

WILDCARE Online...

Important message for DTPHA, DPIWE, FT staff and WILDCARE groups

1. Project Funding Submissions

To ensure that project funding submission applications can be reviewed and discussed at each Board of Management meeting, submission forms **MUST BE RECEIVED AT LEAST 1 WEEK**

PRIOR TO EACH MEETING.

The new Online form is on the **WILDCARE** website <www.wildcaretas.org.au> under *Forms — Project Funding Submission Form*, along with the 2003 Board of Management meeting schedule, found under *Forms — Project*

Submissions Information.

2. Individual Authorisation

Departmental staff requests for individual authorisation of **WILDCARE** members assisting staff in activities can now be lodged to the Vice Chairperson in an Online format.

The new Online form is on the **WILDCARE** website <www.wildcaretas.org.au> under *Forms — Request* for individual authorisation.

WILDCARE Annual Conference 2003...

Did you attend the Conference?

At this year's Open Space Conference/AGM, we were fortunate to have along a member who captured the occasion on paper! During the course of the day Des Shield applied his artistic talents to sketch other members. See if you can pick your picture!

Des retired early from teaching a few years ago for

medical reasons and is unable to take part in heavy physical activity including (unfortunately) adventurous bushwalking. He now enjoys his other interests: art and birdwatching to a greater degree. He is currently in the process of painting a comprehensive set of watercolours of various aspects of the Narawntapu National Park, taken from his photos and sketches. To date 20 are complete.

WILDCARE Inc would like to thank Des for 'donating' his sketches for this issue.

Workshop Outcomes

The following are the workshop topics raised and outcomes from discussions by the membership during the **WILDCARE 2003 Conference**, held at Narawntapu National Park in the State's north. The Conference was to be held in the newly built Visitors Centre. Due to building delays, members enjoyed the day out in the open with a SES-supplied and erected tent for those who wished to be under cover — compliments of the Burnie SES. The Board has already considered all the topics and outcomes (progress to date noted at the end of each topic), and will continue to work through those issues over the coming meetings.

Conference outcomes

Topic: WILDCARE and Centrelink

Convenor: Peter Tonelli

Attendees: Peter Mooney, Julie

Nermut, Philip Milner, Rodney Milner, Annette Varga, John Varga, Anne Kiely, Steven Pursell, Jennifer Pursell, Tara Pursell, Brenda and Brenton Murphy, Rob Hill, Howard Simco, John Rees, Toni Hill

Outcomes

- **WILDCARE** is recognised by some offices of Centrelink as an "approved activity" in terms of mutual obligation requirements.
- Ideal for 50–60 year olds (i.e. people made redundant but who have immense skills to contribute).
- Instant access to activity in Parks and Reserves.
- Activity recognised in relation to any aspect of **WILDCARE** that is relevant to the registration form (e.g. zoology, art public speaking and other volunteer categories).
- Registration with Volunteering Tasmania another way to do this.
- Recommended that **WILDCARE** Inc seeks necessary recognition from Centrelink to make this

opportunity more widely available to members.

Board progress to date:

Centrelink has been approached and as a result, has accepted that members undertaking volunteer work of authorised activities of

IN THIS ISSUE

- **Chairperson's Report for 2002**
- **AGM 2003 Outcomes**
- **Nature Writing Award 2003**
- **Karst CAREs Report**
- **AAT News**
- **Hut Wardens Report**
- **PWS District Volunteer Facilitators**
- **Fishcare News**

Plus More...

WILDTIMES

Newsletter of **WILDCARE** Incorporated
 Tasmania's largest incorporated volunteer organisation,
 caring for wild places, wildlife and cultural heritage.
 C/o GPO Box 44 Hobart 7001, Australia. Ph 03 6233 2836. Fax 03 6224 0884.
 E-mail: <office@wildcaretas.org.au>, <editor@wildcaretas.org.au>
 (newsletter articles). Website: <www.wildcaretas.org.au>.



WILDCARE are fulfilling the requirements of Centrelink's mutual obligation policy.

Topic: Hut Warden Program

Convenor: Lyle Rubock

Attendees: Joan Fitzallen, Ian Fitzallen, Bruce Tivendale, Pat McGuire, Brian McGuire, Fran Lee, Mark Alexander, Antoinette Augustrius, Jim Buchanan, Nita Poutney

Outcomes

- Roles and duties of Track Wardens (Waterfall Valley) explained.
- Discussion regarding funding of the Pelion Hut to extend the program.
- Problems with inadequately equipped walkers discussed.
- General discussion about Overland track walkers and their expectations.

Board progress to date:

- The Cradle Mountain Field Centre has allocated funds for the 2003/04 season in its budget, for volunteer reimbursement costs for Waterfall Valley-based Hut Wardens. The Field Centre has been invited to lodge a funding submission to **WILDCARE** if they wish to run volunteers at Pelion next season.
- OH&S issues need to be resolved between **WILDCARE** and the Field Centre.

Topic: Adopt-a-Track Program

Convenor: Alison Scott

Attendees: Howard Simco, Gordon Cott, Lyn Jackson, Bruce Tivendale, Mark Alexander, Fran

Lee, Ian Fitzallen, Joan Fitzallen, Philip Milner, Rodney Milner, Nita Poutney, Rob Hill, Toni Hill, Annette Varga, John Varga, Steven Pursell, Tara Pursell, Jennifer Pursell, Brenda Murphy, Brenton Murphy, Brian McGuire

Outcomes

- Parks & Wildlife Service to be approached about lack of support for volunteers.

- Where are promised signs for adopted tracks?
- Also where is the Track Manual?
- Introductions, names and phone numbers of new Facilitators needed.
- Workshop training courses. What's the future of these. More [workshops] required.



- Approach the PWS as to their willingness to continue with Adopt-a-Track and how (e.g. workshops).
- Is the review of Adopt-a-Track guidelines in 12 months time going to be undertaken by PWS in conjunction with **WILDCARE** Inc? Will Track Caretakers be invited to participate?

Board progress to date:

- Profiles of the new PWS District Facilitators including contact details are in this issue and the next issue of **WILDTIMES**.
- The track manual is being finalised by 3 volunteers involved with the Program and is planned to be released by July 2003.
- The Chairperson is currently having discussions with relevant PWS staff regarding the other issues.

Topic: Wildlife Care and Rescue

Convenor: Julia Butler-Ross

Participants: Pat McGuire, Alistair Ross, Lorraine McDonald, Judy Synott, Evelyn Funk, Caroline Shemwell, Heather Warden, Julie Nermut and Peter Tonelli

Key to Success for **WILDCARE** in

2003-4: Good Communication

Points from Discussion:

1. Road kill

- Great concern about numbers of dead animals on the road (mainly tourists).

- Lack of public interest in the problem.
- People deliberately drive over them.
- Some roads (i.e. Narawntapu) need chicanes to slow motorists down.
- Appropriate signage (new signs out but only being trialed in limited places).

- Animal silhouettes are good, why aren't there more of them in high risk areas?
- Signs with local care group numbers on them, different areas have different contact numbers.
- Problem: Will groups be able to cope with increased numbers. Needs further discussion.

2. Signs are stolen or shot at

- Produce a video about road kill issues.
- Lobby local Councils to put up road signs.
- Produce a brochure for tourists with local care group numbers and information and put in the pack given to people coming off the 'Spirit' ferries.
 - Get a script that can be read over the 'Spirit' radio station so tourists hear it before they disembark.



3. Pre-paid Mobile phones

- The issue of pre-paid mobile phones needs to be thought through more.
- Need guidelines regarding coordination of who gets the phone and when, and how is it used etc?

4. Coordinators

- Need to meet to discuss all the issues either through Nature Conservation Branch or **WILDCARE**.
- There is a need to set standards and guidelines for carers and groups.
- **WILDCARE** take responsibility for carer groups.
- Would like a 3-5 year plan.

5. Public Access to Carers

- Need direct links to public.
- Central number useful: RSPCA &



P&WS are difficult to reach.

- Distribute numbers through Police (Bushcare Program) and Emergency Services.



6. Advertising

- 'Spirit of Tasmania', radio station and tourist packs.
- Tourist Centres as a brochure giving local coordinator numbers for each district.
- Radio and TV through Community Service Announcements.
- Increase in calls may be chaotic to start with, but will sort out eventually.

7. Euthanasing

- Adult animals at large in community (particularly sick/mangy wombats) Police, SES or Fire Brigades can be very helpful.

8. Pre-Release and Release sites

- Need for registration of facilities.

9. Training

- Beginners need training before they receive animals.
- Mentoring works well (i.e. an experienced carer in close contact with a new carer).
- Group information sharing.
- Need for accreditation and standards for carers — commitment to on-going training programs.



10. Banding/Tagging/Tattooing

- It is unknown what the survival rate for released fostered animals is.
- Are we wasting our time (and money) if the majority are not going to survive simply because of their contact with humans Non-rip tags are available. Birds are banded under license.

11. Funding

- The cost of raising animals is enormous. WILDCARE program has funds; Community or Seedling Grants through Local Councils. Doesn't have to be money — Councils can donate 'in-kind' (i.e. timber, filing cabinets, old computers or do some on-ground

works, etc).

- Hospitals: Could be a source of equipment (i.e. old humidicribs, out of date pharmaceutical, damaged instruments, opened but not

used sterile dressing trays, bandages, etc)

- Pharmacies: Out of Date items such as iodine, disinfectants, bandages, etc.

