



# Snip Rings for Wildlife

**Megan Fabian – National Office Manager**

This month, the Society founded a new campaign called *Snip Rings for Wildlife*. The campaign aims to raise awareness and encourage individuals to protect Australia's wildlife, by cutting through plastic rings, rubber bands and hair ties before disposing of them. Each year, thousands of birds and air-breathing aquatic wildlife such as platypuses (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*), turtles and water dragons (*Intellagama lesueurii*) are strangled, obtain significant injuries and often die horrific deaths from discarded litter. Wildlife becomes entangled in plastic rings, rubber bands and hair ties that wrap around the animal's beak or muzzle, preventing them from eating. These items can also tangle up their feet, wings, or

fins, limiting their movement. Young animals can become entrapped in these items, and as they grow, these items cut into their flesh, sometimes amputating limbs or killing the animal. Other animals mistake these items for food and ingest them.

Despite contacting numerous manufacturers, informing them of the danger that plastic rings, rubber bands and hair ties pose to native wildlife and encouraging them to take action to improve their products, we are still experiencing the same problem and many companies are not taking action. Some manufacturers produce jars, bottles, and tetra packs with plastic lids that come with a plastic ring that snaps apart from the lid upon opening

or a peel-off seal under the cap. While we continue to encourage companies to act, we turn to our followers to ask for your support to protect Australia's wildlife and *Snip Rings for Wildlife*. We encourage everyone to cut through plastic rings, rubber bands and hair ties before disposing of them. It is important to remind ourselves that we can act, both as individuals and collectively, to bring about important changes ourselves and create real change. We acknowledge and commend the companies that have already taken action to make a positive change and improve their products for Australia's wildlife.

The Society encourages everyone to get behind and help promote the campaign, by posting a video of themselves on





social media snipping through a plastic ring, rubber band or hair tie before disposing of it. Do not forget to use the hashtag #snipringsforwildlife. We also welcome any artwork related to *Snip rings for Wildlife* for publication in our newsletter and on our website, to help promote the campaign and emphasise the actions people are taking to protect Australia's wildlife. Material for publication can be sent to [info@aws.org.au](mailto:info@aws.org.au)

We welcome you to send a letter to any company producing plastic rings, rubber bands or hair ties, encouraging them to take action to improve their products for Australia's wildlife. The Society has created a template letter, displayed on the following page, to make it easy for our followers to take further action to protect Australia's wildlife. Thank you for your support.

**Letter over page >**



**Page Eight:** This Australian water dragon (*Intellagama lesueurii*) got his head stuck through the safety seal ring of a discarded bottle and would have slowly starved to death if it had not been rescued. Image: WIRES Northern Rivers

**Top Middle:** Mae West, a common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), has been horribly deformed from a plastic ring. As she grew, she could not break this plastic belt around her waist. Her shell is now permanently deformed, giving her an hourglass-like shape. Image: Marcus Eriksen.

**Top Right:** This platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*) was bound and killed by injuries from a rubber band. The band was tangled tight around the animal's neck, and under its left flipper, clearly cutting into its flesh. Image: Wildlife Rockhampton

**Middle Left:** This Australian magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) was lucky enough to be found before starving to death. Many entrapped birds do not fare so well, and they succumb silently, in agony and out of sight. Image: WIRES Northern Rivers

**Bottom:** This short-beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) starves to death after being unable to open its mouth from discarded twine-like plastic that got caught around the dolphin's beak. Image: Sandra Hilton