



DISCLAIMER:

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INTRODUCTION

Why we need rescue and transport volunteers

As a wildlife rescuer, you may be called upon to rescue a wide variety of animals. In addition to rescue equipment, you will need a good sense of humour, public relation skills, an understanding family and a quiet area for any rescued animal to minimise stress.



Rescue

The need to rescue wildlife in emergency situations comes from:

- Reported sightings of entangled wildlife involving power lines, fishing lines, rubbish, fences and barbed wire to name just a few.
- Reports of sick or orphaned wildlife.
- Requests for assistance for injured road accident victims or domestic animal attacks.
- Calls from the RSPCA and other agencies for assistance with reported wildlife-in-need.

Kangaby Wildlife's [website](#) and [Facebook](#) pages provide worldwide access for education.



How the public can help

- Plant native trees to create natural habitats.
- Install possum boxes in backyards ([Possum Box design](#))
- Keep cats indoors at night, or better still, build them a cat run or enclosure. ([Cat-runs](#))
- Restrain dogs when in areas where they could cause damage to flora or fauna.
- Move deceased animals away from traffic on roads to prevent secondary kills of scavengers.
- Dispose of rubbish and all potential hazards thoughtfully and carefully.
- If a water bird is hooked when fishing, never just cut the line. Call wildlife rescue or take the bird to a vet for the hook to be removed.
- Use wildlife-safe netting on fruit trees. ([Wildlife safe netting](#))
- Use wildlife-friendly fencing. ([Wildlife-friendly fencing](#))
- Drive to the speed limit and road conditions, slow down and avoid travelling between dusk and dawn.
- Call wildlife rescue before removing a flightless baby bird from the ground, it may be a healthy fledgling!



Contacts – please add these contact numbers/apps to your mobile phone.



RSPCA – 1300 ANIMAL (1300 264 625)



EMERGENCY App – GPS location [Android](#) – [Apple](#)

Rights and Responsibilities of Wildlife Rescuers

As a Wildlife Rescuer, please always remember to show empathy, kindness and a caring attitude, as members of the public (MOPs) are normally distressed and/or emotional when dealing with an unknown stressful situation! As a rescuer, you may have dealt with similar situations on numerous occasions but this may be the first time for any involved MOPs.



KEEPING WILDLIFE WITHOUT A PERMIT IS ILLEGAL

Caring for injured wildlife yourself is only an option if you have the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and hold a rehabilitation permit issued by the [Department of Environment & Science](#).

Wildlife carers must also follow:

- [Code of Practice – Care of Sick, Injured or Orphaned Protected Animals in QLD](#)
- Under the “[Animal Care and Protection Act 2001](#)“, they are legally bound to provide for the welfare of animals in their care.
- [Nature Conservation Act of 1992](#)

Other Ways You Can Help!

- Become a [RSPCA Wildlife Hero](#).
- Encourage children to learn about and respect wildlife – the future of our native fauna is in their hands.



Thank you for caring & taking the time to learn more about helping our beautiful native animals

RESCUE KIT

Be Prepared:

- Before attempting to rescue an injured animal, it is essential to think about your own safety, stress reduction for the animal, preparations for transport and what tools will make the rescue successful for both yourself and the animal.
- Keep what is suitable in a car kit for unexpected rescues, and take along any additional items that may be required for calls for particular species rescues.
- **First aid kit.**
- **Reflective safety vest.**
- **Anti-bacterial hand gel, paper towels and wet wipes.**
- **Notepad & pens.**
- **Street directory, mobile phone or GPS.**

- **Heat Source:** heat pad, hot water bottle (water should be from the hot water tap) or a heated wheat bag. The heat source should be covered with a towel and secure enough not to crush or injure the animal whilst in transit. Check the temperature by placing your wrist on the covered bottle – if you can't hold it there, it is too hot! For longer distances, it is useful to have a thermos to refill the heat source as required. On the way to the rescue, wrap your pouch up in a towel with the heat source so it is warm when you arrive at the rescue scene.
- **Carrier:** a strong pet carrier covered with small mesh wire and lined with shade cloth on the interior. A top-opening carrier makes it easier to get the animal in and out. An A4 copy paper box will also hold most animals, but a range of cardboard boxes is invaluable to have on hand as back up.
- **Towels:** towels are helpful with animal capture and are also used to prevent animals from sliding around in boxes during transport.
- **Blanket or doona cover:** these are useful for larger animals and in capturing those which are more active or numerous (e.g. ducklings).
- **Pillowcases:** strong bags of cotton, calico or soft linen, thread free. Definitely NO Hessian or nylon materials. Two bags can be used for increased strength.
- **Elastic bands and cable ties:** these are useful in containing small mammals and reptiles in pouches.
- **Wire cutters:** for entanglements.
- **Pliers:** useful where the removal of the animal takes some time (e.g. entanglements).
- **Eye Protection:** e.g. birds such as darters or cormorants will aim for the eyes with their razor-sharp beak.
- **Disposable gloves:** for checking carcasses, removing joeys and self-protection against fluids or pollutants.
- **Rigger gloves:** to protect your hands from bites, barbwire etc.
- **Glucose Powder:** Mammals will always be in some degree of shock. Pinkies should have a little glucose rubbed on their gums immediately after the rescue as they will often be hypoglycaemic. Glucoden is available from a grocery or chemist outlet.
- **Fold up fishing/landing nets.**
- **Scissors:** these should be sharp and are used for cutting the teat and pouch to retrieve pouched young.
- **Torch:** (must be reliable) – with back-up batteries.
- **Large garbage bags or sheet/s of plastic:** this will protect the interior of your car during messy rescues.
- **Hat, sunscreen, insect repellent and sun-protective eyewear:** for rescues which may take a longer period of time.

Barbed-Wire Rescues:

Bats, birds, macropods & other wildlife often get caught up on fencing. No animal that has been caught on fencing should be released without contacting the rescue hotline for advice. Examples being that barb wire puncture wounds require the animal to have wound treatment, antibiotics and often tetanus vaccinations. Macropods especially can have dislocated hips, nerve damage, fractures, myopathy, wounds & ischemic injuries.



For fence or barbed-wire rescues, make sure you have the following additional equipment:

- **Pliers:** 2 pairs, good quality.
- **Wire Cutters:** good quality.
- **Tie Wire:** to repair or hold fencing.

“Organise another rescuer to go with you to provide assistance”.

NEVER CUT ANY FENCES WITHOUT THE PROPERTY OWNER’S PERMISSION



RESCUE KIT



* WATER BOWL - * SCISSORS - * PILLOW CASES - * EYE PROTECTION

- * HAT
- * RESCUE BOX
- * DISPOSABLE GLOVES
- * WR RESCUE MANUAL
- * WATER
- * 1ST AID KIT
- * PEG/CLUB HAMMER
- * SAFETY VEST
- * ICE PACKS
- * TOWELS
- * TEA TOWELS
- * MAPS
- * CABLE TIES
- * HAIR TIES
- * GARBAGE BAGS



- * TORCH
- * INSECT REPELLENT
- * SUNSCREEN
- * ANTIBACTERIAL GEL
- * BABY WIPES
- * TISSUES
- * HEAT SOURCE/HOT HANDS
- * NOTEPAD/PENS
- * THICK GLOVES
- * GLUCOSE POWDER
- * PLIERS
- * WIRE CUTTERS
- * WR CARDS



Thank you for caring & taking the time to learn more about helping our beautiful native animals

SAFETY



Working in an ‘animal rescue and care’ environment can be very hazardous.

The animals that you rescue and rehabilitate can be unpredictable and, in some cases, quite dangerous.

Rescuers need to know their limitations around animals and work within them to avoid injury.

By understanding animal behaviour, the risk of injury can be reduced.

Animals respond to sights, sounds and smell just as we do but they will also react to things that we may not detect.

