



WILDLIFE REHABILITATION

The Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018 came into effect on 1 January 2019.

Key points

- Wildlife rehabilitators provide a valuable service to the community and the Department in its efforts to conserve and protect wildlife.
- From 1 January 2019, new licensing arrangements exist for the possessing of native animals for the purpose of rehabilitation.
- People who possess fauna for the purpose of rehabilitation for more than 72 hours require a *Fauna possessing (other purposes) licence*.
- A *Fauna possessing (other purposes) licence* can be held either by an individual or an incorporated, not for profit organisation. If the licence is held by an organisation, individual members of that organisation do not need to hold separate licences.
- Injured or abandoned fauna must, as soon as possible (within 72 hours after taking possession of the animal), be returned to the wild at the place where it was originally taken if it is capable of fending for itself; or given to a DBCA wildlife officer, a veterinary surgeon or a person who is authorised under a licence to rehabilitate fauna (i.e. holder of a *Fauna possessing (other purposes) licence*).
- Applications for licences are available from DBCA's website www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/licences-and-permits or by contacting DBCA Wildlife Licensing on wildlifelicensing@dbca.wa.gov.au.
- A modified penalty of \$2500 by way of infringement or a penalty of between \$50,000 and \$500,000 depending on the status of the fauna and if the matter is taken to court may apply to possessing native fauna without a licence unless otherwise authorised.
- For species listed as threatened fauna; specially protected fauna; or listed in Schedule 6 of the regulations; within 24 hours of taking possession of these fauna, a person must provide written notice to the CEO of DBCA. This can be done by completing the *Injured or Abandoned Fauna Notification* form located at www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/licences-and-permits and emailing it to wildlife.protection@dbca.wa.gov.au.
- If you find an injured or abandoned animal and you require advice, contact the *Wildcare Helpline* on 9474 9055.
- The Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018 can be accessed via www.legislation.wa.gov.au.

Background Information

All native plants and animals are protected in Western Australia under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. DBCA in Western Australia is responsible for implementing this legislation as it applies to the management of wildlife.

Under this legislation, a person can apply to temporarily possess fauna that is injured or abandoned until it recovers or can fend for itself to ensure successful release back into the wild.

Wildlife rehabilitators provide a valuable service to the community and the Department in its efforts to conserve and protect wildlife.

DBCA coordinates the *Wildcare Helpline* which provides a service to members of the public who find injured or abandoned native fauna and are seeking advice on how to find care for the animal. If you find an injured or abandoned animal and you require advice, contact the *Wildcare Helpline* on 9474 9055.

Licensing Arrangements for Wildlife Rehabilitators

From 1 January 2019, new licensing arrangements exist for the possessing of native animals for the purpose of rehabilitation. This is principally covered in Regulations 35, 43, 124, and 126.

Injured or abandoned native fauna may be taken in to provide immediate care or rehabilitation, but must, as soon as possible (within 72 hours of finding the animal), be:

- returned to the wild at the place where it was originally taken (or a place agreed by the CEO of DBCA) if the animal is capable of fending for itself; or
- given to a DBCA wildlife officer or another person specified by the wildlife officer; or
- given to a veterinary surgeon; or
- given to a person who is authorised under a licence to rehabilitate fauna (i.e. holder of a *Fauna possessing (other purposes) licence*).

People who possess native fauna for more than 72 hours for the purpose of rehabilitation, require a *Fauna possessing (other purposes) licence*.

A *Fauna possessing (other purposes) licence* may be held by either an individual wildlife rehabilitator or a wildlife rehabilitation organisation. Organisations must be incorporated and not for profit. Members of licensed wildlife rehabilitation organisations do not need to hold their own individual licence as they will operate under the organisation's licence.

If a native animal is trapped or otherwise in immediate danger but is unharmed, you may capture it and release it in the immediate vicinity without needing a licence or other form of approval.



Fauna held under the authority of *Fauna possessing (other purposes) licence* for rehabilitation is classified as either standard or advanced. Fauna classified as **standard** meet all of the following criteria:

- not threatened fauna or specially protected fauna;
- not likely to be the subject of illegal trade and is not likely to be illegally taken from the wild;
- resilient to handling and to being kept in captivity;
- does not have special feeding or housing requirements;
- not dangerous to human health or wellbeing; and
- does not represent a biosecurity risk.

Fauna classified as **advanced** meet any of the following criteria:

- threatened fauna or specially protected fauna;
- has special keeping requirements or keeping requirements are not adequately known;
- poses risk to human health or wellbeing, or biosecurity; or
- has high economic value, may be the subject of illegal trade and is likely to be at risk of being taken from the wild.

A list of species that are classified as standard and advanced and information on applying for a licence is available in the *CEO Guideline Fauna possessing (other purposes) licence for the purpose of rehabilitating fauna for release into the wild*, which is available from DBCA's website www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/licences-and-permits.

Applications for licences will be available from DBCA's website www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/licences-and-permits or by contacting DBCA Wildlife Licensing on wildlifelicensing@dbca.wa.gov.au.

Significant penalties apply to possessing native fauna without a licence unless otherwise authorised.

Notifiable Species

There are some species where special arrangements are needed. For species listed as threatened fauna or specially protected fauna (e.g. Carnaby's cockatoo, western ringtail possum, loggerhead turtle) or listed in Schedule 6 of the regulations (e.g. penguins), within 24 hours of taking possession of these fauna, a person must provide written notice to the CEO of DBCA.

This can be done by completing the *Injured or Abandoned Fauna Notification* form at www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/licences-and-permits and emailing it to wildlife.protection@dbca.wa.gov.au.

The list of threatened, specially protected fauna and fauna listed in Schedule 6 is available on DBCA's website <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/threatened-species-and-communities/threatened-animals>.

Code of Practice for Wildlife Rehabilitation

There are well-established networks of skilled and experienced wildlife rehabilitators around Western Australia which are supported by DBCA.

DBCA has developed a code of practice that outlines the principles and standards for wildlife rehabilitation in Western Australia. The code of practice provides information on the care and welfare of injured or abandoned native animals and sets out standards for procedures, hygiene and housing of wildlife under rehabilitation in Western Australia. Two guidelines that should be read in conjunction with the code of practice have also been prepared in regard to euthanasia and managing rehabilitated animals that cannot be released to the wild.

The code of practice and guidelines are designed to help increase the number of rehabilitated native animals that are successfully returned to the wild. All rehabilitators will be required to abide by the code of practice which is available on DBCA's website www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/licences-and-permits.

Licence Fees

DBCA has waived the licence fee for *Fauna possessing (other purposes) licences* for the purpose of rehabilitating fauna until 30 June 2021. This will allow DBCA to collect improved information about the sector, for example, how many organisations and individuals are involved in this activity and what types of fauna are being rehabilitated.

To find out more about the Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018 visit:

www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/biodiversity-conservation-act

For further information about licensing visit:

www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/licences-and-permits

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FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact your local office of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. See the department's website for the latest information www.dbca.wa.gov.au



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions