

24hr Emergency Line
4754 2946



Phone Coordinators' Handbook

For additions, corrections or other suggestions contact the Senior Coordinator of WIRES Blue Mountains – seniorcoordinator@bluemountains.wires.org.au

For updated lists of Animal Officers and Vets contact news@bluemountains.wires.org.au

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Contents

Regarding the Call 5

Regarding the Call 6

You are a representative of WIRES6

What to ask.....6

Out of area calls7

How the call system works.....7

Diverting the phone.....8

Keeping Records with paper forms8

 The call number8

 Filling out the call sheet.....9

 Enquiries9

 Animals must be registered.....9

 Advising the caller how to assist10

 Finding a rescuer10

 The end of your rostered shift11

Keeping Records using Dashboard.....11


Privacy12

You and the vet12

Animals13

Young Animals13

Dead Bodies13

 **BIRDS**13

Fledglings.....13

Artificial nests.....13

Injured Raptor – Do not go near it.....14

Bird - FAQs.....14

 - *I have found a young bird. What should I do with it?* 14

 - *I have found a racing pigeon. What should I do with it?* 14

 - *What can I do about Magpies / birds swooping – attacking?*..... 14

 - *There is a cockatoo coming into my yard and it has a lot of feathers missing and looks sick. What can I do?* 15

 - *I have a flock of Cockatoos eating my house. How can I stop them?*..... 15

 - *I have a bird caught in bird netting over the fruit tree.* 16

| | |
|--|----|
| - There is a bird hanging from a tree. Can you do something?..... | 16 |
| - There is a bird trapped in our building. How can we get it out?..... | 16 |
| - There is a Pelican / duck down near the river and it appears to be entangled in fishing line. | 16 |
| - Lapwings (Plovers) are attacking people as they enter the building. Can they be removed? | 17 |
| - I have found some bird eggs on the ground and the parent birds are still around. Should the eggs be there?..... | 17 |
| - I have a Kookaburra attacking my window and I am afraid it will hurt itself or break the window. What can be done to stop it?..... | 17 |
| - A bird has just flown into my window. What can I do for it?..... | 17 |
| - There is an Owl in a tree being harassed by Magpies..... | 18 |
| - I have rescued some ducklings. Can I release them on the water?..... | 18 |
| - I have ducks swimming and fouling in my swimming pool. How can I keep them out of the pool?..... | 18 |
| - There are ducklings in my pool and they cannot get out. What can I do?..... | 18 |
| - What can I do about the wild ducks eating my vegetables in my garden?..... | 19 |
| - Emu on the loose and in danger of being hit by a car. | 19 |
| - I have found a bird with oil on its feathers. How can I remove oil from feathers?..... | 19 |
| - Lyre Birds are digging up the plants in my garden. What can I do to stop them?..... | 19 |
| - I want to release my pet cockatoo that I have had for the past ten years. How would I go about it?..... | 20 |
| - What can I do to stop my pet cockatoo plucking his feathers out?..... | 20 |
| - I have found a Magpie with a stainless steel band on its leg. Is there something I should do with the band? | 20 |



MAMMALS & MARSUPIALS.....21

Poisoned mammals21

Pouched young21

Young Mammal / Marsupial Joey FAQs22

- I have just buried a kangaroo / possum / wombat that I found dead on the road. Is that the right thing to do?

- I have found a dead Glider / Ringtail Possum with a live baby. Now what?.....

- I have found a dead Kangaroo with a joey in the pouch. What can I do?.....

Possums23

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Possum Trapping | 23 |
| Possum Boxes | 23 |
| Possum FAQs | 24 |
| - <i>I have found a possum that has been run over. There are no vets open. What can I do?</i> | 24 |
| - <i>How can I get a possum out of my roof?</i> | 24 |
| - <i>There is a possum sitting in our tree in the daytime. Should it be out?</i> | 25 |
| - <i>I have had a possum for the last week and I have been feeding it cow's milk. It does not seem very well at the moment. What can I do?</i> | 25 |
| - <i>I have found some small possums in the firewood. Can I let them go?</i> | 26 |
| Flying-Foxes and Insectivorous Bats | 26 |
| Australian Bat Lyssavirus | 26 |
| - <i>Flying-foxes have been visiting my fruit trees. Will I get Lyssavirus if I eat the fruit?</i> | 27 |
| Flying-Foxes and Insectivorous Bats FAQs | 27 |
| - <i>I have Flying-foxes eating my fruit. What can I do?</i> | 27 |
| - <i>There is a Flying-Fox hanging in our fruit tree. What is wrong with it?</i> | 27 |
| - <i>There are Flying-foxes squabbling in my Cocos palms at night.</i> | 27 |
| - <i>There is a Flying-fox hanging on the power lines. Should it be there?</i> | 27 |
| - <i>How can I get small bats out of my ceiling?</i> | 28 |
| - <i>My children / cat have brought in a small bat. What can I do?</i> | 28 |
| - <i>I have found a Flying-fox with a band on its leg. Is there something I should do with the band?</i> | 28 |
| Macropod FAQs | 29 |
| - <i>I have a Kangaroo in my front yard. Should I try and grab it?</i> | 29 |
| - <i>I hit a Kangaroo and its leg is broken.</i> | 29 |
| Bandicoot FAQs | 29 |
| - <i>What can I do about Bandicoots digging holes in my lawn?</i> | 29 |
| Echidna FAQs | 30 |
| - <i>I have an Echidna in my yard and the dogs are barking at it. What can I do?</i> | 30 |
| - <i>I have rescued an Echidna and bubbles are coming out of its nose. Is there something wrong with it?</i> | 30 |
| - <i>What can I put an Echidna in for transporting?</i> | 30 |
| Platypus FAQs | 31 |
| - <i>A Platypus has been in our pond for a few days. What should I do?</i> | 31 |
| Koalas | 31 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Native Rats and Mice FAQs | 31 |
| - How can I tell if the rats in the roof / shed are native or feral?..... | 31 |
| - I do not know if what I have rescued is a mouse or Antechinus. | 32 |
| - It is winter and a dead Antechinus has been found..... | 32 |
| Quoll (Spotted –tailed) FAQs | 32 |
| - I have a very aggressive animal in my chicken pen and it has eaten some of the chickens. | 32 |
| Wombat FAQs | 33 |
| - I have found a Wombat and it appears to have a skin problem..... | 33 |
| - When is Wombat breeding season? | 33 |
| - What can I do about Wombats digging under and destroying my fences? | 33 |
| Feral Animal FAQs..... | 34 |
| - Why are feral animals such a problem? | 34 |
| - What is the humane way of getting rid of feral birds such as Pigeons, Starlings and Indian Mynahs from around my home?..... | 34 |
| - I have a feral cat living in the bush behind my house. What can I do about it?..... | 35 |
| - We want to report a fox in the bush behind us. | 35 |
| - I have found a stray dog, cat, rabbit or any domestic animal. What can I do with it? | 35 |
| - I have found a Ferret. What will I do with it?..... | 35 |



REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS.....35

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Snake FAQs..... | 35 |
| - There is a snake in my garden. Can you help?..... | 35 |
| - How can I stop snakes from coming into my yard? | 36 |
| - My dog / cat has just been bitten by a snake. What should I do?..... | 36 |
| Blue-tongued Lizards and Turtles FAQs. | 36 |
| - I have found a Turtle and it is not injured. Where can I release it?..... | 37 |
| Frogs and Tadpoles FAQs | 37 |
| - My children have collected some tadpoles. Where can I release them?..... | 37 |
| - Croaking frogs are keeping me awake. Can you relocate them?..... | 37 |
| - I have tadpoles in my pool and I want to drain it. Will you come and get them?..... | 37 |
| - I have found some dead frogs in my pond/house. What could have caused this?..... | 37 |
| - I have found a frog amongst the bananas. Can I put it outside in my garden?..... | 38 |

Goannas38
 Crocodiles and Cane Toads.....38



MISCELLANEOUS.....38

Swarming Bees38
 Funnel-Web Spiders38
 Whales, Leopard Seals and Dolphins38

Reference and recommended books 39

Acknowledgements 39

Animal Officer Email Listing..... 40

Phone Numbers & Contacts 41



Regarding the Call

You are a representative of WIRES



Whilst you are on phone duty, please answer the phone “WIRES Blue Mountains (first name) speaking. How can I help you?”

Never allow small children to answer the phone for you.

Always remember that you are the first contact for members of the general public who are often concerned and distressed about an animal, be it native or feral. Always handle calls in a professional and polite manner.

Even if it is at 3:00 am for a Fox Cub or Red back Spider.



What to ask

If you are unsure of what questions to ask, refer to your call form, which will act as a prompt for all the questions we need answered.

If a caller does not wish to give their name and address, do not push them. The important thing is to find out exactly where the animal came from. When it is explained that the animal must go back as close as possible to where it was picked up from, the caller normally complies.

If a caller is getting agitated because we ask questions regarding the injured animal, gently advise them that this information is vital for our rehabilitation and release procedures, and the successful release of the animal.

Please remember, we do not expect that you will know all the answers to every question asked by the caller. Be honest, tell the caller you do not know and that they will be contacted by someone who has specialised knowledge about these animals or, alternatively a member will come and assess the situation.

If you are not sure how to deal with a particular call, always call the Animal Officer pertaining to that particular animal, and if that person is not available then contact the Senior Coordinator or an experienced foster carer.

If the caller has an animal they wish to keep and would like to know how to look after it, we need to tell them:

“We have been asked to advise you that it is against the Law for anyone to hold a native animal without a licence from National Parks and Wildlife Service. In our experience this species is difficult to raise (feeding times, costs, vet fees, etc.) and it needs to be buddied up with its own kind.

