

Interim report for KI Wildlife Network of rescue and rehab of Rosenberg's Goanna from Penneshaw 15 Nov 2020

This male Rosenberg's Goanna was reported as a road injury on the roadside grass verge along Howard Drive Penneshaw on the 12th of November 2020. One observer reported that it had been seen in that location for at least 24 hrs. It had been known to residents surrounding Christmas Cove for many seasons. At the time of injury it was beginning to shed skin from the neck and forelegs, indicating that it had wintered well; Fat in the tail indicated it was in good health. It was observed on the verge by community members and appeared to be lethargic and unresponsive. He was picked up and reported to us by aware community members for rescue and rehabilitation.*

One point five kilograms in body weight, 105 cm nose to tip of complete tail. A male approximately thirty years of age and in prime breeding condition. The right side of the head was swollen with hemorrhaging to the right ear. The right eye was also closed. After rest he exhibited zuengeln (tongue sensing behavior specific to lizards and snakes) but was swallowing with difficulty. There were no broken bones or apparent internal injuries. There was injury to the throat with swelling. He accepted small amounts of water from a pipette and with stroking, was able to swallow.

Initial paralysis of the front limbs has diminished and he is actively responding when given a temperature gradient within the holding space. At night he retreats to cover and reappears the following morning.

Hemorrhaging in the right ear stopped during the night. The right eye remains shut. Swelling behind the right jaw remains. Sight in the left eye is normal and he actively watches movement. Placed on a sun warmed blanket he shows thermoregulatory behavior by moving into warm areas and then periodically retreating to cooler areas. He continues to take water when offered. Zuengeln behavior shows he responds to known individuals and avoids those unknown.

Total rehabilitation from head injuries in reptiles is difficult to assess. It is still early days in the recovery of this individual. Thanks to the response from the community this individual has been given a fighting chance. Kangaroo Island is the last stronghold for Rosenberg's goanna.



*Post rescue care provided by Dr Peggy Rismiller. Peggy has more than fifty years experience in reptile physiology, reptile veterinary practice and physiological research with free ranging reptiles in the wild. A founding member of the European Pineal Society and specialist in Circadian Physiology and Environmental Physiology she continues to be an active and highly regarded researcher in the community of international herpetology.