

Newsletter of the Friends of the Western Swamp Tortoise

Westy goes to Cambridge

In early June Cathy Levett visited Henny Fenwick chairperson of the British Chelonia Group (BCG), at her home near Cambridge, UK. Henny has been a follower and supporter of the Friends of Western Swamp Tortoise for many years and she wanted to purchase some of our *Westy* books for a symposium hosted by BCG. www.britishchelonigroup.org.uk

While the British Isles has no native tortoises they are popular pets in the UK and most of the activities carried out by BCG are in conservation work and the care and rehabilitation of sick and injured tortoises of many different kinds. This is summed up in the BCG mission statement "For tortoise, terrapin and turtle care and conservation". Educating pet owners and the general public about how to treat the tortoises appropriately is critical to the group's mission.

There are many similarities between the BCG and our Friends of Western Swamp Tortoise and the WA group Turtle Oblonga Rescue and Rehabilitation Network (TORRN), with the key ones being our focus on education and raising awareness of the conservation needs of our respective species. BCG's approach to rescue and rehabilitation is very similar to those practiced by TORRN.

Henny is passionate about all types of chelonians, particularly the various tortoise species and she has travelled extensively to learn about them. She has been rehabilitating sick and injured tortoises on her



Cathy signs a copy of *Westy* for Henny

property for about 40 years. Cathy and her husband Bruce learned about the work that Henny and the BCG are involved in as they toured the property with Henny and met some of the 70 tortoises she cares for. They gained an appreciation of the specific needs of each type and the extent that Henny goes to in ensuring that they are appropriately cared for. This includes special enclosures, seasonal housing, separating certain individuals, and growing food plants. (All photos taken at Henny's property in Cambridge.)

Westy goes to Cambridge, *continued...*



Top left: Tortoises at Henny's rehabilitation facility (see enclosures **above**) enjoy fresh food as they recover.



Bottom left: Henny has an obvious devotion to chelonians of all kinds.



More on Westy's impact

Since the publication of *Westy the Western Swamp Tortoise* by Cathy Levett, the Education Team has been attending school assemblies to donate a hard copy of the book.

The following schools have received a book for their library: Aveley PS, Bayswater PS, Bindoon PS, Carnaby Rise PS, Caversham PS, Coolbinia PS, Dianella PC, Ellen Stirling PS,

Oberarthur PS, Pearsall PS, Swan View PS, Tuart Hill PS, Upper Swan PS, Weld Square PS, Woodlands PS as well as Penrhos College, Carey Baptist College, Halls Head College.



Some of our members have also purchased copies to donate to their children's or grandchildren's school: Riverside PS, Nollamara Steiner School, Mundaring PS.

If your school is not listed here, please let us know so we can contact them.

Public libraries that have *Westy* in their collection include: WA State Library, Mundaring, Boya, Mosman Park, Kalamunda, Wellstead, Belmont, Ellenbrook, Ballajura, Bullsbrook, Midland.

Fundraising and donations

FOWST Chair Jan Bant was privileged to visit some dedicated scientists at **Wetland Research and Management in Burswood** to accept a donation cheque for the Western Swamp Tortoise. Some of the staff had worked in earlier days on WST habitat at Ellen Brook and Twin Swamps and were keen to find out the latest on the reptile. There was a chat about climate change and impacts on the tortoise while enjoying a delicious morning tea—especially the tortoise cupcakes (*see right*).

Thanks once again to **Andrew Triglavcanin** for donating \$100 from **Grill'd Mt Lawley**, where our smiley tortoise was pipped for first prize by an adorable dachshund with wheels for back legs, representing the Lost Dogs Association.

Classes B2 and B3 at Swan View Primary School recently raised money for the Western Swamp Tortoise by selling their art in an Art Gallery Project. Teachers Sharyn Lee and Caitlyn Earl sent some letters from the students. Here is a little of what they had to say.

Miley "We all love what you are doing."

Tait "We hope you spend the money for Westy to help his habitat and him."

Mason "We raised \$143 for Westy. We made it by selling our beautiful artworks."

Callum "I love tortoises."

Shaykaya "I never knew that Westy was an endangered animal."

CJ "You are doing a really good job."

Azer Leah "Please keep Westy safe"

These delightful 7 and 8 year olds had been learning about Westy the Western Swamp Tortoise during Guided Reading, using a kit of 10 copies of the book. If your school would like to purchase a set, or have a free presentation, our Education Team would be happy to come in 2019. Make a booking now.

Like a presentation for your school or group?

If you know of a **school or community group** that would like us to come and talk please contact Jan or Cathy on 0408 024 800. At schools we include an exciting free games session for the children.



One of the children's drawings



Where are they now?



In early summer the Western Swamp Tortoises move out of the drying swamps and back into their natural or artificial aestivation* places (*artificial aestivation tunnel, left*.)

Adult breeding females (at least 8 years old) lay 3 or 4 eggs underground in their aestivation places near the edges of the swamp, and take no further care of them.

*Aestivation (a type of hibernation) protects the tortoises from the hot Western Australian summer and any bushfires that may occur. It can be in natural cracks in the clayey ground, under deep leaf litter or in artificial PVC tunnels installed in the reserves. Occasionally during this time they may emerge to drink if there is a rain event.

You can help save an endangered species, right on your doorstep!

Membership of the Friends is **FREE** and we have lots of great activities, including behind-the-scenes zoo visits and tortoise release days.



**Join us to help save the tortoise...
because EXTINCTION SUCKS!**



For further information on any of the group's activities, contact Jan on

9344 2872 or 0408024800

Email: westernswamptortoise@yahoo.com.au

check out the website www.westernswamptortoise.com

or find us on **Facebook** www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTheWesternSwampTortoise/ where we usually post the latest news.

Committee: Jan Bant, Chair; Tanya Marwood, Vice-chair; Bob Height, Treasurer; Jo Gibb, Secretary; Mike Stokes, Pippa McLeery, Cathy Levett (general); education sub-committee—Jan Bant & Cathy Levett.



Our current sponsors and recovery partners include:



Department of
Parks and Wildlife

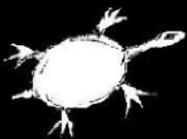


SPREAD THE LOVE -
OUR COMMUNITY, YOUR CHANCE



LOCAL MATTERS
Grilla

edgelcombe brothers



Established 1925



STATE NRM OFFICE
Natural Resource Management in Western Australia

3 Baron-Hay Court
South Perth WA 6151

Phone: +61 8 9368 3168

Email: snrmo@agric.wa.gov.au
Web: nrm.wa.gov.au



...as well as **Boral**, the **University of Western Australia**, **Curtin University**, **Adelaide Zoo**, **Long Road Website Development**, **Aveley Primary School**.