

Code of Practice for Wildlife Rehabilitation in Western Australia

March 2020

VERSION 1



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Conservation and Attractions**



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Preamble

This Code of Practice (the Code) aims to ensure that the activities of all parties involved in the rehabilitation of native animals in Western Australia result in the best possible conservation and animal welfare outcomes for rehabilitated animals and the wild populations they are returned to.

People possessing live fauna for rehabilitation have responsibilities under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, the Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018 and the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*.

The Code emphasises the responsibility that people and organisations involved in the rehabilitation and release of injured or abandoned fauna have to ensure that:

- conservation benefits are maximised,
- adverse ecological outcomes are avoided,
- animal welfare meets acceptable standards, and
- risks to human health and safety are minimised.

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1. General Information

1.1 Legislation

Fauna is defined under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) as an animal that belongs to a native species or taxa. All fauna in Western Australia, including birds, mammals, reptiles amphibians, and some fish and invertebrates are protected under the Act. The term wildlife is also used in this document and has the same definition. Injured fauna under the BC Act means fauna that is sick, injured or diseased. Abandoned fauna under the BC Act means fauna that is of a species and age that would normally be cared for by a parent and has been abandoned by its parents.

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) is the agency responsible for authorising the take, disturbance and possession of fauna, as well as the assessment and licensing for these purposes, including wildlife rehabilitation. Licensed individuals or entities are referred to in this document as 'licence holders'.

Under the Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018, injured or abandoned fauna that require assistance must be rehabilitated under the guidance of a licenced rehabilitator unless the animal is not being kept for more than 72 hours and is being released at the place from where it was originally taken. A licence must be obtained where fauna is to be held for more than 72 hours. The relevant licence for this activity is regulation 35 *Fauna Possessing (other purposes) Licence*. However, this licence type provides for a range of different activities so the 'fauna possessing (other purposes) licence for rehabilitating fauna for release into the wild' is hereafter referred to as a Fauna Rehabilitation Licence. In addition, there is a requirement for "notifiable species" (which includes all threatened and specially protected species and species that require specialised care as listed in Schedule 6 of the regulations) to be reported to the department within 24 hours of a person taking possession of the animal.

The *Animal Welfare Act 2002*¹ (AWA) is also relevant to the practice of wildlife rehabilitation. People intending to become licensed or intending on becoming a member of an organisation that is licensed to rehabilitate injured or abandoned wildlife should become familiar with the AWA. The AWA provides for the welfare, safety and health of animals, the use of animals for scientific purposes, and for related purposes. The AWA is administered by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), but other agencies and organisations also have roles and responsibilities in administering and enforcing the AWA. These include DBCA, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Western Australia (RSPCA), local government rangers and the Western Australian Police.

DBCA is responsible for administration of this Code. There are other Acts and legislative instruments that may make provisions about, or affect certain aspects of wildlife rehabilitation, such as local government bylaws regarding the keeping of animals. People rehabilitating fauna should ensure that they are operating within these laws. This Code does **not** exempt a person or other entity from compliance with any Act, Regulation or other statutory instrument.

¹ Western Australian legislation is available from <https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/home.html>

1.2 The Code

This Code applies to all individuals, organisations and members of organisations operating under a Fauna Rehabilitation Licence as a condition of that license. A person or organisation engaging in wildlife rehabilitation (beyond the initial 72hr period) must be licensed. It is the responsibility of the licence holder to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Code. A wildlife rehabilitator may only rehabilitate species for which they hold a relevant licence. If the rehabilitator is a member of a licenced rehabilitation organisation, they will require the approval of the organisation to rehabilitate that particular species.

Minimum enclosure specifications (Appendix A) set the minimum standards for enclosures and will have immediate effect from the date the Code is published for any new enclosures being built or purchased. Existing enclosure facilities must be upgraded to meet the minimum enclosure size requirements within 24 months of the date the Code is published.

This Code is current at the time of publication and may be subject to periodic review and updates.

1.3 Principles underpinning this Code

The following fundamental principles underpin this Code. These principles should be applied to all aspects of the rescue, rehabilitation and release of injured and abandoned fauna. Appropriate application of these principles will assist wildlife rehabilitators and organisations in complying with this Code.

Avoid harm: in rescuing, rehabilitating, and returning fauna to the wild, there is a risk that adverse animal welfare and ecological outcomes will result. Even well-intentioned care or treatments may prolong or worsen an animal's suffering, and inappropriate release of animals may have significant detrimental effects on local ecosystems and wildlife communities. At all stages of the rehabilitation process the potential for adverse animal welfare and ecological outcomes must be considered and avoided.

Avoid risks to human health and safety: in rescuing, rehabilitating, and returning fauna to the wild, there are generic, situation-specific and species-specific risks to people involved that must be considered and minimised. Anyone involved in rehabilitation should be aware of and practice appropriate disease prevention measures, including vaccinations recommended or required by a health practitioner.

