

OAKLEIGH SOUTH



South Oakleigh Wildlife Shelter's Michelle Phillips with a rescued possum.

## Heatwave woes

Julia Rabar

HAVING spent 20 hours a day tending to sick and injured animals during Melbourne's recent heatwave, Michelle Phillips is bracing for the return of extreme heat this week.

The South Oakleigh Wildlife Shelter owner was over-run earlier this month when the temperature soared above 40C for four days in a row.

"It's killing them, possums are dropping from trees everywhere," Ms Phillips said.

Ms Phillips said she was "terrified" for the animals.

"It's the worst summer since Black Saturday," Ms Phillips said.

### IN HOT WEATHER

**DON'T** hose possums down  
**LEAVE** out bowls of water  
**IF YOU** see a possum on the ground, put it in a box and bring it indoors  
**RELEASE** them at night from where they came from  
**HELP** the South Oakleigh Wildlife Shelter: [sows.org.au](http://sows.org.au)

Ms Phillips spent the last of her rent money on new cages to accommodate the influx of possums and flying foxes during the heatwave.

At one point, she had 60 possums, 16 flying foxes, and about 20 birds at the shelter, with another 35 possums waiting at local vets.

She was spending up to \$175 a day just on rehydra-

tion fluid for the animals. Ms Phillips said she was desperate for donations and volunteers just to stay afloat.

But heat is not the only thing causing animals distress. The remnants of fun summer activities, such as fishing and flying kites, have had detrimental effects on wildlife.

On Monday last week, a distressed cormorant was found tangled in kite string at Jells Park in Wheelers Hill.

It was rescued by Nigel Williamson, of Nigel's Animal Rescue after someone raised the alarm.

Mr Williamson said it was the worst case of entanglement he'd seen in 29 years on the job.