



THIS YEAR MARKS 30 YEARS OF WILDLIFE VICTORIA! TO CELEBRATE WE THOUGHT WE'D SHARE A LITTLE ABOUT HOW FAR WE'VE COME.

1989 5 visionary women from the RSPCA's wildlife branch recognise the need for a 24 hour wildlife rescue and education line and *Wildlife Care Network* is born!



Founder Clare Davis

The ladies are the organisation's first 5 volunteers, running Wildline from their own homes - using a single shared pager.

Each month, the pager, a map of all of Victoria's wildlife shelters and an exercise book to manually record each call is driven across Melbourne to the next volunteer's home.

1990 Wildlife Care Network purchases its first mobile phone so that the volunteer on duty can return calls while out and about. The phone costs \$4,000 - and is so big it needs a handbag of its own to carry it!

1993 Word of mouth is vital in those days before google and mobile phones. Wildlife Care Network now has 4 pagers, and volunteers take 7,000 requests for help from caring members of the public that year.

1998 Wildlife Care Network gets its first permanent office! 15 volunteers still take emergency calls from their own homes.

2000 The organisation recognises the burden that rescuing animals is placing on already overworked wildlife shelters and starts training volunteer rescuers.

2001 The first road signs with the Wildlife Emergency number are installed on roads all over Victoria.

2002 Wildlife Care Network becomes Wildlife Victoria! There are now 40 permanent and 17 relief operators just to

keep up with all the requests for help.

2009 The Black Saturday Bushfires. Millions of native animals are killed in the disaster, but Wildlife Victoria's dedicated volunteers save thousands by combing the fire grounds for months afterwards, looking for animals that are starving or whose wounds have become infected, and making regular food drops until vegetation returns.

A photo of CFA firefighter David Tree giving water to a koala focuses the whole world's attention on the plight of Australian wildlife and the outpouring of generosity from around the world is amazing. One person offers to charter a plane and care for as many injured koalas as can fit into his house - in Canada!

2012 With limited resources, Wildlife Victoria recognises that technology is the clue to helping more animals. The manual system is replaced with a high-tech call centre that uses GPS & SMS technology and an online portal for volunteers, freeing up the operators to answer more calls.

Emergency operators take nearly 45,000 requests for help that year.

2015 Wildlife Victoria has grown to over 1500 trained volunteers and has a state-wide network of rescuers, transporters, vets, wildlife shelters and foster carers. The Wildlife Emergency Response Service, as it is now known, takes more than 60,000 requests for help.

2017 Wildlife Victoria launches the Possum Box Project, a collaboration with Men's Sheds around the state to provide more homes for wildlife. Customers can purchase a possum box from Wildlife Victoria and it will be built by their friendly local men's shed.

2018 Wildlife Victoria's Emergency Response Service continues to grow, with a record breaking 86,886 requests for help. We assist 50,230 animals in a single year, from over 300 species.

On behalf of every native creature that has been given a second chance, we want to thank you for your support. Whether you have volunteered your time, donated money or supplies, or called our Emergency Response Service to help a suffering animal, you've helped us to make a life-saving difference to more than half a million creatures!



Volunteers on patrol after Black Saturday



WILDLIFE TIPS AND ADVICE



Let's share our space with wildlife

CREATING HABITAT FOR WILDLIFE

Did you know that almost half of Australia's threatened species can be found in cities and towns?

Habitat destruction is one of the greatest threats to Australia's biodiversity. With the recent news that the world's insects are in trouble, it's more important than ever that we create safe places for creatures of all sizes to thrive.

How you can help

When most people think about Australian wildlife, they tend to think of the big ones first: kangaroos, koalas, wombats. But there are hundreds of native species of insects, frogs, lizards and birds that are just as important to our ecosystem and that need somewhere to live too. Here are a few simple ways to create habitat in your backyard:

- Plant a variety of native trees and plants! These are important sources of food and shelter, and are better suited to Australia's dry climate.
- Provide plenty of water sources such as ponds, water features, and cat-proof birdbaths.
- Rocks, sticks, brush, mulch and piles of leaves all provide habitat for insects and ground dwelling creatures. Insects, in turn, will attract more birds, lizards and frogs.
- Treasure those big old trees. It can take decades for the hollows to form that animals like owls and possums need to nest and rest.

- Hollow logs and pipes make great homes for insects, lizards and even echidnas.
- Install some nest boxes for microbats, possums, gliders and birds. You can build your own, or purchase a ready-made one.
- Throw away those pesticides and install a bug hotel for ladybirds, beetles and bees. They'll help keep pests out of your veggie garden too.

Wildlife Victoria supports Macquarie University's Habitat Stepping Stone project. Visit their website for more great ideas on building habitat for wildlife: www.habitatsteppingstones.org.au



Little Penguins are common in Victoria

PENGUINS ON THE BEACH

It's the summer of the penguin here at Wildlife Victoria with 94 calls in just the last month!

Every summer Little Penguins moult and grow new feathers, which means for up to 17 days they're not waterproof. During this time they look pretty scruffy and are unable to go out to sea to find food.

Know the signs

Moult season is from January to April in Victoria and is a completely natural occurrence; moulting penguins do not need to be rescued.

