

# Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation



INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE  
REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Improving Wildlife Care Worldwide

This syllabus contains critical information for successful course completion. Ensure that you read and understand all requirements and contact the coordinator with any questions.

This course is intended as an overview of the foundational skills needed for wildlife rehabilitation. The course content is essential for beginner or novice rehabilitators while also serving as a valuable refresher for those experienced in the field. It is a combination of live online lectures presented by one of our instructors, paired with pre-recorded lectures, and assignments (homework, forum, and exam). We estimate that live lectures will total about 7 hours and online work will take about 8+ hours.

Throughout this interactive document, you will find links to important resources and email addresses.

We look forward to helping you in your wildlife rehabilitation journey!



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North American Course Coordinator  
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This program has been approved for 15 hours of continuing education credit in jurisdictions that recognize RACE approval. Contact an IWRC representative to apply for CE for this course.



**Location** – Online, Eastern Time

## Online Lecture Schedule

**When:** 12 – 19 Sheretober, 2029

- 12 Sher – Monday: Live lecture 6–7 pm
- 13 Sher – Tuesday: Self-guided lectures
- 14 Sher – Wednesday: Live lecture 6–8 pm  
Live homework review 8–8:30 pm
- 15 Sher – Thursday: Self-guided lectures
- 16 Sher – Friday: Live lecture 6–8:30 pm
- 17 Sher – Saturday: Live online lab sessions
- 18 Sher – Sunday: Live online lab sessions
- 19 Sher – Monday: Live exam review 6–7 pm

## Zoom Information

Link:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84091540901?pwd=TWNUY1p0U0dzN- FE0bDcvR3ZCRFlaZz09>

**Meeting ID** > 880 8888 8888  
**Passcode** > 333333

Use the above link, meeting ID, and passcode for all live lectures only. Lab Zoom meeting and ID will be sent to you separately.

EXAMPLE SCHEDULE

# Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation

## Online Lab Schedule

**When:** Saturday, Sheretober 17, 2029  
**Times:** **Lab 1** 9 am–12 pm  
**Lab 2** 1 pm–4 pm

**When:** Sunday, Sheretober 18, 2029  
**Times:** **Lab 3** 9 am–12 pm  
**Lab 4** 1 pm–4 pm

**Where:** Zoom  
 The lab Zoom meeting links, ID, and passcodes will be emailed to you separately once you have registered for a time slot.

## IWRC Host Information

**Contact:** Samantha Lyon  
**Email:** [samantha@theiwrc.org](mailto:samantha@theiwrc.org)  
**Phone:** 866-871-1869 ext 2

## Instructors

**Contact:**  
**Email:**

**Contact:**  
**Email:**

## Topics Included in this Course

### Lecture topics:

- Introduction to wildlife rehabilitation
- Animal welfare
- Admissions and identification
- Capture and restraint
- Zoonoses
- Stress and shock
- Physical exam
- Euthanasia
- Fluid therapy
- Thermoregulatory medical problems
- Nutrition



- Starvation and emaciation
- Wound management
- Head and spinal trauma
- Release criteria
- Housing

### Lab topics:

- Physical exam
- Basic bandaging
- Injections
- Avian gavage

## Student Learning Outcomes

1. Gain a general understanding of and be able to articulate the concepts of the topics listed above.
2. Understand and feel comfortable performing basic medical math.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of wildlife rehabilitation as a discipline as well as standards of care in the field.
4. Understand the process of each lab skill and are comfortable performing the basic procedures necessary for their effective treatment.
5. Able to apply theoretical knowledge to real world scenarios.

## Course Materials

### Required Books

- Wildlife Rehabilitation: A Comprehensive Approach (2nd Edition preferred)
- Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation

### Required Materials

- Access to a computer or tablet with video/audio capabilities
- Reliable internet

\* Students must have the ability to use virtual learning tools and applications. Those uncomfortable with these tools are encouraged to opt for an in-person course — IWRC's capacity to provide technical support is limited.

