

# WILDLIFE RESCUE

New South Wales - 2020

What you can  
do to assist  
sick, injured  
or orphaned  
native wildlife



# INTRODUCTION

- This booklet aims to provide readers with basic information, so they are better equipped to help any sick, injured, or orphaned native wildlife.
- All native wildlife is protected under State legislation, but we can all share the responsibility to help where possible, to ensure the safety and ongoing health of all native fauna.
- Only licensed wildlife carers should attempt to care for any sick, injured, or orphaned wildlife. In NSW you must be trained by a licensed wildlife group, giving you authorisation under the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. It is against the law for untrained people to care for wildlife.
- **If you find wildlife in distress, please contact a local wildlife carer, or take the animal to a Vet.** Vets usually do not charge, and you do not have to wait with the animal.
- You can find a local licensed wildlife carer group anywhere in NSW- see the back cover of this booklet.
- The first aid directions in this booklet are designed to help you and the animal until it reaches a Vet or experienced wildlife carer.
- Do not give sick, injured or orphaned animals anything to eat or drink as this can cause further complications, injury, or death.
- Contain the animal comfortably. Keep the animal warm, quiet, in the dark and away from children, domestic animals and noise.



# SIMPLE TIPS

- Be a responsible pet guardian. Dogs and cats cause injury and death to many of our native species. Supervise pets at all times and keep dogs and cats inside the house, especially at night.
- Teach your children to love, respect and appreciate wildlife and the environment.
- Use environmentally friendly detergents and cleaning agents. Restrict use of pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides on your land. Wildlife can be poisoned by these chemicals. Ask us for more information on wildlife friendly pest control.
- Use wildlife friendly netting in your garden if you need to protect your plants from wildlife. 'Wildlife friendly' means white and with tiny holes that your own fingers can't go through. Many animals are badly injured by the wrong netting.
- Retain and plant native vegetation on your land. Plants provide food, shelter, nesting sites and safe passage for wildlife. Hollows in trees are also very important. You can also attach nest boxes in your trees.
- To prevent accidental drowning in ponds and pools attach a scamper ramp or thick rope or towel securely outside the pool and put the other end in the water to help animals to climb out.
- Do not feed native wildlife but plant food trees for them. If you do feed, make sure it is their natural diet (never bread or milk!), in small quantities and in clean trays or dishes. Supply fresh water.





## SIMPLE TIPS Continued

- To keep snakes out of your property, remove long grass, keep your lawn mown, remove rubbish piles and keep food sealed. Don't leave pet food out overnight. Before mowing or using a whipper snipper stamp heavily on the ground around to alert a nearby snake so it will move on. Anything that attracts mice will attract snakes! Frogs in ponds and birds in cages will also attract snakes. Snake-proof your pond and cages with fine mesh netting.
- Drive slowly and carefully, especially at dusk, night, and dawn.
- If you accidentally cause injury or encounter an injured animal, please stop to offer help if it is safe to do so.
- Ensure your own safety whenever dealing with any wildlife situation involving highways, trees, or water.
- Never relocate an animal out of its natural area.
- Consider if the animal really needs to be rescued before you try to help. Seek advice from a local wildlife group if you are unsure.
- Carry an animal rescue kit in a box in your car. Include a blanket, towel, pillowcase, scissors, torch, and safety pin.
- Always check the pouch of dead marsupials - kangaroos, wallabies, koalas, possums, gliders, bandicoots, and wombats. The pouch is where a belly button would be in a human. There could be uninjured viable young needing rescue.
- Observe wildlife from a distance. Animals can easily become distressed and injure themselves if they feel threatened.

# BANDICOOTS

Bandicoots are commonly hit by cars or attacked by dogs.

- Anyone finding a sick, injured, or orphaned bandicoot should immediately contact a licensed carer as these animals have highly specialised needs. The animal's fate often depends on them receiving expert attention as soon as possible.
- **Ensure your own safety whenever stopping on a road.**
- Stress is a major factor in the death of all marsupials. Try to keep at least the head of any injured animal covered with a towel or blanket.
- If you find an injured bandicoot, contain it. **Beware of sharp claws and teeth** when handling adult animals.
- Wrap in a towel or pillowcase, place in a covered carry cage or box and take to a Vet as soon as possible.
- Remove bodies from the road to reduce the risk of further injury to humans or other wildlife.
- Check for life. If the animal is dead, check for a pouch. There may be live joeys in there. Bandicoots can have several young at once.
- If an injured or dead female is found to have young, please place her in a pillowcase or towel and take the mum with baby to a Vet or contact your local wildlife group. Keep them warm.
- Do not attempt to give any food or water.





