



# Possums

## Possums on the ground

If you find a possum on the ground during daylight hours, something is wrong. If the injured possum is a Ringtail (see below for how to identify one) you could use a large towel or blanket and gently wrap the possum up and then transport it to the nearest vet clinic, noting the exact location where the possum was found. The vet visit will be free, and no appointment is necessary. Always call Wildlife Victoria for rescues of adult brushtail possums.

## Dog and cat attacks

- One of the most common injuries to possums is caused by dogs and cats. If your dog or cat attacks or brings you a possum, please transport the possum to the nearest vet clinic or call Wildlife Victoria.
- If your cat has attacked a possum, the possum will need veterinary assistance as soon as possible. Cats carry nasty bacteria in their claws and teeth that almost certainly will lead to a deadly infection for a possum if it is not treated. There may be no visible signs of injury, but even the tiniest scratch from a cat claw is enough to spread the bacteria and cause infection. Always advise the vet that the possum may have come into contact with a cat.

## Baby possums

- Baby possums cannot regulate their temperature so please gently pick up the possum in a towel or beanie, place it in a box and move it to a dark, warm and quiet place, away from any pets or children.
- You can also fill a hot water bottle or drink bottle with warm tap water (not boiling) and wrap this in 2 layers of towel to place next to the possum to snuggle up to.
- As soon as possible, take the baby in the box to your local vet clinic or call Wildlife Victoria.



We hope that by increasing your understanding and awareness of our beautiful wildlife, you feel empowered to deal with wildlife situations confidently in an informed, safe and appropriate manner. For support at any time, please call our emergency response service for advice on **03 8400 7300** or report the details on our website: [www.wildlifevictoria.org.au](http://www.wildlifevictoria.org.au).



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## Which possum is that?

There are over 30 different species of possums in Australia - 13 different species reside in Victoria alone. They have the ability to use their prehensile tails like a 5th limb. Possums can live up to 13 years.

There are two common species of possums you're likely to see around your home.

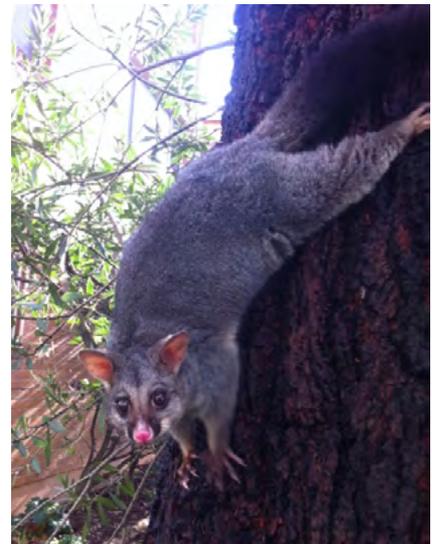
### The Ringtail Possum

- Identifiable by a long slender tail with a white tip.
- Small rounded ears.
- Body length of about 30cm.
- One to four joeys per litter (sometimes twice a year depending on conditions) as well as having multiple sub-adult joeys.
- Feeds on native vegetation and fruits.
- They will build several leafy communal dreys (spherical nests) in trees within their territory range.



### The Brushtail Possum

- Identifiable by a long bushy black tail (like a feather duster)
- Large pointed ears and a bright pink nose.
- About the same size as a cat.
- One joey per year. However, they can have an independent sub-adult at foot and a joey in the pouch at the same time.
- Feeds on native vegetation.
- They usually inhabit hollow limbs of trees. However in the absence of suitable hollows, they will adapt to roofs of houses and sheds in suburban areas.



Both ringtails and brushtails are nocturnal and mostly arboreal (tree dwelling). You will hear them in your garden chattering away and sometimes squabbling, especially during mating season. Both species are territorial, so removal of possums from their home will mean others will move in to fill the void.

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## Trapped possums

If you have a possum living in your shed or you have found a healthy possum roaming through your house, here are some handy tips to help get the possum out:

- When it starts to get dark at night, open a window or door as an exit point so the possum can find its way outside.
- Lead a trail of small pieces of apple or banana to the exit point for the possum to follow.
- Once the possum is out of the area you can close the door or window.
- If the possum returns again this means there is an access point which needs to be investigated and patched up.
- Don't worry - the possum will find another home, just not your home!

If you have a possum in your roof and you are unable to safely tempt it out, please contact a commercial possum removal service that is specifically trained and insured to assist in these cases. Always enquire to ensure their methods are wildlife friendly.

### HOT TIP

**Install a possum nest box in your backyard tree so that the possums have an alternative home to that of your roof or shed!**

**Head to our website to buy one today!**



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