

WALTER RABON
COMMISSIONER

MIKE ENGLAND
COLONEL

MEMORANDUM

TO: Georgia Wildlife Rehabilitators rev1/24jrh

FROM: Special Permit Unit

SUBJECT: Wildlife Rehabilitation Renewals

Wildlife Rehabilitation permit is now valid for 5 years, as opposed to the previous one year and will expire December 31st of the fifth year. Please continue to submit your yearly intake report each year by January 10th, of each year. Failure to do so may result in the suspension of your permit. Please email or mail reports to jamie.hawkins@dnr.ga.gov , with a coversheet with your name, customer ID number and affiliation if applicable. When emailing your PDF file, please name your file with your first and last name Rehab Report, year.

You are reminded that your rehabilitation permit does not allow you to hold animals long-term. As soon as rehabilitation animals are able to survive on their own, they must be released into a suitable habitat (away from people, not a neighborhood). Sometimes, despite your best efforts, an animal may not recover sufficiently for release. In that case, you should coordinate with the Special Permit Unit to locate a suitable, licensed exhibition facility for permanent placement of the animal. Unless you are transferring an animal to another authorized rehabilitator, you do not have authority to transfer any animal to another person without *prior* express permission of the Special Permit Unit.

Please keep in mind that the public may attempt to give you animals for which you are not permitted. ***If at all possible, you should never take animals for rehabilitation that are not covered by your permit.*** If you take in an animal for which you are not permitted, you must transfer the animal to an appropriately licensed rehabilitator within 72 hours. If you have trouble finding one, call the Special Permit Unit for help. **You may not take any regulated migratory bird for rehabilitation without a USFWS permit and must have specific authorization on your state permit to accept birds, including raptors.** It is imperative that you stay within the guidelines established by your permit.

Please attempt to assess if an animal can be rehabilitated prior to spending valuable time, effort, and money. Some rehabilitators have shown a tendency toward saving the life of an animal no matter the extent of its injuries. This practice is contrary to the goal of rehabilitation, which is ***to return sick, injured, and orphaned animals to the wild.*** If you are presented with an animal whose injuries would preclude release – such as a bird whose wing must be amputated, a paralyzed squirrel, a fawn whose leg cannot be saved, or any animal blind in one or both eyes, – then humane euthanasia is the immediate and prescribed course of treatment. Other than endangered species, which you are not likely to encounter, wildlife populations in Georgia are stable, and unfortunately it is part of the natural order that not every individual will survive. Obviously, not all rehabilitation efforts will succeed, but sometimes it is more merciful that not all be attempted.

You should make every effort to avoid the imprintation of any animal. Imprintation is the condition that results when an animal comes to identify more with humans than with members of its own species. This can best be avoided by having ***as little contact as possible*** with animals being held for rehabilitation, while encouraging the animal to rely on itself whenever possible. You should make every effort with any animal to avoid having the animal associate humans with food. NWRA Minimum Standards do not allow rehabilitation animals to run loose in your home. An inherent fear of humans is essential for the successful release into the wild and continued survival of any rehab animal. Holding or petting an animal will do far more harm than good.

Finally, the first question you should ask a caller with “orphaned” wildlife is “How long have you had the animal?” If they have not held the animal for more than three days, and do not know **for an absolute fact** that the mother is dead, then they need to return the animal to the location where it was encountered as soon as possible. Well-meaning persons who think the mother has “abandoned” her young remove too many animals from the wild. We need your help in educating the public that this is not always the case. The best rehabilitator in the world cannot replace the upbringing in the wild provided by an animal’s mother.

We cannot issue a wildlife rehabilitation permit to a facility. Any freestanding facility such as a nature center or a wildlife rehabilitation center that wishes to rehabilitate wildlife must have a licensed wildlife rehabilitator on staff. The wildlife rehabilitation permit is an individual permit and can only be issued to individuals.

If you have any questions or problems regarding the completion of the forms or deadlines, please do not hesitate to call. Please feel free to contact the Special Permit Unit at (770) 918-6408 if you have any questions.