- Lifeline, St Vincent's, Salvation Army, etc. all can supply cots, material, etc.

- Action: Perhaps bags with a logo (i.e. WILDCARE) could be distributed to the above organisations for donations and collected from time to time.

- Government should make more funding available for more training (advanced in particular) and expenses such as pathology, etc.



12. Structural issues

- There seems to be pressure to prevent carer groups from organising and developing on their terms.

- Animal welfare is paramount, but if carer groups are well trained and organised then good animal care will follow.

13. Action: Carers and coordinators need to meet to discuss issues and future directions

- Need to stop the 'backyarders' who take animals in as pets and treat them inappropriately.
- More needs to be done to emphasise to the public the special requirements necessary to care for native animals

14. Recommendations

- A statewide meeting of experienced carers, coordinators and appropriate stakeholders (i.e. Nature Conservation Branch, PWS, etc) needs to be convened as soon as possible. WILDCARE could facilitate and fund such a meeting.

- A brochure on native animal rescue could be produced for distribution through the tourist industry, including district numbers of carer groups. These should be available at Tourist Information offices and in the 'Spirit' tourist packs. This could be done through WILDCARE funding program.

- A script for radio or TV announcements written to advertise and highlight native animal rescue and emergency care and numbers.

- The brochure and scripts could be done through WILDCARE using funding, but also accessing the skills and knowledge of WILDCARE members to design, and publish the material.

Board progress to date:

- a) These numerous issues are still to be

discussed by the Board.

- b) Wildlife carers and NCB staff have recently participated in a one day workshop.

Topic: Care Program assessment — OBP monitoring as an example

Convenor: Bevis Dutton

Attendees: Jim Buchanan, Richard Hammond, John Rees, Anne Kiely, Antoinette Augustinus, Peter Mooney

**The
POSSUM
SHED**
Westerway (Nr Mt Field NP)



**10% discount to
WILDCARE members
on all gifts.**

Outcomes

- Evaluation of participants required ensuring appropriate skills.
- Briefings/training required prior to work commencement.
- Feedback to participants necessary.
- Works programs desirable on top of OBP work.
- Program assessment required determining success or worth.

Board progress to date:

WILDCARE is to make representation to Nature Conservation Branch and Parks & Wildlife Service on improved communications at change-over of volunteers; the end-results of the season re bird counting; and better OH&S briefings prior to volunteers going into the field.



Topic: Support the Supporters

Convenor: Jo Field

Attendees: Alison Scott, Gordon Scott, Hank Straach, Antoinette Augustinus, Lyn Jackson, Richard Hammond, Lyle Rubock, Brian McGuire, Nita Poutney, Mark Alexander, Fran Lee, Jim Buchanan, Rob Hill, Pat McGuire

Outcomes

- Re-engage the department by meeting half way with provision of admin support.
- Why don't the Departments recognise **WILDCARE** Inc?
- Meeting with Premier/Minister Green.
- Are **WILDCARE** members appreciated?
- Petition signed by **WILDCARE** members.
- Letter to Departmental heads to meet and discuss.
- Work undertaken by members recognised by Departments.
- All funding for admin support to come from departments as their contribution to the Partnership.



- BOM to get in direct contact with government heads to advise what **WILDCARE** Inc is about.

Board progress to date:

- Vice Chairperson has met with Bryan Green (Minister for PIWE), who had a positive attitude towards **WILDCARE** and the members' volunteer efforts. The Minister has undertaken to arrange a briefing to the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Heritage & Arts.
- The Vice-Chairperson and another Board member are waiting for a meeting date to be confirmed by the Secretary of Dept of Tourism, Parks, Heritage & Arts to discuss the above issues.

- Conference attendees and Board members have agreed in principal that a 0.03 FTE admin position will be funded out of **WILDCARE** funds. The Chairperson has approached the department for in-kind support (office space, etc), that has been agreed to; as well as the possibility of the position being matched by departmental funds, which is yet to be approved.

Chairperson's Report

Once again we have had a busy, productive, and at times, challenging year.

You, the members have grown in number and vastly increased the hours that you have provided to our partner organisations. The partners we are working with continue to expand. We now work with the usuals — Parks and Wildlife Service and Tasmanian Heritage Office (both part of TPHA), Resource Management and Conservation Division and Nature Conservation Branch (both of DPIWE) and have added Food Agriculture and Fisheries Division (part of DPIWE) working with volunteers registered with our new Fishcare Branch, Forestry Tasmania (in relation to Adopt-a-Track), while management plan recommendations for partnerships with Wellington Ranges Trust (for Adopt-a-Track), and

Southern Midlands Council (for an Adopt a Reserve program) and recent discussion with the RTBG and the Derwent River Project group about working together look really positive and productive. The staff with these organisations is critical to the success of the partnerships. Thankyou to all the Rangers, and other staff who have seen the light and seen the benefit of working with **WILDCARE** members. I would particularly like to thank Chris Leitch, the Community Engagement Facilitator, who provides enormous support and assistance to staff and volunteers wishing to work co-operatively through the **WILDCARE**/government partnership. In December last year, the end of the membership year we had 3500 members, around 1 in 115 Tasmanians. Fantastic growth! And I have to mention Deb Ramm who for a

number of years now has been the **WILDCARE** Office volunteer, who has provided an enormous amount of time, effort and commitment to ensuring that databases are up to date and working bee fliers are sent out. If you spread the memberships evenly over the year (which of course they aren't) Deb processed over 1500 memberships each month. Given that there were 50 working bee notices sent out last year, this means that Deb also prepared, packaged and mailed a working bee notice every week. On top of that, Deb answered many of the e-mails that came into the **WILDCARE** Inc office. A fantastic effort, without which this organisation would not operate. Thankfully Lyn Jackson has now started as our second **WILDCARE** Office volunteer, so thankyou Lyn for



getting involved in this way.

In the December 2002 *WILDTIMES* newsletter we outlined the statistics for the number of hours of volunteer work provided by our members. Take a look at them next time you are browsing through past issues. It amounts to an astounding 15 million dollars value of volunteer time towards natural and cultural heritage conservation and reserve management. The biggest thankyou and the loudest accolades have got to go to you the volunteers. What a supreme effort. This is what makes working with *WILDCARE* Inc such a pleasure. When someone asks "Can this be done?" the answer is "Sure, let's do it!"

We have increased our revenue this year having obtained, for the first time, some NHT funds. \$72,000 for Fishcare Facilitators; \$10,000 for Snake Island; and \$5,000 for Kate Reed Reserve. We also received \$25,000 from Wild Fisheries Branch of DPIWE to contract a Sponsorship consultant to develop a plan for marketing Fishcare to potential sponsors. When you add that to the \$70,000 income from memberships you can see that we have broken the \$100,000 income threshold. This has meant that we have had to register for GST. This in turn has increased the workload on our Treasurer, Jo Field, and I want to thank Jo profusely for her efforts in the Treasurer role and for her efforts as *WILDTIMES* Editor — all as a volunteer. With the need now for GST statements and GST requirements for invoicing and so on, Jo's enthusiasm and commitment has not faltered. The complex management of volunteer reimbursements for programs such as the Orange Bellied Parrot and the Waterfall Valley Hut Wardens has been dealt with efficiently and with good humour, despite the enormous pressures presented by those programs. I heartily welcome members of our new Fishcare branch, around 60 volunteers undertaking education and information activities around the objective of sustainable and ethical fishing. I also welcome the presidents and members of a number of new Community Action in Reserves (CAREs) groups.

We have fully documented our processes for adopting or authorising projects and individuals. I recommend that everyone read these on our new web site <www.wildcaretas.org.au> and to make sure that the staff you

CALL UP NOTICE

Kent Group CAREs celebration gathering

Friends of the Kent Group National Park (CAREs) is having a gathering to celebrate this unique place. We invite *WILDCARE* members to bring any stories, historical items, videos, photos, drawings, scrapbooks or any other art to the event. We will also be spending part of weekend to engage in some project planning but only in the most organic and convivial fashion. Former caretakers, project workers and those

interested in becoming involved with the Friends group are invited.

The event will be held on the weekend of 23–24 August, 2003. The venue is Darlington on Maria Island.

Contact: Christian Bell, President, Friends of the Kent Group National Park. Ph. 0427 872 670. Email: <marine@keypoint.com.au> or write to GPO Box 567, Hobart Tas 7001.

work with carry out those requirements. Once again, Chris Leitch and Jo Field put a lot of effort into getting the procedure booklet produced and distributed.

The web site has also been developed this year, and will become an important promotional and information site for us in coming months. Thanks to Richard Hammond who did the initial work with setting up the contractors who are developing the web site.

During the year we rearranged delegations for authorising individuals, so that our Vice Chairperson Richard Hammond now provides that authorisation on behalf of *WILDCARE* Inc. Not an insignificant workload, with around 60 individuals having been authorised over the last 12 months.

This is just one of many issues and processes that Richard has taken on this year. Richard has also taken the lead in discussions with our Agency partners in regard to sharing the cost of insurance premiums. As a result of his work, DPIWE has agreed to pay \$8000 as their part share, with discussions continuing with PWS, THO and Forestry that I hope will be as positive an outcome. And once again a profuse thank you to Richard for the work he is doing, as a volunteer. This year I feel that we have really been able to develop the concept of partnership at the office bearer level, and its great to work with Richard on what is effectively a Co-Chair basis.

