



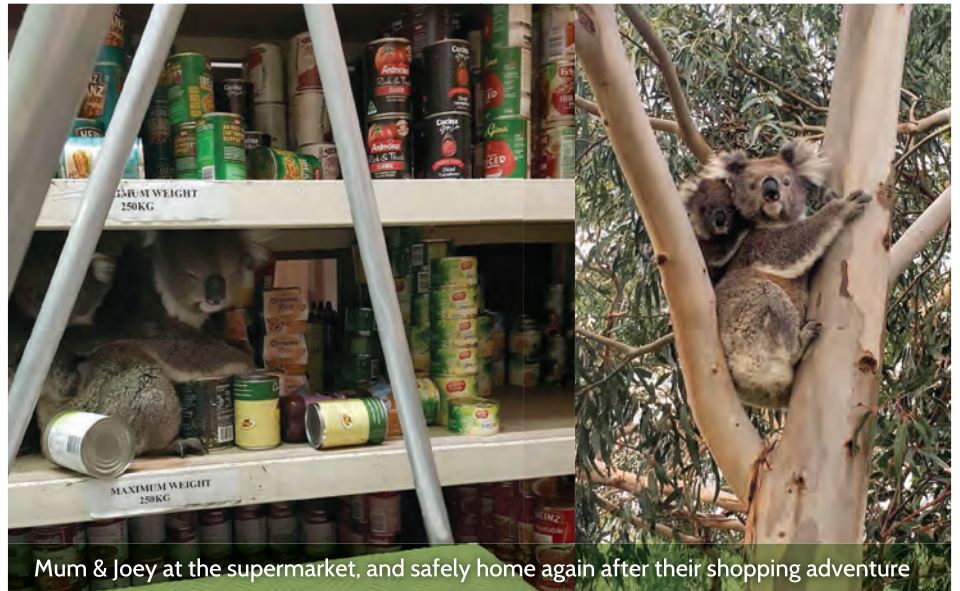
Every year we hear thousands of amazing wildlife stories here at Wildlife Victoria. We don't have nearly enough space to tell them all, so here are some of our favourites from the last few months.

Koala Shopping

A supermarket in Apollo Bay had some unusual visitors recently: a young koala mum with joey clinging to her back wandered in the back door, climbed up into the shelves and got stuck amongst the sauce bottles!

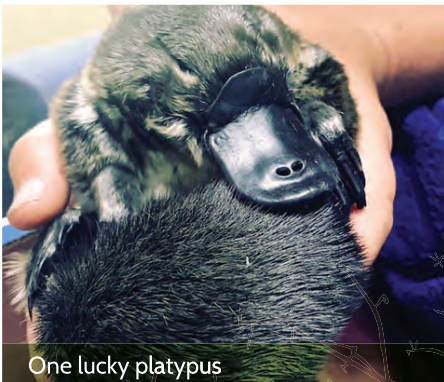
We sent a volunteer rescuer out straight away who took mother and joey safely back to the nearby gumtrees.

Last year your support helped us to assist 732 koalas!



Mum & Joey at the supermarket, and safely home again after their shopping adventure

Platypus Rescue



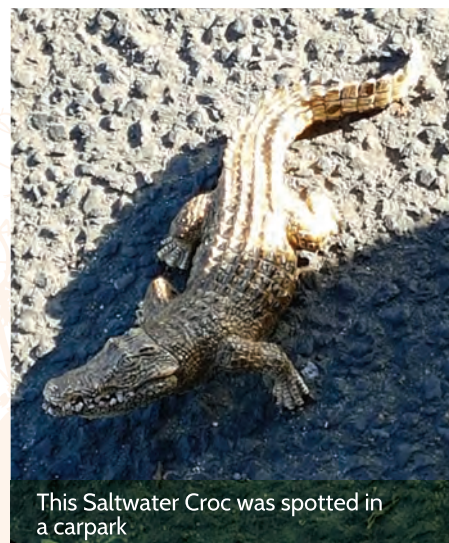
One lucky platypus

Platypus are exceptional at avoiding humans so we were very concerned when a member of the public called to say she'd seen not one but two on the edge of a riverbank. When our rescuer arrived one swam away, but the other curled up in the foetal position and didn't even attempt to escape.

The young platypus had somehow become flyblown and wouldn't have survived without help. She was taken straight to the vet where she was cleaned up, given some yabbies and transferred to the

platypus experts out at Healesville for some TLC. When she's well enough, she'll be released back to the river to find her mate.

