Ohio Department of Natural Resources
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

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MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATION IN OHIO

VIRGINIA OPOSSUM
by TIM DANIEL

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

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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, orphaned or diseased native wildlife is an 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 Rehabilitation Association and International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (NWRA/IWRC) "Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation" copyright 2021)

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATION IN OHIO

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION FACILITY

(sources NWRA and IWRC)

STANDARD REQUIREMENTS OF ALL FACILITIES

First Aid and Safety. All wildlife rehabilitation facilities are highly recommended to have fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, eye wash capability, first aid kits, and safety data sheets (SDS) for all chemicals stored on the premises for personal safety. It is recommended 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 to prevent any backup of sewage. 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. 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.

- ► Each wildlife rehabilitation facility shall provide a daily cleaning and disinfecting schedule.

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.

Shelter. Natural or artificial shelter appropriate to local climate conditions for the 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 always prevent the discomfort of the animals. Such facilities shall be provided with fresh air either by means of windows, doors, vents, fans, or air conditioning and shall be ventilated 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.

Domestic Pets and Livestock. Domestic animals/pets and livestock should not have any direct contact with wildlife. If they are housed on the same property as wildlife in rehabilitation, they should be fully vaccinated.

CATEGORY I FACILITIES (sources ODW and OWRA)

1. A category I rehabilitation permit will allow the permit holder and their authorized subpermittees to care for and rehabilitate orphans, except deer, raccoons, weasels, skunks, mink, badgers, beaver, raptors, canids, bats, mute swans and state or federal endangered species unless otherwise approved by the chief of the division of wildlife or their designee.

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

3. Rehabilitation facilities must be secure and provide protection from predators, domestic animals, undue human disturbance, sun, wind, and inclement weather.

CATEGORY II FACILITIES (sources ODW and OWRA)

1. A category II rehabilitation permit will allow the permit holder and their authorize subpermittees to care for and rehabilitate all species of wild animals except deer, coyote, mute swans, or state or federal endangered species unless otherwise approved by the chief of the division of wildlife or their designee.

2. 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.

3. Rehabilitation facilities must be secure and provide protection from predators, domestic animals, undue human disturbance, sun, wind, and inclement weather.

4. 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.

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

6. 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.

7. It is recommended that all Category II facilities have a liability policy in place.

ETHICS – KEEP IT WILD! (sources NWRA and IWRC revised 2018, annotated 2020, 2021, pg7-10)

1. A wildlife rehabilitator should strive to achieve high standards of animal care through knowledge and an understanding of the field. Individuals must make an effort to be informed of current rehabilitation information, methods, and regulations through participation in continuing education.

2. A wildlife rehabilitator should be responsible, conscientious, and dedicated, and should work continuously toward improving the quality of care given to wild animals undergoing rehabilitation.

3. A wildlife rehabilitator must abide by local, state, provincial, and federal laws concerning wildlife, wildlife rehabilitation, and associated activities.

4. A wildlife rehabilitator should establish safe work habits and conditions, abiding by current health and safety practices at all times.

5. A wildlife rehabilitator should acknowledge limitations and enlist the assistance of a veterinarian and other trained professionals when appropriate.

6. A wildlife rehabilitator should respect other rehabilitators and persons in related fields, sharing skills and knowledge in the spirit of cooperation for the welfare of animals.

7. A wildlife rehabilitator should place optimum animal care above personal gain.

8. A wildlife rehabilitator should strive to provide professional and humane care in all phases of wildlife rehabilitation, protecting the welfare, respecting the wildness, and maintaining the dignity of each animal in life and in death. Releasable animals should be maintained in a wild condition and released as soon as appropriate. Nonreleasable animals have a right to euthanasia.

9. A wildlife rehabilitator should encourage community support and involvement through volunteer training and public education. The common goal should be to promote a responsible concern for living beings and the welfare of the environment.

10. A wildlife rehabilitator should work from a foundation of sound ecological principles, incorporating appropriate conservation ethics and an attitude of stewardship.

11. A wildlife rehabilitator should conduct all business, activities, and communications in a professional manner, with honesty, integrity, compassion, and commitment, realizing that an individual's conduct reflects on the entire field of wildlife rehabilitation.

The Division of Wildlife may revoke a permit based on unethical behavior. An unethical action by one rehabilitator may result in a negative perception of 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. Any wildlife officer may remove any wild animal which is being improperly cared for and provide written notice to the holder of the rehabilitation permit that their permit is being revoked as the conditions of the facility or the care and handling deficiencies are corrected.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY (source IWRC, 2021 pg9-10)

All forms of social media are ways to reach and connect with supporters across the globe and create an interactive community. When posting to social media consider the IWRC and NWRA code of ethics, educate the public about conservation topics, wild animals are not pets, and wildlife rehabilitation. Photos, videos, and other media should be evaluated closely for suitability for public sharing.

