

Calling the Fire Service

Although the rescuing of trapped animals by the fire service is derided by the tabloids there is a good reason for them to respond...this is that caring members of the public will try to rescue a trapped animal themselves if no other help is available and can get themselves into a hazardous situation.

Anton Phillips, animal rescue specialist at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, said: "If we don't rescue that animal somebody else will or will try to, I've seen people have their arms trapped in drains trying to rescue ducklings and we've actually had to dig the road up to get the person out."

The fire service has the equipment and the techniques to deal with situations where animals are trapped and will often respond to an emergency call for a trapped animal when nothing more serious is happening. Some services regard these call outs as a useful training exercise...however some will only respond to a call from the RSPCA.

Although the press makes a big thing of trapped pigeons being rescued by the fire service, there have only been 159 recorded incidents in the last three years. This is a breakdown of the animals rescued by the fire service in that period::

- More than 2400 cats, 2180 dogs, and 1700 horses
- Two thousand and ninety birds, including 1244 seagulls and 159 pigeons, 57 swans and 12 parrots
- Twenty-six foxes, 19 squirrels, seven ferrets and seven badgers
- Ten hamsters, 15 snakes, 11 fish
- Seven dolphins or marine mammals
- Five seals, three bats, three chinchillas, two iguanas, one raccoon, one chameleon, one snail

Before calling the fire service please make absolutely certain that the pigeon needs rescuing and get full details of the location.

On mobiles you can use **112** as well as **999** for emergency calls.

If the fire service responds to a call, please remember to write a letter to the service praising the team that attended.