## BATS

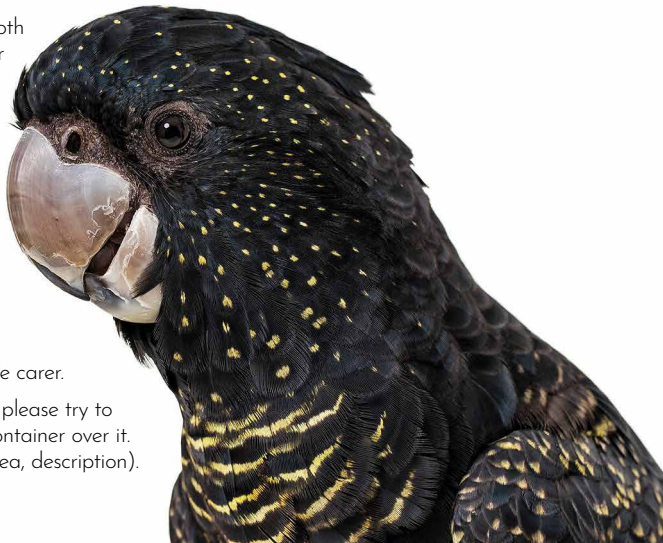
Bats require human assistance after being hit by a car, tangled on barbed wire, caught in fruit netting, or electrocuted on overhead wires.

- **DO NOT HANDLE ANY BAT including flying foxes, and microbats.**
- Contact your local wildlife group for help. A licensed rescuer will have been vaccinated against Lyssavirus. Un-vaccinated people may be vulnerable to serious illness if scratched or bitten by a bat.
- While awaiting assistance to rescue a bat, if safe to do so, cover the animal with a box or cloth to prevent further distress or injury and to protect it from the sun.
- Do not give the bat any food or water.
- If you are bitten or scratched flush the wound thoroughly with soap and water for at least 5 mins. and apply an iodine tincture or alcohol-based antiseptic. Flush bite saliva from eyes, nose, or mouth. Contact your doctor or nearest hospital immediately.
- Please report bats on powerlines even if they appear to be dead. Call your local wildlife group. Babies can survive the mother being electrocuted and wildlife carers may well be able to raise the baby.

# BIRDS - ADULT

Adult birds may need help for many reasons; often they fly into windows, are hit by cars, attacked by domestic pets, or may be poisoned.

- Beware of sharp claws and beaks when handling birds.
- Where possible have two people working together or encourage the bird to move into a corner so it can be more easily restrained.
- To capture the bird, use an old towel or cloth to place over the bird, rather than using your bare hands.
- Once you have captured the bird, contain it. Use a box with air holes, just large enough to confine the bird, and prevent it from flapping its wings, which can cause further injury. Line the base of the box with a cloth, towel, or newspaper. You could use a pillowcase or wrap in a towel if severely injured.
- **Do not give the bird any food or water.**
- Take the bird to your nearest Vet or wildlife carer.
- If you feel uncomfortable about handling, please try to contain the bird by putting a box or other container over it. Tell the rescuer where it is, (GPS, photo in area, description).







## BIRDS - BABY

- Baby birds come into care for many reasons. The bird may be sick or injured, but often juvenile birds are 'kidnapped' by well-meaning people, whilst they are at the stage of learning to fly (a fledgling).
- First determine if the bird really needs rescuing. Some species, like magpies, currawongs and ravens deliberately encourage their young to the ground before they can fly. This is so that they can learn how to forage for food on the ground. The parents are usually in the trees supervising. Unless there is imminent danger like a cat stalking, or vehicles, do not interfere!
- It is a myth that parents reject a baby handled by humans.
- Handle as little as possible to prevent injury and stress to the baby bird.