Desirable Media:

- ► Depict rehabilitation in action with appropriate staff, interns, and volunteers
- ► Depict circumstances requiring interventions (as in orphaned or injured animals)
- ► Depict interesting, normal behavior of healthy wildlife
- ► Depict a barrier between handler and animal
- ► Shows appropriate medical/technical procedures with correct personal protective equipment
- ► Depict injuries, medical conditions that result in the need for rehabilitation and improvement
- ► Depict safety precautions of the facility in handling all aspects of rehabilitation
- ► Demonstrate key concepts that are aligned with Division of Wildlife messaging (wild fostering, humane harassment, respect for wildlife, preventing "abduction", etc)
- ► Depict necessary animal handling or interaction during treatment or rehabilitation

Undesirable Media:

- ► Depict wildlife in posed or contrived settings
- ► Handling any animal without proper PPE, unnecessary handling, or inappropriate handling
- ► Depict inappropriate animal or human behavior or implying a bond
- ► Suggests human-animal bond with wildlife intended for release
- ► Depict wildlife in common living space, with household pets, or in a situation where the treatment or behavior appears to be like that of a pet
- ► Tours or education programs in areas where animals are being rehabilitated
- ► Ethical care and professional conduct by wildlife rehabilitators benefit both the wildlife, wildlife rehabilitation, and community education.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR HOUSING OF WILD ANIMALS (sources NWRA and 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. Please refer to the current IWRC or NWRA minimum standards for the extensive minimum housing guidelines for neonate/nestling/infant/fledgling/etc.

- ► 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.ohio.gov.
- ► When rehabilitating multiple different species of animals, take precautions to separate them by using visual barriers, coverings, or housing in different locations. Keeping different species near each other may cause stress, so it is the responsibility of the rehabilitator to minimize stress during rehabilitation.
- ► 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.
- ► 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.
- ► Rehabilitation facilities must be secure and provide protection from predators, domestic animals, undue human disturbance, sun, wind, and inclement weather.

AVIAN CAGING (source NWRA and IWRC)

Any juvenile bird old enough to completely perch and not on restricted activity 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.

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-inpile Astroturf or indoor/outdoor carpeting. Natural limbs, bow, block, and ring perches are appropriate for certain species of birds.

MAMMAL CAGING (source NWRA and 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:

SPECIES	CAGE SIZE (W X L X H)	ADDITIONAL AMENITIES REQUIRED
AVIAN, NON-RAPTORS: Loons, grebes, cormorants, geese swans, diving ducks (Mute swans may not be rehabilitated and must be euthanized)	large enough to contain 6' pool and loafing area	swimming area, 6' pool, tank or pond, deeper than 2'
AVIAN, NON-RAPTORS: Dabbling ducks	large enough to contain kiddie pool and loafing area	4' kiddie pool
AVIAN, NON-RAPTORS: Songbirds, doves, small woodpeckers, kingfishers, swifts, swallows, rails, coots, phesants, quail, small bitterns, or herons	4' x 8' x 6'	4' kiddie pool (only for bitterns & herons) and perching structure
AVIAN, NON-RAPTORS: Large woodpeckers, nighthawks, goatsuckers, gulls terns, plovers, cuckoos, cranes, large bitterns, or herons	8' x 16' x 8'	4' kiddie pool (only for cranes, bitterns & herons) and perching structure
AVIAN, RAPTORS: Small to medium hawks and 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	8' x 16' x 8'	perching structure
AVIAN, RAPTORS: Large owls, barred owls, great horned owls	10' x 30' x 8'	perching structure

AVIAN, RAPTORS: Large hawks and vultures, red-tailed hawks, red-shouldered hawks, rough-legged hawks, northern harrier, goshawk, black vultures, turkey vultures	10' x 30' x 10'	perching structure
AVIAN, RAPTORS: Large falcons, and other extra-large raptors, peregrine falcons, gyrfalcon, eagles, osprey, snowy owls	16' x 90' x 16'	perching structure

MAMMALS, OUTSIDE PRE-RELEASE: Tree or ground squirrels	4' x 6' x 4' ground squirrels 4' x 8' x 8' tree squirrels	single animal cage sizes. 1 square foot needs to be added for each additional animal.
MAMMALS, OUTSIDE PRE-RELEASE: Opossums, skunks	4' x 8' x 6'	single animal cage sizes. 1 square foot needs to be added for each additional animal.
MAMMALS, OUTSIDE PRE-RELEASE: Fox, raccoon, badger	8' x 8' x 6'	single animal cage size. 2 square feet needs to be added for each additional animal.
MAMMALS, OUTSIDE PRE-RELEASE: Beaver, river otter	6' x 12' x 6'	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'
MAMMALS, OUTSIDE PRE-RELEASE: Bobcat	10' x 10' x 8'	Single animal cage size. 2 square foot needs tobe added for each additional animal. Also need 2 water dishes, climbing structures, double door entry system, a chute/door to allow feeding without human involvement

SPECIAL SPECIES CONSIDERATIONS (source ODW)

Special species authorizations are limited due to the geographic need, education, training, and experience. Authorization of bobcat or fawn is for the permitted facility only and excludes subpermit holders. Prior to accepting any bobcats or fawns, all parties need to educate callers on the biology and ensure any orphan is indeed orphaned before it is removed from the wild.

BOBCAT

The Chief may authorize Category II rehabilitators the option to rehabilitate orphaned bobcats who have both an approved facility and inspection. Rehabilitation of an adult bobcat may be determined after consultation with the Division of Wildlife.

