



## **Code of Practice**

Care of Sick, Injured or Orphaned Protected Animals  
in Queensland

*Nature Conservation Act 1992*

Prepared by: Nature Conservation Services Branch, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

Approved in accordance with section 174A of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*

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## 1. Purpose of this code

- 1 This code of practice (the code) has been prepared by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), RSPCA Queensland (RSPCA Qld), the Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (QWRC) and the wildlife care community. This code will ensure that the activities of all parties involved in the care and rehabilitation of native animals in Queensland result in the best possible conservation and animal welfare outcomes for rehabilitated animals and the wild populations they are returned to.

This code is made under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (the Act), and in consideration of the Nature Conservation (Wildlife Management) Regulation 2006 (the Wildlife Management Regulation), Nature Conservation (Administration) Regulation 2006 (the Administration Regulation), Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006 (the Wildlife Regulation), *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*, *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936* and *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*.

- 1.1 The purpose of this code is to provide information, recommendations, minimum standards and guidelines to ensure that all parties involved in the care and rehabilitation of protected animals in Queensland do so in an appropriate manner.
- 1.2 The code emphasises the responsibility of all persons and organisations involved in the care, rehabilitation and release of sick, injured or orphaned protected animals to ensure that:
- 1.2.1 animal welfare meets acceptable standards
  - 1.2.2 conservation benefits are maximised
  - 1.2.3 adverse ecological outcomes are avoided
  - 1.2.4 risks to human health and safety are minimised.
- 1.3 The code gives due regard to the many factors that determine what is appropriate in the circumstances, including:
- 1.3.1 current community values and expectations regarding the management and rehabilitation of sick, injured or orphaned animals
  - 1.3.2 the values and opinions of wildlife rehabilitators and others with expertise
  - 1.3.3 the importance of minimising the suffering of sick, injured or orphaned animals, and in particular the role of timely euthanasia in appropriate cases
  - 1.3.4 the responsibility of EHP to protect and conserve the environment, ecosystems and wildlife
  - 1.3.5 the risks to human health and safety associated with the rescue, care and rehabilitation of protected animals in Queensland
  - 1.3.6 the relevant legislation as stated in section 1 under 'Purpose of this code'
  - 1.3.7 the availability of resources, such as access to veterinary facilities or expertise.
- 1.4 There are other Acts and legislative instruments that may make provisions about, or affect certain aspects of wildlife care and rehabilitation, such as local laws regarding the keeping of animals, or laws about trespassing on private property. It is **not** the intent of this code to deal with all of these provisions.

## 2. General information

- 2.1 All native birds, mammals (except the dingo outside protected areas), reptiles and amphibians and, some native fish and invertebrates in Queensland are protected under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.
- 2.2 EHP is the agency responsible for the assessment and licensing of individuals and organisations for the purposes of wildlife rehabilitation. Licensed individuals or entities are referred to herein as 'permit holders'.
- 2.3 DAFF is the agency responsible for administering the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*.
- 2.4 QWRC is the peak representative body for the wildlife rehabilitation community in Queensland. The council's focus is to ensure excellent welfare for native animals during and after rehabilitation to achieve, complement and advance conservation benefits and outcomes.
- 2.5 This code applies to all individuals, organisations and members of organisations operating under a rehabilitation permit.
- 2.6 A person who rescues a protected animal, but is not a licensed rehabilitator, must surrender it to a licensed rehabilitator or conservation officer within 72 hours of taking the animal into care as stated in section 59 (4) of the Nature Conservation (Wildlife Management) Regulation 2006.
- 2.7 A person or organisation engaging in wildlife rehabilitation must be licensed. It is the responsibility of the permit holder to ensure compliance with the provisions of this code.
- 2.7.1 EHP is responsible for administration of this code.
- 2.7.2 This code does **not** exempt a person or other entity from compliance with any Act, regulation or other statutory instrument.
- 2.7.3 This code is current at the time of publication and may be subject to periodic review.
- 2.7.4 A wildlife rehabilitator may only rehabilitate an animal of a species for which they hold a relevant permit. If the rehabilitator is a member of a rehabilitation organisation, they will require the approval of the organisation to rehabilitate that particular species.
- 2.7.5 EHP may approve the development and distribution of species-specific standards for native wildlife rehabilitation. Meeting any such standards that may be in place is a requirement in order to comply with the code.
- 2.7.6 To ensure compliance with local government laws, rehabilitators may also require local government approval to conduct the activity at the specified location.
- 2.8 This code (sections 1–18) will have immediate effect from the date of gazettal. Appendix A (Minimum enclosure size) will have immediate effect from the date of gazettal of the code for any new enclosures being built or purchased. Existing enclosure facilities must be upgraded to meet the minimum enclosure size requirements within 24 months of the gazettal date of the code.

Note: All persons intending to become licensed, or become a member of an organisation that is licensed, to care for sick, injured or orphaned protected animals should become familiar with the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*.

### 3. Principles underpinning this code

- 3.1 The fundamental principles underpinning this code that should guide wildlife rehabilitators at all times in the conduct of their activities are:
- 3.1.1 **Duty of care:** under section 17 of the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*, a person in charge of an animal during its rescue, care, rehabilitation or release has a statutory duty of care to appropriately provide for the animal's welfare.
- 3.1.2 **Avoid harm:** in rescuing, caring for, and returning native animals to the wild, there is a risk of adverse animal welfare and ecological outcomes. Even well intentioned care or treatments may prolong or worsen an animal's suffering, and inappropriate release of animals may have significant detrimental effects on local ecosystems and wildlife communities. At all stages of the rehabilitation process the potential for adverse animal welfare and ecological outcomes must be considered and avoided.
- 3.1.3 **Avoid risks to human health and safety:** in rescuing, caring for, and returning native animals to the wild, there are generic, situation-specific and species-specific risks to persons involved that must be considered and minimised.
- Note: Anyone involved in the rescue, care and handling of wildlife should contact their general practitioner or local immunisation provider for more information on appropriate disease prevention measures including any recommended or required vaccinations.
- 3.1.4 **Relieve suffering:** a main objective of wildlife rescue and rehabilitation is to relieve suffering in sick, injured or orphaned wildlife; it is **not** to protect and preserve life at all costs. In this way, the objectives of wildlife rehabilitation are fundamentally different from those of human medicine. The rehabilitation and release of wildlife to the wild is the primary objective, but it must **not** be pursued to preserve the life of an animal at all costs or to achieve broader conservation outcomes where the animal is subject to unjustifiable and unreasonable suffering.
- 3.1.5 **Fair, reasonable and appropriate measures:** in deciding what is fair, reasonable and appropriate, regard must be had to:
- the environment and circumstances of the animal
  - the steps a reasonable person would reasonably be expected to have taken under the circumstances.
- 3.2 These fundamental and guiding principles should be applied to all aspects of the rescue, care, rehabilitation and release of rescued animals, and appropriate application of these principles will assist wildlife rehabilitators and organisations in complying with the code.

