OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATION IN OHIO

PUBLICATION 5475

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The ODNR Division of Wildlife’s mission is to conserve and improve fish and wildlife resources and their habitats for sustainable use and appreciation by all. The Division of Wildlife is funded by annual hunting, trapping, and fishing license sales. It is the authority on Ohio’s fish and wildlife resources, and uses no state or federal taxpayer dollars to fulfill its mission. Additional funds come in the form of federal aid reimbursement from an excise tax on hunting and fishing equipment.

Money generated allows the Division of Wildlife to promote conservation efforts of game and non-game animals. Examples of these efforts include endangered and threatened species restoration, fish hatcheries, hunter and angler education, and law enforcement.
The Ohio Division of Wildlife is dedicated to conserving and improving the fish and wildlife resources and their habitats, and promoting their use and appreciation by the public so that these resources continue to enhance the quality of life for all Ohioans. Rehabilitation of injured or orphaned native wildlife is a popular and important activity in Ohio, involving hundreds of public and private organizations and individuals.

The Division works in partnership with the Ohio Wildlife Rehabilitators Association to (1) foster a relationship among rehabilitators to improve the quality of care given to native wildlife, (2) promote communication and education, and (3) ensure a rapid response team is available in the event of a catastrophe such as an oil spill.

(This document was compiled from the National Wildlife Rehabilitators & International Wildlife Rehabilitators Council's (NWRA/IWRC) “Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation” © 1994 and the Ohio Wildlife Rehabilitators Association’s “Guidelines for Wildlife Rehabilitation in Ohio” with permission for use by both organizations.)

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**MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATION IN OHIO**

**WILDLIFE REHABILITATION FACILITY**

(Source NWRA & IWRC)

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**STANDARD REQUIREMENTS OF ALL FACILITIES**

**First Aid and Safety.** All wildlife rehabilitation facilities shall have fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, eye wash capability, first aid kits, and material safety data sheets (MSDS) for all chemicals stored on the premises. They shall also have protective clothing and safety/capture equipment appropriate to the species under their care.

**Sanitation.** Foods, utensils, dishes, food preparation areas, and food storage areas for wildlife shall always be kept separate from foods, utensils, dishes, food preparation areas, and food storage areas used by humans and domestic animals. Cleaning of wildlife cages and housing shall be done in designated areas specially set aside for such cleaning. It shall not be done in sinks or tubs otherwise used by humans. A suitable sanitary method shall be provided to rapidly eliminate excess water from indoor facilities. If drains are used, they shall be properly constructed and kept in good repair to avoid foul odors and installed so as to prevent any backup of sewage.

**Temperature Control.** Injured or immobile animals shall be housed in indoor facilities. Rooms and buildings used for indoor housing of injured or immobile animals shall provide supplemental warmth or cooling as needed to protect animals from extremes of temperature, to provide for their health, and to prevent their discomfort. The ambient temperature shall not be allowed to fall below or rise above temperatures compatible with the health and comfort of the animal.

Natural or artificial shelter appropriate to local climate conditions for species concerned shall be provided for all animals kept outdoors to afford them protection and to prevent discomfort to such animals. Individual animals shall be acclimated before they are exposed to the extremes of individual climates.

**Light and Ventilation.** Indoor facilities shall be adequately ventilated by natural or mechanical means to provide for the health and to prevent discomfort of the animals at all times. Such facilities shall be provided with fresh air either by means of windows, doors, vents, fans, or air conditioning and shall be ventilated so as to minimize drafts, odors, and moisture condensation.

Indoor facilities shall have ample lighting, by natural or artificial means, or both, of good quality, distribution, and duration as appropriate for the species involved. Such lighting shall be uniformly distributed and of sufficient intensity to permit routine inspection and cleaning.

Lighting of outdoor enclosures shall be designed to protect the animals from excessive illumination. When sunlight is likely to cause overheating or discomfort of the animals, sufficient shade by natural or artificial means shall be provided to allow all animals kept outdoors to protect themselves from direct sunlight.

**Water and Electric.** Reliable and adequate electric power and potable water shall be available on the premises.

**Daily Cleaning and Disinfection.** Each wildlife rehabilitation facility shall provide a daily cleaning and disinfecting schedule.

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**CATEGORY I FACILITIES**  *(source OWRA)*

A Category I facility shall have weighing scales and adequate artificial warming units or incubators as necessary for wild animals in their care.
CATEGORY II FACILITIES

1. A Category II facility shall have incubators, weighing scales and all medical equipment and other items necessary to provide for emergency stabilization of animals prior to veterinary assessment.

2. A Category II facility shall have the gloves, goggles, squeeze cages, protective clothing and capture equipment necessary to handle the injured or Category I exception wildlife under its care.

3. A Category II facility shall have written procedures regarding providing emergency after-hours services for injured wildlife.

4. A veterinarian assisting Category II facilities shall have an on-site pharmacy with appropriate security for schedule II, III, and IV drugs, laboratory equipment, and intensive nursing care, radiology, and surgical facilities. Wildlife temporarily housed at a veterinary facility shall be kept separate from domestic animals to minimize the risk of disease transmission to all animals, and to minimize stress to the wild animals.

5. It is recommended that all Category II facilities have a liability policy in force.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR HOUSING OF WILD ANIMALS  
(source NWRA & IWRC)

The enclosures suggested, with the exception of conditioning cages, are for short-term housing (i.e., usually less than six months) of rehabilitating animals. No animal may be retained for more than 180 days without specific authorization from the Division of Wildlife (source ODW). Written requests may be submitted to: wildlife.permits@dnr.state.oh.us. The philosophy which dictates cage size presupposes normal recovery times for the patient. None of the confinement or recovery cages are recommended for extended or permanent care. Each outdoor enclosure should possess an area which provides necessary protection from the elements.