Procedure. Licensed wildlife rehabilitators may accept bobcats that are considered orphaned with certainty, for immediate transfer to an authorized Category II rehabilitation facility. Within 24 hours of receiving a bobcat, the rehabilitator must contact the district wildlife management supervisor.

Authorized Category II rehabilitators will adhere to the following:

Treatment

- ► Stimulate for fecal/urination activity
- ► Check and treat minor wounds
- ► Maintain body temperature
- ► If immobilization drugs are used, the animal must be tagged upon release.

Caging Requirements

- ► No exposure to human sights, smells and sounds.
- ► A double-door entryway on the bobcat enclosure is mandatory and secured with a lock.
- ► Ability to climb and perform normal bobcat behaviors
- ► Solid or slatted walls on the bottom half of the enclosure to provide a visual barrier
- ► Substrate must consist of natural earth, gravel, grass, or tan bark
- ► Caging and substrate must be escape-proof (completely contained, predator proofing floor)
- ► Provide branches/logs for climbing, and platforms for resting above cage floor
- ► Provide 2 water sources
- ► Provide other furnishings such as plastic barrels, hollow logs, or cardboard boxes for hiding

Cage size should meet the minimum standards outlined below:

Infant Care WxLxH	**Nursung/Pre-weaned** WxLxH	**Juvenile Outside** WxLxH
10 Gallon	**3ft x 3ft x 3ft**	**10ft x 10ft x 8ft**

Release.

- ► Collaboration with Wildlife Management team is required prior to release. Rehabilitation facilities in urban areas may release in adjacent counties.
- ► Ability to live hunt
- ► A minimum of 6 months of age

Criteria Requiring Euthanasia

- ► Significant injury (broken limb)
- ► Habituated to humans
- ► Euthanasia techniques shall comply with AVMA standards based on location and circumstances

WHITE-TAILED DEER FAWN

The Chief may authorize Category II rehabilitators the option to provide short-term care, up to seventy-two hours, of white-tailed deer fawns for return to the wild.

Procedure. Licensed wildlife rehabilitators may accept fawns, that are considered orphaned with certainty, for immediate transfer to an authorized Category II rehabilitation facility.

Authorized Category II rehabilitators will adhere to the following:

Treatment

- ► Check Umbilicus. If present and soft < twenty-four hours old; feed goat colostrum every 2-4 hours; washout with Pedialyte or comparable product, 2 feedings before return to capture area
- ► For fawns > twenty-four hours old, 1-3 feedings of Pedialyte or comparable product to be given for hydration. Fawns shall then be released at dusk following stabilization at or near the capture area. Same day release is preferred to increase opportunities for fostering/reuniting.
- ► The use of immobilization drugs and/or surgery is prohibited. The use of other medications with long withdrawal periods is cautioned.
- ► Stimulate for fecal/urination activity
- ► Check and treat minor wounds
- ► Maintain body temperature
- ► Release within the same county where originally rescued with preference to same township Rehabilitation facilities in urban areas may release in adjacent counties except in CWD restricted counties
- ► Authorized rehabbers must email (preferred) or share a biweekly report of fawn intake and associated outcomes to the district wildlife management supervisor commencing with the intake of the first fawn until they no longer have fawns in the facility

Caging Requirements

- ► Padded/towel-lined container (dog kennel)
- ► Kept dark inside. Smooth sides and doors to prevent injury
- ► Container large enough for fawn can stand or lie down
- ► 4'x4'x2' per 1-2 fawns, 10'x15'x6' per 4 fawns (per NWRA)

Criteria Requiring Euthanasia

- ► Adult or subadult (no spots) deer
- ► Significant injury (broken limb)
- ► Covered in flies or maggots, feces matted to body, weak/emaciated/underweight
- ► Habituated to humans
- ► From a documented Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) infected area as documented on the ohiodnr.gov website and/or 1501:31-19-03 of the Ohio Administrative Code.
- ► Fawns held longer than 72 hours that cannot be released and must be humanely euthanized
- ► Euthanasia techniques shall comply with AVMA standards based on location and circumstances
- ► As of 2024, Fawns from Allen, Hardin, Marion and Wyandot Counties.
- ► https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/wildlife-management/wildlife-disease/chronic-wasting-disease#:~:text=Since%202002%2C%20nearly%2039%2C000%20wild,early%202021%20in%20Wyandot%20County.

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATION IN OHIO

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION FACILITY

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 holder's 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.ohio.gov.

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 holder's 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. Review 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. https://ohiodnr.gov/business-and-industry/business-activities/specialty-wildlife-wild-animal-businesses/wildlife-rehabilitator-volunteer

   This form must be submitted with each renewal. Notify the Division in writing of any changes to the subpermittees information during the permit cycle: wildlife.permits@dnr.ohio.gov.
6. Provide a copy of the current year's rehabilitation permit and Minimum Standards to each sub-permittee and ensure that they have read and understood the documents.

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, and conferences, and by reading professional journals/newsletters/articles.

CONTACT INFORMATION (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 contact information on the 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 contact information does not have to be the direct line of the permit holder. However, it must be a telephone number or email and monitored every calendar day of a person experienced in responding to rehabilitation questions and who will provide appropriate personal assistance to the inquirer.

