

AJWCEF

NEWSLETTER October 2011

Vol. 4

Hello from AJWCEF
Tetsuo Mizuno, Managing Director

We would like to thank everyone who has continued to support the activities of the AJWCEF.

This year also, the AJWCEF has conducted wildlife conservation training courses in March, August and September, in which 33 people from Japan participated. Watching all the participants eagerly assist in the care of dingos and kangaroos, etc., and observe the treatment regime for hospitalised koala, we renewed our hopes that in the future they would share what they learned broadly around the world. Also, you may recall that we informed you that there are only 130 northern hairy-nosed wombats left in the world and that the government was relocating some of this number to a new habitat. Since then, wonderful news of the birth of a wombat joey has been reported.

In other, heartbreaking, news, a wild koala was recently shot seven times with an air rifle; the koala in question is now receiving treatment in an animal hospital. A similar incident was also reported in the latter half of last year. With respect to the recorded outbreaks since the last half of the 1990s of the zoonotic Hendra virus, a major social issue has arisen with regard to the habitat of the bats that are thought to be the natural host and residential areas (the Hendra virus causes acute viral disease and is thought to be passed from bats, to horses to humans, and which has a high mortality rate in horses and a mortality rate of almost 60% in humans). In the metropolitan areas of Australia people live their lives in an environment in which they are so close to wildlife that it would be difficult for Japanese people to imagine. There is a complex inter-relation of factors surrounding the 'better way for humans and wildlife to co-exist' that is the goal of the AJWCEF, making it a very difficult issue. We cannot avoid them, however. It is the intention of the AJWCEF to continue our efforts in wildlife conservation and education to achieve this goal, and we would ask for your continued support to assist us in reaching our aims.

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The Australian Government and the Australia-Japan Foundation are supporters of AJWCEF's new education project – live broadcasting between Australia and Japan to provide education about environmental and wildlife protection.



Australian Government

豪日交流基金
Australia-Japan



FOUNDATION

Report on August 2011 Training Course (Advanced)

Hitomi Ito, 2nd yr veterinary science student, Azabu University

I also participated in the AJWCEF's introductory training course for Australian wildlife conservation in the summer of last year. Having had the opportunity to observe Australian wildlife up close, I wanted to learn more about Australian animals and culture, etc. That is why I signed up for the advanced training course on this occasion.

The lectures we received during introductory course provided basic information regarding the classification, ecology, anatomy and husbandry, etc., of Australian wildlife; the advanced course, however, delved deeper with a greater amount of veterinary medical topics such as Chlamydia in koalas, euthanasia and animal welfare issues rather than preventive medicine in wildlife. Explanations included information about elementary anatomy for those participants who had not previously taken part in an introductory course, helpfully allowing me to review my own knowledge and making it easier to understand. We were also able to hear about the latest information on the Hendra virus, a prime topic of conversation in Australia at present, as well as valuable opinions from vets, rangers and the general public.



Having participated in two training, naturally I was able to gain much veterinary knowledge; but I also learned a lot about other things as well. For example, because I learned about the approach taken to wildlife in Australia, I feel I have been able to consider Japan's attitudes also, and discern the pros and cons of the strategies of both countries. In Australia, wildlife is considered to be the property of the country and Australians have an awareness that they must protect it, something that is reflected in the fact that some housewives and retirees get involved in wildlife protection and habitat surveys etc. In Japan, on the other hand, wildlife exists in a state where they do not belong to the country or anyone at all. I suspect that many people consider wildlife to be animals that are dealt with by experts and that having nothing to do with them personally. Against a background of such thinking, the environment of the two countries is deeply interconnected. In Australia, wildlife visits household backyards and lives in the cities – there were even bats and possums in the trees of the hotel where we stayed. It is precisely because wildlife is so close by that they are considered to be something with which the environment is shared. In Japan, however, the opportunity to encounter wildlife is extremely rare. The habitat in which wildlife lives and the environment in which humans live are considered separately. In this way, I was able to realise something that I would not have been able to just by being in Japan.

In addition, my own view on life changed a little having observed that Australian have a lifestyle that seems less tied to time and money, as illustrated by a thirsty bus driver who was happy to keep his passengers waiting while he went to buy a drink, the way that people don't do so much over-time work like they do in Japan, and the fact that some restaurants are closed on a public holiday.

