

## **Learning Plan for Provisional Wildlife Rehabilitator – Example II**

The goal of this Learning Plan is to help you learn what is needed to be an effective wildlife rehabilitator. It identifies some basic knowledge, skill and experience and sources for learning. Some of the sections describe general information that you need to learn about wildlife rehabilitation, such as ethics, standards and laws. Other sections are specific to the species you will be rehabilitating, such as diet, capture, handling, and release. We may modify this Plan during the provisional period as needs and opportunities arise.

We will also use the Plan to assess progress towards building the knowledge, skill and experience to prepare you for applying for your full wildlife rehabilitation license. We will make joint notes on the plan when you have learned and demonstrated the skills in a section and both initial and date the item. As your sponsors, we will use this information as one of the major components of the recommendation letter when you apply to the CDOW for your full rehabilitation license.

- A. The purpose, ethics, and standards of wildlife rehabilitation, including the Minimum Standards of Wildlife Rehabilitation.
  - a. Print and read the Minimum Standards of Wildlife Rehabilitation (see <http://www.iwrc-online.org/pub/publications.html>);
  - b. Discuss specifics of the ethics and standards with sponsor.
  - c. Follow these guidelines to personal practice, such as caging, examination, euthanasia.
- B. Federal, state and local laws, regulations, and ordinances affecting wildlife rehabilitation.
  - a. Read these laws and regulations. Give special attention to wildlife rehabilitation regulations (e.g., CDOW Chapter 14 and USFWS migratory bird rehabilitation regulations).
  - b. Discuss with sponsor and other rehabilitators.
  - c. If additional questions, discuss with appropriate governmental staff.
  - d. Follow laws, regulations, and ordinances.
- C. Identification of native wildlife species.
  - a. Acquire and use field identification guides for birds and mammals.
  - b. Acquire and use baby bird identification guides from rehabilitation organizations and other rehabilitators.
  - c. Learn how to identify types of young birds from sponsor and other rehabilitators.
  - d. Develop contacts with local birders and Audubon for assistance with other questions.
  - e. Attend training on this as available.
- D. Wildlife natural history and behavior;
  - a. Learn how natural history affects rehabilitation decisions, such as habitat, caging, feeding methods, release.
  - b. Learn about the natural history of Colorado wildlife from publications on Colorado wildlife, including *Mammals of Colorado*, *Sibley's Guide to Birds*
    - i. Range and distribution, including migration.
    - ii. Habitat.
    - iii. Breeding and reproduction (e.g., time of year, size litter, length of time dependent on parents).
    - iv. Feeding habits and behavior.
    - v. Developmental and life stages.
    - vi. Nesting.
    - vii. Predators.