ADDITIONAL PERMITS (source ODW)

There are several activities that 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, an amended 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. Any violation or variation from the stated restrictions and conditions of these permits may result in the 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 into 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 recom-

mended to increase public awareness of and a sense of commitment to both the wildlife rehabilitation facility and wildlife without the expectations that the good Samaritan will be required to fund the care for an injured, sick or orphaned animal.

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 charities. A wildlife rehabilitation facility that 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 a tax-deductible charitable contributions.

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, and ODW)

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. 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 the specifications listed below.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

- ► Species
- ► Date admitted
- ► Name/address/phone number of finder/rescuer
- ► 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. Included to website https://ohiodnr.gov/buy-and-apply/special-use-permits/wildlife-specialty-permits/wildlife-rehabilitator-volunteer

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. Included to website https://ohiodnr.gov/buy-and-apply/special-use-permits/wildlife-specialty-permits/wildlife-rehabilitator-volunteer

ENDANGERED SPECIES (source ODW)

If you admit an endangered or threatened species, gray fox, bobcat, (short-tailed, long-tailed or least) weasel, bald eagle, osprey, peregrine falcon, trumpeter swan, sandhill crane, or barn owl or are called concerning an orphaned or injured one of the previously mentioned species, IMMEDIATELY (within 24 hours) contact the Division of Wildlife by either completing an online Wildlife Rehabilitation Reportable Injury/Mortalities Reporting Form or the Wildlife Officer assigned to your county and the District Wildlife Management Supervisor. Include any details you know about the animal (such as, extent of injury, when, and where it was found). Remember to leave your contact information and information regarding the patient.

STATE ENDANGERED AND THREATENED STATE-ENDANGERED ENDANGERED TERRESTRIAL SPECIES PROTECTED UNDER OHIO REVISED CODE

BIRDS: American bittern, Black tern, Cattle egret, Common Tern, King rail, Kirtland's warbler, Lark Sparrow, Loggerhead shrike, Northern harrier, Piping plover, Snowy egret, Upland sandpiper, Black-crowned night-heron, Least bittern, Rufa red knot, Sandhill crane, and Trumpeter Swan

MAMMALS: +Black bear, Indiana Bat, Northern long-eared bat, Little brown bat, Tricolored bat, Allegheny woodrat and Eastern harvest mouse

REPTILES: Copper-belly water snake, Plains garter snake, Timber rattlesnake, Eastern massasauga, Smooth greensnake, Blanding's turtle, Kirkland's snake, Lake Erie watersnake, and Spotted Turtle

AMPHIBIANS: Eastern hellbender, Cave salamander, Blue-spotted salamander, Green salamander, Eastern spadefoot and Midland mud salamander

+ Black bear (Ursus americanus) shall not be rehabilitated and must be euthanized
State Listed Species: https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-ODNR/wildlife/state-listed-species

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATION IN OHIO

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION RULES & REGULATIONS

RELEASE STANDARDS (source ODW, OWRA, NWRA, and IWRC pg294)

The animal must be fully recovered and well-conditioned both physically and psychologically. Wildlife must be released within 180 days unless otherwise authorized by the Division of Wildlife (wildlife.permits@dnr.ohio.gov).

The best practice is to have a comprehensive quarantine protocol and pre-release disease screening process.

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.

RELEASE CONSIDERATIONS

- Release occurs within the parameters of local and state regulations and laws
- Adults are released back to their original rescue location or home range or as close as possible (follow RVS release standards)
- Be familiar with the natural history so the proper location, timing, and method of release are appropriate for each species
- The animal has had time to acclimate to the environment (outdoors, weather, photoperiod, etc.)
- Site selection has sufficient space, food, and water
- Do not release the animal with a large or lingering storm system in the forecast
- For diurnal mammals, it is best to release mid to late morning
- Nocturnal mammals are best released shortly after dusk
- Must be fully recovered from illness and/or injury for reassimilation to the wild
- Not all physical disabilities preclude an animal from release. If an animal can demonstrate that it has adapted and compensated for a disability, then it may be a candidate for release.
- Ensure that no matter what age, juvenile or adult, a foundation has not been laid for habituation to humans or their pets. The individual must show appropriate reactions (avoidance or flight) and should not be housed near natural predators to avoid desensitizing to the predator's presence.
- Reptiles/amphibians must be released well before the first frost of the year so they can burrow or den for hibernation. It is imperative that the animals be released back to their original location. Refer to the "Special Considerations for Turtles" section for information on releasing turtles, as well as amphibians and reptiles.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR TURTLES

Characteristics of some Ohio turtle species should be considered by the wildlife rehabilitator to ensure that our actions are contributing to healthy and viable populations throughout the state. The first of these is the extreme site fidelity of individuals, often using the same areas for nesting, overwintering, and seeking out mates. How exactly these patterns are formed is poorly understood, but recent research is finding ever more complex turtle life histories. This site fidelity can often lead to the failure of translocated turtles to establish home ranges in unfamiliar habitats, eventually succumbing to mortality associated with dispersal and exhaustion.