The “fight or flight” response is an animal’s primitive automatic, inborn response that prepares its body to “fight” or “flee” from perceived attack, harm or a threat to its survival.

Unsuccessful escape may cause the animal to act defensively.

Inappropriate handling of an animal can cause discomfort, pain and distress and provoke an animal to bite or scratch.

Animal bites and scratches that cause minor skin damage are often disregarded, you should keep in mind that even minor scratches and bites can result in infections and illness if not properly treated.



As a Wildlife rescuer you may not only be at risk of being injured by the animals themselves but you may also be exposed to other hazards that may include:

- Zoonosis – human diseases acquired from animals.
- Injuries from scratches, bites, cuts and punctures.
- Infectious agents – bacteria, fungi, parasites, protozoa.
- Allergies – animal fur, dander, latex gloves etc.
- Falls and road rescue hazards.
- Steam/hot water – used for sterilisation.
- Ergonomics – lifting heavy animals, feed etc.
- Difficult clients and other stressful situations.

Personal safety

Safety should always be your FIRST concern!

Assess the situation for personal risks.

DO NOT act until you are certain you are safe. Without you – if you become injured as well – the animal has less chance of survival.



Check for escape options in case an animal attacks.

If dogs are attacking, **ONLY** intervene if you are certain you will not be attacked.

It is possible that through poor descriptions of animals given by a caller, you may arrive at the rescue to find a completely different species than you thought you would be rescuing. Situations that might be dangerous should only be attempted by experienced and suitably trained rescuers, and then only if every precaution is taken to ensure the rescuer's safety and welfare.

If you arrive at a rescue requiring specially trained rescuers, e.g. raptors, snakes, lace-monitors, bats, large kangaroos or wallabies; **DO NOT** attempt to rescue the animal. Inform the member of the public that you need to call in a specially trained rescuer and call RSPCA to arrange.

Trips, fall and Slip Hazards

Tripping or slipping due to loss of footing or traction is the main cause of falls, which is why you must wear sturdy boots or shoes when attending any animal-related activity.

Safety Tips to avoid falling or tripping

- Take the time to assess the rescue site for obstacles before proceeding.
- Identify alternative routes that may be more easily accessible.
- Look for possible hand or footholds.
- Determine the actions you may take to control or lessen these risks.

Road Rescue Safety

Attending roadside rescues puts volunteers in a very dangerous situation, whether on country roads or major freeways the following safety precautions should always be observed:

Turn on hazard lights & park as far off the road as possible.

Stop somewhere that does not impede traffic flow and provides some safety.

Exit from the vehicle's passenger side if possible.

Ensure that you are visible to motorists – wear a reflective vest. If winter or rain gear is worn ensure that your reflective vest is always the outermost garment.

Keep yourself and the animal safe from traffic.

Carry or drag the animal off the road only when it is safe to do so (removing a deceased animal from the road is important to stop secondary roadkill of scavengers, such as eagles that will feed on the carcass).

Take care as motorists pass and remain alert to the traffic around you.

Never allow yourself or a fellow rescuer to become distracted.

Never attempt to talk on the phone when you are working near or around traffic, remove yourself to a safe location away from all traffic if you need to speak on the phone.



Health Considerations

Before commencing any rescue of an animal, ensure you are following good hygienic practices. Disposable gloves, antibacterial gel and wipes are an essential part of any rescue kit. Several zoonotic diseases can be transmitted from animal to human and human to animal. Please ensure that all equipment is clean, hands are washed or sterilised both before and after the rescue.

Hygiene

Good hygiene is essential for both you and the animal. It is easy to spread infectious diseases and parasites from one sick animal to another such as PBF (Psittacine Beak & Feather Disease) and sometimes to yourself. Diseases that can be spread from animals to humans (zoonosis) include ringworm, salmonella and mange.

Important health considerations

- Keep Tetanus shots up to date.
- If you become sick ('flu' like symptoms, respiratory or gastric) go to your doctor and inform him/her that you handle wildlife.

How to reduce the risk of spreading disease

When rescuing or rehabilitating animals:

- Handle animals as little as possible. Wash your hands before and after handling each animal.
- Use only clean towels for rescues and soak in Napisan© for 1-2 hours before machine washing and drying in sunlight.
- Clean pet carry cages, aviaries and pens between occupants and expose to direct sunlight for as long as possible.
- Do not lick fingers or touch mouth with hands or wipe hands-on clothing.
- Never leave wounds uncovered.
- Never allow children to touch anything from enclosures/cages until they have been thoroughly washed.

Hand Washing

Infectious diseases may be spread from either animals or their environment to people via contaminated hands; therefore, hand washing is the most important practice in preventing both contraction and the spreading of disease. Correct hand-washing techniques and washing hands at the appropriate times will decrease the risk of disease.

Always wash hands with soap and running water after:

- Being licked or bitten by animals.
- Contact with urine, faeces and soil in enclosures/cages.
- Touching animals, their enclosures/cages, or food containers.

Key Safety Rules for Rescuers

1. **Never climb into ceilings.**
2. **Never go beneath houses.**

Lifting Heavy Loads

Animal care operations involve several activities that can cause physical stress when handling and moving heavy objects.

Use proper lifting techniques to help prevent injuries to your back and shoulders when moving animals, cages, bags of feed etc.

Practice the following safe lifting methods:

- Assess where you can get a firm grip on the load.
- Assess the overall size and shape.
- Assess the weight of the load.
- Never bend from the waist and lift a load from the ground – bend your knees and keep your back straight.
- Never attempt to lift anything over 20 kg.
- If you need to change direction while carrying an object, move your feet around and don't strain your back.
- Ensure you have a clear view of what's ahead of you.
- Have another person assist you whenever possible.
- Some of our native animals are very heavy and all can struggle unexpectedly, extreme care must be taken to avoid back injuries.

Difficult Clients

Rescuers are often confronted by members of the public who may be:

- Frightened – “There's a snake in my yard”.
- Upset – “I have just hit a wallaby on my way home”.
- Frustrated – “I have been calling for ages”.
- Annoyed – “The bandicoots are digging up my garden”.

Whilst we should always have respect and empathy for others and attempt to resolve their inquiries, we will not please everyone.

At no time do you, as a volunteer rescuer have to put up with verbal abuse, nor feel threatened or intimidated.

Stress Management & [Compassion Fatigue](#)

Remember that animals only come to our attention when they are displaced, diseased, injured or orphaned. The sad truth is that many are unable to be saved and we often bear witness to their horrific injuries and eventual death. Whether we are aware of it or not these situations are stressful for all involved. ***If this stress is not addressed, we may find ourselves the ones needing care!***

These situations can create more stress for us if we are:

- Unprepared for them.
- Feel unhappy about them.
- Don't feel able to cope with them.

Signs of Stress Overload – Contact your Medical Practitioner!

The following are typical signs of stress overload. If you start to recognise them in yourself, take steps to address them, speak to appropriate people in your group to reduce your workload, or contact your medical practitioner if necessary:

- Anxiety or panic attacks.
- A feeling of being constantly pressured and hassled.
- Irritability and moodiness.
- Physical symptoms, such as stomach problems, headaches or chest pain.
- Allergic reactions, such as eczema or asthma.
- Problems sleeping.
- Drinking too much, smoking, overeating or drug abuse.
- Sadness or depression.

Infectious Agents and Biological Hazards

Whenever you are in contact with natural or organic materials like soil, clay, plant materials or substances of animal origin (fur blood, other body fluids or excrement) you may be exposed to biological agents. Cleaning enclosures and cages should be completed carefully, disposable gloves should be worn at all times and hands thoroughly washed immediately after. Masks should also be worn by anyone who is immune-suppressed or suffering from any type of respiratory illness.