As with last year, I am very grateful to the Australian people who kindly and generously imparted their knowledge to me in a way that was easy to understand. I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to the staff of AJWCEF who provided these various encounters and opportunities.



A vet draws some blood



Advanced course lecture



Carrying a sedated koala

Report on August 2011 Training Course (Introductory)

Asano Sasaki



This training course certainly provided a very full two weeks. We did practical training in the heart of facilities where even local people would be denied access, and the days were full of surprises, discoveries and learning.

All the staff at the facilities openly welcomed us who had come from Japan to study and provided us with friendly instruction. It left a very strong impression that they listened intently to our faltering English and gave us explanations in simple English. Although I could not speak fluent English, we were often able to communicate because of a mutual willingness to listen and desire to understand.

We learnt not only about ecology and husbandry of wild animals, but also the background to protection activities and government endeavours, etc., to gain broad-based knowledge. I'm glad to have been able to become aware of the similarities, and differences, with Japan, as well as the positive, and not so positive aspects.

And because we went to the local supermarket to shop and cooked for ourselves, it was also great fun to experience the local atmosphere and lifestyle. The local people helped me out when I went shopping and used the public transport, and I think it was a wonderful opportunity to have the chance to interact with Australian people in situations outside the training environment.

I will always treasure the encounters with the animals, new friends, lecturers and staff, as well as the experiences, knowledge – everything – that I gained through this training course.



Meeting a baby koala.
Ipswich Koala Protection Society



Hiroyuki Imai, Faculty of Agriculture & Veterinary Medicine, Yamaguchi University

I have an interest in life sciences and am currently studying at university. I am particularly interested in the evolution of animals and decided to participate in the introductory training course because of the opportunity to learn about unique wildlife from the viewpoint of protection.

Having read many books about living organisms, I was fairly confident that I knew a reasonable amount about marsupials and monotremes; when I actually learned about them through actual encounters, however, I found that there was much that I did not know. For example, the anatomy and physiology of the koala is specialized to Australia's low-rainfall climate to an astonishing degree.



Checking a koala's kidneys

Also, by learning about the academic subjects relating to Australia's unique animals, such as anatomy and physiology, I gained a deeper understanding about the issues faced by these animals. With regard to the loss of koala habitat due to urban development we heard directly from people who are actually tackling the issue and gained real information. There was a vast difference with Japan in terms the passion of those involved in wildlife protection and the way the general public thinks about wildlife; I was very surprised to hear that in the spirit of getting the whole country behind the protection of the unique wildlife species the people involved in protection activities had compiled and presented their own original data on animal habitat and succeeded in having plans for town development changed on that basis.

Please take a look at AJWCEF's website to hear more stories from training course participants.

IPSWICH KOALA PROTECTION SOCIETY



Koala ambulance and rescue volunteer

Let me introduce one of the volunteer organizations involved in wildlife protection that provides cooperation to AJWCEF and which the AJWCEF supports – the Ipswich Koala Protection Society (IKPS). The IKPS rescues wildlife, including koalas, possums, kangaroos, birds and reptiles, etc., in the Ipswich area, which is located 40 km to the southwest of Brisbane, and rears orphaned young wildlife until they are able to care for themselves.

Participants in the AJWCEF training course are able to visit these wildlife carers who operate on the front-line to learn of their activities first hand.

The IKPS was originally called the Woogaroo Koala Protection Society, having been started by a handful of residents of the Ipswich suburb of Camira in October 1994; it became a not-for-profit corporation in February 1995.

Its initial aim was to protect the unique Australian wildlife in the habitat along the Woogaroo Creek and its catchment area. Given that many other animals share the koala's habitat, they decided to call themselves a 'koala group' to utilise the high profile of koalas in protected other species as well. The activities of the IKPS now range across Ipswich itself as well as surrounding areas, reaching as far away as Toogoolawah, Boonah and Kalbar. In May 2000, the name of the organization was changed to the Ipswich Koala Protection Society to reflect this.



