

THURSDAY 7 MARCH, 2024

RACV TIPS TO AVOID WILDLIFE ON THE ROADS AHEAD OF LONG WEEKEND

RACV has issued safety advice for drivers who may encounter wildlife on the roads as they head away for the Labour Day long weekend.

Wildlife Victoria data revealed 10,643 native animals were reported to be hit by a vehicle on the state's roads during the 2022-2023 financial year, an increase of 15 per cent from the previous year.

The total number of wildlife hit by vehicles is also likely to be much higher, as many incidents are not registered with Wildlife Victoria.

Wildlife Victoria said this wasn't just a problem for regional or rural drivers, with incidents happening across the state including in metropolitan suburbs, with urbanisation pushing wildlife into more highly populated areas, resulting in more interactions with people and roads.

Insurance claims data from the RACV reveals just how prevalent the problem is, with over six thousand RACV collision claims involving native animals last year in Victoria.

RACV Head of Policy James Williams says it is important to know what to do should you come across wildlife while driving.

"The safest option is to plan your trip to avoid driving at dawn and dusk, when wildlife is often most active," Mr Williams said.

Of the 10,643 reported incidents, eastern grey kangaroos represented 65 per cent of animals struck. However, the casualties included a wide range of Australian species such as wombats, possums, koalas, echidnas and even birds like cockatoos and magpies.

How to avoid hitting wildlife and what to do if you do:

1. Look out for wildlife and drive at a safe speed that reduces your chance of hitting an animal. If you do spot an animal on the road while driving, slow down and prepare to brake safely. Avoid swerving as this could cause danger to yourself and other road users.
2. Avoid driving at dusk and dawn. This is when many native species are most active. If you do have to drive at this time, ensure you actively look ahead, reduce speed and use high beams in poor visibility – however ensure you dim them if you see a car approaching.

3. If you do hit wildlife, safely park your vehicle off the road, turn on your hazards and check that you and your passengers are unharmed before checking on the animal. If anyone is injured, call 000.
4. Call Wildlife Victoria on 03 8400 7300 to report the incident. Their Emergency Response Service will provide free advice and assistance, 24/7.
5. If you are unable to drive your vehicle, call RACV Emergency Roadside Assistance on 13 11 11. If you're not an Emergency Roadside Assistance Member, RACV can sign you up when you call and send one of our signature yellow patrol vans to help.
6. With RACV Comprehensive or Complete Care Car Insurance, you're covered for a range of incidents, including collisions with an animal.

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Further information

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Media enquiries

RACV Media

Phone: 0417 041 398 | **Email:** media@racv.com.au