

Hope for embryos

CALM volunteer Pamela Smith of Roleystone believes she may have stumbled on a "first" in raising orphaned kangaroo embryos.

Pamela found a nine-week old male embryo in the pouch of a western grey kangaroo killed on a road near her home.

She said that if orphan kangaroos under 12 weeks were placed in an incubator, they generally die and if placed in a foster mother's pouch they were rejected.

"I decided the little fellow was worth my best shot so I implanted him in the pouch of Chrissy, another western grey kangaroo I'd also hand-raised," Pamela says.

"Chrissy's teats appeared not to produce milk so she was unable to suckle the embryo, but she didn't reject it.

"The 'virgin' foster mother is incubating the embryo, named Benjamin by my daughter, and I feed him three times a day instead of the recommended six, and he's thriving.

by
Verna Costello

"Benjamin's no bigger than your middle finger so I feed him on Wombaroo formula, a mixture available commercially.

"The formula is designed for much older embryos, but it seems the manufacturers don't make anything for youngsters under 12 weeks old.

"I use a bicycle valve on a syringe to siphon the formula into Benjamin's mouth; I've raised woylies and quokkas this way with great success.

"So I'm beginning to wonder if Benjamin absorbs supplementary nourishment from fluids secreted in the skin of Chrissy's pouch.

"The exciting thing about all this is that it might be possible to use kangaroo foster mothers for orphans of other animals such as the endangered woylie."

CALM ecologist Paul Brown who is based at Kelmscott district said this was a distinct possibility.



Volunteer Pamela Smith feeds Benjamin. Inset: close-up of a thriving Benjamin. Photo by Paul Brown

"Woylies are renowned for throwing out their joeys when disturbed," Paul says.

Pamela says she is always interested in exchanging ideas, particularly with other volunteers, and can be contacted on (09) 397 5885.

SPOTTER pilot John "Woodie" Woodward pictured below is about to take off with son Jamie, who had just completed a week's work experience with CALM before

Story and photo
by Tammie Reid

of his interests and, again, Jamie seems to be a mirror of his father, as John has a

Spotter pilots his son

pilot for the Swan region and in the past 15 years has become a symbol of reliability in the air, instilling confidence in fire crews and office staff, who wait on his reports.

recently, testing the Eagle, soon to replace the slower but ever reliable Piper Cub spotter.

He also represents the pilots on the Enterprise Bargaining Committee.

187/1: Pamela Smith - Volunteer - 9 weeks old
injury

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Photos by Paul Browne - Kelmscott ecologist.