WIRES can do this if you are prepared to leave the animal with us.”

If the caller decides to place the animal with WIRES, the caller can contact WIRES regarding its progress.

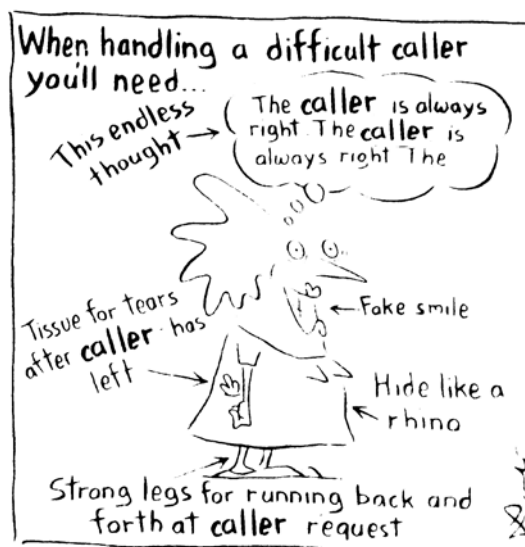
If the caller is still insistent in taking care of the animal themselves, explain to the caller that you do not have that kind of detailed information at hand, but if they give you their name and phone number, you will get the Animal Officer of that particular

species to contact them. The Animal Officer could then try to persuade the caller to give the animal up.

Always be tactful and advise the caller that the animal is very frightened because it is orphaned or injured and to keep it in a quiet area away from noise. Do not let the children play with it and keep it away from pets. Do not feed the animal anything (e.g. water, cow's milk).

Out of area calls

If you receive a call that is not in the Blue Mountains area, ask what area/suburb they are in. If it is just out of our area, see if you can arrange a rescuer, if not, advise the caller of the correct WIRES branch or other appropriate organization's phone number in that area.



How the call system works

Each month you will receive a Roster Calendar with your rostered day(s) marked on it, along with others rostered for that month. If for some unforeseen reason you cannot fulfil your rostered time on telephone duty, then it is up to you to find a replacement or swap a time with another coordinator on duty that month.

You must then advise the person prior to you on the roster so that they can change the phone over to the correct person.

The morning shift begins at 7:00 am and finishes at 9:00 am. The phones are then diverted through to the WIRES Call Centre until 5:00 pm. The member who is doing the 4:50 pm shift must divert the phone from the WIRES Call Centre to their phone.

Please check the roster carefully to see when and how long your coordinating shift is and at what time you should change the phone to the next member.

The WIRES rescue number is on a permanent diversion to each phone coordinators private number. This means that your phone number remains anonymous.

Diverting the phone

Refer to your group's instructions to divert the number to your own phone.

Keeping Records with paper forms

The call number



If you are using paper forms to record your calls this is the procedure you should follow.

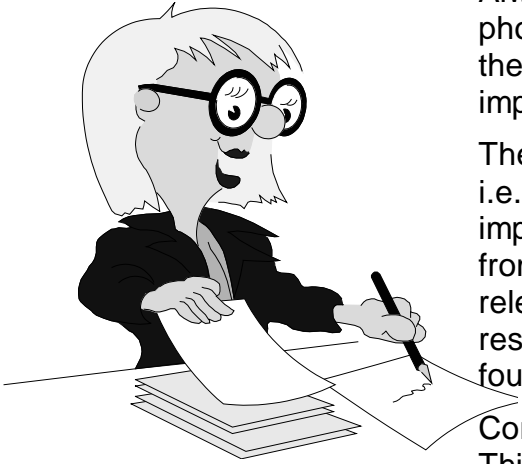
Your first call (enquiry or rescue) will begin with the number 01.

From then on, every call is given the next consecutive number for as long as you are a coordinator. This number will be prefixed with your initials, which should be first approved by the Senior Coordinator to ensure that your initials are not being used by another coordinator (e.g. HB01, HB02, HB03 and so on). This number is written in the top left hand corner of your Coordinator Call Record Form. Remember to record your next Call Number on the next blank Call Form before sending

completed Call Forms to the Data Entry Officer or entering them into the WIRES data base.

Each animal must have a separate call number e.g. 10 ducklings will require 10 call numbers but they can be recorded on the same form.

Filling out the call sheet



Always politely ask the caller for their name, address and phone details before any lengthy discussion of the nature of their problem. This gives them confidence that their call is important and helps us should the phone line drop out.

Then complete all the other details on the Coordinating Form i.e. if the caller has picked up an injured Kookaburra, it is imperative that all the details of where the bird has come from are given. For example a Kookaburra needs to be released back into its own area. This applies to every rescue. We need the exact location of where the animal was found, as well as the caller's address.

Correct species name must be filled out on the Call Sheet. This can either be done before hand or when the rescue is completed.

Tell the rescuer to ring you back after the rescue has been completed. This enables you to complete your Call Form properly. The animal may have been incorrectly identified - the caller may have thought it was a baby Brushtail Possum but it was an adult Ringtail possum, or in the case of baby birds which may take some identifying as they usually do not look anything like the parent bird.

Enquiries

A Coordinator Call Record Form is to be filled out for all enquiries. If you are going to refer the caller to another WIRES member make sure you ring that member first to make sure you have their permission to give their phone number to the caller. Our Member's privacy must be maintained. Then write the details of the call and the member you referred them to on the call form. Remember to never give out a member's phone number without checking with them first.

Animals must be registered

Always remind a rescuer/foster carer that all animals must be registered with the appropriate Animal Officer. This is done so certain species can be paired up or grouped with their own kind, to monitor any problems with species or if the animal is a threatened or endangered species to make sure it goes to an experienced carer immediately.

All animals rescued must be registered with the appropriate Animal Officer within 24 hours of an animal coming into care. Unfurred, unfeathered and very young animals must be registered immediately.

Advising the caller how to assist



After completing the Call Sheet, ask the caller if they can put the animal into a secure box or container relative to the animals size if possible.

The container must have material (cloth, towel) on the bottom to prevent the animal sliding about when being transported. They should cover the animal with a towel, pick it up and place it in the container. If it is a possum, it needs to have a cover over it as well as under it (they like to hide). The container should be firmly closed and placed in a quiet spot.

If the caller does not want to touch the animal then ask them to place a laundry basket or inverted container, perhaps a cardboard box with holes punched in it, over the animal. **This does not apply to snakes, raptors or bats.** The container should then be shaded if in direct sunlight. Pets and children should be kept away from the animal.

Explain that the animal should NOT be fed as food may interfere with veterinary treatment such as anaesthetics and many human foods are inappropriate for native animals. If the caller has already fed the animal note this on your call form and inform the rescuer.

Ask the caller if they can transport the animal to a carer or if the animal is injured and there are no rescuers available ask the caller if they could take the animal to a vet.

Finding a rescuer

Check your member's directory and find a member who lives closest to the location of the animal. The rescuer you call should have qualifications appropriate to the animal they are rescuing. If they are not available check the next closest and so on.

If the animal is being delivered by the caller to a vet, give the vet a courtesy call and let them know that the animal is on its way and the name of the person delivering it.

Enquire what time the clinic would like you to call back to check the animal's fate and if necessary organise a rescuer, or better still assign the task of following up on the animal to a rescuer.

This is your responsibility not the vets.

The end of your rostered shift



If any of the rescuers have not called you back by the end of your shift and sufficient time has passed for them to do so, then you will have to call them. **Do not pass your calls on to the next coordinator.**

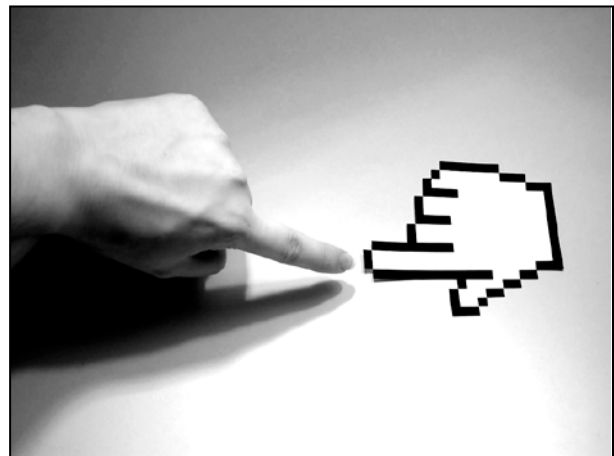
At the end of your rostered shift, if there are any messages that have to be passed on, then give the next rostered coordinator the message when you change the phones over.

At the end of your rostered shift make sure that you write the next consecutive number on your blank next blank call form (not the last number you used) in order to remember it the next time you are coordinating.

Always send completed call forms in promptly to the Data Entry Officer after coordinating. Make sure the forms are properly completed before sending.

Keeping Records using Dashboard

“Dashboard” is WIRES own online database that allows you to enter calls directly without the need of paper. You should approach the call in the same manner as described above for paper forms, but unlike the paper forms, the Dashboard will guide you through the steps: it will give you a unique call number or allow you to enter your own; it will ask you for the caller details; a summary of the call; who to assign the rescue to; whether it is an inquiry; the species; the age; the injury... it covers it all. When you are finished you simply “commit” the call sheet and you are done – nothing more to do. Some phone coordinators write the details on to a pad and enter them at the end of their shift, others do it as they are talking to the caller – the Dashboard gives you flexibility.



