



Other ways to protect wildlife from domestic pets

There are many other ways in which we can help protect our native wildlife from harm caused by our pets including the following;

Provide refuges for wildlife - dense native shrubs and bushes provide protection for small birds whilst logs, rocks and mulch provide hiding places for reptiles and small mammals.

Nest boxes and bird baths - ensure that they are well out of reach of domestic pets. Hanging bird baths are preferred to ones that rest on the ground.

Desexing your pet cat or dog - this can reduce territorial behaviour, roaming and will prevent unwanted litters.

Pet food - remove uneaten food from around the house as this may attract native animals and make them vulnerable to attack by your pet.

Create wildlife 'escapes' - hanging ropes or securing timber branches or posts between trees and fences will allow arboreal wildlife (such as possums, gliders, koalas) to move safely between food trees without having to come to the ground near your pet.



What to do if your pet harms a native animal

We understand that accidents can occur. An important part of responsible pet ownership is taking responsibility for those accidents and ensuring that the animal receives appropriate help as soon as possible.

Any animal that has been in the mouth of a dog or cat requires urgent veterinary treatment (even if it appears uninjured). The mouths of dogs and cats contain high levels of bacteria which will result in severe infection and will lead to death hours, days or even weeks later, if left untreated. Antibiotic treatment should be commenced within a few hours to give the animal the best chance to fight off the infection. Many injuries that may have resulted from a dog or cat attack are not externally obvious.

What to do:

- Retrieve the animal from your pet as quickly as possible and secure your pet away from the area and out of sight.
- If the animal is a koala, bat, snake or adult kangaroo or wallaby, please do not handle as these animals require specialised handling techniques and equipment. Call a wildlife rescuer immediately.
- For all other animals, cover the animal with a towel and gently pick up and place in a cardboard box with ventilation holes. Secure the box to prevent escape.
- Place the box in a dark, quiet and warm area away from people and pets.
- Do not give food or water.
- Take the animal to your nearest veterinary clinic or wildlife facility. The animal will be accepted at no charge to you.
- If you are not confident to handle the animal, place a box or laundry basket over the animal to prevent it from escaping or climbing a tree and call a wildlife rescuer.

wildcare caring for our wildlife

Our emergency hotline is available 24 hours,
7 days a week including ALL public holidays.

24 Hour Emergency Hotline

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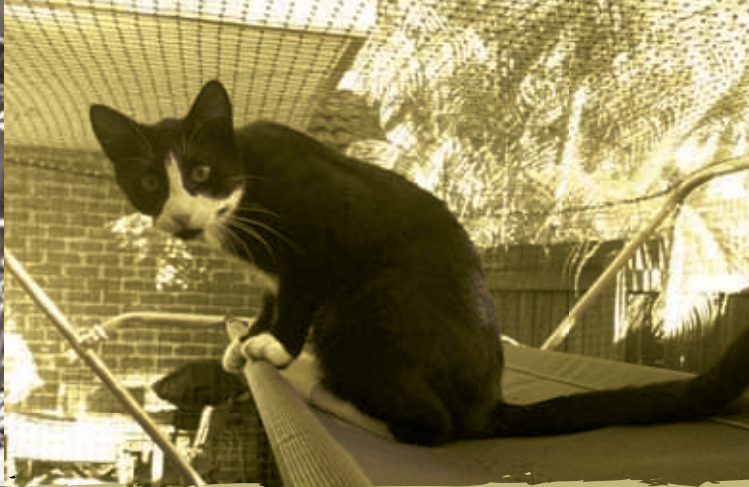
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Pets are great companions and are an important part of our lives. However, each year, millions of Australian native animals are harmed by household pets such as dogs and cats.

Our wildlife often suffers terrible injuries from domestic pet attacks (such as punctures, lacerations, fractures, bruising and bleeding), which will result in death if not treated quickly.

Although you may believe that your pet dog or cat are unlikely to harm wildlife, they have a strong instinct to hunt and may attack wildlife to defend their territory (i.e. their own yard) or as part of play.

Being a responsible pet owner will allow you to enjoy the presence of native wildlife in your own yard whilst ensuring their safety along with your pets.

Protecting your pet dog or cat from harming wildlife, also ensures that your pet remains safe. Pets that attack snakes may succumb to being bitten by a venomous snake. Pets that are allowed to roam free may be exposed to harmful paralysis ticks and a variety of illnesses.

Cats

Cats are most likely to hunt and kill ground-dwelling birds, reptiles, frogs, small possums, gliders, microbats, bandicoots and native rodents.

Keep cats indoors

Ideally cats should be kept indoors at all times. Alternatively keep your cat indoors during the night. Most bird species are active during the day and are often harmed during the dawn and dusk periods. Ensuring that cats are indoors well before dusk will help reduce the likelihood of them injuring our native birds.

Create a cat-proof outdoor enclosure

Creating a cat-proof enclosure will allow your cat to enjoy the outdoors whilst protecting your local wildlife. Modular cat enclosures can be created on a verandah with access to the house through a cat flap/door.

You can build your own enclosure or investigate options available from commercial suppliers. Another option is to invest in a cat-proof boundary fence which will keep your cat confined to your own backyard, but will not protect wildlife if they enter the yard.

Bells and ultra-sonic devices on collars

Placing audible bells or ultra-sonic devices such as CatAlert® or Catbib® on your cat's collar may help wildlife hear them as they approach.

Bells and ultra-sonic devices are only partially effective and many cats quickly learn to stalk wildlife with the devices attached. Securing at least two bells of different sizes to the collar may help to enhance the possibility that wildlife are alerted to the cat's presence.

Be aware that bells and ultra-sonic devices are not as effective in protecting some species such as reptiles and mammals.

Dogs

Dogs are most likely to chase and catch wildlife such as koalas, possums, kangaroos, wallabies, birds, flying foxes and reptiles.

Most of the animals that dogs often chase have sharp teeth and claws which they may use to defend themselves. These may cause serious injury to your dog.

Create a secure area for your dog

Keep your dog contained in a smaller section of yard with no wildlife food trees, in a garage, or on a balcony from dusk until dawn. Confining your dog at night will prevent it from harming nocturnal wildlife (such as koalas and possums) that may visit wildlife food trees in your yard during the night.

Remember to check your fences and gates regularly to ensure your dog is secure to prevent it from escaping and causing harm to itself or wildlife.

Preventing harm outside of your yard

Responsible dog ownership should include ensuring sufficient exercise for your dog.

Many dog parks are home to a large variety of wildlife species including koalas, possums, reptiles and birds. When visiting an 'off-leash' dog park, ensure you keep your dog on a leash until you enter the 'off leash' area and have checked for any wildlife that may be travelling on the ground to reach food or roosting trees.

Avoid taking your dog into bushland areas. If you do, ensure the dog is on a leash at all times.

If your dog is disturbing a wild animal, remove the dog and secure it out of sight of the animal. The native animal will move on once it feels safe to do so. Be patient, if the animal has been particularly scared it may take a while for it to feel safe enough to move on.

Never encourage your dog to chase other animals; teach them that chasing animals is not acceptable. Providing squeaky toys may also encourage them to chase and capture live animals, so choose silent toys.