Any bird old enough to perch requires the same size cage as the adult of the species. Enclosures should be made secure against local predators. They should duplicate natural conditions wherever practical.

Cage design should provide for ease of cleaning, ventilation, light, and temperature control. A separate source of water for drinking and bathing for each enclosure should be provided.

AVIAN CAGING  
(source NWRA & IWRC)

Materials for avian caging vary within the field. Aviaries should have a double-door entry system. Solid walls for aviaries can be constructed of wood, fiberglass, or an equivalent. Chicken wire is not permitted if the birds can come into direct contact with them. If vertical wood lath, fiberglass screening, or netting prevent direct contact, then wire can add extra security. Flooring for aviaries is often pea gravel over sand which should be changed biannually or as needed. Natural flooring is acceptable in very large enclosures; but, it must be turned and disinfected from time to time. Flooring for small cages includes towels or raised netting over newspaper, newspaper alone, or wood shavings (cut up tree trimmings, but not sawdust), depending on the species being housed. Perches can be wood doweling or plastic piping (or the equivalent) covered by 1/4-inch-pile Astroturf, hemp, or indoor/outdoor carpeting. Platforms can be covered with 2-inch Astroturf or indoor/outdoor carpeting. Natural limbs, bow, block and ring perches are appropriate for certain species of birds.

MAMMAL CAGING  
(source NWRA & IWRC)

The following are suggested building materials for outdoor caging. Walls are generally made of chain-link fencing, welded wire, or wood. Chicken wire is not permitted (source ODW). When wooden cages are used, they should be water-sealed. Welded wire sizes are as follows: 1/20 inch by 2-inch (2" x 2") for small rodents and opossums (100gm or less); 2-inch by 1-inch (2" x 1") for squirrels; and 1-inch by 1 and 2-inch (1" x 1-1/2") for raccoons and larger mammals. Roofing materials are the same with a covered area that provides protection from the elements. Fiberglass is sometimes used on top of the wire to provide protection. The flooring depends on the species being housed. Larger walk-in mammal cages should have concrete flooring and be sloped for proper drainage. If natural flooring is utilized, wire fencing must be placed under the cage and be covered with a drainage gravel (i.e., pea gravel). Tree trimmings can be used if they are changed regularly. All doors should be equipped with a double-door system for the protection of the handler and the animal. A den should be provided for the animal; examples would be a wooden box, fiberglass or plastic animal carrier.
## CONDITIONING CAGING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>CAGE SIZE (W X L X H)</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL AMENITIES REQUIRED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVIAN, NON-RAPTORS:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>avian, non-raptors:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>loons, grebes, cormorants, geese, swans, diving ducks (Mute swans may not be rehabilitated and must be euthanized)</td>
<td>large enough to contain 6’ pool and loafing area</td>
<td>swimming area, 6’ pool, tank or pond, deeper than 2’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dabbling ducks</td>
<td>large enough to contain kiddie pool and loafing area</td>
<td>4’ kiddie pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>songbirds, doves, small woodpeckers, kingfishers, swifts, swallows, rails, coots, pheasants, quail, small bitterns or herons</td>
<td>4’ x 8’ x 6’</td>
<td>4’ kiddie pool (only for bitterns &amp; herons) and perching structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large woodpeckers, nighthawks, goatsuckers, gulls, terns, plovers, cuckoos, cranes, large bitterns or herons</td>
<td>8’ x 16’ x 8’</td>
<td>4’ kiddie pool (only for bitterns &amp; herons) and perching structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avian, raptors:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small to medium hawks &amp; owls, Cooper’s hawks, sharp-shinned hawks, broad-winged hawks, merlins, kestrels, screech-owls, saw-whet owls, long-eared owls, short-eared owls, barn owls</td>
<td>8’ x 16’ x 8’</td>
<td>perching structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large owls, barred owls, great horned owls</td>
<td>10’ x 30’ x 8’</td>
<td>perching structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large hawks and vultures, red-tailed hawks, red-shouldered hawks, rough-legged hawks, northern harrier, goshawk, black vultures, turkey vultures</td>
<td>10’ x 30’ x 10’</td>
<td>perching structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large falcons, and other extra-large raptors, peregrine falcons, gyrfalcon, eagles, osprey, snowy owls</td>
<td>16’ x 90’ x 16’</td>
<td>perching structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mammals, outside pre-release:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tree or ground squirrels</td>
<td>4’ x 6’ x 4’ ground squirrels 4’ x 8’ x 8’ tree squirrels</td>
<td>single animal cage sizes. 1 square foot needs to be added for each additional animal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opossums, skunks</td>
<td>4’ x 8’ x 6’</td>
<td>single animal cage sizes. 1 square foot needs to be added for each additional animal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fox, raccoon, badger</td>
<td>8’ x 8’ x 6’</td>
<td>single animal cage size. 2 square feet needs to be added for each additional animal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beaver, river otter</td>
<td>6’ x 12’ x 6’</td>
<td>single animal cage sizes. 2 square feet needs to be added for each additional animal. Also include swimming area, 6’ pool, tank or pond, deeper than 2’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PERMIT HOLDERS, SUB-PERMITTEES, AND VOLUNTEERS

Wildlife rehabilitation and the development of wildlife rehabilitation facilities usually requires cooperative relationships among wildlife rehabilitators working in a geographic area, including sharing of expertise, division and specialization of work, and sharing of limited resources such as housing, equipment, money, veterinary services and administrative services. Wildlife rehabilitators in a geographic area who coordinate their efforts are less likely to compete for limited resources, more likely to fund-raise effectively, more likely to provide a broader range of services for that geographic area, and are likely to have more options available to provide better care for wildlife.