Relieve suffering: the objectives of wildlife rehabilitation are fundamentally different from those of human medicine; it is **not** to protect and preserve life at all costs. The rehabilitation and release of fauna to the wild is the primary objective, but it must **not** be pursued by preserving the life of an animal at any cost or to achieve broader conservation outcomes where the animal is subject to unjustifiable and unreasonable suffering.

Capacity to care: rehabilitators and rehabilitation organisations should ensure that they have the capacity to provide for the essential needs of rescued fauna and have the resources necessary to appropriately prepare fauna for release back into the wild. When a person's or organisation's capacity to care is exceeded, unacceptable standards of animal care or welfare may result. This is likely to occur when the need for rescue and rehabilitation services exceeds the ability of rehabilitators and organisations to provide appropriate care. This is particularly so when there is an influx of fauna requiring care due to major incidents (e.g. bushfire,

significant weather events and other natural disasters). The lowering of animal welfare standards such that they are **not** consistent with this Code or the AWA is **not** an acceptable response to exceeding the capacity to care.

When the capacity to care is exceeded and animal welfare standards are likely to be compromised, there are three acceptable management options, which are, in order of preference:

1. refer fauna to other licensed individuals or organisations with current capacity to care for that species,
2. increase the capacity to care by increasing or pooling resources, and/or
3. lower the euthanasia threshold in combination with early triage of newly rescued fauna and veterinary assessment and prognosis of the individuals in care appropriate to the situation and available resources/capacity.

Additional outcomes:

Wildlife rehabilitation can also contribute to the:

- body of knowledge on the ecology, conservation, management, veterinary care, husbandry and behaviour of fauna, and
- education of the general public, business and industry professions on issues related to the conservation and welfare of fauna.

Terms used:

The terms 'fauna' and 'wildlife' are used interchangeably in the Code to refer to native Australian animals.

2. Document Structure and Terminology

This Code uses the following standard terminology.

Objectives

Objectives are statements of the intended outcome(s).

Standards

Standards describe the **mandatory** specific actions required to achieve acceptable levels of animal welfare and successful wildlife rehabilitation. These are the minimum standards that **must** be met to comply with a Fauna Rehabilitation Licence. They are clearly identified in the text under the heading '**Standards**' and the use of the word '**must**'.

Guidelines

Guidelines describe agreed best practice based on scientific information, accumulated experience and consultation. Guidelines are identified in the text by the heading '**Guidelines**' and the use of the word '**should**'.

In addition to the guidelines provided in this document, licence holders are also directed to review and follow the *Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines – Euthanasia* and *Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines – Management of rehabilitated wildlife that cannot be released into the wild*.

3. Objectives, Standards and Guidelines

3.1 Compliance

Objective

To ensure compliance with the relevant legislation.

Standards

The licence holder must comply with the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, the Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018, any orders in force under that Act and any other relevant State legislation.

The licence holder must follow any verbal or written directions of a Wildlife Officer.

The licence holder must ensure their licence includes an up-to-date list of authorised persons (including off-site rehabilitators) and that all Authorised Personnel are meeting the Standards set out in this Code.

Guidelines

The licence holder should be familiar with the relevant State legislation, including the AWA.

The licence holder should develop written procedures and training for people authorised under their license to ensure best practice.

3.2 Species covered under the licence

Objective

To ensure that fauna receives the specialist care, treatment and rehabilitation it requires.

Standards

The licence holder must only acquire, receive, possess, rehabilitate and release fauna species authorised under their licence. The licence can state number of individual animals to be housed for rehabilitation.

Guidelines

A Fauna Rehabilitation Licence only relates to fauna (species native to Australia), not domestic or exotic species that are not native to Australia. The following actions are recommended for animals not native to Australia, and/or species that are native to Australia but are outside their natural range or identified as pests.

Domestic animals: Call your local council for advice.

Exotic species that are not native to Australia: These species are not to be rehabilitated or released. Refer to *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) or DPIRD for further information.

Declared pests: The BAM Act provides for native and exotic species to be declared as pests in all or part of the State. It is an offence to release or abandon an animal that is a declared pest under the BAM Act, and penalties can apply (a list of declared pests can be found at <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/bam/western-australian-organism-list-waol>). In practice,

declared pests with a management category of C1 or C2 cannot be released in areas where they are declared pests and it is therefore strongly recommended that these species are not rehabilitated for release in these areas. These include:

- Sulphur-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*) – areas south of the 20° parallel latitude.
- Butler's corella (*Cacatua pastinator butleri*) – areas where not naturally occurring.
- Muir's corella (*Cacatua pastinator pastinator*) – areas where not naturally occurring.
- Little corella (Kimberley subspecies) (*Cacatua sanguinea sanguinea*) – areas where not naturally occurring.
- Little corella (Pilbara-Murchison) (*Cacatua sanguinea westralensis*) - areas where not naturally occurring.
- Rainbow lorikeet (*Trichoglossus haematodus* (*Trichoglossus moluccanus*)) – areas south of the 20° parallel latitude.

