

# 2021 Annual Report



ACT Wildlife

Rescue • Rehabilitate • Release

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## *Our Vision*

The welfare and biodiversity of native wildlife in the ACT is protected and maintained

## *Our Mission*

The purpose of ACT Wildlife is to

- Rescue, rehabilitate and release injured, sick and orphaned native wildlife
- Educate the public about sharing the urban interface with native wildlife
- Provide professional training to carers to ensure a high standard of welfare for wildlife in care.

## *Our Patrons*

ACT Wildlife is fortunate to have three Patrons who are readily available to support our activities at our request. Their skills and expertise are wide ranging.

**Ian Fraser** – has been a Canberra naturalist for over 40 years. In that time he has been an author, conservationist, tour leader, educator, blogger, ABC broadcaster and even a wildlife carer.

**Genevieve Jacobs** – recently appointed to the board of the Canberra International Music Festival, a facilitator and broadcaster for local events, and previously a well- known local personality on the ABC 666 Canberra radio. Genevieve Jacobs has been a journalist for 30 years, working in print and radio, and group editor for Region Media, Australia's fastest growing independent media platform.

**Karen Viggers** - is a wildlife veterinarian who is passionate about native animals and habitat conservation. She also writes novels to inform people about wildlife issues and remind us how lucky we are to live in a country with such stunning natural landscapes.

## *Message from the President*

Once again the volunteers and staff of ACT Wildlife have overcome a plethora of challenges over yet another year to continue to provide outstanding service to the Canberra community.

We can only do this thanks to the commitment and reliability of the over 70 active carers and an additional 40 or more volunteers who support them by monitoring our phone service, rescuing and transporting animals, growing and collecting food, relocating aviaries and sewing bedding. Our mange treaters work proactively to reduce mange in the wombat populations along the Murrumbidgee and at other ACT locations. Our Flying Fox team monitor the bat populations in Commonwealth Park for heat stress and other threats to their wellbeing. And we've met with our elected officials to express our concern about the dangers of inappropriate fruit tree netting for our wildlife, and the all too frequent injuries to water birds from discarded fishing lines and lures, with a view to seeing changed legislation. We have continued to recruit and train new volunteers, allowing the vital role of rescuing and caring to continue in spite of some difficult constraints.

ACT Wildlife was fortunate to receive some significant bequests in 2021. We are incredibly grateful to these special people who valued our work sufficiently to leave us a gift in their will.

We could not do what we do without the generosity of donors. Many people make a donation, either a single gift or an ongoing commitment, following an incident requiring the efforts of our volunteers. This speaks volumes of the professionalism and compassion of our phone volunteers and rescuers and carers.

The big news for us in the last year was being recognised in the ACT budget with four years of funding. This will allow us to make some real progress towards our long term plans for financial security and administrative support for our volunteers and committee.

My huge personal thanks to the committee, who work tirelessly in the background, planning for future growth and ensuring that we have processes in place to support our volunteers to do their work.



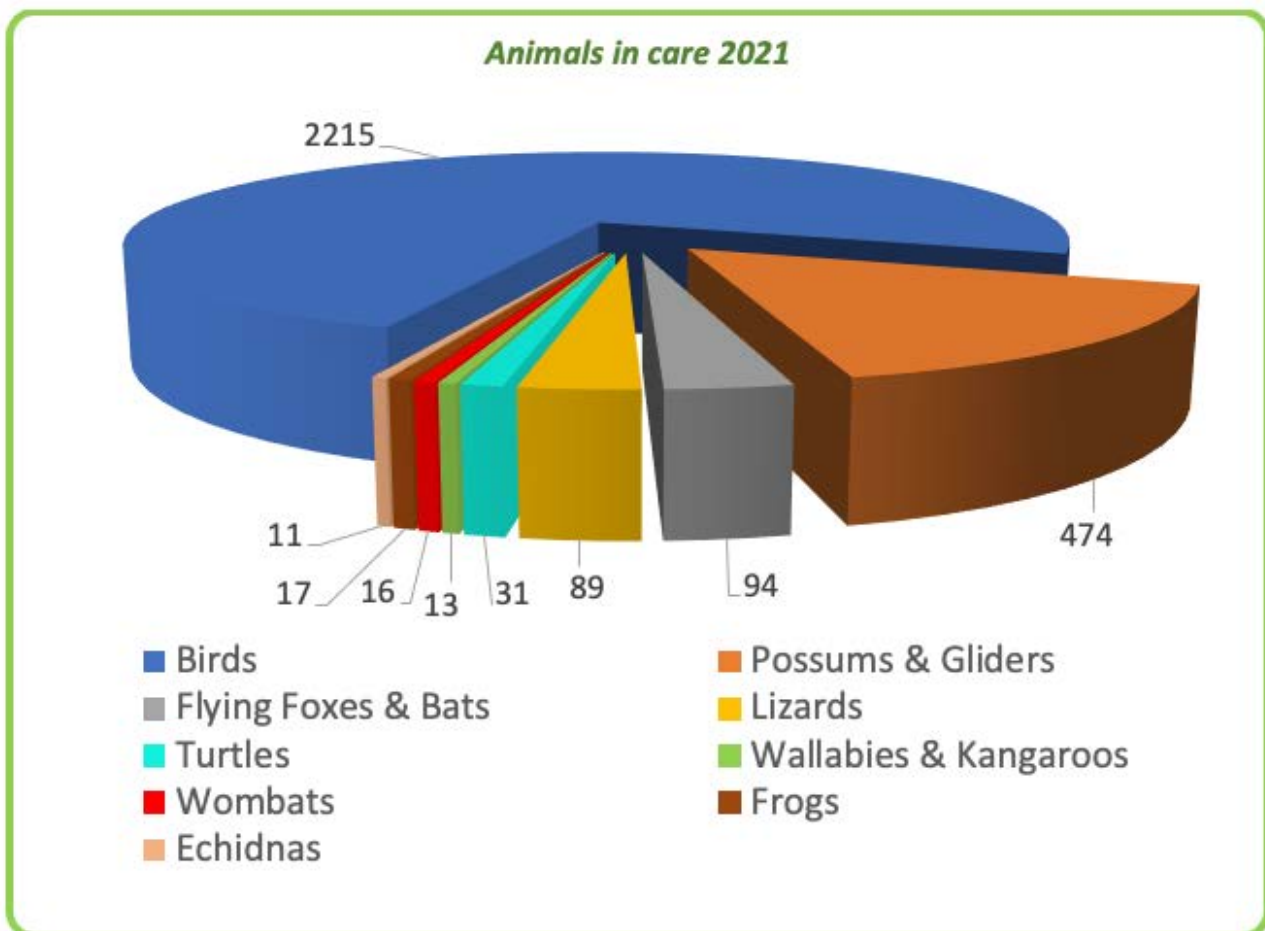
Lindy Butcher, President

## Wildlife Statistics

In 2021 our phone volunteers and staff responded to almost 13000 phone calls requesting assistance with urban wildlife issues. This represents approximately 1,000 more calls than the previous year. The majority of these calls are resolved by providing advice to the caller which also contributes to our public education role. Maintaining a stable roster of phone volunteers for weekends and after hours continues to be a challenge, indicating the demands of that public facing and dynamic role. The search for a system to support our phone volunteers to fill that vital role is ongoing.

