



LEGAL WILDLIFE REHABILITATION POSITION PAPER

IWRC is dedicated to the promotion of science based wildlife rehabilitation. It supports and encourages the legal rehabilitation of wildlife recognising that a legal framework ensures the best outcome for casualty wild animals requiring care and the rehabilitators who care for them.

IWRC recognises that the absence of legal framework for rehabilitation of all species can lead to inappropriate intervention by the general public in wildlife casualty events. A legal framework for science based rehabilitation ensures that;

- Rehabilitators provide appropriate care and management of species that can represent a danger to the public;
- The rehabilitation of potentially dangerous wild animals is undertaken by those who are suitable experienced and knowledgeable about the species they handle;
- The rehabilitation of wildlife with zoonotic potential is undertaken by those with the proper vaccinations, training, facilities, and knowledge;
- Casualty wild animals receive the best care and attention at the hands of experienced rehabilitators who are qualified to do this. Taking wild animals into care is stressful for the animal concerned and if this animal is already sick and injured, it will suffer further in inexperienced hands.
- With the continuing loss of species and population diversity, wildlife rehabilitation can play a significant role in conservation biology and wildlife management through:
 - o the sharing of knowledge;
 - o the sharing of specimens
 - o providing an early warning system of wildlife mortality events;
 - o the education of the general public to the threats faced by many species
- Rehabilitators offer immediate advice and/or assistance to the public when faced with wildlife issues and conflicts. This helps reduce the impact on governmental staff involved with the management and conservation of wildlife by answering the phone calls and offering legal, practical and science based advice.

IWRC contributes to this process with classes presented live and on-line that are already recognised by the legislature of some states, as well as membership services and annual conferences. With its international expertise, IWRC is also able to tailor and develop classes to meet regulatory needs of other countries and states with regards to wildlife rehabilitation.

IWRC recognises that there is also an emotional component when people interact with vulnerable and injured wildlife and that this can lead to well-intentioned individuals intervening inappropriately or unnecessarily. By providing properly enforced legislation that allows for professional wildlife rehabilitation, there is a benefit to all; rehabilitators, government agencies, the general public and wildlife. IWRC supports and endorses all legal wildlife rehabilitation and promotes the use of a permit or licensing system for rehabilitators. The IWRC encourages all legislative bodies to work towards comprehensive, realistic legislation to ensure the humane and professional management of all wildlife within their mandate and the development of a well-educated and professional wildlife rehabilitation community.