

# What to do if you hit a native animal.

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## 1. Stop in a safe place

Look out for own safety first. Don't try to stop suddenly on the road in a dangerous location such as on a bend or with a truck behind you. The road can be a very dangerous place if you don't become alert and aware of other drivers on the road, so be careful, slow down and park your car in a safe place.

## 2. Keep calm

Animals can read emotions and vibrations of humans very well; for example if you have a pet dog and you come home from work feeling stressed out, excited or depressed, you will notice that your pet will also act in this way. It is the same for native species.

Take a deep breath and try to remain calm when dealing with an injured animal. If you were injured and something strange and big was coming towards you that seemed to be acting erratically, how would you react? You may stress the animal even more than it already is and stress is one of the most common causes of death in wildlife injuries and illnesses.



## 3. Approach the animal with caution

When animals get injured they can be shocked, scared, stressed and in a lot of pain. When they are in this state they could very well attack or lash out at you using their claws, legs, beak, or mouth. Most animals can inflict very nasty bites, scratches or even worse, especially when they are scared, in pain or stressed. Be very careful when approaching injured animals and stay calm, move slowly and be alert.

## 4. If the animal is dead

Remove the animal from the road only if you are safely able to. For kangaroos, wallabies and other marsupials like possums, etc check the pouch area for any sign of a joey or baby. Movement or a bump or bulge in the mothers' pouch could indicate that there is a life that needs to be saved. Very gently remove the joey and take extreme care not to injure it more than what it may already be. You may need to cut open the pouch of the mother to gain access to the baby. Don't pull the joey off the teat if it is still suckling, you may need to also cut the teat off so the joey can leave it in its mouth. This

may seem very hard to do but try to remember that if the mother is dead, you need to save the little ones from dying as well and this could be an essential thing to do to save a joeys life.

If the animal is small like a possum, or wallaby you may have to take the dying or dead animal to the vet or wildlife rescuer if it has young inside her pouch. This is a lot easier if you cannot gain access to the joey. If the dead or dying animal has another teat that is long or enlarged there may be another joey around that also may need rescuing. It is best to contact the local vet or wildlife rescue centre ASAP and tell them all details of the incident and observations.

## 5. If the animal is severely injured

Some wildlife cannot be saved such as animals with injuries such as broken legs etc. The best thing to do is to contact the local vet or wildlife rescue centre ASAP or if you are in a remote area and are unable to contact anyone, you may need to euthanase the animal. The preferred method is to shoot the animal so it passes quickly and is in no prolonged state of pain. You may be able to get help from nearby farmers, the Police, or Shire Rangers and people that are qualified to shoot the animal.

## 6. Keep the animal quiet and calm

Native animals are extremely prone to stress. Stress is one of the most common causes of death of an animal when it is injured or sick. Try to keep the animal as quiet as possible, keep it away from loud noises such as the radio, people, children, domestic pets etc and keep it in a dark area not exposed to too much light.

## 7. Check the animals temperature

A cold animal which is sick or injured will stay cold and may even get colder as it deteriorates (which can happen quickly in some cases). It needs to be warm and wrapping up an animal may not be enough.

Small animals can be wrapped up and put under your clothing, near your skin. Your body temperature will make this a safe and reliable source of heat. Other sources could be through improving with hot water bottles, heat packs, plastic bottles with warm water, or the heat system in a car. Never place an animal directly onto a heat source as you could inflict more damage (burns etc). Try not to warm the animal too quickly or fluctuate in different temperatures from hot to cold. Tip – Treat a joey with the same care you would a human baby.



## 8. Contact your local vet or wildlife rescue org ASAP

Seek immediate veterinary help for the animal or contact your local wildlife rescue centre ASAP. Native animals are extremely good at hiding their suffering by what is called Preservation Reflex. This means it may well look fine but underneath the exterior the animal could be in immense agony, but of course it doesn't want you to know this, as it may think that you will feast on it. Birds are renowned for using Preservation Reflex as a lot of owners of birds say "Well, he was fine yesterday, but this morning when I woke up he was dead".

## 9. Emergency Care

Vets and wildlife rescuers are very busy; this means that they may not be able to get to the animal for some time. You will need to administer short-term care in the mean time. The animal's primary requirements are Warmth, Quietness, and Darkness. This means no radios, television, domestic animals, children, cool breezes, and a secure container (of suitable size) so that the animal cannot escape etc, if you can provide this you are doing well.

## 10. Do not offer food

Offering food at this point is to be completely avoided, as it may compromise the animals' end result. Native animals have highly specialised diets in the wild and they are able to go without food for a certain period of time. You can however offer the animal very small amounts of lukewarm water (not cold) as it will be very dehydrated from the experience, but only if it can drink by itself. If you are in a remote area contact your local wildlife rescue centre and they will be able to give you any advice you need until the rescuer is able to get to where the animal is.

**If you live in the East Kimberley, please don't hesitate to call Kimberley Wildlife Rescue or Kununurra Vet Centre on 08) 9169 1229.**



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