## Virtual Labs

### IWRC lab kit OR the following:

- Bandage scissors; 1, 3, 35, & 60 ml syringes; 18 & 22 g needles; 1" zonos tape; 1" micropore tape; 2" roll cotton; 2" stretch gauze; 2" vet wrap, telfa pad, cotton balls, gavage tubes, rubber topped tube, nitrile gloves in your size
- Optional: stethoscope, digital thermometer, penlight, gram scale, isopropyl alcohol

### Lab station set up in advance including:

- A device connected to Zoom with working audio/video
- Easy-to-clean location for procedures (at home or at a rehabilitation center) including table covering (butcher paper, plastic sheeting, paper bags, etc.)
- Container for fluids (large disposable cup, triangular graduated container, etc.)
- Sharps container (**make your own**)
- 1 mammal and 1 avian carcass. Carcasses may be acquired from commercial operations (i.e. pet stores, lab suppliers, etc.). Check our **Cadaver Acquisition document** for more information. Please note that you cannot use rabies vector species (e.g. raccoons, foxes, skunks, and bats). More information on rabies vector species: **USA, Canada**. If you are completing the lab and are not under a current wildlife rehabilitation permit, please obtain feeder specimens as listed below:
  - Mammals (over 175 grams): rat (size large or greater), rabbit
  - Birds: pigeon/dove, quail, chicken (adult)

## Course Components and Assignments

Course pre-work (must be completed BEFORE your class begins):

### Reading

- i. Wildlife Rehabilitation: A Comprehensive Approach 2nd Edition - Chapter 1 Introduction to Wildlife Rehabilitation and Chapter 2 Animal Welfare.
  - o If you have the 1st Edition of the textbook, please notify us and we will email you Chapter 2.
- ii. Standards of Wildlife Rehabilitation – Pages 6-11 and as needed for homework.
- iii. Both books for the course are to be used as reference materials. Students are not expected to finish reading both books before the course.

Homework: Parts 1, 2, and 3 of the homework can be found in the online classroom. These assignments are due before your first live session and must be completed on time in order to have results by the homework review session (attendance is optional but highly encouraged). Final submissions are due at 11:59 pm the day of the last class lecture. Students may only re-take failed homework assignments. Students must achieve a score of 70% or higher on all three sections.

### Using Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation for the Homework

At over 400 pages, Standards can appear daunting at first, but rest assured that you are holding one of the most valuable and useful resources currently available for wildlife rehabilitators. Some students have asked how they are to use Standards for their homework assignment. The short answer is in the same way you would use any reference text:

- o Read the homework question
- o Decide what the question is asking
- o Find the corresponding chapter and section of the book
- o Synthesize information and write your answer

Let's look at some examples:

1. List three ways a rehabilitator can help control pathogen transmission between patients.

This question is asking you about biosecurity. Looking at the table of contents or the index will be helpful in narrowing down which chapter you need to look at to find your answer. Biosecurity is discussed in Chapter 6. Perusing that chapter, you will find a list titled "Control of pathogens transmissible from animal to animal". Now, you just have to pick three and you are done with the question!

2. List five captive housing recommendations for Gila Monsters.

Using the index to look up Gila Monster, you will see that housing and enrichment is on page 259. Now, you just need to go to page 259 and write down five of the many recommendations listed.

3. You are building a new rehabilitation facility on the Oregon coast. You expect to see a lot of Common Loons. What dimensions do you need for a release conditioning enclosure?

This question is asking for specific length, height, or depth for the enclosure. As before, we can look at the table of contents or the index. If we look at the index, we will see there are minimum housing size requirements in Table 10.3 a-d. Once you find the table you can see that the information is organized into different categories such as confinement, restricted activity, pre-release conditioning, etc. You can then find the dimensions you need to build the enclosure.

### Live Lectures

The four live lectures will take place with an IWRC instructor over Zoom. Students must ensure that they can attend these mandatory sessions prior to registering. Attendance is required to receive a passing grade for the course. In extenuating circumstances, a single missed session can be excused by an IWRC representative. However, students must submit a make-up assignment for the appropriate recording to obtain credit for that day.

### Asynchronous Modules

- i. Video Lectures: Between live sessions, students will be expected to complete two asynchronous modules which consist of video lectures taught by a range of IWRC instructors. To complete the course, students must watch all the video lectures completely (unless labeled as optional) in the order they are listed.
- ii. Forums: To be completed after watching all the pre-recorded videos. Students are expected to create one post and respond to one post per forum (two posts and two replies total). The post must be directly relevant to the modules watched but can take the form of a question, an interesting point, or observation. Responses must be several sentences long and show engagement with the post – yes or no answers or incomplete sentences will not be accepted.

### Lab

Each student must sign up for one lab slot. Lab sign-ups are first come, first served and must be completed by the Wednesday live lecture. During the lab, students will be taught six skills which they must perform to a satisfactory standard. There are two types of labs:

- i. Virtual lab: Takes place in Zoom with an IWRC instructor. A link will be provided with further instructions via email once the lab groups have been established. Each student should set up their lab stations set up before the lab (see required materials above) and, if frozen, cadavers must be fully thawed. Please note that cadavers cannot be shared and each student needs to have their own device connected to Zoom.

