

**TASMANIAN WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS AND CARERS
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WEDNESDAY 18 MAY 2022**

Good afternoon and welcome to Government House.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our First People. I stand for a future that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal stories, culture, language and history.

This event acknowledges and thanks Tasmanian wildlife rehabilitators and carers. It was first held here in August 2019, following a discussion with then Governor Kate Warner and Bruce Englefield. It was intended to be an annual event, to support and encourage your wonderful community work, but then was interrupted by Covid restrictions.

Don and I are committed to ensuring that your critical wildlife rehabilitation and important work continues to be acknowledged in this modest way at Government House.

As animal lovers yourselves, we would like you to meet Oscar and Nala. They are rescue dogs and are very privileged that they have gone from having to be rescued to living in a 71-room home on 15 hectares of running space.

Oscar and Nala share these hectares with our quite bountiful estate wildlife, just a couple of kilometres from the CBD. A few years ago, Don Knowler in his *Mercury* newspaper column "On the Wing" wrote:

"As we strolled the Government House grounds on a beautiful spring day we saw many bird species, including a grey fantail snatching at insects disturbed by our footsteps ... The gardens proved to be a bird haven and it was easy to see why. The grounds mix not only a formal parkland in the style of the English landscape garden designer Capability Brown, but open pasture and a smaller garden devoted to Tasmanian native plants ...

"The lakes and the fringing riparian vegetation provide an additional lure for birds favouring such habitat. White-faced herons can sometimes be seen hunting fish and

frogs in the main lake's shallows and little black cormorants – which favour sheltered freshwater rivers and lakes over their marine counterparts – sometimes pay a call.”ⁱ

End of quote.

More recently, working with wildlife scientist, Sally Bryant, the Government House Building Assets and Heritage Manager, Alan Wiltshire, has set up two bird monitoring sites on the grounds – one in the north in the vineyard paddock and the other in the main drive area. Although, they are not public access sites, anyone who is here is able to do a count and enter it into the Birdlife Australia database using its “birdlife birdata app”.ⁱⁱ We have something like 32 identified bird species so far.

Alan also spends three weeks each spring in the far south-west monitoring both swift parrot populations and associated flowering gums.

May I conclude with some brief remarks about our lovely Quarry Pond. It was landscaped as a water feature in the mid-1870s. At the time, a number of tench fish were introduced into it at the height of the acclimatisation frenzy, introducing European wildlife into the Antipodes.

In 2017, Inland Fisheries were invited to DNA sample the thriving population of Quarry Pond fish. They are classified as goldfish and some look exactly that. But others are very dark, so we wonder from time to time if remnant tench DNA lingers with the released pet goldfish population.

In conclusion, I thank you all very much for the wonderful work you do to ensure that our wildlife is cared for as much as possible – not only for their own sakes but also for the continuation of our island's precious natural creatures.

Thank you.

[David invites Bruce Englefield to respond]

ⁱ The Mercury, “On the Wing”, 11 November 2017.

ⁱⁱ See G Drive “Birdlife Birdata surveys” folder.