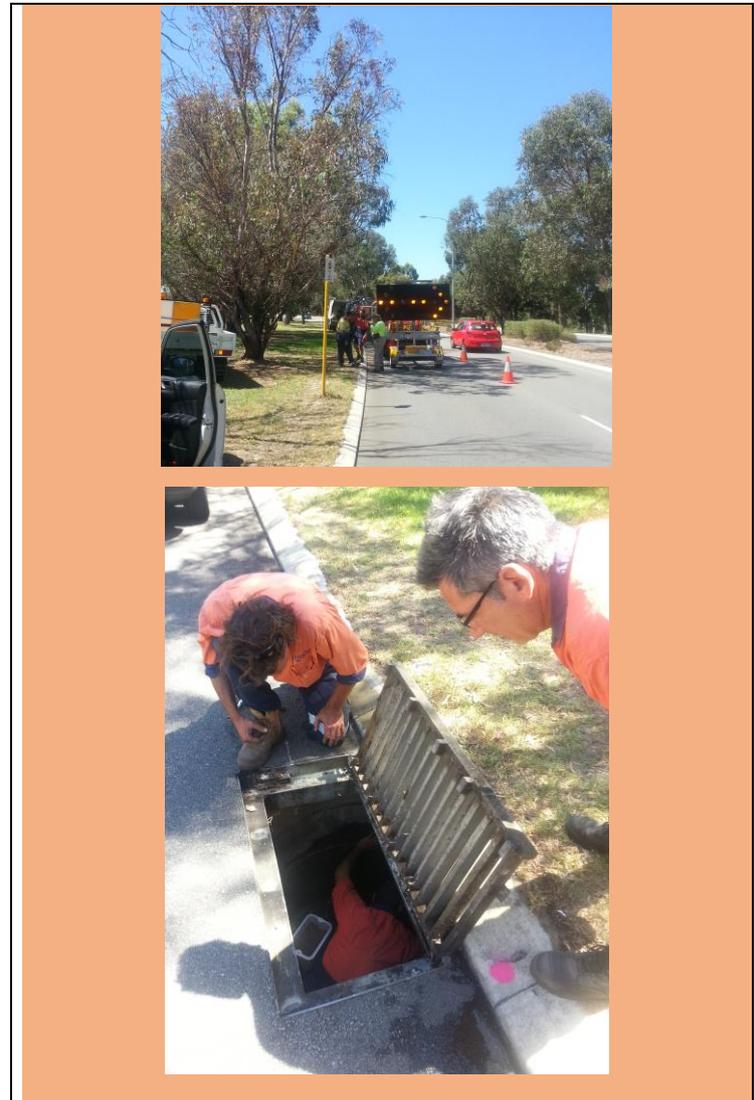
## TURTLES STOPPING TRAFFIC !!!

Another networking story with a happier ending... We were recently called to assist when contractors disturbed turtle nests near a large metropolitan lake. As you will probably be aware many lake have run off drains with turtles often finding themselves in difficult circumstances.

The contractors were cleaning out drains and swung into action when they noticed some turtle eggs, calling the Council who in turn called us.

The lovely guys on the crew travelled in convoy with us in-tandem back to the marked drains and under our guidance, carefully excavated some intact eggs, handing them up to us.

Although we are not sure the eggs are viable as some were submerged in water, we are incubating them regardless.





## TURTLE REHAB & RELEASE

### PREMMY HATCHLINGS

We recently had 4 little premature ninjas admitted after being inadvertently dug up by a construction crew in a conservation area. Three bubs hatched first, followed by another who was less developed, but healthy.

Once their yolks were fully absorbed, they were successfully targeting live food and had achieved their target weight of 6 grams, they were released back into the same area.



### RECENT RELEASES

- "YAGAN", a male from Bayswater - successfully repaired minor shell fracture.
- "ELLA", a gravid female from Dianella - with plastron injuries.

### STILL UNDER CARE

- "FLIPPER" a male from Kenwick - shell repair.
- "JACK" a male from Gwelup. See his story on the following page.
- "CLARE" a female from Claremont - admitted with an eye ulcer. See her story below.
- "DARLING" an engaging male with a tail injury. See his pic below...



"Darling"

... note the shedding scutes on his carapace.