The big advantage of the Dashboard is you don't have to call the rescuer back or send in any paperwork. The call sheet is assigned on to the rescuer straight away: if they use paper forms it will be updated by the Data Entry Officer; if they use Dashboard too they will be able to access and complete the callsheet themselves. The other advantage is that the animal is immediately registered in the system allowing the Animal Officers access to this information **(the rescuer must still register the animal with the appropriate Animal Officer by phone).**

In managing your own records Dashboard comes into its own: every animal you have ever cared for is there. You can alter details, add weights and vet visits, update fates – and once you're done there's no form to send in, or to lose.

The Dashboard is located at members.wires.org.au or through the link at the bottom of the WIRES Blue Mountains Website www.bluemountains.wires.org.au

You will need a login and some initial guidance – contact your IT Communications Officer info@bluemountains.wires.org.au who will be only to glad to assist you.

Privacy

Please respect individual member's privacy and do not pass on names, addresses or phone numbers to any member of the public without first obtaining the members permission.

You and the vet

Only use the vets that are on your list and ensure you check your list for operating hours before sending or taking an animal there. An updated vets list will be sent to you regularly or can be obtained by emailing news@bluemountains.wires.org.au

Remember....always give the vet the courtesy of advising them a WIRES animal is on its way.

Explain if you can, what has happened to it. **Never tell a vet what to do.**

If you have a problem with the way something is done at the Vet's, contact the Animal Officer or Senior Coordinator and seek their advice.

Always ask the vet what time they would like you to phone back to enquire if the animal is ready for collection. Then arrange for a rescuer to collect it as soon as possible.



Animals

Young Animals

Joey possums, macropods, wombats, flying foxes, bats and unfledged birds should be picked up immediately, day or night and reported to the appropriate Animal Officer immediately. All young animals require warmth and special treatment and any delay in placing them into care could make the difference between surviving or not.

Dead Bodies

Please save any dead bodies in your freezer for use at future courses. Use your discretion as to the condition of these bodies and whether they will be useful. You can discuss this with the relevant Animal Officer.



BIRDS

Fledglings

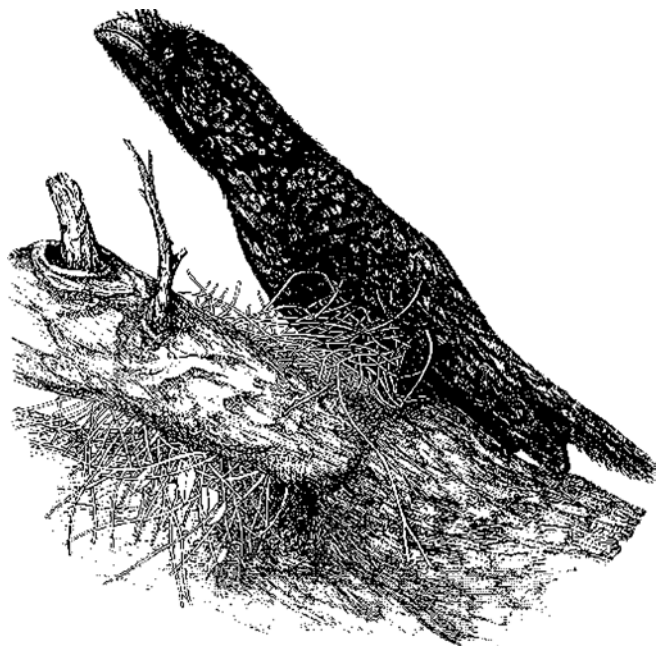
There are several young bird species that often leave the nest before they are quite ready to fly. Their parents often protect them at this time. Species include Bowerbirds, Red Wattle birds, Noisy Minors and Swallows. Often these birds can be placed on a branch and left and observed rather than being brought into care. Refer the call to the appropriate Animal Officer for advice if unsure.

Young fledgling Tawny Frogmouths can often be returned to a nearby branch if the parents are nearby. Refer to the Tawny Frogmouth Animal Officer for advice.

Artificial nests.

A makeshift nest can be made with a hanging pot with sticks and leaves. An ice cream container or small plastic food container lined with the same can also be used. The container must have drainage holes in the base so that in wet weather it does not fill and drown the birds. Try to match the size of the nest to the size of the bird.

Attach the artificial nest as close as possible to the original nest.



All birds that are replaced into the nest have to be watched for at least a couple of hours to see if the parents are feeding them. If not, have them collected by a rescuer.

If the parent bird is feeding the chick during the day, but not staying with it at night, the caller should bring the chick into the house at night. Same applies if there is heavy rain.

Injured Raptor – Do not go near it.

The caller can monitor the bird from a distance but must not attempt to rescue the bird.

Raptors can inflict nasty injuries with their talons. Send a Raptor qualified or experienced rescuer.

Contact the Raptor Animal Officer immediately. The bird will be transferred to a Raptor Specialist.

Bird - FAQs

- I have found a young bird. What should I do with it?

Ask the caller if they have fed the bird. If they have, ask them what they have fed it and advise them not to feed it anymore. If they know where the nest is and the baby bird is not injured, ask the caller if they can put it back into the nest.

If the nest is too high, instruct them on how to make a makeshift nest and nail or hang this high in the same tree if possible on a leafy branch to provide protection from the sun and predators as well as being out of reach of cats and dogs.

If the bird is a young fledgling and just learning to fly, it may be possible to simply return it to a safe branch and ask the caller to monitor it for a few hours.

If the parents do not return to the makeshift nest or fledgling, the bird must be brought into care.

- I have found a racing pigeon. What should I do with it?

Give the caller the phone number of the Racing Pigeon Club and the caller can give them the colour and numbers of the bands on the leg of the Pigeon. The club can then organise to have the bird collected from the caller.

- What can I do about Magpies / birds swooping – attacking?

The three main bird species that display this behaviour are the Australian Magpie, Grey Butcherbird and Masked Lapwing (Plover).

This occurs during the breeding season, usually in Spring and can last up to six weeks before the swooping stops.

Aggressive Magpies are likely to swoop at people who come within 30-50 metres of the nest. The parent birds are only trying to protect their eggs or young chicks. Once the chicks have fledged, the problem will stop.

Action you can take:

- Avoid the nesting area if at all possible during the incubation and raising of the chicks - about six weeks.



- Wear a hat or other headgear to eliminate the risk of injury during attacks. Paint eyes on the back of the headgear. The bird will think that it is being watched and will not swoop.
- Carry a stick or umbrella at head height to prevent the attacker from getting too close. It is not necessary to wave the stick about. You may hit or harm the birds.
- When on a bike, wear a helmet and/or have a flag attached to the rear of the bicycle when riding through an area where birds are swooping.

Explain to the caller that if the adult bird is killed, the other adult cannot feed the chicks by itself and they will all die. If at all possible wait until the chicks have fledged in about 6 weeks. If Magpies are attacking young children at pre-schools, aged people's homes, handicapped children's schools or if families are not able to exit their own home, front or rear without the bird drawing blood, then contact National Parks & Wildlife Service for assistance.



- There is a cockatoo coming into my yard and it has a lot of feathers missing and looks sick. What can I do?

It could be a bird that has Beak and Feather Disease or otherwise known as psittacine circoviral disease (PCD). There is no treatment at this time.

Have the bird trapped in the caller's yard. WIRES will supply a cage and the caller can place feed in the cage. When the bird has been caught, the caller then takes it to a Vet.

- I have a flock of Cockatoos eating my house. How can I stop them?

Galahs and Cockatoos usually start eating verandas when bored. This is caused by these birds being fed by the public and therefore they do not occupy their time in finding food for themselves. Suggest the caller finds out who in their area is feeding the birds and explains to them the problem.

To deter Cockatoos and Galahs:

- attach near the eaves or where the birds are chewing, strips of aluminium foil, fabric, or feathers from feather dusters that will flutter in the wind. This may give a scarecrow effect.
- attach a silhouette model of a bird of prey, made from black cardboard or plywood to the eaves or you can purchase one from your local nursery.
- painting woodwork with a crib spray available from an equestrian produce store can be effective as it gives the wood a nasty taste.
- use a water pistol every time the birds land.

All the above may deter other birds in your garden which you may not wish to do.

The preferred solution is to install a strip of fine wire along the top of the railings to discourage perching.

- I have a bird caught in bird netting over the fruit tree.

With the permission of the caller send a rescuer out to cut the netting off the bird using small pair of scissors with rounded ends.

The bird may be able to be released immediately if it is not injured.

Make sure there is no netting left entangled around the toes or wings which may cut off the blood supply.

- There is a bird hanging from a tree. Can you do something?

Ask the caller if they know what type of bird it is. If it is a Raptor then a Raptor qualified or experienced rescuer must be sent out. If it is an introduced species, then still send a rescuer out for humane reasons.

Ask how long it has been there, how high up the tree it is, what kind of tree it is and if it is reachable with a ladder or a long handled pruning saw? If not would it be accessible using a Cherry Picker?

If the bird is accessible by a Cherry Picker, you can ring Integral Energy and see if a Cherry Picker is either available or in the area to help. Send a rescuer out to meet the Cherry Picker and to collect the bird when it is rescued.

- There is a bird trapped in our building. How can we get it out?

Birds that are caught in large factories or houses may fly out if left quietly and the doors or windows left open.

If the roof is very high and the doors and windows small then the bird may have to be caught.

This can be very difficult. If the building is dark and quiet it may be caught with a long handled catching net.

Some birds such as parrots may come to ground for seed. Raptors need a special loop trap to catch them on the ground. Contact your Raptor Animal Officer for advice.

- There is a Pelican / duck down near the river and it appears to be entangled in fishing line.

Ask the caller to watch the Pelican until the rescuers arrive and call you if it should disappear. If they already have the Pelican, ensure they DO NOT tie up the Pelican's bill as Pelican's have no external nostrils and will not be able to breathe.

