

Wildlife drinking stations

During an emergency, such as during prolonged drought or after fire, some native animals may need short term help. Although not injured, they may be distressed and in need of water until their natural environment recovers.

Considerations for watering devices

You can help native animals by giving them a supply of fresh, clean water. Never add electrolytes or sugar as they can be harmful and exacerbate dehydration. Choose a device that best suits your location, the local wildlife species you are targeting and how regularly you can check on it to maintain the device and add clean water.

A device providing water for wildlife should be:

- Safe and fit-for purpose water dispenser
- Easy to access, clean and refill with fresh water
- Safely mounted and easily relocated
- Cost effective and simple to make with no sharp edges or entanglement points
- Able to have the water changed daily to prevent the spread of disease, or have a secure gravity fed reservoir that is not able to be contaminated or fouled with debris or faeces
- Constructed with either a small watering access point or, for those with a larger surface area of accessible water, have a ramp or other device provided for an animal to scramble out if they fall in
- Mapped, regularly inspected and removed when natural water sources become available.

Consider using a remote motion activated wildlife camera to monitor who is attracted. The position of the station may need to be reassessed if creating a convenient congregation point for feral animals.

For large properties it is recommended to put multiple small stations up to 500 metres apart so small animals do not need to travel as far. This also allows more animals to benefit, reduces the risk of disease and reduces the likelihood of predators being able to monitor all water sources at the same time. Ideally, dispensers would be placed in proximity to where natural sources of water would normally occur.





Once a clean, reliable natural water supply returns the water dispensers should be removed, thoroughly cleaned and stored for future use or deployment to other areas as needed,

The following table shows four examples of easy to construct and relatively cost effective wildlife water dispensers. For instructions on how to make the [wildlife watering pod](#) see the link on '[Helping wildlife in emergencies](#)' page at environment.nsw.gov.au.



Example of a specialist design for a koala drinking station Photo: G James/ NPWS

Examples of simple wildlife watering devices

Device	Materials	Application	Detail
<p>1 Arboreal water dispenser</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds 6.5 litres • Frequently cleaned and refilled • Less than \$30 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.5L Poultry drinker. • A rope attached to the water dispenser at one end and a sandbag the other. • A suitable fork in a tree. Throw the sandbag over a high branch directly above the fork, to act as a pulley. Manoeuvre the dispenser in place and secure the rope. 	<p>Important for arboreal wildlife which may not come to ground (glider species and some possum species).</p>	
<p>2 Wildlife watering pod</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds 14 litres • Will last up to two weeks • Less than \$30 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x PVC pipe 100mm x 1500mm with push-on cap, coupling access, access cap and 50mm elbow. • PVC primer and cement for non-pressurised pipes. • 54mm hole saw attachment on a power drill. • Star picket and cable ties. 	<p>Ground dwelling animals such as small mammals, reptiles and birds.</p> <p>Can be mounted off the ground and in forks of trees with adequate strapping.</p>	
<p>3 Open reservoir with ramp in and out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds up to 50 litres • Must be cleaned out every two days • Less than \$30 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50L storage tub. • 25x25mm mesh cut with 7 x 36 squares and bent over the edge of the tub, so half is in the water touching the tub bottom as an escape ramp and half is outside touching the ground and secured. • Cable ties to secure mesh to tub and a tent peg to secure mesh to ground. 	<p>Birds, ground dwellers including kangaroos, wallabies.</p> <p>Push a stick for birds to perch on through the mesh, and into the ground.</p>	
<p>4 Closed reservoir with self-filling trough</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds up to 25 litres • Open trough may need regular cleaning • More than \$60 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25L container with a tap or bung. • Add a hose connector and tube for gravity feed • Autofill trough with a float system (may be plastic or metal). 	<p>Ground dwellers.</p> <p>Can be arboreal if set up off the ground on a stable supporting structure and secured.</p>	

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