

May 2016



Turtle Oblonga  
Rescue & Rehabilitation  
Network

# Turtle Talk

## CONTACT US

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### Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/TurtleOblongaRescueandRehabilitationNetworktorrn>

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS

### Perth

0424 727 411 East Metro\*

0424 727 624 South Metro\*

0414 476 867 North Metro\*

*\*If the number in your area doesn't answer, please call another number.*

### Regional

0428 984 445 Albany

0438 813 919 Margaret River

0437 910 054 Busselton

## 2015/16 COMMITTEE

<b>Chair</b>	Karen Pye
<b>Secretary</b>	Dianne Hunter
<b>Treasurer</b>	Sarah Cameron
<b>Coordinator</b>	Karen Cavanough (Homecare)
<b>Coordinator</b>	Amy Northover (Membership)
<b>Coordinator</b>	Carla Tassone (Newsletter)
<b>Member</b>	Tegan Box
<b>Member</b>	Deborah Lavigne
<b>Member</b>	Kylie Webster

Congratulations to all incoming and continuing committee members!

## PATRON

Dr Gerald Kuchling, Ph.D.  
Renowned Turtle Scientist



Please like us on FACEBOOK and share our posts. We are at over 775 likes, and now aiming for **1000** likes!

## Celebrate WORLD TURTLE DAY on 23 May!

World Turtle Day is celebrated annually on 23 May, with the purpose of bringing attention to turtles and tortoises worldwide, by increasing knowledge, awareness and respect by encouraging human action to help turtles and tortoises survive and thrive.

Turtle Day is celebrated worldwide in a variety of ways, from dressing up as turtles to saving turtles caught on highways, to research activities. It has been sponsored yearly since 2000 by the non-profit corporation American Tortoise Rescue.

World Turtle Day aims to increase the respect and knowledge for the world's oldest creatures. Turtles are reptiles, characterised by a special bony or cartilaginous shell developed from their ribs that acts as a shield. These gentle animals have been around for about 200 million years, yet they are rapidly disappearing as a result of the exotic food industry, habitat destruction and the pet trade.

There are a few small things that can help to save turtles and tortoises for the next generation. See more on page 3.



*"Yoshi", the 4 year old male Oblonga turtle recently released to the wild.  
See page 3 for Yoshi's release story.*

*Photo: © TORRN*

## Welcome to the second eNews for 2016!

Thank you to all who contributed their stories and photos for this issue in time for **World Turtle Day!**

We have included two stories from TORRN members who during the course of their environmental and community voluntary efforts encountered turtles in their local wetland. These stories reflect a caring and active community striving to clean and restore their local bushland or parkland, increasing biodiversity and improve wildlife habitat, and the results are showing! More turtle power to you! If you have a similar story or encounter you are willing to also share, contact us!

The Turtle Oblonga Network continues with their own dedicated team of volunteers working hard behind the scenes by being involved in many activities including:

- Caring for rescued turtles and hatchlings
- Running regular Committee and General Meetings
- Maintaining homecare medical records of turtles
- Transport and veterinary visits for turtle check-ups
- Provision of home care and technical advice to carers
- Planning and preparing for the annual turtle rehabilitation workshop and Turtle Taxi training
- Engaging with the community at local events

On considering this further, there was still the *“but wait, there’s more!”* moment:

- Handling public queries on the “Turtle hotline”
- Maintaining membership records and donations
- Upkeep of the TORRN website
- Social media (Facebook, email, eNewsletters)
- Building turtle ponds and enclosures for rewilding cases, and for intensive care duration (check out the DIY section in this issue)
- Plus more...

If you can’t get enough of turtles or TORRN from this issue, then why not consider joining and becoming an active member. We are currently seeking willing helpers with time on their hands (retired, part-time workers, students seeking experience) to help lighten the load as the majority of our current volunteers are full time workers.

