

Before responding to a traffic accident, make sure it is safe to stop and get out of your vehicle

Your safety is paramount, so be aware of traffic conditions at all times whilst attending an accident.

- ◆ **Approach any injured animal with extreme care¹**
- ◆ **A blanket, towel or coat over an animal's head will calm it down¹.**
- ◆ **If you find an injured or orphaned animal, please seek expert help as soon as possible²**
- ◆ **Do not feed the animal but keep it warm and quiet in a box or dark place³**

1. Injured animals may strike out with claws and teeth. Throwing a blanket over their heads will calm them down. Always be aware that wallabies have very powerful back legs, and that an animal's claws can inflict serious damage.
2. Depending on the injury and situation, the animal may have to be put down on the spot, seek help if possible. Keep emergency numbers such as the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service Wildlife and Incident Reporting number (63365312) or your local wildlife rescue group in your wallet or car glove box.

Wrap the animal up tightly and/or place it in a sack and tie it off, or put it in the boot of the car. Remember, if the animal gets out whilst you are driving, you may become a traffic accident statistic yourself.

Get the animal to a vet as soon as possible for treatment.

If the adult animal is dead, check for pouch young. Pouch young should be wrapped in a soft, non-fluffy material and kept warm. Animals such as possums, carry their young on their backs after they reach a certain age, so check the bush nearby for a baby that may have been thrown clear.

After the accident:

Young animals cannot generate enough heat to keep warm, so this needs to be provided by heat packs, hot water bottles etc to between 28-32 °C. Do not place young directly on heat sources - they may get burnt or suffer heat stress.

Exceptions to this rule are bats, reptiles and echidnas which should be left cool. Birds should be placed in a cardboard box and kept in the dark to prevent stress and further injury to wings and legs. Fledglings need to be warmed. This is best done using a light bulb suspended in a box (incubator style) with sufficient space for the bird to move away if it gets too hot.

Be careful when using electricity!

3. Do not feed the young animal. Call your vet, Parks & Wildlife Service, RSPCA or wildlife care network and they will give you further instructions. Giving the wrong type of food may increase shock, and cause diarrhoea and further dehydration.

The biggest killers of young animals are shock, exposure and dehydration. The quicker you can get the animal to expert care, the better its chance of survival.

All Tasmanian native animals are protected by law, and with the exception of a few species, it is illegal to keep them without government authorisation (permit).

Children under 18 years are not legally permitted to care for native animals.

Important considerations:

- ◆ Native wildlife should be rehabilitated back to the wild and NOT kept as pets. Releasing a domesticated native animal into the wild, may result in a gruesome and long drawn out death from starvation or injury.
- ◆ Animals harbour parasites and diseases, which can cause harm to humans. Injuries such as bites or scratches must be treated effectively and immediately. Wash hands after handling animals.
- ◆ The male Platypus has venomous spurs. Leave the capture of an injured animal to an expert.
- ◆ Experts should only handle Snakes, - all three Tasmanian species are venomous.
- ◆ It is an offence to remove roadkill without a permit, however to prevent carrion eaters from being hit by vehicles, drag the dead animal off to the side of the road.

The care of native wildlife is specialised and should not be undertaken by anyone who has not received proper training. Untrained caring will often result in the death of the animal.