

Wildlife Volunteers Association Inc.



Phone Roster Manual



WILVOs PHONE SERVICE HOTLINE 5441 6200

Offering 24X7 assistance to injured or distressed Native Animals

You have heard about it, you know it is an important part of the Association, you would like to have a go but are unsure of what is required. So read on.

Not all people in WILVOs care for animals. One interesting way you can help is by being on our phone roster. It simply means being available to answer the incoming calls from the public. Your job is to help them find a solution for their queries. The phone is never to be left unattended when you're on duty as you are the co-ordinator.

Sunshine Coast Environment Council (SCEC) answer the hotline during office hours Monday to Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm. They are also responsible for switching the phone service at the start and end of each working day. After hours, weekends, public holidays and when SCEC are closed over the Christmas break WILVOs Volunteers cover the phone service.

Here's how it works:

When you are rostered onto the phone service our 5441 6200 number is diverted to your phone number. There is no cost to you on receiving these calls. This does not interfere with your normal phone number, but a short beep as you pick up the phone lets you know it is a wildlife call. So you can answer:

“Hello Wildlife Volunteers, this is (your name), how can I help you?”

You may be able to deal with a lot of the problems yourself with your knowledge and experience, however often it is a case of referring the caller to the nearest carer listed on the Phone Roster Contact list which is supplied to you when you volunteer to assist with the rescue phone service.

This Phone Roster Contact list is updated regularly by the membership secretary. If there are any changes to your details please call her (see your Species List). We also ask that phone roster volunteers notify the phone roster secretary if they are going to be away over a certain period of time, or are unavailable. It is very important to the Association that the phone service operates efficiently and avoids the constant frustration that can be experienced by members of the public dialing through on a phone that is not answered.

Sometimes people get a little frustrated in an emergency situation. There will be occasions when you, yourself, will need to contact the nearest carer if the incoming call is from a public phone, an elderly person, someone from their workplace who is restricted as to outgoing phone use or a member of the public who is fed up trying to obtain help for the animal in need.

Those instances are left to your own discretion. If a carer cannot be contacted immediately, or if it is late at night, suggest that a bird be kept quiet and warm overnight in a cardboard box (large enough) with air holes and dropped off at the nearest vet the next day, any expenses will be met by us. Always ask that the box be written on with the exact location where the bird or animal was found so it can be returned to its territory. For all other animals please refer to your WILVOs Immediate Care Procedures.

Be sure to advise the caller not to put food or water into the carton. Placing a water container in a carton could cause it to be tipped over and the bird is then wet and cold. If necessary a little water may be dropped on the end of the birds beak, but allow the bird to decide for itself if it is going to take it up.

Refer any enquiry you don't feel confident about to one of the members listed on the Species List or ring them yourself.

Most people are pleasant when you explain we are a voluntary group and trying your best to help. Here are some handy tips:

- Smile
- Always be polite
- Remain calm
- Don't take abuse personally, the caller is sometimes frustrated at the situation not at you
- Never argue with the caller
- Sympathise with the caller, if necessary say things like "I realise you feel frustrated but give me your name and number and I'll try and get some help to you." If it is taking some time to get help, keep them informed as to what is going on. Reassure them that they are not alone and that their call is important to us and is in the WILVO network.

When referring a caller on **never** give the full name and address of the carer you are referring them to. EG: "I will give you the name of two carers in your area – Ruth on 5476 0000 and John on 5476 3333 – give them a ring and see if they can offer help, perhaps you could deliver the bird to them for immediate attention – if no answer straight away the bird will be okay in the box until such time as you can get an answer". Never advise the caller that the carer will pick up the animal. This should best be left for the carer and the caller to negotiate in regards to how an animal will reach the carer if needed. Tell the person ringing in to feel free to ring back if they need more assistance.

Also, suggest the public keep trying the numbers you've given them as people may simply be out for a while. Some people don't realise we are volunteers.

The hours your help is required are:

Weekdays

5:00pm to 9:00am the following day

Weekends and Public Holidays

24 hours split into shifts

A Telephone Returns sheet is supplied and it is very important to make a record of the call. This information is used to assist in the application of grants, publicity purposes and in fund raising. It is also very important to know just how many calls, about what animals and the reason these animals need assistance. This information is then channeled into campaigns such as responsible pet ownership to try to minimize the numbers of animals injured through domestic animal attacks. It also allows records to be analysed for potential trouble spots that are man made traps for our fauna. This information allows WILVOs to contact council to offer assistance such as road signs or speed restrictions.

