

Emily

The story of a very special wallaby

At only 400g, and showing terrible injuries, little Emily came to us in August 2005.

But she was a fighter...surviving the motor vehicle accident that killed her mother, and then, immediately before being rescued, and still in the pouch, her mother was in the process of being eaten by an eagle!

As a result of the eagle's actions, Emily suffered a torn mouth and a very nasty gash along the top of her skull. Such was the severity of the wound, we wondered if the fur would grow back after it healed.

Emily took to her bottle with gusto, and the wounds healed completely. Even at this early, just furring, stage of her life, Emily was showing signs of the wonderful personality that we were to enjoy; confident, stress-free, inquisitive and affectionate.

Strangely though, Emily wasn't growing as you would expect. Over the next few months we saw her maturing, her fur began to develop it's unique colours, and her motor skills advancing in line with her age, but she was so small! It soon became evident that we couldn't possibly release Emily because she was simply not going to be large enough to survive in the wild. In February 2006 Emily was just a foot tall and weighed 2.3Kg, when a "normal" Red Neck Wallaby should have weighed in excess of 4.5Kg. Not that this worried Emily...every piece of furniture had to be climbed, every person she met was a new friend.

On the 16th of February, the eagle finally won. It appears that the wounds had left Emily with a cerebral aneurism... a vascular "time bomb". In a shockingly brief time our wonderful, healthy wallaby was gone.

It was not until I wrote this that I realised Emily had been with us for only six months. She filled our lives and gave so much back, it seemed a lot longer. I miss her happy little face each morning, and the mischief she got up to. Everyone who was fortunate enough to have met Emily will understand. And miss her as much as we do.

This experience has reminded me of something *all* carers should not forget: we receive our animals as a result of trauma to the mother, and we have no way of knowing what actual damage the joey has sustained. We do our best, but there are no guarantees. Emily, as with any other joey, could just as easily have died the day after she came in.

We were just lucky.

