Help for Injured Wildlife Tool

Frequently Asked Questions

The Help for Injured Wildlife Tool is a web-based tool that provides the general public with relevant contact details and information to help them when they encounter sick, injured or orphaned wildlife in Victoria.

What is the tool and where is it available for use?

The Help for Injured Wildlife tool is a website that The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) has developed to assist the community to access safety information and contact details for help when they encounter sick, injured or orphaned wildlife in Victoria. It is a consolidated online directory of wildlife shelters and foster carers, veterinarians and rescue and rehabilitation organisations. It provides information tailored to the animal and situation that it has been found in, to ensure the safety of the animal and the public.

The tool is available here on the DEECA wildlife website. It is smartphone compatible, meaning anyone can access it through a browser on their smartphone, device or computer anywhere in Victoria.

Why is the Help for Injured Wildlife Tool needed? What benefits does it have?

The community is not always aware of what to do when they find sick, injured or orphaned wildlife. This can delay wildlife receiving care and cause frustration for the person seeking assistance. The Help for Injured Wildlife tool improves the public's ability to find wildlife help in a timely manner and with appropriate information to do so.

As a consolidated online directory, the Help for Injured Wildlife tool makes it easier for the public to contact the existing wildlife services and networks that operate across the state.

How does the Help for Injured Wildlife Tool work?

To find help for sick, injured or orphaned wildlife visit the Help for Injured Wildlife Tool and conduct a search by following the prompts. You will need to enter the type of wildlife requiring help, whether the animal is alive and choose a scenario that is most relevant to the wildlife (for example, entangled, heat stressed, orphaned etc.).

Based on your entries, you are provided with some relevant safety advice about the animal and the situation, and in most cases, a list of available contacts that are able to assist with the wildlife. You can share your location with the tool or manually enter the postcode/suburb where the wildlife is located to find the closest registered contacts that can care for that animal.

Keep in mind that the safety advice provides general guidance so it may not always be accurate. Please always prioritise your safety and use your own judgement as you see fit.

What determines the list of available contacts?

The list of available contacts shows up to ten registered contacts in order of closest distance from the user. To be included in the list, registered contacts will need to care for the type of wildlife requiring help.

How does the mapping feature work?

DEECA has recently updated the tool to include a mapping feature. The user's approximate location is indicated by the green circle. The closest contacts are shown as pins on the map. If a contact has elected to display their full address, the pin will be the exact address location. If the contact has elected to keep their address private, only suburb information will be visible, and the pin will be located in the centre of their postcode area.

The map shows an indicative driving route and estimated travel time to each contact. Please note that this information is an estimate only and does not take into account traffic or road works.

A red pin indicates that the contact is open, a grey pin indicates that the contact is closed.

Who is eligible to register as a contact on the tool?

Groups eligible to register on the tool are:

• Wildlife shelters and foster carers who hold a valid authorisation issued by DELWP

• Registered veterinarians, and

• Rehabilitation and rescue organisations (that meet certain criteria)

Further information about registering on the tool is available in the *Factsheet for registered contacts*.

Why can't I view available contacts for some wildlife?

As the rescue and rehabilitation of certain wildlife is restricted in Victoria, the tool will provide specific contact details for wildlife that require expert assistance. Incidents involving;

• whales and dolphins are referred to the Whale and Dolphin Emergency Hotline on 1300 136 017

• seals and sea turtles are referred to the Melbourne Zoos Marine Response Unit on 1300 245 678

• platypus are referred to the Healesville Sanctuary on (03) 5957 2829.

It is preferential that incidents involving penguins and seabirds on Phillip Island are referred to the Phillip Island Nature Parks on (03) 5951 2800 and entangled waterbirds, penguins and seabirds can be referred the Melbourne Zoos Marine Response Unit.

For incidents involving all other types of wildlife on the tool, you will be able to view available registered contacts and contact someone listed for assistance.

Can I look after sick, injured or orphaned wildlife?

Wildlife may only be cared for legally by veterinarians and DEECA authorised Wildlife Shelters and Foster Carers.

Wildlife requires skilled care, treatment and rehabilitation to recover sufficiently to be returned to the wild. Without this skilled care, wildlife may not recover or may lose their natural behaviours.

It is illegal in Victoria to keep sick, injured or orphaned wildlife as a pet. Taking protected wildlife from the wild without authorisation is an offence under the *Wildlife Act 1975* and carries a fine of up to $9615.50 and/or 6 months imprisonment.

What about other animals?

Help for Injured Wildlife is for assistance with native wildlife in Victoria only. For introduced or domestic animals (e.g. deer, rabbits, pigs, goats, horses, cats, dogs, cows, sheep, chickens, llamas etc.) please contact your local council, vet or police if it's after hours or an emergency.

Who can I contact if I need help with the tool or want to report a fault with the tool?

Contact the Customer Contact Centre on 136 186 or send an email to wildlife.policy@delwp.vic.gov.au.