Accordingly, wildlife rehabilitators should not apply for permits to provide services which are already effectively provided by other wildlife rehabilitation facilities within a geographic area but should instead work with those wildlife rehabilitation facilities, or they should apply for permits to provide wildlife rehabilitation services which are not otherwise already provided for in that geographic area.

Naming wildlife rehabilitators as volunteers or as sub-permittees by a permit holder is recognized as an effective means of building cooperative relationships among wildlife rehabilitators to better serve a geographic area, and as an effective means to supervise the activities of wildlife rehabilitators working in a geographic area. Permit holders are responsible for the supervision of their volunteers and ensuring sub-permittees have all proper equipment and caging to rehabilitate animals at a location other than the permit holders facility. Sub-permittees must maintain a copy of the permit holder’s current rehabilitation permit and current Minimum Standards. Only persons listed on the permit are recognized as legitimate “sub-permittees.” If the permit holder wishes to add or delete sub-permittees, it is the permit holder’s responsibility to request the change in writing from the Division for processing. Requests may be emailed to the Permit Coordinator at: wildlife.permits@dnr.state.oh.us.

A wildlife rehabilitator who possesses wildlife for a permit holder at a site other than the permit holder’s wildlife rehabilitation facility for over 48 hours must be named as a sub-permittee. Wildlife must be received at the permit holders facility prior to being moved to a sub-permittee’s facility. A sub-permittee shall not accept wildlife from the public for direct admission into their own facility.

A volunteer or wildlife rehabilitator who works at the permit holder’s wildlife rehabilitation facility or who only rescues and transports wildlife for delivery to that wildlife rehabilitation facility does not need to be listed as a sub-permittee.

A permit holder who wishes to list wildlife rehabilitators working within his or her geographic area as sub-permittees should do the following:

1. Develop a written policy outlining the qualifications, training, selection and monitoring of sub-permittees.
2. Designate the animals that a sub-permittee is authorized to possess.
3. Be familiar with the facilities of the sub-permittee and assure that the sub-permittee’s facilities are in compliance with the Division of Wildlife rules and conditions of the permit holder’s permit.
4. Designate the duties that a sub-permittee is authorized to do.
5. Submit Form 8998 (Sub-Permittees) for each sub-permittee to be added or maintained on the permit. This form must be submitted with each renewal. Notify the Division in writing of any changes to the sub-permittees information during the permit cycle.
6. Provide a copy of the current year’s rehabilitation permit and Minimum Standards to each sub-permittee. The permit is two-sided with the sub-permittee's names listed on the back.

CONTINUING EDUCATION (source ODW)

While there is no continuing education requirement required to renew a rehabilitation permit, you are strongly encouraged to enhance your rehabilitation skills by participating in formal training, workshops, conferences, and by reading professional journals/newsletters/articles.
TELEPHONE NUMBER (source ODW)
The Division believes each permit holder has an obligation, as a wildlife steward, to both provide care for orphaned or injured wildlife and to inform and educate the person who is seeking the rehabilitator’s assistance. Wildlife rehabilitators must provide a telephone number on their permit application, which can be made available to other wildlife rehabilitators, Division personnel, local law enforcement, and animal care facilities seeking assistance with an orphaned or injured wild animal. The number does not have to be the direct line of the permit holder. However, it must be a telephone number of a person experienced in responding to rehabilitation questions and who will provide appropriate personal assistance to the caller.

ADDITIONAL PERMITS (source ODW)
There are several activities which require supplemental authorization for rehabilitation. These include avian species, endangered avian and/or mammal species.

Persons wishing to rehabilitate avian species must obtain the necessary U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service permit(s) and provide a copy to the Division for their state permit file.

For state and/or federally endangered avian and/or mammal species, a supplemental letter permit is required in addition to the rehabilitation permit and must be requested in writing from the Chief of the Division. Each request will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Following a review of the permit holder’s qualifications, on-site caging, proximity to other authorized rehabilitators, and dialogue with the District Wildlife Management Supervisor, the request will be considered. Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their request. Authorized permit holders will be issued a supplemental letter permit from the Chief. Any violation or variation from the stated restrictions and conditions of these letter permits may result in termination of the permit.

COMMERCIAL PROPAGATION LICENSE (source ODW)
Persons conducting wildlife rehabilitation shall not sell, barter, or trade native wildlife species. Wildlife that are being rehabilitated for release back in to the wild shall not be housed at the same location where a licensed commercial propagator is operating.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (source OWRA)
Wildlife rehabilitation shall be done only on a not-for-profit basis, but any wildlife rehabilitation facility may accept donations from persons presenting wildlife to it. Accepting wildlife for rehabilitation should not be conditional upon the receipt of a donation. A wildlife rehabilitation facility may also consider soliciting funds from its community through education programs, memberships, corporate solicitations, fund-raising events and grants, and such fund-raising is in fact recommended as a means to increase public awareness of and a sense of commitment to both such wildlife rehabilitation facility and wildlife.

Wildlife rehabilitation facilities which have applied for and received tax-exempt charitable status from the IRS are subject to numerous regulations and reporting requirements concerning their governance and use of funds. Accordingly, the IRS allows corporations, foundations, and individuals to make tax-deductible contributions to tax-exempt charity. A wildlife rehabilitation facility which is not such a tax-exempt charity shall not lead the public to believe that the facility is a tax-exempt charity, and shall inform persons and/or organizations which make donations to it that such donations are not tax-deductible charitable contribution.