Managed fauna: Managed fauna are native species that have been prescribed in the Biodiversity Conservation Regulations because they can cause environmental or agricultural damage in prescribed areas of the State. Rehabilitating these species and releasing them in areas where they are prescribed as managed fauna is not recommended. Specifically, the following additional species have been prescribed as managed fauna because of their impacts to the environment and it is strongly recommended that they are euthanised:

- Eastern long billed corella (*Cacatua tenuirostris*) – throughout the State.
- Rainbow lorikeet (*Trichoglossus haematodus* (*Trichoglossus moluccanus*)) – throughout the State.

Non-endemic species: These are species that are native to Australia, but they are outside of their normal range. They may be species from the eastern States or be individuals that are outside of their normal range in Western Australia. As a general rule, species outside of their normal distribution compete with local species. It is recommended that these species not be released outside of their normal distribution. In some circumstances it may be an option to release them back to their normal distribution however this requires Wildlife Officer authority as it is not always advisable and may cause ecological impacts locally.

3.3 Case Assessment

Objective

To ensure that wildlife received or acquired is correctly assessed to determine the type of intervention required.

Standards

When injured or abandoned fauna is taken from the wild, licence holders must arrange for the health of the animal to be assessed by a registered veterinary practitioner or a person who has extensive knowledge of current rehabilitation techniques gained through professional training courses and/or experience in rehabilitating native wildlife and is experienced in diagnosing illnesses, diseases and injuries. This expertise should be relevant to the species or group of similar species. Licence holders must ensure that veterinary instructions, if provided, are followed accurately.

Guidelines

Licence holders should establish a working relationship with a local veterinarian who is willing to provide veterinary care for wildlife and has the relevant expertise. Inaccurate examination may result in undiagnosed or incorrect treatment which can significantly impact on the animal's health and welfare. Licence holders in remote locations should initially seek advice via telephone if the animal cannot immediately be assessed.

3.4 Transport

Objective

To ensure that wildlife is transported in a safe and humane manner.

Standards

Transport must not cause unnecessary pain or distress to the animal.

Injured or abandoned fauna must only be transported when and where necessary.

Transport containers must be appropriate for the species (i.e. the size, strength and behaviour of the fauna being moved).

Transport containers must be designed and maintained in such a way as to prevent injury, escape and distress.

Non-compatible species must not be transported in a manner that allows physical or visual contact.

Guidelines

Transport containers for fauna should:

- be secured to prevent movement during transport causing stress or injury to the animal,
- provide protection from direct sunlight and excessive heat, including appropriate substrate,
- provide protection from wind and rain and excessive cold, and
- be monitored to ensure appropriate temperature range for the species.

The provision of water and food for adult animals is generally not required for short trips. Food and water should be considered when transporting dependent young and adult animals during longer trips (>4hrs).

The use of medication during transport should be approved by a veterinary surgeon.

3.5 Quarantine of wildlife

Objective

To ensure that diseases and parasites are not transmitted between wildlife undergoing rehabilitation.

Standards

Prior to a health assessment or if the fauna shows symptoms of disease or infection, the licence holder must isolate and quarantine it from all other animals. Individuals subject to

quarantine must be housed in such a way as to prevent transmission of disease or infection to other fauna.

Licence holders must not release fauna from quarantine until a registered veterinary practitioner, a person experienced in diagnosing illnesses, diseases and injuries of the species in care, or a Wildlife Officer has provided advice that the fauna may be released from quarantine.

Fauna held under this licence must at all times be housed separately from fauna held under any other licences issued under the Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018 (unless otherwise authorised in writing).

If there is a disease outbreak suspected report it to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) emergency disease watch hotline on 1800 675 888 (free call 24 hours).

Guidelines

Licence holders who are expecting to receive fauna on a regular basis should have separate quarantine enclosures to house individual injured or abandoned wildlife.

Separate quarantine treatment and food preparation facilities from other areas. Disinfect hands, footwear and equipment when leaving quarantine areas.

Also refer to the National Wildlife Biosecurity Guidelines (2018) available at www.wildlifehealthaustralia.com.au.

3.6 Euthanasia

Objective

To prevent fauna suffering significant pain or pain for significant periods and to ensure that resources are only directed to rehabilitate fauna that can be successfully released back into the wild.

Standards

Before attempting to rehabilitate any fauna, the long-term welfare of the individual animal must be carefully considered. The stress of treating the animal must be justified, taking into consideration resource availability and potential for future population management at the release site.

Licence holders must arrange for wildlife to be promptly euthanised (by a registered veterinary practitioner where it is practical to do so, or using appropriate methods²), in the circumstances below unless otherwise approved by a Wildlife Officer:

- wildlife suffering from unreasonable and/or incurable pain, distress, trauma, sickness or injury,
- wildlife* that are likely to require extensive surgery to survive,
- wildlife* that are likely to require extended periods in captivity (e.g. 12 months or a period that is long relative to their lifespan) to be rehabilitated,

² Further information on appropriate euthanasia methods are provided in the *Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines - Euthanasia*.

- wildlife* that are unlikely to survive in the wild, or
- wildlife* that are unlikely to reintegrate into the wild on release.

