



MEDIA STATEMENT

Tuesday, 7 January 2020

**How you can support wildlife during the bushfire emergency:
Wildlife Health Australia**

Millions of Australia's unique wildlife have been wiped out at an unprecedented rate in the current bushfire emergency, which has been experienced across seven states and territories.

Estimates from experts at Sydney University suggest that over 800 million mammals, birds and reptiles [*updated 8 Jan 2020*] have died, either as a direct result of the fires, or due to excessive heat, dehydration, starvation and habitat loss. This number does not even include insects, bats or frogs.

In a tragedy that has unfolded over five months, more than 6 million hectares of bush and farmland has burned, much of it in New South Wales and Victoria.

Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) has highlighted the unique and precious value of Australia's wildlife, with over 300 native species, of which more than 80% are found only in Australia.

CEO of Wildlife Health Australia, Dr Rupert Woods said: "Added to the terrible toll of these fires on humans and livestock, it is distressing to see the loss of such devastating numbers of our wildlife. Entire populations of animals have been killed or displaced, and in many cases, their habitat has been totally destroyed.

"Efforts to support the recovery of wildlife in these areas will need to be supported over years and decades ahead. This is a shared responsibility, and we all need to help where we can."

Here are some things you can do to help affected wildlife:

- Take the advice of the your local authorities and don't enter a fireground to look for injured wildlife until it is safe to do so. Your safety remains the number one priority.
- If you find injured wildlife, contact an accredited wildlife rescue organisation for assistance. The Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife has compiled a list: <https://www.backyardbuddies.org.au/help-byb/injured-wildlife> (For animals affected by bushfires on Kangaroo Island, call SAVEM on 0477 055 233 or email info@savem.org.au).
- For wildlife needing urgent medical assistance, and where an accredited wildlife carer is not available, these animals should be taken to your nearest vet, but only if it is safe for you to do so. If possible, call ahead to ensure that the vet is taking in wildlife and ask advice about animal restraint and transport.
- If driving in smoke affected areas, please slow down to avoid hitting wildlife on the roads.
- To help wildlife around your home, you can leave out shallow bowls of water that wildlife can access.

Wildlife rescue organisations will be working hard to care for and treat native wildlife affected by the bushfires over the coming weeks and months. Wildlife Health Australia is urging people sympathetic to wildlife to support their local wildlife carers and care groups.

Otherwise, please assist by donating to one of the organisations currently responding on the ground.

- Australian Veterinary Association Benevolent Fund: <https://www.ava.com.au/donate/>
- RSPCA Bush fire appeal: <https://www.rspcansw.org.au/bushfire-appeal/>



Wildlife Health Australia

- WWF Bushfire Emergency: <https://www.wwf.org.au/get-involved/bushfire-emergency#gs.qh2zvt>
- Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife Emergency Appeal: <https://www.fnpw.org.au/>
- Wildlife Victoria: <https://www.wildlifelifevictoria.org.au/?view=article&id=145:helping-wildlife-during-bushfires&catid=11:wildlife-information>
- Zoo and Aquarium Association: <https://www.zooaquarium.org.au/public/Australian-bushfire-crisis-response.aspx>
- Taronga Zoo Koala Emergency Appeal: <https://taronga.org.au/donate>
- Zoos Victoria – Bushfire Emergency Wildlife Fund: <https://www.zoo.org.au/fire-fund/>
- Birdlife Australia: <https://birdlife.org.au/current-appeal>

Wildlife Health Australia
www.wildlifehealthaustralia.com.au