

Joey Rescue

It takes great courage to help an animal in distress. You may experience anxiety so breathe deeply, be safe and ring Wildlife Rescue for advice and support if you need to.

This is a free community native wildlife aid to help you to rescue injured and orphaned animals courtesy, of Red Box Wildlife Shelter and Kangaroos Alive. Please keep this in the glove box or boot of your car.

Returning beings who have lost their lives, to bush land away from roads is respectful and allows their family to pass them by safely and to farewell them discreetly it also helps protect birds of prey and other carrion eaters from being injured.

Leave for your journey 10 minutes early so you have time to do pouch checks. Discuss the need to stop and check with fellow travelers before leaving.

If you see an injured or dead Kangaroo on, or beside, the road, put your HAZARD LIGHTS ON to signal other drivers to be aware. Pull over before you reach the Kangaroo if you can so your headlights illuminate you and the Kanga. If you can't stop immediately, make a mental note of a landmark near the Kangaroo so they're easier to find after you turn around.

Take a moment to assess the situation for safety issues and watch the Kangaroo for any movement. If the Kanga doesn't lift their head or move their ears as you get out of your car, there's a good chance they're unconscious or dead.

Approach slowly, shaking your head occasionally to indicate "hello, I'm no threat" just in case they are aware or their at-foot joey is nearby watching. If you see any movement from the injured Kangaroo, call Wildlife Rescue. If there is a joey standing beside or near the dead or injured Kangaroo, call Wildlife Rescue.

When you reach the Kangaroo, place your hand on their chest in the

area 10 to 20cm below their armpits and feel for their heartbeat. Kanga's hearts are very close to their ribcage so if their heart is still beating you should be able to feel it. If the Kangaroo's heart is beating, call Wildlife Rescue.

We would never open or rarely even touch a lady's pouch while she is conscious and especially if she is injured or afraid. Her greatest fear is that her baby will be harmed in some way or stolen from her pouch, if she is conscious, her sole purpose at this point would be to hold that baby tight and keep them safe so you definitely don't want to add to her trauma by posing that kind of threat. Talk to your rescuer about getting help for Mum and her bub.

If the Kangaroo is in the way of traffic, move them and you to safety by carrying them off the road or put your hands under their arms and drag them off the road and as far from moving vehicles as possible.

If you're sure there is no heartbeat and you're in a safe location, you can now check to see if the Kangaroo has a pouch and if there is anyone in there!

Run your hand down the centre of the Kanga's abdomen from the bottom of her ribs and you will feel the opening of her pouch. If you feel a pouch, continue down and you can gently feel for a baby by running your hand over the outside of the pouch, down into the crevices where her legs start.

If there is someone in there, you will feel a lump, anything from the size of a jellybean to a 4 kilogram chunker! Give them a little scratch "hello" so they know you're about to open the pouch then stretch the top of the pouch open and look inside. You will need a torch if it's night. The torch on your phone is good enough if you don't have a head torch.

If the little one is alive, call Wildlife Rescue to let them know you have found an orphan, tell them the species if possible and approximate size of the joey, whether he or she has fur, eyes open, ears up, whether they are active and calling for help. Tell Wildlife Rescue about any other joey who was close to mum or who you suspect has been watching you from the bushes.

Now you have a couple of options.

If you are able to transport Mum with her little one still in her pouch to a wildlife rescuer, this is a very good option as it means the baby stays calm, feels safe, unafraid and warm until an experienced person can help. It's also a good option if you desperately want to help but don't feel you can do the pouch transfer thing. Simply place the mother Kangaroo in your car, cover her pouch area with something warm to help the little one stay comfortable and get on your way.

Transporting the joey, to an experienced carer, in her or his Mum's pouch is also BY FAR the best option for any joey whose mouth is fused to their Mum's teat.

If a joey's mouth is fused to the teat and you can't take Mum with you, you need to try to disturb the teat and the joey's mouth as little as possible and cut the teat off as close to Mum's body as you can. Having the advice and support of an experienced carer here is very useful as they can talk you through it then help you make sure you keep the little one is warm enough until you can get help. This is also a good option if you are sure there was an at-foot joey near Mum as the Wildlife Rescuer who attends to search for the older joey will probably rely upon him or her returning to their Mum's body to enable them to attempt the rescue.

If you suspect there is an at-foot joey as well as your pouch baby, you can confirm by looking in Mum's pouch for a large teat which, when squeezed, oozes milk. If she has two joeys, there will be two teats producing milk, one large and one small.

Ok, so, If the joey's mouth is not fused to the teat and you can't take Mum with you, here is how to rescue her joey.

Get your pouch ready, open the top and lie it next to Mum, just near her pouch. Remember, a little scratch on the baby through the pouch to let them know you're coming in then open the pouch, stretching the top and side as far as you need to so you can slide your hand in and under the joey. Slide your hand in and use it to

stretch the pouch away from the joey. Try to cup the joey's back and bottom in your hand and scoop them out of their pouch and into yours. They're often very wriggly and may struggle hard to stay inside because it's all very terrifying and unnatural for them but stay calm, take your time and persevere. It may take a couple of attempts. Grasping their tail as close to their body as possible with your free hand will help you gently but firmly pull the baby out. Hold furred joeys securely once they're out of their pouch as some will still try to flee from you.

Place the joey in your pouch and completely cover it as quickly as possible. Suspending the pouch, holding it by the top and letting it hang, for a few moments will allow a larger joey to wriggle into a comfortable position. Fold or twist the top of your pouch and tuck that baby under your jumper or place it on your car seat beside a warm (not hot) hot water bottle. You can fill up your hot water bottle at a service station or some cafes will oblige by filling it for you. You can more firmly secure the top of the pouch with a shoelace or hair tie if you're concerned that you have an older joey who may leave your special pouch in search of his or her real pouch but, usually, once they're in there, they're happy to stay. If you're using the hot water bottle on the seat option, make a base and supportive circle around the joey and hot water bottle with a blanket or your jumper so that if the joey turns over they still feel very secure and don't fall away from the heat.

Once your joey is safe and warm, return to Mum with your pink ribbon and tie it around her arm or leg to show other caring people that this lady has been checked and that she was cared for, loved and respected.

If your calls to Wildlife Rescue result in a rescuer attending, please try to stay near the Kangaroo until the rescuer arrives to help keep the Kangaroo safe and so you can pass on as much information as possible about the Kanga's mobility and the possible presence of an at-foot joey. Take the advice of the rescuer on whether they would prefer you leave headlights or hazard lights on.

If you can't stay until Wildlife Rescue arrives use your other ribbon, the striped one with the sticker on it, to identify a tree or sign close to

your last sighting of the injured or orphaned Kangaroo. Perhaps take a GPS tagged photo of the Kanga to send to the rescuer so they can assess its size and know where to start looking.

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