

Bushfire Emergency - Information and Resources for Veterinarians, Vet Nurses, Registered Carers and the Community

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Please find below wildlife related information and resources for Veterinarians, Vet Nurses, Registered Carers and the Community to assist with the current bushfire emergency. Please note, there is a specific WHA fact sheet available on [Supplying water and food for free-living wildlife after natural disasters](#).

The scope of habitat loss for threatened species and recovery plans	2
For local vets in bushfire affected areas treating wildlife	2
Volunteering – Register as veterinarian or veterinary nurse.....	4
Volunteering – National Coordination of Environmental Recovery.....	4
Disease risk and biosecurity	4
Resources and grant opportunities for wildlife rescue organisations.....	5
Mental Health Resources	5
Bushfire – key contacts and web links	5
Emergency Animal Welfare Plans	6
Information and contacts - Injured wildlife.....	6
General Links	6
Australian Capital Territory.....	7
New South Wales.....	7
Victoria	7
South Australia.....	7
Western Australia	7
Queensland.....	8
Tasmania	8

The scope of habitat loss for threatened species and recovery plans

The Department of Environment has released data on [protected species in bushfire affected areas](#), and modelled the percentage of these species known or likely to have occurred in fire affected areas.

The [Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning](#) (Victoria) and the [Department of Planning, Industry and Environment](#) (NSW) have also released information on the impact of the bushfires, based on current knowledge. Find out more about the Victorian Government's Bushfire Biodiversity Response and Recovery program, the NSW Government's [emergency recovery plan](#) to protect and restore wildlife populations and South Australia's [Wildlife recovery taskforce](#).

A 'blueprint' for conservation-led responses to the 2019-2020 wildfires: The Threatened Species Recovery Hub has produced a blueprint for conservation-led responses to the 2019-2020 wildfires: [After the catastrophe](#)

[Plants and fire post 2019/20 Australian bushfires](#) – Advice from the Australian Network for Plant Conservation

For local vets in bushfire affected areas treating wildlife

- **The Australian Veterinary Association**, with funding kindly sponsored by World Wildlife Fund Australia, has established a grants program for veterinary professionals responding wildlife affected in the **2019-2020 Australian Bushfires**. Veterinarians can apply [here](#).
- The University of Sydney's **Bushfire Wildlife Emergency Advice Hotline** - with support from WIRES, The Avian Reptile and Exotic Pet Hospital at University of Sydney can provide after hours, over the phone support, to wildlife carers and veterinarians seeing wildlife. During work hours, vets and carers can call 02 9351 1798. After hours, vets and carers can call 0413 745 748.
- Taronga Conservation Society Australia **E-Learning module - [Assessment, Triage & Treatment of Bushfire Affected Wildlife](#)** - **is currently freely available to all veterinarians and veterinary nurses**. The module will be included in the [Taronga Veterinary Professional Training in Wildlife Treatment & Care](#) starting in June 2020.
- **Zoos Victoria** Resource on [Koala leaf and paste feeding](#)
- **The University of Sydney** [Koala Health Hub](#) fact sheets on clinical assessment and care of koalas.
- **Victorian [Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning](#)** information for [Veterinarians](#) treating wildlife impacted by fire.
 - [Vet guidelines for humane euthanasia of wildlife](#)
 - [Food requirements for wildlife in care](#)
 - [Triage assessment for injured wildlife](#)
- **Australian Veterinary Association** resources:
 - [Treatment of burnt wildlife](#) and [Treating burnt wildlife](#) [Updated Jan 2020]
 - [Equipment used for burnt wildlife](#)

- There are regulations relating to the **sedation of any animal** and the **supply of S4 and S8 medications**. Please find further advice to veterinarians here:
 - [NSW Veterinary Practitioners Board](#)
 - [Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria](#)
- Antimicrobial Stewardship: **Antibiotics must not be used in Australian wildlife unless prescribed by a registered veterinarian**. Antimicrobials rated as “high importance” in the [Importance Ratings and Summary of Antibacterial Uses in Australia](#) are “essential antibacterials for the treatment or prevention of infections in humans where there are few or no treatment alternatives for infections. These compounds should only be used where culture and sensitivity testing indicate no suitable alternative or where no alternative is recommended for the species. For further information see the [WHA Fact Sheet](#).
- The **Journal of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care** made the following two publications open access for the next 6 months to help is with bushfire patients.
 - Vaughn L & Beckel N (2012). Severe burn injury, burn shock, and smoke inhalation injury in small animals. Part 1: burn classification and pathophysiology. Journal of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care, 22(2), 179-186. <https://rdcu.be/bZ1Gt>
 - Vaughn L, Beckel N & Walters P (2012). Severe burn injury, burn shock, and smoke inhalation injury in small animals. Part 2: diagnosis, therapy, complications, and prognosis. Journal of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care, 22(2), 187-200. <https://rdcu.be/bZ1GD>
- **VetAPedia** has collated [Emergency Burns and Smoke Inhalation Resources](#) for their members, registered veterinarians can sign up for access for free.