### 4. General provisions for the care of **sick, injured or orphaned** protected animals

- 4.1 The broad objectives of the rescue and rehabilitation of sick, injured or orphaned protected animals are to:
- 4.1.1 relieve suffering in sick, injured or orphaned protected animals by providing appropriate husbandry and care, pain relief, veterinary treatment when required, and timely euthanasia in cases with a poor prognosis

- 4.1.2 contribute to the conservation of nature by promptly returning suitably rehabilitated animals to their native habitats.
- 4.2 Additional outcomes of the rescue and rehabilitation of sick, injured or orphaned protected animals include:
  - 4.2.1 contribution to the body of knowledge on the ecology, conservation, management, veterinary care, husbandry and behaviour of native animal species
  - 4.2.2 contribution to the education of the general public, business and industry professions on issues related to the conservation and welfare of native animals.
- 4.3 Meeting the 'capacity to care' concept:
  - 4.3.1 The concept of 'capacity to care' relates to the capacity of a rehabilitator or rehabilitation organisation to provide for the essential needs of rescued animals as well as have the resources necessary to appropriately prepare wildlife for release back into the wild.
  - 4.3.2 When a person's or organisation's capacity to care is exceeded, unacceptable standards of animal care or welfare may result. This is likely to occur when the need for rescue and rehabilitation services exceeds the ability of rehabilitators and organisations to provide appropriate care. This is particularly so when major environmental or other events result in significantly increased wildlife casualties.
  - 4.3.3 Rehabilitators and rehabilitation organisations should be mindful of their respective capacities to care, particularly when there is an influx of wildlife requiring care due to major incidents like bushfire, significant weather events and other natural disasters.
  - 4.3.4 When the capacity to care is exceeded and animal welfare standards are likely to be compromised, there are three acceptable management options, which are, in order of preference:
    - 4.3.4.1 Referral of animals to another licensed individual or organisation with a current capacity to care for that species
    - 4.3.4.2 Increase the capacity to care by increasing or pooling resources
    - 4.3.4.3 Lower the euthanasia threshold in combination with early triage of newly rescued wildlife and proper veterinary assessment and prognosis of animals in care.
  - 4.3.5 Wildlife rescue and rehabilitation organisations should develop protocols and procedures that clearly define appropriate actions and responses in the event of catastrophic events or other circumstances in which the defined capacity to care may be exceeded.

For example: Policies and procedures relating to the establishment of good communication, collaboration and pooling of resources between organisations during major wildlife events.
  - 4.3.6 The lowering of animal welfare standards such that they are **not** consistent with this code is **not** an acceptable response to exceeding the capacity to care.
  - 4.3.7 In circumstances that involve major or catastrophic events and where the capacity to care is exceeded, lowering the threshold for euthanasia is a more appropriate response than **not** rescuing animals in distress.

## 5. Restrictions on caring for specialist protected animals

5.1 The species listed below may have requirements outside the normal capacity of most rehabilitators. Additional requirements are placed upon rehabilitators who intend to keep these species to improve the likelihood of their successful rehabilitation and return to the wild.

5.2 Permits may only be granted to persons assessed as having the appropriate skills and facilities to house and care for the following wildlife:

5.2.1 Cassowary:

Contact EHP.

5.2.2 Echidna:

Contact EHP or a person who holds a permit that specifically provides for the rehabilitation of this species.

5.2.3 Emu:

Contact EHP. This species may only be rehabilitated on rural-residential and rural land.

5.2.4 Koala:

Contact EHP or a person who holds a permit that specifically provides for the rehabilitation of this species.

5.2.5 Raptors:

Contact EHP or a person who holds a permit that specifically provides for the rehabilitation of the relevant species. Only carers who are affiliated with a Raptor Association or those with a proven record and suitable facilities in raptor rehabilitation may keep raptors.

5.2.6 Reptiles:

Contact EHP or a person who holds a permit that specifically provides for the rehabilitation of the relevant species.

5.2.7 Marine turtles:

Contact EHP.

5.2.8 Platypus:

Contact EHP.

5.2.9 Flying-foxes and insectivorous bats:

All persons caring for flying-foxes and insectivorous bats must be vaccinated against Australian Bat Lyssavirus (ABL) and must regularly consult their General Practitioner or Public Health Unit to maintain up-to-date vaccinations.

Note: In certain, prescribed circumstances, the use of lethal measures (shooting) is permitted for controlling flying-foxes damaging crops, in accordance with the 'Code of Practice – Ecologically sustainable lethal take of flying-foxes for crop protection'. Where this occurs, live, orphaned young may be given to a wildlife rehabilitator for the purpose of rehabilitation or humanely euthanased.



5.2.10 Seabirds:

Contact EHP or a person who holds a permit that specifically provides for the rehabilitation of the relevant species.

## 6. Interpretations

### 6.1 Objectives

6.1.1 Objectives are the intended outcome(s) for each section of this code.

### 6.2 Standards

6.2.1 Standards describe the mandatory specific actions required to achieve acceptable levels of animal welfare and successful wildlife rehabilitation. These are the minimum standards that must be met. They can be identified in the text by the heading 'Standards' and the use of the word 'must'.

### 6.3 Guidelines

6.3.1 Guidelines describe agreed best practice based on scientific information, accumulated experience and consultation. A guideline is usually a higher standard of care than minimum standards, except where the standard is best practice. Guidelines are identified in the text by the heading 'Guidelines' and the use of the word 'should'.

## 7. Provision of veterinary care

### 7.1 Objective

7.1.1 To rapidly assess the veterinary requirements of sick, injured or orphaned protected animals and provide an appropriate level of relief from distress, pain and suffering as well as appropriate veterinary care.

### 7.2 Standards

7.2.1 A sick or injured animal must receive a standard of care appropriate for its injuries or illness as soon as possible.

7.2.2 An animal that is affected by a critical (see section 18 for definition) injury or illness must be provided with appropriate veterinary care. This includes the provision of appropriate and ongoing pain relief and monitoring by a suitably experienced and qualified person; or prompt referral to a person or organisation able to provide that care; or euthanasia as soon as possible using an approved method. For an approved euthanasia method refer to section 12 of this code.

7.2.3 An animal that is affected by a serious (see section 18 for definition) injury or illness, or that is likely to be suffering from moderate pain, must be provided with appropriate pain relief and veterinary care as soon as is practicable.

7.2.4 An animal that is affected by a mild (see section 18 for definition) injury or illness, or that is likely to be suffering only mild discomfort or pain, must be provided with appropriate veterinary care as soon as is practicable.

7.2.5 A person must **not** hold a critically or seriously ill or injured animal without providing appropriate veterinary care, when such veterinary care is reasonably accessible.

- 7.2.6 Unless authority has first been received from a conservation officer, a wildlife rehabilitator must **not** request a veterinarian to perform the following surgical procedures:
- 7.2.6.1 amputation of a limb, or part of a limb, other than a single digit
  - 7.2.6.2 removal of an eye
  - 7.2.6.3 amputation of more than one third of the tail of a mammal, bird or reptile, other than a skink, gecko or legless lizard
  - 7.2.6.4 perform a procedure that results in the animal being unable to reproduce (sterilisation)
  - 7.2.6.5 any other procedure that might reasonably be expected to reduce an animal's fitness or ability to survive upon release back into the wild.
- 7.2.7 Notwithstanding section 7.2.6, a surgical procedure must not be withheld if gaining authority from a conservation officer will result in an unacceptable delay that may contribute to unnecessary suffering.
- 7.2.8 Wildlife rehabilitators must take all reasonable steps to avoid or minimise stress on animals in care and must **not** deliberately or negligently expose an animal to unnecessary stress.