Alternatively, you can get your turtle fix by catching up on previous issues of Turtle Talk eNews by visiting our website, or just connect with us on Facebook! 😊

### Previous issues of Turtle Talk

Quarterly issues are scheduled for release in January, April, July, and October. Sometimes our hands are full with rehabilitation cases, so eNews issue releases may be delayed. Previous issues can be accessed via our website. <http://www.turtleoblonganetwork.org.au/turtle-talk-e-news.html>

### TORRN website

For care advice, photo gallery, turtle stories and our Turtle shop for gift items. If you wish to donate to help us meet our turtle housing or treatment expenses, there is a Special Gift Donation option. Your \$10 donation will help purchase these 40L tubs, perfect for carting rescued turtles by our Turtle Taxis! Visit our website for more options and information.

<http://www.turtleoblonganetwork.org>



*You too could have a hot pink tub!*

### Turtles on Facebook

Our Facebook page contains more current content on turtle releases, hatchlings, recent photos, links to news articles and research. We are currently at 775 likes and are aiming for 1000 likes! Feel free to share our posts to your friends and family and help us reach our target.

<https://www.facebook.com/TurtleOblongaRescueandRehabilitationNetworktorn/>



## Celebrate WORLD TURTLE DAY on 23 May! cont'd

### What can you do to help to save our turtles and tortoises for the next generation?

- Never buy them from pet shops as it increases demand from the wild
- Never remove turtles or tortoises from the wild unless sick or injured
- If a turtle or tortoise is crossing a busy street, pick it up and send it in the same direction it was going
- Report cruelty or illegal sales of turtles and tortoises to the respective authorities, in WA this would be the Department of Parks and Wildlife; or contact us

Checkout the web and facebook pages behind World Turtle Day observance.

<http://www.worldturtleday.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/WorldTurtleDay/>

Need some inspiration? Support your local wildlife rescue and rehabilitation organisation. Volunteer or donate. Help rescue and transport or fundraise towards meeting welfare costs of turtles in need. Alternatively, increase your awareness and educate yourself:

- Learn five facts about turtles today <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/2014-05-23/5-facts-about-turtles-for-world-turtle-day/1315596>
- Become familiar with local WA turtle species including the Western Oblong Turtle (*Chelodina colliei*); the critically endangered Western Swamp Tortoise (*Pseudemys umbrina*); and other Australian species <http://www.news.uwa.edu.au/201411097106/little-aussie-battler?page=show> <http://westernswamptortoise.com.au/>
- Monitor your local wetland and habitat, and observe for turtles; keep your eye on pets (or on lead) when in these areas
- Join an active bushland or wetland focussed friends group to help improve the health, water quality and biodiversity of your local patch
- Report your turtle sightings online at the Climate Watch website. <http://www.climatewatch.org.au/species/reptiles/oblong-turtle>

- Our Patron Dr Gerald Kuchling Ph.D, is an Advisory Board member of the Turtle Conservancy. Read about his valuable experience and knowledge on turtles worldwide! <http://www.turtleconservancy.org/contact/kuchling>



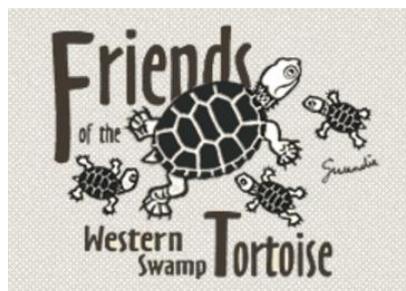
Gerald Kuchling (photo: Turtle Conservancy)

- Visit Turtle Watch, a project of the Australian Association of Environmental Educators WA, and their network working to facilitate conservation of Oblong Turtles <http://www.aaeewa.org.au/turtlewatch.html>
- Turtle Watch's has a factsheet on "Living with Turtles" right here! <http://www.aaeewa.org.au/documents/TurtleWatchFactSheet.pdf>

For further inspiration on how you can participate and show your turtley side this **World Turtle Day**, check out the link below. Remember to share your photos with us!

