

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2020

Victoria's Bushfire Emergency: Biodiversity Response and Recovery – preliminary report

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning has developed a report on the impact of the Victorian fires on biodiversity. The report, *Victoria's bushfire emergency: Biodiversity response and recovery*.

The report describes the impact on species and vegetation communities. It includes actions for the immediate, short, medium and long term for effective recovery of species and their habitats.

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	\$1.85M
	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

Stories from the field

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

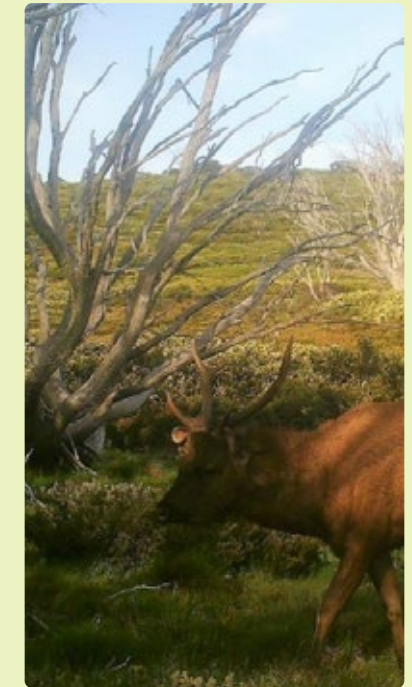
Threatened freshwater fish, crayfish and mussels, with very small distributions and low ability to move, are at most risk from the impacts of ash and sediment washing into waterways in fire impacted areas.

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.

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.



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.

Phase 1: Immediate actions

JANUARY

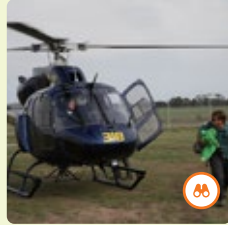
IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Workshops with species experts, academics and land managers to prioritise biodiversity actions.



Victoria's Bushfire Emergency: Biodiversity Response and Recovery preliminary report released.



Reconnaissance flights to better understand impacts, status of remaining vegetation and to support planning of priority actions.

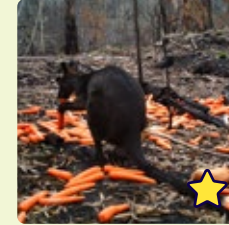
WILDLIFE WELFARE



Wildlife Triage Units deployed to Mallacoota, Bairnsdale and Corryong to assist injured wildlife.



Wildlife Assessment teams deployed across fire-impacted areas.

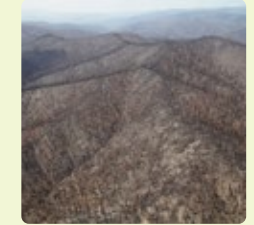


Aerial Food Drops delivered for specific fire-affected wildlife including the threatened brush-tailed rock wallaby.

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT



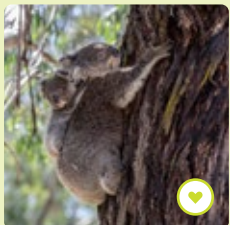
Wildlife carers grants up to \$1000 to help those caring for fire-affected wildlife announced.



Bushfire Biodiversity Response and Recovery program supported by a \$17.5 million funding package.

FEBRUARY

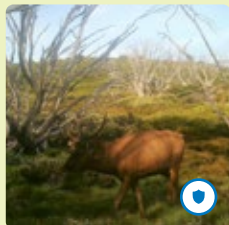
WILDLIFE WELFARE



Koalas assessed and moved to areas not impacted by fire.

THREAT MANAGEMENT

(SEE STORY OVER PAGE)



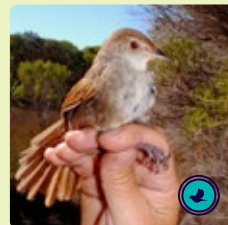
Aerial shooting operation targeting deer, feral pigs and feral goats, foxes and feral cats in priority fire-affected areas to aid recovery of native plants and animals.

EMERGENCY EXTRACTIONS

(SEE STORY OVER PAGE)



Threatened native fish including Macquarie perch, Yalmy Galaxias and Dargo Galaxias extracted to protect these species from ash and sediment impacts.



Eastern Bristlebirds extracted from fire threatened Cape Howe and taken into specialist care with Zoos Victoria.



Food drops



Wildlife Triage Units



Incident Control Centre



Emergency extractions



Wildlife Assessment Teams



Immediate response



Immediate reconnaissance



Wildlife welfare



Threat management



Long-term resilience



Knowledge and program management

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