**Threatened species are a priority for rehabilitation and therefore may be exempt from some of the euthanasia requirements listed above. Seek advice from a Wildlife Officer for threatened species. However, threatened species suffering from unreasonable and/or incurable pain, distress, trauma, sickness or injury must be promptly euthanised.*

Wildlife must be fully functional (as outlined in Section 3.15) before being released. If wildlife is unable to be rehabilitated the responsible decision is to euthanise the animal to prevent further suffering.

Guidelines

Wildlife should be released from care as soon as possible after rehabilitation. While some injuries take time to heal, long periods in captivity can place significant stress on wildlife and result in the loss of survival skills, increased familiarity and dependence on humans, a loss of instinctual fear of predators and the risk that the individual's natural home territory will become occupied. The sooner wildlife can be rehabilitated and released, the greater their chance of survival.

Although hand-rearing young animals can be a rewarding experience, it should be carefully considered as it may not be the most humane option for the animal in the long-term. Survival rates of very young animals that come into care are low. This is particularly true for marsupials which have not developed to a stage where their eyes are open, or they have not yet developed fur. Hand-reared animals also have a higher mortality rate in the wild than wild animals, as it is not possible for humans to teach young animals all the necessary survival skills and behaviours. This means that once the animal is released it may struggle to integrate into wild populations or be disadvantaged when competing for food, territory and mates. Hand-reared animals often fall prey to predators, as they have not learnt to recognise predators and therefore do not have the appropriate flight response to escape. Hand-reared animals may also become a risk to and from humans due to their familiarity with humans.

3.7 Disposing of carcasses

Objective

To dispose of waste so that the risks of disease transmission are minimised.

Standards

Licence holders must dispose of carcasses and organic waste suspected of disease contamination or that have been exposed to chemicals (e.g. barbiturates) by either incineration or burial at a depth that will prevent scavengers from reaching it.

Guidelines

Check with local council to determine their requirements for the disposal of carcasses and other biological waste.

Carcasses should be offered to the Western Australian Museum where they will contribute to its collection or may be provided to another research institution that has the authority to possess the carcass for the purpose of research.

3.8 Provision of food and water

Objective

To ensure that injured or abandoned fauna receive a diet that supports their healthy recovery and development, and their effective rehabilitation and release.

Standards

Licence holders must have sufficient expertise in fauna husbandry including the provision of appropriate food and water requirements for each species accepted for rehabilitation.

Food and water of suitable quality and quantity for the species must be provided at an appropriate frequency and must not be accessible to other wild or domestic animals.

The feeding of live vertebrate animals to wildlife under rehabilitation must not occur.

Food must be provided in a manner that minimises contamination and spoilage and the transfer of diseases.

To avoid contamination and disease transfer, wildlife and human food preparation areas and implements must be kept separate.

Guidelines

Advice should be sought from a person experienced in rehabilitating a species where a rehabilitator is unfamiliar with its care.

Food quantities should be adjusted to reflect an animal's stage of development and to maintain a weight that is within an appropriate range.

Prior to the animal's release, food should be offered in a way that encourages natural feeding behaviour such as foraging.

An animal that is unable or unwilling to feed sufficiently (other than nursing young) should be assessed by a veterinarian or a suitably experienced person, and euthanasia considered.

To the greatest extent possible, diets should be similar to the natural diet for the species to minimise diet-related health issues, to maintain food recognition for release back into the wild and to promote normal digestive function.

3.9 Hygiene

Objective

To maintain clean rehabilitation facilities so that diseases are prevented or contained.

Standards

Licence holders must maintain housing (including enclosures, nest boxes, bedding, substrate, and perching) and all associated equipment in a safe, clean and hygienic condition.

Faeces and uneaten food must be removed at least on a daily basis and disposed of in a way that prevents other animals from consuming them.

Food and water containers must be cleaned at least on a daily basis.

Fauna must be cleaned when soiled with faeces, urine or uneaten food.

Guidelines

Equipment used for cleaning animal housing and equipment should be separate from those used for human areas.

Wash hands and clean all food preparation surfaces and equipment with disinfectant prior to and following the preparation of animal food.

3.10 Housing

Objective

To ensure that wildlife undergoing rehabilitation are housed in a way that prevents injury or escape, minimises stress, maintains safe levels of hygiene and allows natural behaviours.

Standards

Enclosures must be constructed and maintained in such a way to prevent injury and escape and exclude predators and pests.

Enclosures must be appropriate for the species, and the types of injuries, stage of development and/or stage of rehabilitation of the animal being housed.

Enclosures must provide shelter from heat, excessive rain and cold temperatures.

Enclosures must maintain habitat elements appropriate to the species and the condition of the animal (e.g. perching, nest boxes, resting forks, wading pools, suitable substrate).

Enclosures housing wildlife not subject to critical care must allow fauna to undertake their natural behaviour and support rehabilitation for survival in the wild.

All enclosures must meet the specifications (relevant to the species in care) provided in **Appendix A** of the Code, unless authorised by DBCA.

Wildlife in care must be securely contained, especially species that are dangerous to humans.

Wildlife in care must not be housed or have direct contact with domestic animals.

Wildlife in care must not be exposed to other animals where the exposure is likely to result in unnecessary familiarisation or stress.