Ticks

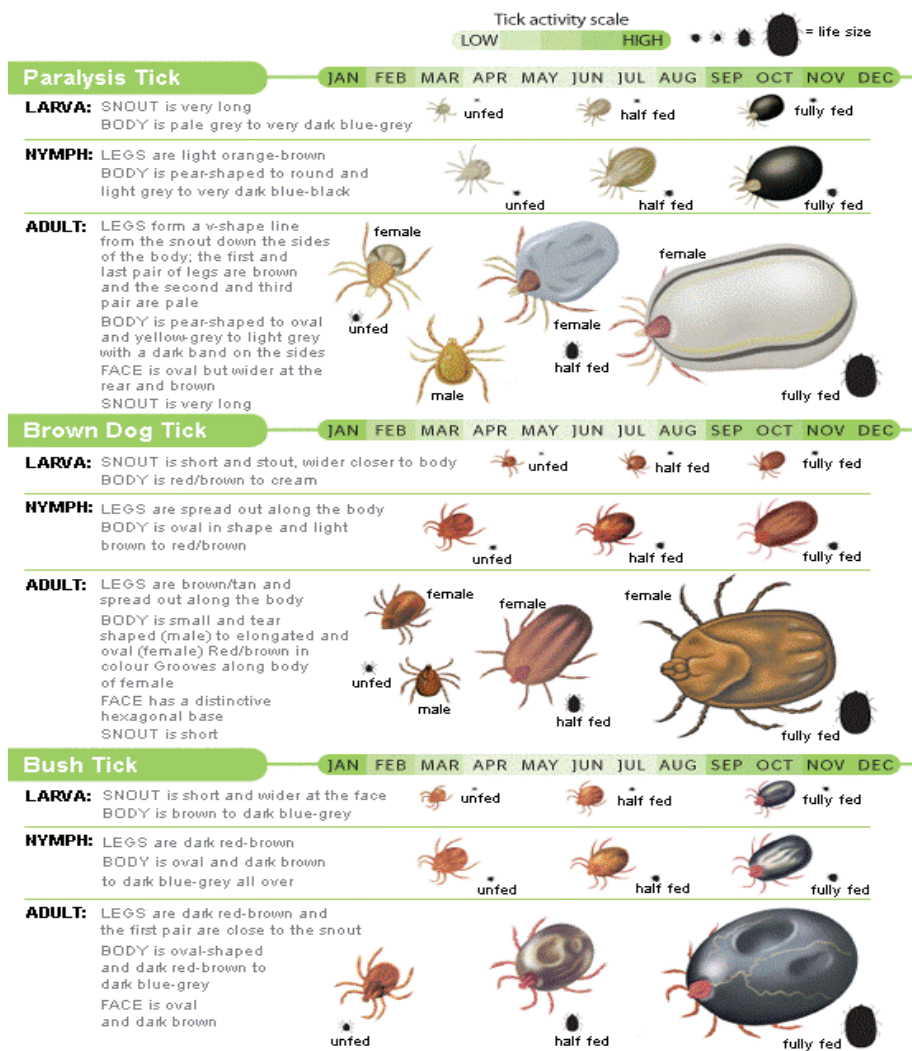
Reactions to tick bites vary from mild, localized redness and swelling to life-threatening anaphylactic shock. When you go on a rescue in a known or suspected tick area there are some things you can do to minimise the risk of bites.

Always:

- Use an insect repellent before the rescue.
- Wear long-sleeve shirts and long pants – pants tucked into socks.
- Check for ticks daily, especially along the hairline, head and neck.
- Be conscious of any area of irritation or soreness.

Removal of Ticks

- Kill the tick with an insect repellent, either spraying directly or gently dabbing the tick with a swab soaked in repellent.
- It will either fall off (this may take several hours) or it can be removed later.
- Seek medical advice if any unusual symptoms, paralysis or breathing difficulties occur after a tick bite. Tick typhus and Lyme disease are rare in Australia but are known to be carried by Paralysis ticks.



Allergies

The symptoms of animal allergies are usually like those of any other nasal allergies.

They may include:

- Coughing
- Red, itchy eyes
- Runny, itchy, stuffy nose
- Sneezing

Some people with animal allergies also have skin reactions, for example, their skin may break out if it has come into contact with animal's saliva. Others with more acute allergies may break out in hives on their face or chest. People with asthma as well as animal allergies can have especially severe symptoms.

It is not the animal's hair, feathers or fur that's the problem; instead, people are usually allergic to the dander – flakes of dead skin – as well as the saliva and urine.

Injuries, Scratches, Bites, Cuts and Punctures

If skin penetration occurs, first aid in the form of thorough washing of the wound with soap and water and/or application of an appropriate skin antiseptic should be administered immediately.

Medical advice should be sought.

Correct Use and Disposal of Sharps

Hypodermic needles, Pasteur pipettes, scalpel blades, plastic items with torn or serrated edges and broken glass all fit this definition.

All sharps have the potential to cause injury through cuts or puncture wounds. Also, many sharps are contaminated with blood or body fluids and microbiological agents posing a risk of infection or illness if they penetrate the skin.

When handling blood and bodily fluids the use of sharps should be eliminated or minimised whenever possible and disposable gloves worn at all times.

It is therefore essential to follow safe procedures when using and disposing of sharps to protect yourself and others from injuries.

- To prevent needle stick injury, needles must not be re-sheathed nor bent or broken by hand.
- All used sharps should be disposed of in a clearly labelled and appropriate sharps container, as soon as possible after use.



WILDLIFE CARE PRIORITIES

WARM – DARK – QUIET – SECURE

Do not take children or domestic dogs on any rescue and don't use the radio, mobile phone or smoke whilst the animal is in the car.



NEVER, unless requested by a carer or vet, attempt to give any animal food or force-feed them water. This action can stress, choke and kill an injured or sick animal.

Unless you have a valid wildlife permit and experience, never attempt to care for the animal yourself at home – **this is both illegal and a threat to the animal who may require specialised care.**

Minimise stress:

- Remove pets and children from the area.
- Reduce noise.
- Cover with a towel or box.
- Keep the animal warm to reduce the effects of shock.

Stress contributes to the development of infectious diseases, the occurrence of heart disease, reproductive failure and psychological distress. All of these negatively impact the quality of an animal's life or its well-being.

Reducing the rescued animal's stress level as soon as possible is vital and should always be a priority.

Contain and secure:

- Place the animal in a box or wrap it in a towel to reduce the risk of further injury.
- If safe to do so, move the animal to a quiet and dark location.
- Ensure the animal cannot escape.
- Ensure the animal is safe from predators and other threats.

Observe:

- If you are unable to transport the animal to a vet, stay with it until help arrives.
- Observe from a safe distance.
- Inform others nearby if there is a potential threat to their safety.

Record Details:

We must know the precise location the animal was rescued from so that it can be released as close to that site as practical. Upon handover of the animal you may be asked to provide any or all the following details:

- Date and time the call was made and/or the rescue were attempted.
- Accurate details of caller's name, street address and phone number.
- Location of the rescue – exact address & location.
- Position, e.g. is the koala high in a tree or in a ball on the ground; is it near the house, road or way up the back of a property?
- Sex of the animal – if it is a dead female marsupial, check for pouch young.
- Nature of the injury and likely cause.
- Size and age/weight.
- Any other relevant information.

Take photographs with your smart-phone if safe to do, this will assist rescue volunteers, vets and/or carers.

Send the photos of both the animal and the location (if possible) so rescuers can find the animal.



Stay with the animal until help arrives!



NEVER give a rescued animal any fluids unless requested to by your species coordinator. Forcing fluid into an animal's mouth can cause aspiration pneumonia.