The business of *WILDCARE* is carried out under the auspices of the

Board of Management, which now has 25 members. This executive group has also become more involved in

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decision-making, not least in relation to managing and allocating the funding scheme for small projects which has granted many thousands of dollars this year towards projects undertaken by our members. Thanks to all the members of the Board for your efforts this year.

WILDCARE Inc has been an enormous success and has grown at an unbelievable rate right from the beginning in 1997. It is interesting to hear the strong message coming from the workshops at this conference that this coming year should be a year of

consolidation. Wise council from our membership and one that the Board will be interested in hearing. I suspect that the growth will continue, but amongst that we need to ensure that we don't leave behind the successes to date, by making sure that we keep an eye on processes and relationships that underpin the success of our programs. There has also been an interesting shift in understanding demonstrated during the workshops this year. You the members are now using language that demonstrates that you see the organisation as yours and

see yourself as the organisation. The discussion has involved much more of "we need to do this" rather than "**WILDCARE** needs to do this". You are the organisation and the organisation is you. **WILDCARE** Inc is not a third party, its not an insurance policy, and its not government, it is an incorporated organisation and you are its members. Keep up the good work! Your organisation is an outstanding success, and you make it so.

Andrew Smith
Chairperson
WILDCARE inc

Annual General Meeting Outcomes

The Annual General Meeting was held in conjunction with the **WILDCARE** Annual Conference, at Narawntapu National Park on the 22nd March 2003. Fifty-five members attended both the AGM and the Conference.

1. The Chairperson presented his annual report (copy included in this issue).
2. The Auditors Report and Financial

Statements were presented by the Treasurer and accepted by the membership. (Copy of the financial statements and auditors report included in this issue).

3. The following office bearer positions were declared vacant for election — Vice Chairperson and Treasurer.
4. The following members were elected unopposed:

- Richard Hammond — Vice Chairperson

- Jo Field — Treasurer

5. Moved by Jim Buchanan, seconded by Brian McGuire that "**Membership fees as from the 2004 membership year be increased to \$25**". Motion carried unanimously. (Note — The new membership fee will be applicable from 1st September 2003. The member discount on Annual Park Passes offered by the Parks & Wildlife Service remains at \$20.)

WILDCARE INCORPORATED Income & Expenditure Statement For the year ended 31 December, 2002

	2002 \$	2001 \$
Income		
Payment In		6,750
Grants	1,141	
Widge Income		3,900
Landcare & Coastcare Income		1,135
Project Income	34,711	9,900
Donations Received	32	50
Subscriptions	61,544	41,738
Interest received	37	47
Promotional Items	80	
Training Income	270	
Total income	97,816	62,619
Expenses		
Advertising and promotion	820	
Agfest		500
Audit fees	305	110
Bank Fees And Charges	72	75
BOM Costs	261	
Annual Conference	638	457
Cradle expenses		315
Equipment purchases	717	
Event costs	1,092	
Insurance	14,964	4,246
Internet Services	165	
Landcare & Coastcare Expenses		1,068
Legal fees		552
Newsletter	20,142	10,616
Office Expenses	40	
Payments Out	2,041	
Postage	95	45
Printing & stationery	4,712	3,805
Project	23,795	11,700
Promo Material	12,578	1,521
Subscription - Costs	38	
Sundry expenses	1,139	
Training		4,054
Total expenses	83,616	39,064

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements. These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

WILDCARE INCORPORATED Detailed Balance Sheet As At 31 December, 2002

	2002	2001
Current Assets		
Cash Assets		
Cash At Bank	47,775	33,311
Cash on hand	1	
	<u>47,776</u>	<u>33,311</u>
Receivables		
Trade debtors	1,280	
	<u>1,280</u>	
Total Current Assets	49,056	33,311
Total Assets		
	<u>49,056</u>	<u>33,311</u>
Current Liabilities		
Payables		
Unsecured:		
- Trade creditors	3,625	
	<u>3,625</u>	
Total Current Liabilities	3,625	
Total Liabilities	3,625	
Net Assets	45,431	33,311
Members' Funds		
Accumulated surplus (deficit)	45,431	33,311
Total Members' Funds	45,431	33,311

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements. These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

WILDCARE INCORPORATED Income & Expenditure Statement For the year ended 31 December, 2002		
	2002 \$	2001 \$
Profit from ordinary activities before income tax	14,200	23,556
Income tax revenue relating to ordinary activities		
Profit from ordinary activities after income tax	14,200	23,556
Profit (loss) from extraordinary items after related income tax	(2,080)	
Net profit attributable to the association	12,120	23,556
Total changes in equity of the association	12,120	23,556
Opening retained profits	33,311	9,755
Net profit attributable to the association	12,120	23,556
Closing retained profits	45,431	33,311

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements. These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

AUDIT CERTIFICATE

AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF WILDCARE INC.

SCOPE

I have audited the financial statements of the Association for the period ended 31 December, 2002.

The committee/Board of management of the association is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the financial report and the information contained therein. I have performed an audit of the financial report in order to express an opinion on it.

My audit has been planned and performed in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide a reasonable level of assurance as to whether the annual financial report is free of material misstatement. My procedures included the examination on a test basis of evidence supporting the accounts, and other disclosures in the financial report, and an examination of accounting policies, procedures and estimates.

This audit has been performed to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with Statements of Accounting Concepts and Standards so as to present a view of the mission, which is consistent with my understanding of its operations.

Inherent Risk

It is not possible for Wilcare Inc. to maintain an effective system of internal control over receipts until the initial entry into its accounting records. Further the inherent limitations of a small association's system of internal control, such as Wilcare Inc. means there may be an unavoidable risk that an irregularity will remain undiscovered.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

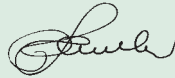
AUDIT OPINION

I report that in my opinion,
Satisfactory accounting records have been kept by the association in respect of the financial period ended 31 December, 2002, including:

- (a) The records of the sources and nature of the income of the association and.
- (b) The records of the nature and purpose of the expenditure of the association
- (c) The statements prepared from the accounting records of the association in respect of that financial period were properly drawn up so as to adequately explain the financial transactions of the association for the financial year and the results of its operations for the year then ended and,
- (d) The financial report presents fairly the financial position of the association as at 31 December, 2002;

in accordance with Statements of Accounting Concepts, applicable Australian Accounting Standards and applicable Approved Accounting Standards.

The rules relating to the administration of the association's funds have been adhered to.



Signed **Peter J. Lawler**
Dip Acc. MA (Business Admin)Hons., PhD, CPA(Auditing), PNA
Registered Company Auditor

Date: 19 March, 2003
Address: 64 Alford Street, Howrah. 7018

AUDIT CERTIFICATE

Nervy newbies

When Jenny approached me with obvious enthusiasm and delight in the fun a WILDCARE member can have in contributing to the ongoing development that makes this volunteer organisation as great as it is, I asked if she would be interested in expressing her thoughts to let other members, who haven't yet attended a Conference, know what a great experience it is...

With an air of slight trepidation, my partner, his daughter and myself set off to our very first WILDCARE activity — the Open Space Conference and AGM, at Bakers Beach in March 2003. We didn't know a soul and to start with felt a bit conspicuous, but as the forum began and people commenced speaking, our nerves left us and we began to feel more comfortable. We did not know what to expect from the day and went with open minds.

We found that the other members of WILDCARE attending the forum to be lovely people and they all made us welcome and comfortable. As the day drew on, our brains started 'ticking' and thoughts began to flow, as we discovered that the amount of input you had on the day was totally up to you. The Open Space concept allows members to both participate in the topics suggested (by members) and

share ideas, or simply sit and listen.

As a result, we found out how to become more involved with WILDCARE and its activities, as well as listening to other members' ideas and involvement in the various projects offered through WILDCARE. And to top it off, the 'Elders' of the WILDCARE Board of Management turned on an excellent BBQ with cheeses and bikkies to boot!

We found this, our first WILDCARE activity, to be not only informative but very enjoyable as well. We suggest to all those members who may be unsure about 'joining in' to simply DO IT! Fill in your preferred activity on the back of the WILDCARE registration form and forward it to the WILDCARE Office, and simply wait for a call up notice relating to that activity — it's as simple as that! We'll be back!

Jenny, Steven and Tara
(Seasoned)WILDCARE members!

POETS BREAKFAST EAGLEHAWK CAFÉ

If you are interested in Creative Writing and Poetry, come and join in on this informal group meeting at the Eaglehawk Café, 5131 Arthur Highway, Eaglehawk Neck.

Phone 03 6250 3331 or email: eaglehawk.café@tassie.net.au

Bring your own writings/poetry along.

WILDCARE members are entitled to 10% discount* off all meals valued over \$20.00.

(*alcohol not included.)

The Conference is an annual event and is open to all current members — so why not take the opportunity in participating in next year's Open Space Conference? I'm sure Jenny and her family will be there again!