Crocodile Tears



This Saltwater Croc was spotted in a carpark

You may have heard media reports about the metre long freshwater crocodile found sitting on a suburban footpath in Melbourne on Christmas Day – that four people came forward to claim!

These kinds of situations are not uncommon – our Wildlife Emergency Service received FOUR emergency calls about crocodiles in Victoria last year! Two of them were real, so we were awfully relieved when this saltwater crocodile (pictured) turned out to be made of plastic.

If you see something that seems too crazy to be true, don't be afraid to give us a call – with plenty of escaped exotic pets and interstate stowaways there isn't much we haven't seen!

None of these stories would be possible without your support, and the help of our wonderful volunteer rescuers who work tirelessly all year round to help animals in need.



Wildlife Tips and Advice



A threatened grey headed flying fox entangled in a fruit net

Fruit Netting

Every year we rescue hundreds of flying foxes (fruit bats), possums and birds that have become entangled in nets on fruit trees.

How you can help

This is easily avoidable – there are plenty of wildlife friendly fruit netting options out there. Look for brands such as Fruit Saver, Hale Guard and Vege nets.

The holes in the mesh should be no more than 2mm apart and too small for you to poke your finger through. The nets should be pulled tight and secured around the tree or branch. If you've got fruit to spare, consider netting or bagging just the branches you need and leave a few out for the critters.

If you see neighbours with harmful fruit tree netting we have some handy fact sheets on our website that you can print and give to them – chances are they'd be happy to switch to wildlife safe options if only they knew what to look for.

If you find a flying fox caught in a net, please call us immediately and don't attempt to free it yourself. Flying foxes and other bats can carry Lyssavirus and should only be handled by experienced and vaccinated bat rescuers.

Backyard visitors

You'd expect to see birds and possums in urban areas, but you may be surprised to hear that echidnas and blue tongue lizards are also common visitors to suburban gardens.



Echidnas roam over great distances

Echidnas

Echidnas have ranges of up to 50 hectares and they regularly pass through backyards looking for ants and termites. They usually move on again within a few hours so it's best to simply keep your pets away, and leave them alone to continue on their way.

Once baby echidnas – known as 'puggles' – are evicted from mum's pouch they are left alone in a burrow for up to 10 days at a time

while Mum wanders many kilometres away between feeds. From Spring through to Autumn it's especially important not to move adults so that they don't become disoriented and can find their way back to their offspring.

Echidnas are terrific diggers and escape artists– once they dig in they're nearly impossible to get out without harming them. They've also been known to burrow straight through car seats – right to the floor – so it's best to leave echidna rescues to experienced rescuers!



Blue tongue lizards are great for the garden

Blue tongue lizards

Blue tongue lizards are usually born in January and February, so you might find some new residents in your garden this month. They've been tracked visiting up to 15 gardens a day but we regularly hear stories of them living happily in the same garden for many years if they find a spot they like.

These large skinks are great for your vegie garden so if you don't have any pets that are likely to hurt them we recommend throwing away your snail bait and giving your lizard a distinguished name and the position of Head of Pest Control. If they run out of snails and slugs to eat they'll move on themselves.

If you have a wild visitor to your garden that seems sick, injured or in immediate danger – or you're just not sure – please give our Wildlife Emergency Service a call on (03) 8400 7300.

Call me Albino

When Keir – a keen wildlife photographer – called our service to report a possum emergency, he shared these beautiful photos of an albino brushtail possum incident he'd witnessed.

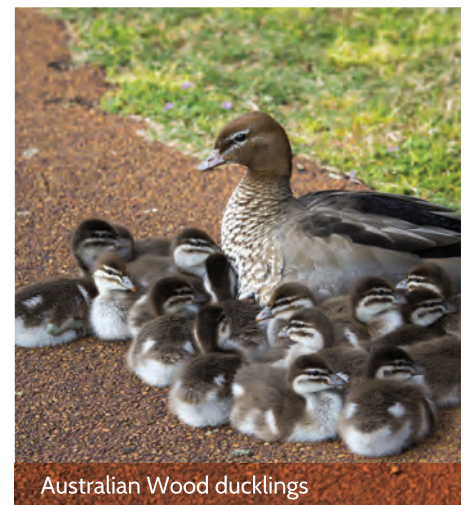
This rare albino joey fell off its Mum's back as she leapt onto a tree. Startled but uninjured, he was attempting to climb the tree after her while she called out loudly for help – and before Keir could believe what he was seeing, Dad possum appeared and collected the little one!

