

Summary of the NSW Wildlife in Emergencies Sub Plan

This is a plain language interpretation of the sub plan, and how it might be implemented locally in the Shoalhaven from the perspective of the Shoalhaven City Council (SCC) Animals in Fires project team. It needs to be noted that this document is not endorsed by SCC or state government but provided for informational and interpretation purposes only. Given that the plan has only recently been released at the state level, it will be some time before we understand how this plan will formally be put into action regionally or locally and we await this advice via the Shoalhaven Local Emergency Management Committee.

Context

The [Wildlife in Emergencies sub plan](#) (Wildlife Plan) is one of 26 sub plans that sit beneath the State Emergency Management Plan (which outlines how the State of NSW coordinates and approaches emergency management in NSW). Sub plans detail how the State manages a specific hazard or event type. The Wildlife Plan details the control and coordination arrangements for the preparation for, response to and recovery from emergencies affecting wildlife in NSW.

Background

In January 2020 the NSW Government commissioned an independent expert inquiry into the 2019-20 bushfire season which produced 76 recommendations to the NSW Government, all of which were accepted. Recommendation 53 stated that Government develop and implement a policy on injured wildlife response, rescue and rehabilitation including a framework for the co-ordination and interaction with emergency management structures, and guidelines for Incident Management Plans to include wildlife rescue and rehabilitation as a consideration.

Purpose

The Wildlife Plan describes the strategic emergency management arrangements for any emergency affecting wildlife in NSW. Emergencies that affect wildlife can be any hazard or disaster including, but not limited to, natural disasters such as fires, floods, storms, tsunamis and earthquakes. The Incident Controller of the lead agency for the emergency will determine when a wildlife response is required, and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) will coordinate it.

Partnering and Supporting Agencies

The EPA will lead and coordinate and implement the Wildlife Plan in collaboration with:

- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)
- Department of Primary Industries (DPI)
- Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water (DCCEEW) Environment and Heritage Group
- Taronga Conservation Society Australia
- Transport for NSW – Maritime Group

What about other agencies?

It is expected that council and other local organisations will have a role in the implementation of the Wildlife Plan at the local level. However, this is not specified in the Wildlife Plan or in this summary document because we don't yet know how the Wildlife Plan will be implemented locally.

Implementation of the Wildlife Plan

The EPA, in collaboration with partnering and supporting agencies, will develop and implement a range of strategies over three years from the approval of the plan (13 Dec 2023) listed below. As this plan is new, the strategies below are really an ‘action plan’ to get all agencies and relevant personnel up to speed, trained, resourced and ready.

Strategies that will be developed and implemented over the next three years to support the success of the Wildlife Plan:

- Representation on local, regional and State emergency management committees
- Identify specific wildlife emergency personnel from support/partner agencies
- Identify wildlife treatment and recovery resources and facilities
- Develop agreements with relevant agencies
- Deliver minimum training requirements such as RFS Bushfire Awareness Training
- Agencies to maintain current lists of trained authorised personnel
- Conduct emergency training exercises to develop and maintain skills of wildlife response teams
- Advice for prevention and preparation made available
- Audit of critical response resources such as vets, cages, euthanasia and other medicines, transport and recovery facilities in each region including a database/interactive map showing deployed personnel
- Documented processes and systems for implementing a coordinated response
- Provision of PPE and other safety measures for operational personnel
- Periodic audit of resources, services and plans
- Wildlife organisations to provide educational and awareness programs for community
- Engagement with Aboriginal people and communities

As the Wildlife Plan is a current endorsed plan it will be enacted from December 2023 onwards where it is needed; the strategies above do not need to be all completed for the plan to be in place. In other words, a wildlife response will occur at every future emergency where wildlife are impacted in NSW, and this response will improve over time as more people are trained and critical resources are more available.

Key Services the EPA will coordinate during a Wildlife Emergency Response

- Tasking of agencies and organisations
- Emergency care of animals – including the provision of emergency supply of food, water, veterinary care and housing for wildlife carers
- Provision of emergency feed and water for wildlife – if there are wildlife welfare concerns
- Surveillance and relocation of native wildlife where needed and practicable
- Impact assessment, veterinary care and humane destruction of affected wildlife
- Disposal of animal carcasses
- Engagement of other local organisations, contractors or veterinarians
- Contribute to recovery processes