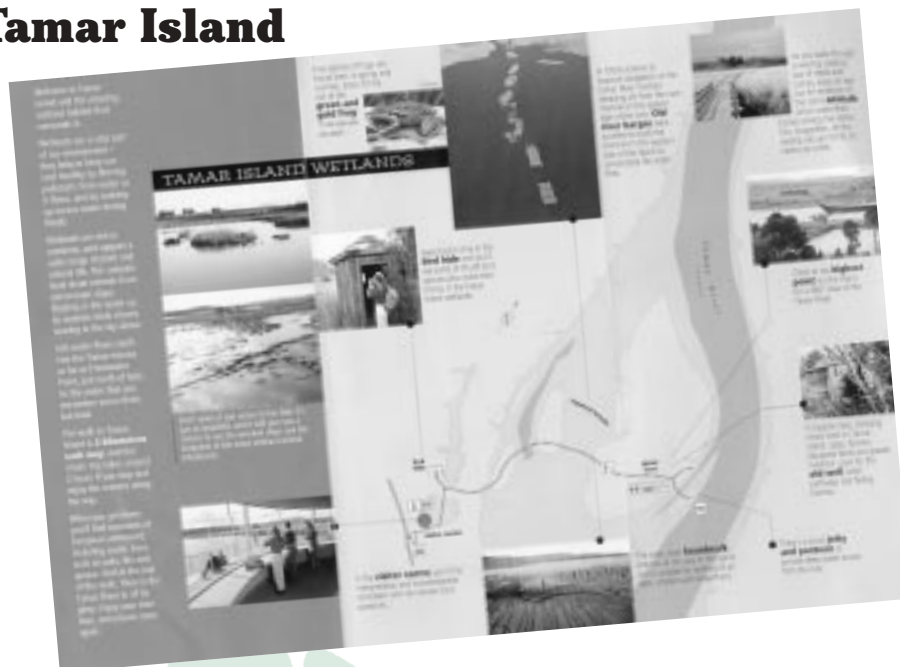
Editor

Have you visited Tamar Island Wetlands?

Tamar Island Wetlands is a conservation area, 15 minutes drive from the centre of Launceston along the West Tamar Highway. There is a 1.3 km board walk (wheelchair access), that leads visitors over the wetlands to Tamar Island.

At the entrance to the wetlands is the award winning Interpretation Centre, which is staffed by **WILDCARE** volunteers. The volunteers are part of the Tamar Island Wetlands Volunteer CAREs group who staff the Centre 7 days a week, offering information to local, interstate and overseas visitors about the wetlands and other sites around Tasmania. The volunteers have visits from schools and community groups for whom educational and activity sessions are provided.

Because of the increasing numbers of visitors finding their way to Tamar Island Wetlands, the volunteers decided there was a need for a professional and exciting interpretation brochure. Thanks to **WILDCARE**, the CAREs group's funding application was approved and we now have a brochure to enhance visitors' experience(s).



So, next time you are in the area, drop into the Centre, collect one of the new brochures and take a great walk across the wetlands, river channels and finally to the Island, which has picnic facilities to add to a delightful day out. There are lots to see such as historic relics, an abundance of bird life, snakes, frogs and endangered species such as the green and gold frog, the glossy grass skink (recently discovered) and many wetland plant species (2 endangered, 1 rare). And

don't forget to take the time to speak with the dedicated volunteers.

Julie Nermut
Representative for the
Tamar Island Wetlands Volunteer
CAREs group

*Members wishing to volunteer at Tamar Island Wetlands can register their interest by contacting the **WILDCARE** Office and amending their members' records to include "Tamar Island" as a preferred Reserve. Members can also contact the Centre on 6327.3964 and speak with Julie or the other volunteers.*

Congratulations! Nature Writing Award 2003

WILDCARE is pleased to announce the winners of the inaugural **WILDCARE** Tasmania Nature Writing Award 2003. Winners were

announced at the Writers and Readers Festival on Sunday, 30th March 2003 at the Hunter Street Arts Centre.

1ST Prize

\$4,500 plus a 2 week Wilderness Residency in Tasmania

Nicholas Drayson, ACT "*Strictly for the Birds*"

Nicholas will also be running a writer's workshop during his residency. Details will be posted on this site later.

Runners Up

\$250 each

Emily Stoddart, Tasmania. "*The Sea Dragon Question*"

Caroline Leach-Paholski, Victoria "*Grass*"

One hundred and ten entries were received from across Australia and overseas. The above stories will be published in **WILDTIMES** in this and the next couple of issues, and in *Island Magazine*.

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Strictly for the Birds

They follow you. No matter which way you turn or how fast you go, they follow you. Day and night, in fair weather, rain or storm, they are with you. Sometimes they are so close that you could see the whites of their eyes — if they had whites to their eyes. Sometimes they are no more than distant specks on the far horizon, but still you know they are following you. Why they follow you no one knows. Perhaps for food, perhaps for company. Perhaps just for curiosity. Because there's nothing much else out there. Just you, the endless ocean, and the birds; the birds, always following you.

Heading south from Mauritius on the long voyage to Australia you don't see many birds at first. As the island shrinks away into the now dodo-free distance a few terns may follow you out; if you're lucky you might spot a snow-white tropic bird (What colour is its tail plume? Red? Ah, it must be a Red-tailed Tropic Bird). But the flying fish keep you amused, leaping ahead of the ship with horizontal fins, gliding, hitting a wave and with a blur of tail leaping again from the water. The little ones, baby fish the size of dragonflies, are the prettiest. If you stand long enough on the bows you might even see a phalanx of strange arrow-shaped creatures leap as one from the waves. Flying squid (did you know that some squid fly?). You see dolphins too, little Spinner Dolphins jumping in and out of the bow-wave in simple delight at their ability to do so. There'll be a few days when you don't see much. The seas get rougher, the air gets colder. But then you go out on deck one day and there they are. The ocean wanderers have arrived.

The old sailors had names for them all — shoemakers, nellies, mollymawks, cape pigeons and cape hens. The modern birdwatcher prefers to attach "recommended common names" — Cape Petrel, White-chinned Petrel, Giant Petrel, Wandering Albatross. And fair enough; who knows how many belaying pins were broken across how many sailors' skulls in arguments over whether that dark grey-brown bird with narrow wings was a cape hen or a shoemaker before the warring parties were convinced that these are different names for the same bird — the White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis*.

And how puzzled the same sailors must have been to see such variety in size and colour in the birds they knew as mollymawks until the ornithologists told them that there are in fact several mollymawks, different species in the genus *Diomedea* which includes the enormous Wandering and Royal Albatrosses, the slightly smaller Yellow-nosed, Grey-headed, and Shy Albatrosses and half a dozen other species besides. And the colour of the plumage depends on how old they are. Yes, scientific and their associated "recommended common names" have their place, even if they have taken a little of the romance from the language.

For many people on the ship, these birds are why they are here. Another species, another click of the camera, another tick on the list.

"How many now Phil?"

"This trip, twenty-two."

"No, altogether."

"Oh, world list you mean. One thousand six hundred and sixty one last time I counted." No hesitation. "Four more now, though." Big grin.

They stand up on the top deck with binoculars in hand and cameras and lenses dangling round their necks like

outsized charm bracelets to bring them the luck of a new species. They talk to each other — places they've been, birds they've seen, even people they've met — but they never look at each other. Their eyes are always focussed on the horizon, looking out for the next one, another species for the list.

And after a few days even I begin to spot some of the differences. I start with the easiest — the black and white Cape Petrel, common now and often flying close to the ship. Its old name "pintado" means painted in Spanish and its scientific name is *Daption capensis*. Daption is an anagram of pintado — I like that. Then there are those bigger dark-coloured birds with long and slender wings. "White-chinned petrels" says Phil. I look for a sign of white chin but perhaps I didn't pay enough for my binoculars.

"No," Phil assures me, "you can usually only really see it in the hand."

In the hand. That means you have to hold one of the birds, to examine it closely. The great Swedish taxonomist Linnaeus who named the species in 1758 would only have seen a dead specimen, a skin. Perhaps he didn't notice the white chin either; he called it *Procellaria aequinoctialis* — "Storm-bird from the equatorial regions". It was Linnaeus who named

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WILDTIMES **2003 Newsletter** **Schedule for** **submission of** **articles**

September issue No 19 —
Deadline for articles to Editor 22
Aug 2003

December issue No 20 —
Deadline for articles to Editor 14
Nov 2003

- Articles can be emailed to <editor@wildcaretas.org.au> or mailed to the *WILDTIMES* Editor, *WILDCARE* Inc, c/o PO Box 72, Westbury Tasmania 7303.
- Pictures accompanying articles preferably slides, negatives or photos. Digital files (JPG/TIF/BMP) MUST be of high resolution (300 dpi) for good reproduction in newsletters. Any JPG/TIF/BMP files are to be compressed (WinZip or Stuffit) before forwarding.

the other great family of wanderers from the south. He put the great albatrosses into the genus *Diomedea*, named after Diomedes who in Homer's Iliad was driven by a storm to the southwest coast of Italy where his companions were turned into birds. Albatrosses are the most faithful of partners. They remain paired for life — unlike Diomedes' wife. The reason Diomedes was heading for Italy was that he had returned to Greece from Troy to find his wife living with another man.

The first albatross arrives at the ship on the fifth day, and it is a big one. Its body is the size of a goose, but those wings stretch out on either side as though the bird is reaching for opposite horizons. It almost seems to touch them. There is something magical about a Wandering Albatross, about its size, about its immaculate whiteness, about the way it glides about the waves without a single flap of those endless wings. I am lucky that it is an adult bird, says Phil. Younger birds, with their black and brown and white patchy plumage, are difficult to

tell from other species. The albatrosses, sometimes two or three now, tend to stay way back from the ship. Giant Petrels come closer — Mother Carey's geese. They are big birds too but with no white on them. Sometimes they glide close by the ship and at the same speed, so that they seem suspended in the air.

