

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION

Self-Audit Checklist

Wildlife rehabilitation is the rescue, medical care, rehabilitation and release of sick, injured or abandoned wildlife. The New Zealand Department of Conservation issues native animal rehabilitation permits (under the Wildlife Act 1953) to allow the captive care of protected wildlife and game species.

Wildlife rehabilitation is undertaken by a wide range of people in the community from young conservationists to experienced veterinarians. There are many reasons that people choose to rehabilitate wildlife – to give back to the community; for animal welfare reasons, or to contribute to biodiversity recovery.

PURPOSE

Current standards of care for wildlife in captivity can vary greatly depending on resources, knowledge and finances.

The guidelines outlined in this document are to assist holders of New Zealand native species to provide good standards of care. These have been developed to assist holders in meeting national animal welfare codes; legal obligations of the Department under the Wildlife Act 1953 and to minimise disease transfer between captive and wild native fauna. The Department is particularly concerned to minimise the risk of disease spreading from released wildlife into healthy wild populations. Any holder of native wildlife may be asked to meet additional quarantine and health screening protocols as required by the Department.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This checklist replaces the Captive Health Care Workbook (for rehabilitation permits only) and can be used by wildlife rehabilitators as a self-audit tool. This guide may also be used as part of a site visit or audit of a wildlife rehabilitation facility by the Department or external auditors as required.

The checklist is to be completed annually by the wildlife rehabilitator and submitted with the annual report to hamiltonpermissions@doc.govt.nz.

This checklist is based on legislation and minimum standards from the following documents:

- WReNNZ (2009). *Minimum Standards for Rehabilitators*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wrennz.org.nz/rehabilitation-standards>
- Ministry for Primary Industries. (2018). *Code of Welfare: Transport within New Zealand*. Retrieved from: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/1407-transport-within-new-zealand-animal-welfare-code-of-welfare>
- Ministry for Primary Industries. (2018). *Code of Welfare: Zoos*. Retrieved from: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/1455-zoo-animal-welfare-codes-of-welfare>
- Jakob-Hoff, R. (2004). *The Captive Health Care Workbook*. Department of Conservation *Te Papa Atawhai*, Wellington NZ.

1	FACILITY DETAILS		
1.1	Permit (Wildlife Act Authority) number		
1.2	Authority Holder		
1.3	Overall assessment: <input type="checkbox"/> Self-audit <input type="checkbox"/> DOC audit <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<i>Highlight or circle one:</i> Meets or exceeds all standards	Does not yet meet all standards
1.4	General comments or plans for progress		
1.5	Signature and Date (Authority Holder)		

2	SKILLS & EXPERIENCE			
	Staff/ Volunteer Name(s)	Training and / or certification <i>Please list any qualifications, training or experience</i>	Can identify species and life stages for all species listed in the permit <i>Yes/ No</i>	Experience and/ or training in wildlife first aid <i>Yes / No</i>
2.1				
2.2				
2.3				
2.4				
2.5	Staff members/ Volunteers (or the organisation) are members of WReNNZ (Wildlife Rehabilitators Network of NZ)		Yes / No	
2.6	Comments – Skills & Experience			

3	HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY	FULLY MEETS CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CRITERIA	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
3.1	Managers, supervisors and staff comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act (2015). <i>(Note that 100% volunteer organisations are not liable under this Act, but it still pays to be familiar with this important legislation.)</i>			
3.2	Staff are aware of common diseases that can spread from animals to humans (zoonoses) and take precautions to minimise chance of infection <i>(Such as washing hands before eating, disinfection of food prep and cleaning areas, wearing Personal Protective Equipment PPE such as gloves)</i>			
3.3	Staff and volunteers understand the correct handling procedures for each species to minimise risk of bites and scratches.			
3.4	Equipment and drugs are appropriately handled, stored and disposed of.			
3.5	Notes/ Comments			
4	TRANSPORT	FULLY MEETS CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CRITERIA	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
4.1	Containment for the transport of animals is suitable for the species, size and weight of the animal that allows them to travel in a natural posture.			
4.2	Containers are well ventilated and provide protection from adverse weather or extremes of temperature			
4.3	Containers are secured to prevent movement during transport			
4.4	Journey times are limited to minimise stress and physical impacts of travel			
4.5	Stress is minimised by careful driving, minimal noise and optimum temperature (species dependent) during transport.			
4.6	If transporting by air, containment requirements are discussed with the intended airline in advance of the transport date.			
4.7	Notes/ Comments			
5	VETERINARY CARE	FULLY MEETS CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CRITERIA	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
5.1	Consults with a veterinarian for advice, protocols or individual animal consultations when required e.g. fractures, medications			

