

Veterinarians, Clinics, and Wildlife – Oh my!

Auburn University Raptor Center
 Auburn University – College of Veterinary Medicine
 Stephanie Kadelitz – Assistant Director, Raptor Rehabilitation





1

Goal of Wildlife Rehabilitation

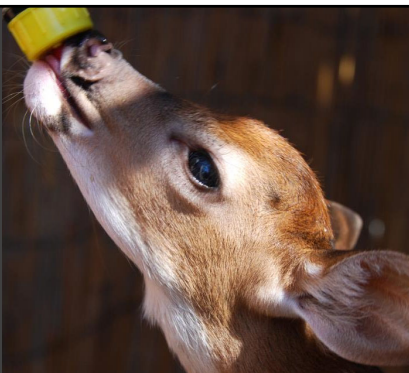


- Provide professional care to sick, injured, and orphaned native wild animals so ultimately they can be returned to their natural habitat.
 - Return wild animals to 100% to be released back into the wild!!**
- Wild animals that sustain injuries or illnesses preventing them from living successfully in the wild are humanely **euthanized**.
- It is not to create pets or non-releasable wildlife.
 - We do not treat to place!**
- Organizations:
 - National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association
 - International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council

2

Laws and Permitting


- Federal Laws
- State Laws
- County Laws
- City Laws



3

4

5

A photograph showing two women in a laboratory or office setting. One woman, wearing a colorful patterned shirt, is examining a raccoon held by another woman in a grey hoodie. The raccoon is lying on a white cloth-covered table. The background shows shelves with various items and a computer monitor.

Role of the Rehabilitator

- Know natural history of the species admitted to rehabilitation.
- Know proper nutritional needs of the species admitted and have access to these items.
- Following all rules and regulations according to state and federal wildlife permits.
- Communicate to the general public with ways to prevent human-wildlife conflicts.
- Educate the public about wildlife species and protecting those species.
- Day to day responsibility
 - Feeding, cleaning, medicating
 - Evaluating when an animal is ready to be released
 - Finding appropriate release site (if possible)

6

Rehabilitators – Speak the Lingo

- Use medical terminology
 - Do a little bit of research and use your reference materials
- Examples:
 - OD, OS, OU = Right eye, left eye, both eyes
 - Distal, Proximal, Mid-shaft = away from center, close to the center, middle
 - Wound (size, depth, exudate?), lesion, plaque
 - Know your bones!
 - Femur, tibia/tarsus, tarsometatarsus, digits 1-4
 - Humerus, radius, ulna, carpometacarpus



7

Communication between Rehabilitators and Veterinarians



- Be sure you know what species your rehabilitator is licensed for.
- Be sure you are comfortable with the species.
 - As well as your staff.
- Be sure to communicate what services you are able to provide.
 - Financial costs, Diagnostics
- Know what the rehabilitators intake policy is.
 - Have your rehabilitator talk with the staff.
 - Know and respect the limits of the rehabilitator
- Do not allow your staff to take home wildlife – It may be illegal!
 - If it needs after hours care, please call your rehabilitator.

8



Veterinary Clinics and Wildlife

- Client owned animals at risk?
- Biosecurity?
- Time and Resources?

9

Wildlife in your Clinic?

Accepting the Risk?

Is it contagious?

- Same species, different species, zoonotic?
- Distemper, Parvo, Leptospirosis, HPAI, Fox Virus, Microparasites, White-nose syndrome, RHD, Chytridiomycosis, Internal/external parasites (fleas, ticks, lice, hippoboscids flies), CWD, Covid.

Other individuals and species at risk?

- Who would be at risk in your clinic?
- Domestic and Exotic Pet?
- Young not unvaccinated
- Young not fully vaccinated
- Adults not vaccinated
- Dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, backyard poultry

Can you keep them separate from client owned animals?

- Fomites
- Stress
- Physiological responses to stress
- Noise
- Visual barriers

10

Biosecurity

Definition: All procedures implemented to reduce the risk and consequences of infection with a disease-causing agent – Merck Veterinary Manual

Flow of patients in and out of clinic? Where will you house wildlife?

Identification and detection of potential infectious diseases for each patient based on species.

Have a plan in place: Detect, Contain, Disinfect, and Surveillance.

DON'T BE A FOMITE!!