Bringing a rescued koala to the hospital



A koala rescued after being hit by a car

Their first dream was to have an ambulance for the koalas and other wildlife. Now, the IKPS has two ambulances, which they use to rescue over 150 koalas and countless other unique Australian animals that are sick, injured or have been orphaned.



Their next dream was to have their own wildlife clinic, a dream which came true in October 2007. IKPS is the only not-for-profit, volunteer-run organisation that has such a facility. Moreover, they are able to respond to emergencies because they have the cooperation of a specialist wildlife vet on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Checking over a koala with cystitis at the IKPS clinic



The opinion paper submitted to the Queensland government Department of Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations

IKPS's greatest achievement to date is the influence they had on the redrafting of the plan for the Southern Freight Rail Corridor. Initially, this rail corridor was to cut right through the middle of an important koala habitat area which was home to a large number of healthy koalas. But now, this rail corridor will avoid this habitat area.

Although the aims and goals of the IKPS remain the same over the years, its role has evolved to making announcements via the media, compiling reports and working in close conjunction with the federal, state and local governments and their representatives. Through many years of activities, they came to realise that rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife alone was not enough; there was no point in making all that effort if the animals had no habitat to which to return. We realised that we could change the future of the wild animals by raising the awareness of the public regarding the dire straits in which wildlife is and the importance of protecting all wildlife.

(Story, materials and photos provided by IKPS)

Photo: animals rescued and reared by the IKPS



Northern Brown Bandicoot
Frequently seen in southeast Queensland



Blue-tongued Lizard



Bush-stone Curlew



Brush-tailed Phascogale
A small, carnivorous marsupial



Brush-tailed Possum



Black Fruit bat (Flying Fox)
A baby flying fox still gripping the teat of the bottle after having a drink of milk



Echidna "Hoover"
Approximately 3 months; spikes are yet to grow



Eastern Chestnut Mouse



Red-necked Wallaby
A still hairless joey



Koala
Approximately 10-12 weeks old

MOGGILL KOALA HOSPITAL CORNER

No.3 The Home They Keep Coming Back To

A considerable number of koalas find themselves back at the Moggill Koala Hospital, and one of those is Lunar.

All koalas who are brought to the hospital are implanted with a microchip before being released back into the wild. Each time a koala comes to the hospital the veterinarian uses a sensor to check for a microchip; if they have a microchip, the history of the koala can be checked from the database. While it is upsetting when 'first-time' koalas are brought in with severe illness or injury, it is particularly distressing to learn that a koala that you have previously cared for has returned to the hospital again.



His eyes became opaque and he became blind.

Lunar first came to MKH at the end of July, during the peak of the mating season and a time when young males like Lunar are most active. He had been rescued because of infected eyes due to conjunctivitis. However, he was already blind at this point; the opportunity for help had come too late. Surrounded by these unknown creatures called humans, he had no idea that we were trying to help him and became very stressed. Even though our intention was to help him, it was a very frightening experience for Lunar who tried to defend himself, at times becoming very aggressive.

It would have been highly stressful even for a koala with sight; for a blind koala like Lunar, the day he was rescued must have been a huge shock.

It is thought that, as long as the habitat is peaceful and safe, even blind koalas can have a solid understanding of their environment and can manage to survive. However, the reality is that if a koala is not only blind, but also old and sick with poor musculature when they are brought to MKH, their chance of surviving for any length of time in the wild after being treated is slim. In Lunar's case, he was otherwise in good condition and was still young, so he was admitted to the hospital for treatment in the hope that he would recover from the conjunctivitis and be successful when returned to the wild. Time is of the essence when treating blind koalas; it is vital to return them to their original habitat as soon as possible because when placed in an unknown environment, the stress on a blind koala depresses their immunity, and because further urban development can change that habitat. After undergoing eye surgery, Lunar showed improvement every day. Although he never got used to the daily eye drops, he was able to leave the hospital two weeks after being admitted due to the efforts of the carers and his own perseverance.

Then, on the very night that I had just cleaned out the enclosure that Lunar had been in and was thinking, 'I hope he'll be alright,' something happened that tore at the hearts of everyone at MKH: Lunar had been hit by a car. According to the ranger who had released him back into the wild, Lunar had bounded up the tree from which he was originally rescued, as if he instantly knew that he had returned to a tree in his own territory. That night, perhaps looking for food or searching for a mate, Lunar crossed the road to shift to another tree.