### 7.3 Guidelines

- 7.3.1 A wildlife rehabilitator or wildlife rehabilitation organisation should establish a working relationship with a veterinarian, veterinary practice or facility able to provide veterinary care for rescued native animals.

Note: For the purposes of this code an animal's injuries or illness may be described as:

Critical (see section 18 for definition);

For example: an animal that has been struck by a car and has a serious head injury.

Serious (see section 18 for definition);

For example: an animal with a closed fracture of a long bone, but no other apparent injuries, and that is bright, alert and responsive; a koala with severe cystitis.

Mild (see section 18 for definition);

For example: an animal that has sustained superficial cuts or bruising as a result of inter-species or intra-species fighting or an orphaned marsupial suffering from mild dehydration.

- 7.3.2 The determination of what is 'appropriate veterinary care' should take into account the circumstances and availability of veterinary facilities and expertise, and the nature and severity of the injuries and/or illness of the animal.

For example: 'appropriate veterinary care' has **not** been provided to a critically or seriously injured or ill animal if it has received only a single treatment, without ongoing veterinary care and/or monitoring.

Note: a person must **not** hold a seriously injured or ill animal overnight without appropriate veterinary treatment, when access to 24-hour veterinary care is available.

- 7.3.3 The most appropriate facility in the circumstances should be used for the provision of veterinary care to seriously sick or injured protected animals.

For example: when specialised wildlife veterinary facilities are readily available and accessible. These should be used in preference to a private veterinary surgeon.

## 8. Rescue and handling

### 8.1 Objective

- 8.1.1 To eliminate additional stress and further injury to wildlife during rescue and in care and to maximise the safety of rescuers and the general public.

### 8.2 Guidelines

- 8.2.1 A wildlife rehabilitator should not conduct a rescue when doing so would put themselves or other persons at risk of serious injury.

- 8.2.2 Wildlife rehabilitators should ensure that they utilise correct personal protective equipment (PPE) relevant to the species that they are rescuing.

For example: eye protection when handling waterbirds, gloves when handling bats, towels/blankets for handling most species, and covered footwear should be worn at all times. For rescues in bushland or long grass, rescuers should also wear long sleeved shirts and long trousers.

- 8.2.3 Prior to undertaking a wildlife rescue the rescuer should assess the associated risks and put in place measures to ensure the safety of themselves, others and the wildlife to be rescued.

- 8.2.4 Wildlife rescues should be carried out in a way that avoids significant disturbance to unaffected wildlife that is likely to cause injury or abandonment of young.

- 8.2.5 The rescue and handling of wildlife should **avoid** causing unnecessary pain, suffering or exacerbation of injuries.

- 8.2.6 The rescue and handling of wildlife should be done in a manner that will not cause or spread disease.

- 8.2.7 Only the appropriate equipment and techniques for the species and size of the animal concerned should be used. Equipment and techniques that should **not** be used include:

8.2.7.1 the noosing of a koala

8.2.7.2 the use of a projectile, other than a net-gun or tranquiliser dart by an appropriately trained and licensed person

8.2.7.3 the use of unpadded snake tongs

8.2.7.4 the use of a leg-hold trap with unpadded jaws or an unattended snare or automatically activated snare

- 8.2.7.5 the felling of a tree containing an animal, when the tree has a diameter at chest height (DBH) exceeding 5 centimetres (cm), or when injury to the animal being rescued or any other animal is a likely consequence, or when the tree is in a protected area.
- 8.2.8 Where the difficulty of a wildlife rescue is compounded by the presence of other persons or dangers such as heavy traffic, a rescuer should opt for the assistance of local authorities (i.e. local council or police) to mitigate these factors.
- 8.2.9 Where the rescue of animals in warm or hot ambient conditions (>24°C) cannot be avoided, or when the animal has been subject to exertion or physical restraint, rescuers should monitor the body temperature of the animal and/or seek appropriate veterinary assistance.
- 8.2.10 Rescuers should monitor healthy nestling and fledgling birds for abandonment rather than attempt to bring the bird into care. Nestlings can be returned to the nest or placed in an artificial nest. Fledglings can be returned to a tree where they were found or in some cases a tree nearby, if determined to be free of injuries or disease by a suitably qualified or experienced person.
- 8.2.11 Where possible, handling and restraint should be minimised and chemical restraint methods such as sedation and anaesthesia used whenever possible by those appropriately qualified and/or licensed to do so.
- Note: Sedatives and anaesthetics must be administered by a veterinary surgeon or authorised person.
- 8.2.12 The use of padded snake tongs should be limited to situations in which there is no other alternative, and in which there is significant risk to human life. Snake tongs, even when padded, may cause significant internal injury, particularly to gravid (pregnant) snakes. Such injuries may **not** be immediately apparent and may result in the death of the snake weeks or months later.
- 8.2.13 Only persons who are vaccinated against rabies should handle any bat species.

## 9. Transportation

### 9.1 Objective

- 9.1.1 To transport wildlife in such a way that minimises further stress and injury and prevents escape. This section applies to the movement of all sick, injured or orphaned wildlife (e.g. from the point of rescue to a veterinary surgery and between rehabilitation facilities and to the release site).

### 9.2 Standards

- 9.2.1 Transport must not cause unnecessary pain or distress to the animal.
- 9.2.2 Sick, injured or orphaned wildlife must only be transported when and where necessary.
- 9.2.3 Transport containers must be appropriate for the species (i.e. the size, strength and behaviour of the wildlife being moved).
- 9.2.4 Transport containers must be designed and maintained in such a way as to:
- 9.2.4.1 prevent injury

- 9.2.4.2 prevent escape
- 9.2.4.3 prevent rolling or tipping during transit
- 9.2.4.4 prevent damage to plumage
- 9.2.4.5 be hygienic
- 9.2.4.6 minimise stress
- 9.2.4.7 be suitably ventilated.
- 9.2.5 Transport containers that hold species that are dangerous, venomous or capable of transmitting potentially fatal zoonoses must be clearly marked with a warning label such as 'Caution—venomous snake' or 'Caution—live bat', and must be locked and secured.
- 9.2.6 Wildlife must not be transported in a vehicle's boot that is separate from the main cabin without ventilation.
- 9.2.7 Non-compatible species, such as predator and prey combinations must not be transported in a manner that allows physical or visual contact.
- 9.2.8 Transport containers for wildlife must:
  - 9.2.8.1 be secured to prevent movement during transport causing stress or injury to the animal
  - 9.2.8.2 provide protection from direct sunlight
  - 9.2.8.3 provide protection from wind and rain.

### **9.3 Guidelines**

- 9.3.1 Transport containers that are **not** of a fully enclosed design should be covered to minimise light, visual stimulation and stress.
- 9.3.2 The use of medication during transport should be considered and approved by a veterinary surgeon.
- 9.3.3 The provision of water and food for adult animals is generally **not** required for short trips (2–3 hours). Food and water should be considered when transporting dependent young and adult animals during longer trips.
- 9.3.4 Wildlife should **not** be transported in the back of an uncovered utility vehicle unless the transport container is securely fastened.
- 9.3.5 Transport containers should be maintained within an appropriate temperature range for the species. Unfurred joeys and bird and monotreme hatchlings should be within the 31–34°C range. 25–27°C is appropriate in most other cases.
- 9.3.6 An experienced rehabilitator or veterinary surgeon should be consulted if it is uncertain what an appropriate temperature range is for a specialised species.

