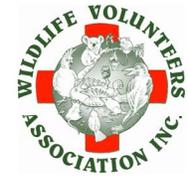


WHAT DO I DO IF I FIND WILDLIFE? (FACT SHEET I)



Wildlife Volunteers Association Inc. (WILVOS).
www.wilvos.org.au 54 416200

Please keep this article somewhere handy, so if you ever need help, it may easily be found.



Photos: Donna Anthony

You've found a sick, orphaned, or injured native animal.

What should you do?

***Immediately* PHONE 54 416200 WILVOS 24 hour hotline**

Finding a sick, orphaned, or injured native animal is of course very stressful for you, as well as for the animal. But there are a few simple things that you can do to immediately minimise stress and increase the animals chance of recovery.

Warm..... Dark.....Quiet

Improper rescue can hurt both the animal and you! That is why we train all our volunteers in correct, confident, and calm rescue techniques. Native animals are not used to being handled, and are very susceptible to stress. If handled improperly, they will struggle and may hurt themselves even more. It is therefore important to take the utmost care in the rescue of native wildlife, and to reduce this stress as much as possible.

Here is a quick guide followed by some more specific advice for different Australian native animals.

- Assess the situation, and remove any immediate threat to the animal. This could mean locking cats & dogs away to alleviate stress until a trained rescuer arrives. It could mean asking someone to stop or divert traffic if the animal is on the road. Your own safety is a priority.
- Minimise stress by placing animal in a soft towel or cloth, and then gently place the animal in a box. Put the box in a warm dark quiet room, away from pets, TV, radios etc. PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB. Stress associated with human contact can result in death.
- Seek advice...If you live on the Sunshine Coast, call **WILVOS** on **54 416200**. This number is manned 24 hours per day 7 days per week. We will then assess the animal, before recommending that the animal be taken to a vet or to a wildlife foster carer.
- DO NOT OFFER ANYTHING TO EAT OR DRINK, unless advised to do so. All native animals have specialized diets.

All of our carers are fully trained in the care and rehabilitation of native animals through certified courses, workshops, hands-on experience, and constant feedback. Rest assured your animal will go to the right person for the best chance of a speedy recovery.

Below are some basic immediate guidelines for different animals:

Baby Birds:

Very often when we find a helpless baby bird on the ground, our first reaction is to assume that it is abandoned, and rescue it. Sometimes, this is the best thing to do, but so many babies are simply taking 'first steps' and fall to the ground. This is quite natural, and given time, the parents manage very well to get baby back up into the tree. So, our first job is to ascertain if baby is indeed abandoned. If not, then the best 'mother' for a baby bird is of course, the mother bird.

If you can locate the nest site, and the parents are still around ~ assuming that the weather is not too hot, cold, or wet ~ the baby has no obvious illness or injury ~ and the chance of predation is minimal ~ try to reunite with the parents. The easiest way to do this is to construct an artificial nest (to suit the size of the chick) out of an old margarine or ice-cream container. Put some holes in the bottom, to let water drain out, line it with dry leaf matter, and hang it as high as possible in the tree, well away from the trunk and thick branches, which would give easy access for predators.

Now the waiting part! Once you are well away from the nest, if the parents are around, they will soon start to feed the chick. You will need to watch closely for some time to see what happens. If the adults do not return to feed them, or if there is a high risk of predation, then the baby/s will need to be brought into care. If in doubt, please do not hesitate to phone us for advice.

Note: If the youngster is fledging, i.e. well feathered and perching, try to place it as high as possible back into the tree, and as with baby birds, please keep a close eye on them.

If you find an abandoned baby bird that cannot be reunited as above ~ please do the following: Place the bird in a temporary nest, which can be anything to suit the size of the bird ~ such as a plastic margarine or take away food container ~ well lined with soft cloth or tissues to resemble the nest lining. Place the nest in a cardboard box and put the box in a warm, dark, quiet area.

Birds:

If the bird can be easily caught ~ (by placing a thick towel over the bird and scooping it up) ~ place it in a paper lined cardboard box with plenty of air holes. Prop the bird up with towels or cloth so its airways are clear. Put the box in a warm, dark, quiet area. This is quite simply the best way to help the animal, and these simple steps can very often save its life. Birds are particularly susceptible to stress, and stress can very quickly cause death.

Mammals (Adults):

If the animal (possum) can be carefully caught with a thick towel or blanket, place in a sturdy cardboard box with the towel. Make sure the towel is wrapped around the animal but not too tightly. Wear gloves as adult possums have sharp teeth and claws. Leave the box in a quiet dark spot ensuring that the animal will not get too cold or too hot.

Kangaroos and wallabies often have broken bones and cannot be moved or handled. Please call 54 416200 and request assistance. If the animal is dead, please check for young. Please do not try to remove joeys from the pouch as their mouths may be damaged by the forcible removal from the mothers teat. The joey can only be removed from the pouch with the mothers teat intact. A long teat indicates 'joey' is possibly still in the vicinity. Please have a look around.

