

# Cats and dogs wreak havoc on wildlife

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**A SPATE of horrific attacks on koalas and other native wildlife has the RSPCA pleading with pet owners in south-east Queensland to lock up their dogs and cats.**

In the last three weeks alone, more than 100 native animals have been brought into the RSPCA Queensland's Wildlife Hospital at Wacol.

Some animals, including a number of koalas, had their internal organs crushed by dogs. Others suffered serious infections from cat scratches.

Wildlife Veterinarian Tania Bishop says while most people think cats are responsible for the vast majority of attacks, this isn't the case.

"Dogs do as much damage to native wildlife," she told AAP.

"Dogs just don't grab either - they grab and tear and shake. They cause a lot of internal damage."

Dogs tend to attack larger animals such as snakes, bluetongue lizards, possums and koalas, whereas cats prey on smaller species like birds, marsupials and baby possums.

Most of the over 4000 native animals brought into the animal hospital at Wacol each year are either victims of domestic animal attacks or hit and runs.

Dr Bishop said this time of year is particularly bad for attacks as many native species are giving birth.

She urged pet owners to lock up their cats and dogs, particularly at night.

She said responsible pet ownership was imperative as urbanisation brought native wildlife closer to residential areas.

"As habitats get destroyed and people live closer to koalas it (attacks) becomes a real problem," Dr Bishop said.

"New developments tend to level everything, leaving nothing for native wildlife which forces them to live closer to residential areas."