### LADY CLARE MONT

A little note from Lady Clare Mont. The first titled turtle to be admitted, we think...

*"I am doing just fine, thank you! Am staying with Alan and Barbara who have yummy sardines, not out of a tin either, which are very oily and mess up the water no end, makes it stink too!"*

*After a short stay at a holiday resort in Martin, I returned home with white feet. Vet Lisa said to stay away from the line markers. I am having Betadine foot baths, and salt added to my pond water to help with my feet. Vet says to keep on with food (yes, please!) and to come back in two weeks. Feet are improving and the "house menu" of fish and mice is just great!*

*My original eye ulcer has resolved and, my butler (sorry, carer Alan) thinks I'm becoming more active than I was when first rescued from the Ravens! So. I may possibly hand out some sharp-claw Ninja moves next time you see me. Time for another nap before dinner, more later"*

Lady Clare Mont ☺



### GWELUP JACK

Our Turtle Taxi member had just returned home from a busy day in the office when she received a call about a turtle found by a little girl in her back garden. The home owners reported that they had had a few problems with large brown cockroaches so when their youngest daughter ran inside excitedly exclaiming that she had found a turtle, they were readying themselves for a very large cockroach. Jack's young finder obviously knew her biology and her parents were pleasantly surprised to discover a real turtle. Our Turtle Taxi member was treated to some fabulous turtle art-work by Jack's finder and her big sister and answered lots of questions about turtles. Everyone was pleased to discover that turtles don't have teeth and that they aren't poisonous. Initial assessment of Jack was positive; and despite what looked like an old hairline fracture at the rear of his carapace, he appeared healthy and responsive and ready for release to a suitable wetland.

Jack was taken away for a more thorough assessment including weighing, measuring and irrigation of the "old" fracture to determine if it had healed. Irrigation of the fracture site showed that it was fairly recent as there was evidence of fresh blood - this can be very hard to see on a turtle's dark carapace and especially when the blood has dried. Jack was taken to Wattle Grove Veterinary Hospital where he received a fracture repair from Dr Gary. He is currently recuperating and is expected to make a full recovery and be released back home shortly.



"Jack"

### PHOTO FLASHBACKS



Big girl "TK2" as found by her rescuer!  
Yes, your bum end is too big!



QUEEN LATIFAH making her dash for freedom!



THORPIE sunbaking on KP's deck at Club Chelodina



## SPREADING THE WORD

### E-NEWS, ONLINE & SOCIAL MEDIA

- **PICS:** If you have any pictures of Oblong turtles (and/or stories about them) for inclusion into the next Turtle Talk OR the website/Facebook page, then **Karen** would love to hear from you.
- **OLD STUFF:** Have you been out of the loop or want to re-read something? Find previous editions of the TURTLE TALK E-News [here](#).
- **UPDATES/NEW STUFF:** We recently updated the [Donate](#) and [Events](#) page.
- **WEBSITE:** We welcome your suggestions and comments about our website see: [www.turtleoblonganetwork.org.au](http://www.turtleoblonganetwork.org.au)
- **FACEBOOK:** We are currently sitting on **492** likes and counting! Please **LIKE US** and share things of interest with your friends, as this may also assist us in gaining more likes and subsequent members.

### AND SPEAKING OF MEMBERSHIP.....

- INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS : 149
- GROUP MEMBERSHIPS : 2

To those of you who are receiving/reading this newsletter, but have not yet officially joined us as a member - please do so! Numbers count. Just by becoming a member you are helping. The more members we have, the more supporters our turtles have which will be of benefit when we are lobbying on their behalf. Membership is FREE but you'll still need to complete a membership form. [Download our Membership Form](#).

### CHANGED ADDRESS, EMAIL OR PHONE?

Remembering that we might need to mobilise our forces in the event of an emergency, it would be great if our lists of members were always up to date.

Email **Karen** any changes to your contact details.

## MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

### EASTER TURTLES?

Sick of the bunnies/bilbies at Easter? Why not help out our friends at [Friends of the Western Swamp Tortoise](#) by purchasing some yummy chocolate turtles from the Margaret River Chocolate Factory? You'll find a shop in the city or in the Swan Valley.