Volunteering – Register as veterinarian or veterinary nurse

- **Vets Beyond Borders** - [Australian Veterinary Emergency Response Team](https://www.vetsbeyondborders.org/avert-registration/). Register here: <https://www.vetsbeyondborders.org/avert-registration/>
- South Australia - Veterinarians and nurses wishing to join a **South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management Inc (SAVEM)** Activation must first complete mandatory training which is explained and outlined on the [SAVEM](#) website.
- Victoria
 - Agriculture Victoria has a formal Victorian Animal Welfare Emergency Plan for paid veterinary assistance in these emergencies. AVA is currently assisting with activation of the response. You can register here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NDBDCGR>.
 - Information on volunteering during wildlife emergencies is available on Victorian [Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning](#)
- Further information for volunteer veterinarians and veterinary nurses responding to bushfires
 - [NSW Veterinary Practitioners Board](#)
 - [Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria](#)
 - [Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia](#)
- Guidance regarding insurance for veterinarians volunteering can be found on the [Australian Veterinary Association](#) website.

Volunteering – National Coordination of Environmental Recovery

Conservation Volunteers Australia has been selected by the Australian Government to coordinate the national environmental volunteering response to the bushfire crisis. Register to volunteer or Request support here: <https://conservationvolunteers.com.au/bushfires/>

Disease risk and biosecurity

For information on diseases that can be transmitted from wildlife to people (zoonoses), see the following WHA fact sheets:

- [Zoonoses of Australian Native Mammals](#)
- [Zoonoses in Australian Bats](#)
- [Zoonoses of Australian Wild Birds](#)
- [Zoonotic Diseases of Australian Reptiles](#)

The [National Wildlife Biosecurity Guidelines](#) provide advice to anyone working with wildlife on best practice biosecurity measures to prevent transmission of disease between wildlife and humans, and from one animal or group of wildlife to another.

Resources and grant opportunities for wildlife rescue organisations

- Victorian [Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning](#) information for [Wildlife Shelters](#) and Carers responding to bushfire affected wildlife. Links to numerous resources and FAQs [moving animals, grants, threatened species advice, etc]
- [Wildlife Heroes Bushfire Emergency Grants \(Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife\)](#) – eligible to licenced wildlife volunteer groups and independent wildlife licence holders Australia-wide.
- **WIRES** has established a national emergency Wildlife Relief Fund to ensure rescue groups around Australia are assisted for costs associated with the rescue and care of animals affected by recent fires and the ongoing drought. Rescue groups and licensed carers can now apply for funds to cover the costs of food, medical supplies, veterinary needs and equipment. Details can be found at: <https://www.wires.org.au/wildlife-emergency-relief>
- Animal Rescue Cooperative - [Wildlife Organisation and Rescuer support request form](#)
- [Humane Society International](#) has set up an emergency fund and is ready to help licenced wildlife carers in need as they deal with the ongoing suffering caused by these devastating bushfires. To help carers on the frontlines deal with this HSI are offering emergency assistance to wildlife carers in need and can be reached at 1800 333 737.

Mental Health Resources

The loss and destruction of bushfires can be extremely traumatic. The National Farmers Federation website includes a link to a [full list of available services](#) available to assist if you're experiencing distress.

[Love Your Pet Love Your Vet](#) is assisting registered psychologists provide support to veterinary, wildlife, shelter, and zoo workers who are, or have been, treating and caring for our injured and sick wildlife and animals as a result of the bushfires in Australia. The purpose is to be able to refer those workers who may be feeling overwhelmed or struggling to cope to a registered psychologist for free support via telephone or online.

The AVA has a dedicated [resources web page](#) which includes downloadable fact sheets on coping with bushfire crises, provided by Converge International.

If you are thinking about suicide, call Lifeline on 13 11 14. If your life is in immediate danger, call 000.

Bushfire – key contacts and web links

[National Bushfire Recovery Agency](#)

National Farmers Federation have also pulled together a really useful one-stop shop of key contacts and web links, including links to [each state and territories current fire information](#), recovery assistance in addition to links and information about assistance with livestock, managing biosecurity, fodder and general disaster assistance.