[https://www.buzzfeed.com/simoncrerar/selfies-with-turtles-to-celebrate-world-turtle-day?utm\\_term=.blRXONxoA#.tjBrkX0](https://www.buzzfeed.com/simoncrerar/selfies-with-turtles-to-celebrate-world-turtle-day?utm_term=.blRXONxoA#.tjBrkX0)

Source: Wikipedia and <http://news.cision.com/american-tortoise-rescue/r/american-tortoise-rescue-celebrates-world-turtle-day-2016-on-may-23rd,c9894220>



### Releasing "Yoshi"

"Yoshi" is a four year old male turtle which came into TORRN's care as a rewilding case in 2015 following his surrender as a pet.

Yoshi has been a very food focused little man from day one, which has made him a great case for release and an ideal candidate for first time carer Tegan Box to develop her rehabilitation skills.

During his time in rehabilitation, Yoshi assisted in a test case for pond enrichment tools such as rubber ducks and coloured floating ping pong balls.

Enrichment tools are used to keep animal minds active when in anthropogenic environments (i.e. non-natural ponds) for long periods of time. Although there is still debate regarding the effectiveness of enrichment tools for turtles, Yoshi found them interesting and was always quite inquisitive when new colours and shapes were introduced to his pond.

Last month, Yoshi was finally released back to the wild and we wish him the best of luck in the wild.

For more photos on Yoshi, visit our Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/TurtleOblongaRescueandRehabilitationNetworktorrn/>

Story: Tegan Box, TORRN  
Front page photo: "Yoshi"



## Lost in Translation: Wildlife Volunteer Lessons

When I'm not playing with turtles, I moonlight as a general wildlife volunteer and Reptile Relocator. Two key lessons stand out from my experiences.

### Lesson One

I think the greatest lesson I have learned is that there is an increasing disconnect between people and the natural world. It can result in questions that are seemingly stupid: "there is a duck in my backyard – it'll die unless someone frees it", "the grey volcanoes in my backyard – are they dangerous?", "there is a live emu on the side of the highway – what are you going to do about it?" and "I saw a snake down by the river yesterday – when can you come out and catch it?"

It's not so silly once you realise that people simply don't know that native ducks can fly, what anthills are, that there isn't a wildlife SWAT team to intervene every time an animal grazes near a road and that the remnant bushland and wetlands that people enjoy walking through so much is the only habitat left for most wildlife – and that includes snakes, which will move surprisingly far in a day and can be impossible to find.

### Lesson Two

The second greatest lesson I've learnt is that people sometimes don't have the right words – they describe a pelican as 'not looking well' because they don't know what creeping paralysis (botulism) looks like, or a galah as "well, he just looks a bit lonely" and an entangled dolphin as "swimming weird". Even when you think you have established what is wrong, you can drive a half hour to rescue a one-legged duck with an entangled bill only to find it's a perfectly healthy two-legged musk duck.

Perhaps my favourite story to date is that of the Perth crocodile in someone's living room: I knew it was incredibly unlikely to be a crocodile, but the caller didn't know what a lizard was. So, back to basics: yes, it has a head, four legs, long tail and is a metre long. Crocodile? Looking less unlikely. Unusually, this one was described as having feathers and climbing the curtains. I referred the call on to one of my mentors who established the animal in question was actually a bobtail. Apparently a long tail meant a short tail, a metre meant a foot, feathers meant scales and climbing meant 'hiding behind'.

### Lessons Learnt

These two lessons are what I always fall back on when I'm frustrated at yet another call-out for a "mulch skink". As wildlife advocates we want people to keep coming to us, to keep asking questions, to keep alerting us to wildlife in trouble. We are educators as well as carers.

It also illustrates the importance of networking, mentoring and training – so when people don't have that awareness or lack the right words, we have the right attitude and can ask the right questions to give the best advice.

