



## There's something in my roof; how to be sure and what to do

The Western Ringtail Action Group (WRAG), carer groups and local vets often receive reports from residents regarding sick or dead possums being found in backyards. This may be due to a sickness, or from mice and rat baits used to control rodents. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers to help protect possums if you are considering using rodent baits or if you suspect there may be a possum living in your roof.

### How do I tell if there are possums or rodents in my roof?

To avoid any native animal from eating baits meant for rodents, WRAG received the following recommendations from the Department Parks and Wildlife, Busselton:

- If possible get into your roof space to determine whether the problem is mice, rats and/or possums.
- Look carefully for droppings (scats); possum scats are 1- 2cm long and 0.5-1cm wide. Mice and rat scats are generally skinnier with pointy ends.



Brushtail possum scat



Ringtail possum scat



Black Rat Scat



House mouse scats

- The lingering smell of rats and mice is quite distinctive from possums.
- Rats and mice chew electrical wires while possums (usually) do not.

### Where should baits be placed if I have rodents and/or possums in my roof?

If you think you have mice or rats but are concerned possums may also enter your roof space, try to place baits where possums cannot access them. For example, plastic bait boxes can be purchased where baits are placed inside, possums are then unable to get to the baits. A piece of narrow poly pipe can also be used if tightly secured horizontally to a beam and a possum cannot get to the bait inside the pipe. Wax baits are recommended as they are not scattered by rodents. Baits can also be placed either inside the house or under the house. Quendas (bandicoots) need to be considered prior to placing under the house.

Small plastic traps (available from pet shops or rural stockists) can also be used. If possums or other native animals are unintentionally caught they can then be released. Under the Wildlife Conservation Act it is an offence to intentionally trap or harm native wildlife and any wildlife caught must be released immediately. Products are also available that repel rodents rather than using baits.



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## How do I prevent possums from re-entering my roof space?

All access points into the roof space need to be identified and blocked off from possums. Once you've located an entry point (you may see scratch marks, urine stains and/or fur), wait until after dusk, then enter the roof space and corner the possum at the access point. At this point you can block the access point(s) as best as possible and then install a permanent, sturdy barrier the following day (when you can see better!) (Courtesy Possum Centre, Busselton and Living with Possums, Land for Wildlife brochure). To prevent possums climbing onto the roof you may need to trim back overhanging branches close to your house.

## Who can help get a possum out of my roof space?

If you do find a possum in your roof, you may choose to contact:

Southcape Pest Management in Dunsborough. This company is licenced to remove possums from roof spaces and block up eaves. Contact 9755 3925 or [admin@southcapepest.com.au](mailto:admin@southcapepest.com.au)

## What should I do if I find a sick or dead possum?

If people find sick, injured or "at risk" possums, they are able to take the possums to a local vet for assessment. Local vets have kindly offered to assess possums to ensure our local population of Western Ringtail Possums is maintained. Veterinarians will then pass sick or injured animals onto wildlife rehabilitators who will care for them until they can be released.

Alternatively, contact the Department Parks and Wildlife office, 97525555 during office hours, or the Wildcare Helpline, FAWNA or Possum Centre for advice and assistance (see numbers below).

If dead possums are found relatively fresh with no particular signs of injuries or obvious cause of death, they can be placed in a plastic bag and refrigerated until taken to the Busselton Vets for further investigation. Any alive, sick, injured or dead possums should be reported to Department of Parks and Wildlife on 9752 5533. Or [click here](#) to download a fauna report form.

The information gathered from these reports from the community helps to build the health profile of our possums and identify risks to population survival.

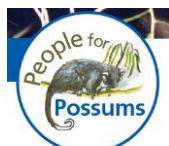
## Where can I get further information?

If you require further information or advice please contact:

Department of Parks and Wildlife on 9752 5533 or 97525555, GeoCatch on 9781 0111, FAWNA 0438 526 660 or your local vet.

*Information in this article was provided in most parts by Cherie Kemp, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Busselton.*

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Western Ringtail  
Action Group