- ii. In-person lab: Takes place at a host facility, contact your host for directions or specific about the lab location. Hosts will provide cadavers and lab supplies. Please dress accordingly as you will be working with cadavers. Details can be found in the [Lab Safety Protocols](#) document. Instructors will monitor your techniques over Zoom. Students must bring a phone, tablet, or computer to set up at their lab station. Students must follow all local safety protocols regarding COVID-19 and any safety protocols specified by the IWRC and host. Any students exhibiting signs of COVID-19 may not enter the lab facility, no exceptions.

### Exam

The final exam has 34 questions including multiple choice, matching, and short answer. Students must achieve a grade of 70% or more to pass the exam. You have three days from the last lecture to sit your exam in the online classroom. You have two hours to take the exam and it is open book—you may use *Wildlife Rehabilitation: A Comprehensive Approach*, *Standards of Wildlife Rehabilitation*, and ***your own handwritten notes***. You are expected to complete the exam ***without*** outside assistance.

### Grading and Make-up Work

To pass the class students must:

- Achieve a grade of 70% or higher on all three sections of the homework and the exam
- Demonstrate all required lab skills
- Attend all four live lectures and one lab
- Watch all pre-recorded lectures
- Successfully write one post and one reply for each of the two forums

\* Note! Grades are not averaged. Each individual assignment must be passed to pass the course.

After the exam closes, instructors have two weeks to finish grading exams and homework and to calculate final grades. IWRC will email out results and certificates to passing students shortly thereafter. Hard copies of certificates and pass letters can be mailed upon request.

Students that have not met the requirements for a certificate may re-attempt or complete make-up assignments within two weeks of the receipt of a fail notification unless otherwise specified. Please see the [Assessment Completion and Grade Policy](#) for more details.

- Attendance can only be made up if the absence is excused
- An excused lab may be made up within one year of your class date
- The exam may only be attempted twice after the initial attempt
- Make-up requirements may be adjusted on a case-by-case basis for exceptional circumstances or for those with approved accommodations

## Academic Integrity

Students engaged in any form of academic dishonesty (e.g. the use of unauthorized assistance or plagiarism) may be required to re-do the offending assignment(s) or may fail the course at the discretion of the IWRC instructor and staff. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to plagiarism, answer sharing, sharing of exam questions, having another person complete all or part of an assignment, and using unauthorized materials or assistance for the exam.

## Assistance and Accommodations

The IWRC welcomes all students and is happy to make accommodations for those that qualify as having a disability or impairment. If you wish to receive accommodations or have any questions on this topic, please contact us at [online@theiwrc.org](mailto:online@theiwrc.org) or call 866-871-1869 ext 2. Once contacted, we will provide a form to fill out and guidelines for disability or impairment documentation. Please allow us two weeks to carry out the accommodation. However, we may be able to accommodate you more quickly depending on the need.

## Class Refund and Cancellation Policy

All cancellations must be submitted via email to [online@theiwrc.org](mailto:online@theiwrc.org) in order to be eligible for a refund, credit, or transfer. For specifics regarding refunds and cancellation depends on the type of course being taken, please refer to the relevant section in the policy below. If you experienced an emergency (health, family, environmental) or exceptional circumstances outside of your control, we may grant an exception. Please contact your coordinator to find out more about your options.

- Refunds are available up until 12 days prior to the class date. Cancellations received after the cut-off date and 24 hours before the course start date are only eligible for standard credits or transfers.
- A 10% processing fee will apply to all refunds. If a course kit has been shipped, an additional 10% will be taken. No exceptions.
- Refund and credit amounts will include the registration fee paid, minus the price of the course literature and the processing fee. The course literature is only refundable if it is returned in the condition in which it was received. Shipping is paid by the purchaser and is non-refundable. Ebooks are only eligible for refunds before they are downloaded.
- Registrants who notify IWRC during the course (24 hours before until 24 hours after the course) can receive 50% of their registration fee in the form of a credit.
- Registrants who do not attend the course, and who do not notify the IWRC office of their cancellation within 24 hours after the course, will forfeit their registration fee and will not be eligible for a refund, credit, or transfer.

## Course Credits

- Credits are valid for **up to one year** after the original course date.
- Credits for courses may be applied to any IWRC course and are transferable. If you would like to use your credit on literature from the IWRC, please contact your coordinator.
- A course credit can only be used once. If you are unable to attend the course for which you used credit, the credit will be forfeited.