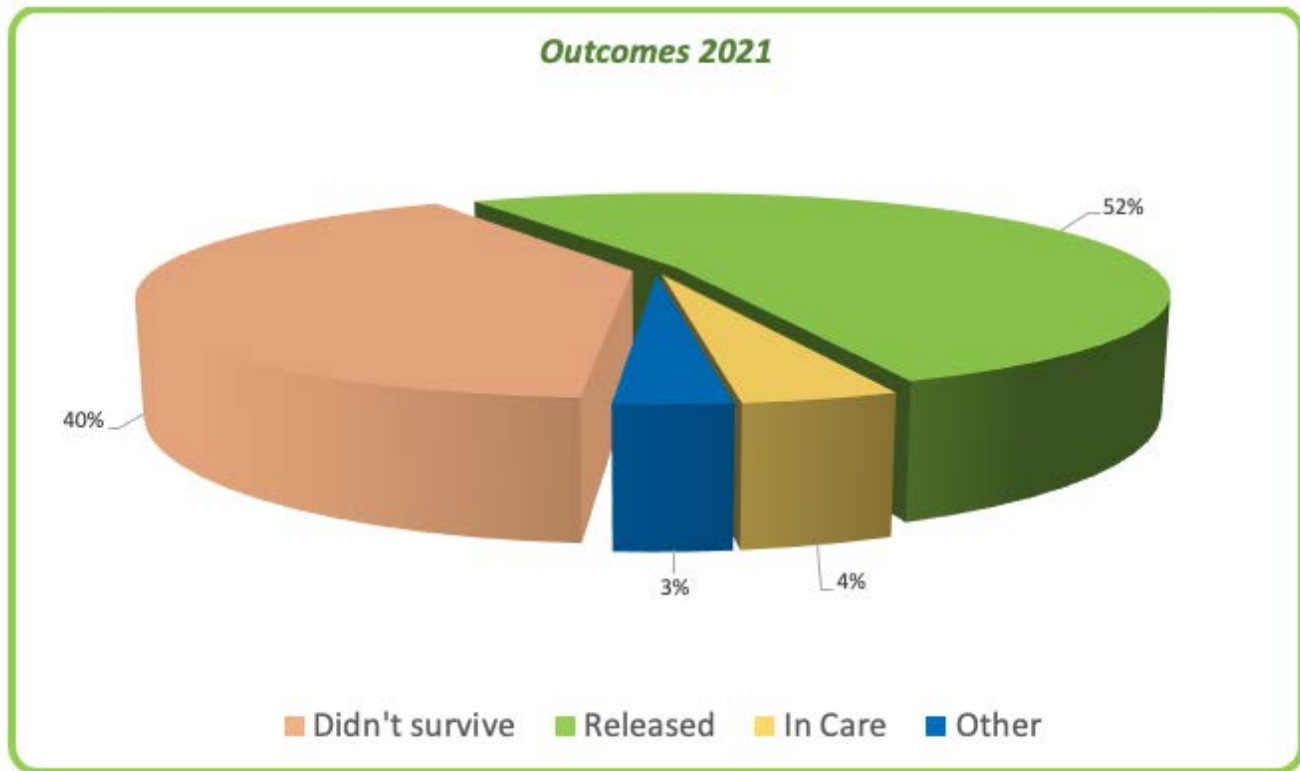
Our Jerrabomberra Wetlands staff respond to phone calls during the day, however our phone continues to be “staffed” by volunteers after work hours and overnight. Particularly during the warmer months with longer daylight hours these afterhours times can be very busy.

Our volunteer rescuers, transporters and carers took in 2960 animals, of which 52% were released and another 4% were still in care at the time of the reporting date. As well as being a big increase in last year’s 2,257 this is a significant increase in successful outcomes over the previous year’s 46% release rate. This number represents the huge amount of work put into the rehabilitation of injured and orphaned wildlife and is the reason our volunteers do what they do.



## Outcomes

The high percentage of releases is largely due to having injured wildlife taken directly to a vet by the member of the public who finds it. The animal can then be treated before being sent to us, which increases its chances of survival, or it is euthanased and therefore not entered into our database.



While every released animal is a success it is particularly pleasing to see the increase in the numbers over the years of animals being released following rehabilitation by our volunteers. These numbers reflect timely rescue and transport to carers and vets and the combined work of carers and support volunteers in the rehabilitation process.

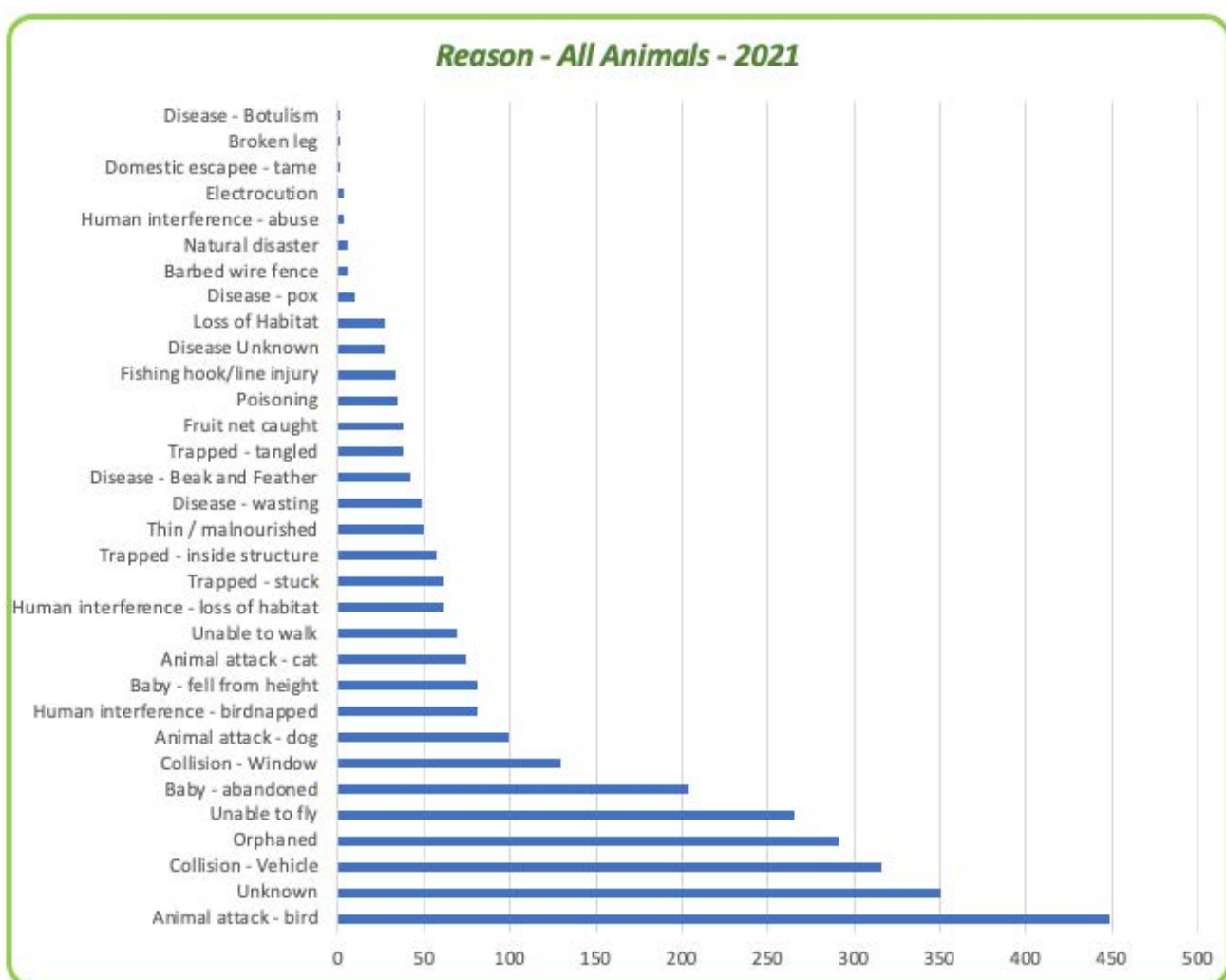
<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of animals taken into care</b>	<b>% released</b>
2018	1591	46
2019	1567	42
2020	2257	46
2021	2960	52

## Reasons for coming into care

**Attacks by domestic animals** continues to be a primary cause of wildlife coming into care. It is very satisfying to note the new cat containment laws coming into effect in new suburbs and for newly acquired cats. We look forward to seeing a reduction in cat attacks on our native birds and small mammals and lizards.

In 2021 our volunteers attended to 72 animals in either **netting or fishing line**.

We have met with MLA Rebecca Vassarotti to discuss the ongoing problems of animal entanglements in inappropriate fruit tree netting. We have requested that the ACT Government consider following the actions taken by the Victorian government to ban fruit netting with a large aperture.