Rescuing:

Firstly, ensure you are in a safe environment in which you feel comfortable. When you get to the rescue site, be prepared to find that the animal may have died, turned out to be a species that you were not expecting, or may have escaped. Remember, the animals will see you as a predator and attempt to escape no matter what their injuries. A frightened animal will defend itself by biting or clawing. Use enough pressure to control the animal but no more than you need to at any given time.

To reduce the stress of the rescue, remember the rule – warm, dark, quiet & secure.

If the animal is already contained when you get to the rescue site, you will need to assess whether the container size and type are appropriate for the animal and if there is any risk of injuring the animal further by transferring it into your equipment. You will also need to know the extent of the injuries; in case you have to go straight to a vet.

Initial observations without handling:

From a distance, observe the following:

- Is there any sign of blood loss or a broken limb?
- Is it unresponsive, very weak or not standing?
- Is the animal in shock – the general rule is that any injury causes a shock?
- Does it have a hunched or stooping posture, favour one leg or are there any deformities or lameness?
- Is it breathing erratically or laboured?
- Does it respond to your movement and other visual stimuli?
- If these signs are present then it is probably critically ill, so any handling or distress will need to be kept to a minimum.

A healthy animal appears alert with its eyes wide open and bright, is clean and well-groomed, appears symmetrical and is difficult to capture.

Heat stress can occur in very hot weather and may come about if the animal has overworked to escape a predator.

Note any aspects of its condition as they may help a vet or experienced carer diagnose the problem.



Where possible and from a distance, get a short video or photo of how it is standing or moving, this may assist in diagnosis.

Rescuing uncontained animals:

If the animal is uncontained, then you will need to plan how to capture it with the minimum of risk to you, the public and the animal.

Having a plan of action will also minimise the amount of stress placed on the animal. The important thing is to take your time, regardless of how injured the animal is. Careful observation and planning will make the capture quicker and safer for all.

Move people and domestic pets out of the animal's immediate vision and, if possible, hearing. You will need to reduce the threats the animal can see to a minimum of yourself only.

Observe the animal from a distance to gauge its exhibited behaviour, e.g. is it lying still, is it displaying signs of attack because it is feeling threatened, any obvious injuries and to get an identification of the species.



If you believe the animal is a species that requires a specially trained rescuer, contact the RSPCA to organise an appropriate rescuer. Be sure to explain the situation to the member of the public.



Assess the rescue situation for personal risks involved e.g. traffic and potential injury from the animal. Have you done everything possible to reduce these risks (e.g. wear personal protective equipment including hi-vis vest)?

Plan your approach to the animal, taking into account its likely escape routes and the need for any assistance or special equipment, e.g. nets. The easier the animal is to capture, the more likely it is to be seriously ill or injured.

Most animals will calm down once fully covered by an appropriately sized towel or blanket, making the capture process easier and less stressful for the animal. See the relevant animal section for specific detail on capturing a particular species.

Transport

Often the caller has already placed a small animal in a box. Take care when removing it from the box, as small animals are extremely fast when active. **DO NOT transport animals suffering from burns in Hessian or canvas bags.**

Transporting – Small Mammals

Noise

When transporting any animal, it is essential to create a stress-free environment. This can be achieved by securing the pouch/rescue basket using a seat belt to minimise its movement. Further, noise should be limited within the car. This involves driving slowly and carefully, turning off the radio and avoid talking too loudly. This reduction of stress will encourage the animal to feel comfortable and reduce stress levels.

Sunlight

Direct sunlight should be limited as much as possible. This is advisable for all animals but essential for the animals that are sensitive to heat stress, such as an echidna or platypus. Place an additional towel or sheet over the rescue basket to block light.

Ventilation

Good ventilation will help to manage temperatures and humidity. Air conditioning can also assist! This is less essential for animals, which require heat such as possum joeys.

Medications

NEVER administer any medications unless advised to by a species coordinator or vet.

Transporting Lizards

- Avoid temperature extremes when transporting animals.
- Minimize noise that will cause stress to an animal being transported.
- Transport each reptile in a separate rescue container.

Always be aware of a reptile's great ability to escape.

Lizards are to be transported in a strong rescue bag. All bags should be securely closed utilising a 'knot' at the top of the bag, or by folding the bag over onto itself, creating a loop, and placing a cable-tie around this loop.

To safeguard against escape, you can place a 'bagged' animal into a rescue basket. Alternatively, lizards can be transported in a box or animal carry cage with a towel at the bottom.

Ensure that the animal can't slip around in the box used for transport.

Transport Box Set-up

- Holes near the base of a cardboard box, or use a vet transport box.
- A towel placed on the floor.
- Tightly rolled towel wedged in across the flooring to act as a soft perch for birds.
- Large dark towel or sheet to cover box to reduce visual stimulus and stress.
- Animals must be contained at all times.
- Secure the box with the cars seat belt.
- Maintain quiet, no music, talking, smoking etc.



No domestic animals should ever be taken on a rescue.

Relocating healthy or problem animals

Wildlife Organisations get many calls each year inquiring about removal or relocation of animals no longer welcome at a person's home. Common calls are for possums in roof cavities, snakes, nuisance bats, birds etc. Some callers are quite insistent that they want them removed and threaten to hurt the animal if we do not.

It is illegal to interfere with or harm native wildlife. Please advise the caller you are not permitted to assist with these requests. They can be directed to [DES \(Department of Environment & Science\)](#) for bats or birds, pest control companies for possums and licensed snake catchers for reptiles. **The relocater should have a damage mitigation permit for this purpose & there will be a cost to the caller if they engage them.**

Vets

Vets are critical to wildlife work and the maintenance of a good working relationship with the veterinary surgeries in your area will make your rescue work much easier. At all times, vets and their staff should be treated with respect and courtesy. Your vet has spent years in both academic study and their working environment and his/her judgment should not be questioned without a very good reason.

Many vets have limited experience with handling wild animals and may be reliant upon your experience to assist in assessing an animal, so be prepared to assist if you feel comfortable in doing so. The very nature of a vet surgery causes stress in wild animals as they are usually housed near domestic dogs and cats, which are considered predators. For these reasons, we must minimise the time any wildlife spends in vet surgeries by ensuring animals are picked up quickly or are only there for the period of their assessment.



If the animal you've rescued needs to see a vet, please contact the vet ASAP after picking the animal up to arrange a suitable time. You may be asked to leave the animal for a few hours and to contact the clinic after it has been assessed and/or treated. This is not ideal; it is preferable to hold the animal at home until the vet is ready, though this may not always be practical – emergency cases will need to be seen straight away. Describing what the animal is doing will generally allow an assessment of how urgent the case is, and advice can be given on the best way to manage the animal until it is seen by a vet.

Before arriving at the Veterinary Clinic, ensure the animal is contained and kept warm, dark and quiet until it can be assessed. Do not provide heat to echidnas or reptiles. Stop any bleeding from open wounds by applying slight pressure to the area for a few minutes, using a clean cloth.



Euthanasia

The objective of wildlife volunteers is to rescue sick, injured and orphaned native fauna for rehabilitation and release, however, if this cannot be achieved due to age, injuries or disease, then the native animal must be euthanised.

“In all circumstances, administration of a lethal drug by a veterinarian is the preferred method of euthanasia”.



Volunteer members must seek veterinary involvement, whenever possible. In emergencies, the best course of action will be to call for outside help (e.g. Police, licensed shooters, Rangers, or another accredited and insured agency such as RSPCA).

Ensure all Animal Welfare, Firearms Regulations and Acts of Parliament are complied with.

Take to vet for final decision

- Vets euthanise by lethal injection.
- Leave the body at the vets for disposal as it will be poisonous for scavengers.

Our aim as wildlife carers is to help animals recover to full health so they can survive back in the wild. An animal that is not fit and healthy will not survive and will be killed by a predator or suffer a slow death by starvation. Euthanasia is a harsh reality of wildlife care!