Key Roles and Responsibilities during a Wildlife Emergency Response

NEW ROLE	PERFORMED BY	RESPONSIBILITY	REPORTS TO	LIAISES WITH
LIAISON OFFICER	EPA	Provides wildlife coordination in the Emergency Operations Centre	Incident Controller	Technical Advisor – Wildlife
TECHNICAL ADVISOR – WILDLIFE (TAW)	Partnering agency, such as NPWS	Provides specialist advice on wildlife support from within the Planning or Intelligence Unit	Liaison Officer	Coordinator Wildlife (if appointed) Coordinates WERTs for smaller scale event
COORDINATOR/S - WILDLIFE (CWS)	Partnering agency, such as NPWS	Provides a wildlife operational role for larger scale events	Operations Officer	Receives planning support from Technical Advisor – Wildlife Coordinates WERTs for larger scale events
WILDLIFE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAMS (WERTS)	Resourced by various agencies with wildlife expertise, made up of personnel with specific skills (e.g. wildlife handler, vet, shooter)	Provides wildlife emergency response to injured animals on the fire ground with relevant services such as euthanasia, rescue and recovery	Small scale events - Technical Advisor – Wildlife Large scale events - Coordinator - Wildlife	Supervised by a Fire Crew Leader

Key Agencies and their Roles

Stage of Emergency		Agency Actions & Responsibilities
BEFORE THE EVENT	Prevention	<p>EPA – manages the plan, builds awareness, develops systems and resources, coordinates capacity of stakeholders</p> <p>NPWS & Taronga Zoo – assists with building awareness, developing systems and resources, and education & training</p> <p>NPWS – provides resources to emergency response operations, implements bushfire mitigation programs and threatened species knowledge sharing on NPWS land</p> <p>DCCEEW – provides expertise relating to wildlife conservation</p> <p>TfNSW – assists with building awareness, developing resources and delivering training for wildlife in emergencies relating to marine pollution</p>
	Preparedness	<p>EPA - assists the regions to develop and test their own wildlife emergency plans, identifies wildlife response personnel, coordinates training, collaborates with other to develop emergency response systems</p> <p>NPWS – assists the regions to develop their own wildlife emergency plans, engages with local wildlife networks, assists with collaboration, assists with mapping and planning for threatened species, assists with capacity building of NPWS staff.</p> <p>Taronga Zoo – supports EPA to engage local and regional networks to build capacity regarding wildlife conservation and management, manages registry of wildlife health for disease identification</p> <p>DCCEEW – supports EPA to engage local and regional networks to build capacity regarding wildlife conservation and management, manages the Saving Our Species program which provides critical threatened species and ecological community data.</p> <p>TfNSW - supports EPA to engage local and regional networks, collaborate in training and capacity building exercises, provide guidance and support for wildlife in emergency response where maritime knowledge and experience is relevant</p>

Stage of Emergency		Agency Actions & Responsibilities
DURING THE EVENT	Response	<p>EPA - provides a Liaison Officer, activates a response when called upon, coordinates wildlife personnel and roles</p> <p>NPWS - helps identify at-risk wildlife during an emergency and provide impact advice, provides advice to the operations cell around impact of fire prevention strategies, provides key wildlife resources and personnel, directly responds to or coordinates teams to respond to injured wildlife, helps identify supply of resources to the Technical Advisor - Wildlife role, coordinates local and regional wildlife organisations to respond from Operations cell, or as Coordinator Wildlife</p> <p>Taronga Zoo - available to assist during an emergency such as providing medical and hospital resources and euthanasia services.</p> <p>DPI - supports with services, expertise and resources where required, collaborates where wildlife and domestic animal livestock requirements overlap, including euthanasia services where severely injured wildlife are found when conducting animal & agricultural tasks and wildlife welfare is a priority</p> <p>DCCEEW - provides trained personnel in emergency management to assist in incident, provides data and knowledge regarding protected and or threatened wildlife species</p> <p>TfNSW - engages EPA to provide a wildlife coordinator and wildlife responders in operations</p>
AFTER THE EVENT	Recovery	<p>EPA - coordinates recovery process and assists with any government funding that might be available</p> <p>NPWS - assists with recovery processes and participates in recovery activities to support and restore wildlife populations</p> <p>Taronga Zoo - provides any required accommodation for injured wildlife, veterinary advice and hospital treatment, and work with DCCEEW and NPWS for longer-term reintroduction of wildlife to its habitat</p> <p>DPI - provides damage assessment information or impacts to wildlife that may have been gathered via their animals and agricultural field work</p> <p>TfNSW and DPI - assist with the recovery process in conjunction with emergency recovery operations related to marine</p>

More Information

- [Wildlife in Emergencies sub plan | NSW Government](#)