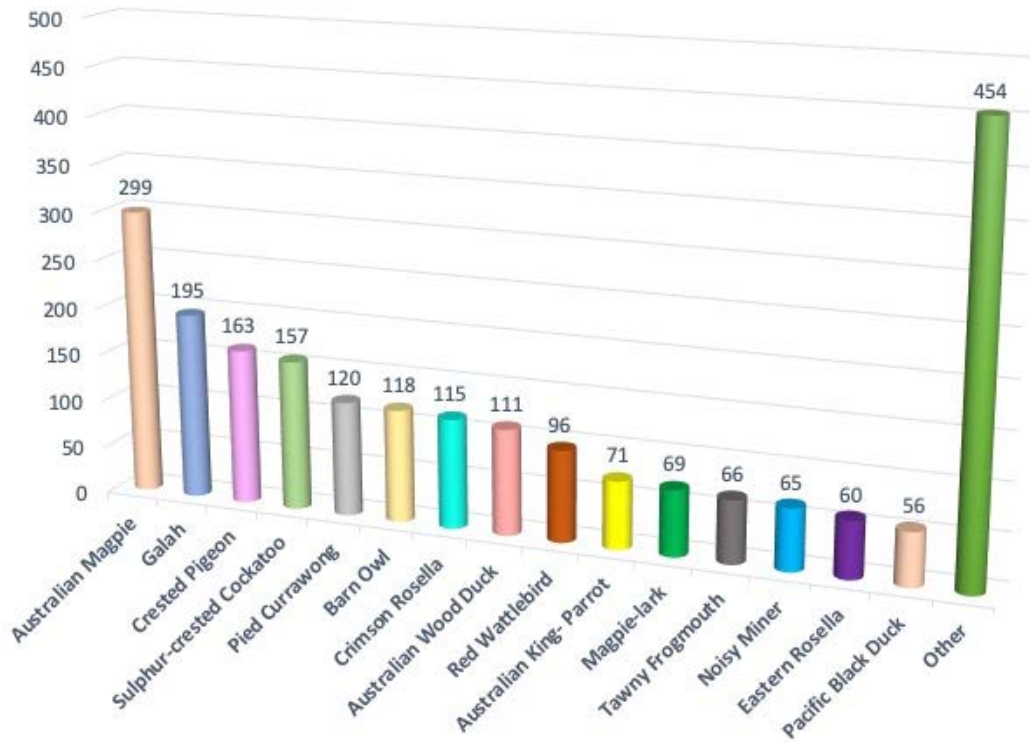
## Birds

As always, the most commonly occurring rescue is that of birds, representing 75% of the animals that come into care. A total of 2212 birds were cared for by our team of bird carers. The usual trends continued, with everybody's favourite Magpies being our most commonly received bird, not surprising given how frequently they can be seen in and around the suburbs. Our staff and volunteers constantly work with the public to educate well-meaning people not to "bird nap" young birds that are temporarily on the ground whilst gaining their flying skills.

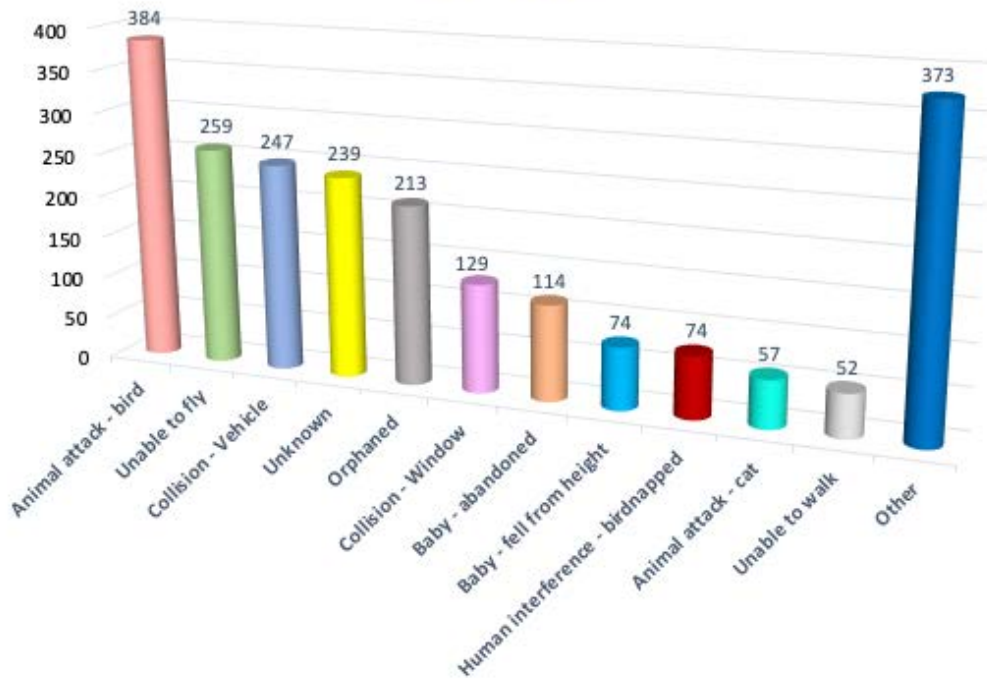




### Birds by type



### Birds - reason



2021 saw a massive increase in the numbers of Barn Owls, about 118 compared to single digit numbers in previous years. This is thought to be a result of good rain and plentiful food resulting in a baby boom and a subsequent high number of adolescents competing for food and shelter following dispersal. The majority of these birds were released following a time in care.

*Photo by carer Manuela Benson*



A group of our volunteers have also met with Minister Vassarotti with our concerns about water birds and other aquatic animals becoming entangled in discarded fishing lines and lures. We look forward to seeing some actions on these problems in 2022.

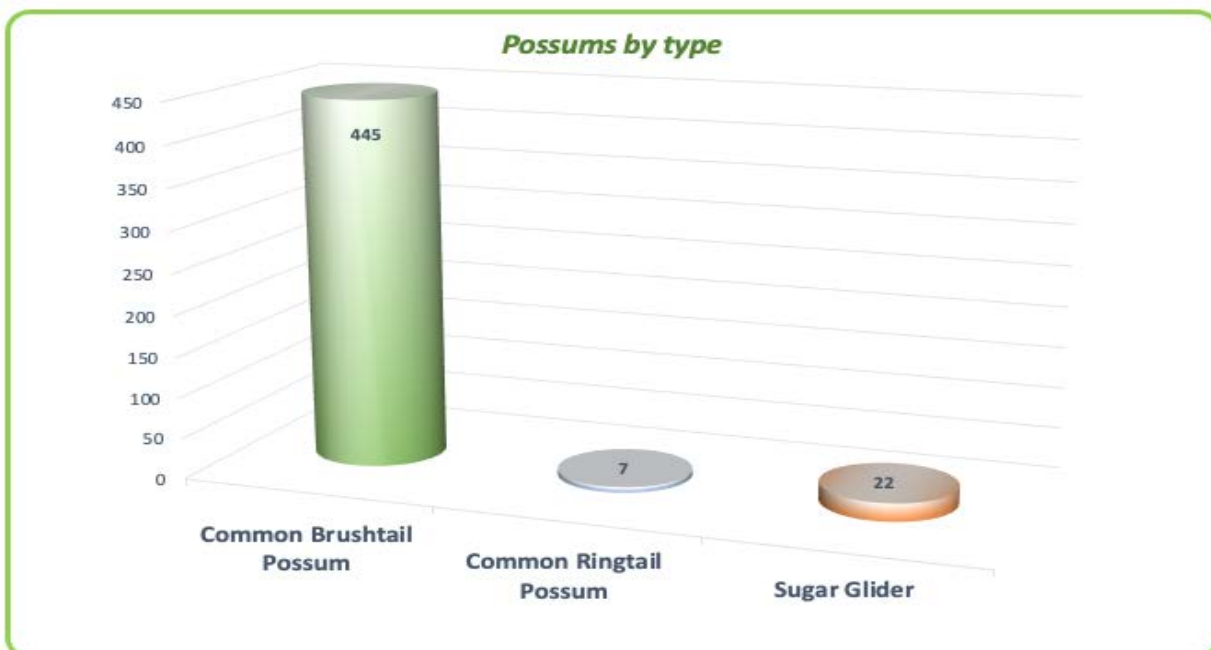


*Photo - ACT Wildlife*

Swan "Grunt" was entangled several times over a year, requiring vet treatment and many hours of volunteer time to catch, care for and return to his home.

