

## TRANSPORTING SICK OR INJURED SEABIRDS

All seabirds see humans as a threat and be extremely stressed. This is why it's important to limit your handling of the bird to what is strictly necessary and to follow the instructions below. Remember the golden rules of DARK AND QUIET.

### Preparing a container for the seabird

- Choose a box large enough that the bird cannot see out of it and can turn around inside with ease.
- Air flow around the bird is very important as **seabirds are very prone to overheating**.<sup>1</sup>
- Make sure there are ventilation holes in the lid of the box but not the sides.<sup>2</sup>
- Place one or two folded towels in the bottom of the box. If the weather is hot, one of these towels can be lightly dampened to help prevent overheating.
- If the bird is very weak or unable to sit up, roll another towel into a firm sausage and bend it into a horseshoe shape. Place this in the centre of the box to provide support for the weak bird, reduce stress and make breathing easier.

### Picking up a seabird

- Use a towel to pick up the bird, ensuring that you fully cover the head, keeping the eyes covered at all times.<sup>3</sup>
- Do not hold the beak closed (if you do, the bird will not be able to breathe).
- Hold the bird at (your) waist level to prevent your face or throat being injured.
- Keep the head held away from your body to avoid being injured.
- Keep the wings folded against the sides of the body<sup>4</sup>
- Place the bird in the middle of the box (on the horseshoe) and then remove the towel used to pick up the bird. Close the lid. A damp towel may be used to cover the box and keep it cool.

### Securing the box in the car

- Ensure the box is sitting in the shaded side of the car during the journey.<sup>5</sup>
- Put a seat belt around the box so that it does not move around during the journey.
- Do not place the box in the boot of a car or outside the car (i.e., in the tray of a ute or in a trailer).

### Travelling with the bird

- Keep the bird in a dark and quiet environment.
- Turn off music or radio in the car.
- Avoid sudden noises such as slamming doors or using the horn.
- Avoid conversation (do not talk to the bird).
- Do not let children play with or around the bird.
- Do not smoke in the car.
- Do not transport birds with other animals in the car.<sup>6</sup>
- Proceed directly to the vet or seabird carer, without delay or stops.

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<sup>1</sup> Never place a hot water bottle or other heat source in with the bird.

<sup>2</sup> Holes in the sides of the box can damage feathers, and the bird will be more stressed if it can see out of the box.

<sup>3</sup> Adrenalin will enable even a very weak bird to fight and cause injuries to itself or the handler, so covering the eyes of the bird helps protect both bird and handler.

<sup>4</sup> This is to avoid damaging the wings and prevent the bird from escaping.

<sup>5</sup> The inside of a car can heat up rapidly, and air conditioning may not reach inside the box. Even if the outside of the box feels cool to the touch, the inside may be too hot.

<sup>6</sup> The presence (or even just the smell) of pets will cause extreme stress to the bird.