A second characteristic of turtles that should be considered is their longevity. The longevity of some Ohio turtle species includes 75 years for Snapping Turtles, 80 years for Blanding's Turtles, and 100+ years for Box Turtles. These long lives have two implications for conservation and management. First, turtle population dynamics often require adults to be around for a long time (to have low mortality) for populations to be viable. Unlike most game species, there is no evidence that turtles compensate for a reduction in population density with increased reproductive output or higher survivorship. Second, a long life means that individuals can have a longer time to interact with and alter populations.

The third consideration for turtles is that of disease. The transmittal of novel pathogens through well-meaning rescue and rehabilitation programs is not merely theoretical. Translocation of turtles has been implicated in the spread of Upper Respiratory Tract Disease and possibly ranavirus. Diseases that have received increasing attention include ranavirus, Chelonian Mycoplasma, and Terrepene herpesvirus but these are simply the diseases that we are aware of today. Not all infected turtles will necessarily show symptoms and new diseases are constantly being identified.

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 cared for by unpermitted individuals for longer than 30 days requires written authorization from the chief of the Division of Wildlife. Requests should be submitted to: wildlife.permits@dnr.ohio.gov.

NON-RELEASABLE (source ODW/IWRC pg336)

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.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR NON-RELEASABLE ANIMALS

- ► Quality of life: If it is not expected that the animal will have a comfortable life, then the animal should be humanely euthanized.
- ► Temperament: Not all non-releasable animals are candidates for educational programs or display facilities. An animal that is nervous and stressed in the presence of humans will not have a quality life on display or in education.
- ► Likelihood of Placement: Species that are commonly seen in rehabilitation are also usually available in great numbers for placement. Euthanasia is a kinder option than waiting for placement that might never come.
- ► Availability of Resources: Opting to euthanize an animal that is not releasable opens space and resources for an animal that might be releasable.

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)

Under OAC Rule 1501:31-15-03, nuisance wildlife (raccoons, skunks, beavers, coyotes, red foxes, or opossums) captured, trapped, or taken by a Commercial Nuisance Wild Animal Control Operator (CNWACO) or by a non-licensed individual must be euthanized or released on site of capture and may not be accepted for rehabilitation. If the situation suggests the young were abandoned, the young can try to be reunited (e.g., release the young on-site) or euthanized and may not be accepted for rehabilitation. If a CNWACO attempts to give you nuisance wildlife species that have been captured, trapped, or taken, please contact the Wildlife Officer assigned to your county or District Wildlife Management Supervisor to report the violation.

INVASIVE NON-NATIVE FREE-RANGING TERRESTRIAL VERTEBRATE (source ODW)

The Division discourages the rehabilitation of any invasive non-native terrestrial species and specifically prohibits the rehabilitation of mute swans, yellow-bellied sliders, and European wall lizards. These species must be humanely euthanized.

Due to physical and environmental barriers, wildlife is often restricted in their ability to migrate and populate new areas. However, many species are being transported by people for commercial or personal use while others are introduced inadvertently as hitchhikers on vehicles or ships. Most of these species do not become established in the wild. However, they occupy areas where their natural predators do not exist and may have a substantial advantage over native species. If they become established these nonnative invasive free-ranging terrestrial species can and do outcompete and displace native wildlife. Two examples include 1) the mute swan which competes with the trumpeter swan in wetland areas and is a vector for several strains of avian influenza and 2) the European wall lizard which has established a reproducing population along the Ohio River near downtown Cincinnati and is spreading westward displacing native skinks.

The release and/or escape of unwanted reptiles and amphibians is difficult to control or prevent. However, if non-native species are found in the wild and can be eliminated before they become established, we can minimize their effect. The Division adopted rules and regulations prohibiting release of captive reptiles and amphibians to prevent disease transmission to wild populations. This is primarily a deterrent to people who might have otherwise released unwanted animals into the wild. The rule facilitates our ability to prosecute if a person is caught releasing an animal or if the animal is later found and their owner identified by the implanted passive integrated transponder (PIT) number.

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

(Sources CDC, USDA, ODW, ODH, OWRA, NWRA, and IWRC)

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).

   ► Orphaned RVS accepted from different locations/townships outside the oral rabies vaccination zone and intended to be housed together in the same enclosure, should be marked in such a manner as to differentiate individuals. The 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 of origin should not be housed together.

   ► RVS-approved orphan species (fox, bobcat, skunk) transferred out of the oral rabies vaccination zone (Northeast Ohio) may be combined with other county/township orphans to create a new litter. Once combined, all orphans in the new litter must be released to the county/township in the oral rabies vaccination zone where one of the orphans was originally rescued. 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 food stuff 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

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, surgical masks, and any other necessary PPE 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 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 IWRC, NWRA, and OWRA Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and OWRA Rabies Vector Training standards.

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.

16. 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 for further instructions or direction. wildlife.permits@dnr.ohio.gov

RABIES-VECTOR SPECIES

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

Only licensed Category II wildlife rehabilitators with RVS training may raise orphaned or provide care to injured RVS. 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. Individual skunks or foxes admitted to rehabilitation with no obvious sign of illness or injury may be immediately released to their capture location.

Adult 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. Individual admitted to rehabilitation with no obvious sign of illness or injury may be immediately released to their capture location.

Orphaned RVS accepted from different locations/townships outside the oral rabies vaccination zone and intended to be housed together in the same enclosure, should be marked in such a manner as to differentiate individuals. The 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 of origin should not be housed together.