Keir named the joey Al, and has been continuing to photograph and watch over him as he grows up.

He recently updated us with the exciting news that there are now two more albino joeys in the neighbourhood.

Albinism – lack of colour pigment due to an inability to produce melanin – is a recessive trait inherited from both parents. We get the odd report about albinos of all species.

Albino wildlife often have impaired vision and are easy for predators to spot so not many make it to adulthood. Fortunately, being nocturnal, Al doesn't have to worry about another common problem for albinos – getting sunburnt.



Australian Wood ducklings

To rescue or not to rescue?

One of the topics we rarely talk about is all the native animals we DON'T rescue. In 2017 it was around a quarter of animals reported to our Wildlife Emergency Service.

That sounds terrible, right? In fact, in most cases, NOT rescuing the animal may have saved its life!

In many cases – especially ones involving fledgling birds – the animals are doing exactly as nature intended and human intervention may do more harm than good. An enormous part of our job is simply to advise callers when they should – and should NOT – intervene.

Most Australian native species are surprisingly difficult to raise in captivity. All of our volunteer rescuers and foster carers do a super-human job but they can never prepare a young animal for life in the wild as well as its parents can.

If you see an animal and you're not sure if it needs help please give us a call. Our operators are always happy to share their advice on what's best for the animal.

Last year, your support helped us to save thousands of animals from going into rehab unnecessarily, freeing up precious space for the animals that genuinely needed human intervention! The most common species that didn't need rescue were duck families and fledgling birds.



Al as a tiny joey and an independent young adult



Photos by Keir Sinclair



FIGURES & FACTS FOR 2017



81,074
Number of requests
for help

50,875
Number of animals
assisted

If you're interested to see what's happening with wildlife in your neighbourhood, we now have an interactive map on our website that shows all of the calls to our Wildlife Emergency Service each month by species and location.

For a fun challenge, see if you can spot an echidna moving through its home range by all the calls we've received along the way!



Upcoming Events

Come along to one of our Wildbytes events to hear real-life wildlife rescue stories and advice from our operators, volunteer rescuers and foster carers! The next few events will be held at:

Tuesday 20th February
6:30pm – 8pm
Bendigo Library, Bendigo

Saturday 24th March
2pm – 3:30pm
Woori Community House,
Woori Yallock

Saturday 21st April
1pm – 2:30pm
Langwarrin Hall, Langwarrin

Please register online at www.wildlifelifevictoria.org.au/racv-wild-bytes



Community fundraiser spotlight

Late last year, talented young artist Baden Croft held an art exhibition at Mornington called *Bushwacked*, featuring his beautiful paintings of endangered Australian wildlife. It was a huge success, resulting in Baden donating \$4,008 from sales of his artwork to Wildlife Victoria! An enormous thanks to Baden for all of his hard work.

Volunteers needed

We run training for volunteer rescuers and transporters all year round. For more information about our volunteer program, upcoming training sessions and application forms please visit our website at www.wildlifelifevictoria.org.au/volunteer



Volunteers needed

Thank you!

With donations to animal and environmental causes falling in 2017, it's a tough time to be a charity. A bigger-than-ever thanks for your support last year - you make everything we do possible.

With no government funding and more calls than ever we have to make every cent go even further this year, so please consider signing

up to our WildFriends monthly giving program. It's an automated deduction from your credit card or bank account, with a single annual receipt at tax time which helps to keep our admin fees as low as they can go - so that the maximum amount goes directly towards helping wildlife.

Yes, I want to help sick, injured and orphaned native wildlife!

I will give:

\$25 \$50 \$100 My gift of \$ _____

I would like to make this a regular monthly donation

Donations \$2 and over are tax deductible.

ABN 27 753 478 012

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

I will give by:

Cheque or Credit card: Visa Mastercard Amex

Card number

Expiry date ____ / ____ CVV ____

Cardholder's name _____

Signature _____

Please post this form to:

Wildlife Victoria, Reply Paid 86041, Abbotsford VIC 3067

or call (03) 9445 0310 to make a donation. *Thank you for your support.*

Donate online at www.wildlifelifevictoria.org.au/donations