Bushfire CRC: <https://www.bnhcrc.com.au/home>

Ecological Society of Australia: [Supporting members, ecologists and the community to respond](#)

Emergency Animal Welfare Plans

[Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan](#) - The plan is a joint responsibility of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). Under the plan, DJPR is responsible for coordination of activities relating to all animals other than wildlife, DELWP is responsible for coordination of activities relating to wildlife.

Western Australia [Animal welfare in emergencies](#), including the [State Support Plan - Animal Welfare in Emergencies](#) - Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is responsible for coordinating the provision of animal welfare services to support the owner or carer or local arrangements for the animal categories of livestock, horses and companion animals. The Department of Biodiversity Conservations and Attractions (DBCA) is responsible for coordinating the provision of animal welfare services to animals in Perth Zoo and advising the owner or carer of wildlife and wildlife parks.

South Australia [Managing Animals in Emergencies](#) - Developed by PIRSA to provide a guide to the key issues to consider when planning for animals in emergencies. It covers the responsibilities of animal owners and what assistance and services may be available to help.

Information and contacts - Injured wildlife

Key points:

- Take the advice of 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.
- It is best not to interfere with animals that are not injured.
- If you find injured wildlife, contact an accredited wildlife rescue organisation for assistance (see below).
- 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.
- Most wildlife is not accustomed to being handled and can become very stressed. If it is safe to do so, contain it in a covered box in a dark, quiet place while waiting for a rescuer or until transporting the animal to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator or veterinarian. It is important to note that bats including flying foxes, adult kangaroos and venomous reptiles pose a serious risk to human handlers and should only be rescued by experienced personnel. Do not attempt to handle them yourself.
- It is also important that pet cats and dogs are kept inside to protect wildlife. Heat-stressed wildlife are often weak and vulnerable, making them easy targets.
- Please slow down to avoid hitting wildlife on the roads.

General Links

- The Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife has compiled a contact list of accredited wildlife rescue organisations: <https://www.backyardbuddies.org.au/help-byb/injured-wildlife>
- Australian Veterinary Association advice on [helping injured wildlife](#)
- RSPCA How [to help animals during the bushfire crisis](#)

Australian Capital Territory

- ACT Government: https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1957/~injured-wildlife-and-straying-stock

New South Wales

- NSW DPI Agricultural and Animal Services: <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/bushfires>
- NSW DPI [Helping Wildlife after Floods and Fires](#)
- NSW Local Land Services - [Helping wildlife in emergencies factsheet](#)
- NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment - [Helping wildlife in emergencies](#)
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service: <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/conservation-and-heritage/care-for-parks/injured-wildlife>
- NSW Wildlife Council: <https://www.nwc.org.au/resources/injured-wildlife-find-your-nearest-rescue-group/>
- WIRES (NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service Inc.): <https://www.wires.org.au>

Victoria

- [Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning](#) specific bushfire response information for veterinarians, wildlife shelters and carers and the community: <https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/>
- Agriculture Victoria Emergencies: <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/emergencies#>

South Australia

- SA Government Animals in Emergencies: <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/emergencies-and-safety/animals-in-emergencies>
- During large-scale emergencies, such as bushfires, wildlife issues can be referred to [South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management](#) (SAVEM) or [RSPCA South Australia](#). During an emergency these organisations are coordinated by PIRSA [Agriculture and Animal Services](#) (AAS) - phone the AAS hotline on [1800 255 556](tel:1800255556).
- For animals affected by bushfires on Kangaroo Island, please call SAVEM on 0477 055 233 or email info@savem.org.au.
- Environment SA – [How to help Kangaroo Island bushfire affected wildlife](#)
- Kangaroo Island Wildlife Network: <https://kiwildlifefnetwork.wixsite.com/kiwn>

Western Australia

- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and attractions Wildcare helpline: <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/wildcare-helpline?showall>
- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development Evacuating animals in emergencies: <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare/evacuating-animals-emergencies>

Queensland

- Qld Government Natural disaster information: <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/agriculture/disaster-recovery/natural-disaster>
- Injured wildlife: <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/wildlife>

Tasmania

- Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment Tasmania
- Injured Wildlife: <https://dpiwve.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/caring-for-wildlife/injured-and-orphaned-wildlife>
- Wildlife and Bushfires: <https://dpiwve.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/caring-for-wildlife/wildlife-and-bushfires>
- Bushfire information: <https://dpiwve.tas.gov.au/about-the-department/bushfire-information>



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