

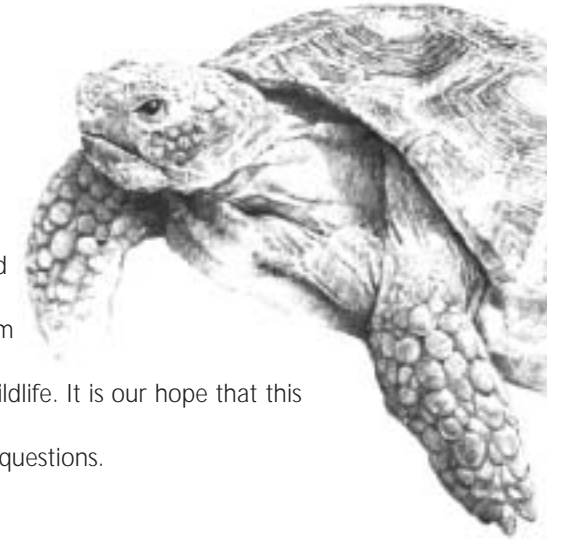
Wildlife Rehabilitation



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Wildlife Rehabilitation

Texas Parks and



Wildlife receives a large number of inquiries each day from

people wanting to become involved with rehabilitating wildlife. It is our hope that this

brochure will answer some of our most frequently asked questions.

How can I gain experience with wildlife?

Caring for injured, sick or orphaned wildlife is an incredibly time-consuming job. If you have not yet participated in hands-on rehabilitation work, you may wish to volunteer with a licensed rehabilitator in your area. By doing so, you will gain valuable experience with wildlife while providing an equally valuable service to the rehabilitator. The experience may help you to decide whether or not you wish to become involved in wildlife rehabilitation on your own. For a list of Texas wildlife rehabilitators (organized by county), please visit: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/research/rehab/index.htm>.

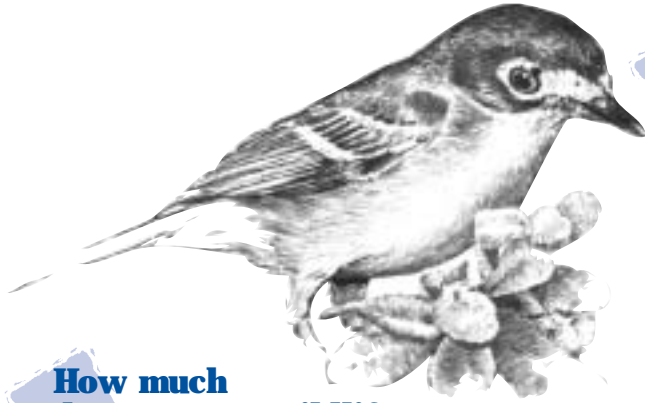
Various wildlife rehabilitation organizations offer training courses to educate prospective rehabilitators in both emergency and long-term wildlife care. For more information on classes that are being offered throughout the year, you should contact a local or national rehabilitation group. You can learn more about the NWRA (National Wildlife Rehabilitator's Association) online at www.nwrwildlife.org, or by calling (320) 259-4086. The IWRC (Interna-

tional Wildlife Rehabilitation Council) can be reached online at www.iwrc-online.org, or by calling (707) 864-1761.

What does the department need besides my application?

In addition to a completed application and two verifiable letters of recommendation, the department requires evidence that the applicant has a basic knowledge of wildlife rehabilitation. No wildlife rehabilitation permit will be issued without one of the following four items:

1. A certificate of completion from a training course offered by the IWRC or the NWRA within the past three years.
2. Proof of attendance at a department-sponsored wildlife rehabilitation conference or a national wildlife rehabilitation conference within the past three years.
3. Proof of membership in a state or national wildlife rehabilitation organization, such as IWRC or NWRA.
4. A score of 80% or better on a department-administered wildlife rehabilitation examination.



How much does a State Wildlife Rehabilitation permit cost?

There is no fee associated with the issuance or renewal of a state wildlife rehabilitation permit.

What types of wildlife should I include on my application?

