

1.12 Specialist Care

Policy Revised 21/6/93: 1.12.1 – 1.12.12 reviewed June 08 listed for comment from members and branches 14/7/08 relisted September 2008 presented to Council 25 October 2008 and adopted with changes on 25 October 2008. Reviewed July 2024, distributed to members and branches 17th September 2024 and finalised 18th November 2024.

POLICY

- 1.12.1 This policy refers to **all** animals that come into WIRES care.
- 1.12.2 Specialist care is defined as high-quality, species-specific care, based on best practice and is provided by trained and authorised individuals. All animals in care are entitled to receive high quality care based on best practice.
- 1.12.3 Where a species-specific policy exists, members must refer to that policy.
- 1.12.4 Where a species-specific, National Parks Code of Practice exists, members must refer to that Code of Practice.
- 1.12.5 The WIRES Rescue and Immediate Care Course is an introductory course covering the rescue, transport and immediate care of native wildlife. Members who have completed the RICC only, may provide care for up to 24 hours following rescue. This does not apply to certain species including snakes, monitors, bats, birds of prey, koalas or threatened or endangered species.
- 1.12.6 Rehabilitators must complete the relevant species care course of the species they intend to care for. Travel may be involved in attending a face-to-face species course.
- 1.12.7 Any member who has not attended more than the RICC cannot care for animals for more than 24 hours. Where a trained rehabilitator is not readily available within 24 hours of the rescue, a member who has completed the RICC only, may provide temporary care under direct supervision of the relevant species or state coordinator, or an experienced carer for that species appointed by the relevant species coordinator, state coordinator or Head Office. The approval to provide temporary care under direct supervision applies to an individual animal and must be sought on a case-by-case basis. Temporary care is defined as short-term care and is to be used as an interim measure only until such time as an animal can be transferred to an appropriately trained and authorised rehabilitator. This does not include snakes, monitors, bats, birds of prey, koalas, unfurred, lightly furred or unfeathered young and intensive care animals which must be cared for by a trained, and in some cases vaccinated, rehabilitator.

- 1.12.8 WIRES reserves the right to refuse recognition of prior learning (RPL) obtained externally, for internal rescue or care authorisation. Any RPL requests must be made in writing to the relevant Species Management Team and WIRES Head Office.
- 1.12.9 A database of training records for all individuals who complete WIRES training will be maintained by WIRES Head Office. Branch training records will be made available to the Branch for the purpose of placing animals with individuals who are up to date with the relevant species training.
- 1.12.10 Rehabilitators must attend refresher courses for the species they intend to continue to rehabilitate. Training refresher requirements are outlined in the relevant Codes of Practice.
- 1.12.11 Each Branch shall inform its members of upcoming training and encourage them to stay up to date with the refresher timeframes outlined in the Codes of Practice.
- 1.12.12 Should the Branch exceed the care capacity of trained members and to avoid over-loading individual carers, the branch must make contact with neighbouring branches in an attempt to place animals with appropriately trained authorised members. Should care capacity issues persist, the branch must contact Head Office in accordance with other WIRES policies pertaining to care capacity and transfer of animals. Where another licensed wildlife rehabilitation organisation exists which specialises in the rehabilitation of particular species, transfers of animals outside of the WIRES system may occur, in line with other relevant WIRES policies. If the transfer of animals either internally or externally is not possible, lowering of the euthanasia threshold must be considered, in combination with early-stage triage of newly rescued animals and proper veterinary assessment and prognosis of animals in care.
- 1.12.13 Every effort must be made to ensure that, wherever possible and if appropriate for the species concerned, animals are buddied with other individuals of that species which may be in care.