

Injured wedge-tailed eagle released back into the wild

Officers from the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) yesterday released an injured wedge-tailed eagle back into the wild at Wistow, near Mount Barker in the Adelaide Hills.

Donna Jensen, Acting Curator at Cleland Wildlife Park, said the eagle was rescued from the Strathalbyn Road near Wistow by a member of the public on Monday.

"The eagle had been injured so it was taken to the Mount Barker Vet Clinic, and from there it was transported to Cleland Wildlife Park for further examination," Ms Jensen said.

"We decided yesterday morning that the eagle was ready to be returned to the wild, so we took it to Wistow where it was released at about 11 am.

"It's a great outcome and I would like to thank all involved in the rescue, especially the woman who found the injured eagle.

"It's also a timely reminder to the community to take care to avoid wildlife, including birds, when driving," she said.

The wedge-tailed eagle is Australia's largest living bird of prey. Historically it was regarded by many farmers as a pest, so was often killed.

The wedge-tailed eagle is now protected in South Australia under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. Under the Act, it is an offence to poison, trap or take a protected animal without lawful excuse, with maximum penalties of up to \$10,000 in fines or imprisonment for 2 years.

Recently another wedge-tailed eagle was found near Riverton with jesses secured to its legs, indicating it had been kept in captivity for falconry purposes. DEH is asking anyone with information about this eagle to contact the DEH Burra office on 8892 3025.

DEH is also calling for information about the death of a white-bellied sea eagle, Australia's second largest eagle, at Cape Bauer near Streaky Bay in November last year. Anyone who is able to assist can call Mr Ross Belcher, Regional Conservator, West Region, at the DEH Port Lincoln office on 8688 3111.

Editors' note: Photos of the release of the wedge-tailed eagle are available on request.

Media contacts

Donna Jensen

Acting Curator
Cleland Wildlife Park
Phone 08 8130 9003

Stephen Cox

Media and PR Officer
Corporate Communications
Phone 08 8204 9109
Mobile 0423 822 992

www.environment.sa.gov.au