All wildlife rehabilitation facilities shall comply with all laws governing charitable solicitations required by the Ohio Attorney General, the Internal Revenue Service, and local charitable solicitations laws, and should comply with charitable solicitation standards prescribed by the Better Business Bureau to the extent they may apply to such facility. IRS Form 990 annual reports should be kept on site in accordance with Internal Revenue Service regulations for tax-exempt organizations required to file them.

Whether or not a wildlife rehabilitation facility is a tax-exempt charity, if it solicits people as members or volunteers it shall make available for its members and volunteers written organizational structure that defines how policy is developed, what establishes membership, the governing body, and the hierarchy for decision-making. This may be represented by policy manuals, a code of regulations, constitution, by-laws, etc.
RECORD KEEPING REQUIREMENTS *(source NWRA, IWRC & DOW)*
Records are a vital part of any rehabilitation program and are particularly important when trying to learn from previous work to improve the care given to wildlife. Record-gathering information has been placed into two categories: required information and recommended information. Records must be kept on all wild animals admitted into a rehabilitation facility. The specific format of the record will vary from organization to organization. Records can be consolidated for healthy litters or clutches of animals raised for release. Daily forms for animals by pen, enclosure, or cage are required to verify that food, medications, and care is being provided. Statistics should conform to specifications listed below.

**REQUIRED INFORMATION**
- Species
- Date admitted
- Name/address/phone number of finder
- Presenting injury/problem
- Final disposition
- Federal band number, where applicable

**RECOMMENDED INFORMATION**
- Physical examination data
- Initial weight
- Release weight
- Data regarding surgery, clinical pathology, necropsy, histopathology *(where applicable)*
- Treatment information

The Division of Wildlife's Publication 8981 “Wildlife Rehabilitation Intake Sheet” is a template that rehabilitators may use to help with record keeping. The form is available for download on the Division’s website. The use of this intake sheet is not required.

YEAR END REPORT *(source ODW)*
Wildlife rehabilitators are required to submit an annual report to the Division. For migratory species, a copy of your federal annual report will be acceptable. For all other species, please utilize the form “DNR 9019 Annual Year End Report” included with permit applications. This form is also available for download on the Division’s website.

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATION IN OHIO

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION RULES & REGULATIONS

**SUMMARY**
- All applicants for a Category I Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit must be at least eighteen years of age at the time of application.
- All applicants for a Category I Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit must provide documentation that they have completed a Division of Wildlife approved rehabilitation course conducted by the Ohio Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (OWRA) or another approved entity.
- Applicants that have at least three years of rehabilitation experience as a Category I rehabilitator or equivalent may apply for a Category II Rehabilitation permit. The Chief or his designee shall approve new Category II applicants as needed to fulfill the rehabilitation needs of a county or geographical region.
- All applicants for a Category I or Category II Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit must provide signed verification of veterinary assistance (DNR 8960 provided).
- All Category I and Category II Wildlife Rehabilitators shall comply with the conditions set forth in the permit and provide proper facilities for the animals in their care. All cage and holding facilities shall meet the minimum standards as outlined in this Publication 5475, Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation in Ohio.
- All Category I and Category II Wildlife Rehabilitators shall keep a record of all animals by species which are held for rehabilitation. Records shall include the location the animal was found, the date the wild animal was received, the issue causing a need for rehabilitation, and the date and location where the wild animal was released, or its final disposition if not released. All records must be maintained for a period of two years and shall be open for inspection by any Division of Wildlife personnel. All rehabilitation facilities will be inspected by the Division of Wildlife a minimum of once every two years.
• Persons holding a Category I Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit may rehabilitate orphaned wild animals, except
deer, bobcats, raccoons, weasels, skunks, mink, opossums, badgers, beaver, raptors, canids, bats, birds, mute
swans and state or federal endangered species.

• Persons holding a Category II Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit may rehabilitate additional species of native wild
animals as specified on their permit except deer, coyote, bobcats, mute swans, birds or state or federally endan-
gered species unless otherwise approved by the Chief of the Division of Wildlife.

• Wild animals that are not candidates for release to the wild, but may be a good representative of the species, may
be transferred to licensed education facilities upon approval from the Division of Wildlife. Additional approvals may
be required by the USFWS for migratory birds and Federally listed species.

• Category I and Category II Wildlife Rehabilitation Permits are not valid for the possession of Dangerous Wild Ani-
mals as defined in Chapter 935.01 of the Revised Code except for injured timber rattlesnakes, Eastern massasau-
gas, and Eastern copperheads held for rehabilitation purposes only.

• Wild animals that are being improperly cared for may be removed by any Wildlife Officer. Written notice to the holder
of a Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit may be given that his or her permit is being revoked until the conditions of the
facility or the care and handling deficiencies are corrected.

• While bobcats, bald eagles, osprey, peregrine falcons, trumpeter swans, sandhill cranes and barn owls are no longer
endangered species, the Division wants to be involved in decisions concerning the rehabilitation of these species.
For this reason, only persons with permits to handle state endangered and/or federally listed species or those with
specific written permission from the Division should accept these species for rehabilitation.