Story: Kylie Webster, TORRN



(c) Houndstooth Studio



*Congratulations*

*To Committee Member  
Dr Amy & Matt*

*on the arrival  
of their cute little man*



*Owen Summers*

*Hatched 7 April 2016*



## Turtles in the Vegie Patch

Your story: "Keepers of the Creek", Stoneville rehabilitate and turtles return!

I have lived on the same block which backs on to Jarrah Creek since I got married close to 40 years ago.

Sadly over the year with increased population pressures, exotic plant escapees from gardens and the reduction in reliable winter rain, the creek had gone from flowing all year round to overgrown with weeds, flowing only after heavy winter rain.



The creek line overgrown with weeds

After hearing about the work of existing "friends groups" a couple of our neighbours and us decided to restore Jarrah Creek between Jarrah Road and the pool at the corner of Riley Road, Stoneville. There were many sections that were so overgrown, with Blackberry being the main problem, they were impassable. With the absence of water all year round there had also been a reduction in the amount of wildlife numbers and the variety of species.



Clearing blackberry weeds in summer

It has been slow progress, but over the last 2½ years our small group, with the support of Chris and Diane from the

Shire, are now seeing the benefits with the creek now starting to look like it used to years ago. We have not reached the end of our section of the creek yet so there is still plenty to do.



A section after weeds removed, natives planted and bank re-enforced

Aside from the pleasure in seeing the creek regain some of its former beauty, I was delighted to see two turtles between the beds of our vegetable patch in March 2014. Whether Western Swamp Tortoise or a Western Long Neck Turtle was beyond my expertise, but regardless, it was lovely to see them.



Turtle wandering through the vegie patch

The resident magpies also spotted the two visitors and were none too happy. The magpies continually swooped and screeched at the turtles despite my efforts to be a mobile "scarecrow". I don't know whether the location was unsuitable or they were scared off by the magpies but the turtles left and went back down to creek.

We did some online research and believe they were looking for a site to lay eggs. The vegetable patch is about 40 metres from and about 10-15

metres higher than the highest flood level that we have seen. I left them alone and do not know if eggs were laid that day. Over the next few days we still could not see any signs the ground had been dug.

When I shared the exciting news with group member Kaylene, it was suggested we try attracting more turtles here by providing other soil types which might be more suitable for nesting. We already had a soft sand mound close to the vegie patch, so we decided to try loose pea gravel and fine clay which resembles the natural ground above the creek line.

Keith Campbell of Mundaring Landscape Supplies kindly donated a load of gravel which we placed by the vegie patch on the assumption the turtle had determined the veggie patch was the right location to nest. Still, there were no obvious signs of digging in either location but animals in the wild don't always seem to know when you are trying to help. Who knows? Maybe one year they may like the options in the vegetable garden.



Above & below: Mounds of soft grey earth and imported loose gravel



Story and photos: J Payne, Stoneville

## DIY: Building a house – turtle style

Usually when the network takes a turtle into care, the patient is housed in a large black 200L “hospital” tub. For longer-term patients such as unwell gravid females or previously captive turtles going through “rewilding”, it is better for them to be housed in a more natural environment such as an outdoor pond.

Turtles need the opportunity to leave the water, brumate (turtle equivalent of hibernation) and sunbake safe from predators.

Building a turtle home is not as simple as digging a pond into some dirt – it requires a lot of planning and preparation. Site location is very important and consideration must include:

- Proximity to power, running water and drainage;
- Shelter from extremes of weather with places for the turtle to hide under or retreat to;
- Access to shade and sunlight but not too hot or exposed; and
- Safety from predators or pets such as dogs.

You will also need to check the rules that apply in your local shire.

After nearly three years of rehabilitating turtles using a combination of a backyard pond and large black rescue tubs, I decided it was time to build another turtle home with a mini-pond. Although it’s a lot of work to set a pond up and it takes quite a few weeks to establish the nitrogen cycle, my experience is that turtles seem much more relaxed and exhibit more natural behaviours in a pond environment which can only be better for their recovery. They see the sky, enjoy the sounds of nature and a natural photo-cycle, and sunbake naturally which is so much better than a UV lamp. I have seen a turtle patient shed its entire carapace of severely

retained scutes over a few months after being allowed to bask naturally. Not to mention the condition of its skin improving immensely.