A penguin may need help if:

- it is on the beach during the daytime. They usually leave and return to their nest under cover of darkness,

- it is on its own and nowhere near a known penguin colony,
- it is lying down,
- it is trying to swim out to sea but is being washed back to shore repeatedly,
- it is entangled in fishing line, netting or other discarded waste,
- it is bleeding,
- it has oil on it. Oil destroys their natural waterproof layer and can also poison them if ingested.

How you can help

- Keep all dogs away from penguin colony areas and always keep your dog on a leash outside of designated off-leash areas.
- Keep all animals, children and sightseers away from the animal.
- Give us a call if you're not sure whether the penguin genuinely needs help. If you have a phone, take a photo as that will help our Wildlife Emergency Operators to assess the situation.
- Do not feed the penguin or try to put it into the water.
- If you are sure the penguin needs help, use a towel to gently place it in a dark, well ventilated box or basket.
- Avoid using spotlights, camera flashes or bright torches.

It is also common to see moulting seals on the beach in late summer. In most cases they are just resting and it is not a cause for concern. Please keep pets and sightseers at least 30 metres away and contact us if you see signs of injury or they wander into populated areas.



Please don't approach a resting seal

OWL CRISIS UPDATE

When reports of sick and dying owls increased by more than 300% last winter we immediately alerted Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) and our volunteers have been assisting WHA's investigation.

WHA's final report into 2018's Birds of Prey Mortality & Morbidity Event found the worst affected were Barn Owls and Nankeen Kestrels whose diet is mostly rodents. Many of the dead owls were juveniles and their stomachs were empty, suggesting starvation was the primary cause for young birds unaccustomed to seasonal changes in the food supply.

43% of birds tested had detectable levels of second generation anti-coagulant rodenticides in their liver, providing conclusive evidence that rodent poison is making its way into the food chain.



A record number of owls were reported to our emergency service last winter

The outcomes of WHA's investigation are now being used to inform an investigation in NSW into a similar owl crisis, and will be added to the findings of research in other states.

An enormous thank you to everyone who contributed to our Save the Owls Appeal and all of the volunteers involved. Your support helped us to

raise the alarm, support a formal investigation and also directly helped 526 owls, 48 Nankeen Kestrels and another 567 Tawny Frogmouths.

We're relieved to report that the number of owls needing our help has steadily declined since the weather warmed up and we are continuing to monitor the situation.

SAFE CAT, SAFE WILDLIFE

The topic of cats is always a controversial subject here at Wildlife Victoria. Their impact on wildlife is devastating, but for many of us they're also much-loved members of the family.

We all know that cats love to hunt, but most people are not aware that



Cats adapt well to indoor life

even the smallest bite or scratch from a cat can kill wildlife, even if the victim gets away. Cats carry a nasty bacteria that will almost certainly cause a fatal infection without antibiotics. Last year our Wildlife Emergency Service received 841 calls to help native birds, lizards, bats and small marsupials attacked by pet cats – and we know that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Fortunately there's a simple solution: you can help wildlife to flourish just by keeping your cat indoors. Indoor cats live up to 4 times longer than outdoor cats so you'll be keeping your beloved pet safe too.

Wildlife Victoria is proud to be a collaborating partner with Zoos Victoria and RSPCA's Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife campaign. Join a community dedicated to protecting cats and wildlife and visit the Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife website for advice, offers and tips for keeping indoor cats happy and healthy at www.safecat.org.au



A crow? Nevermore!

DID YOU KNOW?

The majority of the big black birds referred to as crows in Victoria are actually ravens!

The Little Crow is the only real crow we have here, and it's only found in the very north west of the state.

SLOW DOWN ON THE ROADS

Animals being hit by cars on the road is still our most common wildlife emergency, with 3,467 animals reported to our emergency service last year, mostly kangaroos. Many of them left orphans behind that will need many months of care.

Studies have shown that a reduction in driving speed of just 10 km/h can reduce your chances of hitting wildlife by as much as 20%! Wildlife are more likely to be crossing the roads at night, so it's even more important to slow down between dawn and dusk.

A number of solutions are being trialled around the country, including one promising new technology called Virtual Fences.

These 'fences' are actually solar powered electronic boxes by the side of the road that detect cars and emit noise and flashing lights to warn wildlife of oncoming traffic. Trials of these fences in Tasmania have resulted in up to 50% reduction in common wildlife species killed on the roads.



An Egret caught in a car grill

OTHER WAYS TO HELP

Become a monthly donor.

The regular, reliable income helps us to plan for the future while keeping admin costs to a minimum so that the maximum amount goes to helping wildlife. Just tick the 'monthly' box on the donation form below.

Consider leaving a bequest in your Will.

Not everyone has the capacity to donate today, but leaving a small gift in your Will – after your loved ones are provided for, of course – is an excellent way to leave a lasting legacy and ensure the future of our wildlife. Contact us on 03 9445 0310 for a bequest info pack.

Save our Wildlife Emergency Response number (03) 8400 7300 in your mobile phone in case you need us and don't have internet access.

FUNDRAISER SPOTLIGHT: UNIFY GATHERING



A few years ago a Tiger Snake made a surprise appearance at Unify Gathering, a heavy music festival in Gippsland, and they've been supporting Wildlife Victoria ever since!

Unify donate \$5 from each VIP ticket sold and allow our rockin' team of volunteers in to fundraise at the event, raising more than \$6,000 in the last 3 years.

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

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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.wildlifevictoria.org.au/donations