If an animal has suffered a severe injury and has no chance of a full recovery, the only humane option is to end its' suffering. Wild animals never make good pets; they spend their lives distressed and trying to escape, remember that the animal will have left behind its mate, family, home territory and freedom.

Keeping a wild animal is also against rehabilitators Permit conditions and keeping animals from the wild as pets is illegal

Releasing an Animal

The release of any animal that has not been taken into care with a qualified carer should be done only with the approval and/or assistance of a vet or carer. In some cases, you may be able to release the animal immediately or within a few hours.

WARM – DARK – QUIET – SECURE

MACROPODS – KANGAROOS & WALLABIES


Be aware they can bite, scratch and kick when scared if given the opportunity. Large or mobile animals such as kangaroos can inflict serious injury and a specialist rescuer should always be contacted to help with these animals.



NEVER chase an animal – this causes capture myopathy which may kill them.

Whilst at the location of the injured animal, contact the RSPCA to arrange for a specialist macropod rescuer to attend.

Stay with the animal and make sure it (& it's joey/s where applicable) are safe from further danger, scavengers etc. until a rescuer can arrive, or if you cannot wait, then tie a highly visible cloth in a location that will assist to locate the animal.

 If a large mammal is in an unusual place but appears healthy and in no immediate danger, it should be left alone and its location reported to the RSPCA, large Macropods should not be relocated unless there is no other option.

Large mammals are sometimes cornered and attacked by dogs in a pack. Make sure dogs are out of the animal's hearing range and tied up. Incessant barking, even at a distance, will tend to keep the animal distressed.

Any mammal that has been attacked by dogs or cats must not be released straight away. The animal needs treatment for stress, antibiotics, warmth, rest, re-hydration and good nutrition. Domestic animal attack victims should be transported to the vet clinic or an experienced carer as soon as possible.

Please note that capture myopathy may affect some animals and particularly macropods. This is a response to high levels of stress and for this reason, no large mammal should ever be chased to achieve capture.

The prognosis for recovery of large mammals caught in barbed wire is rarely favourable; an experienced macropod rescuer should attend all entanglement rescues.

Adult Macropod Rescue (small to medium)

Macropods can be restrained by firmly grasping the base of their tail.

Care must be taken not to hold the tail too far from the base, as serious sprains or fractures may result if the animal struggles.

The feet should be facing away from you to avoid personal injury.

As soon as you have a firm grip on the tail, the animal should be elevated above the ground and placed slowly headfirst into the bag, ensuring the head & neck are not stuck or twisted backwards.



Ensure the bag is secured to avoid escape and that the head of the animal is not jammed into a corner.

No more than three attempts should be made to capture the animal. Serious risk of capture myopathy will dramatically increase if further capture attempts are made.

If the animal begins to show signs of stress (drooling or licking forearms) do not proceed unless you are presented with a 'life or death' situation where you may have no other choice.



Note: The legs of a macropod should never be tied under any circumstances.

Joeys & checking Pouches

A marsupial joey (kangaroo, wallaby, glider, possum, bandicoot etc.) can live for days in the pouch of its dead mother. If you come across a deceased female marsupial, always check the pouch for a live joey/s.



NEVER pull a joey off the teat. This can cause irreparable damage to the joeys' mouth and internal organs.

Always contact a rescuer for advice if the mother cannot be transported. If the mother is alive but will be euthanised, please wait until she is dead before removing the joey. Before leaving home for joey rescues, fill a hot water bottle (hot tap water – not boiling) and place it in an artificial pouch.

Cutting the pouch for checking and/or safe removal of a joey

- It can be difficult to remove a joey from the pouch; the joey will brace its legs and tail to try to stay in. The mum may be bloated or rigor mortis may have set in, making the pouch tight.
- A joeys' neck, legs and tail are extremely fragile, extreme care must be taken to ensure they are not broken when trying to remove it.
- It is often better to cut the mums pouch before trying to remove the joey (ensure mum is deceased beforehand and not just unconscious).
- Insert hand into pouch & lift away from joey.
- Ensure joeys body parts are safely away from where you will cut.

- Always keep your hand between the scissors and the joey.
- With sharp scissors cut the pouch until you have enough space to safely remove the joey or see all 4 teats.



Removal of Pouched Young

Always check deep within the pouch for any joeys. Macropods have 4 teats, ensure all 4 are checked!

Check the mum's teats for elongation or milk glands. If a teat has been recently used, milk will be visible when the end is squeezed.

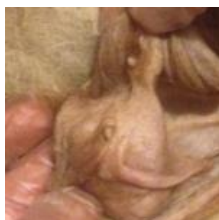
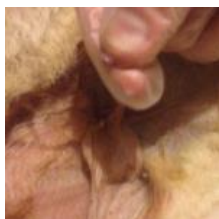
A joey ever only uses one teat, if there are 2 teats with milk, please look around for a twin joey (rare) although there is more likely to also be an "at foot" joey. Check for the "at foot" joey hanging around and advise the coordinator if any are sighted. Try to get a photo of the joey so it can be assessed for its chances of survival on its own.

Do not remove any small mammal joeys from the pouch, please transport the mother and joey to an experienced rescuer so they can demonstrate a safe way to remove the joey.

Having the mother's body or a photo is useful for distinguishing the species of the joey.

If the joey has either been ejected from the pouch (in the case of an attack from a predator), a member of public (MOP) has already removed the joey, or the mother's location is unknown, **follow these instructions**.

- Loosely wrap the joey in a cotton handkerchief or a towel for larger furred joeys and put in a pillowcase or rescue bag. The re-usable material shopping bags are often a good size.
- Place the pouch next to a secured heat source in your pet carrier.
- Warm the joey up slowly, monitoring it with a digital thermometer with a remote probe placed near but not on the animal (Furred 28°C/unfurred 32°C).
- If there is a MOP present, ask again when and where the animal was found and if it has been given anything to eat or drink. – Do not comment if it has and be thankful if it has not!



Note: If the joey is still inside the pouch of the mother, you will need to warm the body of the mother with the joey inside.

If possible, it is always ideal to transport the mother with the joey still inside the pouch to an experienced carer. If this is not practical, you may need to remove the joey from the pouch.

Unfurred Joeys



NEVER pull an unfurred joey off the teat. This can cause irreparable damage to the joeys' mouth and internal organs.

- To remove the joey from the pouch, cut the pouch open to remove it.
- Cut the teat off as close to the mothers' body as possible.
- Remove the joey with the teat still in its mouth.
- The caution here is the body temperature of the joey. If the pouch is cold, then the joey needs to be gently warmed.
- Push a safety pin into the far end of the mothers' teat so it doesn't end up getting stuck in the airway.
- The joey should release the teat after a few hours.
- Place a heat source, wrapped in a towel or similar. NEVER place a heat source directly next to the joey as it may cause burns or heat stress. Unfurred joeys cannot regulate their temperature.
- If you don't have a heat source, place the joey in a thin pouch, then inside your clothes close to your chest. The joey will get heat from your body and your heartbeat will also calm the joey.
- Do not stand the joey up or allow to stand or bear weight on the legs.

Unfurred joeys should never be left without attention!



Contact the RSPCA or take to a vet as soon as possible to organise to get the orphan to an experienced carer straight away as it will need specialised care.

Furred Joeys



If the joey is attached to the teat you will need to break the suction by gently apply pressure to the sides of the joeys' mouth which should release its' grip on the teat.

If a furred joey needs warmth – place the joey into a pre-warmed artificial pouch liner and then into a warm pouch cover. Tie the neck of the bag securely and place the pouch on a hot water bottle filled with hot tap water. Ensure that the hot water bottle is secured inside the rescue basket to prevent further injury during transport. Put a thermometer probe inside the pouch but not on the animal to monitor the appropriate temperature for the animal (**furred 28°C/unfurred 32°C**).