Wildlife in care must not be exposed to odours or noises that are likely to result in unnecessary familiarisation, stress or illness. Be particularly aware of potential toxicities of any chemicals or insecticides used in the vicinity of wildlife.

Guidelines

Enclosures should be purpose built and designed to allow easy cleaning, easy access and minimise handling of wildlife. Wildlife should not be kept in bathrooms or rooms without suitable enclosures.

Regularly monitor the temperature within enclosures to ensure it is within the normal range for the species. Enclosures containing thermal support should be monitored more regularly to ensure that appropriate temperatures are maintained (e.g. blankets, hot water bottles and electric heat mats).

Rehabilitators should avoid mixed-species housing whenever possible and, when mixed-species housing is necessary, ensure that only compatible species are housed together. Any

new additions should be monitored closely for the first few days to ensure their safety and the safety of other individuals.

Animals that naturally form social groups in the wild should be housed with animals of an appropriate age and gender of the same species where possible. When animals are housed collectively, they should be individually identifiable by non-permanent methods (see Section 3.18).

3.11 Monitoring of wildlife under rehabilitation

Objective

To monitor the health of fauna undergoing rehabilitation so that issues can be promptly identified and managed.

Standards

Dependent young and fauna in intensive care must be monitored repeatedly during the day and weighed daily.

Independent young and fauna in intermediate care must be monitored at least once per day and weighed at least once per week.

Fauna being prepared for release must be observed every day to determine if it is physically and behaviourally ready.

Guidelines

The type and frequency of monitoring will vary with the species, type of injury or illness and required treatment.

Unnecessary handling is not recommended during preparation for release unless there are concerns about the animal's food intake and/or body condition.

3.12 Surgical treatment

Objective

To ensure that only qualified persons undertake surgical treatment of wildlife.

Standards

Only registered veterinary practitioners are permitted to undertake surgical treatment on wildlife.

Guidelines

Surgical treatment is "the treatment of injuries or disorders of the body by incision or manipulation, especially with instruments".

3.13 Breeding of fauna

Objective

To prevent breeding of wildlife in rehabilitation.

Standards

Breeding of any fauna held under a Fauna Rehabilitation Licence is not permitted without prior written authority from DBCA.

Guidelines

Reproductive individuals should be housed separately at all times.

3.14 Zoonoses

Objective

To prevent disease being transmitted to humans from wildlife.

Standards

Licence holders must apply preventative measures to avoid zoonotic disease transmission.

Guidelines

All animal species can harbour infectious organisms which have the potential to cause disease in humans; diseases passed from animals to humans are termed 'zoonotic'. It is important to realise that such infections may have no effect on their animal host but can produce a serious response in humans. If a zoonotic disease is suspected, licence holders should contact their medical practitioner as soon as possible for diagnosis and appropriate treatment.

Care should be taken to reduce the risk of zoonotic disease not only when handling animals, but also animal products, such as blood and excreta.

Disease can spread to humans by inhalation of infective dust or droplets, by ingestion, by contaminated food or water; or by penetration of skin by bites; or absorption through mucous membranes and uncovered cuts and abrasions.

Licence holders should make themselves familiar with the clinical signs and preventative strategies for the common zoonoses encountered in the species they rehabilitate.

Attention to personal hygiene is strongly recommended, including always washing hands thoroughly before and after contact with animals, not eating, drinking, smoking around animals, and the use of personal protective equipment, such as gloves and face masks, where appropriate. Attention to cleaning and disinfecting equipment, bedding and clothing is also important between animals and species.

3.15 Suitability for release

Objective

To ensure that only wildlife possessing an appropriate level of physical, cognitive and behavioural fitness are released to the wild.

Standards

Licence holders must confirm that the animal is physically fit prior to its release.

An animal is deemed physically fit for release if:

- it has fully recovered from any pre-existing injury,
- reasonable steps have been taken to determine the animal is free of disease,
- its weight and body condition are within the normal range for the age, sex and species, and
- it has adapted to prevailing climatic conditions.

Guidelines

Licence holders should confirm that the animal is also behaviourally fit prior to its release.

An animal is deemed behaviourally fit for release if:

- it can recognise, find and consume naturally available food (including, in the case of predators, that they can hunt prey),
- it has sufficient natural instinct to recognise and avoid predators,
- it is not attracted to humans or to sights, sounds or smells that are specific to captivity (i.e. it is not imprinted or humanised),
- it can navigate effectively through its natural environment, and
- it can recognise and interact appropriately with members of the same species.

Species that are required to construct shelters for survival (e.g. dig burrows or construct dreys) should exhibit this behaviour prior to release.

In some circumstances, animals that are not suitable for release may be suitable to be transferred to an authorised conservation or education program. More information is available in *Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines - Management of rehabilitated wildlife that cannot be released into the wild*. If not, then the animal should be euthanised.

3.16 Timing of release

Objective

To ensure that fauna is released as soon as it is ready and at a time that minimises stress and maximises its chances of survival in its natural habitat.

Standards

Wildlife must be released as soon as possible after rehabilitation.