## Possums

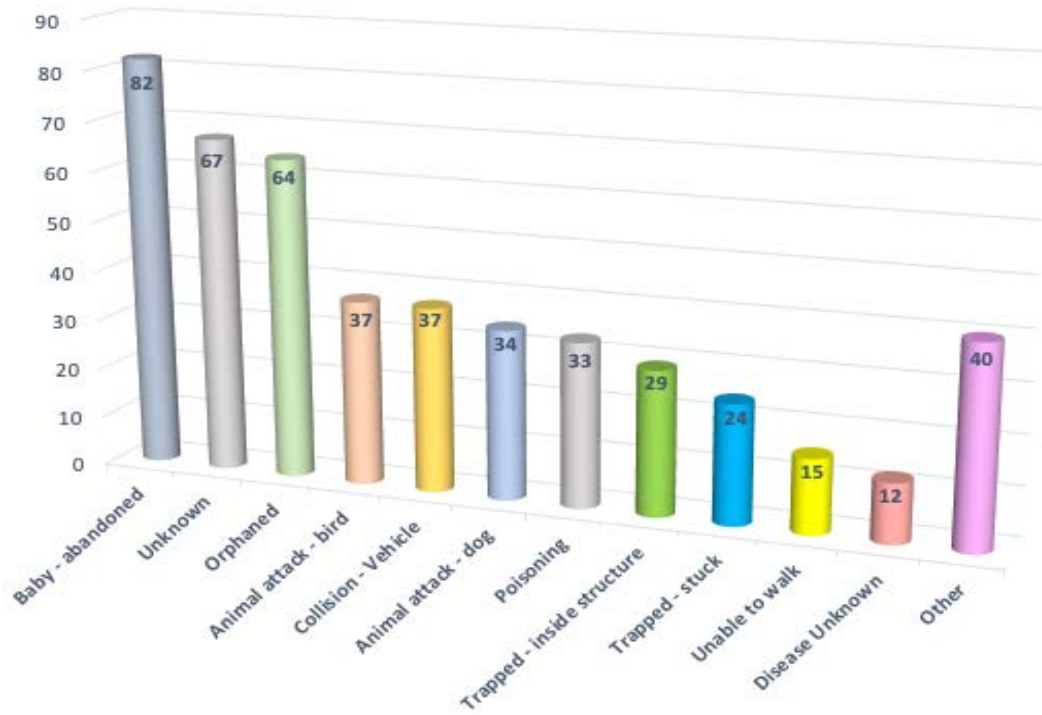
Our possum volunteers have attended some challenging rescues of possums caught in a variety of domestic situations. Their ingenuity in solving the problems these animals find themselves in has been remarkable and has highlighted the need for some specialised rescue training and equipment for our volunteers. We have also noted an increase in the condition “exudative dermatitis” and will collect specific data on that in the future to map that trend. Of significant concern is the sixfold increase in poisonings since last year. Our data does not indicate whether that is from garden type poisons such as snail bait or mouse and rat poisons. Limited access to vets and high costs prevent us having affected animals tested for confirmation and diagnosis of poison type.



*Sugar Glider - photo by carer Corin*

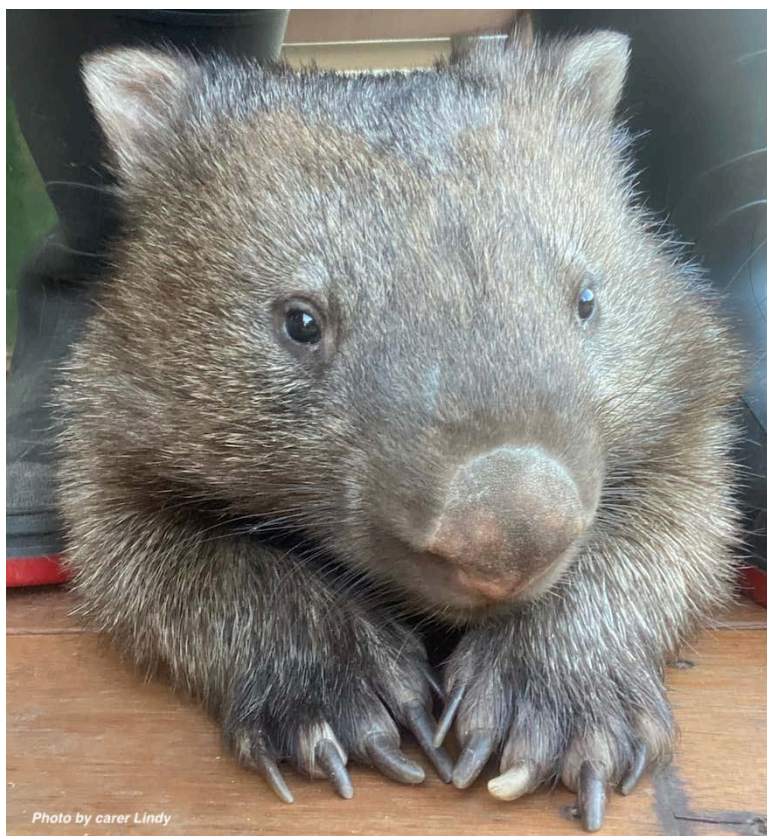
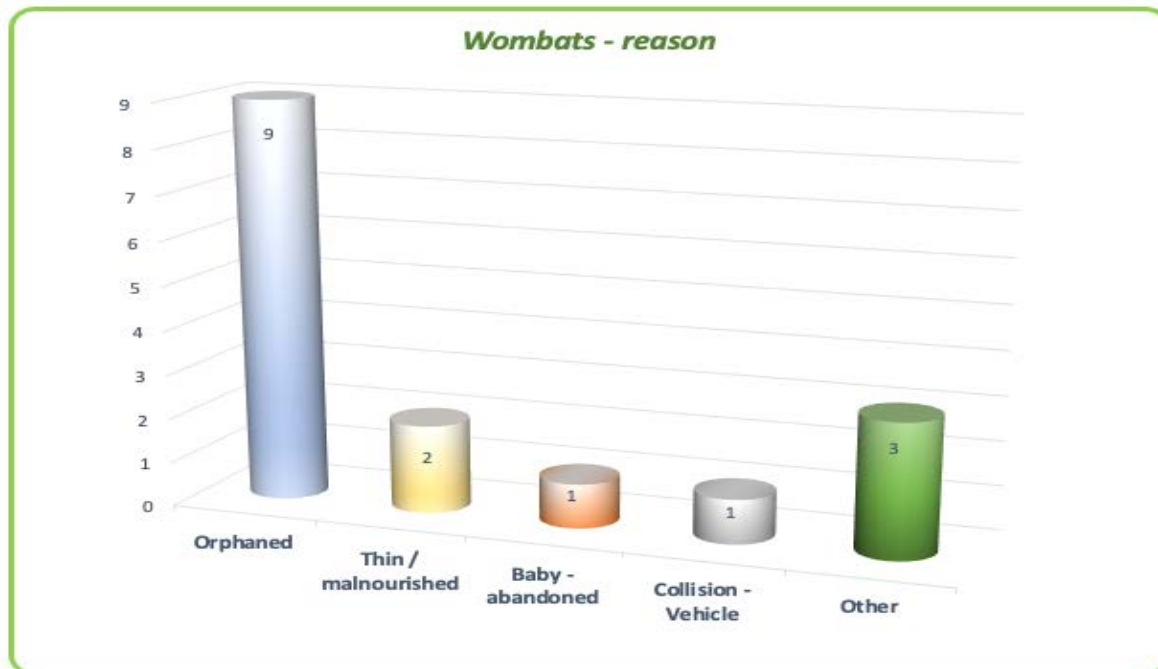