ENDANGERED SPECIES  
(source ODW)
If you receive an orphaned or injured endangered species, or are called concerning an orphaned or injured en-
dangered species, IMMEDIATELY (within 24 hours) contact the Wildlife Officer assigned to your county and the
District Wildlife Management Supervisor. Inform them of any details you know about the animal (such as, extent of
injury, when, and where it was found). Remember to leave your contact information, the date, and time of your call.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wildlife District</th>
<th>Wildlife Supervisor</th>
<th>Telephone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District 1</td>
<td>Gary Comer</td>
<td>(614) 902-4185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 2</td>
<td>Bob Ford</td>
<td>(419) 424-5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 3</td>
<td>Scott Peters</td>
<td>(330) 644-2293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 4</td>
<td>Jim Hill</td>
<td>(740) 589-9930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 5</td>
<td>Brett Beatty</td>
<td>(937) 372-9261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While bobcats, bald eagles, osprey, peregrine falcons, trumpeter swans, sandhill cranes and barn owls are no
longer endangered species, the Division wants to be involved in decisions concerning the rehabilitation of these
species. For this reason, only persons with permits to handle state endangered and/or federally listed species or
those with specific written permission from the Division should accept these species for rehabilitation.

STATE ENDANGERED SPECIES
STATE ENDANGERED TERRESTRIAL SPECIES PROTECTED UNDER OHIO REVISED CODE 1531.25
(up-to-date list maintained at wildohio.gov)

BIRDS: American bittern, Northern harrier, King rail, Piping plover (*E), Common tern, Black tern,
Loggerhead shrike, Kirtland’s warbler (*E), Lark sparrow, Snowy egret, Cattle egret, and
Upland sandpiper

MAMMALS: +Black bear, Indiana bat (*E), and Allegheny woodrat

REPTILES: Copperbelly water snake (*T), Plains gartersnake, Timber rattlesnake,
Eastern massasauga (*T), and Smooth greensnake

AMPHIBIANS: Eastern hellbender (*SC), Cave salamander, Blue-spotted salamander,
Green salamander, and Eastern spadefoot

* Indicates an Additional Federal Status Designation
+ Black bear (Ursus americanus) shall not be rehabilitated and must be euthanized
RELEASE STANDARDS (source ODW/OWRA)
Wildlife must be released within 180 days unless otherwise authorized by the Division of Wildlife (wildlife.permits@dnr.state.oh.us). Landowner permission must be obtained prior to releasing wildlife. It is preferable that all animals be returned to the site where found for release. Refer to the “Rabies-Vector Species” section for details on release of rabies-vector species. Refer to the “Special Considerations for Turtles” section for information on releasing turtles, as well as amphibians and reptiles.

NON-RELEASABLE (source ODW)
Rehabilitators shall not sustain the life of any wild animal that cannot after medical management feed itself, or one that has an impairment that prevents it from standing, perching upright, or moving about without inflicting additional injury to itself. Further, any bird that has sustained injuries requiring amputation of a wing at the elbow (humero-ulnar joint) or above, a leg or foot, and/or are blind in both eyes, must be euthanized. Non-releasable wildlife, with no visible signs of injury, deformity, or amputation may be transferred to a licensed education facility upon approval of the Division. A Wildlife Transfer Form (DNR 8919) must be filled out for each individual wild animal transfer request and submitted to the Permit Coordinator. The rehabilitator will receive an “approval” or “denial” notification. A copy of the approved transfer form must remain with the animal upon transfer to education.

EUTHANASIA
Under Ohio Revised Code 4729.532 (method and requirements for euthanasia of animals by use of drugs) and Ohio Revised Code 4729.531 (license for euthanasia of animals by use of drugs), only licensed veterinarians, certified euthanasia technicians and registered veterinary technicians can perform euthanasia by means of lethal injection. Additionally, Ohio Revised Code 4729.532 states no agent or employee of an animal shelter shall perform euthanasia by means of lethal injection on an animal by use of any substance other than combination drugs that contain pentobarbital and at least one non-controlled substance active ingredient, in a manufactured dosage form, whose only indication is for euthanizing animals, or other substance that the state veterinary medical licensing board and the state board of pharmacy both approve by rule adopted in accordance with Chapter 119 of the Ohio Revised Code. To become a certified euthanasia technician, individuals must take required coursework and pass an examination.

NUISANCE ANIMALS (source ODW)
Wildlife, such as raccoons and bats, which have been live-trapped by a Commercial Nuisance Wild Animal Control Operator (CNWACO) or by the property owner due to a nuisance situation shall not be accepted for rehabilitation. There may be times when dealing with the public, a rehabilitator must determine if the animal is “abandoned” or “orphaned.” Simplifying the scenario (e.g., no rehabilitation of raccoons from chimneys/attics/porches/garages) is the most straightforward approach and will take the subjectivity out of the decision. When dealing with the public, ask for details of the situation to assist in objectively assessing if an animal has been abandoned because of a purposeful action by the homeowner or are actually “orphaned” because of a natural event. If the situation suggests the young were abandoned, then the person can try to reunite (e.g., release the young on site) or have them euthanized. Animals abandoned because of a purposeful action by the homeowner may not be rehabilitated. Any young from adults trapped or captured as nuisance animals shall not be accepted for rehabilitation. Under Ohio Administrative Code 1501:31-15-03, ALL raccoons, skunks, coyotes, fox and opossums trapped or captured under the authority of the nuisance wild animal regulation must be euthanized or released on site by the CNWACO or property owner, NOT given to or accepted by a rehabilitator. If a nuisance trapper attempts to give you any animal for rehabilitation, please contact the Wildlife Officer assigned to your county or District Wildlife Management Supervisor as soon as possible.

INVASIVE NON-NATIVE FREE-RANGING TERRESTRIAL VERTEBRATE (source ODW)
In August 2008 the Division of Wildlife implemented Policy #41 entitled, “Invasive Non-native Free-ranging Terrestrial Vertebrate.” This policy outlines the agency’s position concerning the potential negative impacts of non-native species and the need for their control.

