



Heat-Stressed Wildlife

Signs to look out for

Successive hot days can have serious and even fatal consequences for wildlife. It's important to identify the heat stress behaviours in wildlife. Here are some common signs to look out for:

Possums (especially ringtails)

- Out during the day (rather than sleeping/hiding)
- On the ground rather than in a tree
- Appear lethargic or unresponsive



Birds

- Seen with beaks open or panting
- Wings spread
- Generally won't fly away when approached



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.wildlifestvictoria.org.au.



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Koalas

- Found sitting at the base of trees
- Drinking from troughs or other water sources



Kangaroos/Wallabies

- Licking forearms
- Appearing lethargic



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How you can help

To help prevent heat stress on hot days, you can put out water in small shallow containers with different levels using sticks or rocks so that all different species can drink from it. The sticks and rocks prevents small animals from drowning. Remember to replenish the water regularly! It is best to leave water near native plants / trees.

- Provide some artificial shade for the animals in your yard.
- Keep cats and dogs safely inside where it's cooler for them and away from vulnerable wildlife.
- If you find a heat-stressed possum or bird, carefully pick up the animal using a towel and protective gloves and place it into a secure box in a cool, dark, quiet area indoors and out of the direct heat. Make sure the box has ventilation holes in it. Leave the animal undisturbed until safe to release in the cooler evening.
- Do not wrap the animal directly in a damp towel, however a damp towel can be placed on the top of the box for a short period.
- If you notice any signs of injuries such as burns to a possum's feet, please take the animal to the local veterinarian immediately or contact Wildlife Victoria for advice.
- If the animal cannot drink from a container, offer it water from an eye dropper or a shallow spoon.
- You can use a spray bottle to mist over the animal (but not directly aimed at the animal).
- If the animal recovers it may be able to be returned to the wild. Remember that possums should only be released at night as they are nocturnal. They should be placed at the base of the closest tree to where they were found.
- If the animal doesn't improve in 1-2 hours please take it to your local vet clinic. During transport, please keep the environment in your car cool and quiet.



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