When rescuing Pelican's at least two rescuers are needed. Always call an experienced rescuer first. NEVER send a Pelican to the Vet before checking first with the Water Bird Animal Officer or Miscellaneous Animal Officer.



- Lapwings (Plovers) are attacking people as they enter the building. Can they be removed?

They are only attacking because they have eggs nearby. It is usually a futile exercise to try and catch these birds.

If the eggs are removed the birds will only lay eggs there again. Once the eggs have hatched the parent birds will take their young chicks into the bush and the problem will be solved. In the meantime, you can put a sign there warning people to be aware of the swooping. In this way people are prepared for evasive action. It takes about 4 weeks for the eggs to hatch.

- I have found some bird eggs on the ground and the parent birds are still around. Should the eggs be there?

Ask the caller to describe to parent birds to try and establish what bird it may be.

If the bird described is a Plover, then it is a natural occurrence. These birds lay their eggs on the ground. Leave the eggs where they were found.

- I have a Kookaburra attacking my window and I am afraid it will hurt itself or break the window. What can be done to stop it?

Kookaburras are territorial birds and when they see their own reflection in the window they attack it.

You may have to cover the window with flyscreen, paper or something similar to stop the mirror effect usually caused by the sun shining on the window just at the right angle. Kookaburras are more territorial during the breeding season which is from September to January.

- A bird has just flown into my window. What can I do for it?

During breeding season this can be a problem as most birds are territorial. Seeing their own reflection in a window may cause them to attack it, often knocking themselves out.

See if the caller is prepared to look after it for a couple of hours and ask them to place the bird in a covered box, in a quiet room away from noise, children and pets.

Tell the caller to ring back if there is no improvement and you will have the bird rescued as soon as possible.

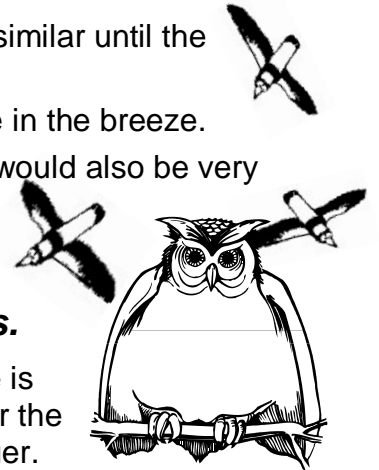
If the caller will hold the bird for a couple of hours, ask them not to feed it anything as this will only stress the bird even more.

If birds flying into windows is a recurring problem, the following are some suggestions to alleviate this:

- Hang shade cloth strategically on the outside of the window.
- Hanging plant baskets may be effective.



- Install anti-glare screens over the windows. This will prevent the birds getting access to the windows while reducing the glare and heat inside the house without affecting visibility.
- Stop reflection by smearing outside windows with Ajax or similar until the breeding season is over.
- Hang strips of aluminium foil on windows. These will move in the breeze.
- Apply transfers or stencils to the windows. A hawk shape would also be very effective.
- Do not recommend any products to get rid of birds.



- *There is an Owl in a tree being harassed by Magpies.*

This is natural behaviour; Nature taking its own course. There is nothing WIRES can do in this situation. The caller can monitor the Owl and if it comes to ground call us and we will send a rescuer.

- *I have rescued some ducklings. Can I release them on the water?*

Advise the caller that if the adult duck has disappeared or been killed, that it would not be a good idea to release the ducklings back into the water as ducklings do not have their water-proofing feathers. The mother duck provides the oil for water-proofing their feathers. If placed in any water they will die of pneumonia.

If the ducklings cannot be returned to the parents, advise the caller to keep the ducklings together in a box and to keep them warm until they can be rescued.

- *I have ducks swimming and fouling in my swimming pool. How can I keep them out of the pool?*

Place an inflatable ball or pool toys in the pool. These move around and keep the ducks away.

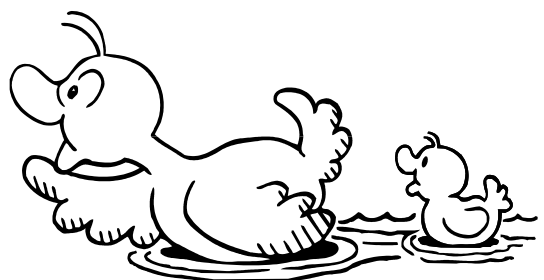
A solar pool cover will not only exclude ducks from swimming pools but will heat the pool to some extent.

- *There are ducklings in my pool and they cannot get out. What can I do?*

If there are ducklings in the pool tell the caller to turn the pool filter off immediately as the ducklings could be sucked into the filtration system and be killed as they cannot get out.

A wet towel hung over the side of the pool attached to a float will allow the ducklings a means of escape from the pool. The birds should be observed from a distance to see if the parents return and lead the ducklings away.

If the ducklings have to be caught, the adult duck needs to be caught first. The ducklings then can be herded into a corner and scooped out with a long handled catching net or pool scoop. Re-unite parents and ducklings and release in a safe environment nearby.



- What can I do about the wild ducks eating my vegetables in my garden?

Get a Wonder-Bird Scarer (plastic Hawk) and hang it near the vegetable garden.

Cover the vegetables with chicken wire so that the ducks cannot get to the vegetables.

- Emu on the loose and in danger of being hit by a car.



The Emu has more than likely escaped from a nearby Fauna Park or the ADI site.

Advise the caller NOT to CHASE the bird. Emus are prone to myopathy.

A number of experienced rescuers should be called. A catching net may be needed, much the same as for catching Macropods on the loose. Do not tie up the legs, as this will cut off the blood circulation. Keep the legs pointed away from you. Cover the head with a sack as this will calm down the bird.

If no rescuer is available pass the rescue on to NPWS.

Once the bird has been apprehended, make sure you advise the rescuer to keep the bird upright and NOT on its side or leaning on its chest or the bird will suffocate and die.

- I have found a bird with oil on its feathers. How can I remove oil from feathers?

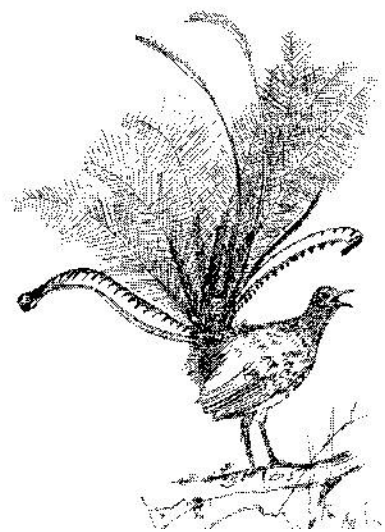
Call a rescuer to get the bird as it will need intensive treatment.

So long as the bird has not ingested any oil, then the oil can be removed with gentle washing in luke-warm water. Use Amway LOC or Dawn detergent. Do not use undiluted. Washing the bird may require several treatments to remove all the oil from the feathers.

Do not use a hair dryer to dry the bird as the noise will cause stress and the heat may burn the bird's skin. Gently dry with a towel and make use of the sun's natural warmth when possible. Filter the sun's rays so that you do not overheat the bird. If drying indoors, make sure the bird is not in a draught and keep the bird warm until it has recovered.

- Lyre Birds are digging up the plants in my garden. What can I do to stop them?

Making a compost heap down the back yard and away from the rest of your garden can sometimes help keep them out of the garden beds. Usually Lyre birds scratch in the garden mulch looking for worms. This quite often occurs after periods of rain or dry periods when there is no food around.



By keeping the compost heap moist and putting some worms in it, the Lyre Bird is hopefully attracted to it as they love scratching around in the mulch for food. At the same time you too can make good use of the compost material.

Cover garden beds with chicken wire (on the ground) or mulch with rocks.

WIRES does not trap Lyre birds.

Sometimes Lyre birds turn out to be Pheasants. If this is the case a home can be found for it. This applies to all exotic birds such as quails, peacocks, partridges and turkeys.

- I want to release my pet cockatoo that I have had for the past ten years. How would I go about it?

If you no longer want the cockatoo and you cannot find a good home for it with a reliable person, it would be far better and kinder to have it euthanased by a veterinarian than to release it in the vain hope that it will be able to live out a natural life in the wild. A bird kept as a pet for that length of time would be unable to fend for itself and would slowly die of starvation.

- What can I do to stop my pet cockatoo plucking his feathers out?

This can be a physical or psychological problem. To determine which of these it may be you need to take the bird to a vet for an accurate diagnosis.

The physical causes include dietary problems, skin parasites, hormonal imbalances, bacterial or viral infections or allergies.

If it's a psychological problem, then it is more than likely suffering from boredom or frustration.

Birds kept in small cages with no variety to their surrounds are most susceptible to this.

Birds need room to move around and exercise freely, a varied diet, things to chew, companionship and security. Some female cockatoos will feather-pluck in the breeding season due to sexual frustration. Supplying a male will often stop this.

Some ways to relieve boredom:

- transfer the bird into a large aviary.
- give the bird the company of another bird of the same species
- allow the bird to wander around the house (supervised of course)
- give the bird native branches, gum-nuts or Banksia cones to chew
- place the bird near a radio or television
- most important give the bird more attention

- I have found a Magpie with a stainless steel band on its leg. Is there something I should do with the band?

It is likely that the bird was banded under the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes. Each band has a unique number embossed on it and could be part of a scientific study. If the bird is dead, the band should be removed, flattened and sent to Australian NPWS, P.O. Box 8, Canberra 2601 or phone (02) 62466180.

The following details should accompany the band

- date and location where bird was found.
- your name and address so they can let you know where and when the bird was banded.
- any ideas you may have on the cause of death.