## **10. Housing**

### **10.1 Objective**

- 10.1.1 To ensure that wildlife undergoing rehabilitation are housed in a way that prevents injury or escape, minimises stress, maintains safe levels of hygiene and allows natural behaviours.

## **10.2 Standards**

- 10.2.1 Enclosures must be constructed and maintained in such a way to prevent injury and escape and exclude predators and pests.
- 10.2.2 Enclosures must be appropriate for the species, and the types of injuries, stage of development and/or stage of rehabilitation of the animal being housed.
- 10.2.3 Enclosures must maintain habitat elements appropriate to the species and the condition of the animal (e.g. perching, nest boxes, resting forks, wading pools, suitable substrate).
- 10.2.4 Enclosures housing wildlife **not** subject to critical care must allow for the display of natural behaviour and support rehabilitation for survival in the wild.
- 10.2.5 All enclosures must meet the dimensions (relevant to the species in care) described in Appendix A of the code. These dimensions are regarded as the minimum standards that must be met.
- 10.2.6 All housing, including enclosures, nest boxes, bedding, substrate, perching, food and water bowls must be kept in a clean and hygienic condition.
- 10.2.7 Cleaning and disinfection regimes must be appropriate for the species and excreta must **not** be allowed to accumulate excessively in any enclosure, substrate or bedding.
- 10.2.8 Species that are dangerous to humans, venomous or those known to carry life threatening zoonoses must be securely contained to prevent unauthorised human contact and exposure to domestic animals.
- 10.2.9 Animals showing signs of infection or disease must be quarantined from other wildlife in care. Animals subject to quarantine must be housed in such a way as to prevent transmission of disease or infection to other animals.
- 10.2.10 Wildlife in care must **not** be exposed to other native or domestic animals where the exposure is likely to result in unnecessary familiarisation or stress.  

For example: native wildlife and a domestic dog, cat or recognised predator sharing the same space or having contact.
- 10.2.11 Wildlife in care must **not** be exposed to odours or noises that are likely to result in unnecessary familiarisation, stress or illness. Use of certain aerosols and insect repellents can be toxic to animals in care and should be avoided.  

For example: cigarette smoke in an enclosed area or loud music.
- 10.2.12 Incompatible species or individuals must not be housed in the same enclosure, or within sight of each other.

## **10.3 Guidelines**

- 10.3.1 Enclosures should be designed to allow easy cleaning, easy access and minimise handling of wildlife.
- 10.3.2 Faeces and uneaten food should be removed daily (more frequently if needed) and disposed of in such a way as to limit access by other animals and the potential spread of disease.
- 10.3.3 Food and water containers should be cleaned with a suitable (non-toxic to wildlife) disinfectant daily.

- 10.3.4 Household and animal-related cleaning implements and products should be kept separate to avoid cross contamination.
- 10.3.5 Wildlife husbandry items should be cleaned in areas separate to those used to wash domestic or household items.
- 10.3.6 Rehabilitators should avoid mixed-species housing whenever possible and, when mixed-species housing is necessary (such as in pre-release bird aviaries), ensure that only compatible species are housed together. Any new additions to an existing aviary, colony or mob should be monitored closely for the first few days to ensure their safety and the safety of other individuals.
- 10.3.7 Animals that naturally form social groups in the wild should be housed with animals of an appropriate age and gender of the same species where possible. When animals are housed collectively, they should be individually identifiable.
- 10.3.8 Potential stressors that could have a detrimental health effect on an animal should be identified and removed from an enclosure. Ongoing or prolonged stress can result in reduced growth rates, weight loss, abnormal behaviour (e.g. self-mutilation), inhibited recovery and increased mortalities. More subtle and psychological signs of stress could be repetitive stress-related behaviour (stereotypical behaviour) such as pacing.

Note: If carers are in any doubt of an animal's capacity to deal with the unavoidable stresses of coming into care, or there are unknown causes for unusual behaviour, they should consult experienced carers for that species. Unmanaged issues relating to ongoing or prolonged stress while in care will compound the original health problems, making a full recovery less likely. Similarly, communication and cooperation between wildlife rehabilitators and rehabilitation organisations are encouraged to maximise the use of available appropriate housing and facilitate the housing of social species into groups at an appropriate stage and/or age prior to release, where possible.

## 11. Food and water

### 11.1 Objective

- 11.1.1 To ensure that sick, injured or orphaned wildlife receive a diet that supports their healthy recovery and development, and their effective rehabilitation and release.

### 11.2 Standards

- 11.2.1 Rehabilitators must be aware of the appropriate food and water requirements for the particular species in the wild and in care. Advice must be sought from a person experienced in rehabilitating a species where a rehabilitator is unfamiliar with its care.
- 11.2.2 Food and water of suitable quality and quantity for the species must be provided at an appropriate frequency and must not be accessible to other wild or domestic animals.
- 11.2.3 The feeding of live non-native vertebrate animals to an animal under rehabilitation must not occur unless the feeding of live food is essential for the rehabilitated animal's survival.
- 11.2.4 Live protected animals must not be used for the purpose of feeding an animal under rehabilitation. It is permissible to collect a dead least concern animal (e.g. fresh road kill), other than a special native animal (echidna, koala, platypus, wombat), if the dead animal is taken to feed the bird of prey kept under a rehabilitation permit.

- 11.2.5 Food quantities must be adjusted to reflect an animal's stage of development and to maintain a weight that is within an appropriate range. Guidance on this can be obtained from wildlife rehabilitation organisations and facilities.
- 11.2.6 Prior to release food must be offered in a way that encourages natural feeding behaviour such as foraging.
- 11.2.7 An animal that is unable or unwilling to feed sufficiently (other than nursing young) must be assessed by a veterinarian or a suitably experienced person to diagnose the cause of the inability to feed.
- 11.2.8 Prior to undertaking the force feeding of an animal, a rehabilitator must have received training from a suitably experienced person (i.e. experienced wildlife rehabilitator or veterinarian) for that particular species.
- 11.2.9 Food and water for wildlife must not be allowed to become contaminated by wild or domestic animals.
- 11.2.10 Food must be provided in a manner that minimises food contamination and spoilage and the transfer of disease.

### **11.3 Guidelines**

- 11.3.1 To the greatest extent possible, captive diets should be similar to the natural diet for the species to minimise diet-related health issues, to teach food recognition for release back into the wild and promote normal digestive function.
- 11.3.2 Animals should be weighed at least weekly to determine overall health and to mitigate weight loss through dietary changes.
- 11.3.3 Vitamin and mineral deficiency is a disorder associated with prolonged captivity in a wide range of species, and should be anticipated and prevented by provision of a proper diet with vitamin and mineral supplementation. Care should be taken when adding supplements to an animal's diet as incorrect quantity can also cause dietary problems.
- 11.3.4 Whenever practicable, prior to release, animals should have foods included in their diet that would be available to them in the area where they are to be released.
- 11.3.5 To avoid contamination and disease transfer, wildlife and human food preparation areas and implements should be kept separate.