- Do not give food or water.
- Try to identify the parent bird and find the nest. Always try to put uninjured babies (not fully feathered) back in their nest or as close as you can to where the nest is.
- Construct a makeshift nest if necessary - a small box or plastic container like an ice cream container will work. Ensure it has drainage holes. Put dried leaves, grass and twigs in the bottom.
- Attach the nest in a tree as close as possible to where the baby was found. Check if the parents come to feed it in your nest, over the next few hours. If they don't, or if the chick is showing signs of illness, injury, weakening condition, or if other birds attack the chick, you may need to take it to a Vet or call the local wildlife group.



# ECHIDNA and PLATYPUS

Echidnas often receive injuries when trying to cross a road. An injured echidna on the road needs to be picked up with a towel or the rubber floor mat in your car (ideal to hold an echidna safely). If you see an echidna crossing a road, try to alert on-coming traffic by flashing your lights, or putting on hazard blinking lights. If safe to do so, pull over and pick up the echidna with the car mat or a towel and take it over the road in the direction it was going, to release a little distance away from the road.

- If you find an injured or orphaned echidna you can pick up as above and contain in a bucket or closed box. Take to a Vet or contact the local wildlife group immediately.

Note - DO NOT provide artificial heat as suggested for other animals. Echidnas have a naturally low body heat and cool is the rule!

- If you have an echidna in your yard, it is usually just passing through. Unless in immediate danger allow it to go on its way. Constrain domestic pets to allow the animal to move on.

- Never remove an echidna from its territory unless it's in immediate danger. You may be taking a mother away from her burrow with young dependent on her.

- **Do not attempt to give the animal any food or water.**

## PLATYPUS

Do not handle a platypus more than is necessary and be aware of possible injury to you, from spurs located on their lower hind legs. Contain carefully in a bucket or similar and take to a Vet or contact a local wildlife group as soon as possible.





# FROGS

Frogs may be injured by a mower, line trimmer, contact with chemicals or cleaning agents or when caught in a door or by a cat or dog. They may also be unexpectedly found in recently bought fruit and vegetables.

- Before handling a frog - thoroughly wet your hands, or better still, wear wet gloves. The secretions on our skin could further its injuries.
- Never relocate a frog. A fatal fungal disease called Chytridiomycosis affects total populations of native frogs across the world. If you find a frog in purchased vegetables or flowers, do not release it but seek further assistance to avoid spreading the disease.
- **Do not attempt to feed the frog any food or water.**

- Gently place the frog in a waterproof container - takeaway plastic containers are perfect.
- Pour a few drops of water (preferably spring or rainwater) onto the frog's skin, so it doesn't dry out.
- Take an injured frog to a local Vet or contact the local wildlife group.
- You can also get excellent advice on frogs from a dedicated frog helpline FATS (Frog and Tadpole Society) - phone 0419 249 728
- Do not dispose of water from the frog's container down your sink or toilet as this may inadvertently spread Chytridiomycosis. Pour the water into a pot plant instead, where it can cause no harm.

# KANGAROOS and WALLABIES - ADULT

Kangaroos and wallabies often need our help for a variety of reasons, but mainly due to motor vehicle or dog attack injuries or being caught in or trapped by fencing.

- A mother may have been killed on the road, but her joeys may have survived, and not even be injured.
- **Ensure your own safety whenever stopping on a road.**
- Stress is a major factor in the death of kangaroos and wallabies. Try to keep at least the head of an injured animal covered with a towel or blanket.
- Injured kangaroos can be quite aggressive so always approach from behind so they can't kick you.
- **Beware of sharp claws, strong legs and tail, and sharp teeth when handling injured adult animals.**
- Remove dead animals from the road where possible to reduce the possibility of further injury to humans or other wildlife.
- Check for life. If the animal is dead, check for a pouch - it's where the belly button would be in a human. There may be a live joey in there. See the next section for first aid for kangaroo and wallaby joeys.
- If the mother is injured on the road, make every effort to keep her and any joeys as safe as possible. Contact a Vet or local wildlife group for advice. Try to set up warning barriers so following cars can't do further damage. Park your car back from the site and put on your hazard lights so at least cars might slow down on approach. You may even need to phone the local police station for help.
- **Do not attempt to give any food or water.**





# KANGAROOS and WALLABIES - BABY

Kangaroo and wallaby joeys come into care after the mother has been injured or killed and are sometimes found alone.