It is the policy of the Division of Wildlife to humanely euthanize invasive non-native free-ranging terrestrial vertebrates found on Division owned or managed lands. The Division will strongly encourage other land-managing agencies to also eliminate these species from their lands. The “American Veterinary Medical Association’s 2013
Based on these characteristics and considerations, the following recommendations are made for wildlife rehabilitators dealing with turtles:

1. Do not accept turtles that have been “rescued” but are otherwise healthy and uninjured. Old injuries that have healed, including a missing limb or eye or previously cracked shell, are commonly observed in wild turtle populations and are not a sufficient reason for accepting a turtle for rehabilitation. Explain to the public that removal of turtles from areas that they deem “unsuitable” will eventually result in the loss of populations. Turtles can and do survive in some suburban and even urban areas, but not if they are constantly rescued and relocated.

2. Turtles should be released at their point of capture, not simply within the township where they were found. When you receive a turtle, ask for — and document — the location with as much specificity as possible. Within reason, this is the location where the turtle should be released. Releasing amphibians or reptiles somewhere other than their point of capture requires written authorization from the chief of the Division of Wildlife.

3. Keep turtles isolated from other animals and use strict biosecurity procedures to ensure you and your facility are not inadvertently spreading diseases.
4. Release turtles as soon as possible. The longer a turtle spends in captivity, the greater the chance it has to be exposed to pathogens. Living in captivity may also interrupt natural cycles such as overwintering, breeding, and nesting. Releasing amphibians or reptiles that have been in captivity for longer than 30 days requires written authorization from the chief of the Division of Wildlife. Requests should be submitted to: wildlife.permits@dnr.state.oh.us.

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE’S POSITION ON KNOWN & EMERGING DISEASES IN WILDLIFE

The Division of Wildlife utilizes a five-pronged approach to address known and emerging wildlife disease issues. This approach focuses on 1) preventing diseases before Ohio’s wildlife are affected; 2) detecting diseases in wildlife that emerge; 3) diagnosing and identifying diseases; 4) monitoring outbreaks of diseases in wildlife; and 5) managing these diseases in wildlife. The Division also puts significant effort into informing and educating Ohioans about the Division’s role and authority in addressing disease issues and in disseminating factual information about diseases that impact or potentially affects Ohio’s wildlife populations.

Under Ohio Revised Code 1531.04(A) the Division is directed to plan and implement programs and policies based on the best available information, including biological information derived from professionally accepted practices for the benefit of the wildlife resource. Maintaining healthy wildlife populations is the most basic function of the Division. Species which are abundant like the white-tailed deer, mallards, or Canada geese could be locally reduced in numbers or vigor from a known or an emerging disease. The threat of a known or an emerging disease in wildlife could be devastating to endangered species with limited populations.

CONTROL OF DISEASES TRANSMISSIBLE FROM ANIMAL TO ANIMAL

1. The efficiency of cleaning should be incorporated into the design of cages and pens. Seamless, nonporous materials should be employed for cage construction and food containers.

2. Animal enclosures should be kept sanitary by having an adequate and routine cleaning regimen in which responsibilities are clearly defined and assigned to personnel. Before a newly-acquired animal is introduced into a cage or enclosure that has previously been used by another animal, the cage must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and the bedding material changed.

3. Animals having contagious diseases must be kept isolated from all non-infected susceptible animals. Newly acquired animals should be housed separately upon arrival. They should not be added to a group pen until it has been established that they are in good health (i.e., ten to thirty days). RVS that are being accepted from different locations/townships should be marked in such a manner to differentiate individuals when housed in the same enclosure. Marking method is at the discretion of the rehabilitator but must remain visible/detectable through the rehabilitation period to facilitate the efficient return of the animals to the appropriate township for release. Unmarked animals from different locations must not be housed together. A routine examination for parasites should be performed on new arrivals, with reexamination at intervals during protracted rehabilitation.

4. Animal diets must be prepared and foodstuffs should be stored under sanitary conditions that are free from vermin and microbial contamination.

STANDARDS GOVERNING THE PREVENTION OF DISEASE TRANSMISSION WITHIN THE REHABILITATION FACILITY (source ODW, NWRA/IWRC, & OWRA)

1. Clothing should be clean and changed as often as necessary. It is suggested that the facility provide lab coats or other tops to volunteers and launder them.

2. Shoes and boots should be kept clean.

3. Disposable gloves and surgical masks must be available for use during such procedures as necropsies or cleaning contaminated animal quarters.

4. Lavatory facilities should be accessible. This is especially true of handwashing sinks.

5. Eating, drinking and smoking should be restricted to designated areas free of animal waste materials.

6. The supervisory staff must, as a part of their training, be given basic information on zoonoses. Personal hygiene rules should be established and the supervisory staff should set an example.
7. All personnel should be advised to seek the consent of their physicians before working in the facility. They should acquire any necessary vaccinations (especially tetanus). If working with mammals, they should inquire about the possibility of pre-exposure rabies vaccinations. Female personnel who become pregnant should be advised to renew medical consent.

8. Necropsy procedures must adhere strictly to sanitary practices including the use of surgical masks and disposable gloves, appropriate outer garments, and the use of disinfectants.

9. There must be separate refrigeration facilities for food and for post-mortem specimens.

10. The veterinarian assisting a wildlife rehabilitation facility should direct the wildlife rehabilitation facility as to the proper disposal of carcasses.

11. A wildlife rehabilitation facility should use discretion when allowing children, persons with weakened immune systems, or women who are pregnant or considering becoming pregnant to handle any animals or work within the animal care areas of the wildlife rehabilitation facility. In no event should a Category II Facility allow such persons to have access to diseased wildlife.