RVS-approved orphan species (fox, bobcat, skunk) transferred out of the oral rabies vaccination zone (Northeast Ohio) may be combined with other county/township orphans to create new litters. Once combined, all orphans in the new litter must be released to the county/township in the oral rabies vaccination zone where one of the orphans was originally rescued. A routine examination for parasites should be performed on new arrivals, with reexamination at intervals during protracted rehabilitation.

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 sign 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.

Rehabilitated 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 40°F for 10 consecutive days). 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.

RABIES

In Ohio, raccoons, skunks, and bats are the primary vector species of rabies. However, all mammals are susceptible to rabies including humans. Birds are not capable of contracting rabies. Animals with rabies typically have marked changes from normal behavior.

Section 1: Symptoms. Common signs for rabies are; **Aimless wandering**, **Lethargy**, **Lack of coordination**, and **Paralysis.** A less frequent sign includes animals becoming vicious at any moving object and often leads to self-mutilation. The primary way the rabies virus is transmitted is by the bite of an infected animal or by exposure to open wounds of the saliva or bodily fluids of an animal.

Health Responsibilities. In cases where there has been contact with a human or a pet and rabies is a possibility, especially when there has been contact with raccoons, skunks, or bats you should insist the person contact their local health department by the next business day with a history of who and what has had contact with the animal.

Section 2: Biosecurity. Rubber and PPE gloves should be used to handle the animals. Human and pet exposure to rabies should be treated seriously. Once symptoms of rabies start showing, the disease is almost always 100 percent fatal for the human or pet. Pre-exposure vaccination is available through your doctor and is strongly encouraged for those who routinely handle wild animals.

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.

SECTION 2: Biosecurity

The best way to decontaminate equipment and clothing that have been in direct or indirect contact with bats is to completely submerse 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.

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

1 Formula 409 accepted in correlation with the 2012 national decontamination standards, as well as the state standards for Idaho, Wisconsin, and Colorado.

2 These 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 federally and state-listed species: Indiana bats, northern long-eared bats, eastern small-footed bats, and little brown bats. For help with identification, send photos to wildlife.permits@dnr.ohio.gov. 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.

RABBIT HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE (RHDV)

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHDV) is a highly contagious and fatal calicivirus. This deadly virus affects both pet and wild rabbits. RHDV kills quickly, giving little warning. Beginning in 2020, RHD was detected in wild and domesticated lagomorphs in the United States and Mexico, resulting in the deaths of untold numbers.

Section 1 Symptoms:

Rabbits with RHD typically die from liver dysfunction with aberrant coagulation and hemorrhage contributing to death. Symptoms of RHD in rabbits include, but are not limited to:

- ► Inappetence, or loss of appetite
- ► Lethargy, or lack of energy
- ► Fever of 104F or higher
- ► Seizures, weakness, wobbliness and other neurological signs
- ► Difficulty breathing
- ► Sudden death
- ► Jaundice, or yellowing of the skin and mucosal membranes (most noticeably in the ears)
- ► Bleeding from nose, mouth, genital openings or rectum

The virus is shed by infected animals through urine, feces, blood, milk, saliva and mucus from the nose and mouth. RHDV2 infects rabbits through the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose or mouth and digestive tract. Typically, animals

are infected when they encounter body fluids of infected animals, the corpses of deceased animals or through insect vectors who carry the virus on their bodies or through meals of infected blood. RHDV2 is also easily transmitted by "fomite" meaning objects like shoes or clothing and "vectors" like insects, indoor/outdoor pets and car tires that become contaminated with live virus.

- ► RHDV2 remains viable in the environment outside a host for considerable lengths of time. The tissues of animals that die from RHD are particularly potent as sources of virus.
- ► RHDV2 remains viable for 3.5 months at room temperature at 68F on fabric.
- ► The virus that causes RHD persists for 7.5 months at near freezing temperatures
- ► RHDV2 can survive temperatures of up to 122F for one hour.
- ► The virus can also withstand cycles of freezing and thawing

Section 2: Biosecurity

- ► There is no treatment or cure for RHD. Most cleaners are ineffective at killing the virus.
- ► House rabbits indoors.
- ► Reduce or eliminate outdoor playtime, especially in endemic areas.
- ► Wash your hands thoroughly and apply PPE before handling rabbits
- ► Change your clothes and wash hands after contact with rabbits.
- ► Don't let the rabbit have physical contact with other rabbits from outside.
- ► Use effective disinfectants listed here.
- ► Know your sources of hay and feed and whether they were grown. "Quarantine" your hay and feed for three months if they're sourced from endemic areas.
- ► Do not feed plants, grasses, or tree branches foraged from outside, especially if you live in a region where RHD is endemic.
- ► Use monthly flea treatments (e.g., Revolution).
- ► Quarantine any new rabbits for at least 14 days.
- ► Do NOT touch wild or feral rabbits. Contact your Wildlife Supervisor officials to report any unexplained rabbit deaths.

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (CWD)

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a fatal neurological disease of white-tailed deer. There is no strong evidence that CWD is transmissible to humans. The first confirmed case of CWD in Ohio was at a hunting preserve in Holmes County in 2014.