Wildlife must not be released in environmental conditions that are likely to cause significant hardship or reduced chances of survival.

Wildlife release must take place during the species' normal period of activity (e.g. diurnal, nocturnal, crepuscular).

Migratory species must be released at a time when other members of the species are present if the location is within a migratory path. If this is not possible, the animal may need to be kept in care until the following migratory season.

Guidelines

Territorial species and social species may have occupied a territory or been part of a family group prior to coming into care. Such species may lose territory or recognition in a short time which can vary between species. In such circumstance wildlife should only remain in care for short periods.

3.17 Release site selection

Objective

To ensure that wild populations and natural environments are not negatively impacted by release of fauna and the welfare of the rehabilitated animal after release is considered.

Standards

If the exact location where the animal was found is known and it is a suitable environment for release, the fauna must be released there.

A suitable environment for release is one that:

- contains appropriate habitat and adequate food resources for the long term,
- members of the same species naturally occupy the area, and
- does not place the animal at a high risk of injury.

If the exact location where fauna was found is known but it is an unsuitable environment for release, approval must be sought from DBCA for an alternate release site.

If there is no information about where the fauna was found, approval must be sought from DBCA for a suitable release site.

Guidelines

There are biosecurity and welfare reasons why some species cannot be released away from where they were found thus the need for DBCA advice and approval.

If only the general location where the fauna was found is known and it contains or adjoins a suitable environment for release, it should be released there, ensuring the fauna is not transported across a physical boundary that it would not normally cross or further than it would normally move.

3.18 Monitoring upon release

Objective

To allow for short term monitoring upon release to improve post release welfare outcomes.

Standards

Licence holders must not permanently mark animals either before or upon release without written authority from DBCA.

Guidelines

Temporary marking using non-toxic paints or markers, or small fur clips may be applied if the animal can be monitored post release.

Permanent marking and tracking of released fauna will only be authorised where there is a long-term authorised monitoring program and may require additional licenses or permits and competencies.

3.19 Display of wildlife

Objective

To eliminate additional stress and further injury to wildlife and to maximise the safety of the general public.

Standards

Licence holders must not place wildlife on display without prior written authority or the appropriate licence from DBCA.

3.20 Record Keeping

Objective

To maintain comprehensive records of injured or abandoned wildlife admissions, disposals and management while in care. These records can be used to develop better treatments, educate rehabilitators, identify state-wide trends in fauna incidents and identify threatening processes.

Standards

The licence holder must maintain a record in the form required by DBCA that details acquisitions and disposals (including deaths and escapes) of all fauna held under their Fauna Rehabilitation Licence. Records must be entered immediately as fauna are acquired, disposed of, or released and must be made available to a Wildlife Officer upon request. The licence holder must submit records to the DBCA Wildlife Licensing Section (including where no animals have been held or there is no change in the animals held) to be received prior to the end of each annual period of the licence .

All records must be kept for at least a three-year period.

If an animal is transferred to another rehabilitator, a copy of the relevant record must accompany the animal.

Wildlife rehabilitation organisations must maintain an updated list of all personnel operating under a Fauna Rehabilitation Licence along with details of their experience.

Guidelines

Licence holders should record the following information:

- date animal taken into possession for rehabilitation, i.e. date taken into possession by the licence holder (if the animal was held by an unlicensed person before it was taken into possession by the licence holder this should also be recorded)
- species
- identifying number or name
- reason for possession
- approximate age or age class (neonate, juvenile, sub-adult, adult, aged)
- sex (M, F, Unknown)
- exact location found/rescued
- details of wounds, injuries, diseases, external parasites, mobility, abnormal behaviour
- recommended management (e.g. euthanasia or treatment)
- housing requirements
- fate of fauna
- date of disposal (e.g. release, euthanasia, transfer)

Licence holders should record the following routine monitoring:

- weight
- type and quantity of food/liquid ingested
- treatment (e.g. medication, therapy)
- changes to general fitness and behaviour
- enclosure cleaning (e.g. quantity and quality of faeces/urine)

Copies or backups of records should be kept avoiding information being lost.

To gauge the effectiveness of various rehabilitation and release techniques, post-release sightings of known rehabilitated wildlife should be recorded and kept.

4. Appendix A

Table 1. Minimum standards for housing various avian species during rehabilitation

Note: This table is not intended to be used independently but should be used in conjunction with the information provided in the *Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines – Euthanasia* and *Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines – Management of rehabilitated wildlife that cannot be released into the wild*.