## **12. Euthanasia**

### **12.1 Objective**

- 12.1.1 To support the timely euthanasia of sick, injured or orphaned wildlife through identifying when euthanasia is appropriate.

Note: Euthanasia is a large part of wildlife rehabilitation and an important welfare tool. It should not be seen as a failure on the rehabilitator's behalf, nor should it be avoided at **all** costs.

### **12.2 Standards**

- 12.2.1 All wildlife rehabilitators, whether individually licensed or operating under a group licence, must be able to provide for the euthanasia of wildlife when required.



- 12.2.2 Wildlife must be euthanased without exception when:
- 12.2.2.1 it is necessary to alleviate significant pain or suffering when such pain and suffering is not able to be managed by a veterinarian
  - 12.2.2.2 further treatment is **not** practical or recovery is **not** expected such that the animal can be successfully rehabilitated to the wild
  - 12.2.2.3 resources are **not** available to provide appropriate care or an acceptable quality of life throughout the likely rehabilitation period.
- 12.2.3 Animals with a poor prognosis for survival and that are suffering must be euthanased rather than left to die from the injury or illness. Failure to take appropriate steps to arrange the prompt euthanasia of these animals is a breach of the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*.
- 12.2.4 Unless EHP has granted permission for the animal to enter the Queensland Species Management Plan (QSMP) or unless otherwise advised by the EHP Director Wildlife Management, an animal must be euthanased when:
- 12.2.4.1 an orphaned animal is not viable or is unlikely to be rehabilitated
  - 12.2.4.2 there is no suitable release location (refer to sections 14.2.4 and 14.2.7 regarding release/alternative release locations)
  - 12.2.4.3 the ability to reproduce is lost due to an injury, disease or surgical procedure
  - 12.2.4.4 the ability to move freely or normally (i.e. run, climb, crawl, hop, fly or swim) is permanently impaired due to, for example, a missing or impaired limb, wing, foot or tail, such that it will significantly impair the animal's ability to survive in the wild
  - 12.2.4.5 the ability to sense environment (i.e. see, hear, smell, taste or feel) is permanently impaired due to a missing or injured organ such as an eye, ear or nose, such that it will significantly impair the animal's ability to survive in the wild
  - 12.2.4.6 the ability to catch, find or handle food is permanently impaired
  - 12.2.4.7 its advanced age renders it unlikely to survive in the wild.
- 12.2.5 The carcasses of euthanased animals must be discarded in accordance with the local regulations. Carcasses of animals euthanased using anaesthesia and/or veterinary euthanasia solutions may present a significant risk to scavengers, including native animals, and must be disposed of by deep burial or incineration.
- 12.2.6 Carcasses of animals euthanased by way of barbiturate overdose must not be fed to other animals.

### **12.3 Guidelines**

- 12.3.1 Wildlife should be euthanased when suffering from injuries or illness that require a long and complicated rehabilitation process and when such wildlife provide little contribution to the conservation of the species.
- 12.3.2 Non-releasable wildlife should be euthanased (as per section 12) or referred for placement through the QSMP. For further information on non-releasable wildlife or the QSMP, contact your local EHP office.

### 13. How to euthanase

#### 13.1 Objective

- 13.1.1 To support the timely euthanasia of sick, injured or orphaned wildlife by identifying who may perform euthanasia and what methods may be applied.

#### 13.2 Standards

- 13.2.1 Methods of euthanasia, including methods of restraint for euthanasia, must not cause significant pain, suffering or distress.
- 13.2.2 Death must be confirmed prior to the disposal of the carcass.
- 13.2.3 Euthanasia by barbiturate overdose must only be performed by a veterinary surgeon or a competent and appropriately trained person authorised by the chief executive of Queensland Health to possess and use restricted drugs for veterinary purposes.
- 13.2.4 If euthanasia via intracardiac or intrathoracic (as opposed to intravenous) barbiturate overdose is performed then the animal must be fully anaesthetised prior to performing the procedure.
- 13.2.5 The following euthanasia methods must **not** be used on wildlife:
- 13.2.5.1 suffocating via drowning, strangulation or chest compression
  - 13.2.5.2 freezing
  - 13.2.5.3 burning
  - 13.2.5.4 poisoning with household products
  - 13.2.5.5 air embolism
  - 13.2.5.6 exsanguination or decapitation without stunning
  - 13.2.5.7 electrocution or microwave irradiation
  - 13.2.5.8 poisoning with any domestic or agricultural pest control agent, chemical or noxious agent not currently approved for the veterinary euthanasia of domestic animals.

#### 13.3 Guidelines

- 13.3.1 Animals should be euthanased by barbiturate overdose while under general anaesthesia administered by a veterinary surgeon or an appropriately trained person authorised by the chief executive of Queensland Health to possess and use restricted drugs for veterinary purposes.
- 13.3.2 When it is **not** practicable to perform euthanasia using barbiturate overdose a method appropriate for the species that causes minimal pain and suffering should be used. This may include the following methods:
- 13.3.2.1 Large animals shot with a rifle of a calibre sufficient to achieve instantaneous insensibility followed by the rapid death of the animal without first regaining sensation or consciousness. In effect, the technique must destroy the brain.

Note: The use of a firearm for the euthanasia of wildlife must comply with the *Weapons Act 1990*.

- 13.3.2.2 Cranial trauma sufficient to cause instantaneous insensibility followed by the rapid death of the animal without first regaining sensation or consciousness. In effect, the technique must destroy the brain

Note: The brain of reptiles is very small in comparison with their head size, and well protected by the bones and soft tissues of the head. Cranial trauma techniques used on reptiles must cause instantaneous and complete destruction of the brain.

## 14. Release of rehabilitated protected animals

### 14.1 Objective

- 14.1.1 To ensure that only wildlife that possess an appropriate level of physical, cognitive and behavioural fitness are released to the wild.

### 14.2 Standards

- 14.2.1 Rehabilitated wildlife must be assessed as physically and behaviourally fit by a wildlife veterinarian or a rehabilitator experienced in that species prior to its release.
- 14.2.2 An animal must only be deemed physically fit for release if:
- 14.2.2.1 it has fully recovered from any pre-existing injury
  - 14.2.2.2 reasonable steps have been taken to determine the animal is free of disease
  - 14.2.2.3 its weight and body condition are within the normal range for the animal's age, sex and species
  - 14.2.2.4 it has adapted to prevailing climatic conditions
  - 14.2.2.5 it is not known to be sterile/unable to reproduce.
- 14.2.3 The following process must be followed regarding amphibians:
- 14.2.3.1 An amphibian must only be released in suitable habitat as close as practicable to the same location from which it was originally taken to minimise the potential spread of parasites and disease and impacts on genetic integrity.
  - 14.2.3.2 It is **not** permissible to release an amphibian at a location that is only similar to or near the original location, or at a location that is only assumed to be the original location.
  - 14.2.3.3 If the original location of the amphibian is not known, the animal may be suitable to enter into the QSMP. Contact your local EHP office to arrange for the animal to be assessed.
  - 14.2.3.4 If the amphibian is not suitable to enter the QSMP, it must be euthanased.
- 14.2.4 An animal must only be deemed behaviourally fit for release if it:
- 14.2.4.1 can recognise, catch and consume naturally available food
  - 14.2.4.2 has not been allowed to associate with domestic animals and predator species during the rehabilitation period so as to ensure that its natural instinct to recognise and avoid predators, including domestic animals, remains intact

14.2.4.3 is **not** attracted to humans or to sights, sounds or smells that are specific to captivity (i.e. it is **not** imprinted or humanised)

14.2.4.4 can navigate effectively through its natural environment

14.2.4.5 can recognise and interact appropriately with members of the same species.

