

# Encouraging wildlife

There are many things landholders can do to encourage wildlife into your environment, but to do so successfully, you need to offer similar conditions to the animal's natural habitat:

Firstly, **be aware of what species occur on your property**. This can be done by documenting the animal and bird species you actually observe on your property or by surveying your property for evidence of animal activity including droppings, scratchings, burrows, etc and learning which animal leaves which kind of evidence. Some wildlife carers or members of the NPWS are available to survey your property with you to assist you in developing a bird and fauna list.

Secondly, **become aware of the habitat ranges or home ranges for the animals on your fauna list**. This will assist you in the identification of injured animals in and around your community and assist wildlife carers in finding appropriate release sites for rehabilitated animals.

Thirdly, make your property wildlife friendly by:

- **retaining hollow trees and logs** for animals and birds to nest and make their home in,
- **allowing leaf litter, branches and fallen logs to accumulate** to provide safe hidey holes for reptiles, etc,
- **creating wildlife corridors** between forested areas so that animals can move between forested areas in a safe manner,
- **protecting roadside**



- remnant vegetation** as these are sometimes the only links connecting forested areas between properties,
- **regenerating with existing plant species** so that the animals' food source is sustained,
  - **creating a wildlife island in dams** and vegetate stream banks so that frogs and other aquatic animals have a safe refuge away from stock and other threats,
  - **managing fire appropriately** taking into account the fire management strategy appropriate for your vegetation type, fuel loads and fire management support in your area,
  - **fencing off stock from areas of natural habitat** so that they don't trample natural vegetation and create tracks which can erode the landscape,
  - **implementing wildlife friendly fencing** or regularly monitor barbed wire fences for trapped wildlife, and
  - **actively eliminating feral animals and pests**, which does include the domestic moggy.

And lastly, **support your local wildlife carers** by either becoming a carer, or a support member if you can't actively care for animals. Otherwise you can support fundraising activities your local carers may run, or lend them your skills if you can make possum or nesting boxes, or sew up pouches for joeys, create something that can be donated for a raffle, etc.

Your property may be just the right natural environment to release animals that have been in care.

*We can't isolate our native wildlife from the rest of the environment, however unnatural it may be, otherwise their populations will dwindle. Learning to live with one of Queensland's greatest assets — our wildlife — will ensure their long-term survival.*

For further information about Granite Belt Wildlife Carers, contact the Secretary on:

**Phone:** 07 46 833 119

**Mail:** PO Box 27  
Stanthorpe Q 4380

**E-mail:** [pbboatfield@bigpond.com](mailto:pbboatfield@bigpond.com)

**Wildlife Rescue:**

**Mob:** 0418 144 073



## Living with Wildlife...



*So everyone is happy!*

# Possums

*Some of Queensland's exquisite wildlife have adapted to life in a wide range of natural and human environments. Many Queenslanders are lucky enough to have close encounters in their own backyards with these remarkable animals. Here are some helpful hints so that you and your furry, feathered and scaly friends can live harmoniously together.*

**Possums on the roof** can be extremely noisy! To eliminate possums accessing your roof, prune overhanging branches back from the house and attach an 80cm diameter disc over the wire close to your building so that they can't access your roof via power lines.



**Possums in the roof** are even noisier! To deter possums living in your roof, some natural suggestions that have been suggested include - cloves or garlic, camphor or naphthalene (but not both together). A bright light on during the day may also help.

**Removing uninvited guests?** First, confirm it is a possum and not a rat or mouse? Rats and mice make scratching, chewing and skittering noises, whereas possums make heavy, thumping sounds when walking and distinctive guttural growls, screeches and hisses and coughs when disturbed. Find out for sure by looking inside the ceiling with a flashlight during the day, or observe your house just on dark when the possum is likely to emerge to feed.

# Possums/Snakes

Find out where the possum is getting in, keeping in mind that more than one place may be involved. On a fine night between dusk and 10pm, while the possum is likely to be feeding, make the necessary repairs to prevent entry. Any young should be with the mother either in her pouch or on her back, however, if you happen to trap one inside accidentally, you will soon enough be alerted.

Liberal splash the old entry areas with a strong smelling substance such as disinfectant, camphor or naphthalene to destroy the scent, otherwise the possum will try and re-enter.

Possums can get stuck in chimneys. Wire mesh placed over the top of your chimney will prevent possums entering your chimney. To assist a trapped possum, provide a rope down the cavity for the possum to climb up.

Nurture your new friend. Research has proven that relocating possums does not solve the problem for you or the animal, providing an alternative home in the way of a wooden nest box is a more effective alternative. Possums can be encouraged to stay in our yard by providing a waterproof nest box placed four to five metres above the ground.



## Snakes sleeping in your backyard?

Like other natural predators snakes are important in regulating populations of their prey. Without such predators pest animal populations such as rat and mice populations would spiral into plague proportions. Although most will be just passing through, to minimise such presence in your garden, keep:

- grass mown and garden debris to a minimum;
- wood heaps away from the house;
- under the house well sealed or very clear and dry;
- seal cracks in concrete which may shelter lizards - rockeries are a major attraction for lizards (snake prey); and
- have a well-maintained paling fence.

# Magpies

## The Stealth bomber!

For 4-6 weeks during magpie breeding season (July to December), an individual magpie, usually males, may become aggressive to one or more humans. In the case of a swooping magpie:

- Recognise the warning calls, and avoid the area where the bird is being aggressive.
- Remember that aggressiveness in an individual magpie lasts only a few weeks.
- Wear a wide brimmed hat or carry an open umbrella, and place a net or shield over prams and strollers.
- Keep in groups on the way to school. Should it be necessary for you to walk through an attacking magpie's territory, you may have to bluff the bird into leaving you alone. Like dogs, magpies seem to sense fear and capitalise on it.
- Do not run away if you are attacked, but assume a confident pose and walk quickly out of its range.

Consider the right of the bird to live in the area, and recall the benefits it brings. Be sure that you and your pets do not harass them.