- **Stress is a major factor in the death of kangaroos and wallabies. Try to keep the animal covered, particularly the eyes.**
- If the joey is furless, **do not forcibly remove it from its mother's teat, as this could cause further injury, even death.** Only if the mum is dead, and you feel comfortable to do so, use a pair of scissors to cut the teat as close as possible to the mother's pouch. If possible, attach a safety pin or clip to the cut end of the teat to stop the joey swallowing it. If you are not comfortable cutting the teat, or if the mother is still alive, contact a local Vet or wildlife group as soon as possible for further instructions.
- Wrap the joey in something warm and put it close to a heat source - like your own body, or a wrapped bottle of hot water. Furless joeys cannot maintain their own warmth and may be cold already. Monitor temperature - be careful not to cause over-heating or scalding.
- **Do not attempt to give the joey any food or water.**
- Take the joey to the nearest Vet or wildlife group carer.
- Try to avoid transporting the joey long distances from where it was found as it must eventually be released back to its original habitat/location.

# KOALAS

Koalas are often hit by cars or attacked by dogs. Please keep all domestic pets away from koalas at all times. Restrain your pet if you find a sick, injured, or orphaned koala.

- Anyone finding a sick, injured, or orphaned koala must contact a licensed wildlife group to find an experienced koala carer immediately. Koalas have highly specialised needs.
- Never chase a koala to catch it. The stress can kill the animal.
- **Koalas have very sharp claws and teeth**, so avoid handling the animal.
- If injured on the ground, cover the animal with something warm like a blanket, towel or jumper. Place an empty box or basket over an injured koala and weigh it down to prevent escape. Don't attempt to pick up or move a live koala. Never grab around the chest.
- Give it something to hold - a rolled

up towel or old soft toy but **do not attempt to give the animal any food or water.**

- If a dead adult is found, check to see if it's a female as it may have a joey in the pouch. If there is a live joey then transport the dead adult with the young still in the pouch to the local vet or wildlife group carer, keeping the joey as warm as possible.
- Search nearby if you find a dead female with an active teat. A joey may have separated and will need to be rescued. If found, cover with something warm and secure if possible, but don't chase it or pick it up.
- Tell rescuers where to find the koala - give a detailed description of the area, preferably with a photo and GPS location.
- If a dead adult is found, please take a note of any ID tag and report the number to the relevant government department.



# POSSUMS and GLIDERS - ADULT

Adult possums and gliders are often found after being hit by a car or attacked by domestic pets. They can also suffer falls, burns, poisoning, or skin conditions caused by stress in trying to survive in an inadequate environment.

- **Ensure your own safety whenever stopping on a road.**
- **Beware of sharp claws and sharp teeth** when handling injured adult animals.
- Check for life. If the animal is dead, check for a pouch. There may be live joeys in there or nearby. See the next page for first aid for possum and glider joeys.
- Stress is a major factor in the death of all marsupials. Try to keep at least the head of any injured animal covered with a towel or blanket.
- If an injured adult is found, contain it. This can be done by placing an upside-down washing basket or box over the animal or wrapping it in a towel or pillowcase and placing in a covered carry cage or box. Note that small gliders can get through small holes in baskets! You can even use a fabric shopping bag as a temporary container, but make sure it is secured by tying at the top.

- Try to hold the animal by the scruff of the neck and the base of the tail, when moving it.
- **Do not attempt to give the animal any food or water.**

- Remove dead animals from the road where possible, to reduce the possibility of further injury to humans or other wildlife.
- Take the animal to your nearest Vet or call a wildlife group. Make sure you tell them the location found, because the animal should be released there after rehabilitation. Record the location with GPS, photos, and written description. Tell the Vet or carer what you know of the history so the most appropriate treatment can be started eg. attacked by a cat or dog (it will need immediate antibiotics), no sign of injury - has poisoning occurred?



