



Encouraging the Future

of Wildlife Conservation at Murdoch University

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Australia's unique and diverse wildlife makes it one of the most important nations on the planet for biodiversity, with roughly ninety percent of its animal species found nowhere else in the world. But these species are disappearing at an alarming rate, with Australia's native wildlife facing constant threats from habitat destruction, urban development, and introduced species. To have a chance at saving these wonderful animals, we need to build a more sustainable future, improve the support for conservation efforts, and develop innovative ideas and recovery strategies. An essential aspect of working towards these goals is encouraging future generations to get involved in wildlife conservation, which is precisely what Murdoch University Wildlife Association aims to achieve.

Murdoch University Wildlife Association is a student-run, not-for-profit organisation within Murdoch University that provides opportunities for students to gain experience, skills, knowledge, and enthusiasm for wildlife medicine, conservation, rehabilitation, and research.

Murdoch University is the only university in Western Australia that provides a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine course, and it offers a variety of other animal health and conservation courses, making it a hub for students interested in these fields. Murdoch University Wildlife Association aims to provide wildlife experiences that complement and go beyond the standard academic curriculum, including wildlife handling practicals, first aid workshops, exposure to current research, and other events incorporating conservation and wildlife. We also organise social events to build a community for students who share our passion for Australia's native animals. Our goal is to inspire and support these students to become future ambassadors for wildlife conservation, whether as veterinarians, researchers, or animal health professionals.

Being a not-for-profit organisation, Murdoch University Wildlife Association relies on our generous sponsors to provide various interesting and engaging events for our members. In 2023, the Australian Wildlife Society

kindly sponsored Murdoch University Wildlife Association's Wildlife Necropsy and Quiz Night events.

Wildlife Necropsy

The Murdoch University Wildlife Association Wildlife Necropsy event included presentations on wildlife first aid and necropsy and a practical workshop where students could dissect various wildlife species. The event allowed students to learn crucial wildlife first aid skills, understand wildlife anatomy and physiology, and develop their knowledge of wildlife health. The hands-on and interactive aspects also encouraged students to develop their curiosity and proactively explore aspects of wildlife medicine and conservation.

We began this event with a talk on wildlife first aid that discussed the importance of stress reduction for wildlife patients, proper triaging and assessment of sick and injured native animals, and prompt and effective

Top: Murdoch University Wildlife Association committee and club members at Bibra Lake in Perth, Western Australia. Image: Ashley Chan.



Murdoch University Wildlife Association Quiz Night Attendees. Image: Ashley Chan.



Murdoch University Wildlife Association Quiz Night prizes. Image: Trinity Elsom.



Presentation on anatomy pathology and wildlife necropsy by Dr Flaminia Coiacetto. Image: Ashley Chan.

first aid for these patients. The talk introduced skills such as intragastric gavage fluids and food administration, subcutaneous fluid injections, and intramuscular medication injections. Common diseases of wildlife, such as magpie throat worm, psittacine beak and feather disease, and the emerging black and white disease, were also discussed.

Dr Flaminia Coiacetto, an accomplished veterinary anatomic pathologist interested in avian and exotic pathology, presented on the purpose, procedure, and findings of wildlife necropsies. This engaging presentation explored how wildlife necropsy and anatomic pathology are vital for investigating current diseases and threats to our wildlife species, further research into these species, and directing future medical procedures and conservation efforts for our wildlife. Dr Flaminia then explained the anatomy of various wildlife species and the necropsy procedures we would use in the following practical workshop.

The highlight of the event was the wildlife necropsy itself, where students had the opportunity to practice their wildlife first aid skills and dissect a variety of wildlife species, including possums, bandicoots, echidnas, bobtails, turtles, cockatoos, and many more. At the start of this practical workshop, students got hands-on experience with examining, providing fluids, and providing medications to these animals. We then examined and compared the anatomy of these species through necropsy and put on our detective caps to explore what may have happened to the animals.

The Murdoch University Wildlife Association Wildlife Necropsy was an incredibly informative and fascinating event that provided students with key practical skills and wildlife knowledge. We hope this engaging and unique experience will encourage these students to continue to follow their interest in wildlife and support wildlife conservation efforts in the future.

Quiz Night

The Murdoch University Wildlife Association presented the all-new quiz night event, a fun evening of wildlife trivia, socialising, and great prizes! This event was designed to provide wildlife knowledge in an entertaining way while fostering a sense of community between Murdoch University Wildlife Association members. By building a community for students who share a passion for wildlife, we hope these students will continue to support and encourage each other into the future.

In previous years, the Murdoch University Wildlife Association was a special interest group in the Murdoch University School of Veterinary Science, so most of its members were veterinary

medicine students. But wildlife conservation requires an integrated effort between veterinarians, animal scientists, environmental scientists, and many other professions. So, in 2023, we expanded the Murdoch University Wildlife Association and welcomed students from all disciplines. To celebrate this change and to support communication between Murdoch University Wildlife Association members studying different degrees, we introduced the Murdoch University Wildlife Association Quiz Night event.

To follow the wildlife theme, the Quiz Night questions included wildlife identification, true and false, and wildlife fun facts. The brain-testing trivia rounds were interspersed with interactive mini-games and breaks to enjoy the natural scenery around the Murdoch Guild Tavern. Everyone had a chance to win, with various prizes, including first-, second-, and third-place prize packs, free drinks, and bonus prizes! The Quiz Night was entertaining, informative, and enjoyable for all involved!

The Future of Wildlife Conservation

The Murdoch University Wildlife Association aims to motivate and inspire the next generation of wildlife conservationists to save Australia's incredible wildlife. These bright minds will bring new perspectives and ideas to our current conservation challenges. By working together, not giving up hope, and finding new solutions, we can create a future where humans, animals, and the environment can exist in harmony.



A student dissecting a short-beaked echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*). Image: Ashley Chan.



Demonstration and practice of subcutaneous fluid injection on a kookaburra (*Dacelo novaeguinae*). Image: Ashley Chan.



Students dissecting a giant petrel (*Macronectes giganteus*). Image: Ashley Chan.



Demonstration of wildlife triaging and assessment of a variety of wildlife species. Image: Ashley Chan.