Species	Length of bird	Intensive or high needs care (WxLxH)	Pre-release care (WxLxH)	Mesh size and weight
Pigeons/doves, Nightjars	25–35cm	32x20x32cm	2x2x2m	25x12.5mm
Honeyeaters, Wagtails, Wrens/finches, Wattlebirds, Tree Martins, Swallows	>22cm	32x20x32cm	2x3x2m	6.5mm ² 19–23g
Butcherbirds, Mudlarks	<40cm	32x20x32cm	2x3x2m	25x12.5mm
Magpies, Raven, Currawong	>50cm	50x53x64cm	2x5x2m	25x12.5mm
Neophema, Lorikeets	>22cm	32x32x32cm	2x3x2m	12.5mm ² 20g
Kingfishers Bee eaters	>28cm	32x32x32cm	2x5x2m	6.5mm ² 23g
Kookaburra, Tawny Frogmouths	>50cm	55x53x64cm	2x6x2m	25x12.5mm
Larger parrots	>40cm	55x53x64cm	2x5x2m	1.6x1.25mm or 25x12.5mm 16 --18g
Cockatoos	>60cm	60x59x70cm	5x6x2m	4x2.5mm 8- 12 g
Malleefowl, Coucal, Brush Turkey	>60cm	42x67x48cm	5x15x4m (ensure roof material is soft bird netting and ensure plenty of natural cover and trees for high roosts)	25x25mm (line large enclosures with shade cloth for protection and visual barriers)

Table 2. Minimum standards for housing waterbirds and seabirds during rehabilitation

Note: This table is not intended to be used independently but should be used in conjunction with the information provided in the *Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines – Euthanasia* and *Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines – Management of rehabilitated wildlife that cannot be released into the wild*.

Species	Intensive or high needs care (WxLxH)	Pre-release care (WxLxH)	Pool size and depth (minimum)	No. of birds	Codes
Duck, Moorhens, Coots, Grebe	40x40x40cm	2x4x1.75m Alternative: 4.3m round gazebo style	Surface area of water 1m ² 50cm deep pool	2	H, AW, FP, ON, PT, AP
Darter, Cormorant	42x67x48cm	2x2x1.75m	Surface area of water 1m ² 50cm deep pool	1	
Stilt, Egret, Heron, Spoonbill	42x67x48cm	2x2x1.75m	Surface area of water 1m ² 50cm deep pool - graduated	1	AW, AG, ST
Oystercatchers, Dotterel, Plover	32x32x32cm	1.5x1.5x1.75m	Surface area of water 1m ² 25cm deep pool - graduated	1 small or 2 large	AW
Swan	70x70x70cm	2x2x2m	Surface area of water 2.4m 60cm deep pool	2	PT, AP
Pelican	1.2x1.2x1.2m	3x3m Alternative: 3x9m round gazebo style	Surface area of water 3m ² 70cm deep pool	1 small or 2–3 large	PT, AP, SO ST
Little penguin	40x40x40cm	3x3m	Surface area of water 2.4m ² 30cm deep pool	3	AG, AP, H, SO
Small seabirds (e.g. terns and seagulls)	40x40x40cm	2x2x1.75m	Surface area of water 1m ² 30cm deep pool	2	N, PT PP
Albatross Giant petrel	70x70x70cm	2.5x2.5m	Surface area of water 2.7m x 3.3m with 70cm deep pool. Walls 60cm above depth of pool	1	N, PT, PP, SO, AG

Table 3. Codes for housing requirements used in Table 2, minimum standards for housing waterbirds and seabirds

AG	Can be extremely aggressive, even with conspecifics. Use caution and observe the birds' interactions when introduced, before housing together and leaving unattended.
AP	Require pre-release conditioning aviaries that contain pools to swim in and suitable standing/perching surfaces.
AW	Require pre-release conditioning aviaries that contain shallow wading pools and a variety of perches, including some high perches.
FP	Provide as much wading area (in addition to a 'swimming' pool) as possible in all housing to help prevent husbandry injuries as have sensitive feet.
H	Provide natural vegetative material or human-devised areas for cover.
N	Should be housed on tightly stretched, suspended netting as a substrate whenever bird is not in water.
ON	When an individual is in intensive care and/or is not standing, it should be housed on suspended net/shade cloth to protect feathers and keel until the bird is standing normally. If it can stand normally and the keel is not extremely pronounced, housing substrate can be a towel or matting.
PP	Only require pool space during pre-release conditioning. Prior to release individuals must be able to stay in a pool full-time without a haul-out area, for a minimum of 48 hours without compromise to their waterproofing.
PT	Should be allowed pool time for as long and as often as their medical condition allows.
SO	A surface overflow of the pool is required to maintain water quality. This can be achieved by constantly trickling water into the pool so that it overflows, or by filtering and recirculating water.
ST	Have stiff tail feathers and as soon as they are able to stand, they should be provided with a stump or stump-like perch to avoid feather breakage and soiling.

Table 4. Minimum standards for housing raptors during rehabilitation

Note: This table is not intended to be used independently but should be used in conjunction with the information provided in the *Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines – Euthanasia* and *Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines – Management of rehabilitated wildlife that cannot be released into the wild*.