**POSSUMS continued** • If there's a live joey, take the dead mother's body to the Vet with the joey (keeping it warm), so the Vet can diagnose the problem. If poisoned with rat poison, for instance, the joey will need special treatment because it may have ingested poison through its mother's milk.

- If you are not comfortable about picking up the animal, please try to contain it under a box or similar. Give the rescuer a good description of the location, send a photo, and give GPS coordinates.

## POSSUMS and GLIDERS - BABY

Possum and glider joeys come into care after the mother has died or been injured or killed. Sometimes joeys are found alone. Falling off mum's back is common.

- **Ensure your own safety whenever stopping on a road or trying to reach high places.**

- Brushtail possums usually have only one joey. Ringtails and gliders have two or even three joeys. Joeys may be in pouch, riding mum's back, or left in a nest. If you find an elongated or active teat in a mum's pouch, search nearby for babies. If there is only one joey in the ringtail or glider pouch, search around the area as there are likely to be more that have managed to move away from the mother.

- If the joeys are furless, **do not forcibly remove them from the mother's teat**

as this may cause further injury, even death. In these cases, whether the mother is alive or dead, wrap, keep warm, and contain the mother and joeys and take them straight to a Vet or call the local wildlife group for a carer.

- If the mother is dead and the joey not attached to a teat, wrap the joey in something warm and place next to your body or a wrapped bottle of hot water. Young joeys are not able to maintain body heat and they can die from cold. Monitor the temperature to ensure the joey does not over-heat.

- **Do not attempt to give the joey any food or water.**

- Take the joey to a Vet or call the local wildlife group as soon as possible. Take the mother too, if applicable - see notes in the previous section.







## REPTILES - Lizards

Lizards are often injured by mowers, whipper snippers, line trimmers and domestic pets.

- Never pick up or hold a lizard by the tail (skinks drop their tails).
- **Beware of sharp teeth, claws, and the tail.**
- Contain an injured lizard in a box with a lid, or in a pillowcase.
- **Do not attempt to give the animal any food or water.**
- Take the animal to your nearest Vet or contact your local wildlife group.



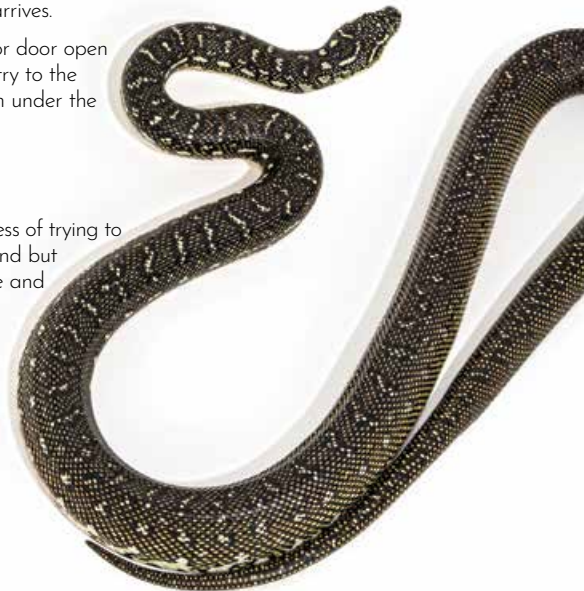
## Turtles

Turtles are often active in wet weather. They can be found on roads or in yards.

- An uninjured turtle should usually be left alone as it will find its own way.
  - An injured turtle should be picked up by the sides of its shell and placed in a box, garbage bin or pillowcase.
- Be aware of sharp claws.**
- **Do not attempt to give the animal any food or water.**
  - Take the animal to your nearest Vet or contact your local wildlife group.

# SNAKES

- **Do not handle any snake.**
- If you have found an injured or sick snake, then immediately call an experienced snake handler – through the local wildlife group or through local police if necessary. Keep the animal in sight, from a distance, until help arrives.
- If a snake is found inside a house leave a window or door open as an avenue of escape, while blocking off further entry to the rest of the house (by rolling towels and wedging them under the door for instance).
- **Do not attempt to catch or kill the animal.** It will move off when it is ready.
- Most snake bites are received by people in the process of trying to capture or kill the snake. If bitten, don't wash the wound but apply a pressure bandage or towel over it, immobilize and elevate the limb and keep the patient still and calm. **Phone 000** for an ambulance. There is no need to contain the snake, but if safe to do so, take a photo to enable quick identification for medical services.
- Though many snakes encountered are harmless, some are highly venomous and should be avoided.
- Snakes usually prefer to retreat but can become defensive if cornered or threatened.



