

Baby possums and pouches

- information about baby possums and pouches

Most of us have probably seen dead possums in our gardens, beside the road or under electricity cables. It is an unfortunate fact that many possums, both brushtail and ringtails, are killed each month in our suburbs due to cars, electrocution and attacks by cats and dogs.

However, how many of us check to see if these dead possums have any young in their pouches?

Possums are marsupials, so the female carries her young in a pouch for several months before they start being carried on their mother's back. Although spring is the peak season for babies, possums can and do produce young throughout the year.

Australian possums are clean animals and do not carry diseases. Should you see a dead possum, please check to see if it is a female and if it has any young in its pouch. The ringtail possum usually has twin joeys while the brushtail possum generally only gives birth to single young. Brushtail possums, as their name suggests, have a thick, bushy tail that is black in colour. Ringtail possums have a thin tail that ends with a white tip.



If you do find a female possum with babies, and this also applies for any sick or injured possums, place a towel over the possum and scoop it up and place it in a cardboard box or other suitable container (laundry baskets are often used). Place the box/container in a quiet location and then call a wildlife rescue service in your area.

If the babies are active and have crawled out of their dead mother's pouch or have been separated from their mother, wrap them loosely in a small towel/scrap of material and place them in a box/container. Babies need to be kept warm so fill a plastic bottle with warm water (or use a hot water bottle if you have one available), place it next to the wrapped baby and keep the baby somewhere quiet and then call a wildlife rescue service in your area.

If you do see a dead possum, always check to see if it is a female and if it has any young in its pouch. The baby ringtail possums (they weighed 58 grams!) in the accompanying photograph were found in the pouch of their dead mother and were successfully raised and released.