

CARING FOR NATURE

Reducing roadkill



Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania

Produced in consultation with
Nature Conservation Branch, DPIWE



DEPARTMENT of TOURISM, PARKS
HERITAGE and the ARTS

Tasmania is home to many animals that are not found anywhere else in the world and also provides a refuge for many species that have become extinct or threatened with extinction on the mainland of Australia.

Each year millions of animals are killed, orphaned or injured on Tasmanian roads and many die a slow and painful death. Affected species range from Tasmanian devils to lizards, frogs and birds of prey, including several threatened species. Entire local populations have been known to become extinct due to roadkill. These collisions also result in human injury or death and costly property damage. Wildlife roadkill has a distinct negative effect on community morale and on tourism and Tasmania's 'clean green' image.

While preventing roadkill entirely is not realistic, we have the ability to strongly reduce the occurrence. There are several methods that can be used by road designers to reduce roadkill, but what works best is motorists being aware and taking action!

Why so much roadkill?

Tasmania's rich, diverse environment supports an abundance of small to medium sized animals. Many of Tasmania's native animals are active at night, often crossing or travelling along country roads or feeding on roadsides. They can be difficult to see and also behave unpredictably, as they are dazzled by headlights and each species responds differently to threats.



Eastern barred bandicoot

Roadkill incidents are more common in the following situations:

- Between dusk and dawn (Tasmanian mammals are all nocturnal).
- During summer when pouch young are venturing away from parents.
- Roads that cross or run close to creeks where animals come to drink.
- Areas with attractive roadside vegetation such as mown/slashed grass.
- Roads with steep banks, ditches or other barriers, which trap wildlife on the road.
- The inside of corners, where animals will run away from the vehicle in a direct line, which takes them onto the road.

	Drive slower at night. Most wildlife is active between dusk and dawn.
	Honk your horn to scare wildlife off the road.
	Please don't litter. Litter attracts animals to the road.
	Collisions with wildlife can also pose a risk to human safety and can cause damage to your vehicle.
	Be alert when driving at dusk, dawn and at night.

Roadsides make good territories due to plentiful resources (water in ditches, slashed vegetation, dead animals and food thrown from cars) so roads act as 'sinks': once one animal is killed, another will move in immediately to take advantage of the good territory.

Over the last few decades, the number of roadkills in Tasmania has increased due to increases in traffic, faster roads (straighter, wider and smoother surfaces), lower cars, and more new roads being constructed in country and wilderness areas.

Reducing the toll

There are a number of methods available to reduce roadkill, some of which have been implemented in Tasmania. These include:

- Reflectors, attached to guideposts which reflect headlights into the bush to deter animals from the road.
- Shelter on the roadsides for animals to hide in.
- Underpasses with 'funnel' fencing to encourage animals to cross underneath the road surface.
- Rope overpasses or even solid, vegetated overpasses.
- Escape routes that assist animals to cross barriers such as steep roadside banks so that they can get off the road when a vehicle approaches.
- Signage and rumble strips to alert drivers to wildlife.
- Reduction of vegetation and water to discourage animals from the roadsides
- Traffic slow points.
- Removal of carcasses from the roadsides to reduce deaths of scavengers.



How you can help?

The best way to reduce roadkill is for people to take responsibility for their own driving habits. You can do the following things to reduce your chance of hitting an animal:

1. Watch out for wildlife. There are more animals on the roads in the summer months when emerged pouch young are venturing away from their parents, and some animals are basking on the warm road surface. Roadkill occurs most often between dusk and dawn when nocturnal animals are on the move.

Identify roadkill hotspots.

If you drive a particular route regularly, you will become familiar with the places you normally see wildlife on the roads. When driving in unfamiliar territory, keep an eye out for the conditions listed on the previous page where roadkill is likely to occur.

2. Slow down. If you can't avoid driving at night, make sure that you leave enough time to drive slowly. Slowing down by at least 10 km/h (up to 35km/h on fast roads) will mean that you are more in control when you come across an animal, and will also give the animal more time to respond.
3. Honk your horn. This will scare animals off the road. make sure the animal is well off the road before you pass it.
4. If it is absolutely safe to do so, move dead animals off the road. This will reduce the attraction of scavengers such as quolls, devils and birds of prey. Do not stop your car unless it is clearly visible to traffic in both directions.
5. If you hit an animal or encounter an injured animal, please stop only if it is absolutely safe for you to do so. Wildlife can be aggressive when scared or injured. If this is the case, mark the spot and contact your nearest Parks and Wildlife office. See the Parks and Wildlife Service notesheet 'Caring for orphaned Wildlife' for further information.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

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