- E. Techniques to humanely prevent and resolve human-wildlife conflicts;
  - a. Learn about common human wildlife conflicts from rehabilitation publications and websites, talking with rehabilitators and sponsor, etc.
    - i. CDOW's publications: *Too Close for Comfort Living in Coyote Country*, *Living in Bear Country*, etc.
    - ii. *Wild Neighbors* (Hadidian, et al)
  - b. Learn about methods that are considered effective, humane, and legal versus those that are not. Learn how to use and explain those methods.
  - c. Talk with experienced rehabilitators about tips for talking with the public and influencing them effectively.
  - d. Practice. Discuss challenging/difficult conversations with the public and ways to improve with sponsor and other rehabilitators.
- F. Safe capture, handling and transport methods;
  - a. Work with sponsor and other rehabilitators on safe capture, handling and transport methods. Watch demonstrations.
  - b. Acquire and practice with gloves, nets, and other capture equipment.
  - c. Practice handling a variety of species and ages of wildlife being rehabilitated. Get feedback. Keep practicing.
  - d. Demonstrate knowing when to get help with capture, handling and transport.
- G. Identification and general assessment of common health or behavioral problems;
  - a. Talk with sponsor about common health and behavior problems in species and ages of animals to be rehabilitated.
  - b. Learn about signs of shock, dehydration, injuries, wounds, fractures, head trauma, spinal trauma, respiratory problems, emaciation, poisons, parasites and common diseases for species the provisional will rehabilitate.
  - c. Learn to conduct basic physical examination from sponsor, rehabilitators and veterinarians. Practice. Get feedback. Keep practicing.
  - d. Learn what is normal and not needing veterinary care, and what types of conditions need to be diagnosed and treated by veterinarian.
- H. Basic first aid;
  - a. Acquire the *NWRA Principles of Wildlife Rehabilitation, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, IWRC Basic Skills 1A/B, NWRA Quick Reference.
  - b. Talk with veterinarian and sponsor about possible treatments for signs of shock, dehydration, injuries, wounds, fractures, head trauma, spinal trauma, respiratory problems, emaciation, poisons, parasites and common diseases for species the provisional will rehabilitate.
  - c. Learn to follow protocols and administer medications prescribed by veterinarian, such as rehydration and wound management.
  - d. Learn to ask questions about medications, treatments, possible side-effects or interactions with medications, and potential outcomes. Research. Talk with sponsor, rehabilitators, veterinarians, and others.
- I. Intake procedures (e.g., assessment, weight, hydration, supplemental heat);
  - a. See sections G and H.
  - b. Learn to identify animal's age and condition, and use that to determine feeding schedule, diet, etc.
  - c. Learn how to safely weigh animals of different sizes, ages, and conditions and keep accurate and complete records. Demonstrate proficiency.
  - d. Learn to recognize problems related to weight and hydration.
  - e. Learn about hydration requirements and methods. Demonstrate effective rehydration and feeding methods.

- J. Nutrition, diet, and feeding methods;
  - a. Learn about basic nutritional requirements for species to be rehabilitated.
  - b. Learn how to evaluate effective diets and what is needed for native species. Review *NWRA Principles of Wildlife Rehabilitation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Discuss with sponsor and other rehabilitators.
  - c. Learn how and where to order effective diets and formula.
  - d. Learn to prepare diets and formulas. Demonstrate.
  - e. Learn to how to safely and effectively feed juvenile and adult animals of species rehabilitated from sponsors and other rehabilitators. Demonstrate.
  - f. Learn what is normal growth, development, healing, activity, behavior. Observe healthy animals of the species. Read. Discuss with sponsor.
  - g. Learn how to determine amounts of food. Demonstrate.
  - h. Learn how to identify and respond to problems related to feeding technique, diet, quantity, etc. Demonstrate.
- K. Facilities, appropriate caging, and habitat needs;
  - a. Learn criteria for cages for various species, ages, and conditions of animals.
  - b. Learn how to create, maintain and clean wildlife caging that is appropriate, safe, and effective for various ages and conditions.
  - c. Learn how to clean cages and maintain good sanitation.
  - d. Learn how to create appropriate habitat within cages for various ages and conditions of animals.
  - e. Learn appropriate type of nesting and bedding materials and where to place them.
  - f. Learn how to quarantine.
  - g. Learn how to minimize stress by cage design, placement, etc.
- L. Wildlife diseases and parasites;
  - a. Learn about relevant wildlife diseases and parasites that are zoonotic and those that are non-zoonotic, as well as prevention and control of diseases and parasites. Review CDOW training info and *NWRA Principles of Wildlife Rehabilitation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.
  - b. Learn to recognize common diseases and parasite of species rehabilitated. Demonstrate.
  - c. Demonstrate effective sanitation, quarantine, parasite treatment, and other control and prevention methods.
  - d. Learn about Chronic Wasting Disease.
- M. Release criteria, considerations, and preparation;
  - a. Learn appropriate release criteria for different species and age of animals being rehabilitated. Discuss and demonstrate.
  - b. Be able to determine if release criteria may be able to be met, or if euthanasia is required. Discuss and demonstrate.
  - c. Learn how to prepare an animal for release, e.g., getting to appropriate weight, demonstrating wild behavior, acclimating to being outdoors, food acquisition skills, nest building, avoiding predators. Demonstrate.
  - d. Learn about how to ensure that the animal recognizes and relates to own species, and avoids predators and humans. Discuss with sponsor. Demonstrate.
  - e. Learn the appropriate type of habitat for the species rehabilitated and finding such habitat for release sites. Ensure that the habitat meets animal's needs, such as not being over-populated.
  - f. Demonstrate effective releases of wildlife according to guidelines in the Minimum Standards of Wildlife Rehabilitation, and Colorado and USFWS regulations, such as the animal is of the appropriate age and condition to be able to survive when released, location is within 10 miles of where the animal was found, and appropriate season.