Once you have selected a site the fun really begins. Unfortunately there is no cheap way to build a proper turtle enclosure so be prepared to outlay several hundred dollars and make lots and lots of trips to the hardware shop. Oh yes, and have a couple of days spare and friends to help. ☺

### Building the Outdoor Pond

The following list is not exhaustive but the basic items included:

- 2m x 1m x 0.73m high corrugated garden bed (you can now buy these amazing garden beds that slot together in about ten minutes);
- Large hospital rescue tub (for the pond) plumbed with an outlet tap;
- 19mm and 13mm black reticulation pipe plus elbow joints and a couple of in-line taps;
- Small pond pump;
- 30 litre square water drum plus rainwater tank inlet (you’ll need to install to fit 19mm poly pipe);
- Spillway;
- 1.5 x trailer load of appropriate soil (I used “Gingin quartz”);
- Materials to build a cover for protection from predators, including plastic mesh, lengths of pine, metal fasteners or braces for joints, and galvanised screws to put it all together;
- Pond plants;
- Filter sponges;
- A suitable water heater and plastic guard (these zap your power bill in winter but sick turtles need to stay warm); and
- A “pond-sucker” (venturi) with outlet hose long enough to reach your garden or a drain from the pond.

Even though the nitrogen cycle will establish in a pond you will still need to do partial water changes every week and to suction solid wastes or food scraps.



Garden bed ©TORRN

The most important thing is getting the plumbing right and checking for leaks. The large hospital tub I used as the pond, has an outlet tap installed to which I attached some 19mm poly pipe. I ran the pipe under the edge of the garden bed and connected it to an inlet (which had to be drilled and installed) on the 30 litre water drum which sits outside the pond enclosure for ease of access to the pump and filter sponges.

I also inserted an inline tap adjacent to the water drum for drainage when required. The pond pump sits inside the water drum – 13mm poly pipe is attached to the pump outlet and this runs into a dual spillway that sits above the pond inside the garden bed enclosure.



Testing the plumbing ©TORRN

## DIY: Building a house – turtle style cont'd

Having the pump outside the turtle pond also means your turtle patients don't have to endure a constant background hum in the pond itself.

It was definitely worth conducting a full test of the plumbing and pumps to test for flow rates, pressure and leaks. Unfortunately, I bought a water drum with a faulty bung and only discovered this after carefully drilling and fitting a 19mm inlet (very annoying) but I was able to swap it over with no fuss. If possible make sure you test water drums for leaks in the hardware shop.

Once you are satisfied the plumbing is functioning well, you can start to fill the garden bed with sand. The hospital tub was first placed on several bricks to ensure flat and even height as was the water drum outside the garden bed so that it was also the same height as the tub. It was a great opportunity to remember some high-school physics--essentially because the two containers are connected via the poly pipe the height of the water column in each will equalise and become identical. This means that it is really important that your water drum is at least as high as your pond so that it doesn't overflow. If your pump fails, your pond won't run dry either.



19mm inlet plus tap on water drum. ©TORRN

After filling with sand, placing filtration plants inside the spillway and the filter sponges in the drum around the pump, it's time to construct a mesh cover.

I used plastic mesh, untreated pine and brackets all held together with

galvanised screws. Make sure the lid is secure and can't be removed from within by the turtle (they are escape artists) or breached by predators.

Although the pond is almost finished, I am yet to install a ramp which is essential for turtle patients to bask and wander outside the pond, plants in the pond, a few fringing plants for shelter and a dry-land hide for the turtle to hide under outside the pond.