***Possums - reason***



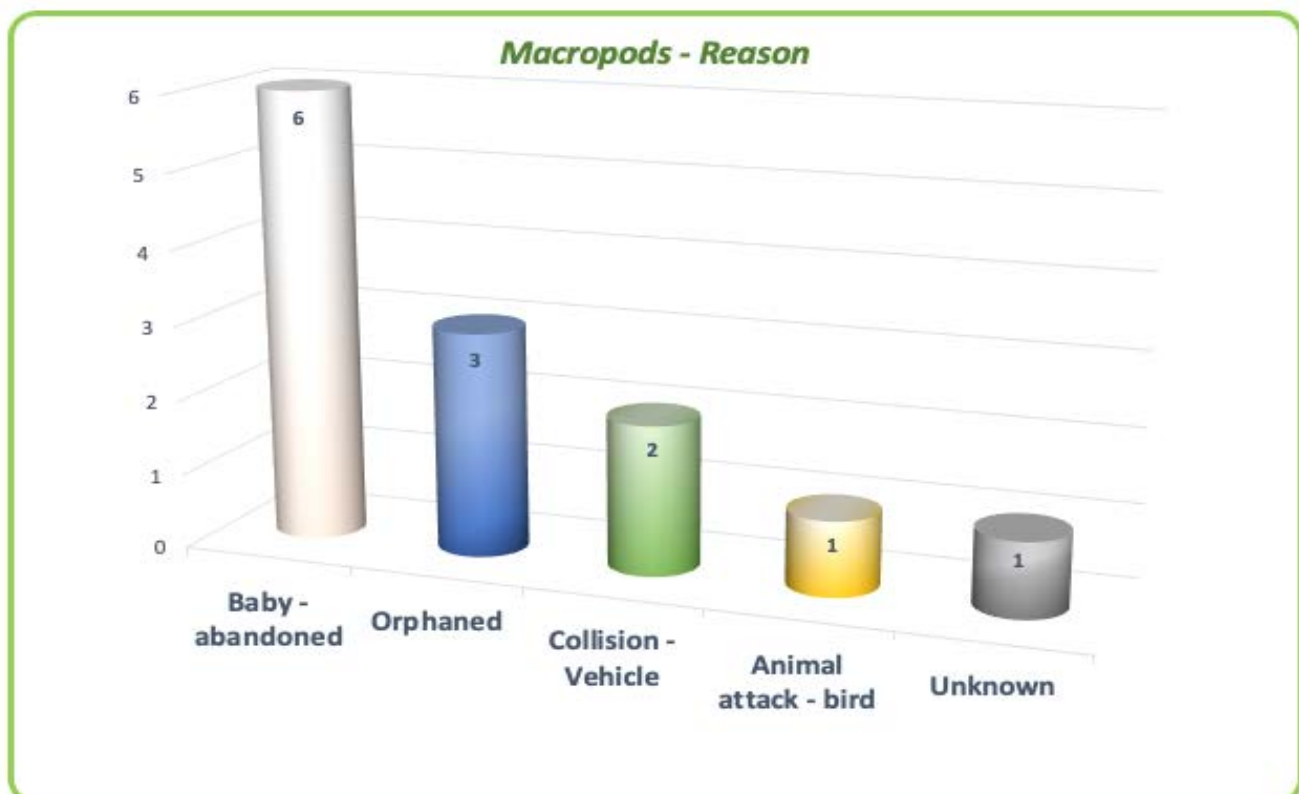
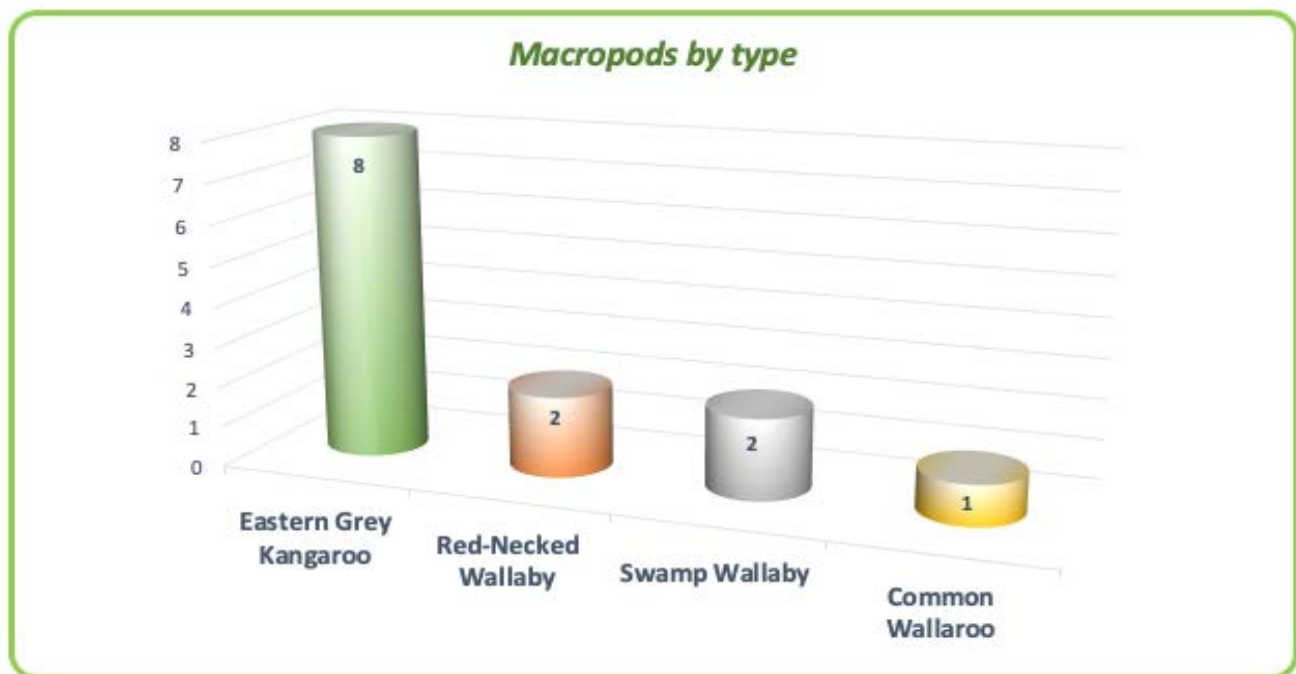
## Wombats

While wombat numbers in care remain in the low teens they are a long term commitment for their carers, who are also now taking in older orphans with both advanced mange and significant injuries. Mange is a constant insult to the health of these enigmatic “bulldozers of the bush”. ACT Wildlife is now partnered with the ACT government in the recording of both mange affected and healthy wombats and carrying out treatments on those suffering with mange where possible. Thank you to the ACT Government for the grant to carry out this important work that will improve the welfare of wombats in the ACT.



