

## WHAT TO DO IF...

### You see sick, orphaned or injured wildlife?

- If you find a sick or injured wild animal that is capable of avoiding threats (such as domestic animals and human beings) it may be in the best interests of the animal to be left alone.
- However, if the animal is not capable of fending for itself or you have doubts about the animal's welfare, you should contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitation group as soon as possible.
- For wildlife needing urgent medical assistance, and where a licensed rehabilitation group is not available, the animal should be taken to your nearest veterinarian, but only if it is safe to do so, for you and for the animal (See [Safety advice](#) below). If possible, call ahead to ensure that the veterinary clinic accepts wildlife and ask for advice about animal restraint and transport.
- Further information on what to do with sick, injured or orphaned wildlife can be found on your state/territory environment agency website, including contact information for licensed wildlife rehabilitation groups. See Links to 'injured wildlife' under contact details for your local [State/Territory Environment Representative](#) on the WHA website.
- Be aware that sick and injured wildlife may bite, scratch and kick, and that there is a risk of disease transmission between humans and wildlife.
- In general, members of the public may not care for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. Anyone caring for wildlife must be authorised or licensed to do so. See Link above for contact details for your local licensed wildlife rehabilitation group.

### You notice any unusual signs of disease or deaths in wildlife?

- Reports are critical in helping us to understand the disease threats to Australian wildlife.
- If you see unusual signs of disease or death in multiple animals, you can report it to:
  - your [State/Territory WHA Coordinator](#)
    - Please complete the [Wildlife Incident Submission Form](#) and send to your [WHA coordinator](#).
  - the 24 hour [Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline](#)\* on 1800 675 888
  - your local veterinarian
  - the Department of Primary Industries or Agriculture in the state/territory in which the event is occurring/occurred.
- You can find out more about specific wildlife health diseases in the [WHA Fact Sheets](#).

\* The **Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline** is a toll-free phone number that connects callers to the relevant state/territory officer to report concerns about any potential emergency disease situation. Anyone suspecting an emergency disease outbreak should use this number for immediate advice and assistance.

### You find dead wildlife?

1. Report unusual deaths in wildlife as [advised above](#).
2. You may be requested to submit a carcass(es) for investigation.
3. Dead wildlife may still pose a disease transmission risk. If you must handle a dead animal, follow the [Safety advice](#) below to protect yourself.

4. Wear gloves and consider using a tool to pick up the dead animal. After handling any wild animal carcass and removing gloves ALWAYS wash and dry hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser (>60% alcohol).
5. To dispose of a dead animal, place the body in a strong, leak-proof plastic bag and seal it. Place the bag inside a second plastic bag and seal the second bag.
6. Refer to your local council or State/Territory government agency for instructions on safe disposal.

## Safety advice - Protecting yourself and the animal

1. Improper rescue can hurt or distress the animal and may put your health and safety at risk.
2. DO NOT approach snakes, monitor lizards (goannas), bats (flying-foxes or microbats)\*, large macropods (kangaroos or wallabies), raptors (eagles, falcons or hawks) or marine animals (whales, dolphins, seals or turtles). These animals require specialised handling and MUST be rescued by trained wildlife rescuers.
3. Be aware that sick and injured wildlife may bite, scratch and kick.
4. Be aware of possible disease transmission risk between humans and wildlife.
5. If you must handle wildlife, protect yourself and the animal, by following these recommendations:
  - a. Do not handle wildlife if it is not necessary or you do not have the skills to do so.
  - b. ALWAYS protect hands against scratches, bites and disease. Full protection is provided by wearing rubber or disposable gloves covered by leather or manual handling gloves. If both options are not available, wear what is available. A towel can also act as a protective barrier, but take care to ensure it covers the animal in a way that will prevent scratches and bites to the person.
  - c. Wear a jacket or long sleeves.
  - d. Make sure the animal is well restrained to avoid being scratched, bitten or kicked.
  - e. After handling animals and removing gloves ALWAYS wash and dry hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser (>60% alcohol).
  - f. Wear a dust mask (P2/N95 specification or higher), if available. Note: surgical masks do not offer adequate protection.
6. If you are bitten or scratched, clean the injury with warm water and soap (or disinfectant), and seek medical advice.
7. \* In the event of a **bat** bite, scratch or other significant contact to yourself or another person, seek medical attention URGENTLY. Bite or scratch wounds should immediately be washed thoroughly with soap and copious water for approximately 15 minutes and a virucidal antiseptic applied. Bat saliva in the eyes or mouth should be rinsed out immediately and thoroughly with water. For more information contact your local Public Health agency for advice.
8. If you do not have appropriate protective equipment, ask someone to observe the animal while you gather protective equipment, or until an authorised wildlife rehabilitator arrives.
9. For further information, see the [National Wildlife Biosecurity Guidelines](#).