

Frequently Asked Questions

Deliberate fishing injuries to wildlife

1. Why is RSPCA WA raising awareness about this issue?

RSPCA WA has received reports of waterbirds being deliberately hooked or injured at several metropolitan lakes and waterways. While these incidents involve a very small number of young people, they are a timely reminder of the importance of talking to children and teenagers about treating wildlife with kindness and respect.

2. Why is RSPCA WA sharing resources about this issue?

RSPCA WA has developed these resources to help parents, schools and local governments educate young people about treating wildlife with kindness and respect. Most people fish responsibly. By raising awareness and encouraging conversations at home, we hope to prevent deliberate harm to wildlife and reduce the number of injured animals requiring rescue and treatment.

3. What should parents talk to their children about?

If your child enjoys fishing, encourage them to:

- treat wildlife with care and respect
- never deliberately target birds or other animals
- dispose of fishing hooks and fishing line responsibly
- tell a trusted adult if they witness someone deliberately harming wildlife.

A simple conversation at home can make a real difference.

4. Is this a widespread problem?

No. The incidents reported to RSPCA WA involve a very small number of young people. However, because deliberately harming wildlife causes significant suffering and reports have been received from more than one location, RSPCA WA is taking the opportunity to remind families about the importance of treating wildlife with kindness and respect.

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5. Is deliberately harming wildlife against the law?

Yes. Deliberately causing unnecessary harm to an animal may constitute animal cruelty under the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*. People who intentionally cause unnecessary harm to an animal may face investigation, prosecution and significant penalties, including a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to five years' imprisonment.

6. How can I report suspected deliberate cruelty?

If you witness deliberate cruelty towards an animal, report it to RSPCA WA as soon as possible by calling 1300 CRUELTY (278 358) or lodging a report online at rspcswa.org.au. Where it is safe to do so, record details such as the location, date, time and a description of those involved. This information can assist inspectors in their investigations.