

## Living with wildlife

- Here at RSPCA we love animals; we love our family companions but also our native wildlife.
- As human population grows and more native habitat is destroyed for infrastructure, more and more native animals are finding themselves in suburbia where they have to contend with cars, people and other animals.
- Our suburbs can be a dangerous place for wildlife, but there are ways to minimize our impact and live together with wild animals.
- It's as easy as ABC! (Animals, Backyards & Cars)



## ANIMALS

Key message and action	Notes
Desex your cat!	<p><b>Over it's lifetime just one feral cat added to the population will lead to the loss of at least 3,650 native wild friends.*</b></p> <p>Desexing your cat reduces the number of unwanted kittens which in turn can reduce the feral cat population.</p> <p><i>*conservative estimations based on research findings; 1-AVMA; Australian Wildlife Conservancy 2013</i></p>
Confine domestic dogs and cats	<p><b>Cats kill 75 million native animals a day in Australia. That means 868 deaths every second.*</b></p> <p>Confining your cat indoors and outdoors only in a cat run means they cannot roam and hunt.</p> <p>We love cats, and cats love us. Help your cat keep their sweet, fluffy innocence by confining them. You will be a life saver.</p> <p>Dogs will also kill wildlife and should be kept on your property. In koala areas confine dogs indoors or in wildlife-proof enclosures outdoors at night.</p> <p>Always walk dogs on leash or safely in off-leash parks.</p> <p><i>*conservative estimations based on research findings; 2-Pimentel 2001; The Federal Environment Department's cat threat abatement plan, 2008.</i></p>



## BACKYARD

Key message and action	Notes
Plant natives	<p>Lack of habitat causes wildlife loss. Planting native plants will help provide homes, shelter, safety and food. Be mindful of planting them in appropriate places. For example, a tree near a roof may increase rooftop possum activity which might cause a nuisance. Also, don't plant food trees in an area accessible to domestic animals as this might only serve to lure wildlife into danger.</p> <p>Don't remove old or dead trees with hollows unless there is a safety need. Hollows can take 40-60 years to form and provide shelter and nesting opportunities for wildlife.</p>
Offer possum boxes to resident possums	<p>Providing possum boxes is a great way to lure possums away from living in your roof or other structures.</p>
Do not feed wildlife (including birds)	<p>Regularly feeding wildlife, including birds, creates dependence, changes natural behaviours, increases the chance of aggression between friends and between species, and in most cases forms the base of an unnatural and unhealthy diet. This is also true for birdfeeders.</p> <p>NEVER feed wildlife including birds bread. Bread can cause many serious problems including metabolic bone disease and malnutrition.</p>
Avoid inappropriate food temptation	<p>Leaving food or scraps out such as petfood will attract wildlife into potential conflict with domestic animals, and when eaten could cause gastrointestinal health concerns.</p> <p>Leaving food out might also attract feral cats and dogs into the area, thus increasing the risk to our wildlife.</p>
Don't use rodenticides (e.g. rat bait), organophosphate insecticides, molluscicides (snail bait) or sticky traps.	<p>Rodenticides cause an inhumane death in rats and mice (their target species) and in wildlife that may consume it. This can be through direct ingestion or indirectly by consuming other affected animals.</p> <p>Insecticides can cause secondary poisoning of insect-eating birds. Spraying spiderwebs causes a hazard for birds who use webs as nesting material. If a spiderweb is causing a hazard, brush it off.</p>

# FACT SHEET

	<p>Some baits used for snails and slugs are poisonous to wildlife.</p> <p>Sticky traps are inhumane and cause a slow death from starvation and dehydration (e.g. for geckos).</p>
Have wildlife friendly fencing and netting	<p>NEVER use barbed wire as it is dangerous for bats and other creatures.</p> <p>Ensure wildlife have access to escape routes from your garden. Shrubs and trees inside your fenceline and trellis structures can work in this way.</p> <p>Inappropriate fruit tree netting can seriously damage birds and bats. If you don't have to use it, don't. If you must use it, choose wildlife friendly designs with a small hole gauge.</p>
Have a wildlife friendly pool	<p>Thousands of animals drown after being caught in backyard pools each year. To help animals escape the pool install a ramp where the pool exit is not graduated, hang a rope from a nearby structure and into the pool, and place a plank across one corner, particularly if you are in a koala area. Also consider covering the pool at night and check the skimmer box regularly for frogs and lizards.</p>
Don't litter	<p>Litter doesn't just trash our environment, it is also regularly ingested by wildlife often causing illness or death. Small wild animals can also get caught inside glass or plastic containers. Marine wildlife and birds get tangled in netting, string, baling twine, fishing line, plastic rings and plastic bags, often leading to limb loss, starvation and death. Dispose of litter thoughtfully; cut plastic rings, reduce plastic bag usage, and dispose of cigarette butts, fishing hooks and wire appropriately.</p>
Think carefully before buying a birdbath	<p>Birdbaths are decorative, but may create hotspots for disease transmission. Birdbaths can also create predictable behaviour patterns in the birds that use them, making predation easier.</p>
Learn about your local species	<p>Understanding the wildlife species in your local area, including which species are endangered or particularly vulnerable, will assist in making the best decisions when it comes to backyard choices. Local native nurseries offer advice on which plants attract which animals and their size / suitability for certain areas.</p>



## CARS

Key message and action	Notes
Drive safely	<p>Most of the injured wildlife we see at the RSPCA Qld wildlife hospital has been hit by a car. They are the lucky ones as many more are killed.</p> <p>Driving carefully, especially in marked wildlife zones, especially at dusk and dawn, will save animal lives and also make for a safer journey for you and your passengers.</p>
Take action when you see an injured animal	<p>More and more roads and more and more traffic mean more and more wildlife accidents.</p> <p>If you see a creature on the side of the road, pull over somewhere safe to investigate further. If you can safely do so, check if it still alive and if it is, assess whether you are capable of picking it up and transporting it. NEVER put yourself at risk to collect an animal. If possible wrap the animal in a towel and place in a box or other container Take the animal to the nearest veterinary surgery for immediate treatment.</p> <p>If your assessment suggests you are unable to pick up or transport the animal for whatever reason, telephone 1300 ANIMAL for assistance.</p> <p>Where the animal is deceased and has a pouch, check the pouch for the presence of young. If a baby is present, remove it gently, wrap it in a towel and take to the nearest veterinarian. If the baby is attached to the teat, do not pull it out of the pouch; you can do life threatening damage. If you are not squeamish and you are sure the mother is dead, you can cut the teat and remove the baby with the teat attached. Otherwise, the whole animal with the baby in the pouch will need to be transported to the veterinarian.</p> <p>Whenever you need help with an injured or sick wildlife rescue call 1300 ANIMAL.</p>

For more information please visit  
[www.rspcaqld.org.au/livingwithwildlife](http://www.rspcaqld.org.au/livingwithwildlife)

For wildlife help please call  
1300 ANIMAL

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