

KANGAROOS – A USER’S GUIDE

How do you move an 80kg kangaroo? Well, surprisingly, the answer is ... quite easily.

Having worked as a volunteer for over three years with the Researchers from the University of Sydney, there are a few ‘tricks of the trade’ that all members should know.

Under no circumstance should you sound your cart horn or use an air horn to move the Kangaroos.

Trick No.1: Use your umbrella for more than just rain.

Opening and closing an umbrella quickly, whilst moving towards a single or mob of kangaroos is the best technique for moving animals safely and effectively. The animals are startled by the sound and rapid movement. It also puts a protective barrier between you and the animals. Once one bolts, the whole mob is likely to follow.

Trick No.2: Do not approach animals from the front.

Always approach kangaroos from the rear or the opposite side from the direction you would like the mob to move. e.g. off the fairway and into the bushes. If you would like the animals to move to your right, approach them from your left. Kangaroos cannot walk backwards. (If you see one moon walking backwards, take a video. It’ll be a first and you’ll make a fortune on YouTube).

Throwing sticks or clubs or thumping the ground at animals is ineffective and can injure animals and should not be done. If a golf cart is used to move animals, please do so at slow speed. Oh ... by the way, shouting “shoo” only makes your partners, and the kangaroos, laugh.

Be aware that a frontal approach can leave a kangaroo no escape route and can also be misinterpreted by the animal as mimicking the confrontational behaviour of another male kangaroo. Remember, as far as kangaroos go: “Side is safe, rear is recommended”.

Trick No.3 Please move animals before you play your shot.

It’s easy to avoid injuring kangaroos on our course. It takes only a minute or two of your time but can save hours of work by the Pro Shop staff, animal wildlife rescuers, Police and the time and expense of vets in having to euthanise struggling, injured and frightened animals.

If there is a single kangaroo or a mob twenty or even thirty metres directly in front of you, please take the time to move them prior to playing your golf shot. If you think it is even possible you might hit a kangaroo with a forceful ball, please flush the animals using the umbrella technique. You will find that if you are using an umbrella you do not have to walk all the way to the mob before they move. And this simple act helps following groups as well.

Despite their size and strength, kangaroo’s legs and the bones are quite vulnerable to golf ball strike. A fractured skull or a broken leg means an animal must be captured (if possible), transported to a vet and euthanized. Volunteers do this work National Parks do not assist. Large, immobile and injured animals necessitate Police being withdrawn from normal duties and are then required to shoot the animal on site. It’s dangerous, time consuming work that can be avoided by a minute or two of simple ‘umbrella work’ by a thoughtful group of golfers.

Trick No.4: A Final Tip:

A ‘growling’ kangaroo, rather than being interpreted as an aggressive animal, is in effect simply warning a golfer that the kangaroo is feeling threatened by the golfer’s close presence. My experience has been that they are often injured, old animals or arthritic and cannot move quickly or are in pain when forced to move. I’m sure some of our members will empathise. Clearly, it is best to move away from the animal in this instance.

The Eastern Grey kangaroos on our course are wild animals. With wild animals weighing up to 80kgs, there is always a potential danger and all animals should be treated with caution and all golfers should proceed in a safe manner.

Safety is paramount. And now you know the ‘tricks of the kangaroo trade’.

Written by: Phil Murray aka Kangaroo Phil