

Projectiles taking aim at birds

RSPCA South Australia calling for locals to be vigilant

Adelaide residents are being asked to be on the alert for people cruelly injuring birds, after two in the last month have been shot with ‘darts’.

Earlier this month a native pigeon was reported wandering around in Christie Downs with a homemade dart through its neck, made of a 14cm nail with paper wrapped around the end.

RSPCA Rescue Officers attended the scene and with the help of people at a nearby local business, later captured the bird.

RSPCA South Australia Chief Executive Officer Paul Stevenson said RSPCA vets were able to safely remove the dart and provide care at our Lonsdale shelter until the bird was ready for release.

“Somehow, very luckily, the dart had only pierced the pigeon’s skin and did not cause major internal damage,” he said.

“The dart appears to have been crudely designed for the purpose of injuring or killing an animal; it’s horrifying that people would go to such deliberate lengths.”

This was followed by a report of a duck spotted swimming in a pond at St Clair with what is believed to be a blow dart visibly shot through its neck. An RSPCA Rescue Officer captured the duck and removed the 8cm dart, which luckily had only perforated the skin rather than the skull. After five days of care the duck was safely released.

“We are encouraging people to be vigilant and keep an eye out for birdlife that may be the target of attacks,” Mr Stevenson said.

“Anyone who witnesses someone injuring birds, or finds one in need, should call RSPCA South Australia’s cruelty and rescue hotline immediately on 1300 4 777 22.

“The maximum penalty for aggravated animal cruelty offences under the Animal Welfare Act is a \$50,000 fine or four years’ imprisonment,” he warned.

Background:

This follows the attack on an Adelaide Hills duck in April this year, photographed by multiple witnesses with the tip of a knife embedded in its head. RSPCA Rescue Officers attended the scene, however despite an extensive search across a number of days the duck was unable to be located. It is thought that the knife may have dislodged naturally leaving the duck with, hopefully, recoverable injuries.

In September last year, a Pacific Black Duck appeared to have been deliberately shot through the neck with a 10-cm long rusty nail affixed with a paper cone. The duck managed to survive for a number of days with the nail lodged in its neck, spotted in both Edinburgh and Salisbury North, until it was captured by an RSPCA Rescue Officer. Sadly, due to the extent of its injuries, the bird was humanely euthanised.

To date in these cases RSPCA has not received adequate information regarding persons of interest to have success in animal welfare investigations.

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