But size isn't everything. Small black birds that seem no bigger than swallows, what are they doing out here hundreds of miles from anywhere? See that flash of white on the rump and under the wing? Wilson's Storm-petrels. I think back to my childhood and the illustrated edition of Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies* that sat on my bedroom bookshelf for years and years. Mother Carey's chickens, that's what they are. Who was Mother Carey, with her geese and her chickens? Why, Mater Cara, the Virgin Mary, and each bird contains the soul of drowned sailor. The little birds flutter and dabble. There must be food out there, tiny morsels of planktonic life that can be plucked from the surface. And this must be the food of the little grey birds too, the ones with the wide inverted V-shaped marking on each wing. Phil says that they are Salvin's Prions (Osbert Salvin was an English ornithologist who to the best of anyone's knowledge never went nearer the southern ocean than the end of Brighton pier). Their old name is whalebirds, perhaps because they often feed around whales, perhaps because they strain krill from the water with their serrated beaks like baleen whales. I'm getting quite good at recognising some of the birds now, but I find myself asking more questions than just "What bird is that?" Where do they come from, I wonder, what are they doing here? And to me the biggest question of all is how do they know where they are? Scientists have proved that most of these birds breed only on small islands in the Southern Ocean, dots on the map. They have caught and banded Giant Petrels and caught them again at the same nest on the same island year after year. They have glued transmitters to the backs of albatrosses and tracked them by satellite. The birds fly a zigzag path across thousands of miles of empty water, then return to their nest in a straight line.

But just by looking at the birds it is obvious that they know where they

are, every one of them. Their ease, their nonchalance, their insouciance in the face of endless horizons and featureless oceans tells you that at any moment any one of them could just head straight for home — wherever home might be. They have no paths to follow, no landmarks to show the way, there may be no sun or moon or stars to see for weeks at a time. But those birds know where they are as surely as old Descartes knew "I think, therefore I am".

Another thing I wonder is, how many senses do animals have? We tend to think of our human senses as five — sight, smell, taste, hearing and touch. We may include another, a sixth sense, which psychologists give the name of proprioception. With my eyes closed and touching nothing I can still tell the position of my hands and feet and arms and legs. Some kind of information is feeding into my brain from the muscles that move me, so that I have a sort of mental picture of my own body. I think it's OK to call this another sense. But that's about it as far as my own senses go. I can detect no hidden auras, I can feel no mystic vibes. I know that other animals certainly have other senses. Platypuses can detect minute electrical currents, the kind that the small aquatic insects and crustaceans they eat makes involuntarily every time they move. This was first discovered by an ex-Vaudeville comedian called Harry Burrell in the 1920s. Harry became fascinated by the platypuses that lived around him in Manilla in northern New South Wales. He discovered that when platypuses are swimming underwater — and they catch all their food underwater — they keep their eyes and ears firmly shut. If they can't hear their prey or see it, perhaps they can smell it. Platypuses are timid animals. Harry was able to show that out of water, even if a platypus couldn't see or hear him, it would be upset by his scent. He made a special tank — a "platypussary" — where he could see the platypuses and touch them with his bare hands while they were swimming about underwater. They didn't react in the slightest, which strongly suggested that underwater they couldn't smell him. So Harry Burrell deduced that platypuses must use a "sixth sense" to find their food. Fifty years later other scientists used sensitive electronic monitoring equipment to confirm Harry's suspicion. We now know that

echidnas can do it too, as can many sharks and other fish. But this “electroreception” only works over relatively short distances. What about a sense that works over long distances. What about a sense of direction?

Have you ever woken up at night in an unfamiliar room? Perhaps you are staying somewhere away from home and you need to go and get a drink but it’s pitch dark and you can’t remember where the light switch is. You try to remember the shape of the room from when you saw it in the light before you went to sleep, where the bed is relative to the door. You grope forwards and hit your shin on a low table. That’s funny, what’s that table doing there? You turn and shuffle forwards, this time into the bed. You stand there for a while, then realise that you are completely flummoxed. You find a wall — any wall — and feel your way inch by inch along it. At last a door, a light switch. You flick on the light and there is the room just as you last saw it. There is the bed, there is the table, here is the door. In the light everything is clear and obvious but in the dark you had to admit that you were as lost as you were as a spun child when they took off the blindfold after a game of “blind man’s buff”. Well, that’s how I feel anyway. I’m almost as bad when it comes to pointing. Sitting here in this room, which way is north? I have to think very carefully about it and when I come up with the answer it isn’t from any sense of direction, but from deliberately thinking where my room is in relation to the street and putting the street onto a mental map. It’s a logical process, not an intuitive one. It’s thinking, not sensing.

I know some people are much better at this kind of thing than I am. Quite a few of my friends seem to know left from right without thinking about it, can give clear directions and read a map without having to hold it sideways or upside-down. But how many of them could find their way across a thousand miles of ocean to Possession Island? Birds can do it. Birds have that sixth sense — or should it be seventh or eighth? The fact of it is surely wonder enough; the fact that we do not understand how it works is yet another wonder.

So on we go, across the Southern Ocean, and one morning there is a perched on the surface of the water a bird that is different. It is large and

dark and its wings seem rather short. It sits low in the water like a cormorant, looking up at me with one eye. It takes me a while to realise that what is really different about this bird is that it is wet. The saying “like water off a duck’s back” might just as well be “like water off a petrel’s back” or “like water off a prion’s back” — most birds’ feathers are water-repellent and their owners keep them that way with lots of preening and oiling. But this bird is wet and glistening. I have heard that cormorants are among the few birds that do not have waterproof feathers, which is why you often see them perched on rocks with their wings out, drying them in the sun and wind. But this bird doesn’t have that hooked end to its beak, and besides it’s too big to be a cormorant. Then I notice that beneath the glistening film of water the bird is coloured. It is black and white, and there seems to be a bit of orange on its head. When the bird slips beneath the water I can still see it, swimming through the waves with strong strokes of those short wings — more like flippers really. Of course, it’s a penguin — and with that orange mark on its head it must be a King Penguin. My first, my very first King Penguin. I see several more in

the water — like so many of the seabirds we have seen they seem curious of us and our big ship — but when we go ashore the next day onto Possession Island I see more penguins than I have had hot dinners.

I am forty-nine years old. I like my food and I’ve been eating hot dinners for most of my life. I eat dinner just about every day and most times it’s hot — nine times out of ten I’d say. I haven’t had any major illnesses, I’m an atheist who doesn’t fast for Lent or Ramadan. So I reckon that’s about three hundred hot dinners a year, about 15,000 in my lifetime. There are four or five times that number of King Penguins on the beach at Possession Island. Penguins bobbing about in the water, splashing and cleaning themselves, penguins crowding on the beach of grey volcanic sand. Up the hill there is a solid mass of penguins reaching for hundreds of metres. There are young penguins, this year’s hatchlings still fat and woolly in their covering of brown down. There are the last year’s mob, fully feathered but without the bright orange head marking and smart orange patch on their beak. And there are the fully-grown penguins, male and female indistinguishable but already in pairs



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Don't take my word for it, talk to Jean-Pierre. Yes, he's French, and Possession Island — or *Prise de Possession* to give it its proper name — is French too. It was named by the explorer Marc-Joseph Marion Dufresne on the 21st January 1772. He named the group of islands the *Iles Crozet* after his second-in-command and the island on which he ran up the flag he called *Prise de Possession*. As soon as word got around about the Crozets, ships from all nations converged on the place. This was long before the days when kerosene could be simply made from petroleum oil. What people used to fuel their lamps was seal oil and whale oil — penguin oil at a pinch. Within a few years the seals and penguins which had been living there were pretty much wiped out. Now, thanks to kerosene and Mr Edison's electric light bulb the demand for animal oil from the Southern Ocean is not what it was and many species are recovering. So Jean-Pierre assures me and with the evidence of this many penguins before my eyes I am not about to contradict him.

Jean-Pierre tells me a lot more about the penguins — *les manchots* — about

when they breed, how long they stay on their eggs, how far they go to find food and how much they eat. The scientists on the island mark individual penguins with transponders — like the ones you can get slipped under the skin of your pet dog or cat to identify it if it gets lost. When the penguins come ashore they are funnelled by low fences through a gateway where an automatic scale weighs them, a camera takes their picture and an electronic sensor reads the number on the transponder. I'm sure this is all very interesting stuff, and I am trying to look very interested — but it isn't why I came here.

Jean-Pierre is talking to someone else. I drift away, back to the shore. There are regulations about people and animals in many parts of the Antarctic and the sub-Antarctic. People should keep five metres away from the animals. The regulations fail to say how far animals should keep from people. There is absolutely no chance of keeping five metres from the penguins. If I move the penguins waddle a few steps away, if I stay still they seem not to notice me and crowd around again. And the sheathbills — they don't ignore me, they investigate me.

