

Wildlife Act Review

Submission Comment 146:

Contributor: Lawrence Pope - President of Friends of Bats and Bushcare Inc

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Eco-tourism involving wildlife
- Rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned wildlife

Comment

Dear Review,

Barbed wire is the second biggest man made "obstacle" killer of wildlife due to entanglement. It takes a heavy toll on both flying foxes, owls and other birds and also macropods (kangaroos and wallabies) . Several hundred entanglements are reported by Wildlife Victoria and other wildlife agencies each year. Around eighty percent result in fatalities - either animal is dead or must be euthanized. A significant percentage of animals are caught and die in barbed wire that is "non-functional", that is it performs no security or animal husbandry function (eg. Wire fence runs for a few metres and then is open at one or both ends. Or fence is largely collapsed or otherwise redundant.) It is also the case that certain fenced areas are prone to capturing wildlife e.g. hilltop barbed wire fencing.

Observation: Barbed wire is invisible at night, in smoke or water, and in low light. It represents a lethal, permanent threat and cause of death to wildlife and livestock (and potentially humans). Barbed wire can be made safer by 1. Removal and /or replacement with an alternative type of fence or fencing wire or 2. by Marking the top two wires with Bright Tape (Eg. Bear Cloth tape) or other markers to make it visible. NB. Marking wires is very cheap at a couple of cents per metre using a standard yellow or white cloth tape and has an estimated life of around five years.

Recommendation: That the Wildlife Act make it an offence to allow barbed wire upon which animals have been entangled to remain "untreated". That is it must be "treated" (undergo hazard mitigation) either by removal or replacement with round wire / or alternative fence type, or by marking the dangerous section of the wire with cloth tape tabs every 300mm along the area of the problem (at least 50 metres).

Provided June 17/2021