



IRRESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERS PUT ROOS AT RISK

Wednesday 16 January 2008

Local dog owners are being urged to keep their pets under control in Darebin Parklands following numerous recent incidents of dogs harassing the park's resident kangaroos.

On Tuesday (15/1/08) a local photographer captured images of pet dogs in an on-leash area of the parklands chasing an Eastern Grey kangaroo, forcing it to seek refuge in a polluted water treatment pond.

"Many of the dog owners that use the parklands understand what a wonderful privilege it is to have these beautiful animals living so close to a suburban area," Darebin Parklands Association president Ingrid Svendsen said.

"Sadly though a number of irresponsible dog owners are ignoring the prominent warning signs in the park and flouting the law, allowing their animals to chase and harass the kangaroos.

"Darebin Parklands is a designated conservation bushland area and is home to endangered birds, echidnas, flying foxes, reptiles and possums, as well as the visiting kangaroos.

"While there are some off-leash areas in the park this does not mean that dog owners can simply let their dogs run wild. Only dogs that are within sight of their owner at all times and will respond to voice command are permitted off-leash.

"For the safety of all wildlife, including the kangaroos, we implore dog owners to keep their dogs on leash and under control."

Two kangaroos, forced into suburban areas because of the drought and habitat destruction, have been intermittently living in the Darebin Parklands since before Christmas.

The park's rangers have received numerous reports of the kangaroos being chased by dogs and harassment is on the rise as more people return from holidays and bring their dogs to the park.

Last October an Eastern Grey kangaroo was allegedly mauled to death by two pet dogs in the parklands.

The Darebin Parklands Association has welcomed Darebin Council's commitment to investigate non-wildlife habitat areas as alternative dog off-leash zones.

The council is also stepping up patrols in the parklands by animal management officers at dawn and dusk when the kangaroos are most active.

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