5.2	Follows prescriptions for individual animals or VOI (Veterinary Operating Instructions) to provide correct medications under direction of a veterinarian (e.g. antibiotics, pain relief) as required and treatments are recorded.			
5.3	A veterinarian is consulted if animals show signs of persistent regurgitation or vomiting, respiratory disease, diarrhoea, neurological disease, serious injury, inability to stand or move, or is comatose.			
5.4	Please confirm the name and contact details of the veterinarian who will be overseeing any medical treatment. As per the WReNNZ Minimum Standards for Rehabilitators, drugs must only be administered under veterinary direction, and vet care must be sought for any major illness or injury:			
5.5	Notes/ Comments			
6	EUTHANASIA	FULLY MEETS CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CRITERIA	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
6.1	Euthanasia is carried out according to the conditions in the Wildlife Act Authority (permit)			
6.2	Euthanasia is carried out by trained personnel or a veterinarian			
6.3	Euthanasia is performed when a wild animal is unlikely to recover or thrive in the wild. <i>(UNLESS they are to be placed in a captive programme. Contact your regional DOC biodiversity officer for advice, who will contact the ZAA or Recovery Group as appropriate)</i>			
6.4	Bird Euthanasia is performed in accordance with the New Zealand Veterinary Association (NZVA) policy statement on Avian Euthanasia: See Appendices			
6.5	Cadavers are disposed of hygienically and in accordance with permit conditions. Cadavers are temporarily stored in a dedicated freezer, or are refrigerated if to be sent for post-mortem (under direction of the Department)			
6.6	The Department is consulted if a threatened species is euthanised or dies, in case a postmortem or special disposal is required.			
6.6	Notes/ Comments			

7	STRESS MINIMISATION	FULLY MEETS CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CRITERIA	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
7.1	Stress to captive wildlife is managed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimising foot traffic and human proximity where animals are housed Minimising noise, including voices, loud noises, music, etc Separating predator and prey species Preventing exposure to domestic pets Minimising handling and treatment time 			
7.2	Interaction and attention from the public or media is minimised.			
7.3	Wildlife undergoing rehabilitation shall not be displayed for public viewing, unless a site-specific advocacy plan has been approved by DOC.			
7.4	Wildlife are handled by experienced personnel, or under the direct supervision of experienced personnel.			
7.5	Wildlife are not stroked, patted or cuddled, or caused to be imprinted on people.			
7.6	Screens, hides, plantings, artificial burrows or coverings are provided in enclosures to allow wildlife to hide from view, but do not block all light.			
7.7	Enrichment such as foraging browse is provided (<i>not necessary for hospitalised/ critical care patients</i>).			
7.8	Notes/ Comments			
8	NUTRITION	FULLY MEETS CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CRITERIA	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
8.1	Species-appropriate nutrition is provided which is based on knowledge of the natural diet and up-to-date expert information, where available.			
8.2	Food is of good quality and is not spoiled when fed out. Food is replaced daily, or more frequently depending on species and food.			
8.3	Food is stored properly to reduce loss of nutrients and to prevent access by rodents or other pests.			
8.4	Quality Supplements are given as required. (E.g. Mazuri® Vita-Zu® Bird Tablets if feeding frozen fish). Use according to directions of the product labelling or direction of a veterinarian / nutritionist.			
8.5	Food and drinking water are provided in a way that is easy for the animal to access and prevents contamination.			
8.6	Notes/ Comments			