### **14.3 Guidelines**

14.3.1 Species that are required to construct shelters for survival (e.g. dig burrows or construct dreys) should exhibit this behaviour prior to release.

## **15. Release timing and site selection**

### **15.1 Objective**

15.1.1 To ensure that the release timing and site chosen for rehabilitated wildlife maximises the chances of survival in the wild and has minimal negative impact on wild populations.

### **15.2 Standards**

15.2.1 Wildlife must not be released in weather conditions that are likely to cause significant hardship or reduced chances of survival.

15.2.2 To allow wildlife to immediately investigate its environment and avoid predation, release must take place during the species' normal period of activity (e.g. diurnal, nocturnal, crepuscular).

15.2.3 Migratory species must be released one month prior to their typical departure period or at a time when other members of the species are present if the location is within a migratory path. Due to time in care, the animal may need to be kept in care until the following migratory season.

15.2.4 If the location where the wildlife was found is known and is suitable for the release then the wildlife must be released there. A suitable environment for release is one that:

15.2.4.1 Contains appropriate habitat, shelter, water and food resources

15.2.4.2 Is free of immediate hazards or risks (i.e. not a roadside)

15.2.4.3 Is known **not** to be subject to imminent land-clearing or development.

15.2.5 The release of koalas to the wild must be conducted in accordance with the relevant provisions outlined in the Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2006.

15.2.6 If the original site of capture is **not** appropriate for release (refer to section 15.2.4), then the animal must be released as close to the original site as possible. The rehabilitator needs to be aware of that particular species natural home range in order to provide the best alternative release location.

15.2.7 Wildlife must **not** be released into a national park unless the animal originated from the national park and prior approval has been obtained from EHP.

15.2.8 If a release is unsuccessful, despite repeated attempts to rehabilitate the animal for release to the wild, the animal must be euthanased (see section 12). If the animal is potentially suitable to enter into QSMP, the local EHP office must be contacted to arrange for the animal to be assessed.

- 15.2.9 Progeny of wildlife held on a rehabilitation permit must be released to the wild when self-sufficient. The progeny should be released at the location from where the mother originated, consistent with section 15.2.4 of the code.
- 15.2.10 Tagging, banding, or other marking, including microchip or PIT implanting, may only be performed by a person who is authorised by EHP to tag wildlife or by a registered veterinary surgeon, and must only be performed as part of an EHP approved program.

### **15.3 Guidelines**

- 15.3.1 An animal should be released as soon as it is deemed ready and the conditions are suitable.
- 15.3.2 Environmental conditions should be suitable for the release, taking into account the weather and time of year which will help facilitate the animal's reintroduction to the wild and its survival. For example:
  - 15.3.2.1 reptiles should be released during the warmer months such as spring and summer
  - 15.3.2.2 juvenile animals should be released during natural dispersal periods
  - 15.3.2.3 insectivorous species should be released during periods of insect abundance.
- 15.3.3 The release of rehabilitated animals into habitat other than that from which they originated, should be carefully considered as it increases the risk of undesirable ecological impacts, such as:
  - 15.3.3.1 spread of diseases and parasites into native wildlife populations
  - 15.3.3.2 genetic contamination of genetically distinct wildlife populations, or other deleterious genetic effects
  - 15.3.3.3 impacts on stable social structures of wildlife populations residing in recipient habitat.
- 15.3.4 Gradual or 'soft' release is preferred for most species whenever practicable. Abrupt or 'hard' release is not advised for animals subject to long term care, orphans or those animals requiring social groups.
- 15.3.5 If social species are to be managed and released as a group, then all individuals within the group should originate from the same or neighbouring location, or be within the range of normal movement from their place of origin based on the species capacity to travel.

Example: A kangaroo can be released within 100 kilometres of its origin, based on its (the species) capacity to travel long distances.
- 15.3.6 Regarding migratory species that have been in care for extended periods, the rehabilitator should ensure that an appropriate level of physical fitness is achieved prior to release, allowing the animal enough time to establish itself in the wild in advance of the forthcoming migration.
- 15.3.7 Inexperienced rehabilitators should contact an experienced rehabilitator, rehabilitation group or EHP for advice on 'soft' release of animals with a close social structure such as bats (including flying-foxes), gliders and macropods.
- 15.3.8 Highly social species, excepting those individuals in critical care, should be held in appropriate groups as early as possible to enable a social unit to develop before release.

## 16. Records

### 16.1 Objective

- 16.1.1 To maintain comprehensive records of sick, injured or orphaned wildlife admissions, disposals and management while in care. These records can be used to track and review individual case histories and identify trends and represent a useful resource for rehabilitators, regulators, veterinarians, educators and research organisations.

### 16.2 Standards

- 16.2.1 A register must be kept by each wildlife rehabilitator for all protected animals rescued or cared for including:
- 16.2.1.1 date of admission or rescue
  - 16.2.1.2 identifying number or name
  - 16.2.1.3 reason for rescue
  - 16.2.1.4 species
  - 16.2.1.5 approximate age or age class (neonate, juvenile, sub-adult, adult, aged)
  - 16.2.1.6 sex (M, F, Unknown)
  - 16.2.1.7 exact location of rescue
  - 16.2.1.8 brief description of health or injuries
  - 16.2.1.9 treatments
  - 16.2.1.10 relevant observations (behaviour, diet, general progress)
  - 16.2.1.11 regular weights
  - 16.2.1.12 final outcome (released, died, euthanased, permanent care, transferred to another person/organisation)
  - 16.2.1.13 date of final outcome
  - 16.2.1.14 if transferred to another person or organisation, to whom.
- 16.2.2 If an animal is transferred to another rehabilitator, copies of relevant records must accompany the animal.
- 16.2.3 All records must be maintained in a form that can be readily examined, analysed and clearly understood, and be made available to a conservation officer upon request.

### 16.3 Guidelines

- 16.3.1 Copies or backups of records should be kept to avoid information being lost.
- 16.3.2 To gauge the effectiveness of various rehabilitation and release techniques, post-release sightings of known rehabilitated wildlife should be recorded and kept.

## 17. Wildlife rehabilitation organisations

### 17.1 Objective

- 17.1.1 To identify the roles and responsibilities of wildlife rehabilitation organisations when operating under a group rehabilitation permit.