### TURTLE NEST PREDATION

Secretary, Dianne, has since this year's Wetlands Conference been talking to various Councils about turtle issues. One of the issues is the protection of turtle nests. After talking to a Marine turtle group in Queensland about their nest protection program and its success rate, we now have some proven methods of turtle nest protection.

Marine turtle people have it easy . . . they just go down to the beach first thing in the morning, follow the turtle tracks to the nest site and install their nest protection.

From Kate on the Sunshine Coast . . . *"We use a square metre of plastic mesh for the protection of the nests. The gauge on the mesh is large enough for several hatchling to emerge through without any further interference from our volunteers. The reason we use plastic, is because a mesh made of metal would interfere with the hatchlings ability to collect information about the earth's magnetic field. We use 8 sand pegs to fasten down the mesh, and cover it with a 3cm (approx.) layer of*



sand to disguise it. The mesh does need to be centred over the nest chamber. I've attached a photograph for you to view; it's been a very effective program to reduce fox predation with only 2-3 nests breached over an eight year period".



Unfortunately, we freshwater turtle people can only protect a nest if someone's been lucky (and it is a matter of luck) to see a turtle nesting and has marked the spot.

However, as both Marine and Freshwater turtle eggs are subject to the same predator - Mr Fox - the same nest protection methods work for all turtles. For freshwater turtle nests we can use metal mesh as the magnetic field is not thought to be an issue.

Kevin from the Friends of Lake Yellagonga emailed the following comments along with a picture of their method of nest predation.....

*"This is the mesh we used to prevent fox predation.*



*Fortunately we had a keen walker, Trudel, who walked along the nesting areas during the time of nest activity and noted the position of the nests.*

*We used bent reinforcing mesh (used for concrete) buried an inch or two below the surface and centered over the nest. This has been very effective. The fox had a scratch or two but had no hope and gave up. Later examination showed eggshell and hatchlings gone, saving about six nests".*

As in the previous story "Turtles stop Traffic" many Councils are now clearing lakeside and wetlands drains in preparation for Winter rains. Unfortunately, when turtle eggs are disturbed by movement such as an excavator, it's unlikely the eggs will be viable - depending on the amount of movement/disturbance - but we'll still give them a chance by continuing their incubation artificially.

Council workers involved in such work are always distressed when they uncover turtle eggs but these accidents are unavoidable as the nest locations can be anywhere.

### GOOD NEWS FOR THE CANNING RIVER

The WA Environment Minister recently released a media statement which brings good news for our waterways and ultimately our turtles.....

"The health of the Canning River received a boost with the completion of a third \$1 million oxygenation plant to help reduce the impact of algal blooms and to prevent fish deaths....." You can read the full media statement [here](#).

## MEMBERS PROFILE

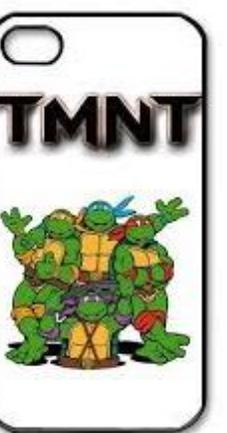


If you are interested in being featured as the next member profile please email [Karen](#).



# DON'T WE ALL NEED A TURTLE PHONE?

☺ There's something here for everyone ☺



## CONTACT US

If you have some spare time and would like to get more involved - please get in touch with us ...

### TORRN COMMITTEE MEMBERS & CONTACTS



### TORRN COMMITTEE

<u>Chair</u>	Karen Pye
<u>Secretary</u>	Dianne Hunter
<u>Treasurer</u>	Carla Tassone
<u>Membership</u>	Karen Cavanaugh

### Committee Members

Michelle Hazelwood  
Deborah Lavigne  
Dr Amy Northover  
Sandy Shailes  
Dr Lian Yeap

### EMERGENCY MOBILES

#### PERTH METROPOLITAN:

0424 727 411 - East Metro\*  
0424 727 624 - South Metro\*  
0414 476 867 - North Metro\*

*\*If, for any reason, the number in your area doesn't answer, please call one of the other numbers.*

#### REGIONAL WA:

0428 984 445 - Albany  
0438 813 919 - Margaret River  
0437 910 054 - Busselton