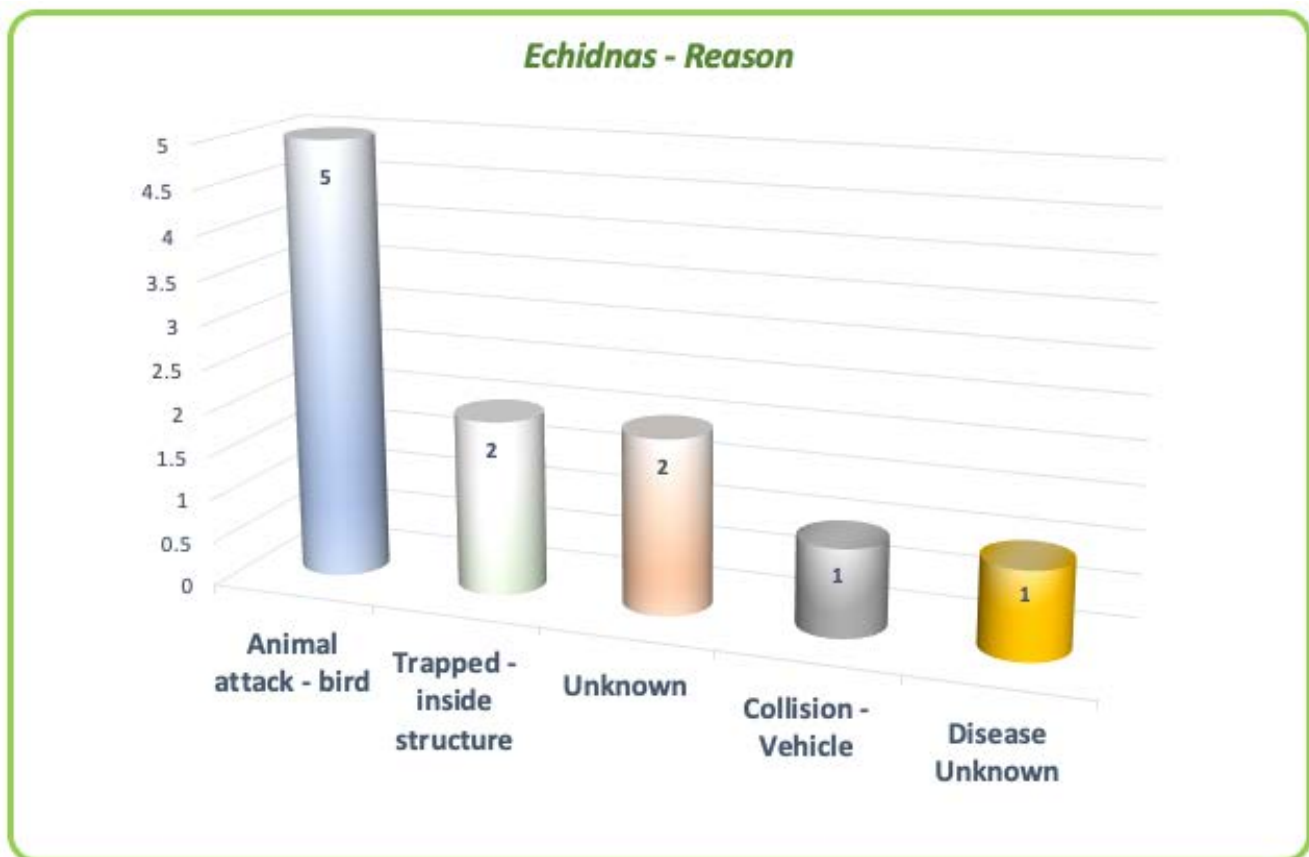
## Macropods

As in previous years our macropod carers receive a small number of Eastern Grey Kangaroo joeys that are orphaned, usually as a result of vehicle strike. These are transferred to Wildcare. We also transferred a Wallaroo to a NSW care group to provide it with a buddy, which is essential for its wellbeing.



## Echidnas

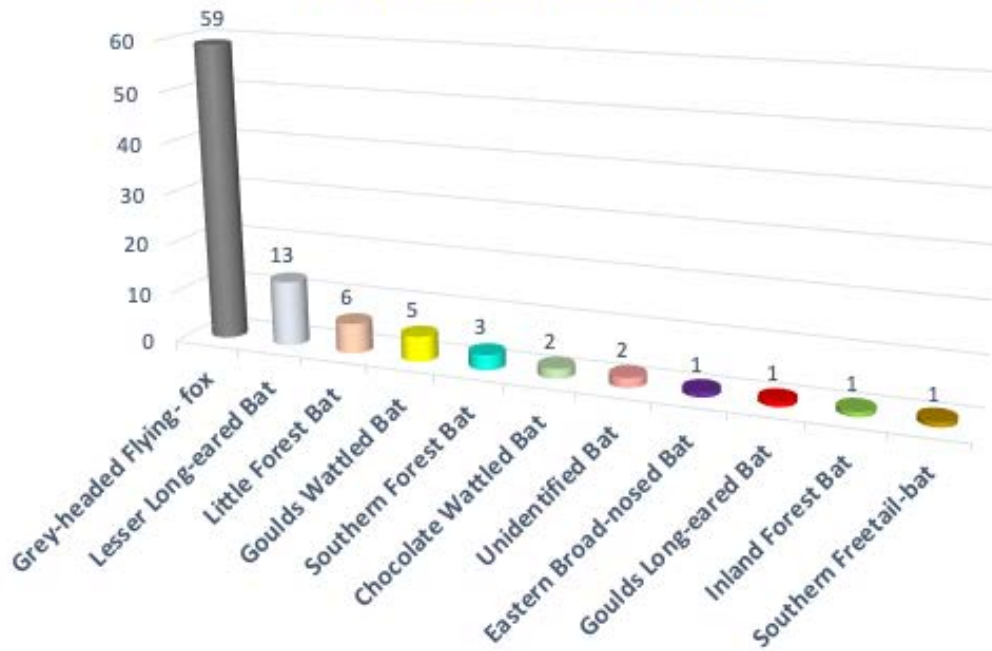
Echidnas are hardy little animals which rarely come into care. Those that do end up in care are well known for being escape artists and self-release.



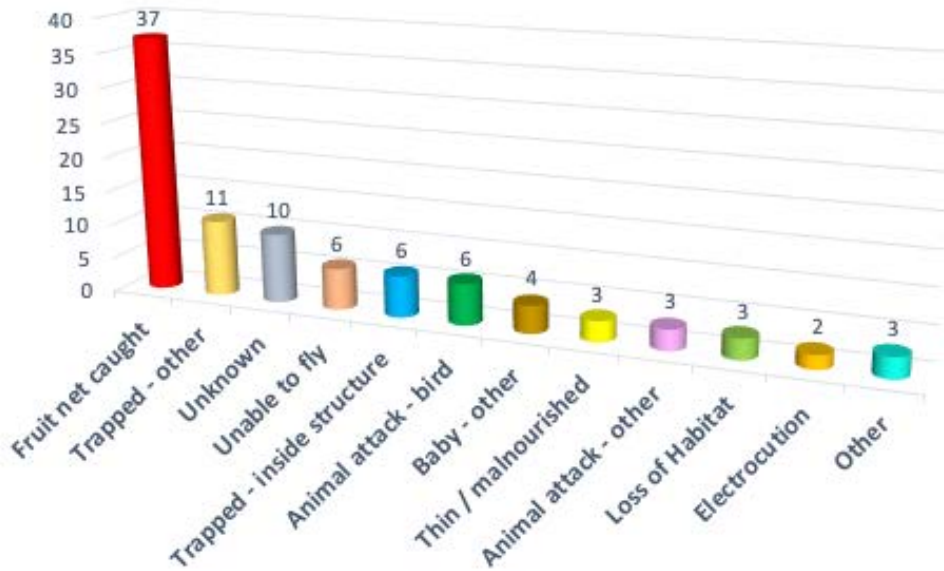
## Bats/Flying Foxes

2021 was a much quieter year for flying foxes than the previous year's influx following bushfires and devastating storms in NSW and the ACT. This was much appreciated by our carers. Inappropriate fruit tree netting is still a primary cause of Flying foxes needing rescue.

