



Helping wildlife during floods

During an emergency, such as a flood, some native animals may need short term help. Never enter floodwater to rescue wildlife.

If you find an animal injured, in distress, disoriented, heavily waterlogged, or in an unexpected location, you should seek advice from a trained wildlife rescuer or vet. If it is safe to do so, contain it in a clean, covered box in a dark, quiet place while waiting for a rescuer or taking it to a wildlife carer or vet. Only [licensed wildlife rescue and rehabilitation providers or qualified vets](#) may take injured or orphaned native animals into care. You can use the [IFAW Wildlife Rescue App](#) (International Fund for Animal Welfare) to quickly find the closest one to you to contact.

If not injured, native animals made temporarily homeless may need access to short term shelter to dry out, or until flood water recedes. It is not recommended to provide food, water or heating unless directed by a licensed wildlife carer or vet.

The condition of some animals may deteriorate even though they do not appear to be injured. They may be dependent on a parent, have taken water into their lungs, or suffered internal injuries by objects ramming them in floodwaters, for example. If an animal's condition deteriorates or it remains distressed or disoriented once dried out, immediately contact a [licensed wildlife rescue and rehabilitation provider or qualified vet](#).

Helping waterlogged or displaced wildlife

The following considerations are for **uninjured** wet, temporarily homeless animals. Native wildlife has specific and varied needs and are not used to being handled. Approaching wildlife can be risky for both humans and animals.



Type of animal	Considerations	What to do
Large mammals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not handle or try to restrain large mammals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact a trained wildlife rescuer.
Birds and small mammals (including possums and bandicoots)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These warm-blooded animals need a dry, protected place to dry off. Keep sound to a minimum. The animal is already stressed, and additional stress may be fatal. Do not place fabric with loose threads under or around them, as they can easily become entangled. Monitor them regularly as their condition can quickly deteriorate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover with an upside-down, empty washing basket or large box to contain it. Cover the container with a sheet or towel to block out light and sound. Keep noise to a minimum. If it is not in a safe or dry place, call a wildlife rescuer immediately for advice on how best to move it.
Turtles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freshwater turtles can be washed down the river to the coast and mistaken for marine turtles. Sea water kills freshwater turtles. Many types of freshwater turtles are threatened with extinction. Different turtles species live in different waterways, so returning them to the correct catchment is critical to their survival. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If found on the beach – check to see if it is a freshwater turtle or marine turtle. Freshwater turtles have webbed toes and claws. Marine turtles have flippers. Contact a wildlife carer to ensure the turtle is returned to the correct river system. If required to transport the freshwater turtle to a wildlife rescuer, never place it in a container that has held dirt or other animals due to the risk of disease transmission into the wild population.
Snakes and lizards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These cold-blooded animals become less active when cold. Call a wildlife rescuer or snake handler immediately for advice. Do not attempt to handle them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close off the area to contain it. Keep an eye on it through a window or other vantage point to see where it has settled so that rescuers can be directed to the exact location when they arrive.
Insects and spiders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many will be washed out and try to seek shelter inside homes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If non-venomous, place a clear container over the top. If it needs to be moved away from pets or frequently used areas, carefully slide a piece of paper under the container and then cardboard under that to provide a sturdy base. Release it outside to a safe, dry location or when flooding has receded.

Photo: Eastern Long necked turtle (*Chelodina longicollis*). Rosie Nicolai/DPIE