

Director's Report for 2015

This has been a remarkable first year for the Sanctuary with so many developments and achievements in such a short time frame. I have been mainly involved in display work throughout 2015, but also finalising the infrastructure for the Sanctuary has been a large part of my role. I have briefly outlined the key areas of change and activity for 2015 below.

Building infrastructure

The basic elements of the Sanctuary are housing for our birds and constructing these enclosures took up much of my time this year. With the help of a great group of volunteers in the beginning (late 2014) to assist with Quil's enclosure, especially, I have built a total of 6 and a half bird enclosures. The 'half' is the breeding enclosure, so we can breed our own birds, which is expected to be completed in Autumn 2016.



Volunteers assisting with erecting the main posts for Quil's enclosure in 2014



Quil's enclosure mostly complete in 2015

Our Birds

In November 2015, we acquired our eighth addition to the Sanctuary from a breeder in South Australia – Eglantyne, an Barn Owl. This was very exciting for us as we were able to train her while she still had some of her chick fluff!

Our display birds now include (from largest to smallest): Quil, Wedge-tailed Eagle; Tyriel, Little Eagle; Cleo, Peregrine Falcon; Eglantyne, Eastern Barn Owl; Min Min, Eastern Barn Owl; Merle, Australian Hobby; Mokey, Southern Boobook Owl; Kevy, Nankeen Kestrel (see [Our Resident Birds](#) page on our website for photos and more information on each bird).

Rehabilitation of injured wild birds

The other arm of the Sanctuary is focused on rehabilitating, where possible, injured birds of prey. These birds usually come to us via members of the public, who have found the birds injured on their properties or elsewhere and contact us directly, from other wildlife carers or other organisations, such as Healesville Sanctuary. The following is the number and type of injured bird, who came through our Sanctuary in 2015. *Eight of these birds were successfully released.*

6	Black-shouldered Kites
2	Wedge-tailed Eagles
2	Peregrine Falcons
2	Australian Hobbies
1	Black Falcon
1	Little Eagle
1	Barn Owl
1	Nankeen Kestrel

Educational Displays

From February - December 2015, we gave a total of 104 displays. Kevy flew her tail off, literally on one particular day...(well, 1 feather anyway!) The displays and contexts are outlined below.

<i>Target group</i>	<i>Display type</i>	<i>Number of displays</i>
Narmbool	Meet the Beaks	30
	Outstanding Owl Encounters	7
	Full Raptor Encounter	1
Ballarat Wildlife Park	Bird of Prey Encounters	30
Kryal Castle	'A Kestrel for a Knave'	20
School Incursions	Meet the Beaks	3
Landcare & Farming groups	Various presentations	4
Other organisations & community groups		5
Expos and conferences	Static displays	3
Birdlife Australia 'Pop-up Backyard' (Federation Square)		1
Total displays		104

Given this total number of displays to school groups at Narmbool and Kryal Castle alone, we can estimate that the total number of students who have been exposed to our birds and our environmental education messages is approximately 2000 school students. We have received heart-warming feedback in the form of letters from some of the students from Geelong College, in particular. You can read a couple of them on our [Testimonials](#) page on our website.

The Director's More 'Personal' Statistics for 2015	
Number of talon wounds Martin received	14
Number that required a band aid	4
Number that required more than a band aid to treat	2
Number of peck wounds	3
Number of tantrums: (Martin not the birds)	148
Number of psychologist visits	less than were probably needed...

It should be mentioned at this point that none of our achievements could have been gained without the support of our incredible volunteers (please see our [Friends of the Sanctuary](#) page to see the amazing people who have contributed to the development and ongoing work at the Sanctuary). These contributions took the form of:

- Food provided for critters
- Physical support
- Materials and donations
- Time and energy

Not to mention our regular volunteers, Elle Fox and Kate Vleck, who have brought great enthusiasm and energy to the Sanctuary. More recently, we welcomed Molly Watchorn to the ranks of our volunteers.

Challenges ahead

There are still quite a few challenges, which include continuing to create more infrastructure and obtaining birds for breeding and then actually getting them to breed!

Other challenges will include negotiating 'down' periods, marketing to schools to increase school incursions and increasing our team of flight ready birds for free flight shows... All of this whilst maintaining a good standard of care for our birds and our own sanity.

But, 2016 will be an exciting year as we enter this next phase and expand our business more.

Martin Scuffins

Director

Leigh Valley Hawk & Owl Sanctuary



Eglantyne - still with some of her chick fluff (and a yummy rat in her talons)...