

## Note that this fact sheet applies to native wildlife affected by fires only

### 1. I have found an injured native animal suffering burns. What do I do?

When dealing with injured or orphaned wildlife after wildfires, it is important not to frighten or try to catch them.

All wild animals should be treated with caution, especially when they are distressed and injured.

Untrained members of the public should only tend to those animals that are severely injured or unlikely to be able to care for themselves. Wild animals that may bite, or are otherwise dangerous (e.g. venomous snakes), should only be handled by trained wildlife carers or handlers.

If the animal is small:

- Place it in a pillow case or cloth bag.
- Place this in a box a little larger than the animal.
- Place the box in a shady /cool place.
- Contact a wildlife shelter number at the bottom of this sheet and arrangements will be made to collect the animal.

Do not try to feed or give the animal a drink – discuss this with the wildlife carer when contact has been made. The wildlife carer may wish to do this once an assessment of the animal has been made.

If the animal is large:

- Keep clear of the animal and attempt to leave it undisturbed (i.e. keep pets away and unnecessary vehicle traffic).
- Note its location and apparent difficulty.
- Contact a wildlife shelter number at the bottom of this sheet and describe the situation. The carer will then offer advice on how to proceed.

### 2. I'd like to assist in helping orphaned or injured wildlife. What do I do?

Untrained members of the public should only provide initial care to injured wildlife.

Ideally, they should take the animal as quickly as possible to a qualified vet or carer. The long-term care and rehabilitation of native animals is best done by experts.

In line with Victorian law, you need to be a licensed and trained carer to rehabilitate wildlife.

You may best assist by providing financial support to wildlife welfare organisations which need medicines and equipment.

### 3. What is DSE doing to prevent suffering of wildlife injured during fires?

DSE is coordinating the rescue by wildlife welfare organisations to ensure that this is being conducted safely and that immediate care goes to the animals in most need.

Department officers are assisting rescuers where appropriate and are humanely destroying suffering animals that cannot be rescued or are unlikely to survive rehabilitation.

DSE are providing advice on the locations and habitats of threatened species to guide fire prevention work.

### 4. Can I destroy suffering wildlife affected by fire?

All wildlife is protected. However where animals are so badly injured that they cannot be successfully rehabilitated, it is appropriate to humanely destroy them provided it is safe to do so and it is carried out in a humane and decisive manner. If you are a licensed firearm user you must be exceedingly careful in using firearms. You must not discharge a firearm in a populous place, from or on roads, or on or across private property without the permission of the owner or occupier.

Any vet who assesses an animal as unfit for treatment and rehabilitation may euthanase affected wildlife without the need for a permit.

## 5. Can I make donations to assist wildlife welfare organisations?

Please refer to the list of animal welfare organisations at the end of this document. Further details can be found on the website of each organisation.

## 6. What else can I do to protect animals affected by fire?

Native wildlife is particularly vulnerable following a bushfire, due to injuries and reduced food and shelter.

- Lock up domestic animals (e.g. cats, dogs) to stop them preying on or harassing native wildlife.
- Provide water for wildlife. Place a stick or rock in the container to prevent animals from being trapped or drowning in deep containers.
- Drive carefully through burnt out areas to protect remaining wildlife
- Refrain from providing hay as feed for wildlife in burned bushland to reduce the spread of weeds and the subsequent degradation of wildlife habitat. In non-natural areas it may be possible to provide food for distressed wildlife however this should be done in consultation with wildlife care agencies to ensure that foods are as close to a natural diet as possible. Wildlife should not be attracted to areas where they may be vulnerable to predation by foxes and domestic pets.

## 7. When can I go into an area to search for injured wildlife?

You must not enter fire affected areas unless you are trained and under the supervision of fire authorities.

## 8. Who do I contact to get assistance for burned wildlife?

Please contact wildlife shelters on:

### STATEWIDE:

Help for Wildlife

24 hr emergency service 0417 380 687

[www.helpforwildlife.com](http://www.helpforwildlife.com)

RSPCA

General enquiries (03) 9224 2222, or contact your local shelter

[www.rspcavic.org](http://www.rspcavic.org)

Wildlife Victoria

24hr Hotline 13 000 94535 or 13000Wildlife

[www.wildlifestvictoria.org.au](http://www.wildlifestvictoria.org.au)

WRIN Wildlife Rescue and Information Network  
0419 356 433

[www.wrin.asn.au](http://www.wrin.asn.au)

WRES Wildlife Rescue Emergency Service  
0427 301 401

[www.wres.org.au](http://www.wres.org.au)

BADGAR Emergency Wildlife and Rescue  
1300 223427 or 1300BADGAR

[www.wildlifesthelter.org.au](http://www.wildlifesthelter.org.au)

### LOCAL

AWARE

24 Hr Rescue Hotline and General Inquiries 0412 433 727

[www.awarewildlife.org.au](http://www.awarewildlife.org.au)

Contact the hotline if you find injured wildlife in the AWARE area (Frankston to Melbourne encompassing the Oakleigh-Springvale and Dandenong-Cranbourne region. AWARE increasingly attend rescues on the Mornington Peninsula)

*Due to the current fire situation, the Healesville Sanctuary is accepting native wildlife for treatment but remains closed to the general public until further notice.*