## 17.2 Standards

- 17.2.1 An organisation conducting wildlife rescue and rehabilitation activities in Queensland must be a legal entity (incorporated association or Australian company) and hold a valid rehabilitation permit issued under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* by EHP.
- 17.2.2 A licensed wildlife rehabilitation organisation must ensure that:
- 17.2.2.1 all members engaged in wildlife rehabilitation activities comply with this code
  - 17.2.2.2 the organisation and its members comply with the conditions of their rehabilitation permit
  - 17.2.2.3 the organisation provides a current copy of the rehabilitation permit to members stating the period of membership and what species the member is endorsed to care for, together with the total number of animals that the member is entitled to hold, under the group rehabilitation permit
  - 17.2.2.4 the organisation provides new and inexperienced members with appropriate and ongoing training and mentoring for species that the individual rehabilitator wishes to care for
  - 17.2.2.5 membership lists are updated and forwarded annually within 20 business days at the close of each financial year to Permit and Licence Management, EHP, [palm@ehp.qld.gov.au](mailto:palm@ehp.qld.gov.au) or GPO Box 2454, Brisbane QLD 4001
  - 17.2.2.6 a process is established for handling alleged breaches of this code, or non-compliance with other relevant rules of the organisation
  - 17.2.2.7 a procedure is established for responding to complaints against members either from external or internal parties (all new members must be given copies of this procedure)
  - 17.2.2.8 all members are given timely, clear and detailed directions by the organisation concerning the activities that the member may carry out under the rehabilitation permit.
- 17.2.3 The organisation must advise EHP in writing within 20 business days of any person who is no longer a member and that they are no longer permitted to operate under the permit.
- 17.2.4 If the organisation becomes aware that a member operating under the permit does **not** comply with this code, the organisation must:
- 17.2.4.1 identify the actions or steps needed to be taken by the member to comply with this code and time frames associated, and
  - 17.2.4.2 take responsibility for the individuals' actions under the group permit, and either
  - 17.2.4.3 limit the authority of the member to operate under the permit, or
  - 17.2.4.4 instruct the person in writing that they are no longer permitted to operate under the permit.

## 17.3 Guidelines

- 17.3.1 Organisations should inform prospective new members of relevant matters such as the financial costs and time commitment required by the individual.

- 17.3.2 All wildlife rehabilitators operating under a group wildlife permit should conduct themselves according to that group's membership requirements to the extent the law permits.
- 17.3.3 Wildlife rehabilitation organisations should endeavour to familiarise themselves with recently updated information about diseases in wildlife. This can be done by contacting the Australian Wildlife Health Network, the Wildlife Disease Association or Biosecurity Queensland.

Note: Wildlife rehabilitation organisations are permitted to undertake fundraising activities to support member training and assist with the acquisition of resources such as husbandry items, veterinary support and food.

## 18. Definitions

**Act**—the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

**Administration Regulation**—the *Nature Conservation (Administration) Regulation 2006*.

**Animal**—any member of the animal kingdom (other than humans) as defined in the Act.

**Conservation officer**—a person who is appointed as such by the responsible Minister under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

**Crepuscular**—pertaining to early in the morning and late in the afternoon.

**Critical**—when the animal is affected by: major traumatic injuries, difficult breathing, major bleeding, serious head injury, or disembowelment; or is showing any signs of severe pain or discomfort; or has obvious injuries or illness that might cause the death of the animal; or is rescued or found in circumstances which might reasonably be expected to have caused such injuries or illness, even if they are **not** apparent (for example: dog attack); or the animal is moribund.

**Critical care**—a level of care provided to wildlife suffering from life threatening injuries or illness. Generally, wildlife in critical care will require short-term housing that reduces activity and facilitates easy observation, feeding, treatment and rehydration as required.

**Diurnal**—pertaining to day time.

**Euthanasia**—to achieve humane destruction of an animal. The method must achieve instant insensibility followed by rapid death of the animal without it first regaining sensation or consciousness.

**Experienced rehabilitator/person**—a person with a minimum of two (2) years, ongoing demonstrated wildlife rehabilitation experience specific to that species or a similar species of sick, injured or orphaned wildlife.

**Exsanguination**—death caused through loss of blood.

**Hard release**—where an animal is released directly to the wild without further support, feeding or environmental conditioning. It should only be used in the case of short-term rehabilitation and is not advised for animals in long-term care, orphans or social animals.

**Mild**—when the animal's injuries or illness appear to cause little discomfort, pain or loss of function, and are not life-threatening or likely to become life-threatening without immediate treatment.

**Nocturnal**—pertaining to the night.

**Permit**—a rehabilitation permit issued under the Act.

**Protected wildlife**—an animal that is prescribed as such in the Act.



**Qualified person**—a person who has completed a training course approved by the chief executive of Queensland Health and is issued with an authority under the provisions of the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 or a person registered by the Veterinary Surgeons Board as a Veterinary Surgeon.

**Quarantine**—where an animal is kept isolated for a period to ensure it does not transmit or contract disease or parasites. Rehabilitators should take precautions when entering and leaving such isolated areas, utilising disinfectant footbaths, overalls etc. The same practice should apply to all husbandry equipment used for managing an animal in quarantine.

**QSMP**—the Queensland Species Management Plan. This is the process for placing zoologically required species or specimens into zoo collections for conservation/education purposes in lieu of being released successfully.

**QWRC**—the Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council.

**Rehabilitation organisation**—a corporation or association holding a valid rehabilitation permit whose members engage in the rehabilitation of sick, injured or orphaned wildlife.

**Rehabilitator**—a person who is engaged in the rehabilitation of sick, injured or orphaned wildlife and is operating under a valid rehabilitation permit either as an individual or as member of a rehabilitation organisation.

**Serious**—when the animal is affected by serious injuries or illness that might reasonably be expected to cause moderate pain, but are **not** immediately life-threatening; and the animal is **not** showing obvious signs of distress or pain, or significantly reduced mental activity.

**Soft release**—where an animal is released with the provision of supplementary food, shelter and water at the site of release, preferably with a period of confinement during which time the animal(s) become familiar with the surrounding habitat, wildlife population and supplementary resources.

**Veterinary surgeon**—a person registered as a veterinary surgeon under the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936*.

**Veterinary treatment**—the conduct and application of veterinary surgery and veterinary medicine when applied to sick, injured or orphaned animals by a veterinary surgeon.

**Wildlife**—a protected animal as defined in the Act.

**Wildlife Management Regulation**—the Nature Conservation (Wildlife Management) Regulation 2006.

**Wildlife Regulation**—the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006.

**Zoonosis (plural zoonoses)**—any infectious disease that can be transmitted from both wild and domestic animals to humans.

## 19 Appendix A: Minimum enclosure size

### 19.1 Objective

19.1.1 To identify appropriate enclosure sizes for rehabilitation purposes for each animal group.

### 19.2 Standards

19.2.1 **Critical care housing** must be housing that is designed to reduce an animal's level of physical activity for a short period of time and that facilitates frequent monitoring, treatment, feeding or rehydration. Once an animal no longer requires critical care it must be transitioned to an 'intermediate care' or 'pre-release' enclosure.

- 19.2.2 **Intermediate care housing** must be housing that is designed to allow sufficient space for some physical activity while enabling the animal to be readily caught for monitoring or treatment.
- 19.2.3 **Pre-release housing** must be housing that allows an animal to regain better physical condition, display natural behaviour and acclimatise to normal weather conditions. While in pre-release housing, interactions between wildlife and humans must be greatly reduced. The pre-release enclosure sizes listed in the tables below are regarded as the minimum standards that must be applied. Rehabilitators are encouraged to exceed these sizes if possible.
- 19.2.4 The maximum number of individuals listed in column four of the table below can be applied to both intermediate care and pre-release housing sizes. Critical care housing sizes are for individuals. For each additional animal the floor area of all enclosures must be increased by 50%. However this does not apply to clutch mates or siblings of the same age where individual territorial boundaries are minimal.
- 19.2.5 While in intermediate care and pre-release housing a waterbird must be provided with a pond that contains soft substrate and meets the area specified for the animal in the table below. This area must be increased by 50% for each additional waterbird. However this does not apply to clutch mates or siblings of the same age where individual territorial boundaries are minimal.
- 19.2.6 The requirement for pond size to be a percentage of the total floor area does not apply if the pond size exceeds 100 square metres (i.e. 10m x 10m).