If the bird is alive, the band should be left on the bird, and the number on the band recorded and sent to the above address with all the necessary information.

Banded Flying-foxes must also be reported to the relevant Animal Officer ASAP.



MAMMALS & MARSUPIALS

Poisoned mammals

Many animals may be poisoned and it is often difficult to diagnose if an animal is suffering from poisoning. Animals may consume rodent baits, industrial waste products, snail bait, household chemicals, poison from the spraying of plants, stagnant or polluted water.

Symptoms may include any of the following: nervous twitching, convulsions, symptoms of shock, internal haemorrhaging, fits, extreme salivation or frothing from the mouth, loss of balance, difficulty in breathing, vomiting, blood from the cloacae or bleeding from the mouth.

If an animal is suspected of poisoning it should be taken to a vet immediately. Ask the caller if they have used any poisons recently and if so, ask the name of the poison.

If the caller cannot take the animal to a vet contact a carer immediately.



Pouched young

Most mammals sustain injuries from domestic pets, moving vehicles, man-made structures and even from extreme weather conditions. Sometimes the caller is not aware of the sex of the animal. Females may have pouched young and these can often be free from injuries which may have caused the demise of the mother.

Young Mammal / Marsupial Joey FAQs

- I have just buried a kangaroo / possum / wombat that I found dead on the road. Is that the right thing to do?

Explain to the caller that it is possible that there may be young in the pouch of the mother and ask them to check the pouch. In some circumstances the young will survive in the pouch for several days after the mother has died.

If the joey is still in the pouch of the dead mother and is still attached to the teat, the joey or joeys are NOT to be removed unless there are maggots, the baby has come off the teat or the animal is too large to transport and it smells.

If the joey is attached to the teat, we do NOT cut the teat. The joey can be removed from the pouch by pushing on the outside of the pouch and turning it inside out. Once the joey is out of the pouch, if the sides of the joey's mouth are gently squeezed and a little pressure is applied to the teat the joey will separate from the mother. Care must be taken so as not to damage the mouth.

Ask the caller to wrap the joey in a hanky or towel and place in a container with a warm hot-water bottle wrapped in a towel and arrange for it to be delivered to a carer as soon as possible. **Do not leave overnight.**

If no heat is available, the wrapped joey can be placed under their shirt to keep it warm, ensuring that it does not get squashed if small. It is preferable for experienced carers to remove the joey, although sometimes an experienced carer is not always available.

- I have found a dead Glider / Ringtail Possum with a live baby. Now what?

Advise the caller that these animals have multiple young and can they check the area where the animal was found for any other joeys separated from the mother. This can be done while awaiting collection by a rescuer. If the mother has been dead for a while the joeys can wander off.

Ask the caller to:

- a) Place the joeys in a warmed cotton bag (pillowslip, sock or beanie will do) and tie the top with string / rubber band or wrap in a towel. Place in a warmed container with a warm hot-water bottle wrapped in a towel. Immediate delivery or collection is required. Do not leave overnight.
- b) If the joey is separated from the parent, bring the dead mother in for identification if possible.

- I have found a dead Kangaroo with a joey in the pouch. What can I do?

If the animal is on the road, move it to the side.

Ask the caller to check to see if the animal is flyblown as maggots could be in the pouch.



If the joey is off the teat remove the joey from the pouch and wrap in a jumper or towel. Place it under their shirt to keep warm and ask them to deliver it to the nearest carer.

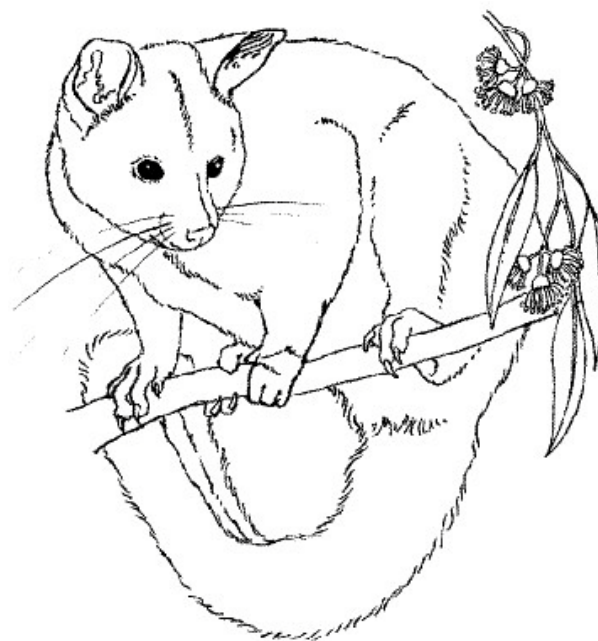
If they will not pick up the animal ask the caller to wait with the Kangaroo until a rescuer arrives.

If this is not possible ask the caller to leave something beside the road to mark the area for the rescuer. A plastic shopping bag or towel tied to the trunk of a tree or to the animal.

If the joey is still attached to the teat it is preferable for an experienced carer to remove the joey. If you cannot contact a carer, explain to the caller how to remove the joey out of the pouch and off the teat.

Possums

Possums who insist on making their home in roof cavities can become a problem. Possums are an all year round “get-into-trouble” animal – smart and inquisitive they find their way into all sorts of situations. These are the most likely mammal you will encounter in the Blue Mountains Branch.



Possum Trapping

We do not trap possums if they are living in the caller's roof. We do not trap possums that are running across the roof or making a noise outside the window at night because the caller thinks they are a nuisance.

We only trap injured possums or possums that may have been locked in the caller's roof due to extensions or repairs being done to the roof.

Possums are very territorial and cannot be relocated as it generally ends in one possum dying while fighting for a new territory.

Suggest to the caller that they place a suitable weatherproof possum box in a tree close by so the possum has a home to shelter in.

There are licensed possum trappers that will assist callers in repairing rooves and also supply a possum box. Give the caller the appropriate number.

It is NPWS policy that possums are not to be relocated.

Possum Boxes

Sturdy, weatherproof boxes can be constructed and secured to a tree. The box should be approximately 300mm x 600mm. A hole approximately the size of a saucer is cut in the front of the box to allow entry for the possum. Holes should be drilled in the base to allow drainage of rain water.

Fix the box securely in the fork of a tree at least 4 metres high. Placing some fruit in or on the box should attract the possum to the box.

Possum boxes can be purchased from the Branch or we have possum box plans that we can send to the caller. The Branch supplies possum boxes free to WIRES members that are rehousing a possum.



Possum FAQs

- I have found a possum that has been run over. There are no vets open. What can I do?

Ask the caller to move the possum to the side of the road.

If at all possible place the possum into a pillow slip and tie off the top. A towel will do as well.

Ask the caller if they can deliver the possum to the closest carer.

If the caller is unable to move the possum off the road ask the caller to stand near the possum and place a towel or blanket over the animal to reduce stress and wait for the rescuer.

- How can I get a possum out of my roof?

Explain to the caller that possums are protected and are very territorial animals. While the possum is in the caller's yard it is deterring other possums from entering.

If at all possible the best option for both the caller and the possum is to wait for nightfall. It is at this time that the possum will leave the roof in search of food. Once it has vacated the premises the entry hole/s can then be sealed so that the possum cannot re-enter the roof. Note: Access is usually soiled by oils and dirt from the possum's fur and feet.

At least it will then still be in its own territory but in need of suitable accommodation.

Possum boxes are available for sale from the Branch. We also have plans for possum boxes. The Branch supplies possum boxes free to WIRES members that are rehousing a possum.

When they are sealing the roof remind them to ensure that there are no more possums in the roof at the time.

Sometimes possums leave their young in the roof whilst they go out to forage for the night.

Trees that overhang the roof are a means of climbing onto the roof and into the cavity. Any overhanging branches should be removed.



Fit a cylinder that is constructed of metal or other non-climbable material around the trunk of the tree to prevent climbing.

- *There is a possum sitting in our tree in the daytime. Should it be out?*

Tell the caller that possums are nocturnal animals and that they should not be out during the day.

Ask the caller:

- How high up in the tree is the possum?
- Are there any signs of injuries (missing fur, visible blood, flies buzzing around the animal)?
- How long has the animal been up there?
- What is the size of the animal?
- Is there only one or more?

If there are no visible injuries ask the caller to:

- Keep an eye on the animal as it may have been caught out in daylight hours while making its way home.
- Keep all dogs and cats locked up.

If the possum is injured but is too high up the tree to be rescued safely a possum trap will need to be set for when the possum comes down at night.

If the possum is constantly being attacked by birds, the caller can hose the birds.
An experienced rescuer should be sent to assess the situation.

- *I have had a possum for the last week and I have been feeding it cow's milk. It does not seem very well at the moment. What can I do?*

Possums are protected animals and cannot be kept without a licence from NPWS. If the caller does not want to give up the possum, try to get as much information as possible such as name, address and phone number. Tell the caller that the branch has a possum coordinator who will assist them with information and that you will arrange for the coordinator to contact them. If the possum coordinator is not available contact the Senior Coordinator who will call them.

Explain to the caller that:

- native animals do not drink cow's milk as it has inappropriate nutritional value and can cause diarrhoea
- the possum requires the correct diet and may need to be paired up with possums of the same age or species
- there are special milk formulas for rearing native animals and that possums may die without the correct diet and care
- stress will very quickly kill an animal
- they can drop the possum at a WIRES vet for collection if that is what they prefer.

- I have found some small possums in the firewood. Can I let them go?

These little possums are more than likely Feathertail Gliders or Pygmy Possums.

