



# Western Ringtail Possum

## Legal Situation (Conservation Status)

## Fact Sheet 3

The **Wildlife Conservation Act 1950** and **Wildlife Regulations 1970** govern the activities of rehabilitators.

### Wildlife Conservation Act 1950

**Section 14:** Except to the extent which the Minister declares by notice published in the Government Gazette pursuant to the provisions of this section all fauna is wholly protected throughout the whole of the State at all times.

### Wildlife Conservation Regulations 1970 PART 4 - Keeping of fauna in captivity REG 28A Caring for sick or injured fauna

1. A person may temporarily keep in captivity or confinement fauna that is sick, diseased or injured or that is abandoned juvenile fauna, for the purpose of caring for it until it recovers or becomes capable of fending for itself.
2. A person who takes into captivity or confinement under subregulation (1) fauna that has been declared by the Minister, by notice in the Gazette, to be notifiable, must notify the Minister within the period specified in the notice that the person is keeping the fauna.
3. A person who keeps fauna under subregulation (1) must, as soon as practicable after it recovers or becomes capable of fending for itself, release it in a place where such fauna is ordinarily found in the wild.
4. If a person keeping fauna under subregulation (1) —
  - (a) is directed to do so by a wildlife officer; or
  - (b) is unable to release the fauna in accordance with subregulation (3), the person must
    - (c) give the fauna to a wildlife officer;
    - (d) with the approval of the Minister, give it to a person who is authorised under a licence to keep it; or
    - (e) if it is unlikely to recover or become able to fend for itself, have it humanely destroyed.
5. In subregulation (1) —
  - (a) abandoned juvenile fauna means fauna —
    - (i) of a species the juveniles of which are normally cared for by a parent;

- (b) that is of an age at which it would normally still be being cared for by a parent; and
- (c) that has been abandoned by its parents.

### Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2005

Anyone finding any injured, orphaned or dead animal from this Specially Protected Fauna list must immediately notify a DEC wildlife officer. Gunshot victims, suspected poisoning or other criminal activities also have to be reported.

Specially protected species are listed under one of four schedules:

Western Ringtail Possums are listed under Division 1 - Mammals

**Schedule 1** – Species that are rare or likely to become extinct.

Species listed under Schedule 1 are also referred to as Threatened Species for fauna.

DEC also classifies Threatened Fauna species into one of five IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and natural resources) categories:

- extinct (EX)
- extinct in the wild (EW)
- critically endangered (CR),
- endangered (EN)
- vulnerable (VU)

(all listed on Schedule 1)

These categories are determined by the total distribution of the species, and not just their distribution within Western Australia. This is why we need to know if the species is threatened in other states.

Western Ringtail Possums only occur in the SW of WA and are vulnerable.

The Western Ringtail Possum is also listed as 'Vulnerable'

- on the 2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species
- under the EPBC (Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation) Act 1999

### Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation in WA

This document based on accepted veterinary practice and decades of experience in wildlife care was first published by DEC in 2008.

It provides a code of ethics and 'minimum standards' for all aspects involved in wildlife care as guidance for rehabilitators.

It's a 'working document' and will be updated periodically. Rehabilitators are encouraged to give their feedback.

Its aim – just like ours – is "to help increase the number of rehabilitated wildlife that is successfully

returned to wild populations."

<http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/community-and-education/volunteer-programs/minimum-standards-for-wildlife-rehabilitation.html>

It is strongly recommended to download this document and have it at hand for future reference. Most experienced wildlife rehabilitators will already be meeting and probably exceeding any minimum standards. However, it is invaluable for new rehabilitators who may not be aware of the requirements of particular wildlife.