An example: A few years ago reports were received about many kangaroos being killed in a certain area. On investigation it was found that new road alterations were allowing the animals to be trapped in a fenced drain when they hopped off the road. The drain entrance had been closed off as part of the road works. The fence was extended right around the drain, the kangaroos were given a way out and the problem was solved. Easy isn't it! BUT it would never have been resolved if we didn't get the information on calls from our volunteers.

If you would like to volunteer but are unsure about taking on the job, talk to your phone roster secretary. Arrangements can be made to have an experienced member of the group stand by. If you have a problem and you are unsure of how to answer a call you can take down the details of the problem, the callers details and contact your stand by for instructions.

Please contact your Phone Roster Secretary if you are available to assist with manning the rescue phone or if you would like to know more. The Native Animals on the Sunshine Coast thank you for support



Wilvos Immediate Care Procedures

These are very brief notes. Your manuals provide extensive information and species list members are always willing to advise or refer you to someone nearby to help. Libraries provide plenty of interesting and informative reading.

You may be contacted to assist any of the following animals. Listed below is advice you may give callers for immediate care procedures. Advise all callers to treat all wildlife with utmost respect. An injured bird, possum or macropod may seem very quiet, but may recover enough to inflict personal damage. A blanket or thick towel is good to place over an animal/bird before trying to pick up. On arrival in care, a quiet, cosy, dark environment is required, with minimal handling.

Snakes

These are to be referred to snake handlers on the "Snake Catchers" list.

Bats

These also are not to be handled at all, unless you have been vaccinated for the Lyssavirus. Immediately check your species list for experienced bat carers.

Seabirds

Refer call to a carer closest to the caller listed under the Seabirds and Waterbirds heading on your Species List. There are also Seabird Associations listed on Useful Numbers that may be able to assist.

Specialty Animals

Contact QPWS or the after hours carers as listed on your species list. For Koalas contact QPWS, or after hours contact details are on the Species List. There is also an active Koala Squad for animals in the Noosa area, numbers under Useful Numbers. For echidnas, do not put on artificial heat and call as per the Species List Speciality Animals

Birds

Place in a shoe box or carton, lined with paper towel. Make sure the box is big enough for the bird. Cages are not suitable at this stage, as removing an injured bird through a small door is not a simple task, and a carton reduces the chance of feather damage. Do not give water. Never feed birds. Refer to the nearest carer on the phone roster contact list.

Possums/Glidors

Put young animals in a warm natural fibre (no synthetic) bag secured at top. This can then be placed in a mesh laundry bag used for washing 'delicates'. That way they can't accidentally escape! They should not be put into socks as their legs can get caught in the knit material. Some native flowers and leaves can be placed in there prior to the animal. A carry cage, with plenty of cloths inside, is needed for larger animals. With dead females the pouch is to be checked for young, usually one young with brushtails, and two young with ringtail possums. Again call a possum carer in the area immediately. Refer to Phone Roster Contact list.

Kangaroos/Wallabies

With mature animals, unfortunately, the outcome usually has to be euthanasia due to major broken bones. Always check the pouch if the female is dead. Orphaned animals often come from road accident victims. If the joey is very young it will be firmly attached to the teat, and the teat may need to be cut from the mother. This isn't as bad as it sounds – no blood and gore – just like cutting a piece of string! Place in a cosy flannelette bag or pillowslip and contact a macropod carer in the area immediately. Refer to phone roster contact list. Again it is best not to attempt to feed until the animal is assessed. It is extremely important that, if animals are cold, they not be fed until their temperature is slowly returned to normal.

Raptors

Require special care and must be handled by specialist carers refer to your species list. In emergency situations the caller must be made aware of the talons and beak .

Veterinarians are very busy and extremely generous with their care of our wildlife, giving their time free of charge. Of course, we must be prepared to pay for medications. Call your vet, prior to taking in wildlife so that they may let you know what time best suits them.

