

DOUG the DARTER'S

DICE with DEATH

If we don't put our rubbish in the bins provided, it can end up in our waterways and harm the animals living there. Please use the bins and help save our wildlife.



The Australian Darter is a large, slim waterbird with a long snake-like neck and a sharp pointed beak. They are found in wetlands and coastal waters throughout Australia. The Darter catches fish and turtles using its long, sharp beak to pierce its prey, then flicking it out of the water before swallowing it.

Doug the Darter was found by Swan River Trust (SRT) officers with a large piece of discarded rag stuck in his beak and was struggling to walk.



SRT officers managed to catch him and wrapped him in a towel to minimise stress while they examined him and cut off most of the rag. Darters have 'teeth like' projections on the inside surface of their beaks that face backward. This meant the rag was stuck and could not be completely removed without causing Doug further stress.

Doug had to be taken to the Perth Zoo Veterinary Hospital where he was treated for stress and dehydration, as well as having the rag removed under anaesthetic. He was also x-rayed to check for other items like hooks and fishing line which are commonly ingested by seabirds, and are a common cause of death.

After his treatment, Doug was able to be returned to the wetland where he was found. He stretched his wings and was last seen taking to the skies.

Seabirds and other animals are often found entangled in fishing line and other forms of marine debris. Many eat plastic bags floating in the water, mistaking them for jelly fish. Litter such as this blocks their digestive tract and results in a slow and painful death. It is important that **NO LITTER** ends up in our waterways to protect the birds and marine animals that live in and around them.



Doug's dice with death is a reminder to take **ALL** your rubbish home or place it in the bins provided.



If you see an injured animal along the rivers within the Swan and Canning Riverpark, call the WILDCARE helpline on 9474 9055

For more information visit:

www.aaeewa.org.au

www.rowa.org.au/pr_ttrs_pollution.php

www.environment.gov.au/coasts/pollution/marine-debris/index.html