### Flying Foxes and Bats by type



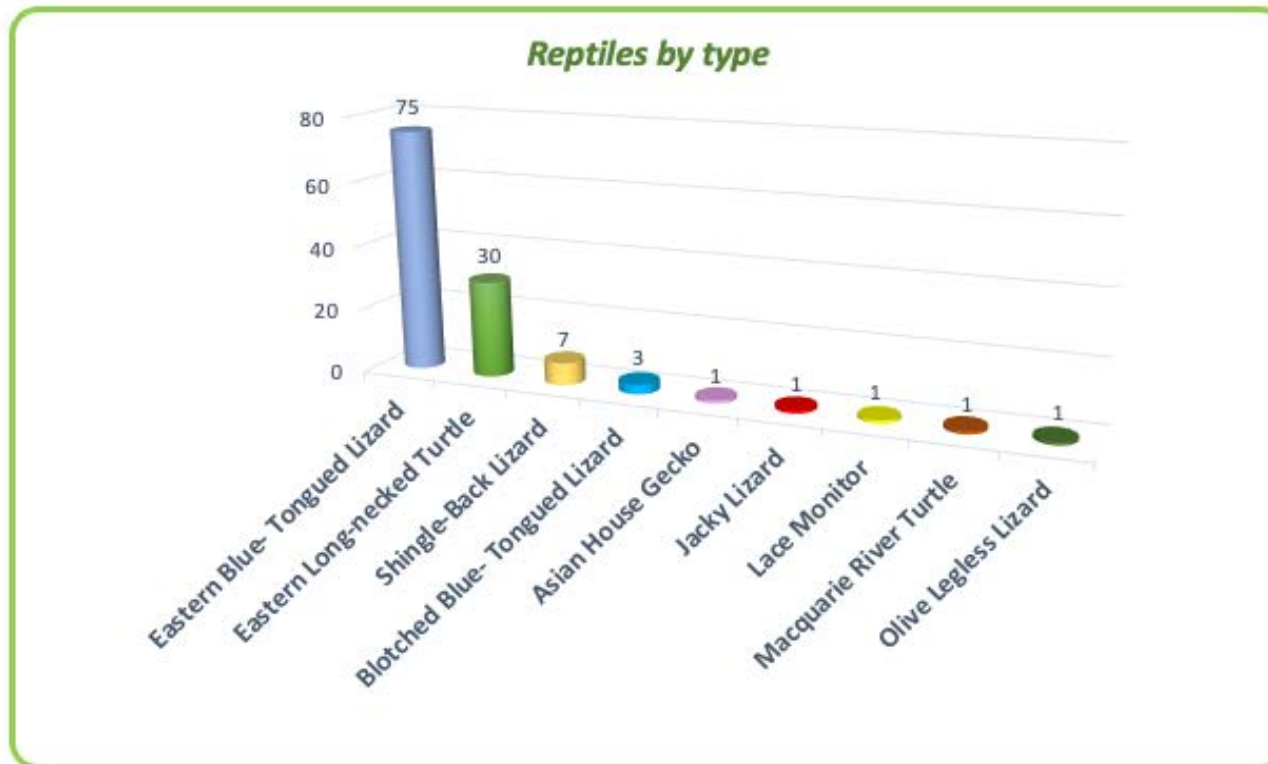
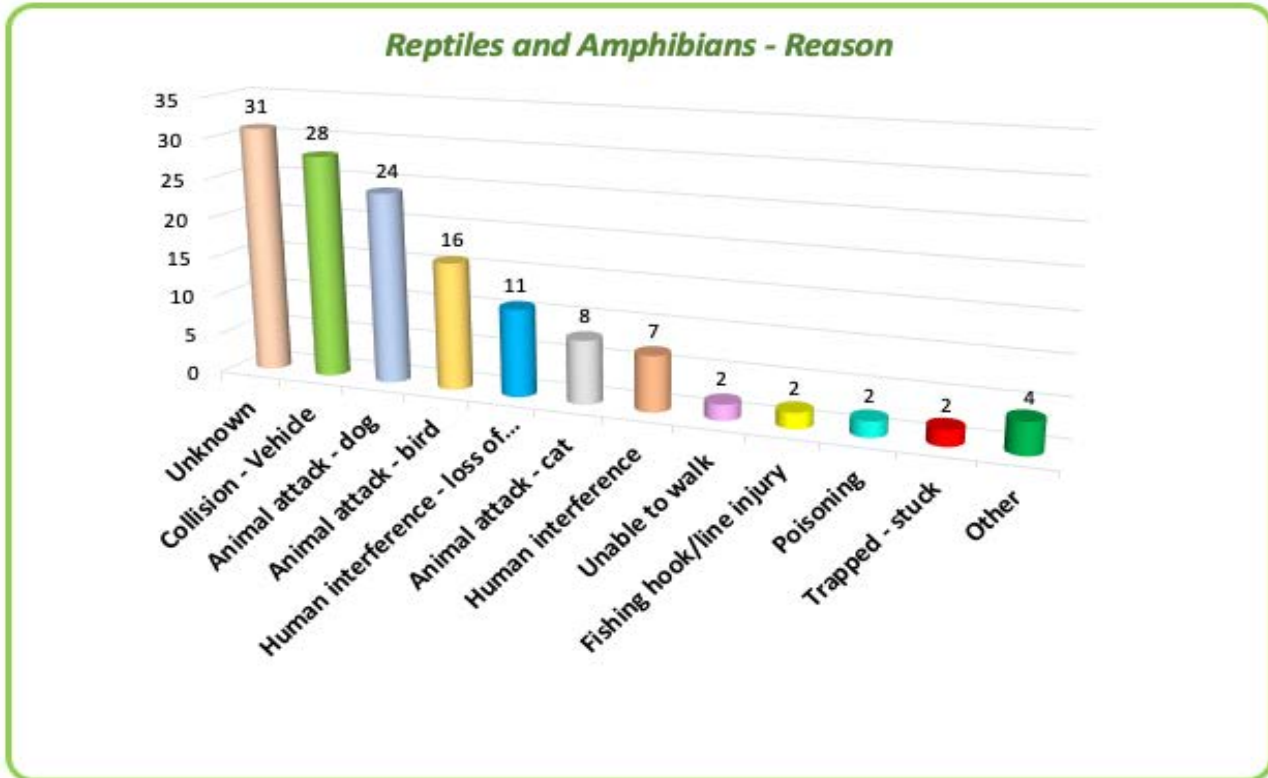
### Flying Foxes and Bats - Reason





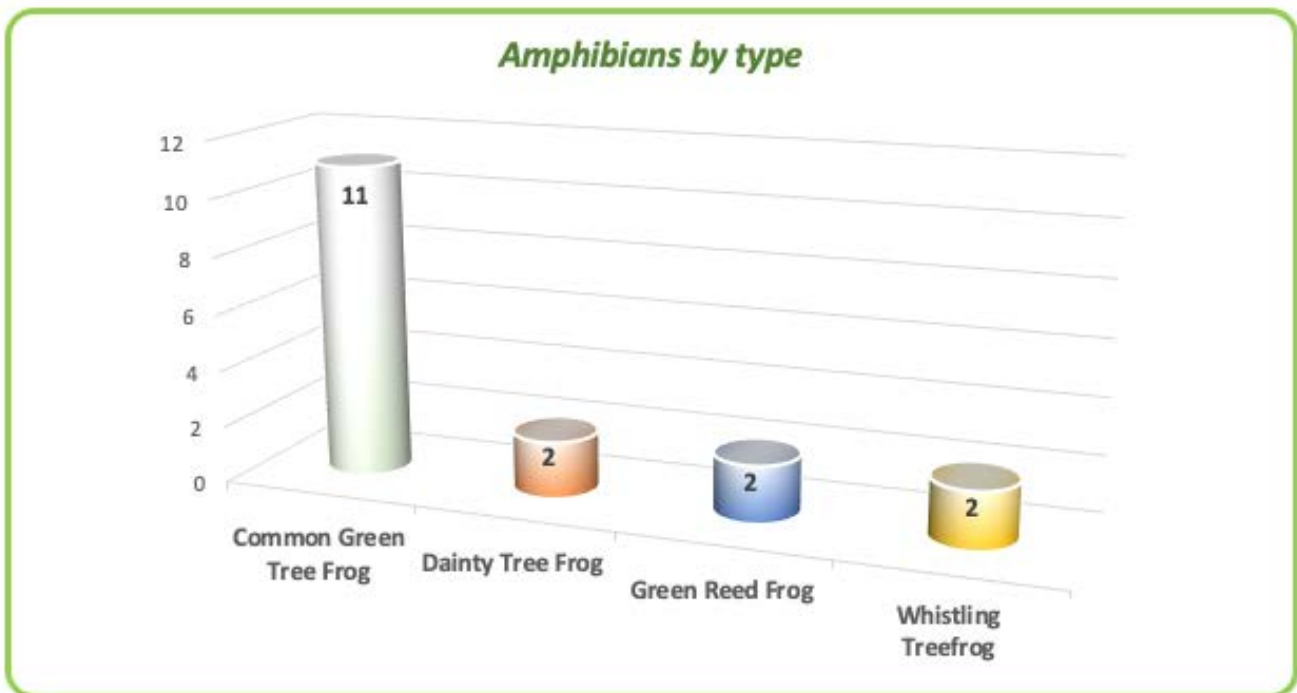
## Reptiles and Amphibians

Fewer lizards came into care this year, possibly due to good rain and availability of food. However, this rain also contributed to an increase in the number turtles coming into care as a result of being hit by cars. The majority of these animals were able to be released following rehabilitation.





Our most frequent incoming frogs are Common Green Tree Frogs, which arrive in the ACT in interstate fruit deliveries, visitors with caravans and household items from people relocating to the ACT from interstate. These animals remain in care under a special license.



## ***Treasurer's Report***

The last year (2021) was financially a very good year for ACT Wildlife with high donations and grants received which enabled us to construct several needed assets and perform more wildlife care and protection programs than previously.

### **INCOME**

Income for the year was \$443,516 including \$235,350 in donations. Notable among many donations in the year were a large bequest from Betty West Campbell of \$147,023 and \$10,000 from the Green Shed.