Pygmy Possums may be in torpor (asleep) and if warmed up will come out of that sleep and use up their energy. They will probably require feeding before returning to their area.

Ask what area the firewood originally came from.

Have the animals collected for identification and possible quick release if not injured.

These very small Gliders / Possums should go to an experienced carer.

Flying-Foxes and Insectivorous Bats

Vaccinated members only (see members list)

Micro bats are often mistaken for baby Flying-Foxes by the public.

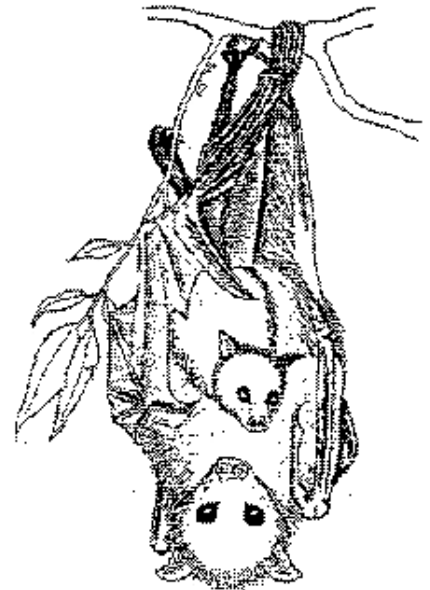
Cotton gloves must be used when handling Micro bats.

Banded Flying-Foxes: contact the Flying-fox Animal Officer immediately.

The Little Red flying-fox may be confused with the Grey-headed Flying-fox. Little Reds are very stressful animals and are often pregnant at the time we get them in our area.

For any calls regarding either Micro (small insect eating bats) or Mega Bats (flying-foxes), only an experienced **vaccinated** rescuer must be contacted. Do not send any bats to the Vet before checking with the Flying Fox Coordinator.

Between September and January always send a rescuer to check with binoculars for baby Flying-foxes hanging on the mother if on power lines during the daytime. The mother may have been electrocuted and has died.



Australian Bat Lyssavirus

Lyssavirus is a Rabies-related virus. This is a new virus to Australia and little is known about it at present. Both Micro and Mega bats carry the virus. **Only experienced and vaccinated rescuers are to be sent out.** If a caller is bitten advise them that they must wash the wound with soap for at least five minutes and seek medical attention immediately. The Health Department must be contacted by the person who was bitten. The Bat must be placed into the care of the Species Coordinator for further investigations. Bats showing signs of Lyssavirus will be euthanased and sent to the NSW Agriculture Department at Menangle for Lyssavirus testing. Micro and Mega bat Animal Officers and Senior Coordinator must be contacted ASAP if a caller or handler has been bitten.

Advise the caller not to touch the Flying-fox or Micro bat.

The public are not at risk, provided they do not touch the bats.

- Flying-foxes have been visiting my fruit trees. Will I get Lyssavirus if I eat the fruit?

The virus is unlikely to survive very long on fruit. It is destroyed by exposure to sunlight and drying (Fishbein & Bernard 1995). The fruit should be washed and any bitten fruit should be discarded.

The caller can contact the NSW Health Department for more information.

Flying-Foxes and Insectivorous Bats FAQs

- I have Flying-foxes eating my fruit. What can I do?

Cover the fruit tree with plastic or paper bags. Empty bladders from wine cask are ideal to fill with air and hang on the tree.

Try to pick the fruit before it ripens to save it from predators.

Net the fruit tree with netting stretched out tight over a frame to cover the whole tree so the bats do not get tangled in the netting.

Do not extend the netting to the ground as snakes will get caught in it.

Plant native trees such as Native fig, Red Bloodwood and eucalyptus.

- There is a Flying-Fox hanging in our fruit tree. What is wrong with it?

The same situation applies to Flying-foxes as to possums. If they are found in a tree or away from the colony during daylight, then we need to assume something is wrong.

Sometimes they are just resting and may fly off in the evening.

Ask if the caller has netting over the tree as the animal may be entangled.

Ask the caller if the animal is alive and if there are any obvious injuries. Explain to the caller that you need to organise a rescuer to assess the situation if the animal is hanging very low in a tree.

If they have any domestic pets, they should be locked up until the Flying-fox is removed.

- There are Flying-foxes squabbling in my Cocos palms at night.

Advise the caller that they are only feeding but if the noise is annoying them suggest they removed the Cocos palm fruit. This will stop the Flying foxes from visiting.

- There is a Flying-fox hanging on the power lines. Should it be there?

If possible send an experienced Flying-fox rescuer immediately. Check the bat for a baby with binoculars. There may be a need to wait for Integral Energy to arrive with a cherry picker.

Call Integral Energy only if a baby is visible. Tell them of the situation, the location of the animal and that you will organise for a rescuer to be at the scene when they arrive.

- How can I get small bats out of my ceiling?

Explain to the caller that the bats naturally live in the area. The best deterrent is to seal off the cavities in the roof or walls after the bats have left the area. Maybe the caller is interested in offering the bats an alternative roost site. If the caller is interested in building a bat box WIRES will send out the details.

The Micro bat coordinator should be contacted immediately so the site can be assessed for the best possible solution.

Bats are also not fond of light, so the caller may leave a light on in the cavity for up to 48 hours. Explain to the caller that before sealing any cavities, they need to be positive that no bats or their babies are left in there. If the cavity is blocked while the bats are out feeding there may be babies left in the roof who will be trapped inside and starve to death. A maternity colony cannot and should not be disturbed or removed from the site.



- My children / cat have brought in a small bat. What can I do?

Advise the caller not to handle the animal but to cover it with a towel and place a box over it until a vaccinated rescuer arrives. All domestic pets should be kept away.

Bats that have been bitten by a cat need antibiotics as soon as possible. They are easily stressed and can be easily injured.

- I have found a Flying-fox with a band on its leg. Is there something I should do with the band?

It is likely that the Flying-fox was banded under the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes. This is performed by professional banders, and each band has a unique number embossed on it.

If the animal is dead, the band should be removed by an approved and vaccinated rescuer only - **THE CALLER SHOULD NOT HANDLE A FLYING FOX OR BAT.** The band is then flattened and sent to Australian NPWS, P.O. Box 8, Canberra 2601 or phone (02) 62466180.

The following details should accompany the band

- date and location where animal was found.
- your name and address so they can let you know where and when the animal was banded.
- any ideas you may have on the cause of death.

If the flying-fox or bat is alive, the band should be left on the animal, and the number on the band recorded and sent to the above address with all the necessary information.

Banded birds (such as magpies) must also be reported to the relevant Animal Officer ASAP.



Macropod FAQs

- I have a Kangaroo in my front yard. Should I try and grab it?

Large Macropods can be very dangerous especially if cornered. Tell the caller not to approach the animal and keep the dogs and children inside the house. Send only experienced rescuers (see contact list).



- I hit a Kangaroo and its leg is broken.

Adult Kangaroos cannot be brought into care as they stress and it can cause more problems for the animal. Contact only experienced macropod rescuers as the animal will need to be sedated so it can be taken to a vet to be euthanased. Make sure all onlookers have been moved away from the area.

Ask the caller to throw a towel over the animals head to keep it quiet and reduce stress.

In the event that a Macropod rescuer is not available contact the Macropod Coordinator or the Senior Coordinator to determine the course of action that may involve the use of the local Police for euthanasia.

Bandicoot FAQs

- What can I do about Bandicoots digging holes in my lawn?

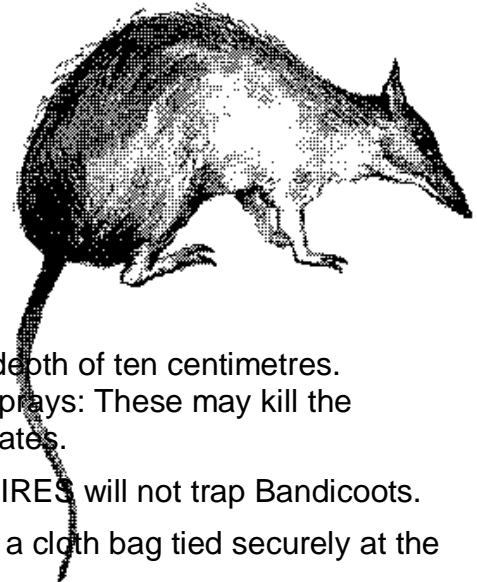
Bandicoots are very likely to be eating pest insects, snails, and in particular the larvae of the cockchafer beetles which can destroy a lawn by eating the roots of the grass.

They are a gardener's best friend. This problem usually occurs in late Autumn after periods of rain. Bandicoot holes are usually vertical, cone shaped and four to eight centimetres in depth. Erect a low chicken wire fence around the area to exclude the animals with the bottom buried to a depth of ten centimetres. Spotlighting the area may deter them. Do not use sprays: These may kill the Bandicoot as they eat a lot of soil with the invertebrates.

Bandicoots are under threat from cats and dogs. WIRES will not trap Bandicoots.

Bandicoots being rescued should be transported in a cloth bag tied securely at the top.

These animals suffer from stress and need to be housed correctly. Contact your Miscellaneous Animal Officer immediately.



Echidna FAQs

- I have an Echidna in my yard and the dogs are barking at it. What can I do?

Echidnas often wander through backyards in search of ants or water.

When disturbed, they curl into a ball of radiating spines or dig themselves into the ground surprisingly quickly. You can help the animal by keeping people away and locking up your cats and dogs until the Echidna moves away. Relocation is not necessary if there is plenty of natural bush nearby or surrounding the property.



If the Echidna is in the middle of suburbia with houses all around then, so long as it is not breeding season, relocation to nearby bushland may be the best answer.