# WOMBATS

Wombats are often victims on the road or attacked by other animals. They are also frequently found debilitated by skin disease and need our help.

- **Ensure your own safety whenever stopping on a road.**
- Be aware that joeys may survive a vehicle collision. Always check the pouch of a marsupial animal like a wombat.
- Minimise stress by covering the head at least, with a towel or blanket.
- **Beware of sharp claws and teeth particularly.**
- Remove dead or injured animals from the road when possible, to reduce the possibility of further injury to humans or other wildlife, including a live joey.
- If you can't move the wombat, try to set up warning barriers so following cars don't do further damage. Park your car back from the site and put on your hazard lights, so at least cars might slow down on approach. You might consider phoning the local police (see back cover).

- If the mother is dead but there is a live joey, not attached to the teat, wrap the joey warmly and secure in a pillowcase or bag. Keep it warm with your own body heat or a wrapped bottle of warm water near it.

- If the joey is still attached to the teat of a dead mother, please follow the directions given for kangaroo joeys still attached. If you feel comfortable to do so, remove the joey using the same method as given for kangaroos. Be aware that the wombat's pouch faces backwards so it might be harder to find and remove a live joey. If you are not comfortable to remove the joey, cover and secure the dead mother with baby and make a careful note of the location, as described below.

- Contact a Vet or local wildlife group as soon as possible.

- If you find a wombat injured by animal attack or sick, please take careful note of the area it is in. If the animal is lying on the ground, cover it with a blanket or towel and something more secure like a weighted down box if possible. Give the local wildlife group a GPS location, a photo and detailed description of the roads and landmarks, so it can be found.

- **Do not attempt to give any food or water.**





# HOW YOU CAN HELP?

Would you like to help your local wildlife group as a volunteer?

Could you do the training to be a rescuer or carer?

Could you, with appropriate training, man a rescue telephone?

Could you make cages or boxes or help build aviaries?

Could you help to make bags and pouches to house small marsupials?

Could you help to raise food for animals in care?

Could you help in fundraising?

Could you assist with technology and publicity resources?

Could you help in education, like talks about wildlife at schools?

Could you help with transport - collection and delivery of contained animals between Vets and carers, or collection of food supplies?

The list of tasks is endless! Please contact your local group to discuss how you might be of assistance.

Sydney Wildlife Rescue  
[www.sydneywildlife.org.au](http://www.sydneywildlife.org.au)

NSW Wildlife Council  
[www.nwc.org.au](http://www.nwc.org.au)



# WHO TO CALL?

**SYDNEY** - Call **Sydney Wildlife Rescue 02 9413 4300**  
(24hr manned rescue line) or **WIRES 02 8977 3333**

**NSW REGIONAL** Find your nearest wildlife rescue group including ACT

[www.fauna.org.au](http://www.fauna.org.au) will give you the contact details for wildlife groups throughout NSW. Always phone for rescues, do not email.

**Download the International Fund for Animal Welfare's (IFAW)**

Wildlife Rescue App: <https://www.ifaw.org/au/resources/wildlife-rescue-app>

**Wildlife Rescue Australia - 1300 596 457.**

They will connect you with the local wildlife carers needed.

**Police Assistance Line 131 444.** Call in an emergency when you can't reach a wildlife carer or Vet, or if the injured animal can't be moved away from traffic. Police usually also have details of local reptile rescuers.

**Local Vets** - search online for 'Veterinarians in \*(nearest town) in NSW' for contact numbers.

*Sydney Wildlife Rescue has, in good faith, given directions for the assistance of sick, injured, or orphaned native wildlife, but incurs no liability for actions taken or decisions made.*



New South Wales - 2020



*Sydney Wildlife Rescue would like to thank Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council, NSW Wildlife Council, IFAW, fauna.org.au, and Wildlife Rescue Australia for allowing us to use their resources in building this guide.*