Emergency extractions of threatened wildlife

**eastern bristlebirds**

With the only population of Eastern Bristlebird in Victoria threatened by oncoming fires in the Croajingolong National Park, DELWP, Parks Victoria and Zoos Victoria, working with Currumbin Sanctuary, Fisheries Victoria and Monash and Wollongong universities, have flown a team of experts into Howe Flat on a Singapore Defence Force Chinook helicopter.

15 Bristlebirds were extracted as insurance against the threat of the continuing bushfire emergency and are in the care of Zoos Victoria until it's safe to return to their natural habitat.

**dargo galaxias, yalmy galaxias and macquarie perch**

Threatened freshwater fish, crayfish and mussels, with very small distributions and low ability to move, are at most risk from the impacts of ash and sediment washing into waterways in fire impacted areas.

Salvaging these species, before fire impacts lead to extinction or further decline, is a critical management strategy.

Expert teams including DELWP regional and Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) staff and Parks Victoria have extracted 200 critically endangered Dargo Galaxias from near Mt Hotham, as well as a small number of critically endangered Yalmy Galaxias from a highly impacted stream north of Orbost. 15 endangered Macquarie Perch from the Buffalo River near Abbeyard have also been salvaged.

Based on these initial assessments, more than 185 species of plants and animals have had at least 50% of their likely habitat burnt, 170 of which are rare or threatened species.

### Actions for threatened species and their habitats:

The Victorian Government is taking immediate action to support Victoria's bushfire impacted wildlife and biodiversity with a **$17.5 million funding package** announced to support Phase 1 of the Bushfire Biodiversity Response and Recovery program.

The program is delivering across six key themes:

- **Immediate reconnaissance of critical fauna, flora and habitat for targeted actions** $18.5M
- **Wildlife welfare** $1M
- **Emergency extraction to prevent extinction and limit species decline** $2.4M
- **Intensified and sustained management of threats** $7M
- **Maximise long-term resilience** $3M
- **Knowledge and program management** $2.25M

**TOTAL $17.5M**

### Coordinating with partners

DELWP would like to acknowledge the coordinated effort of our agency partners including Emergency Management Victoria, Parks Victoria, Zoos Victoria and Royal Botanic Gardens, the emergency services, Traditional Owners and workshop attendees, in the immediate response to the impacts of bushfires on Victoria's biodiversity.

Aerial shooting operation

Highly experienced professional shooters have been engaged by DELWP and Parks Victoria to undertake an aerial shooting operation for control of pest predators and introduced large herbivores in priority fire-affected areas and adjacent public land.

This is a necessary and urgent action to give native plants and animals the best chance of survival after the fires. The operation is targeting deer, feral goats, feral pigs, foxes and feral cats.

Stories from the field
Phase 1: Immediate actions

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT**
- Workshops with species experts, academics and land managers to prioritise biodiversity actions.
- Reconnaissance flights to better understand impacts, status of remaining vegetation and to support planning of priority actions.

**WILDLIFE WELFARE**
- Wildlife Triage Units deployed to Mallacoota, Bairnsdale and Corryong to assist injured wildlife.
- Wildlife Assessment teams deployed across fire-impacted areas.
- Aerial Food Drops delivered for specific fire-affected wildlife including the threatened brush-tailed rock wallaby.

**VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT**
- Wildlife carers grants up to $1000 to help those caring for fire-affected wildlife announced.

**OTHER DELIVERED ACTIONS:**
- Biodiversity Emergency Response Teams established
- Rapid Risk Assessment Teams inform biodiversity actions
- Incident Control Centres equipped with Wildlife Coordinators
- Escalation of level 2 State Controller Wildlife within the State Control Centre
- Injured wildlife transported to specialist care
- Specialist bushfire wildlife training facilitated
- Advising Australian Government’s Wildlife and threatened species bushfire recovery Expert Panel