Sometimes the Echidna has crossed a busy road and if it is placed on the other side it may venture back across the road so do not relocate unless the animal is in danger.

Breeding season starts in July – August. Gestation, incubation and pouch life in September – October. Suckling and lactation from November through to March. ***Do not relocate, especially during these periods as the young could be in a burrow nearby.***

- I have rescued an Echidna and bubbles are coming out of its nose. Is there something wrong with it?

It is natural for clear bubbles to be coming from the nose. Any nose injury, blood in bubbles must be seen by a vet.

Adult Echidnas have a home range and should be returned to it.

- What can I put an Echidna in for transporting?

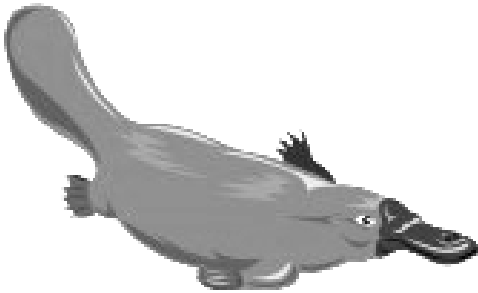
A plastic carrier or garbage bin with holes in it for ventilation with a secure lid. Wooden box well ventilated with hinged lid and with plenty of mulch or shredded paper. Never place an Echidna in a cardboard box as you find that it has buried itself into the car. You do not want to dismantle the car if you can help it. Echidnas can die from heat stress. Never use a heat source.

The male has a long spur on his hind leg that can cause a painful injury.

Echidnas are to go to experienced carers. Contact your Miscellaneous Animal Officer.

Platypus FAQs

- A Platypus has been in our pond for a few days. What should I do?



Platypus are solitary animals and live in burrows on the banks of streams. The female is smaller than the male and lays 1–3 eggs which hatch in 1-2 weeks and the young suckle on milk for 4 months and emerge from the burrow in late summer.

Male Platypus have a large venomous hollow spur on each hind leg which will cause painful swelling in humans. Handle the Platypus by the base of the tail, keeping the hind legs away from your body. Place the

animal into a pillowslip.

Platypus, like Echidnas, are also vulnerable to heat stress and can die if they get overheated.

Pollution, fishing line and hooks, netting, dogs and habitat destruction make these animals extremely vulnerable.

Contact an experienced rescuer or Miscellaneous Animal Officer to evaluate the situation. It could be in trouble.

Koalas

If you receive a call from a member of the public reporting a Koala sighting please obtain as much information as possible as to the whereabouts of the animals and the time of the sighting.

Send a rescuer out to verify the sighting. If a rescuer is not available contact NPWS.

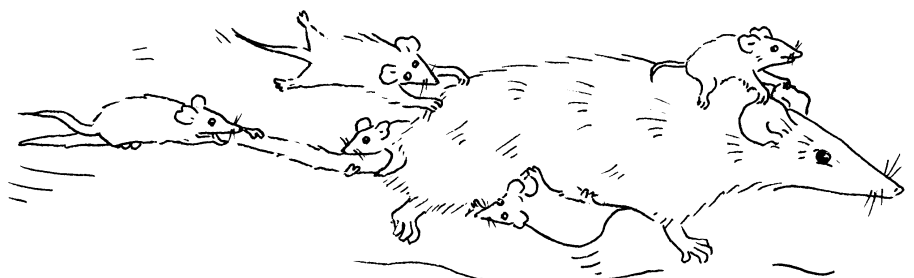
Inform the Miscellaneous Animal Officer of the sighting immediately and if it is verified by one of our members NPWS must be informed.

A sighting form must be completed (apply to the Senior Coordinator).

Native Rats and Mice FAQs

- How can I tell if the rats in the roof / shed are native or feral?

Swamp Rats, Water Rats and Bush rats which are native are not likely to be in the house at all, but there are exceptions to the rule if the caller backs onto bushland. It is almost certain to be feral rats that get in the rooves of houses. Native rats are hard to identify at the best of times, so it would be advisable to have it picked up and checked by an experienced carer.



- I do not know if what I have rescued is a mouse or Antechinus.

The Antechinus (marsupial mouse) may be distinguished from the introduced House Mouse by the lack of an obvious mousy smell and the presence of many small teeth in its mouth.

The snout of the Antechinus is long and pointed. The droppings are 5 -10 mm long, irregular and easily crushed between the fingers, while the mouse droppings tend to roll and remain intact under moderate pressure. Ears are large, rounded and slightly crinkled. It is brownish/grey in colour.

If the caller is unsure, see if they can take it to an experienced carer to be identified.

- It is winter and a dead Antechinus has been found.

If there is no sign of visible injury and it is a male the breeding season ends around August and all males have usually died from exhaustion after mating.

Injured or orphaned Antechinus should go to an experienced carer. Contact your Miscellaneous Animal Officer.

Quoll (Spotted –tailed) FAQs

- I have a very aggressive animal in my chicken pen and it has eaten some of the chickens.

Ask the caller to describe the animal. Spotted-tailed quolls are about the size of an adult cat. Dark brown to lighter brown in colour with distinctive white spots over body and tail. Distinctive pink nose and aggressive in nature.

It is advisable to send an experienced rescuer to capture a Quoll. If one is not available, then send at least two rescuers.

All Quolls are weighed, measured, micro-chipped and ear tagged before release.

Mating takes place April – July. Average litter size is 5.



This is an endangered species – Contact the Endangered / Miscellaneous Animal Officer immediately.

Wombat FAQs

- I have found a Wombat and it appears to have a skin problem.

Many wombats, especially adults, may have a Sarcoptic Mange. This can be passed on to anyone having contact with the animal. Sarcoptic Mange is a burrowing mite spread by foxes and is usually found in areas where Wombats are abundant. The severity of its condition and age will be a determining factor in the treatment and recovery. Often animals found out in daylight hours, particularly in the winter months will be suffering from mange. Ask if the animal has large scabs to the face, ears and flanks.

Treatment is to apply an application of Revolution (20kg-40kg dose available from the vet or pet store) to the animal and leave in its natural habitat. This can either be attempted by one of our members or alternatively by the caller if the animal is on property and a regular visitor. In some cases the animal has to be euthanased if treatment is unsuccessful or the animal is too badly infected.



Only send out an experienced rescuer for adult Wombats.

If a furless Wombat is rescued, it should be placed into a pillow slip and kept warm. Over- heating can cause heat stress.

- When is Wombat breeding season?

Wombats breed anytime during the year. The females pouch opens to the rear. They have one offspring per year.

- What can I do about Wombats digging under and destroying my fences?

Wombats use as many as ten holes within their home range although, only two or three of these will be used regularly. Their home range varies from 5 -25ha. Depending upon the habitat quality.

The killing of Wombats as a means of reducing the damage to boundary fences is futile as in most Wombat area's there is a reserve of young transient Wombats ready to replace any established animal that is removed.

Solutions are: erect a two wire electric fence 30cm outside the existing boundary fence with wires

15 -30 cm above the ground. Install swinging gates at regular Wombat access points to relieve damage. For this to work 2 or 3 well used holes must be chosen and all other holes within a few hundred metres must be repaired daily. After about a month, the Wombats should be using only the selected holes. The frame for the

gate is then erected around the hole and left for the Wombats to become accustomed to it before the gate is hung. This will exclude Rabbits and Kangaroos and fresh Wombat holes being made in fences.

Wombats do not like fertilisers made from chicken manure (e.g. Dynamic lifter) and this discourages them if placed in areas where their digging is a nuisance.

WIRES will send out a fact sheet (contact the Miscellaneous coordinator).

Any destruction of Wombats must be done under the authority and control of NPWS Officers.

Feral Animal FAQs



- Why are feral animals such a problem?

Feral animals are introduced species not native to Australia, and have created a number of problems for our native fauna, such as competition for food, shelter and nesting sites and through direct predation by animals such as cats and foxes.

A list of **non-native animals** that have successfully established wild populations in Australia:

- **Birds:** Blackbird, Red-whiskered Bul Bul, Spice Finch, Jungle Fowl, Gold Finch, Ringneck Pheasant, California Quail, Green Finch, Indian Mynah, Mallard, Black-headed Skylark, Mannikin, Ostrich, Mute Swan, Common Peafowl, Song Thrush, House Sparrow, Domestic Pigeon, Starling, White-winged Whydar, Tree Sparrow, Spotted Turtle Dove, Senegal Turtle Dove, Grenadier Weaver.
- **Mammals:** Cattle, Donkey, Camel, Fox, Cat, Red Deer, Goat, Hare, Horse, House Mouse, Fallow Deer, Hog, Pig, Rabbit, Black Rat, Brown Rat, Sheep, Dog, Grey Squirrel, Sambar Deer, Rusa Deer, Chital, Palm Squirrel, Water Buffalo.

- What is the humane way of getting rid of feral birds such as Pigeons, Starlings and Indian Mynahs from around my home?

The best method available to people is to encourage native birds to their garden which will displace the feral species. This can be done by providing a suitable habitat. Grow food and nesting plants which are native to your area and will attract native birds.

Some pest companies offer a service in controlling some birds, but if the habitat is not changed to attract native birds the pests will quickly re-establish themselves.

- I have a feral cat living in the bush behind my house. What can I do about it?

Refer the caller to the RSPCA, Cat Protection Society or NSW Animal Welfare League. They have traps to catch the animal.

They should also notify NPWS if they see feral cats in a park or their property backs onto a national park area. Complaints about domestic cats should be referred to RSPCA or their local Council.

- We want to report a fox in the bush behind us.

If you receive a call about a fox sighting refer the caller to Rural Lands Protection Board.



