



Wild about Seatrees



March 2015

Issue 4: Rescue on the Rocks



Vale Rosie

We lost our little Rosie in January. We believe she was between 15-16 years old, and had been a part of Seatrees Farm ever since Pat claimed her from the RSPCA over ten years ago.

Obviously mistreated before that, Rose took a while to settle in and relax but time weaved its magic and before long a shivering, anxious mite turned into a loyal little friend and great companion.

Rosie gave us so much and in return she enjoyed long beach walks, superb care, and the eternal stimulus of country life.

Rosie was laid to rest underneath a beautiful flowering creeper.

We were thrilled to bits when our hoodies gave birth to two chicks on a sandy cove in front of Seatrees. The miracle continued the next day when there were still the two adults and their chicks and the area had been roped off to indicate their presence. Come day three and four, still there. Day five, yes!

We know that Hooded Plovers, being shore-nesting birds, are totally vulnerable to hazards including walkers, dogs, foxes, feral cats, raptors, wild weather and their own pattern of not seeking protection in higher dunes or shrubland.

They are also totally threatened and considered one of the most beautiful birds in the world.

So day six dawned and accompanied by two cottage guests we ventured out to again witness the miracle, except that this time there were no hoodie chicks or adults in sight. Initially we thought that they had simply scuttled away from home base and would soon bob up. But they didn't, so after more than an hour we walked on.

We were at least two hundred metres away on the ancient Marengo rockshelf, when one, then a second adult hoodie flew in front of us, distressed, screeching, darting and most unusually, letting us come really close. With still no sign of the chicks, there was definitely something terribly wrong. We sat down.



Hoodie chicks caught in a fissure



Rescue on the Rocks, continued. . .

Then we heard the cheep. Then more cheeps. Where in the world are the chicks?

Clambering over the rocks, we soon discovered a deep, long fissure with tidal water surging through. The cheeps and shrieks continued. Dangling head first into the fissure, we searched and then saw one, then two tiny fluff balls, one bobbing on the water, the other with tooth peg legs huddling on a rock shelf.

With two scoops they were up and out, carried to a sandy beach and reunited with mum and dad who immediately covered them with a warm hoodie doona, themselves. After about ten minutes the chicks re-emerged and the little family scuttled back home.

After such a drama, we were hopeful that the chicks would survive, blossom and bolster the dwindling numbers of Hooded Plovers on this earth. But it was not to be.

Within a few days there was only one chick and after three weeks, there were none.

Cottage guests Mary, Trudi and Peter contributed to the sightings and rescue. Together we did what we could, and so did they.

Spotted Pardalote



One of our cottage guests, Elizabeth, spotted a hole in the side of the road and surprise, surprise identified it as a Spotted Pardalote's nest. This tiny bird creates its nest by lining a chamber at the end of a narrow tunnel, excavated in an earth bank. Sometimes they nest in tree hollows and occasionally in artificial structures. Both parents share nest-building, incubation of the eggs and feeding of the young when they hatch.



Orphaned Koala Joey Found at Seanook Cottage



An Act of Humanity

A few weeks back a tourist rang Seatrees Wildlife Shelter to report a drowning wallaby in the surf at Apollo Bay.

We assumed it was chased into the sea by a dog but we really didn't know why it was in the water. Fortunately, two foreshore staff, who were working on the walking track, waded in and rescued it.

When we arrived to take it into care we beheld a poignant sight - a shivering, drenched and miserable wallaby, coughing up lots of seawater whilst sitting in a ute on his rescuer's lap, wrapped in his jacket. Its prognosis was poor.

After treatment and heat application the poor little wallaby was looking a lot brighter – so much so that by evening it was raring to go.

This tiny koala joey was recently found just outside Seanook, huddled on the ground. For reasons unknown it had been separated from its mother.

A joey this size would normally be riding on the back of its mother, suckling its milk and eating eucalyptus leaves. Once separated, it is very difficult to reunite mum and baby, and although we tried, it was not to be, so the joey was taken into care.

The joey, now named Mary, is doing well in the care of our Otway Wildlife Group's koala experts. She will be given specially formulated milk and daily armfuls of fresh eucalyptus leaves. She now has another orphaned joey, Darcy, to snuggle up to. They have become inseparable.

Mary will be in care for about one year until she reaches the release weight of five kilos. She will then be released at Seatrees Farm, her home.

Many thanks to guests Rob and Anne who alerted us in the first place and to guests in other cottages who kept lookout for mum.



Happy to be released from its rescue bag, it hopped with confidence back into the bush.

“Life is as dear to a mute creature as it is to man. Just as one wants happiness and fears pain, just as one wants to live and not die, so do other creatures.”

His Holiness The Dalai Lama

Koala Saga

We are always delighted when koalas decide to visit our back decking for it allows us to observe them at close range. But late in October one koala managed to get himself on a small and somewhat isolated decking at the front of the house about 30 metres above ground level. How on earth he got there remains a mystery, as there are really no access points except for the decking pole and balustrade wires!

He then found himself in an even stickier spot after climbing up the sliding window pole to sit on the edge at roof level. He was precariously near the edge and we couldn't bear to watch as he tried manoeuvring an escape.

We are not sure if it was Doze – one of our rehabilitated koalas or not – but he was pretty cool about all the goings on as we had to secure tree saplings and a pole onto the deck to encourage him to come down. Eventually after dark he scrambled down the branch, sat on the decking railing, munched on some of the leaves attached to the sapling, then nonchalantly climbed over the deck wire onto a branch to safety.



Big Boy River

Update:

River, the Swamp Wallaby, was successfully released in early September last year after 8 months in care. He is now happily out and about Seatrees Farm but returns daily to the open enclosure to enjoy his pellets, oats and apple.

“Until you have loved an animal, part of your soul will have remained dormant.”

Anatole France

Native Orchids

Spring and Summer bring with them a lot of our native orchids to Seatrees.

Two of those most seen are:

Common bird orchid

(Chiloglottis valida) –

These are quite hard to see as the little brown flowers are hidden in the leaf litter. The flower resembles a baby bird with its mouth open. This orchid spreads vegetatively, producing clones of itself from tubers, so you often find it in large numbers in one area. It's thought that it has two geographically distinct wasp pollinators, attracted by two distinct odours in different parts of the range.

Rosy hyacinth-orchid

(Dipodium roseum)

This is a leafless orchid often seen flowering amongst bracken and Messmate gum trees.

For most of the year, plants are dormant and have no above-ground presence. Below the ground lie fleshy roots. Flower spikes ranging from 30 to 90 cm in height appear between December and April. Pollination is by native bees and wasps.

“Lots of people talk to animals...Not very many listen though...that's the problem.”

***Benjamin Hoff,
The Tao of Pooh***



www.coastcottages.com.au/wildlifeshelter.html

Donations to our Seatrees wildlife shelter are greatly appreciated.