

Helping wildlife in emergencies

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment works with the community and wildlife rehabilitation groups to rescue and care for injured and distressed native wildlife in an emergency, such as prolonged drought, or after fire or flood.

How you can help

Although only licensed wildlife rescue and rehabilitation providers or qualified vets may take injured or orphaned native animals into care, you can use the IFAW Wildlife Rescue App to quickly find the closest carer to contact. Most wildlife is not used to being handled and can become very stressed. If you find an injured animal, and it is safe to do so, contain it in a covered box in a dark, quiet place while waiting for a rescuer or when taking an animal to a wildlife carer or vet.

During an emergency some native animals may need short term help. Although not injured they may need access to water, food or shelter until their natural environment recovers.

Providing water

Many animals can only survive a matter of days without life-saving water. You can help native animals by giving them a safe supply of clean water changed daily to prevent the spread of disease. Never add sugar, honey or electrolytes to the water. Use:

- Containers or water dispensers put in the shade at a range of heights from the ground, including in trees, so a range of native animals can use them.
- Strong containers to avoid collapse with stable rocks or sticks poking out to give safe access out of the water for birds and reptiles. Modify watering troughs by adding a stick or mesh.
- Firm surfaces to put the containers on, so they don't tip if a heavy animal tries to use it.
- A cleared area with shade to allow nervous wildlife to watch out for predators and keep cool.

Swimming pools can present a danger to thirsty wildlife if no other water source is available. Keep your pool covered or secure a floatation device to side of pool such as a rope threaded through a pool noodle or to allow wildlife to escape if they fall in while drinking. Check it daily.

Providing food

Feeding native animals is generally not recommended because they have very special and diverse dietary needs. Although it's always best for the health of wildlife to forage for food and water naturally, in times of natural disaster when natural food resources are scarce, you may want to help by providing food, but only do this until nature begins to recover. If there is still vegetation, providing water only is the best way you can help. Remember:

- What can be offered to one animal in small amounts may be harmful to another and could result in debilitating disease or even death. Also, over feeding can be fatal to starving animals.
- Remove uneaten food and clean all food containers daily to prevent the spread of disease and attracting unwanted pests.
- Never throw bird seed directly onto the ground.
- Never feed bread, honey, sugar, avocado, chocolate or dairy products as they are very harmful. Mixtures of peanut butter, honey and rolled oats, also known as bait or wildlife balls, are also harmful to some animals.

Suitable food for wildlife

ANIMALS	USE IN SMALL AMOUNTS	DON'T USE	TIPS
Kangaroos, wallabies, pademelons and wombats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Macropod pellets (from rural supply stores) If macropod pellets are not available: horse pellets (not high performance) or macropod muesli 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rice, seeds or pollard based pony mixes Lucerne Brassicas, such as cabbage, broccoli, kale, cauliflower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not hand feed Scatter food early morning and evening in small amounts – only replace as needed Provide fresh water
Brushtail and eastern pygmy possums Sugar, squirrel, feather-tail and yellow-bellied gliders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starchy vegetables such as sweet potato, or corn Some pear, red apples or melons Insect meal (from pet food store) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sugary foods Rolled oats, peanut butter or honey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are omnivores, so need a varied diet. Place in fork of tree after sunset Do not encourage them to the ground to feed as they are vulnerable to predation
Ringtail possums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native plants and flowers Small amounts of sweet potato or corn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit or too much starchy vegetable is harmful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place in fork of tree after sunset They are primarily folivores (leaf eating)
Greater gliders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rabbit pellets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolled oats, peanut butter or honey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place food in fork of tree after sunset
Carnivorous and insectivorous marsupials: antechinus, bandicoots, native rats and other native rodents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insect meal (pet food shops) Finely chopped starchy vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meat Rolled oats or honey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scatter beneath the leaf litter or place under logs where nothing larger than a bandicoot can reach Provide water
Seed and grain eating birds: parrots, cockatoos, galahs, finches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good quality wild bird blocks with large and small seeds hung in trees Fruit such as apples, pears, melons hung in trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black or grey sunflower seeds as they can make birds sick Seed mixes other than wild bird mix or blocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not scatter seed on the ground – attract predators and make other species sick Dispose of decomposing fruit, soiled seed before replacing
Honeyeaters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insect meal or nectar mix placed in fork of tree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not offer water and sugar or honey mixes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not put food on the ground as the birds may be attacked by predators
Reptiles: skinks and dragons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insect meal or finely chopped vegetables placed in a tree fork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create habitat using logs, rocks and leaf litter Provide a shallow dish of water with a stick poking out to escape on, if they fall in