You might think that the birdoes would be dancing with delight at the sight of all these majestic King Penguins, but no. The true birdo is unimpressed (Kings? They're all over the place, mate — South America, the Falklands, South Georgia, Macquarie Island. You mean you've never seen one before?) What the true birdo has come here to see is *Chionis minor crozettensis*, the Crozet sheathbill. Greek-speaking readers who have never seen sheathbills will immediately guess that they are white birds — *chios* being the Greek for snow. Greek-speaking readers who have seen sheathbills might think up another name for them — *Coprophagos minor* perhaps. For the birds are indeed little shit-eaters. A bit bigger than pigeons, with white plumage and a horny sheath at the top of the beak, they wander round the penguin colony on unwebbed feet like little white chooks, pecking at this and pecking at that. During the breeding season they eat penguin eggs, dead chicks, the placentas of seals that have just given birth. The rest of the time they seem to exist on whatever scraps have passed undigested through the alimentary systems of penguins. As soon as a penguin defecates, a sheathbill will be inspecting the offering. Not much of a life, you might think, but the birds are quite attractive in their own way. They're not at all shy — stay still long enough and you might find one pecking away at your bootlaces. Leave your bag around and you'll come back to find it being given a thorough investigation by a full forensic team of *Chionis minor crozettensis*.

While we're on the subject of avian excrement (I promise this won't go on much longer but it really is important), I suppose I should mention a special part of the Southern Ocean Penguin Colony Experience. I believe that like most birds, penguins have a very poor sense of smell. They may know where they are day or night, sunny or cloudy; they may be able to spot a krill at two hundred metres and recognise the sound of their chick among a million others; but according to bird boffins the olfactory lobes on a penguin's brains are mere pimples. Given the whiff of a penguin colony, this is probably just as well. Smells are difficult to describe but I'll give it a go. Take a few tins of anchovies, drain and mash. Add an old carp that was left by a fisherman beside the river a

5 easy ways to contact **WILDCARE Inc...**

WILDCARE Inc now has 5 new email addresses for members and departmental staff to direct enquires or forward information.

<office@wildcaretas.org.au>

The Chairperson and Volunteer Admin Officer will receive all general inquiries plus **event call up notices** to this email. Emails can also be forwarded on to other recipients (e.g. CAREs Presidents) from this address.

<chair@wildcaretas.org.au>

Correspondence to the Chairperson (Andrew Smith).

<vicechair@wildcaretas.org.au>

Individual authorisations for volunteer work plus correspondence to the Vice-Chairperson (Richard Hammond).

<treasurer@wildcaretas.org.au>

Financial correspondence or inquiries to the Treasurer (Jo Field).

<editor@wildcaretas.org.au>

Information including articles, digital photos, for the *WILDTIMES* newsletter.

Don't forget to check out **WILDCARE's** website
<www.wildcaretas.org.au> for up-to-date information.

couple of weeks ago, the one that your dog has just rolled in and now it can't understand why you have that funny look on your face. Combine these with the deadliest, room-clearing fart you can find and mix in just a trace of rotten seaweed. Stir and sniff. Close your eyes and you are now — give or take a few thousand squawking birds — in a King Penguin colony.

I don't think I've mentioned the squawking before. King Penguins just love to squawk. The young ones give a kind of cheeping squawk, like a baby magpie only even louder and more attention-seeking. (Oh all right, have a bloody fish. Now just shut up.) The adult King Penguin sounds more — regal is unfortunately not quite the right word — more squawky, if you know what I mean. Though you may argue over whether canaries cheep or chirrup, and you may be undecided whether swallows tweet or swallows twitter, no-one who hears King penguins is in any doubt that they squawk. Being in a King Penguin colony is a feast for the eyes, the nose and the ears. There is nothing quite like it.

But here I go again. Not content with ticking another species off the list I find myself wondering about those squawks. They all sound the same to me, but could it be that every bird has a different squawk, just as we have different voices? Think about it. How many times can you recognise a voice when you pick up the phone? If you're like me, quite often. There are probably a hundred or so people I know whose voices I can recognise, and lots of others I don't know. I'm talking about film and TV stars, whom I've never met but whose voices I am familiar with. They don't even have to be alive; I'm sure I could recognise Cary Grant from his voice as easily as I could recognise Hugh Grant. As for recognising faces — there are almost an infinite number of people I recognise. Not because I'm clever or because I've practised hard. It's nothing to with intelligence, it's just an innate ability that I share with most members of the human race. So what about other animals? Is it unreasonable to assume that other animals possess just the same ability? Perhaps they use sight and sound as we do, perhaps they use smell (with all that sniffing and pissing that dogs do, don't you think they can smell who's been around the neighbourhood recently?) As for penguins, it may be that they can tell each other apart from

their visible features (just because all King Penguins look the same to me doesn't mean they do to the next penguin), but I suspect they do it from their calls. Why shouldn't their squawks be as individual to them as our voices are to us? Perhaps they could be analysed with some kind of electronic thingy. Look into it please, Jean-Pierre.

But what's that you say, J-P? Where? I look to where Jean-Pierre is pointing and as the clouds part, there on the green hillside is a big white shape — then another and another. Would I like to see them closer? Lead on. We follow a path through the tussocky grass. The cloud drops down again but Jean-Pierre seems to know the way. After about twenty minutes we stop. The cloud lifts. We are standing no more than ten metres from a large nest. It is a sort of bowl-shaped thing made of grass. On it is sitting one Wandering Albatross.

I don't know which is more impressive, an albatross on the wing or on the nest. It almost takes my breath away. I think it is the whiteness that is the most startling — I'd thought the penguins' breasts were white, I'd thought the sheathbills were white. No, only this albatross is truly white. And its size. I know that albatrosses are big birds and I have seen them at sea flying behind the ship. But there is no scale out at sea. Here on land I can see just how big a Wandering Albatross is. Did I say earlier that an albatross is as big as a goose? This bird cannot be compared to a goose. The Wandering Albatross is a Greek statue among birds. It's the head that does it, I think. No foolish flat-beaked head this. It is a large head, a royal head, a head of deep thoughts and noble aspirations. A brow of whitest marble, a beak sculpted in delicate pink alabaster, two jet eyes hooded and as dark as the void. The eyes see everything. The albatross looks at me and I look at it and in its eyes' black depths I see another question, a question that I can no longer avoid.

What are you doing here, it asks. Why have you come half way round the world to stand on this island, to annoy the penguins, to disturb my peaceful solitude? I move away from the bird (out of respect? out of shame?) but the question stays with me. Jean-Pierre is telling me that it takes three people to grab one of the birds on its nest so that it can be weighed and measured. That

NEW WHALE HOTLINE NUMBER

There is a new 24-hour whale hotline number to report all whale (and dolphin) sightings or strandings: **0427-WHALES** (that is 0427-942537).

Remember, it is vital that **any whale information** is called in straight away, as it could prevent a stranding or save the life of a whale through your prompt response.

you can tell the difference between male and females by the size of their beaks. That their average wingspan is 3.24 metres. That the males go towards the Antarctic to feed while the females fly north. That hundreds of birds are caught and drowned each year when they swallow the hooks set by long-line fishing boats. Did I have to come to this island to know this? This is the bird's island, it is not mine. What am I doing here? I have become part of the paradox of wilderness. I came looking for the remote and uninhabited, yet my presence negates the very quality I seek. Is it not enough for me to know that albatrosses exist, and perhaps where they exist, without having to see them for myself? Should humans be excluded from some places — not just oil-exploring, wildlife-shooting humans but scientists, tourists, me?

Later that day, after the anchor is raised and the ship begins steaming away from the island, from the penguins and sheathbills, from Jean-Pierre and the albatrosses, I stand on the upper deck and watch the birds already swirling and swooping around our stern. They are familiar birds now, birds that sailors have known for centuries — nannies and mollymawks, cape pigeons and cape hens, Mother Carey's geese and Mother Carey's chickens. As we make for the open ocean and turn east towards Australia I make a small decision. I will not be coming back.

Nicholas Drayson
1st Prize

Karst CAREs Report

A successful working bee was carried out on the Mersey Hill block in Mole Creek on Sunday, 6 April 2003.

This was to follow-up on 2 previous working bees carried out by other environmental groups to eradicate the weed Spanish Heath. The block of land was purchased about 18 months ago by DPIWE to add to the Mole Creek Karst National Park, and contains several small caves, many karst features such as 'sink holes' plus one significant cave of over 1000 metres in length. Spanish Heath is an introduced weed that once well established, is able to 'choke out' many other plant species. The particular concern regarding this area is that the block is above the Mersey

River; once the seed enters this waterway, this weed would readily spread in both the bushland and farmland downstream.

One Park staff from Mole Creek Field Centre, a Karst Officer from DPIWE, and 12 Karst CARE volunteers cut

Karst CAREs working bee at Mersey Hills block, Mole Creek. Photo D Wools-Cobb.



back and painted poison on hundreds of plants over approximately 2 Ha. Many of the group visited nearby Mersey Hill Cave afterwards, to consider a further underground working bee, cleaning some muddied formations sometime later.

David Wools-Cobb
Karst CARE Coordinator

AAT News...

Management of the Old Hartz Track (Kermandie Track)

Arthur Geeves and his family, under a government contract, constructed the Hartz Track (which runs from Geeveston to the Hartz Mountains) in the 1890's. The track was 4-ft (1.3 m) wide with benched sides and provided access to the southwest for prospecting and exploration as well as recreation and tourism to the Hartz Mountains. The track has always been an important part of history to the area, mainly due to the timber harvesting on the lower sections and the Geeves tragedy in 1897 when the



Meeting between Forestry and community members. Photo L Jackson.

bodies of Arthur and Sydney were carried out along the track.