By the time he had been found and brought to MKH the following day, he was already gone. Lunar's forest was a very hazardous place, divided by houses and roads. Lunar had lived his life

under the constant threat of encountering vehicles and dogs. The stress of this could have contributed to the conjunctivitis and resultant loss of sight. The carers who had felt somewhat relieved to see Lunar go back to his home were enveloped in a sense of hopelessness. We had sent him back to what was his battlefield. It is unlikely, however, that anything would have been solved by returning him to a different location; we couldn't throw a blind koala into an unfamiliar environment.



We need to put a stop to the fragmentation and destruction of natural habitat. Koala numbers in Queensland and New South Wales are dropping at an alarming rate annually, and they are just one species of animal that require protection before it is too late. Urban development conducted solely for human beings will result in humans finding themselves all alone. What is required is town planning that allows us to co-exist with other animals.

Working towards that co-existence, many of the volunteers that care for the koalas at MKH take part in activities to protect koala habitat, including the purchase of forest areas and planting unique tree species on their own properties to create areas for wildlife. But this alone is not enough; we need to expand these efforts much more. To reduce even one tragedy such as that which befell Lunar we need to think about how to create environments for co-existence in each region and act!
(Story and photographs – Toshimi Hirano)



Activity Report

December 2010 to October 2011

Wildlife Conservation Training Course

1. Introductory Training Course (March 2011)
2. Advanced Training Course (August 2011)
3. Introductory Training Course (September 2011)

Wildlife News from Australia and Japan

- Blog launched in June 2011! AJWCEF volunteers contribute their thoughts about wildlife issues based on newspaper articles from Australia and Japan. Written in Japanese, the blog can be found at <http://ajwcef.blog115.fc2.com/>
English speakers can read the original articles at <http://www.ajwcef.org/wildlifenews.htm>



AJWCEF Exhibit

1. 32nd Japan-Australia Joint Seminar (25-26 June, 2011 (Sat - Sun)
Attendance Approx. 100
Speaker: Tetsuo Mizuno AJWCEF Executive Director and CEO
Dr Mizuno spoke about the effects on the natural environment and wildlife of the major flooding and cyclone Yasi that occurred in Queensland, Australia, in late 2010 and early 2011

Wildlife Conservation Study Tour (Max. 41 persons)

1. Nippon Veterinary and Life Science University (August 2011)

Projects

1. Eucalyptus Plantation Project
(Joint project between Moggill Koala Hospital, Pullenvale State School, Kenmore South State School and AJWCEF)

※ The status of donations will be reported on in the April 2012 newsletter.

Event Information

1. 2011 Wildlife Conservation Seminar and Training Course Information Sessions

In November, AJWCEF will hold wildlife conservation seminars and information sessions regarding and training courses at various locations around Japan. Please see the website for details (in Japanese only) <http://www.ajwcef.org/semi-setumei.htm>

《Seminar Content》 ※ Different seminar content will be presented according to location.

- Australia's Unique Wildlife: Dr Tetsuo Mizuno, AJWCEF Executive Director & CEO
- A Koala Crisis: Dr Allan McKinnon, Manager, Moggill Koala Hospital (Qld Govt. facility)
- Latest Information on Koala AIDS and Hendra Virus Infections: Moggill Koala Hospital (Qld Govt. facility)
- Participating in Wildlife Conservation Activities Overseas – Australia: Dr Tetsuo Mizuno, AJWCEF Executive Director & CEO
- AJWCEF Australian Wildlife Conservation Training Course: Dr Tetsuo Mizuno, AJWCEF Executive Director & CEO