A furred joey in a warm climate should not need extra warmth and can be gently placed in a pouch for transport.

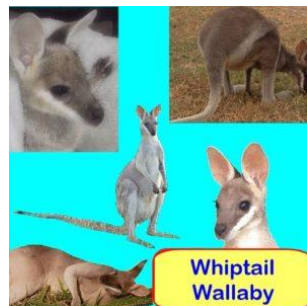
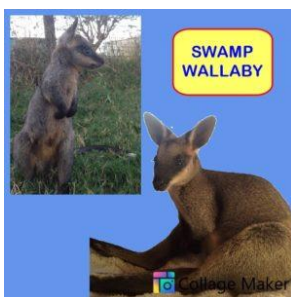
Never transport or place a joey in a cage or box, always place the joey in a pouch, pillowcase or wrap a blanket around like a pouch and secure.

Ensure the dead mother is left in an area where scavengers will not be at risk whilst consuming the body, and where it will not be a hazard to motorists.



Species of Macropods

often seen around Central QLD



POSSUMS, GLIDERS & OTHER SMALL MAMMALS



Possums and other small mammals can scratch and bite when scared.

NOTE: gliders quite often have more than one joey, so have a look around in the grass and bushes where you found the first one, for another one, two or even three (depending on species).

- Possums are extremely territorial and should never be relocated.
- If the animal is injured, bleeding, immobile, or in shock, place a towel or blanket over the possum, carefully wrap the animal, and lift it gently into a prepared carrier.
- Make sure the hot water bottle is wrapped in a towel so it will not burn the animal. Transport it to an experienced carer or vet as soon as possible.
- If a possum is not injured, place the towel over it and bundle it up. Alternatively, you can grasp it by the back of the neck and the base of the tail (close to the rump), at the same time keeping the limbs away from your body.
- Do not hold it by the tip of the tail as it can turn back to bite you.
- If the animal is difficult to reach, try and get above it or use a hoop bag with a long handle.
- Transport adult animals in a lined rescue basket.
- Cover the animal with a towel inside the rescue basket.
- Place an additional towel over the rescue basket to reduce noise and light.
- Deceased marsupials such as gliders or possums may have young in their pouch. If you think there may be young, you can take the dead mother to a carer or vet to check for you.
- Young can sometimes fall or move out of the pouch when mum is injured, attacked or killed. Please also check the immediate surrounding area.

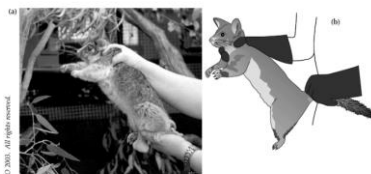


Figure 4 Handling techniques for (a) ringtail possums and parakeats and (b) brush-tailed possums. Note that long leather gloves are often used for handling brush-tailed possums. Photos by Stephen Jackson.



NEVER attempt to remove a joey from the pouch without the assistance of an experienced carer/rescuer.

Joey's should either be transported inside the pouch of the dead mother or placed on a heat source. **Never put the heat source directly on the animal**, it should be wrapped in a towel to prevent the animal being burnt (28°C furred/32°C unfurred), or inside a cotton-lined pouch, and near a secured heat source in a rescue basket if the animal is not with the mother.

If you find a joey out of the pouch, it should be kept in a pillowcase with a heat source available and transported immediately to a carer or vet.



Joey's are often found cold, dehydrated with possible hypoglycaemia so getting help as quickly as possible is critical to give the young animal its best chance of survival.

ECHIDNAS



NEVER use a shovel to “dig out” an Echidna!



Adults should not be relocated – it may be a mum with young nearby (young are left in a burrow while mum forages for food). Keep the animal as close to the rescue site as possible.

Do not allow the animal to overheat; these animals can die from heat stress so keep temperatures below 32°C. Young Echidnas, even when spineless, should not be placed on heat. Good ventilation is essential.

If checking a deceased echidna for a puggle (baby), you may find no pouch (echidnas do not have permanent pouches), a pouch with an egg, a young puggle or an empty pouch (that may indicate the mum has an older puggle in a hollow somewhere).

Be warned – Echidnas are escape artists and will cause severe damage if they escape in your vehicle so please ensure that any rescued animal's container is secured.

Young Echidnas weighing less than 1 kg should be with their mother and should be transported together.

It is normal for Echidnas to have ticks and other mites. **Do not bath or spray insecticides on them!**

Echidnas blow bubbles of mucous through their snouts as a normal process to remove dirt; these bubbles should be clear in colour. **If there is damage or blood around or coming from the snout, it may indicate a broken beak and vet treatment is vital.**



If rescuing an echidna use rigger or thick welding gloves.

Gently manoeuvre your hands down each side of the Echidna avoiding the spines and get your hands under the animal where the fur is soft. Link your fingers together if possible, and then apply firm constant pressure in an upward direction. If you keep constant pressure upward every time the Echidna gives a little you will lift it out a little more, eventually it will come free. As you lift the Echidna it will curl around your hands.

Another way is to tickle the echidna on one side, it will lean towards your hand in defence. You may then be able to see the long toe on the back foot on the other side of the echidna. If you are able to grip the toe, you can lift the animal by the toe. It will curl under as you lift it, as soon as possible support the echidna's whole body. This technique works well if the echidna is locked up under a wire fence for example, but it will take time & patience.



BIRDS

Rescue

Cover the bird with a towel and gently pick it up so you do not cause further injury, pain or stress.

Place the bird in a basket or box, close the lid and cover the box with a towel.

Provide ambient warmth,

- use a heat pad or hot water bottle.
- Call for assistance and/or take to a vet.
- Be sure to provide the exact location where the bird was found.
- If the bird is an adult, in obvious need of help and is still mobile, contact a rescuer to attend,
- provide a photo of the bird and its exact location.
- observe the bird until help arrives.



Use caution: Raptors & other large birds have very strong talons and beaks!

- take all precautions to protect yourself from injury.
- use or wear welding gloves or thick towels for protection.



Birds are the most commonly rescued species in wildlife organisations. There are over 700 bird species in Australia, and each has very individual needs. Identification is essential to determine what a bird eats and how to house it, whether a bird is a juvenile or adult, whether it is a threatened species and if it is either diurnal (active during the day) or nocturnal (night).

- Taking a quick photo of a rescued bird is an excellent way of helping obtain a correct identification, whilst avoiding the need to repeatedly disturb it.
- The age of a bird is also important for immediate care and identification.

Nestlings

Dependent on adults, still in the nest and either naked or downy.

It gapes for food and cannot fly or perch.

Due to lack of plumage, nestlings can be exceedingly hard to identify.

Nestlings with little or no feather cover cannot maintain their body temperature (thermo-regulate) so immediate warmth is vital.



Branchlings

Out of nest but not yet able to fly.

Has developed some flight feathers, though these feathers have not fully opened where they emerge from the skin, and usually still has down feathers.

Spends time hopping from branch to branch, gaining strength.

They are still dependent on their parents for food.



Fledglings



Learning to fly.

Mostly dependent on adults for food, still gaping and calling for food but will forage.

Fully thermo-regulating.

Juvenile

Can fly and forage reasonably well.

Has adult features and size but in some species has not developed full adult plumage.

Some will have plumage similar to the female (e.g. Bowerbird, Koel).

Others, where males and females are similar, will be duller or may have brownish or streaky plumage (e.g. seagulls).



Adult

Full adult plumage.



Precocial Chicks



Able to walk as soon as they have hatched and are covered in down the moment they leave the egg, e.g. ducklings and plovers.

They can be independent of adults (e.g. Brush Turkeys) or follow adults for warmth and protection (e.g. ducks).

These birds do not gape for food and are usually self-feeding, although assistance usually needs to be provided by the parent in locating and identifying food.



