



CARERS: Bec Piper with a young wallaby and (inset) Pam Tully with a sugar glider.

MAIN PICTURE: BILL MIDDLEY

# Rescuers on job

WHILE the phones are unusually quiet and the wildlife mostly staying out of trouble, the Far North Queensland Wildlife Rescue team is not sitting idly by.

The 24-hour hotline for injured native wildlife has still listed an ibis, a Papuan frogmouth, a possum and a joey needing help.

"Not a lot of animals are coming in, but we're busy trying to retrain everybody - getting ready for the (breeding) season to start up again," committee member Kate Richards said. "The season runs from around October through to March."

"During the summer,

we get lots of Torres Strait pigeons and metallic starlings. The starlings nest in huge flocks and sometimes we can have 30-40 nestlings fall out of a tree in one go - suddenly you have 40 babies to farm out to people."

Birds account for 90 per cent of rescues, with the rest mostly joeys, possums and mammals.

Ms Richards said FNQWR was currently running two courses a month and was keen to add to its 300 members, who man the hotline, care for orphans, run errands or take animals to the vet.

"We're looking for

anybody with spare time or interested in learning about native wildlife," she said.

Age is no barrier.

"Children are great. They are the ones who get their parents interested. They're our new wildlife warriors. We've got to recruit them."

Ms Richards said Piccone's IGA in Pease St had become a lifeline for the centre, donating left over fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis. "It's fantastic and we are getting that year round."

● The centre is at 4/114 Hoare St or [www.fnqwildliferescue.org.au](http://www.fnqwildliferescue.org.au) online. The 24-hour hotline is 4053 4467.