### Nitrogen Cycle - Important

The next stage is waiting for the nitrogen cycle to establish which can take up to 6-8 weeks. I may kick-start this process with a few fish. It's really important to remember that if you do start with a turtle in an "unestablished" pond, it will be necessary to undertake daily partial water changes until the nitrogen cycle kicks in as turtles produce a lot of waste and ammonia levels will skyrocket pretty quickly, which is not ideal for any aquatic life. The water test kit will cop a hammering over the next few weeks but good pH and zero ammonia and nitrites are essential for turtle health.



Nearly there - sand in place. ©TORRN

The final step will be installing the water heater (and guard) and a thermometer to keep the water at the right temperature for convalescing turtles.

### Finally...

The turtle house has been completed. Within the enclosure, it now includes both an underwater and outdoor hide, native sedges and grasses, pebbles, a native pennywort in the spillway for additional filtration, a floating ramp covered in shade-cloth, and a heater.



Complete with mesh cover. ©TORRN

The most important addition was added last, Leo one of our patients.



Completed enclosure with protective mesh cover. © TORRN



Leo enjoying his new home. © TORRN

Story: Karen Pye, TORRN

## Katanning History, the Turtles and Keeping it Clean

by Matt Collis

*Your story: Adopt-a-Spot connecting this Katanning family with their local wetland and turtle population!*

### A Flour Mill, Electricity & Dam

This story is made possible because F.H. Piesse made the choice to establish a flour mill in Katanning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The "old Flour Mill" site as it is currently known, is under development and refurbishment as a future Dome Café and hotel accommodation.

Katanning is a country town about 280km south east of Perth with a population of around 4000. The town was formed as a result of the expansion of the railway system and was declared in 1889.

Located prominently on the corner of two of the main streets, it was opened by the Hon. J.A. Wright, President of the Western Australian Land Company on 1 May 1891 and was in operation until the late 1970's, bringing both jobs and prosperity. The *Premier Roller Flour Mill* was entirely powered by electricity generated onsite. The excess capacity meant Katanning was the first place in WA to have electric street lighting and the mill supplied its electricity to residents of the town a number of years before electricity was distributed in Perth.

While in Katanning for the opening of the mill, J.A. Wright was persuaded by Piesse to authorise the excavation of a large dam for railway water. After the dam was excavated it was purchased by Piesse to supply the new mill with water. This dam is located a short distance up Clive Street from the mill.



*Old Flour Mill, Katanning*



*Turtle wandering near Piesse dam*

### Keeping It Clean for the Turtles

I was born in the UK, a mechanic in my forties, and emigrated to Katanning with my family about 10 years ago. A proud POM but now also a very proud Western Australian! I care greatly about the environment and community in which I live, and am active in the Katanning community, formerly having helped run a countryside volunteer group for the National Trust in the UK.

In late 2013, my kids and I took a walk around Piesse Park which includes the Piesse Dam and soon to contain Piesse Lake, situated at the top end of town on Clive Street. At the time it was wet underfoot, but still I recall thinking what a wonderful site this Park was. Since discovering I have remained connected to it with frequent visits.



*Piesse Dam foreground and lake in background*

It was early in March 2015, and my kids and I visited Piesse Park again. It was much drier, and therefore as we walked around, we were disgusted with the amount of litter left lying about! We set off home, collected some supplies and returned to the park, spending the next couple of hours picking up other peoples' rubbish.

Since then, I have returned to the park weekly, occasionally aided by my kids. When we first commenced, it was not unusual to fill 3-4 bin bags of rubbish. Nowadays, we collect about half a bag, and the difference to the Park surrounds is amazing!

Collecting rubbish is never glamorous, especially in the rain, but the results are always very satisfying.



*Izzy at work!*

## Katanning History, the Turtles and Keeping it Clean cont'd



*Joe, Izzy, Beth and Will collecting rubbish.*

When people ask why I do it, I explain and it always includes the sense of community pride and personal satisfaction in the experience.