Rehabilitators are authorized to care for different types of wildlife based on their knowledge and experience as well as the facilities they have available to them. When applying for the permit, applicants list the types of animals they wish to care for (i.e. small mammals, deer, reptiles, amphibians, songbirds and raptors). Before a permit is issued, the applicant's facilities will be inspected by a game warden to determine whether or not they are suitable for the type(s) of wildlife requested.

Applicants must also remember that, in order to rehabilitate birds of any type (excluding starlings, English sparrows and feral pigeons), they must hold a federal migratory bird permit in addition to a valid state permit. Information and applications for a federal permit may be obtained by contacting: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 709, Albuquerque, NM 87103-0709; (505) 248-7882 or by e-mail at FW2_Birdpermits@fws.gov. Web page address: <http://www.permits.fws.gov/>.

What type of facilities are required to rehabilitate wildlife?

The type of facilities a rehabilitator is required to maintain are entirely dependent on the type(s) of wildlife he/she plans to care for. To rehabilitate small mammals, for example, an assortment of wire and/or glass cages is often appropriate. Other supplies, such as heating pads, food and water dishes and medical supplies should also be readily available. Caging requirements for the rehabilitation of raptors are more stringent and can be found under "Facilities Standards for Rehabilitation and Holding of Raptors" in your application packet. In general, facilities may be indoors or outdoors, as long as the wildlife is protected at all times from undue stress caused by human activity, domestic animals, predators (both wild and domestic) and weather. Wildlife may not be placed in an area where it is subject to public viewing, display or exhibit, and wildlife should not come into contact with anyone other than the licensed rehabilitator and his/her sub-permittees (if any). A game warden must inspect and approve your facilities before a permit will be issued.

Can I keep wildlife that cannot be released back to the wild?

All applicants should realize that a wildlife rehabilitation permit is by no means a license to keep native wildlife as pets. Rehabilitators who have been licensed by the state for at least three years may request to retain non-releasable wildlife either for fostering or educational purposes. These requests are reviewed and approved (or denied) on a case-by-case basis. Without express written permission from the department, rehabilitators may not hold wildlife for indefinite periods of time, and non-releasable wildlife must be euthanized or found a permanent, legal home.

What types of wildlife are included in the statewide rabies quarantine?

The prospective rehabilitator must also understand the Statewide Rabies Quarantine Restrictions, as defined by the Texas Department of Health. The current restrictions state:

"It is illegal for a person to transport certain animals that are high-risk for transmitting rabies, including coyotes, species of fox indigenous to North America, and raccoons, to, from, or within the state. A violation of this law is a Class C misdemeanor."

These restrictions are waived for peace officers, individuals hired or contracted by state or federal agencies or local governments and employees of zoos or other institutions accredited by the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (AZA) when those individuals are carrying out their official duties. Special provisions have been added for raccoons:

"In addition to the list of exempt persons cited above, the following individuals can also transport raccoons: rehabilitators and educators permitted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and pest control operators



licensed by the Structural Pest Control Board." (Except for educators, transport by these individuals is restricted to within a 10-mile radius or within 10 miles of the city limits where the animal was originally captured.)

For more information on the rabies quarantine, please contact the Texas Department of Health office in your region or the Zoonosis Control Division of the Texas Department of Health at (512) 458-7255.

Does my veterinarian need to be licensed to help me treat wildlife?

All medical treatment provided to wildlife is to be done in consultation with a veterinarian. However, a vet is not required to hold a state wildlife rehabilitation permit to hold, possess or transport protected wildlife to provide emergency medical care or stabilization care for periods up to 48 hours. Many veterinarians in the state of Texas hold wildlife rehabilitation permits. This allows them to hold and treat wildlife in their facilities for longer periods of time.

Will I receive financial assistance to help with my rehabilitation expenses?

Unfortunately, the department cannot provide funding or compensation to wildlife rehabilitators at this time. Most wildlife rehabilitators pay for their supplies entirely out of their own pockets. However, an increasing number of local rehabilitators' organizations are providing grants and other donations to their members to help offset the cost of a number of needs, including food, medical supplies, treatment and caging. For further information, contact a wildlife rehabilitation group in your area.