# Fencing for conservation

Fencing can be a useful tool for managing habitat. It can help manage livestock, introduced pests, and human traffic, reducing the impact of threats. However, fences can also pose risks to wildlife. This resource outlines key principles for using fences to manage habitat.

## Location and habitat

This information is relevant across Victoria.

## General information

- Fencing can be an effective tool for managing habitat to prevent disturbance and degradation by animals and humans
- Fences can prevent or manage livestock access to habitat, managing grazing, erosion, trampling and spread of weeds
- Fencing can help manage introduced and native herbivores, although it is not as effective as other control methods
- Fences can be used to control access by people and vehicles
- Fencing poses risks to wildlife, including entanglement and restricting movement across landscapes
- Wildlife-friendly fencing can be used to manage risks to wildlife
- New technologies like virtual fencing (using GIS to regulate movement of livestock) may be suitable
- Predator-proof fencing can protect wildlife from introduced predators
- Check state and local fencing regulations

## Methods

- Create a plan for the entire property, including priority areas such as remnant habitat, wetlands and streams

**Types of fences**

- Consider the type of fences suitable for your property
- Electric fences may be cheaper but require more maintenance and create a barrier to wildlife
- Standard farm fences with wire strands or box wire generally do not exclude wildlife

**Wildlife-friendly fencing**

- Construct fences to allow wildlife to pass through and move between habitat
- Leave a 50 cm gap between ground and first rail or strand
- Use box wire or space strands and rails at least 30 cm apart
- Build fences no higher than 1.2 m to allow kangaroos to jump over
- Plant vegetation on both sides of fence

**Barbed wire**

- Barbed wire poses a significant risk to wildlife. Animals become trapped in the wire and die from injuries, exhaustion or starvation
- It is a particular risk around areas that wildlife use such as waterways, ponds and ridge-tops
- Use a plain wire rather than barbed wire for the top two strands of the fence
- Where barbed wire is needed, install reflective materials or wrap the top strand

## Maintenance and monitoring

- Monitor fences regularly for damage from fallen trees and livestock
- Monitor weeds and other impacts in fenced areas
- Check fences for impacts on wildlife, and consider modifying in high-use areas
- Work with neighbours and other landholders on boundary fences

## Further information

If you have a conservation covenant, please consult with your Trust for Nature regional staff member to ensure land management activities are in line with your covenant deed.

For further advice and support, please contact Trust for Nature.

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## Safety

Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when undertaking land management. Follow all label instructions on equipment and local regulations. Be mindful of weather conditions. Do not conduct land management on days of extreme or catastrophic fire danger or total fire ban.

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