



Division of Fish and Wildlife
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WILDLIFE REHABILITATION PERMIT INFORMATION

Dear Sir/Madam:

Thank you for your interest in wildlife rehabilitation!

As you know, wildlife is naturally subject to territorial conflict, predation, disease, and parasites. However, New Jersey's wildlife is facing another problem. Our wildlife is increasingly threatened by the loss of habitat incurred by continued construction, forest fragmentation, and deforestation of our lands often resulting in negative human/wildlife interactions such as vehicle accidents, accidental poisonings, and pollution. One can also add to the list of detrimental influences, the well-meaning intentions of individuals who unknowingly try to “save” abandoned young wildlife when in reality, they are actually orphaning the animals. All of these issues are caused by the increasing number of negative interactions with New Jersey's rising human population.

Wildlife rehabilitators play a critical role in re-establishing and maintaining various endangered and threatened species populations like bald eagles, piping plovers and ospreys, as well as provide an outlet that supports the public's deep-seeded desire to nurture wildlife in distress. In addition to the noble challenges of rehabilitation, these volunteers are also confronted with finding the location of an appropriate release site. There is conditional evidence that relocated wildlife does not fair well when compared to wildlife that has been returned to its original home range.

The goal of the rehabilitation program is to release sick, injured and/or orphaned wildlife “back to the wild”. Animals that are injured beyond repair or behaviorally cannot be released are to be euthanized. Rehabilitators with appropriate scientific or education permits may apply for permission to maintain a non-releasable animal for educational purposes or transfer the animals to individuals who have the appropriate state and federal education permits providing they have permission from the state and/or federal government. In each case, the individual must meet the criteria for the educational permit.

Before you begin an apprenticeship, please contact your local municipality and confirm if wildlife rehabilitation is an allowable activity in your area. Be advised several municipalities do not allow for wildlife rehabilitation.

Wildlife rehabilitators cannot charge a fee for their services; however, they may accept donations and apply for 501(c)(3) non-profit status. Rehabilitators often absorb all expenses related to rehabilitation.

Many states now require basic training, written and/or oral testing, and continuous education. Therefore, our requirements are subject to change.

The following is the basic criteria to apply for and maintain a rehabilitation permit:

- Apprenticeship – completion of a one year minimum apprenticeship with a licensed rehabilitator. The numbers of hours per day, week and/or month as well as other details of the apprenticeship are to be worked out between the apprentice and the sponsor, but the minimum requirement is four (4) hours per week. It is extremely important that the apprentice be exposed to a complete calendar year of experience.
- Letter of Recommendation – from the sponsor who details the proficiency with regards to the species and type of care.
- Veterinary Letter of Support – from a veterinarian that is willing to work with you and the species for which you are applying. Be advised that veterinarians may, and often do, charge for their services.
- Interview/Questionnaire – which measure the knowledge of various aspects of rehabilitation, as well as a description of caging and facility.
- Federal Permits – as required for migratory birds
- Facility Inspection – successful inspection of proposed facility. The facility must meet the requirements to successfully rehabilitate the species requested.
- Annual Report and Renewal Form – must be completed annually and submitted with required documentation.
- Continuous Education – Recommended participation in a minimum of one continuous wildlife rehabilitation education program each year.

Rehabilitation permits are currently issued for one (1) calendar year and all permits expire on December 31st each year. An annual report and renewal form must be submitted to the Division by January 15th along with the required documentation each year in order to renew your permit and continue rehabilitating wildlife.

I hope you follow through on the apprenticeship so that you may continue to advance into your own wildlife rehabilitation facility.

Respectfully,

Amy Wells
Wildlife Permitting Unit
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