

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 content is essential for beginner or novice rehabilitators while also serving as a valuable refresher for those experienced in the field. There is a combination of live online lectures presented by one of our instructors paired with pre-recorded lectures and assignments (homework, forum, and exam). Live lectures will total about 7 hours and asynchronous online work will take approximately 8 hours.

Within this document, you will find links to important resources and contact information.

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

Samantha Lyon
Education Operations Coordinator
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samantha@theiwrc.org



This program has been approved for 15 hours of continuing education credit in jurisdictions that recognize RACE approval. Please send us your license number and state of issue if you wish to receive CE via RACE. Your information will be uploaded via CE Broker to your RACetrack account. Need a MyAAVSB account to access RACetrack? Click [here](#).

Location – Online, Your Time Zone

| | Lecture Schedule | Zoom Access |
|--------------|--|---|
| Dates | August 24–30, 2025 | Link |
| 24 Monday | Live lecture 6–7 pm | https://us02web.zoom.us/ |
| 25 Tuesday | Watch lectures, forum post & reply | Meeting ID > 111 222 3333 |
| 26 Wednesday | Live lecture 6–8 pm | Passcode = 0123456 |
| | Homework review 8–8:30 pm | |
| 27 Thursday | Watch lectures, forum post & reply | |
| 28 Friday | Live lecture 6–8:30 pm | |
| 29 Saturday | Lab sessions | |
| 30 Sunday | Lab sessions | |
| | Exam review 6–7 pm | |

EXAMPLE SCHEDULE

Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation

Lab Schedule

When Times Saturday, August 29, 2025
Lab 1 9 am–12 pm
Lab 2 1 pm–4 pm

When Times Sunday, August 30, 2025
Lab 3 9 am–12 pm
Lab 4 1 pm–4 pm

Where Zoom
The lab Zoom link, ID, and passcode will be emailed to you during the week of class.

Host

Contact Samantha Lyon
Email samantha@thewrc.org
Phone 866-871-1869 x 2

Topics Included in this Course

Lecture

- 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

- 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

Textbooks

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

IWRC Lab Kit

- Bandage scissors; 1, 3, 35, & 60 ml syringes; 18 & 22 g needles; 1" zonal 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

Technology

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

* IWRC's capacity to provide technical support is limited.

Course Components and Assignments

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, 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 are found in the Moodle online classroom. Final attempts of these assignments are due by the last day of class, Sunday at 11:59 pm. Students may only re-take failed homework assignments to achieve a minimum score of 70% on each.

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

- Find the corresponding chapter and section of the book
- 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 are 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: Watch all the pre-recorded videos in Moodle. Students must then 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 by the first day of class. Lab assignments are first come, first served. During the lab, students will be taught six skills which they must successfully perform.

A link will be provided with further instructions via email and in Moodle once the lab groups have been established. Each student must set up their lab station before the lab and cadavers must be fully thawed. Note that cadavers cannot be shared and each student needs to have their own device connected to Zoom.

Lab Safety Protocols

Lab station set up:

- 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. Note that you cannot use rabies vector species (e.g. raccoons, foxes, skunks, and bats). Find more information on rabies vector species here: **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)

Exam

Students must achieve a minimum score of 70% to pass the exam. You have one week from the last lecture to sit your exam in the online classroom. There will be two consecutive hours to take the open book exam—you may use *Wildlife Rehabilitation: A Comprehensive Approach*, *Standards of Wildlife Rehabilitation*, and **your own 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 each of the three homework assignments and the exam
- Successfully demonstrate all required lab skills

* Note! Grades are not averaged.

After the exam closes, IWRC will send out all results within one month of the end of class. Certificates and pass letters will be emailed and hard copies can be mailed upon request.

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

- 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. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to plagiarism, sharing answers, 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, contact us at online@theiwrc.org or call 866-871-1869 x 2. 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 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 experience 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. 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 may be applied to any IWRC course, literature, and are transferable.
- 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.