12. Residences where children, persons with weakened immune systems, or women who are pregnant or considering becoming pregnant live should not be used as wildlife rehabilitation facilities.

13. Any permit holder who possesses rabies vector species for rehabilitation should have possession of and comply with Procedures and Guidelines for Wildlife Rehabilitators Who Are Authorized to Handle Rabies-Vector Species written by Laura J. Simon.

14. All wildlife rehabilitators should have current tetanus inoculations.

15. If you, or a sub-permittee, or volunteer is bitten by a rabies-vector species or otherwise potentially exposed to rabies; immediately (within 24 hours) call your local health department to report the incident and submit the animal for testing, as well as seek medical attention.

**RABIES-VECTOR SPECIES**

All mammals can get and transmit rabies; however high-risk species or rabies-vector species (RVS) include raccoons, skunks, foxes, and bats.

Only licensed Category II wildlife rehabilitators with RVS training may raise orphaned or provide care to injured RVS. All Category II rehabilitators must provide the date of their most recent pre-exposure vaccination and/or antibody titer and acknowledge the risk of handling these species on the permit application. All rehabilitators handling RVS shall complete a training course (or equivalent certification) for handling RVS offered by the OWRA or other approved organization. All Category II rehabilitators shall discuss the risks associated with handling RVS with all volunteers and sub-permittees who assist with wildlife rehabilitation at their facility. Skunks and foxes must be euthanized or held for 30 days with no signs of rabies before being released to the same county and township in which they were originally obtained. If this is not possible, they must be euthanized. Raccoons originating from Ashtabula, Belmont, Carroll, Columbiana, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Harrison, Jefferson, Lake, Mahoning, Monroe, Portage, Stark, Summit, Tuscarawas and Trumbull counties cannot be rehabilitated and must be euthanized. Additional counties may be added as specified by the USDA and/or Ohio Department of Health. In counties outside of the oral rabies vaccination zone, raccoons must be euthanized or held for a minimum of 65-days with no signs of disease before being released unless otherwise authorized by the Division of Wildlife. If held for 65-days with no signs of illness, they must be released in the same county and township in which they were originally obtained. Individuals admitted to rehabilitation with no obvious sign of illness or injury may be immediately released to their capture location. Rehhabilitated bats showing no sign of rabies should be released immediately during the spring, summer, and fall (April 1 to November 30, when temperatures are above freezing). Bats that are rehabilitated in the winter should be released as soon as possible in the spring (April 1, pending weather conditions). Bats should also be released to the same county and township they originated. It is recommended that all animals are to be released in the same approximate location they were collected. For further questions about releasing bats, please refer to the releasing bats subsection in the WNS portion of this document.

Unless otherwise authorized by the Division of Wildlife, orphaned or injured skunks and foxes must be euthanized or held for 30-days with no signs of rabies before being released to the same county and township in which they were originally obtained. Individuals admitted to rehabilitation with no obvious sign of illness or injury may be immediately released to their capture location.
WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME

All rehabilitators that intend to take in bats should be willing to coordinate with the Ohio Division of Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on updated methods and protocols. Due to White-nose Syndrome (WNS), bats are more susceptible now than ever to steep declines in populations. It is therefore prudent to instill certain actions that will help to stop the spread of the disease. When wildlife rehabilitation activities involve contact with bats, their environments, and/or associated materials, the following decontamination procedures are designed to reduce the risk of human-assisted transmission of the fungus to other bats and/or habitats. Spores can be spread in the summer and winter time even if the fungus is not visible. **All bats should be treated as having WNS upon initial intake into a rehabilitation facility and kept separate until you determine if it likely has WNS or not using method listed below. Check with the Division of Wildlife prior to administering treatment for WNS.**

SECTION 1: REHABILITATION OF BATS

**Transportation and Initial Inspection of Bat:**

- Bat(s) should be transferred to a secure box (with a lid) that can be decontaminated or discarded. Whoever is transporting the bat should not touch the bat with bare hands.
- The transport box should be placed inside another clean box or loose bag (ensuring there is access to air) before placing it inside the vehicle for transport to the rehabilitation facility.
- The transport box should not be opened to examine the bat(s) until inside the dedicated bat quarantine room.
- Once the bat is removed from the box, that box needs to be decontaminated or sprayed with a disinfectant and thrown away.
- It is recommended that one person take notes while the other inspects the bat to prevent spores from getting on paperwork that cannot be decontaminated.
- Anything that came into contact with the bat or with something else that came into contact with the bat, such as a gloved hand, needs to be decontaminated with one of the approved methods (see Section 2).
- Photo documentation should be used for all bats coming into the rehabilitation center. Certain species, like the little brown bat and Indiana bat, can be incredibly difficult to distinguish. These pictures are also a useful documentation of scarring present on the bat.
- When first accepting a bat, it is important to make sure that the bat receives proper hydration. Bats in general, but especially bats with WNS, are susceptible to dehydration. This should be done before the bat is fed.
- While examining each bat, it should be determined whether or not the bat has likely been in contact with Pd and/or is infected with White-nose Syndrome. Use a long-wave UV ray light, with the capability to emit a wavelength of 368 nm, and run the light over the bat’s wing to see if small orange-yellow specks appear. If there are specks, the bat may have WNS. An example can be seen at https://theiwrc.org/archives/3926. We do not recommend using the Wing Damage Index Scores because bats can exhibit wing scars due to causes other than WNS.