Note: The trachea is the entrance to the airways. If fluid gets down the trachea, the bird could suffer from inhalation pneumonia or instantly die.



NEVER let food or fluids enter the trachea and NEVER pour water down a bird's throat or dribble in the side of its mouth.

When a bird becomes stressed, their heart rate increases and a highly stressed bird is at risk of death from heart failure.

You must try not to cause any further harm to the bird you have been called to rescue.

Never damage feathers!



Without feathers in perfect condition, the bird will not be able to fly.

Prevent feather damage while transporting birds by using a cardboard box or a lined rescue basket with a towel on the bottom.

All cages and aviaries must be lined with shade cloth.

Chicks

If the young bird is a nestling, return it to the nest, **call for immediate advice if the chick is unfeathered and cold.**



If the chick is a fledgling, place it as high as possible in a nearby tree.

- watch to ensure it doesn't fall again.
- It is normal for some chicks to be on the ground after they have fledged.
- if they are walking normally and not injured and parents are present, keep dogs or cats contained whilst these chicks find their wings.

Rescuing Chicks

Wildlife carers can care for a chick and provide security and food. What we can't do is teach it the intricacies of its society and the natural world. Whenever possible, the best outcome is to reunite a chick with its family.

Each year, many chicks are rescued mainly due to the following events:

- Falling from the nest.
- Nest becomes disturbed.
- Weather conditions.
- Unsuitable habitat.
- Problems when leaving the nest.
- Loss of parents.
- Problems with food sources.
- A well-meaning passer-by finding fledgling juveniles.
- Injury.
- Disease.
- Parent birds may discard a chick from the nest if it has a congenital deformity.



Every scenario is different and needs to be assessed before removing a chick from its parents.

- All chicks must be passed on to an experienced carer immediately.
- Many precocial chicks, like the swamphen, are picked up unnecessarily by well-meaning members of the public when feeding out of sight of the parent birds.

Re-uniting Chicks with Parent Birds

Try to identify what species it is, this will give you an idea of the nest it came from,

- Are the parents around? (Is it a cuckoo? Cuckoos lay their eggs in another birds' nest to be raised by the other species parents).
- If the chick is still a nestling i.e. not perching, return to nest if possible.
- If the chick is feathered and perching well, it can be placed as high as possible in a nearby tree, thick bushy trees are best for cover etc.
- Watch to make sure the chick does not fall again and ask the member of the public to keep an eye out as well.
- It is important to observe the chick from a hiding place where the adult birds will not feel threatened by you.
- Do not leave the chick until you see it being attended by a parent.
- It is normal for some chicks to be on the ground after they have fledged, provided they are walking normally and not injured and the parents are present e.g. magpies, tawnies, kookaburras.
- Become familiar with your local birds so you understand what type of nest these birds are likely to make e.g. cup, bowl or tree hollow.
- An Eastern Rosella, for example, will not have fallen out of its 'nest'.
- Birds choose their nest sites carefully, so it helps to know where they prefer to build them.
- As a general rule, the larger the adult bird, the more open the position needs to be so they can fly in and land near the nest.

Nestlings

Return it to the nest if possible or provide a substitute nest.

Cane baskets are a better option than plastic containers as they come in different shapes and sizes so you can choose one that most closely resembles the original nest.



Tie the basket to the nearest bushy tree (to protect it from being seen by predator birds), making sure there is a suitable landing branch for the parent birds to reach the nest.

Try to be as discreet as possible when doing this – remember, birds such as magpies and butcher-birds watch us very carefully.

Very young chicks with no feathers and eyes closed will need immediate care if it is not possible to return them to their nest.

⚠ Important: Do not return an unfeathered chick to a nest if it is cold.

Note: A substitute nest will not work if there are other chicks still in the original nest. The parent birds will favour their own nest of young and neglect the chick on its own.

If the chick can perch but cannot fly well and is uninjured: place the chick in a nearby bushy tree.

If the chick is on the ground with its parents, this is natural behaviour for magpies and some other species,

Providing the chick is old enough to be walking around and can fly a bit, the parents will protect it.



Members of the public can become very concerned about chicks at this age; some people might insist that we take these chicks into care,

➤ We should very gently and carefully explain that it is normal for fledgling birds to have a few 'awkward' days once they are out of the nest.

➤ After Reuniting, it is important to stand well back and watch to see if the parent birds are feeding the chick,

✓ Remember, if they can see you some birds will be reluctant to approach their chick until they feel it is safe for them to do so.

✓ Binoculars are useful to watch without being too close.

✓ Ask members of the public to contain any cats and dogs.

✓ If the chick falls again or if the parents do not feed the chick after 2 hours, it will need to come into care.

➤ Sometimes a chick will need to come into care for a few days until it is just perching, then another attempt can be made to reunite it with the parents.

➤ Most birds remember their fledgling chicks after days, or even sometimes weeks, have passed.

➤ Members of the public are often happy to keep an eye on their resident bird family, so it is good to keep them involved.

Bird Rescue – The Rescue Site

Assess:

1. Are there any obvious or severe injuries that require urgent vet treatment?
2. Age of the bird?
3. The exact location of where the bird was found. **This is essential information!**
4. How long it has been there?
5. Whether the bird has been given food, and if so, what it has been given?



Finding out the circumstances of where the bird was found will give you clues as to what happened to it. It may have been found by a road (motor vehicle) or under a window after a collision.

Most birds are territorial and MUST be returned to where they are found. Many birds mate for life; they may have young or are part of a flock and are known by the other birds in the area.

Rescuing a Contained Bird

If the bird is contained in a box, check first to make sure it is not in an inappropriately sized box or wrapped as this will distress the bird and potentially cause further injury. Ensure bird is the right way up!

If you need to transfer the bird, do so in a closed dark room (windows covered, fans off) or in your closed car to avoid an escape or further injury.

If you need to transfer the bird into more suitable housing, utilise this time to quickly determine any obvious serious injuries that need immediate veterinary treatment. **Only do this if you need to transfer the bird into another container for transport and do not conduct a full examination on the bird at the rescue site.**

If no obvious injuries are present, take it to a vet or carer immediately. Ensure that the car is as quiet and as stress-free as possible i.e. **no loud music, smoking, domestic pets or children.**



Keep in mind how quickly an unattended car can heat up, especially in summer, never leave an animal unattended in a car.

Is it a chick?

Chicks will need immediate care from an experienced carer especially if they are very young, cold or injured.

If it is a young chick, warmth and security are immediate concerns, and only when warm enough will food of an appropriate type, temperature and consistency be given.

This will mean the difference between life and death for a chick.

Rescue of an uncontained Bird

Observe the bird before attempting the rescue.

Look for any obvious injuries before rescuing i.e. dragging wing or limping.

Gape breathing means visibly gasping for air with an open beak.

If the bird is on the ground and does not fly away, it is severely compromised.



NB: The easier an adult bird is to catch, the sicker it is or the injuries are severe.

At the Rescue Site

Politely ask any members of the public to keep any pets and children away to reduce stress to the bird.

Take time to assess the rescue site for your safety as well as the birds.



Assessing the situation is important and can tell you how to go about the rescue.

You may have to devise the best way to approach the bird to avoid it escaping or further injuring itself.

You may also decide that you need help from another rescuer or equipment such as a net or trap.

Have a rescue basket/box open and prepared with a towel in the base and a U-shaped towel ready.

Approach the bird slowly and confidently.



Cover the bird with a towel and gently pick up, making sure its wings are in the correct position – flush, against its body.

Be gentle so you do not cause any further injury or pain.

Place the bird in a basket or box, then carefully remove the towel or just uncover the bird's head to allow it to free itself from the towel if it is well enough.

Birds become very stressed if left wrapped up in a towel.

Close the lid and cover the basket with breathable fabric (cotton/linen).

