

## Rescue Kit Equipment

The following items are good things to keep in a rescue kit that can be kept in your car.

- **A heat source** - EG: a hot water bottle (wrapped and filled with hot water only – not boiling), grain filled bag, etc.
- **Thermometer** for checking temperature. Place probe near joey and place the thermometer unit where it can be easily seen.
- **Scissors.**
- **Antiseptic**, such as Dettol.
- **Pouches** (eg pillowslips), **towels, and blankets of assorted sizes.**
- **Torch.**
- **Milk replacer** (eg Di-Vetelact or Wombaroo. These can be purchased from most vets).
- **Electrolyte fluid**, such as Vitrate or Glucodine.
- **Bottles and teats.**
- **Syringes** (without the needle).
- **Disposable gloves.**
- **Paw paw ointment** (a great natural wound cleaner and healer).
- **Wet Ones** (alcoholic hand wipes to clean your hands after rescue).
- **Safety pins** (to pin pouch liners together).
- **Vet wrap** and assorted bandages.



Eastern Grey Kangaroo

## Fourth Crossing Wildlife

Website:

[www.members.optusnet.com.au/~fourth\\_crossing](http://www.members.optusnet.com.au/~fourth_crossing)

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promoting

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Brushtail Possum

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# How to safely remove a joey from the pouch of its dead mother



Brushtail Possum

*Did you know that a marsupial joey (eg: a kangaroo, possum or wombat) can live up to five days inside the pouch of its dead mother?*

So, if you see a dead native animal on the side of the road, or if you accidentally hit one while driving- or if your domestic pet brings home a dead possum - then you should always check the pouch - there may be a joey alive inside!

There are two ways you can help save a joey. Either put the mothers body in a box and take it to your local wildlife organisation or vet or follow these instructions to learn how to **safely** remove a joey from the pouch.

**Removing a joey from the pouch** is not as easy as it sounds. If the mother has already reached rigor mortis (stiffening of the body after death) the pouch opening may be quite small and tight and removing the joey could be difficult and may cause injury. Even if the body is still soft there may not be enough room to manoeuvre and free the joey without damaging it.

**In most situations it is better to use a pair of scissors** to cut the joey free - of course this can have its problems also.

**The best way to cut a joey out of the pouch** is to move the mother so that it is lying on its back with its hindlegs toward your body. Insert your hand, or at least a few fingers, into the pouch and lift pouch as high as you can. Make sure that your fingers lie between the scissor blades and the joey (this is where you may have problems - don't cut yourself or the joey!).



*Brushtail Possum*

**Cut very slowly** until you can see clearly and have enough space to gently remove the joey.

**Remember!** that **furless and just furred joeys have their lips fused** and are permanently attached to the teat - so if you find one at this stage you will need to cut the teat off the mother entirely. Cut the teat as close to the mother's body as you can and remove the joey with the teat still in the mouth.

**If you don't have a pair of scissors** and cannot cut the pouch open try to enclose the joey in your hand. Move your fingers to the end of the snout and gently push the sides of its mouth and then ease the teat out of the mouth. It must be noted that this action may rip and damage the mouth so be very careful.

**To remove the joey from the pouch** use a towel or some kind of cloth and glove it over your hand. Reach in very slowly and gently and try to envelop the joey. This action will also rub the mother's scent onto the towel which will help keep the joey calm after it has been removed. If the mother has been dead for some time and has a rotting smell it is best to avoid scenting the towel.

**As you pull the joey out of the pouch** move the towel up and over the joey.

**The towel, with the joey enclosed, can then be placed inside warmer wrapping.** The number of wrappings will depend on the size of the joeys.

**Small furless or just furred joeys will require more warmth than larger furred joeys.**



*Common Wombat*

**If you have a furless or just furred joey** try to pin the mother's teat to the towel so that the joey doesn't end up getting it stuck in the airway. Put the pin on the outside of the towel, away from fragile skin. The joey should release the teat after around 3 hours.

**A joey needs to be kept warm once you have removed it from the pouch.** If you have a heat source, such as a hot water bottle, wrap it in another towel and place it between the towel you have the joey wrapped in and the warm wrappings. Do not place a heat source directly next to the joey as it may cause burns or heat stress. Different joeys require different temperature ranges, **but for short term only** try to keep the joey at approximately 28° Celcius. Do not overheat!

**If you don't have any warm wrappings** or a heat source place a furred joey in a spot that will stay warm and is away from drafts. Place another towel over the joey so that it is in the dark and will feel secure.

**If you have a furless or just furred joey place it inside your clothes close to your chest** (still wrapped in the towel). The joey will get heat from your body and your heart beat will also calm the joey.

**Try to get the orphan to an experienced carer straight away as it will need specialised care.**

**If you can't find a carer** then take the joey to the closest veterinary clinic or police station and they may be able to find a carer for you.



*Common Wallaroo*

**To learn more about Australian native animals** talk to your local wildlife care group or individual carer or surf the world wide web. There is heaps of information out there.