11





Time and Resources

- Staff time?
- Who?
- When?
- Where?
- Training of Veterinarian and Veterinary Nurses/Assistants?
 - Wing fracture repair?
 - Turtle shell repair?
 - Restraint of wildlife?

12

Rehabilitation Considerations



- Age
 - Neonates to juvenile animals are admitted to rehabilitation.
 - Mammals – Neonatal mammals are time consuming to raise and costly, High mortality rate
 - Neonates need feeding every 2-3 hours, 24 hours per day.
 - Birds – Hatchlings are hard to raise, high mortality rate.
 - Hatching songbirds must be fed every 15 minutes from sun up to sun down, and some longer.
 - Reptiles – are on their own once they hatch. No care needed. Release in appropriate habitat or site of origin.
- Illness
 - Reportable?
- Injury
 - Can the species survive in the wildlife due to the injury?
- Medications
 - Is this a game species and need to be held for certain amount of time before release due to medications given?
 - Can you use the medication in this game species?

13



Common reasons wildlife are admitted



- Illness
 - Natural
 - Toxins
- Injury/Trauma
 - Other animals
 - Wildlife or domestic
 - Natural disasters
 - Hit by car/window strikes
 - Fishing line/hooks
 - External Substances (oil, grease, garbage)
- Orphaned
 - Parent trapped/relocated
 - Killed by domestic pet/wildlife/car
- Falls from nest
 - Kidnapping
 - Public attempting to rehab
 - Nutritional deficiency
 - Illness – Aspiration in young animals

14

Euthanasia

Considerations for euthanasia

- Quality of care vs Quantity
- Does the rehabilitator accept that species?
- Does the state allow the species to be rehabilitated?
- Is the survivability of the animal high or low?
- Is the injury/illness treatable and the animal can survive in the wild?

Migratory Birds – Permit Regulations USFWS

- You are required to euthanize any migratory bird that will not be able, even after medical treatment and rehab, to perch upright and/or ambulate without inflicting additional injuries to itself.
- You must euthanize any bird that is blind.
- Diurnal raptors with loss of vision in 1 eye not a candidate for release.
- You must euthanize any bird that has sustained an injury requiring amputation
 - wing at the elbow (humero-ulna joint) or above
 - a leg or a foot
- DO NOT TREAT TO PLACE!

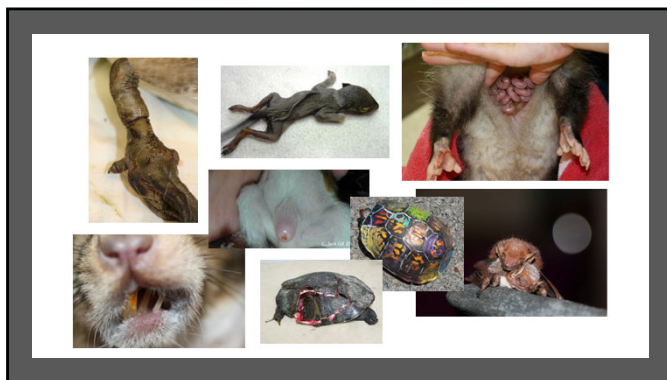
15

Issues that can arise while wild animals are in rehabilitation

- Husbandry issues**
 - Bumble foot - inappropriate surfaces
 - Inappropriate housing - over crowding
 - Nutritional issues
 - Inappropriate diets - They need more than cat and dog food!!
 - ASBO
- Poor biosecurity between species or new admissions**
 - No quarantine procedures
- Cannibalism**
 - Virginia Opossums
- Injuries while in rehabilitation**
 - Toes caught in cage, flying into side of aviary, handling issues
- Self mutilation - Nerve damage**
- Poorly trained rehabilitation techniques**
 - Assilation of young animals, no PT on wing wraps, bandages to tight
- Stereotypical behaviors**
 - Need enrichment for most species




16




17

Resources

- State/province fish and wildlife agency website for information on regulations, wildlife possession and rehabilitation.
 - List of licensed wildlife rehabilitators
- National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association (NWRA)
- International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC)
- State/Province Wildlife Associations
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

18

Thank you!



Questions:

Stephanie Kadletz, MNR, CET,
CWR

sak0050@auburn.edu

334-539-2262