9	HUSBANDRY	FULLY MEETS CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CRITERIA	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
9.1	Equipment used to clean enclosures/ cages is cleaned and stored tidily			
9.2	Provides species-appropriate husbandry (enclosures, browse, perches, day to day care) for all animals in care.			
9.3	No species are mixed in the same aviary or cage			
9.4	Facilities and equipment are maintained to minimise risk of harm or injury to animals.			
9.5	Sufficient shelter and shade are provided to protect animals from extremes of rain, wind, flooding and temperature.			
9.6	Housing provided is appropriate to the degree and type of injury, and the stage of rehabilitation			
9.7	Additional cages or holding areas are available to enable separation or isolation of animals if required.			
9.8	Species requiring physical fitness are provided adequate aviary, pool or enclosure space and/or fitness training prior to release.			
9.9	Predator control is undertaken for outdoor aviaries and enclosures.			
9.10	Aviaries are provided with natural environmental enrichment to encourage natural behaviours.			
9.11	Notes/ Comments			
10	HYGIENE	FULLY MEETS CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CRITERIA	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
10.1	A quarantine or isolation area is provided to separate infectious animals from healthy animals			
10.2	Holding cages are cleaned of faeces/ urine/ droppings and stale food daily			
10.3	Frequently used basking, perching or feeding sites are scrubbed/cleaned regularly to prevent build-up of animal waste			
10.4	Hands are washed (soap/ disinfectant) and dried before handling animal food and after cleaning or handling animals.			
10.5	Food preparation areas, utensils and dishes are washed, air dried and kept clean between uses.			
10.6	Disease screening or diagnostic testing is undertaken if required (in consultation with DOC and/or a veterinarian)			

10.7	Equipment used for wildlife is scrubbed, disinfected, rinsed thoroughly and dried before re-use. Disinfectants used are safe for the species.			
10.8	Animal and food waste is stored and disposed of in a hygienic manner that complies with local bylaws.			
10.9	The substrate of cages and aviaries is changed / replenished / cleaned regularly to prevent build-up of animal wastes and organic matter.			
10.10	Ponds or pools are maintained to ensure the absence of rotting organic matter <i>(These can be a source of botulism, algal blooms or other diseases)</i>			
10.11	Rodents and wild birds such as sparrows are prevented from entering aviaries and enclosures.			
10.12	Dead animals are handled with appropriate PPE and stored such that transmission of infection to other animals or people is minimised.			
10.13	Notes/ Comments			
11	PATIENT RECORDS	FULLY MEETS CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CRITERIA	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
11.1	Admission records include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History • Species • Location found and date 			
11.2	Individual patient records are kept which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial physical examination • Daily observations (as required) • Progress reports • Veterinary treatments • Release information 			
11.3	Wildlife are weighed on arrival, prior to medical treatment (to ensure correct medication dose); prior to release and/ or daily to monitor weight loss or gain when hospitalised. <i>(Not required in aviaries)</i>			
11.4	Outcomes of individual cases are recorded (released, died, euthanised, in progress or transferred) and an annual report sent to DOC as stated in the permit conditions.			
11.5	Notes/ Comments			

12	RELEASE	FULLY MEETS CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CRITERIA	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
12.1	Patient progress is assessed and recorded at appropriate intervals			
12.2	Only those animals which meet the criteria to function normally in the wild are released. Refer to release criteria for the species or animal group where this exists.			
12.3	The Department is consulted for any animals which do not meet the release criteria to discuss options of humane euthanasia or inclusion in a captive management programme if appropriate.			
12.4	Animals are released into appropriate conditions that ensure the best chance of survival and reduce unnecessary suffering e.g. good weather, enough wind, calm seas			
12.5	Release is undertaken according to permit conditions.			
12.6	Notes/ Comments			
13	EGG AND INCUBATOR HYGIENE	FULLY MEETS CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CRITERIA	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
13.1	Standards of care for eggs and incubators should follow the guidelines in the Auckland Zoo Egg Incubation Hygiene Protocol (Office reference: OLDDM-721759)			
13.2	Notes/ Comments			