Adding Rabies Vector species certification to rehab permit:

Because of the public health risk associated with rabies infection in bats, bobcats, coyotes, foxes, raccoons, and skunks, rehabilitation permits for those species will be issued only to veterinarians; or persons that:

1. Have at least two (2) years’ experience as a licensed wildlife rehabilitator and have taken in at least 20 individuals for care. (check your effective date on permit)
2. Score a minimum of 85 percent on a qualifying examination covering all aspects of rabies including symptoms, reporting, and other areas as determined by the Department.

<https://dph.georgia.gov/document/publication/georgia-rabies-manual-updated-april-2018/download>

The exam may be taken by a previous appointment, at the DNR Special Permit Unit office in Social Circle at the above address. If you live some distance from Social Circle, it is possible to arrange to take the exam at one of our field offices. <https://georgiawildlife.com/about/contact> or see enclosed regional office list/map.

3. Receive rabies pre-exposure vaccination and can demonstrate rabies antibody levels that are recommended for adequate protection before a permit is issued and at least every five years thereafter.

(c) The issuance of a rehabilitation permit is further conditioned upon the Department’s determining that an applicant’s rehabilitation services are needed or are likely to be utilized in the area he/she proposes to operate.

(d) Applications for rehabilitation permits shall be submitted, on forms provided by the Department, to the Special Permit Unit at the address indicated on said form.

(e) Nothing in this rule shall be construed to limit or prohibit a licensed veterinarian or licensed veterinary technician from providing emergency care, vaccination or other veterinary care that otherwise falls within the scope of professional and ethical judgment.

(f) Persons permitted to rehabilitate bats, bobcats, coyotes, foxes, raccoons, and skunks shall be required to contact the appropriate rabies control authority as prescribed by the Department to report possible rabies exposures; to hold these species in arrival groups and in isolation for the duration of convalescence and release rehabilitated animals only in areas designated by the Department; and to submit for rabies testing all bats, bobcats, coyotes, foxes, raccoons, and skunks accepted for care which are dead on arrival or which subsequently die during care.

Rev1/24 jrh

LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION / SPECIAL PERMIT UNIT
2070 U.S. Hwy. 278, SE | SOCIAL CIRCLE, GEORGIA 30025
770.918-6408 | WWW.GADNRLE.ORG/SPECIAL-PERMIT

Department of Natural Resources
Law Enforcement Division
Special Permit Unit
2070 U.S. Highway 278, S.E.
Social Circle, Georgia 30025
(770) 918-6408

**RENEWAL
WILDLIFE REHABILITATION
PERMIT**

(Use attachments if more space is needed for any item)

DNR Customer ID Number: _____ **Required**

1. Applicant name: _____ DVM: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ County: _____

Email: _____

Home # _____ Cell # _____

2. Specify classes or groups of wildlife you are qualified to care for (check appropriate box (s):

Birds* **Raptors*** **Deer** **Small Mammals** **Reptiles**

***USFWS Permit** **RVS Requires (2 complete years from effective date, and intake of 20 individual animals) – Take/pass RVS exam.**

*** If migratory birds are to be rehabilitated, a USFWS permit is required. Please provide a copy with your application**

3. Check If Different from above: Address or location where wildlife will be rehabilitated (held): (Can only rehab animals where the facility has been inspected and approved by DNR)

Address: _____

City: _____ County: _____

4. Describe facilities, equipment, and layout in detail:

5. List your consulting veterinarian(s):

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ County: _____

Do you wish to be published on the Rehabilitation List on our website? Yes or No

(If you do not wish to be on the list, please leave blank):

Daytime Phone # _____ **Evening #** _____

O.C.G.A. § 16-10-20: "A person who knowingly and willingly makes a false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement...in any matter within the jurisdiction of any department or agency of state government...shall, upon conviction thereof, be punished by a fine of not more than \$1000 or by imprisonment for not less than one or more than five years, or both."

Date

Signature (in ink)