When Forestry announced a proposal to harvest an area that crossed over the track, local community members were

contacted to discuss the best way to manage this section. At the first meeting concerns were raised mainly because of the historical tramway formations on the track and the damage to the environment around it. As an uncertainty arose to the section of track affected, it was decided to walk up onto the track just above the Kermandie Falls to have a look at the area. Dudley Geeves was able to fill us in on some points of interest along the way notable a stack of timber still lying where it had been split. At one stage, the road to the Hartz Mountains was to follow this track but was eventually constructed in 1960 where it is today. Kay Geeves explained the intensive displays of climbing heath associated with the forest that can be seen on different sections during early autumn. I feel everyone benefited from that walk on the track, as other alternatives could be seen and discussed.

As a result of this meeting, Forestry put 3 options up for consideration. After considerable thought and more inspections of the area we met again and all agreed on the same option, with some compromise on both sides. Part of that compromise was Forestry reducing their harvest size so that the most historic and aesthetically significant portion of the track is retained and protected. A lower section, above the falls was agreed to be re-routed closer to the river and rejoining the old tramway section of

Farewell to Deb!

Over the last 2 years on a weekly basis, *WILDCARE's* member database has been diligently kept up-to-date by a very dedicated volunteer — Deb Ramm. And as the membership grew, so did Deb's tasks — entering in new memberships and annual renewals; forwarding out the Welcome package to new members and working bee notices to all members; as well as coordinating volunteers to assist in the quarterly 'stuffing' of *WILDTIMES*.

Unfortunately for *WILDCARE*, Deb

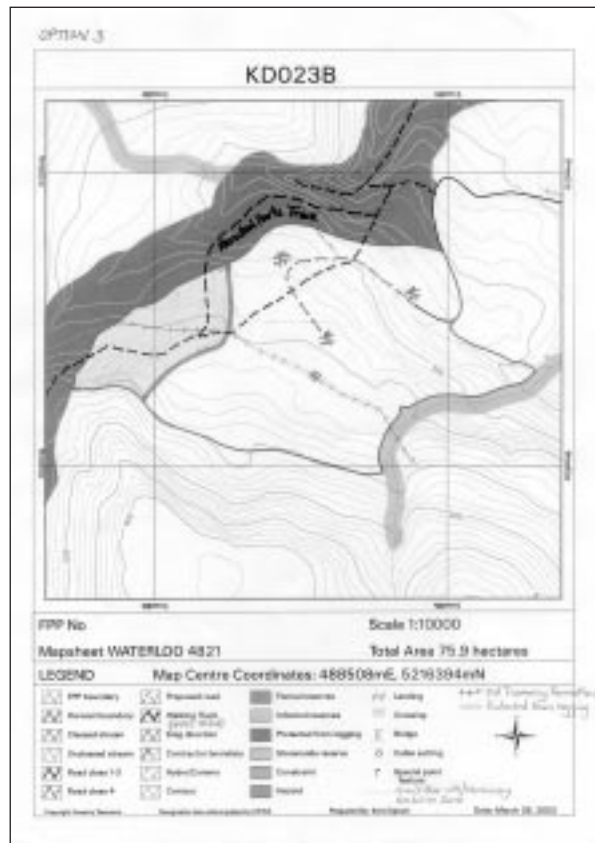
has now secured a full time paying position and as such will not be able to devote the time required each week to undertake this massive and very important role. Thanks Deb, for all your efforts — you'll be sorely missed!

But as they say, every dark cloud has a silver lining, and the silver lining is Lyn Jackson who has stepped into Deb's vacated position. Welcome aboard Lyn! We hope you enjoy the challenge as much as Deb did!

the track further up putting the whole section in protected forest. The harvested area will be re-seeded as native forest and opportunities for maintenance to be carried out on other sections of the track. Forestry has continued to inform the community members of any progress-in-works and hopes for minimal interruptions to the track. The new section of track was thoughtfully marked out and inspected before being cut out and constructed. Inspections of other sections requiring work have also been carried out.

Forestry Tasmania Huon District's Senior Forest Planner — Kerri Spicer — and Forestry Tasmania Community Liaison — Peter Pepper — have done some intensive research on the

Options for reroute on track.
Source: Forestry Tasmania.



track, which will be published in their Forest Practice News along with an article and photos of the management of the track.

Over the last two years, Parks & Wildlife staff along with some keen volunteers have completed some intensive track clearing and constructed new bridges on the top section of the track to enable safe crossings of the creeks, leaving the remains of the old bridges for historical reasons. Hopefully the two land managers — Forestry and Parks — with the support of the community and volunteers can continue the maintenance of this historical track.

Lyn Jackson
Adopt-a-Track Caretaker,
Kermadie Track

Hut Wardens — Waterfall Valley February 2003

When we decided to volunteer as track wardens on the overland track at either Waterfall Valley or Pelion Huts, we had an idea the experience would be an interesting one, but had no anticipation of how rewarding the stay would be.

First thing we had to do was book in for a St Johns Ambulance First Aid Course, (this Certificate is a requirement for the job) and then work out how two weeks food was going to fit in 2 x 20 litre rafting drums, to be left at Cradle Ranger Base. Eddie Firth then arranged a helicopter drop of all volunteers' food packs into Waterfall Valley Hut, ready for participants on arrival. Parking the car at Cradle, we collected name tags, key and two-way radio and hitched a ride with Bob Hamilton to Dove Lake to begin the walk into Waterfall Valley.

Upon arrival at the Waterfall Valley hut we were met by Bill Forsyth packed and ready to leave, having completed one of his many stints at Waterfall Valley. After a brief run down on duties, jobs to be done and operation of equipment, Bill headed out, planning to spend the night at Scott Kilvert Hut.

Very soon it became obvious, of the value of having experienced walkers as wardens at this, the first stop, for those tackling six days of walking the overland track. While most were well equipped and experienced, many were first time walkers, with equipment that was either borrowed, or maybe purchased new but not tried on, or tested prior to setting out on their 6+ day Overland trek. Backpacks were the number 1 issue (i.e. overloaded, incorrectly packed, wrongly adjusted or even parts missing like straps & buckles). Stoves tended to be another trap for the inexperienced with incorrect fuel, mismatching fittings, or didn't know how they worked. Then

comes no mat, no sleeping bag, no warm clothes, insufficient food, and then, boots falling apart, and sprains and blisters.

The rewards come from being able to generally overcome these mishaps, either by our own efforts, or by the generosity and help offered by the experienced and well equipped walkers sharing the huts and campsite.

Mainland and overseas visitors joined us each night as we went Wombat watching at around 6.30pm until dark, cameras and videos at the ready, most had never seen one before, mother and baby Wombat appeared from the burrow and among the oohs and aahs the visitors happily watched them grazing in the long grass two male Wombats also came around on the odd

Parks staff loading at Waterfall Valley heli pad. Photo I & J Fitzallen.



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occasion but the mother quickly sent them on their way. There was also the family of beautiful Bennett Wallabies, and sometimes there was the odd whip snake crossing our path.

Most of the people we spoke to were open and friendly and were most interested in what sort of role we played at Waterfall, how we got the job, and what duties were involved. We explained that we were there in a voluntary capacity and our main aim was to help anyone who may need our assistance i.e. first aid, weather report for the day. We in turn got to ask them about the countries they came from, differing weather conditions to what they were experiencing here, their animal life etc, a real education, many said that given the chance they'd be back again.

We had a lot of positive feedback from people saying how great it was to have people to welcome them on their arrival, the cleanliness of the huts and the toilets.

Once we saw everyone off for the day we did our chores and the rest of the day was ours, but on the odd occasion the early birds arrived. Read quite a few books that had been left behind by some of the previous Wardens and some by PWS. We went over to Windermere and Scott Kilvert huts to make sure everything was OK and

performed the same duties in these huts as at Waterfall Valley and cleaned the windows. Both walks were varied and interesting. The one to Windermere was fairly easy going with spectacular scenery and a beautiful lake about 5 minutes away from the hut, where it was quite safe to have a swim etc. The walk to Scott Kilvert was different with quite a steep descent down to it and through some beautiful forest area. The walk back was extremely good for the calf muscles. We spent some time in the surrounds of both huts and had had a very pleasant day at each, got back to Waterfall to greet the first of the weary travellers. We also got in touch by radio every day with the Rangers at Cradle Base for a weather report, and at times to report on any walkers that may be returning to Cradle because of injuries sustained.

On another occasion we had the helicopter come in. The pilot had dropped Eddie and Bob and an Aboriginal Environmental Officer down near the Waterfalls to do some track work. They came into camp to have morning tea with us and a chat, which gave us some idea of the kind of work these lads do.

It is quite amazing how much we learnt within the time we spent there. We met some great people from all walks of life and had time to look around the area. We even picked a perfect day to climb Barn Bluff.

We had extremely good weather for our 2 weeks at Waterfall, but on the last day it started to rain and by the time we were ready to leave to head back to the Car Park to wait for Bob to collect us it was absolutely pouring. By the time we got to Marions Lookout it had become quite cold with sleet coming down, we decided not to go down Marions but went down the steep track on the other side towards Dove Lake car park, that was an experience in itself especially with our packs on, very slippery. Once at the car park we looked up towards Marions and saw the outline of several people going over the top towards Cradle it was quite a sight and so glad we weren't up there.