Note: The tables below are standards which **must** be followed however where enclosure dimensions fall short by a small amount e.g. 0.23 instead of 0.25 leeway may be granted.

These standards are in place as a **minimum** requirement.

For the purpose of achieving best practice for protected animals in care, rehabilitators should seek to exceed the below dimensions whenever possible for better animal welfare and management.

All rehabilitators should take care to identify individual animals that may require additional space or demonstrate the need for specific requirements to achieve a positive conservation outcome. When the capacity to care for such individual animals is limited, rehabilitators should seek advice from experienced individuals or rehabilitation organisations and make arrangements that are more appropriate (e.g. alternative placement of such individual animals).

**Code of Practice**  
**Care of Sick, Injured or Orphaned Protected Animals in Queensland**

**Birds**

<b>Type of bird (examples)</b>	<b>Critical care L x W x H (m)</b>	<b>Intermediate care L x W x H (m)</b>	<b>Pre-release L x W x H (m)</b>	<b>Maximum number of individuals</b>	<b>Pond size (as % of total floor area)</b>
Small passerines (finches and wrens)	0.2 x 0.2 x 0.2	1 x 0.7 x 0.7	1.5 x 1.3 x 2	6	N/A
Medium passerines (parrots and pigeons)	0.4 x 0.4 x 0.4	1.5 x 1 x 1	2.9 x 1.5 x 1.8	4	N/A
Large passerines (parrots, pigeons, magpies and cockatoos)	0.5 x 0.5 x 0.5	1.2 x 0.8 x 0.8	4 x 2 x 2	4	N/A
Small waterbirds (ducks and grebes)	0.5 x 0.5 x 0.5	2 x 1.5 x 1	4 x 2 x 2	4	50%
Large waterbirds (swans and herons)	1 x 1 x 1	2 x 2 x 1.2	6 x 3 x 2	2	50%
Small aquatic/sea birds (gulls, cormorants and terns)	0.5 x 0.5 x 0.5	1 x 0.6 x 0.6	4 x 2 x 2	2	50%
Large aquatic/sea birds (albatrosses and pelicans)	1 x 1 x 1	4 x 2.5 x 1.5	6 x 3 x 2	2	50%
Small raptors (kestrels and hobbies)	0.5 x 0.5 x 0.5	2 x 2 x 2	5 x 3 x 3	2	N/A
Medium and Large raptors (kites, large falcons, goshawks, eagles and buzzards)	0.8 x 0.8 x 0.8	4 x 3 x 3	15 x 4 x 4	2	N/A
Emu chicks and adult brush-turkeys	0.7 x 0.7 x 0.7	2 x 2 x 2	5 x 3 x 2	2	N/A
Emus (other than chicks) and cassowaries	1.5x1 x 1	3 x 3 x 2	10 x 10 x 2	2	N/A

## Reptiles

<b>Type of reptile (examples)</b>	<b>Critical care L x W x H (m)</b>	<b>Intermediate care and pre- release L x W x H (m)</b>	<b>Maximum number of individuals</b>	<b>Pond size (as % of total floor area)</b>
Geckos and small skinks (garden skinks)	0.1 x 0.1 x 0.1	0.6 x 0.6 x 0.6	2	N/A
Large skinks (blue-tongue lizards)	0.6 x 0.4 x 0.2	1 x 0.4 x 0.2	2	N/A
Small dragons (bearded dragons)	0.3 x 0.2 x 0.2	0.8 x 0.3 x 0.3	2	N/A
Monitors and large dragons (lace monitors)	1.2 x 1 x 0.6	4 x 3 x 2	2	N/A
Small venomous snakes (death adders) up to 80cm	0.5 x 0.3 x 0.2	0.7 x 0.6 x 0.5	2	N/A
Large venomous snakes (eastern brown snakes) over 80cm	0.6 x 0.4 x 0.4	1.20 x 1 x 0.6	2	N/A
Small pythons (spotted pythons)	0.4 x 0.3 x 0.2	1 x 0.6 x 0.5	2	N/A
Large pythons (carpet pythons)	1.2 x 0.5 x 0.5	2 x 1.5 x 1.5	2	N/A
Small freshwater turtles (eastern snake-necked turtles) up to 15cm shell	0.6 x 0.4 x 0.4	1.8 x 0.6 x 0.4	2	50%
Large freshwater turtles (broad-shelled turtles) over 15cm shell	1 x 0.5 x 0.4	2 x 1.2 x 0.9	2	50%

### Mammals

Type of mammal (examples)	Critical care L x W x H (m)	Intermediate care L x W x H (m)	Pre-release L x W x H (m)	Maximum number of individuals
Small bats (microbats)	0.3 x 0.2 x 0.3	0.5 x 0.5 x 0.5	5 x 3 x 2	10
Large bats (megabats)	0.8 x 0.6 x 0.6	1 x 1 x 1 (for single animals)	10 x 4 x 2	30
Small dasyurids and rodents (antechinus and mice)	0.3 x 0.2 x 0.2	0.5 x 0.5 x 0.3	1 x 1 x 0.3	4
Large dasyurids and rodents (quolls, phascogales and water rats)	0.5 x 0.3 x 0.5	1 x 1 x 1	3 x 2 x 2	4
Bandicoots, potoroos and bettongs	0.5 x 0.5 x 0.5	1 x 1 x 1	4 x 3 x 2	4
Small macropods (pademelons)	0.7 x 0.7 x 0.5	3 x 2 x 1.5	10x 10 x 2	4
Medium macropods (wallabies and rock-wallabies )	1.5 x 0.8 x 1	4 x 3 x 1.5	20 x 20 x 2	4
Large macropods (grey kangaroos)	1.5 x 0.7 x 1.5	5 x 5 x 2	40 x 20 x 2	4
Small possums and gliders (pygmy-possums and feathertail gliders)	0.3 x 0.2 x 0.5	0.6 x 0.3 x 1	2 x 1 x 2	10
Large possums (ringtail and brushtail possums)	0.5 x 0.5 x 0.8	1 x 1 x 1	3 x 2 x 2	2
Large gliders (greater gliders and sugar gilders)	0.4 x 0.3 x 1	1 x 1 x 1	6 x 3 x 3	6
Koalas	0.7 x 0.7 x 0.7	2 x 1 x 2	4 x 3 x 3	2
Echidnas	0.5 x 0.5 x 0.5	1.5 x 1.5 x 1	5 x 4 x 1	2

**Note:** Persons and organisations are reminded to refer to **Section 10—Housing standards and guidelines** in the code to ensure wildlife undergoing rehabilitation is housed in a way that prevents injury or escape, minimises stress, maintains safe levels of hygiene and allows natural behaviours.