- N. Euthanasia, necropsy and carcass disposal;
  - a. Learn about euthanasia criteria for the different species to be rehabilitated. Discuss with sponsor and other rehabilitators.
  - b. Learn about acceptable euthanasia methods.
  - c. Learn to make euthanasia decisions. Demonstrate that euthanasia decisions are made in a timely and appropriate manner.
  - d. Learn about necropsy methods and when necropsies are needed.
  - e. Discuss necropsy results with veterinarian and sponsor.
  - f. Learn about and follow appropriate carcass disposal methods as well as risks, including incineration, burial, return to food chain.
- O. Public contact regarding wildlife (e.g., reasons, issues, risks, safety, liabilities);
  - a. Learn about common public questions about wildlife, e.g., from rehab publications and websites, talking with rehabilitators and sponsor.
  - b. Learn about risks, safety and liabilities from rehab publications, talking with rehabilitators and sponsor.
  - c. Talk with experienced rehabilitators about tips for talking with the public and influencing them effectively.
  - d. Practice. Discuss challenging conversations and ways to improve with the public with sponsor and other rehabilitators.
- P. Wildlife rehabilitation recordkeeping;
  - a. Review and discuss the CDOW and USFWS requirements for annual wildlife rehabilitation report, such as rescuer's name and contact information, species, date of admission, date of disposition, disposition (e.g., released, died, euthanized, transferred).
  - b. Maintain accurate, timely and complete records on each animal during rehabilitation (including admit info, treatments, feeding amounts, weights).
  - c. Use the individual records to ensure effective monitoring, decisions and care. Use records with sponsor and veterinarian as needed.
  - d. Submits rehabilitation records and reports to CDOW and USFWS as required.
- Q. Working effectively with veterinarians;
  - a. Become familiar with veterinarians who are willing to work and skillful with wildlife.
  - b. Learn how to select a veterinarian(s) to work with wildlife. Learn items to discuss to clarify expectations regarding costs, animal care, handling, impacts of stress, referrals, etc.
  - c. Learn how to build good communications and positive working relationship with veterinarian(s).
  - d. Learn how to develop a 'back-up' veterinarian in case the primary veterinarian is unavailable.
  - e. Learn when it is not necessary to take animals to the veterinarian (i.e., healthy) and when a veterinary visit is necessary (e.g., serious injuries, diagnostics, medications, surgery). Demonstrate that this is done properly and timely.
  - f. Learn how to minimize animal's stress at the veterinary clinic.
  - g. Learn to effectively and safely handle the animal during a veterinary examination, including input on if and when animal needs anesthesia.
- R. Minimizing stress:
  - a. Learn what things cause stress for wildlife, such as noise, scents, handling, activity, proximity to predators, exposure to humans, etc.
  - b. Learn how to minimize stress for wildlife.
- S. Managing the wildlife rehabilitation workload and stressors.
  - a. Learn what is involved in effective rehabilitation.
  - b. Learn how to set and manage personal boundaries to avoid getting overloaded with work and potential consequences.
  - c. Learn how to manage personal stressors related to wildlife rehabilitation, e.g., workload, euthanasia decisions, contact with the public, resources.