All in all a wonderful experience and one which we are definitely going to repeat.

Ian & Joan Fitzallen
Hut Wardens — Waterfall Valley

Mt Roland CAREs group update

Visitors to O'Neills Creek Picnic Reserve and the walking tracks within Mt Roland Regional Reserve which is accessed from Gowrie Park, 15 km southwest from Sheffield, can now enjoy the recently constructed O'Neills Nature Trail with the aid of a new brochure. The brochure guides and instructs walkers through 16 numbered stops along the 700m trail that follows O'Neills Creek from the Picnic Reserve to O'Neills Creek Road opposite the Mt Roland

Regional Reserve car park.

The brochure describes and depicts by hand drawings, various ecological features along the trail including plant and animal species found within this lowland, wet sclerophyll forest. The trail is an easy grade and suitable for walkers of all ages and levels of fitness.

The brochure and nature trail are the initiatives of Outlook Mt Roland (Mt Roland CAREs group), which is a volunteer group promoting

ecologically sustainable recreation in the Mt Roland Regional Reserve. A grant from the Kentish Council enabled the construction of the trail.

For more information about this organisation or the O'Neills Creek Picnic Reserve and Nature Trail contact Outlook Mt Roland, PO Box 254, Sheffield Tas 7306. Phone 03 6491 2213 or 6491 1317.

Anne Heyes
Mt Roland CAREs member

For more information on O'Neills Creek nature trail is in the WILDTIMES #17 (April 2003) issue.

PWS District Volunteer Facilitators are here!

District Volunteer Facilitators are now in every Parks & Wildlife District to help, encourage, facilitate and coordinate volunteer activities in National Parks and other Reserves. The Facilitator is a point of contact for anyone wishing to undertake volunteer work in these areas. In current and future WILDTIMES issues the District Facilitators will introduce themselves (profiles) to members.

Profile — PWS Western District

A Trainee Admin Officer, yet to be appointed, along with PWS Ranger Krissy Ward (who has an established track record working with volunteers and volunteer groups on the West Coast) will be responsible for supporting WILDCARE members wishing to participate in volunteer activities in the Western District. A number of opportunities already exist for volunteering and members interested in becoming a part of these programs can contact Krissy at the Strahan PWS office on 03 6471 7122.

- The Orange-bellied Parrot recovery Rehabilitation at Trial Harbour.

program at Birchs Inlet calls for volunteers to spend 2 weeks at a time observing and reporting on the birds.

- A network of animal carers devotes many hours to the care and safe housing of orphaned and injured West Coast wildlife.
- Opportunities for extended periods of volunteering during the summer season at Lake St Clair National Park attract volunteers from within

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District Volunteer Facilitators availability & contact details

PWS District	Facilitator	Days available	Contact
Western	Krissy Ward (supported by a full time trainee admin officer, yet to be appointed)	Mon–Fri	6471 7122 (Strahan)
Southern	Craig Saunders	Mon–Fri	6264 8463 (Huonville)
South Eastern	Kristy Welch	Fri	6214 8100 (Seven Mile Beach)
North Western	Tim Dyer	Thur	6429 8723 (Ulverstone)
North Eastern	Caroline Shemwell	Tue & Wed	6256 7012 (Freycinet)
Northern	Will be appointed by the time this Issue goes to print!	Four days a week — to be advised	6336 5312 (Prospect); 6327 3964 (Tamar Wetlands Centre)

and outside Tasmania.

- Local people and groups work with Rangers on the maintenance of remote huts as part of the

Community Hut Partnership program, and trial the rehabilitation of degraded sections of lakeshore.

- Established community groups involved in Coastcare, Landcare and conservation projects volunteer time and effort on reserve and crown land, protecting Aboriginal sites, rationalising 4 wheel drive tracks, tackling weed infestations and rehabilitating dunes.

The District supports community involvement and may be able to assist you or your group in volunteer projects in Reserves. Make contact with Krissy to discuss alternative volunteer opportunities.

Profile — PWS Southern District

Craig Saunders is the Southern District Volunteer Facilitator. The Southern District is the result of the merger of Central South (e.g. Mt Field NP) and Southern (e.g. Dover) districts.

Craig says he's "been working on the periphery of the Parks and Wildlife Service for around 20 years. Throughout the 80s I worked as an adventure travel guide leading bushwalking, rafting and cycling tours into Tassie's wild places. From 1986 I also did casual track work for PWS, mainly in the Southwest. I spent the 1990/91 summer as track ranger in the Walls of Jerusalem, perhaps my favourite Parks job. Since 1991 my partner and I have run a small native

plant nursery in the Huon Valley, but I have been still able to fit in the odd project work for PWS and some freelance outdoor guiding and instruction. The nursery work has required a lot of work with community conservation groups, experience that I find invaluable in my new role as volunteer facilitator with PWS. What spare time I have left I like to spend keeping up with two teenage children, visiting our many natural areas (mainly seated in a sea kayak) and playing music in a community orchestra."

Profile — PWS Northeast District

Caroline Shemwell is the Northeast District Volunteer Facilitator, based at Freycinet National Park. She has worked with animals for 23 years, starting as a Vet Nurse in a small practice on the Central Coast of NSW; at Eric Worrel's Australian Reptile Park (a blast from the past for those who remember it) as a keeper of native mammals as well as the sick, injured and orphaned. From there Caroline worked for Uni of NSW, Lucas Heights, Prince Henry and Price of Wales Hospitals, as well as driving the Animal Ambulance for North Side Emergency Services. Caroline also spent 12 years at Taronga Zoo in Special Operations and as a Senior Specialist Keeper of various Taxa where duties covered captive husbandry, artificial rearing, behavioural enrichment and conditioning to name a few as well as training staff and volunteers. She has spent time both in Thailand and Cambodia working with these countries' Government Departments developing rehab and release centres as well as public education centres. In Cambodia Caroline was an adviser to the Wildlife Protection Office and assisted in the writing of wildlife laws and other working legislation on law enforcement. I also trained staff and volunteers in this capacity as well.

Caroline has an understanding of voluntarism, having been a volunteer for a variety of organisations including Wild Animal Rescue Foundation of Thailand (WAR), Surf Life Saving Association at Shelley Beach in NSW, Lions, Lionesses, Lions Ladies and was a founding member of Killarney Bateau Leo Club.

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Fishcare News...

Important — Fishcare Volunteer office hours

Please note FCV offices in Hobart, Prospect and Burnie are only open at the following times. If Fishcare Volunteers need to pick up resources, please do so during these times.

Mondays and Tuesdays 9 am–5 pm

Wednesdays 9 am–12 pm



Fishcare Volunteer Coordinators at the Fishcare Pool.

Southern FCV News

The coordinator for this region is **Andrew Sharman**. Andrew is based on the 9th floor in the Department of Primary Industries, Water & Environment offices in the Marine board building in Hobart and is available Monday through to Wednesday midday for you to phone or speak to in person.

This region also welcomes a new senior support volunteer, **Mike Cawthorn**, who will support Andrew in his role. Mike has a place on the **WILDCARE** Inc Board of Management, representing the Fishcare/**WILDCARE** volunteers in the southern region.

The FCV library is still located in the Hobart office. Please contact Andrew and make a time to come in and browse, or contact your regional coordinator and they can organise for books to be transferred to your regional office.

Andrew's contact details: DPIWE Offices, 9th Floor Marine Board Building, 1 Franklin Wharf, Hobart, GPO Box 44, Hobart 7001. Phone: 03 6233 3053. Fax: 03 6223 1539. <Andrew.Sharman@dpiwe.tas.gov.au>

Northern FCV News

The new coordinator for this region is **Quenton Higgs**. Quenton is based in

the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment offices at Prospect, Launceston and is available Monday through to Wednesday midday for you to phone or speak to in person. He is also available on his mobile after hours on 0407 502 046.

Senior support volunteer, **Mark Williams**, will continue assisting with coordination in the region and has a place on the **WILDCARE** Inc Board of Management, representing the Fishcare/**WILDCARE** volunteers in the northern region.

Contact details: DPIWE Prospect Office, 165–167 Westbury Road, Launceston, PO Box 46, Kings Meadows TAS 7249. Ph: 03 6336 5474. Fax: 03 6336 5311. Email: <quenton.higgs@dpiwe.tas.gov.au>

Northwest FCV News

Yes, the rumours are true, **Damian Heran** is moving back to his home town to take over the reigns of the FCV Northwest region. Damian is based in the Cradle Coast Authority Offices in Burnie and is available Monday through to Wednesday midday for you to phone or speak to in person. He is also available on his mobile after hours on 0408 337 317.

Senior support volunteer, **Mark Heran**, will continue assisting with coordination in the Region, and has a place on the **WILDCARE** Inc Board of Management representing the Fishcare/**WILDCARE** volunteers in the northwest region.

Damian's contact details: 30 Marine Terrace Burnie, PO Box 338 Burnie 7320. Phone: 03 6431 6285. Fax: 03 6431 7014. <Damian.Heran@dpiwe.tas.gov.au>

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Cartledge Agency would like to thank all WILDCARE members for their past support and look forward to future dealings.

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