

Real life wildlife champions – Emily



Emily with rescued wombats.

Ever wondered who you're taking to when you call our wildlife emergency number?

Emily has a degree in animal and veterinary science and is a dedicated foster carer with a passion for wombats – she's raised more than 90 orphaned wombats!

Emily is also one of our wildlife emergency response operators, which she describes as '000 for wildlife'. She takes calls from distressed members of the public, identifies the species, and determines what the animal needs next. Then she coordinates the volunteer rescuers, vets, foster carers and shelters to get it the care it needs.

She can regularly be found with an orphaned baby wombat down the front of her jumper!

How did you become an operator for WV?

I work in a vet clinic too, but I specifically wanted to work with wildlife. I have been caring for wombats for 15 years and my Mum used to be a Wildlife Victoria operator too. I can help more wildlife doing this than by

becoming a vet – vets mostly deal with pets and the training course only offers a single wildlife subject so students don't get much wildlife time.

What do you like most about the job?

Getting to know wildlife volunteers, carers and shelters all over Victoria, and knowing there are so many people out there who are dedicated to wildlife. They're inspiring.

What's the toughest part of the job?

Abusive calls. Usually from people who don't understand that our rescuers are volunteers and can't always get there immediately, or people who just don't want to live with wildlife.

You, like most of our operators, volunteer for Wildlife Victoria in your spare time. Tell us a little about that?

I'm a rescuer and my Mum and I have a wombat orphanage. We mostly take orphans, but also burn and car accident victims. I have 3 orphans at the moment: Agnes, Gerald and Gertrude. Caring for orphans is a 24/7 job and I've always worked or studied full time at the same time – the two little ones need 5-hourly feeds, so I'm not getting much sleep!

Why wombats?

We do take other animals too, but mostly wombats as we've accumulated so much knowledge about them – I don't think I have space in my brain to learn another species that well! There isn't a lot of information about wildlife out there, so we've had to learn from each other, and by trial and error. I'm always reaching out to other wombat carers and vets, but everyone is great with helping each other.

What's your most memorable rescue?

We received a call about a big male wombat under a car so I went out after work. He was so big that when he stood up he lifted up the whole car. He decided to make a run for it; it was near a really busy road so I knew I'd only have one chance to grab him. I got him into the cage, but split the seat of my jeans open in the process! The caller was a seamstress – she offered to sew up my pants, but by then everyone had already seen my backside.

If you could give Wildlife Victoria's supporters one bit of advice, what would it be?

Keep telling people about wildlife! It's all about education – to prevent animals from getting injured and to know to call us if they are.

Your support helps to staff our emergency response service with highly skilled operators like Emily who are trained to assist more than 270 native species.



Emily at work on the Wildlife Emergency lines.



Tips & advice: checking pouches

Australia's unique marsupials give birth to 'joeys' that are barely more than an embryo, so most of their development happens in Mum's pouch. In spring, most adult female marsupials will be carrying a joey.

How you can help

We've had reports of babies surviving up to 5 days in the pouch after Mum has died, so it's even more important to stop and check at this time of year.

The most common marsupials that need pouch checks are kangaroos, wallabies, wombats, possums, gliders, koalas and bandicoots.

If you come across a deceased animal with a pouch that hasn't been checked, call and report it to us on 1300 094 535 or follow these DIY pouch checking instructions.

How to identify if the pouch has already been checked

You may have seen bodies by the side of the road with large spray paint crosses on them: this is how wildlife rescuers let other rescuers know that the animal's pouch has been checked. If you're checking pouches yourself you might want to carry a can of spray paint and some disposable gloves so that you can mark the ones you've checked.



These two 'pinkie' ringtail possums are barely the size of a jelly bean.

How to check a pouch

Make sure you always look after your own safety first: don't ever try to check a pouch on the road, make sure you're easily visible to passing cars if you're near the road and always wear gloves. And remember, you only need to check the females!

Pouches are located on the lower abdomen. Most face upwards, except wombats whose pouches face the opposite direction. Use your hands to open it and inspect inside. Joeys can be as small as a jelly bean so you may need a torch to spot the tiny ones.

Very young joeys – known as 'pinkies' – have their mouth fused to Mum's teat for the first few months of life. Never try to forcibly pull the teat out of a joey's mouth as it will do serious damage.

The best way to help a pinkie is to take the body of the mother directly to the vet with the joey still inside. If that's not possible, you'll need to cut the end of the teat off and remove the joey with teat still in its mouth. Please give us a call and we'll talk you through this.

Joeys with fur that are able to detach from Mum's teat themselves should be gently taken out of the pouch and wrapped in a towel, pillowcase or jumper – removing them back first is the best way to avoid getting legs or tail caught on the way out. You may need to cut the pouch opening using round tipped scissors to get larger joeys out, but be careful they don't escape.

Joeys are unable to regulate their own body temperature so you'll need to keep it warm. Your body heat is great for this – our volunteers often carry joeys down their jumpers, or you can make a makeshift hot water bottle by filling a plastic bottle with warm (not hot) tap water and wrapping it in a towel.

Once freed, you'll need to get the joey to help as quickly as possible. If you call us we can direct you to the nearest vet or shelter, and let them know that you're coming.

Please don't ever try to feed the joey.

If the pouch is empty, keep an eye out for joeys that may be injured or hiding nearby.