Covering the rescue basket will reduce visual stimuli and reduce the bird's stress.

In birds' eyes, we are predators, not rescuers!

Secure the bird in the car and transport it to a vet, if injuries need vet attention, or to a carer if there are no apparent injuries.



Raptor Rescue

Aim to cover the head as quickly as possible.

Do not use a net as feather damage may result.

A calico snake bag or thick blanket square can be useful in some situations.



Have the box open and ready before you start, with the folded towel already in the bottom.

Thick welding gloves can be worn for protection but may be cumbersome. If the bird is facing you, it may well sit back on its tail and throw its feet up in defence, this is especially true for falcons.



If this is the case, throw a smaller bunched up towel or pillowcase for it to grab, which will also distract it while you attempt to get the head and body completely covered.

Use a towel thick enough to protect your hands.

Raptors are often very vocal; this is their tactic to scare you away.

If at all possible, approach from behind.

With the bird facing away from you, cover it totally, especially the head.

Hold the wings against its body, find the legs through the towel.

Then hold them apart just enough so they cannot grasp one foot with the other and do damage to themselves.

Birds operate at higher temperatures (typically around 40°C) than any other living creature to take advantage of speed, strength and endurance that flows from warmer nerves and muscles.



REMEMBER – BIRDS FEEL PAIN!



Page 133 | Designed by Kim Strong, scott@oznet.com.au | Images by Kim Strong, Melissa Bentley, Kim Strong

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Thank you for caring & taking the time to learn more about helping our beautiful native animals

REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS & TURTLES

NEVER approach or attempt to rescue any snake or large lizard.



Call RSPCA for advice.



Always assume a snake may be dangerous and potentially deadly, ensure that you, all MOPs, and domestic pets are removed from the threat area.



Some of our lizard species are large enough to inflict serious injury and many of our snakes are listed as some of the most venomous in the world. For this reason, no rescuer should ever attempt to rescue snakes or large lizards i.e. monitors.

If a rescuer has any doubt regarding the correct identification of any reptile, always assume it may be dangerous and **DO NOT** attempt to rescue it.



Call an authorised Reptile Handler.

Lizards and Skinks

Grasp behind its head and around the front legs, support the body with your other hand as you pick it up.

Some handlers use their index and middle fingers to pin the animal behind the head to prevent it from biting.

Once supported, the animal will usually stop struggling and quieten down enabling you to place it into a rescue bag and securely tie it off.

Be aware, scared lizards and skinks can bite you if given the chance.

Blue-tongues may make a hissing sound as a defence tactic or roll and twist in an attempt to escape.

Dragons have very sharp small teeth and will often bite if not handled appropriately.



Frogs

Frogs are a highly sensitive species, absorbing many of the external factors in their environment, including the chemicals, bacteria and even the heat of our hands. Only handle if necessary and ensure your hands are clean and wet, or non-latex gloves are used.

Transport frogs in suitably sized clear containers to restrict their movement and facilitate observation. The lid should have air holes for ventilation and a damp paper towel in the bottom.



Cover clear rescue containers to minimise stress on the frogs during transport.

Wash your hands afterwards, as their skin secretions could irritate your mouth & eyes.

Turtles (Freshwater)

Be aware, if their legs can reach you, they will scratch.

If scared they will release a foul smell from their scent glands or urinate.

You can hold a turtle by grasping each side of the carapace (upper shell) edge, although you may still find that if its legs can reach you, they will scratch.

Alternately, place one hand at the tail end of the turtle covering the carapace and plastron (underside) with the other hand holding the front end of the carapace.



Smaller juvenile and hatchling turtles should be held between the index finger and thumb over the carapace and plastron. **Avoid holding the carapace edges when they are small as this can cause damage.**



They can be transported on a towel in a box. **Do not transport in water!**

Turtles (Marine)



Contact RSPCA to obtain advice from a specialised marine turtle rescue centre.

Do not force the turtle back into the water.

Stay with the turtle until advised on how to proceed.

Keep members of the public away to avoid further stress on the animal.



BATS – FLYING FOXES & MICROBATS



NEVER touch a bat!



Bats (Both Mega and Micro)

Bats and flying foxes may carry the Australian Bat Lyssavirus, only those rescuers or rehabilitators that have been vaccinated against the virus should handle bats.

“Specialised training” and “vaccination against Australian Bat Lyssavirus” is required before you can rescue or handle a bat under any circumstances; whilst less than 1% of bats carry the virus, never take the risk!

The Department of Health provides free post-exposure vaccination for anyone who may have been bitten or scratched.

Members of the public should be advised not to touch any bat and to keep domestic pets away from a bat until a vaccinated rescuer arrives.



First AID for Bites or Scratches

If you are bitten or scratched by a bat, gently wash the wound with soap under running water for 15 minutes as soon as possible. Do not scrub the wound! Consult your medical practitioner to discuss post-exposure vaccination immediately.

Prior to the development of symptoms, the vaccine provides very effective treatment. Once symptoms develop, there is “NO TREATMENT” available at present.

Insectivorous Bats – Microbats

During the day these bats roost in roofs, wall cavities, caves, rock crevices, tree hollows and under the bark. These bats are excellent to have around as they eat vast numbers of insects each night including mosquitos. Microbats use echolocation to navigate at night.

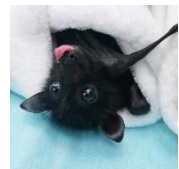


Flying Foxes

Grey-headed and Black flying foxes give birth to their single young in October / November. The Little Red flying fox gives birth in April / May. Young flying foxes are unable to fly until approximately 12 weeks of age and are dependent on their mothers for up to 6 months.

Flying foxes are important pollinators and seed dispersers.

Flying foxes do not use echolocation like Microbats do, just their eyes and ears.



Flying Fox Barbed Wire Rescue

Approach the animal slowly and quietly and ensure that animals and any onlookers are kept away.

Place a towel over the top of the barbed wire to prevent further injury to the animal and to yourself. If additional towels are on hand, cover barbs in reach of bat also.

One person wraps the animal in a towel, controlling and supporting the animal, taking their weight off the wire.

The second person removes sections of the towel from the caught areas to work on them.

The first person must keep the animal covered and still, holding its weight.

Person two identifies caught areas. Using pliers, attempt to unwind the barbs, and then snip off the sharp ends. Warn people that the shards will fly, **wear eye protection and gloves**. Unhook pieces of skin as you go.



Never cut skin or membrane

Avoid cutting the fence wire.

When you have the animal freed, put it into a pillowcase, still wrapped in the towel, and place it into the carry cage next to a hot water bottle.

An injured animal needs either veterinary assistance or the immediate help of an experienced bat carer so it is vital to contact either immediately.



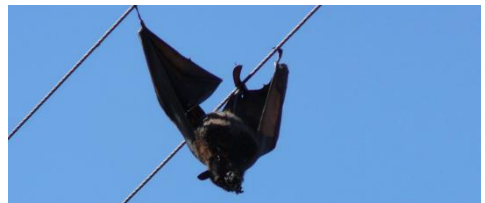
The veterinary surgery should be called in advance to ensure the vet is willing to consult on the bat, as not all vets are vaccinated!



Flying Foxes on power lines

If you see a flying fox on a power line during the day, stop and look closely. Flying foxes can be severely injured or their baby may still be alive clinging to mum's chest or under her arm.

If you notice any signs of life, contact the RSPCA immediately to organise for the electricity company along with a vaccinated rescuer to help get the animal down.



Other common threats to bats

Microbats are often victims of cat attacks!

Barbed wire and fruit tree netting often result in flying foxes becoming caught or entangled. Please check & if still alive, place a towel over the top to protect it from predators and the sun, then call for a vaccinated rescuer to attend. Stay with the animal until help arrives to keep it safe.