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Healesville Sanctuary vets shocked to find injured koala carrying a joey

- by: John Dagge
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Catherine the koala after surgery at the Healesville Sanctuary. Picture: Rob Leeson

Source: Herald Sun

STAFF at Healesville Sanctuary found more than they were looking for when they X-rayed a koala injured after being hit by a car.

As well as identifying a badly broken left arm, the X-ray also uncovered a four-month-old joey still being suckled by its mother.

"We often do X-rays and you can get a shock," sanctuary veterinarian Kathryn Stalder said.

"It's a pleasant surprise, but it certainly heightens the anxiety regarding the treatment and just making sure mother and baby survive."

Catherine, as the koala has been named, was found injured on the side of a road on the Mornington Peninsula. She was taken to the sanctuary by local wildlife carer Jennie Bryant.

"She was in a bad way," Ms Bryant said. "We could feel a break in her arm, but we didn't realise she had a joey."

On Wednesday, Catherine had two metal plates and 13 screws inserted into her arm in a three-hour operation carried out by a team of veterinarians from the sanctuary and the Melbourne Veterinary Specialist Centre.

Joey Arnold stayed in his mother's pouch.

Carers are confident Catherine will make it back into the wild.

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