- I have found a stray dog, cat, rabbit or any domestic animal. What can I do with it?

WIRES is for native animals. If a caller needs help with any of these animals, refer them to the RSPCA, Animal Welfare or a suitable animal agency or the local council. WIRES rescuers may sometimes rescue domestic animals if the appropriate animal organisation cannot be contacted.

- I have found a Ferret. What will I do with it?

Ferrets are often misnamed by the caller as a Weasel, Stout or Badger. Tell the caller to contact the New South Wales Ferret Welfare Society.



REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS



Snake FAQs

- There is a snake in my garden. Can you help?

Many calls for snakes needing to be relocated from yards can be a waste of the handler's time as most of the time the snake disappears before the rescuer arrives. Only send a snake handler if the caller is distressed or at risk, if the snake is in the house or in a school yard where children play.

Do not hesitate to ask an experienced handler to talk to the caller as often the handler is the best person to judge whether or not they should go on the call.

If the snake is caught in netting ask the caller to protect the animal from the sun. Any object can be used to cast a shadow over the snake from a distance. Do not suggest the caller goes near the snake.

If the animal is caught in netting in a pond call a snake handler immediately as the snake may drown before rescue.

If the caller threatens to kill the snake explain that there is no need for that and you will call a handler immediately.

Ask the caller if they live in close proximity to the bush. If the snake is not threatening or near where children play, explain to them that if left alone the snake will return to the bush. Snakes are often just passing through or sun basking.

Tell the caller to lock up their pets until the snake has moved on.

If you cannot contact a WIRES snake handler and the snake is in a dangerous situation and you have exhausted all other avenues, then try NPWS at Glenbrook, Blackheath or Richmond office.

- How can I stop snakes from coming into my yard?

Snakes do not come looking for people. They are usually attracted by food (mice and rats), water in dry weather and/or hiding places in your yard. To reduce the chance of unexpected encounters with snakes near living areas you can modify the habitat around buildings.

If the caller does live in close proximity to bushland there is no way to stop them.

Suggest the following:

- Clear all rubbish in the yard and around buildings. Keep grass cut short,
- Remove any piles of wood and other cover, especially sheets of iron and keep fire wood as far away from the house as possible.
- Be alert during the warmer months even at night.
- Wear shoes or boots as protection and look where you are putting your feet, especially children.
- If you do come across a snake, leave it alone. Most snake bites occur when someone tries to either move or kill the snake.
- Snakes often frequent aviaries or chicken pens looking for mice that may be scavenging for seed etc.
- Fish ponds are also a favourite spot for snakes as they feed on frogs.
- Do not leave water bowls near the house.

- My dog / cat has just been bitten by a snake. What should I do?

Advise the caller to take the animal to a Vet immediately.

If the snake has had an encounter with a dog and it is still there, the snake needs to be rescued and assessed by a snake handler.

Blue-tongued Lizards and Turtles FAQs.

You can send any rescuer to a rescue a Blue-tongued lizard or other small lizards as well as a Turtle.

If it turns out to be a snake, the rescuer must not touch it unless they are an authorised snake handler. Make sure of the size of the lizard before sending a rescuer. If it appears quite large it would be better to send a reptile handler.



If the lizard is injured or caught in any way and it is lying in the sun, ask the caller to cover it with a towel or block the sun with something.

- I have found a Turtle and it is not injured. Where can I release it?

Always ask the caller the location of where the animal was found. Sometimes animals are picked while travelling in the country and brought home. We need to know exactly where the animal has come from.

Make sure that the turtle is not injured. If it appears alright ask the caller if there is a creek/body of water in close proximity to where they found the turtle.

If the caller knows the area the animal came from, then they can return it to the water for release.

If the caller does not wish to release the animal themselves, then call a rescuer.

If an injury has been found on the turtle, then have it rescued for inspection by an experienced carer. If you suspect the animal is an introduced species (e.g. Red Slider) it must not be released but should be rescued and the Reptile Animal Officer notified.

Frogs and Tadpoles FAQs

Frogs are protected wildlife in NSW. They should not be harmed or collected from the wild to be kept as pets. They need special housing and food. A special licence from NPWS is also required.

- My children have collected some tadpoles. Where can I release them?

They must be returned to the place they came from.

- Croaking frogs are keeping me awake. Can you relocate them?

No. We do not relocate frogs. They will go away when the rain stops.

- I have tadpoles in my pool and I want to drain it. Will you come and get them?

No. They should contact the Frog Helpline of FATS (The Frog and Tadpole Society) - 0419 249 728 or www.fats.org.au

- I have found some dead frogs in my pond/house. What could have caused this?

Ask if they have used a pesticide and if so, this could have caused the problem.



- I have found a frog amongst the bananas. Can I put it outside in my garden?

No. The frog probably came from Northern NSW or Queensland and will not survive our weather conditions. It does not belong here and it could carry diseases which could spread amongst the local population.

Send a rescuer out to collect the frog as these animals are required to undergo a period of quarantine before being re-housed with persons suitably licensed to keep them. These licence holders will be members of FATS - 0419 249 728 or www.fats.org.au.

Contact your Reptile Animal Officer.

Goannas

If a Goanna is up a tree, then advise the caller to leave it alone and remove any dogs from the area. The Goanna will leave – probably that evening when it feels safe.

These animals can only be rescued by a reptile handler.

Crocodiles and Cane Toads.

These animals have been released and found in areas where you would least expect them. Do not discount their occurrence if a caller claims to have seen one. Send out an experienced reptile handler.



MISCELLANEOUS



Swarming Bees

Advise the caller not to disturb the bees as they may retaliate. Give the caller the contact number of the Bee Keepers Association.

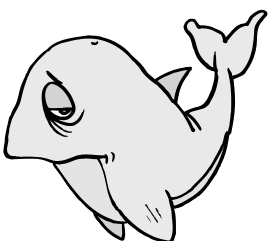
Funnel-Web Spiders

The Australian Reptile Park will take the spiders. Male spiders are collected for milking to make antivenin.

If a caller has found a Funnel-web spider, advise them to safely collect the spider into a container (preferably glass so that it can be observed and identified). A small amount of damp soil should be placed into the container, the lid closed, and stored out of sunlight and away from heat. The contained spider can be dropped off at the Environment & Development Counter, Hawkesbury City Council, George St, Windsor.



Whales, Leopard Seals and Dolphins



Ask the caller to keep everyone away from the animal and refer the caller to the ORRCA Hot-line for any calls concerning sea mammals. **All whale sightings in the Blue Mountains must be reported to an Animal Officer immediately.**

Reference and recommended books

“A Guide to Living with Wildlife” by Ian Temby DCE Victoria (publisher)

“Australian Natural History Series” UNSW Press (publisher)

The Platypus, The Koala, The Wombat< The Lyrebird, Mountain Pygmy Possum, Echidna, Kangaroo, The Dingo, Little Penguin: Taronga Zoo’s Guide to the care of urban wildlife by Erna Walraven. Allen and Unwin (publisher)

“The Mammals of Australia” Australian Museum. Reed (publisher)

“Field Guide to the Birds of Australia” by Graham Pizzey and Frank Knight. Angus and Robinson



Acknowledgements

WIRES Blue Mountains Branch

Heather and Bob Buckley

Sonya and Fred Stanvic

Revised: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011

Animal Officer Email Listing

SENIOR COORDINATOR

seniorcoordinator@bluemountains.wires.org.au

MACROPODS

macropods@bluemountains.wires.org.au

FLYING FOXES

flyingfoxes@bluemountains.wires.org.au

INSECTIVOROUS BATS

bats@bluemountains.wires.org.au

POSSUMS & GLIDERS

possums@bluemountains.wires.org.au

REPTILES

(inc. snakes, lizards, frogs, & turtles)

reptiles@bluemountains.wires.org.au

RAPTORS

raptors@bluemountains.wires.org.au

PARROTS

parrots@bluemountains.wires.org.au

WATERBIRDS

waterbirds@bluemountains.wires.org.au

BLACK & WHITE BIRDS

(magpies, ravens, currawongs, magpie larks, butcher birds, choughs)

piedbirds@bluemountains.wires.org.au

TAWNY FROGMOUTHS, OWLET NIGHTJARS, KINGFISHERS, KOOKABURRAS

kookaburras@bluemountains.wires.org.au

BUSH BIRDS

(miner, wattlebird, honeyeater, doves, lyrebird, quail, shrike, finch/wren, thornbill, brush-turkey, etc.)

bushbirds@bluemountains.wires.org.au

MISCELLANEOUS & THREATENED SPECIES

(Quolls, koalas, bandicoots, wombats, antechinus, echidnas)

specialanimals@bluemountains.wires.org.au

Phone Numbers & Contacts

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Australian Reptile Park | 02 4340 1022 | Spider ID, collection & advice |
| Blue Mountains Council | 02 4780 5000 02 4782 2391 02 4782 2674 | General Animal Care Facility & Pound Animal Care Facility & Pound |
| FATS | 0419 249 728 | Frog & Tadpole Society |
| NPWS | 1300 361 967 | National Parks & Wildlife Service |
| ORRCA | 02 9415 3333 | Whale, Dolphin & Seal Rescues |
| Police Assistance Line (PAL) | 131 444 | Will dispatch police or connect to nearest station |
| RSPCA | 02 4782 2674 1300 278 358 | - Katoomba Shelter - General (Cruelty complaints) |
| Wildlife Management Service | 0413 430 825 | Scott Bevins – possums in rooves – not free |
| WIRES Call Centre (WCC) | 02 8977 3333 02 8977 3309 | General Rescuer Direct Line |