Species	Intensive or high needs care (WxLxH)	Pre-release care (WxLxH)	Codes
Pacific baza	35x50x40cm	3x5x2.4m	
Letter-winged kite	35x50x40cm	3x5x2.4m	SM
Black shouldered kite	35x50x40cm	3x5x2.4m	SM
Collared sparrowhawk	35x50x40cm	3x5x2.4m	SM, JH
Australian hobby/little falcon	35x50x40cm	6x20x3.6m	SM, FF, JH
Australian kestrel	35x50x40cm	3x5x2.4m	
Boobook owl	35x50x40cm	3x5x2.4m	
Barn owl	45x70x55cm	3x5x2.4m	
Square-tailed kite	45x70x55cm	4x15x3.6m	JH
Red goshawk	60x80x70cm	6x20x3.6m	SM, FF, JH
Black breasted buzzard/kite	45x70x55cm	6x20x3.6m	JH
Spotted harrier	45x70x55cm	4x15x3.6m	JH, SM + floor hide
Swamp harrier	60x80x70cm	4x15x3.6m	JH, SM + floor hide
Brahminy kite	45x70x55cm	4x15x3.6m	SM, JH
Whistling kite	45x70x55cm	4x15x3.6m	SM, JH
Little eagle	45x70x55cm	4x15x3.6m	SM, JH
Black kite	45x70x55cm	4x15x3.6m	SM
Brown goshawk	45x70x55cm	4x15x3.6m	SM, FF, JH
Grey goshawk	45x70x55cm	4x15x3.6m	SM, FF, JH
Brown falcon	45x70x55cm	6x20x3.6m	
Black falcon	45x70x55cm	6x20x3.6m	SM, FF, JH
Grey falcon	45x70x55cm	6x20x3.6m	SM, FF, JH
Peregrine falcon	45x70x55cm	6x20x3.6m	SM, FF, JH
Masked owl	45x70x55cm	4x15x3.6m	
Grass owl	45x70x55cm	4x15x3.6m	SM + floor hide
Rufous owl	45x70x55cm	4x15x3.6m	
Barking owl	45x70x55cm	4x15x3.6m	
Osprey	60x80x70cm	6x20x3.6m	
White-bellied sea eagle	60x80x70cm	6x20x3.6m	JH
Wedge-tailed eagle	60x80x70cm	6x20x3.6m	JH

Table 5. Codes for housing requirements used in Table 4, minimum standards for housing raptors

FF	Free (uncaged) flight exercise needed to reach adequate fitness (unless bird has been in care for less than four weeks).
SM	Special materials suggested – lining aviaries with shade cloth will reduce injury in most cases.
JH	Juveniles that are too old to be hacked back cannot learn to hunt adequately in a cage and will need to learn these skills during free flight.

Table 6. Minimum standards for housing reptiles during rehabilitation

Note: This table is not intended to be used independently but should be used in conjunction with the information provided in the *Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines – Euthanasia* and *Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines – Management of rehabilitated wildlife that cannot be released into the wild*.

Species	Intensive or high needs care (WxLxH)	Pre-release care (WxLxH)	Max no. per enclosure
Stimson's python Black-headed python	1/2 body length x 3/4 body length x 1/3 body length	N/A	1
Young pythons up to 1m long	30x90x50cm		
Carpet pythons	1/2 body length x 1/2 body length x 3/4 body length	N/A	1
Death adder	50x30x45cm	N/A	1
All other venomous snake species Up to 1.5m	45x90x45cm	N/A	1
Small geckos	40x20x30cm	N/A	2
Bluetongue lizards	30x90x40cm (3ft tank)	N/A	2
King skinks	50x90x30cm	N/A	1
Dragons	30x90x40cm (3ft tank)	N/A	
Varanids Stage 1, 2 and 3 will rely on the length of the monitor's body	2x body length 1.5x body width 60cm high	3 x body length 2 x body width 60cm high	1
Adult longneck turtles	80x60x30cm	100x100x30+cm pool with a dry land area. General habitat considerations: 5x animal's head-tail length. Water >24°C for feeding to occur. Water pH: 7.4-7.6 Ammonia, Nitrate, Nitrite levels: Nil	1
Amphibians	50x25x30cm	N/A	4

Table 7: Minimum standards for housing mammals during rehabilitation

Note: This table is not intended to be used independently but should be used in conjunction with the information provided in the *Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines – Euthanasia* and *Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines – Management of rehabilitated wildlife that cannot be released into the wild*.

Species	Intensive or high needs care (WxLxH)	Pre-release care (WxLxH)	Max no. in pre-release housing
Insectivorous bat	18x25x20cm	3x5x2m	6-8
Fruit bat	30x43x36cm	4.5x13x4m	4-6
Dunnarts and Antechinus species	20x32x32cm	30x91x40cm	6
Pygmy possum Honey possum	20x32x32cm	1x1x1m	2
Sugar glider	20x32x32cm	2x5x1.75m	4
Ringtail possum	30x43x36cm	90x1.8x1.8m	2 (only if related)
Brush-tail possum	30x43x36cm	2x3x1.75m	1
Bandicoot	Juveniles 20x32x32cm Adults 30x43x36cm	2x3x1m	1
Bilby	30x43x36cm	10x10m	2
Chuditch	Juveniles 20x32x32cm Adults 30x43x36cm	2x3x1.75m	2
Echidna	50x71x51cm	6x6x1.2m	2
Small macropods	50x71x51cm	15m ²	15
Wallabies	60x91x53cm	20x30m	7-10
Large macropods	60x91x53cm	20x30m	7-10