In December 2024, Ohio has confirmed CWD-positive wild deer in Allen, Hardin, Marion and Wyandot counties. To monitor prevalence and implement regulations to slow the spread of the disease, a Disease Surveillance Area (DSA) was established in 2021.

Section 1: Symptoms

- ► drastic weight loss (wasting)
- ► lack of coordination.
- ► drooling.
- ► stumbling.
- ► listlessness.
- ► excessive thirst or urination.
- ► drooping ears.
- ► lack of fear of people.

Section 2: Biosecurity

- ► Properly dispose of a deer carcass.
- ► Wear disposable gloves when handling fawns.

https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/wildlife-management/wildlife-disease/chronic-wasting-disease#:~:text=Since%202002%2C%20nearly%2039%2C000%20wild,early%202021%20in%20Wyandot%20County.

HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA (HPAI)

Avian influenza (AI) is caused by an influenza type A virus which can infect poultry (such as chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, domestic ducks, geese, and guinea fowl) and wild birds (especially waterfowl). Avian influenzas are categorized based on the severity of the symptoms they cause in chickens. Low pathogenic avian influenza viruses do not cause illness in poultry and are common in wild birds around the world. Highly pathogenic avian influenza virus, such as H5N1 detected in 2022, often causes death to poultry and can spread rapidly from flock-to-flock, but symptoms in other birds are variable. Wild birds such as ducks, gulls, and shorebirds can carry and spread avian influenza viruses without any signs of illness.

Section 1: Symptoms. In general, wild or domestic birds with any of the avian influenza virus types may exhibit one or more of the following signs:

- ► Decreased egg production
- ► Swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, wattles, and hocks
- ► Lack of coordination
- ► Sudden death without clinical signs
- ► Nasal discharge
- ► Eye discharge
- ► Wild birds can be infected with HPAI and show no signs of illness.

Section 2: Biosecurity

- ► Diagnosis is made through oral or cloacal swabbing. Contact your local ODNR Division of Wildlife district office to see if the birds qualify for testing.
- ► Separate and compartmentalize your birds to prevent contact with free-ranging (non-captive) wild birds.
- ► Quarantine all sick birds and newly acquired birds to prevent the spread of illness.
- ► Clean and disinfect enclosures and equipment used for birds under human care.
- ► Prevent cross-contamination via personnel (staff, volunteers, veterinarians) by wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) or dedicated facility clothing and shoes and showering before and after contact with birds.

EPIZOOTIC HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE

Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) is a viral disease of white-tailed deer that is transmitted by biting midges (Culicoides spp.), also called no-see-ums or punkies. The disease is not spread directly from deer to deer and humans cannot be infected by contact with deer or bites from midges. EHD outbreaks are most common in the late summer and early fall when the midges are abundant. The dead deer do not serve as a source of infection for other animals because the virus is not long lived in dead animals. Some strains of EHD can infect cattle.

Section 1: Symptoms. In deer, external signs of EHD include

- ► Fever
- ► small hemorrhages or bruises in the mouth and nose
- ► swelling of the head, neck, tongue, and lips
- ► A deer infected with acute EHD may appear lame or dehydrated. Once infected with EHD, deer will begin to show signs 2 - 10 days later and usually die within 36 hours of showing signs of infection. Frequently, infected deer will seek out water sources and carcasses are often found in or near water. Some will suffer longer with acute condition and ultimately die and others might survive a chronic infection. Deer dead from EHD infection seem to bloat and decompose rapidly. Many dead or sick deer may be found in a limited area.

Section 2: Biosecurity

There is no treatment and no means of prevention for EHD. The first hard frost should kill midges, effectively ending EHD outbreaks. EHD is endemic (occurs yearly) in the southern U.S. and it is becoming more common in the northern parts of the U.S.

SARS-COV-2

The risk of getting COVID-19 from animals in the United States, including wildlife, is low. We know that some mammals can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, and there is evidence that some wildlife species have been infected in the United States.

Do not wipe or bathe animals with chemical disinfectants, alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or other products, such as hand sanitizer, counter-cleaning wipes, or other industrial or surface cleaners. There is no evidence that the virus can spread to people from the skin, fur, or hair of pets or wildlife.

If you are sick with COVID-19 (either suspected or confirmed by a test), you should avoid contact with your pets and other animals, just like you would with people

Animals infected with this virus may or may not get sick. Of the pets and wildlife that have gotten sick, most only had mild illness and fully recovered. Serious illness in animals is extremely rare.

Section 1: Symptoms. Animals sick with the virus that causes COVID-19 may have:

- ► Fever
- ► Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- ► Sneezing
- ► Eye discharge
- ► Diarrhea
- ► Coughing
- ► Lethargy (unusual lack of energy or sluggishness)
- ► Runny nose
- ► Vomiting

Section 2: Biosecurity

- ► Separate and compartmentalize animals to prevent contact Quarantine all sick animals and newly acquired animals to prevent the spread of illness.
- ► Clean and disinfect enclosures and equipment used for animals.
- ► Prevent cross-contamination via personnel (staff, volunteers, veterinarians) by wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) or dedicated facility clothing and shoes and showering before and after contact with animals.
- ► Animals are usually free to resume normal activity after 72 hours of no signs or disease without medical care and it has been 14 days after a positive test, or all current tests for infection are negative.