I have since adopted Piesse Park under the Keep Australia Beautiful Adopt-a-Spot scheme. I am not alone—there are a number of folks in Katanning doing similar, having adopted their own sites (whether it be family groups, school groups, girl guides etc) also under the scheme, or whether they just happen to collect rubbish while out walking. Every little bit helps and helping to create an attitude change.

Littering is harming our local environment and wildlife. A recent report from the World Economic Forum stated without intervention, by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the world's oceans. Our inland waterways can suffer the same fate so action is needed!

How does this connect directly with turtles? Well I always knew turtles lived in the Katanning Creek and town, but I'd never seen one! But one drizzly day while out at Piesse Park picking up rubbish, I had a chance encounter with a turtle walking around!

That was the turning moment for me—since this day, I have seen turtles in and out of the water many times over following months. My camera was included with my rubbish collecting kit. During November, everytime I visited Piesse Park I saw turtles. I found the best time to see them in the water was in the middle of a bright sunny day, the water was so clear you could see right into the water and for a few weeks I

rarely failed to spot turtles. My best day for turtle-watching was a mid-November weekend - over the course of an hour I easily counted thirty individual turtles, and overall close to ninety sightings. It was really hard to leave and go home that day.



*Above: Turtles happily swimming at Piesse Dam*

In September 2013 just prior to the redevelopment and expansion of the lake at Piesse Park, a fauna relocater was engaged to relocate turtles just prior to earthworks. More than 90 turtles were relocated from the area to other suitable wetland sites. To my knowledge the turtles hadn't be relocated back to Piesse Dam. Therefore the turtles had re-introduced themselves back to the dam and lake via the Katanning creek, or were survivors of the original relocation in 2013. Whatever it was, Katanning has a turtle highway smack bang in the middle of town!

### Community Spirit Alive at Piesse Park

In early 2015, with the redevelopment slowly underway, the community spirit was reignited once again this time at

Piesse Park with the formation of a Friends group. My family and I participated in as many events along with many other nearby residents, including helping to build a "rain garden", a native garden, and spruce up of the site of a commemorative plaque and Old Pump. The community contributed and donated benches which now overlook Piesse Dam and the expanded lake.



*Filling buckets for gravel path at Piesse Park*

Other positive actions included the Shire recently engaging South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare to develop a plan for the site, and community consultation processes for public input, and mindful of ensuring turtle safety and nesting habitat.



*Matt and Beth loading mulch for the native garden at Piesse Park*

My family and I continue to collect rubbish at our adopted site, and we also continue to enjoy and appreciate the local wetland's wildlife.



Story and photos: Matt Collis, Katanning

## Donations and Support

### Why Donate?

Like most wildlife rehabilitation groups, we are unfunded and run by volunteers. Wildlife rehabilitation work is unfunded, relying on donations, sporadic grants and grass roots fundraising. Most wildlife care in Australia is funded from household budgets by ordinary people carrying out extraordinary work to help save and preserve our unique wildlife.

Out of sight, and out of mind; turtles have been, until now, the forgotten wildlife. It's commonly said that turtles are bombproof; that they can survive anything. Once this may have been true - before we began to upset the balance by causing habitat loss through urban development which prevents traditional and safe migration patterns, pollution of lakes, a dropping water table due to our use of underground aquifers and climate change which is altering weather patterns.

Most wildlife centres would normally see half a dozen turtles a year; trauma (dogs, cars and machinery) victims and found hatchlings. With the unprecedented rescue of over 100 debilitated turtles in a short time during the very hot summer of 2010/2011, it was realised just how little we knew about turtles. Whilst we've learned a lot from that summer's experience we are well aware of just how much more we need to learn about these complex creatures.

We anticipate that the events of that summer will occur more frequently in future. Before then, we aim to prepare for another such occurrence by providing training for vets and rehabilitators, community information sessions, establishing husbandry guidelines and working toward coordinating rescue and rehabilitation efforts.

Whilst, like most wildlife rehabilitators, we are good at scrounging, begging and operating on a shoestring we do need money.

