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Media Release

Parents urged to talk to kids after increase in wildlife cruelty reports

RSPCA WA is urging parents and guardians to speak with young people about respecting wildlife after receiving three reports of waterbirds being deliberately hooked or otherwise injured at lakes and wetlands during the recent school holidays.

Reports were received from locations in Ascot, East Perth and Iluka. They follow seven documented incidents of wildlife sustaining fish hook injuries at lakes and waterways in the City of Stirling between November 2024 and October 2025.

Three reports have RSPCA WA concerned that deliberately “fishing” for ducks and swans has become a trend among a small group of young people.

Following investigations into last year’s incidents, RSPCA WA worked directly with some of the young people involved and their parents, while also partnering with the City of Stirling to develop educational resources for families and schools.

Given the more recent reports, those resources are now being shared more broadly with local governments and schools.

RSPCA WA Chief Operating Officer Hannah Dreaver said the organisation wanted to prevent further harm to wildlife through education as well as enforcement.

"Our priority is protecting animals from unnecessary pain and suffering while helping young people understand the consequences of their actions.

"Most young people who fish do the right thing, but we've received enough reports over the past year to know this is an issue that deserves attention from families, schools and the wider community.

"Animals experience pain, fear and distress just as any other living creature does. Deliberately injuring wildlife is never acceptable.

"Parents play an incredibly important role. Simply having a conversation about treating animals with respect and fishing responsibly can make a real difference."

Ms Dreaver said RSPCA WA appreciated the collaborative response from local governments, wildlife rehabilitators and volunteers who had helped injured birds.

"Every injured bird represents the efforts of many people and we're grateful to organisations including Perth Wildlife Hospital and WA Seabird Rescue, together with local government rangers and WA Police, for the work they do responding to these incidents."



RSPCA WA is encouraging anyone who witnesses deliberate cruelty towards wildlife to report it as soon as possible, including where safe to do so, recording details that may assist investigators.

Under the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*, deliberately causing unnecessary harm to an animal is an offence that carries a maximum penalty of a \$50,000 fine and five years in prison.

ENDS

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Images relating to this media release can be found [here](#).

Recent reports:

8 July – report of approx. 8 boys aged 14-15 catch ducks and reeling them in at Lake Vasto East Perth.

11 July – duck found with a fishing hook, attached to fishing line, in its leg at Ascot Waters Marina. Approx 10 boys aged 15-17 seen at location the day before with fishing lines and loaves of bread.

17 July – report of a duck hooked at Sir James McCusker Park Iluka where 4 young boys were fishing.