《Locations》

- 3 Nov. (Thur.)** **Kani Public Arts Center (Kani, Gifu Prefecture)**
Enquiries: Environment Office (0574) 62 1111
- 4 Nov. (Fri.)** **Azabu University (Sagamihara, Kanagawa Prefecture)**
Enquiries: Hitomi Ito (v09009@azabu-u.ac.jp)
- 5-6 Nov. (Sat-Sun)** **Nippon Veterinary and Life Science University (Musashino, Tokyo)**
Enquiries: Haruko Mori (haruti.ek@gmail.com)
- 7 Nov. (Mon.)** **Okayama University of Science (Okayama, Okayama Prefecture)**
Enquiries: Misato Hirai (rct36_mie29@i.softbank.jp)
- 8 Nov. (Tues.)** **Waseda University (Shinjuku, Tokyo)**
- 10 Nov. (Thur.)** **Kitazato University (Towada, Aomori Prefecture)**
Enquiries: Kazuki Yoshioka (yoshioka@vmass.kitasato-u.ac.jp)
- 12 Nov. (Sat.)** **Obihiro University of Agriculture & Veterinary Medicine
(Obihiro, Hokkaido)**
Enquiries: Chiyo Kitayama (star617_chi4@yahoo.co.jp)

2. Nippon Veterinary and Life Science University holds Public International Symposium held to Commemorate the 130th Anniversary of Establishment

5 November, 2011 (Sat.) 12:45~3:35 p.m.

Nippon Veterinary and Life Science University campus, Room C502

- **Host:** Management Committee for Events to Commemorate the 130th Anniversary of Nippon Veterinary and Life Science University, Nippon Veterinary and Life Science University International Exchange Committee
- **In cooperation with:** School of Veterinary Science, Faculty of Science
- **Supported by:** Commonwealth of Australia, Australia-Japan Foundation, Australia-Japan Wildlife Conservation and Education Foundation, Queensland Government Trade and Investment Office in Tokyo

3. Training Courses

- ① **March 2012**
Australian wildlife conservation training course (introductory)
Queensland, Australia
- ② **August 2012 (tentative)**
Australian wildlife conservation training course (advanced)
Queensland, Australia
- ③ **September 2012 (tentative)**
Australian wildlife conservation training course (introductory)
Queensland, Australia



Greater Bilby

AJWCEF Staff

Hitomi Ito

From a young age I have had an interest in endangered animals and my goal was to become a veterinarian involved in wildlife conservation. Unfortunately, the university I attend doesn't teach us about wild animals. I really wanted to visit Australia with all its unique animals, and I was able to fulfill this long-held wish when I participated in AJWCEF's September 2010 introductory training course. Since then, I have been involved with the AJWCEF as a volunteer, and through this and my participation in the training course I have become even more fascinated with Australia, leading me to take part in the advanced training course held in September 2011. Now I act as a leader and maintain communication between contributors to the AJWCEF blog ("Want to Know More About Wildlife?!) and summarise newspaper articles about Australian wildlife and add my own opinion piece also. In this way, I hope that many people become interested in the circumstances faced by wildlife in Australia.



Kano Shimizu



Hi everyone! I am a student at the School of Veterinary Science at Queensland University, and help out at the AJWCEF when I can. I came to Australia in search of somewhere that I could be more involved with wildlife. It is almost seven years since I came to Australia, but I am still inspired by the animals that I get to meet every day. Because the campus I attend is in a regional area, it gives me the opportunity for contact with a lot of animals. The university has many horses, sheep, cows and the like, and everyday I get to see beautifully coloured parrots too. Although studying veterinary science in English is even more difficult than I anticipated, I am very grateful to be able to study in such a wonderful environment. Recently, I became a wildlife carer – something that I have longed to do – and am now rearing a baby possum. If you get the chance, you should definitely come to Australia to experience an environment which is so different from that in Japan.

Chiyo Kitayama

Hi everybody, I'm Chiyo Kitayama and I am public relations officer with AJWCEF. At the moment, I am studying to be a veterinarian at Obihiro University in Japan. I became involved with the AJWCEF after participating in one of the training courses last year. I am interested in wildlife and its conservation, as well as its co-existence with humans. When I took part in an exchange programme to Tasmania, Australia when I was 16, Australia's wide open spaces, its environment and the cattle, sheep and other livestock as well as the unique marsupials that live there all made a deep impression on me, leading me to strive to become a veterinarian myself. I'll be working hard to help realize even greater 'international cooperation in wildlife conservation' between the countries that I love – Australia and Japan.



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Your support will help save wildlife.

Please click on the 'Membership & Donations' link at www.ajwcef.org

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