

Swans' lives take a dive

Kelly Ryan

OUR beautiful black swans are under siege.

One was savaged to death by a dog at Albert Park yesterday.

Only hours earlier another was released after surgery to remove a fishhook from its neck.

Life-threatening daily hazards facing the birds include botulism from dirty water, and broken bones from flying into power lines and being hit by cars.

Hobsons Bay Wildlife Shelter operator Mandy Hall said swans were being killed and injured at alarming rates. She was taking three into care a week.

"I had one recently that was hit by a car driven by a hoon who lost control in Laverton, mounted the kerb and mowed down a swan standing on the grass," Ms Hall said.

It wasn't all bad news for swans this week, though.

Ms Hall released a swan on Wednesday that had been caught at Docklands with a fishhook in its neck.

It was treated at Port Melbourne Veterinary Clinic.

And electricity provider Powercor has paid \$9000 to install bird diverters on power lines in Altona Meadows to stop swans hitting the wires as they swoop down to Laverton Creek.



Lift-off: Vet Julie Paris and Kara McMullan check a swan before its release at Williamstown, after a fishhook was removed from its neck (inset). Pictures: CHRIS SCOTT