Mammals (Baby)

Please do not try to remove joeys from the pouch as their mouths may be damaged by the forcible removal from the mothers teat. The joey can only be removed from the pouch with the mothers teat intact. A long teat indicates 'joey' is possibly still in the vicinity, please have a look around. Place joey in a pillow slip, or similar natural fabric, ideally with a blanket or similar wrapped around them. Baby marsupials cannot regulate their body temperature, so please keep them under your shirt until passed to an experienced carer. Do not try to heat them any other way as often when found they may be cold and their temperature needs to be very slowly raised or the animal may die.

Echidnas

Use thick gloves, a towel or blanket (a pair of thongs worn like gloves is great too), and place the animal into a very sturdy container such as a large plastic bucket. They are unable to bite and do not have poisonous spurs. These animals can easily push their way out of a carton and wedge themselves under a car seat. **DO NOT PUT ON HEAT**, or place on a hot water bottle. Echidnas do not cope at all well with heat.

COOL, DARK & QUIET and no warmer than 25 degrees.

Please do not offer anything to eat or drink, echidnas have specialised diets. Please remember where you picked up the injured echidna. It is important that we know this for release. Unless an animal is injured please do not relocate echidnas, as a little 'puggle' may be in a burrow nearby.

Lizards

Whilst most lizards are quite docile, please use caution, as even a medium size lizard, if stressed, can inflict deep wounds with its claws. Lizards also possess a very powerful bite, and because of their diet, most bites are likely to infect. We suggest you approach the animal quietly, place a cardboard box with plenty of air-holes over the lizard, and weigh the box down with something heavy ensuring that the weight is not too heavy to collapse the box.

Snakes

Please **DO NOT TOUCH**. Stay away. Keep pets and people away. If at all possible, please try to keep an eye on where the snake goes. The Environment Protection Agency provides WILVOS with a list of permitted 'Snake Catchers', and where removal is deemed necessary these people can be contacted.

Bats

Please **DO NOT TOUCH**. Stay away. Cover with towel or box to protect from weather. WILVOS have a list of permitted bat carers.

Orphaned Wildlife

Always check the pouches, and around the bodies of dead mothers on the road. Most people are very surprised to learn that despite the extensive injuries to female marsupials killed on our roads, the little 'joeys' cocooned safely inside Mum's pouch. very often survive the impact unharmed. In fact, they are so well insulated that joeys can survive for up to an incredible 10 days in a dead mother's pouch and can then go on to suffer a slow lingering death of starvation and dehydration, if not rescued.

SO PLEASE CHECK. Also, young marsupials may be watching from just a few metres away in the undergrowth. So, if you've taken the time to stop and check a mother, please take just a couple of minutes to check the immediate surrounding area for the joey.

Remember - your safety, and the safety of other motorists, is paramount. Make sure that when you stop to check, that your car is parked safely - well off the road. There is no point in saving an animal hit by a car if (A) You get hit by another car, or (B) You cause another accident yourself.

PLEASE DO NOT CUDDLE THE ANIMAL, they are not used to human contact. Placing them under your shirt offers body warmth but do not handle or disturb the animal unnecessarily.

PLEASE DO NOT TRY TO CARE FOR THE ANIMAL YOURSELF

All Australian native animals in care require a highly specialised and intensive feeding program such as specialised diet, amounts & frequency. Many need urgent veterinary attention (not immediately obvious) and many require very specialised housing requirements, such as exact heating, perching, bedding, and sometimes humidity. ALL require a complex rehabilitation program. It is illegal to keep a native animal without a rescue permit. If you are interested in

becoming a wildlife carer we would love to hear from you. WILVOS have an initial Induction/New Carer's Workshop, followed by a variety of training workshops held throughout the year.

If you find an orphaned, sick, or injured native animal, please contact your nearest WILVOs member on 54 416200 as soon as possible. The faster an animal comes into care – the faster are its chances for a full and successful recovery. Every minute counts. Delay often means death or an extended traumatic rehabilitation time.

One final note: Yes! They are cute, helpless, and 'different', but Australian native animals generally are just not suitable pets, due to strange territorial behaviour, specialised diets, complex housing requirements, and often unsociable waking hours. The majority of native wildlife are illegal to keep as pets in most States, and even where allowed, there are big fines for any kept without a specific permit.

LET'S KEEP OUR WILDLIFE FREE



Photo: Donna Anthony

Thanks to very responsible members of the public, all of the above animals were able to be rehabilitated with WILVO Sylvia Whiting OAM!

The pheasant coucal responded to veterinary treatment on its injured wing and both red-necked wallaby joeys survived, due to people promptly ringing the 54 416200 WILVO 24 hour hotline phone number.

With specialised diets and correct care all these animals were able to be released back into the wild.

Delay often means death so please call a wildlife carer as soon as possible.

Help our wildlife by keeping domestic dogs and cats confined and by planting native trees indigenous to your area.

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