Government grants spent totalled \$103,508 including \$69,247 of \$100,000 from Urban Reserves, Parks and Conservation to assist with staff costs.

Other income of \$28,706 was mainly from calendar sales and training fees.

### **EXPENSES**

Employee expenses at \$104,269 was our largest cost and a significant increase of almost 90% on 2020 due to employing effectively two full time staff equivalents compared to one in 2020. The salary rate only increased marginally in line with the award.

Administration expenses increased due to rent for the Duffy premises being fully charged again (\$11,696) compared to significant rent relief in 2020 (\$2,799). Depreciation was also significantly higher due to capitalising several assets purchased with grants in 2021.

### **SURPLUS**

The surplus for the year was \$238,337 compared to \$311,043 in 2020. An excellent outcome for both years.

### **BALANCE SHEET**

Total assets increased from \$563,310 to \$773,077 including \$608,307 in cash.

Liabilities decreased from \$116,802 to \$88,130 due to lower unspent balances on grants.

Total equity at year-end was \$684,947 compared to \$446,508 for 2020.

# ACT Wildlife Incorporated

## Statement of comprehensive income

for the year ended 31 December 2021

	2021	2020
	\$	\$
<b>Income</b>		
Donations	235,350	186,484
Grants	62,783	156,235
Government Grants	103,508	74,551
Memberships	13,225	20,522
Bank Interest	231	164
Other Income	28,706	36,608
<b>Total income</b>	<b>443,803</b>	<b>474,564</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Grant expenses	8,719	67,450
Employee expenses	104,269	55,052
Administration expenses	28,383	12,531
Depreciation	30,232	4,976
Food & Consumables	12,386	7,913
Other expenses	21,477	15,599
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>205,466</b>	<b>163,521</b>
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>238,337</b>	<b>311,043</b>

For the full Financial Report please see Attachment A.

# ACT Wildlife Incorporated

## Statement of financial position

as at 31 December 2021

	2021	2020
	\$	\$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	600,007	452,733
Trade and other receivables	3,179	7,633
Stock on hand	5,121	1,634
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>608,307</b>	<b>462,000</b>
Fixed Assets		
Vehicles	56,198	64,323
Aviaries, Cages, Computers and equipment	57,989	10,131
Clinic	50,583	27,126
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>164,770</b>	<b>101,580</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>773,077</b>	<b>563,310</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Current Liabilities		
Grants	28,517	56,571
Government Grants	50,753	54,861
Trade payables		113
Employee provisions	8,860	5,257
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>88,130</b>	<b>116,802</b>
Non-current Liabilities		
Employee provisions	0	0
Other non-current liabilities	0	0
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>88,130</b>	<b>116,802</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>684,947</b>	<b>446,508</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Capital	37,481	37,481
Current year Surplus	238,337	311,043
Retained earnings	409,129	97,984
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>684,947</b>	<b>446,508</b>

## Grants Received

We have been successful again in securing grants that help us meet the costs associated with our rescue and rehabilitation and release efforts.

We thank:



### WIRES

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| - Food Support Program (approved 2021) | \$10,000 |
| - Rescue Equipment                     | \$5,000  |



### ACT Government

- |                                      |           |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| - Environment and Nature in the City |           |
| Mange treatment                      | \$10,000  |
| - Parks and Conservation             |           |
| Staff wages                          | \$100,000 |

The Parks and Conservation Grant has again allowed us to employ two staff to reduce the workload on our volunteers.

Grants are critical in allowing us to carry out specific projects and purchase infrastructure that would otherwise require substantial fundraising efforts. Thank you everyone who puts the time and expertise into writing grant submissions.

## Membership

Membership fees play a vital role in securing a predictable funding base for our organisation. While numbers of financial members are down from the previous year's record high numbers that followed the bushfires and hailstorms, our membership base continues to grow and we recorded a membership of 398 people in 2021.

## Training and Education

Our ability to respond flexibly within the ever changing COVID-19 environment has allowed us to continue delivering training across all of our areas. This flexibility also attracted participants from interstate care groups, demonstrating the versatility of online training delivery. Training provides our volunteers with the information and equipment they need to become effective rescuers and rehabilitators. However, attendees that don't go on to become volunteers are equipped with knowledge to better respond to wildlife in their area. That said, we look forward to a return to face to face training when it is safe to do so.

<i>ACT Wildlife Training 2021</i>			
Course	Sessions	Attendees	
Bird (Adv)	2	21	Plus 16 from Tasmanian Wildlife Council
Bird (Basic)	5	58	Plus 11 from Wildlife Rescue South Coast
Orientation	6	138	
Wildman	10	135	
Sewing Group	10	0	10 sessions
Bats	1	14	
Reptiles	2	23	Tried hybrid course July 3 (including trainers) at Duffy and rest online
Baby Birds	1	19	
Possums	2	25	
Phone & Transport	6	89	
Wombats	2	31	
<b>Total number of sessions</b>	<b>47</b>		
<b>Total number of Attendees</b>		<b>553</b>	<b>Plus 37 others</b>

## *Fundraising Activity*

Covid restrictions have again limited the opportunities for fundraising during 2021. However, the 2022 Calendar, photographed by Swimming Wombat Photographers, was a huge success.

Calendar sales have gone from strength to strength with 900 being sold in the lead up to Christmas in its fourth year of sales this year. The number sold included 55 to overseas buyers. The calendar provides a stunning record of some of the animals that have been in care over the year as well as promoting the work done by our volunteers. The 2023 calendar will feature photographs of our in-care wildlife taken by their carers and ACT Wildlife photographers.





Sponsor a Species continued to grow its number of sponsors through 2021. Currently 100 sponsors pay differing levels of monthly fees to help support the care of wombats, birds, reptiles, possums and bats. There are three levels of sponsorship available:

*Fledgling* – the reward is being thanked on both the ACT Wildlife Facebook page and website;

*Wild Thing* – provides the benefits of Fledgling plus an additional reward of 2 newsletters a year; and

*Wildlife Warrior* – provides all the above benefits plus invitations to talks by ACT Wildlife carers throughout the year.

Unfortunately Covid impacted our ability to provide Wildlife Warrior carer talks in 2021. Usually three talks take place in a year, however a talk about birds and owls went ahead at our Duffy premises in March.

Promotion of Sponsor a Species is undertaken using graphics with information about a particular species or in a more general form.





The graphic features the text "SPONSOR a SPECIES" in large, colorful, stylized letters. To the right is the ACT Wildlife logo with a hedgehog illustration and the tagline "Rescue • Rehabilitate • Release". Below the logo, handwritten-style text reads: "Did you know a wombat in care costs \$1000 a year? Milk, bedding, food, medications." Three Polaroid-style photographs show wombats being cared for: one being held, one being bottle-fed, and one being petted. At the bottom, more handwritten-style text says: "Sponsor a wombat today! A great gift idea too. [actwildlife.net/sponsor-a-species/](http://actwildlife.net/sponsor-a-species/)"

Can you help?

# SPONSOR a SPECIES

[actwildlife.net/sponsor-a-species/](http://actwildlife.net/sponsor-a-species/)



## Looking Ahead

One of our biggest needs going into the future is to have access to a specialist wildlife vet. Our volunteers rely on the generosity of private vet practices who see injured wildlife whilst still working on meeting the needs of their paying customers. We know that injured wildlife may wait for several hours before being seen by a vet and this is a real concern for our volunteers. We also know that outcomes for injured animals improve with prompt pain management and other treatment. This issue is a priority in our long term plan.

The committee continually updates the long term strategic plan as each short term goal is achieved.

## The 2021 Committee

Lindy Butcher	- <i>President</i>
Marg Peachey	- <i>Vice President</i>
Dorothy Brown	- <i>Secretary</i>
Don McLeod	- <i>Treasurer</i>
Corin Pennock	- <i>Member</i>
Helen Hardy	- <i>Member</i>
Luke Robbie	- <i>Member</i>
Hange Sloan	- <i>Member</i>
Heather Sommariva	- <i>Member</i>
Mark Jenkin	- <i>Member</i>
Sarah James	- <i>Member</i>
Kate Morioka	- <i>Member</i>



# RESCUE



# REHABILITATION



# RELEASE