SNAKE FUNGAL DISEASE

Snake fungal disease (SFD) is a disease in snakes caused by the fungus Ophidiomyces ophiodiicola. This fungus is active at a range of temperatures and pH and grows well on a variety of common substrates including dead fish, dead insects, and dead mushrooms. It seems likely that the fungus lives on decaying organisms and opportunistically infects snakes, so the fungus may be present in a wide variety of ecosystems even in the absence of snakes.

Transmission is by direct contact with infected animals or a contaminated environment. A few days following exposure, snakes develop discolored skin at the site of infection. As the infection progresses, fungus penetrates the tough outer layer of the skin and creates inflamed, crusted lesions.

Section 1: Symptoms. Animals sick with the infection that causes SFD may have:

- ► Localized thickening or crusting of the skin; yellow, crusty scales especially common around the eyes, snout, and chin.
- ► Irregular scale surfaces.
- ► Ulcerated skin.
- ► Nodules (abnormal bumps) under the skin.
- ► Abnormal shedding.

Section 2: Biosecurity

- ► Separate and compartmentalize animals to prevent contact Quarantine all sick animals and newly acquired animals to prevent the spread of illness.
- ► Clean and disinfect enclosures and equipment used for animals.
- ► Prevent cross-contamination via personnel (staff, volunteers, veterinarians) by wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) or dedicated facility clothing and shoes and showering before and after contact with animals.
- ► Treatment of captive snakes usually comprises thermal, fluid and nutritional support, surgical debridement, topical antifungals and antiseptics, and systemic antifungals and antibiotics.
- ► Treatment with an antifungal, Terbinafine, either by a slow-release, long-lasting implant or nebulization, has been found to reach therapeutic levels in cottonmouth snakes; methods and doses for treatment are thus based on these findings. Other treatment options include thermal and nutritional supportive therapy

RANAVIRUS

Ranavirus is a genus within the family Iridoviridae. They are enveloped viruses; however, they maintain their infectivity without the envelope. Recent evidence suggests that the virus originated in fish and underwent multiple host-shifts. Ranaviruses infect amphibians, reptiles, and fish; however, susceptibility varies by species and across phylogenetic lineages. All age groups may be susceptible, but this may vary by species. In general, hatchling and metamorphs are the most susceptible age groups in amphibians; however, adults are reported most often in die-offs of several European amphibian species. The egg appears to protect embryos from infection.

Transmission is horizontal via direct contact, ingestion of virus or infected animals and water exposure. Vertical transmission is suspected but remains unknown. Ranaviruses are highly infectious and are capable of surviving for extended periods of time in the environment, even in dried material.

Section 1: Symptoms. Animals sick with the virus that causes Ranavirus may have:

- ► Drowsiness (lethargy)
- ► Redness of the skin (erythema)
- ► Breakdown of limbs (limb necrosis)
- ► Bleeding (systemic haemorrhaging), especially from mouth/anus.
- ► Abnormal wasting (emaciation)
- ► Skin ulcers or sores.
- ► Eye problems

Section 2: Biosecurity

- ► Separate and compartmentalize animals to prevent contact Quarantine all sick animals and newly acquired animals to prevent the spread of illness.
- ► Clean and disinfect enclosures and equipment used for animals.
- ► Prevent cross-contamination via personnel (staff, volunteers, veterinarians) by wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) or dedicated facility clothing and shoes and showering before and after contact with animals.
- ► Bleach (1%) and chlorhexidine (0.75%) are effective options for disinfection of equipment and boots when handling amphibians
- ► There is currently no treatment or vaccine for ranavirus. Since there is no treatment for ranavirus, management is focused on quarantine and sterilization to prevent the spread of the virus to other animals and new environments.

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATION IN OHIO

SUMMARY

- ► A person with a rehabilitation permit may care for and rehabilitate orphaned, injured, or other wild animals designated by the chief of the division of wildlife for the purpose of releasing the wild animals back to the wild.
- ► 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 their 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, badgers, beaver, raptors, canids, bats, birds, reptiles, amphibians, 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, birds or state or federally endangered 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 Animals as defined in Chapter 935.01 of the Revised Code except for injured timber rattlesnakes, Eastern massasaugas, 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.
- 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.ohio.gov.

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATION IN OHIO

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

WILDLIFE OFFICER LIST

https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-ODNR/wildlife/wildlife-contacts/customer-service

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (CWD)

https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/wildlife-management/wildlife-disease/chronic-wasting-disease#:~:text=Since%202002%2C%20nearly%2039%2C000%20wild,early%202021%20in%20Wyandot%20County.

WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME

whitenosesyndrome.org

STATE ENDANGERED AND THREATENED STATE-ENDANGERED

https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-ODNR/wildlife/state-listed-species

INJURY/MORTALITY/SPECIES REPORTING FORM

https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/wildlife-management/wildlife-disease/chronic-wasting-disease#:~:text=Since%202002%2C%20nearly%2039%2C000%20wild,early%202021%20in%20Wyandot%20County.

CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

https://www.cdc.gov/index.htm

USDA

https://www.usda.gov