### How to Donate

#### Via Direct Debit

Name Turtle Oblonga Public Fund  
BSB 306-066  
Ac No. 273 2950

Email the [treasurer@turtleoblonganetwork.org.au](mailto:treasurer@turtleoblonganetwork.org.au) and a tax deductible receipt will be posted.

#### Online

Go to our website, and click the "Make a Donation" icon which links to the "GiveNow.com.au" site, and learn about Aphrodite's Legacy.

A tax deductible receipt will automatically be emailed to you for your donation.

### How Donations Will Be Used?

#### Emergency Housing

Providing housing set-ups for loan to wildlife centres and individual rehabilitators, which includes 220L tubs, water filters, water heaters etc.

#### Medication

Turtles as reptiles have a slow metabolism; healing is slower than for mammals and birds. Contrarily, considering the degraded state of metropolitan lakes, turtles in care are susceptible to a variety of water-borne bacterial infections. The antibiotic of choice for turtles is not expensive but by the time you've added the cost of syringes and needles and multiplied that by any number of turtles, it all adds up. A turtle requiring antibiotics needs a course of 14 injections over seven weeks.

#### In-house Veterinary Blood Testing

We are grateful to enjoy the generous support of the Veterinary community who provide their expertise free of charge, but still pay for consumables and outsourced testing. A simple blood test can give us an idea (blood protein and fluid levels) of the turtle's state health which can't be determined by an external examination. Ideally, we would like to test all admitted turtles to establish baseline data.

#### Imaging

Any trauma case requires an x-ray, and some females may need an x-ray determine whether they're carrying eggs.

#### Consumables

Turtles with shell infections require, as well as an extended course of antibiotics, 3x daily treatments with Chlorhexadine and Flamazine, costing \$20 and \$110 for 50g and 500g respectively. Waterproof dressings may be needed twice daily, along with pain relief.

#### Food

Sick animals like sick people need good food to aid their recovery. Whilst we aim to replicate natural diets for animals in rehabilitation it's not always feasible. In rehabilitation we feed turtles human grade whitebait, prawns, sardines, premium beef mince (all enriched with additional nutrients) and Reptile Mix jellies (a commercial product designed to supplement the diet of captive reptiles).

#### Membership

Membership is FREE so please fill out the membership form on our website and send in!



## Calendar of Events 2016

### Community Education and Meetings

We are seeking helpers from our membership to enable us to meet various commitments relating to environmental community education and engagement events. If you are interested and the dates suit, **please contact us**

Date	Time	Event	Location
23 May (Mon)		World Turtle Day	Worldwide
May-Jun		Turtle Taxi Session	To be confirmed
12 Jun (Sun)	10am	Committee Meeting	To be confirmed
14 Aug (Sun)	9am 10.30am	Committee Meeting Annual General Meeting	Canning River Eco Education Centre, Wilson
4 Sep (Sun)	10am-4pm	National Threatened Species Day Event	To be confirmed
7 Sep (Wed)	9.30am - 2pm	Kalunga Katitjin Festival, Kings Park	To be confirmed
18 Sep (Sun)	10am – 1pm	Celebrate Lake Claremont Day, Stirling Road	To be confirmed
2-3 Oct (Sun-Mon)		World Animal Day Event, Piney Lakes	To be confirmed
9 Oct (Sun)	10am	Committee Meeting	To be confirmed
11 Dec (Sun)	9am 10.30am	Committee Meeting General Meeting	Canning River Eco Education Centre, Wilson



#### Desktop Wallpapers

The *Department of Parks and Wildlife* website has a series of free downloadable desktop wallpapers, including this one of the Oblong turtle. Images are also available as purchasable prints.

<https://shop.dpaw.wa.gov.au/gallery>

<https://shop.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/gallery/1920x1080/print-western-longneck-turtle-1920x1080.jpg>

#### ABOUT US

TORRN 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.*," (TORRN for short), our trading name is Turtle Oblonga Network.



*Photo by Darren Darch, Fauna for the Future*