

Pets & heatwaves

Keep animals cool, hydrated and protected when temperatures rise.



Animal Care Australia

HEATWAVE ESSENTIALS

All pets need access to cool, shady areas and plenty of fresh, clean water. If you are feeling warm, chances are they are too.

It is so important to make sure you're all prepared during hot weather to care for your pets, livestock and even native wildlife.

Small pets and flat-faced dogs can be particularly susceptible to heat stress. Use familiar, gentle ways to help them cool down.

Species Specific Care:



IMPORTANT

Shade

Move enclosures out of direct sun as the shade moves.

Birds:

- ◆ House indoor birds in the coolest room, but not directly in front of a fan or air-conditioner. Use a spray bottle instead.
- ◆ For aviaries, provide fine misting sprays or sprinklers and keep them running until the extensive heat has faded.
- ◆ Provide ample water dishes, including shallow dishes for bathing. Do not saturate feathers, as this can cause shock.

Cats:

- ◆ Panting is not a good sign. If your cat begins to pant, contact a veterinarian immediately.
- ◆ Do not use ice-cold water or ice; this may worsen the problem. Apply a fan or fanning to maximise heat loss.
- ◆ Make a cool spot by filling a zip-lock bag about one-quarter full, removing air, sealing it and freezing it flat. Place it under a towel or sheet.
- ◆ Provide plenty of fresh drinking water and access to cool tiles or a well-ventilated space.

Dogs:

- ◆ Heat exhaustion can be dangerous—even fatal. Short-nosed breeds, obese, elderly, arthritic or respiratory-compromised dogs are at higher risk.
- ◆ Walk in the coolness of early morning or evening. Hot ground can seriously damage paws.
- ◆ If your dog seems uncomfortable, wet their feet and mist water onto their face. Do not use ice-cold water or ice.
- ◆ Apply a fan or fanning to maximise heat loss, and provide cool, well-ventilated spaces.

Small animals:

- ◆ Rabbits, guinea pigs, rats and mice need air circulation and do not cope well with heat. Ideally keep them indoors in the coolest room.
- ◆ Offer a frozen water bottle, damp towels, shade cloth and ice bricks covered in a tea towel. Refresh water regularly.
- ◆ Do not put rabbits in cold water or directly in front of a fan or air-conditioner. Rats and mice should not be kept outdoors.
- ◆ Small mammals may start stressing above 24°C and can suffer heat stroke above 30°C.

IMPORTANT

Water

Provide multiple large containers; place them in shade and add ice.

Reptiles:

- ◆ Enclosures without sufficient airflow or a cooler location can kill reptiles quickly. Geckos in particular do not do well in extreme temperatures.
- ◆ On extreme-temperature days, turn off heating and lights.
- ◆ Provide frozen water bottles or a shallow dish of water so reptiles can regulate their body temperature.



Horses:

- ◆ Provide shade throughout the day and make sure your horse will not run out of water.
- ◆ Hosing can help cool a hot horse; you do not need to scrape them.
- ◆ Quick treatment: move the animal to a cool shaded area, use Vytrate to replace lost electrolytes, and wet the animal all over with a towel—including armpits, under the stomach, between the legs and neck. Repeat until the skin has cooled.

**Native wildlife:**

- ◆ Ensure swimming pools are covered; many animals drown trying to access pool water.
- ◆ Flying fox colonies can be affected by a lack of fruit, blossoms and water. Hanging apples can help, but keep them out of reach of climbing cats.
- ◆ If an animal needs assistance, call your nearest wildlife carer

VETERINARY ADVICE

If you are unsure about the health of your pet during hot days, seek veterinary advice immediately.

NEVER LEAVE ANIMALS IN VEHICLES

Not even with the windows down. Heat stress and death can occur within six minutes.

JOIN ANIMAL CARE AUSTRALIA

Animal Care Australia invites you, your club or group to join us.

ACA has quickly established itself as a reputable experience-based animal welfare organisation.

ACA is comprised of volunteers who devote many hours of their time responding to local, state and national animal welfare issues. Your input into this process is crucial.

Join ACA and help us continue to advocate for all of our animals.

ACA offers memberships for small and large animal organisations, as well as individual Supporters and businesses.

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