Remember: we're here to help. If you're not sure then give us a call – we will send one of our volunteers to check if you're not confident enough.



Wildlife rescuers spray paint a cross on the body after checking an animal's pouch.



Removing a wombat joey from the pouch.

Did you know?

Wildlife facts



Rainbow Lorikeet tongues

Rainbow lorikeets have a brush-like tongue that is specially adapted for extracting nectar from flowering plants, which is one of their main sources of nutrients. Eating bread and seeds can permanently damage the brush on their tongue, so that they are unable to eat their natural diet.

Rather than feeding lorikeets, we suggest planting some native flowers that will turn your garden into an oasis to share with wildlife.

The importance of flying foxes

Flying foxes (fruit bats) are our most efficient pollinators and seed dispersers of native Australian forest species. A single flying fox can spread up to 60,000 seeds over a large distance in a single night!

Several native species of plants and animals rely on flying foxes for survival, so these amazing creatures are essential to the future of Australia's hardwood forests, rainforests, honey industries and entire ecosystem.

You can help our threatened flying foxes by always using wildlife friendly netting on your fruit trees and giving us a call if you see one in trouble- just remember never to touch any species of bat; our bat rescue volunteers have to be specially vaccinated for the job.



Lookout for Opera Nets



We've had several reports of platypus drownings in 'Opera House' yabby nets recently - in one case 5 platypus were found in two nets, wiping out half the struggling population in one area. Sadly, they're cheap to buy and still widely available in fishing and outdoors stores for private use. Opera nets are used for trapping yabbies, but they are illegal in all public waterways in Victoria as they're deadly to platypus, native water rats, turtles and diving birds.

You can help by:

- Removing any opera nets you find from public waterways
- Reporting illegal opera nets to Parks Victoria, your local council, DELWP or the police - trappers face a \$37,000 fine or up to 2 years in jail
- Visit PlatypusSPOT on Facebook and sign the petition calling for a ban on Opera Net sales in Victoria, and call or write to your local stockist and ask them to switch to more wildlife friendly options.



FIGURES & FACTS FOR 2016/17

77,364
Number of requests
for help

52,258
Number of animals
assisted

Common wildlife situations to watch out for in spring

- Ducklings crossing roads
- Swooping birds
- Baby birds on the ground
- Orphaned possum joeys
- Echidnas in backyards
- Wildlife on the roads



If you're interested in more, we're now publishing our monthly stats on our website, including the breakdown of top species, causes, locations and the volunteers involved.

Upcoming Events

Ever wondered what to do if you're swooped by a magpie or find a possum in your roof? Bring the family along to our free Wildbytes events, funded by RACV, for some tips on how to co-exist with our wonderful native wildlife.

Visit our website to register:
<https://www.wildlifevictoria.org.au/racv-wild-bytes>

The next few events will be held at:

Woori Yallock
 Saturday 2 September 2017, 2pm
 at Woori Community House

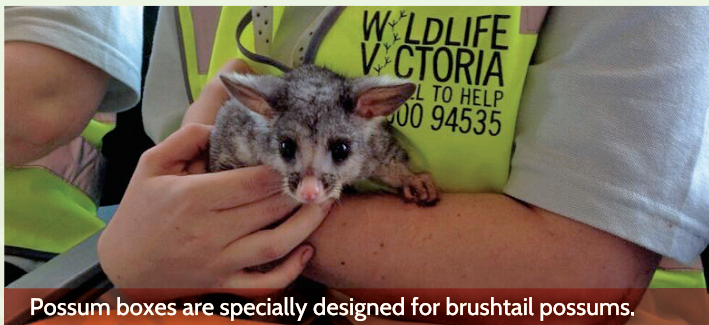
Altona
 Wednesday 1 November, at the
 EnviroCentre, Altona Library



INTRODUCING Possum Boxes!

We've teamed up with Men's Sheds around Victoria to make possum boxes to help keep native brushtail possums safe, dry and out of your roof!

From mid-August you can purchase your own handmade possum box from our website, and collect it from a participating Men's shed near you. It's a great way to look out for your local possums, as well as supporting both Wildlife Victoria and Men's sheds.



Possum boxes are specially designed for brushtail possums.



OTHER WAYS TO GET Involved

Fundraise for us. Run a marathon, hold a workplace event or ask your guests to donate in lieu of a gift at your next celebration.

Entertainment Books. Wildlife Victoria now has entertainment books! The book (or digital membership) contains \$20,000 worth of meal and entertainment vouchers for just \$70. Visit www.entertainmentbook.com.au and select Wildlife Victoria for 20% of the purchase price to be donated back to us.

Volunteer. Our website has tonnes of information about the types of volunteering available with wildlife – it's not for the faint hearted, but you'd be joining a pretty amazing group of people.

Yes, I want to help sick, injured and orphaned native wildlife!

I will give:

\$25 \$50 \$100 My gift of \$ _____

I would like to make this a regular monthly donation

Donations \$2 and over are tax deductible.

ABN 27 753 478 012

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

I will give by:

Credit card: Visa Mastercard Amex

Card number

Expiry date / CVV

Cardholder's name _____

Signature _____

Please post this form to:

Wildlife Victoria, Reply Paid 86041, Abbotsford VIC 3067

or call (03) 9445 0310 to make a donation. Thank you for your support.

www.wildlifevictoria.org.au