**Cleanliness of persons handling bats:**

- Outer clothing should be cleaned or changed in between taking care of bats with WNS versus bats without WNS. It is suggested that lab coats be employed so that they can easily be changed and laundered each day.
- Shoes and boots need to be kept clean. It is recommended that volunteers use rubber boots so that they can be treated with Clorox wipes, or other approved cleaning agents, in-between interacting with WNS bats and non-WNS bats. Foot baths are also an acceptable form of decontaminating boots after exiting the WNS room. Disposable booties can also be used to cover boots when in the WNS room. These should be removed and thrown away upon exiting the room.
- Disposable gloves must be used when handling a bat or cleaning its cage. In addition, surgical masks are suggested to prevent breathing in spores from bat guano that may lead to Histoplasmosis. In between each bat and/or cage, gloves should be thrown away, and new ones should be adorned. It is also advisable to wash hands when changing gloves.
- All supplies used to treat bats with WNS should be kept inside the bat quarantine room. However, if any of the equipment needs to be taken out, the decontamination protocols in this document must be followed.
- Once exiting the WNS room, the trash bag that contained the gloves, masks, and wipes for decontamination should be sprayed and placed in another bag. Due to the fact that the bag was in the WNS room, it is likely have spores on it. The process of spraying and double-bagging the trash prevents these spores from spreading.

**Releasing Bats:**

- As you are preparing to release each bat, keep in mind that bats with WNS must always be isolated from those without WNS. If you are placing the bat in a flight cage before release, this rule still needs to be followed. The flight cages that hold the bats with WNS should be kept at least twenty feet away from the flight cages that hold bats that do not have WNS.
• Bats should be released in the same county/township in which they were originally found after sundown. WNS bats and non-WNS bats should be released separately. Due to the large amounts of bats with WNS in the state, releasing infected bats is not likely to negatively impact the population.

**Dead Bats:**
When five or more dead bats are to be collected from the same location, the following steps should be taken:
• The bats should be collected using gloves and preserved in double zip-lock bags.
• Label the bags with the location the bat was found, the date, and the contact information for the person submitting the bats.
• Refrigerate the bats separate from any refrigerated food.
• Within 24 hours of receiving specimens, contact the Division of Wildlife (Kate Parsons, 614.265.6329 or email kate.parsons@dnr.state.oh.us).

**SECTION 2: METHODS TO REDUCE WNS TRANSMISSION**
The best way to decontaminate equipment and clothing that have been in direct or indirect contact with bats is to completely submerge in hot water. This must be done at ≥55°C (131°F) for ≥20 minutes.

**Table 1.** Alternative options for decontamination. All products must be used in accordance with the label.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCT</th>
<th>DILUTION/TREATMENT</th>
<th>APPROVED USES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clorox Bleach</td>
<td>1:10 (bleach: water)</td>
<td>All but non-porous safety equipment 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lysol IC/ QD Treatment</td>
<td>1 oz IC/ QD: 1 gal water</td>
<td>Hard non-porous surfaces and safety equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clorox Disinfecting Wipes</td>
<td>0.184% dimethyl benzyl ammonium chloride</td>
<td>Only hard non-porous surfaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethanol</td>
<td>60% or greater in water</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isopropanol</td>
<td>60% or greater in water</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescue</td>
<td>4.25 % hydrogen peroxide</td>
<td>Only hard non-porous surfaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrogen Peroxide Wipes</td>
<td>3% in water</td>
<td>Only hard non-porous surfaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isopropyl Alcohol Wipes</td>
<td>70% in water</td>
<td>Only hard non-porous surfaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formula 409</td>
<td>Effective as specified on label</td>
<td>Only hard non-porous surfaces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Formula 409 accepted in correlation with the 2012 national decontamination standards, as well as the state standards for Idaho, Wisconsin, and Colorado.
2These products must follow the standards listed out in the water submersion section. The items need to be completely submerged for a minimum of 20 minutes in any treatment.
Note: Non-submersible gear, like cameras and electronics, should be wiped down with disinfecting wipes. If there is a porous surface attached, such as a strap, it should be decontaminated with the submersible gear using hot water, bleach, or Lysol QD as directed above.

Ohio bat species are often difficult to identify, especially those in the Myotis genus which include Indiana bats (federally and state endangered), northern long-eared bats (federally and state threatened), eastern small-footed bats (state species of concern), and little brown bats (state species of concern). For help with identification, send photos to wildlife.permits@dnr.state.oh.us. The DOW and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Columbus Field Office Endangered Species Coordinator, Angela Boyer (614-416-8993 ext. 21) must be notified within 24-hours of receiving and prior to euthanizing an Indiana or northern long-eared bat.

Additional information is available at whitenosesyndrome.org, and on the DOW and USFWS websites.

**OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSIBILITIES**
1. All organic refuse must be collected into airtight bags or containers and stored in a safe location until removal from the premises. The supervisory staff is responsible to local public health officials on matters regarding waste and post-mortem material disposal.
2. Indoor facilities are required to have efficient ventilation and air movement.
3. Domestic animals should not be allowed on the premises. However, if they are, they should be fully vaccinated and must have no direct contact with wildlife.
4. A program for rodent & insect control is recommended for wildlife care facilities. However, care should be taken to avoid contaminating food or housing areas with pesticides.
ETHICS – KEEP IT WILD!

All wildlife rehabilitators should adhere to the NWRA Code of Ethics which can be found at nwrawildlife.org. The Division of Wildlife may revoke a permit based on unethical behavior. An unethical action by one rehabilitator may result in a negative perception towards wildlife rehabilitation as a whole or confusion by the public about how wild animals should be treated. It is of utmost importance for rehabilitators to act in the best interest of wild animals and to ensure public safety.