

2.10 Policies for New Recruits

Revised 7.94: 2.9 reviewed 09/2008 for council approval 25/10/08 for member comment cob 14/12/08 **Council adopted 14/2/09**

The following policies are meant for new recruits and are included in the Basic Notes, which are available at the Rescue and Immediate Care Course. The Rescue and Immediate Care Course manual is provided at the training course..

NEW SOUTH WALES WILDLIFE INFORMATION RESCUE AND EDUCATION SERVICE INCORPORATED

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1. LICENCE AND AUTHORISATION

- 1.1 The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) will annually grant WIRES a General Licence to:
 - 1.1.1 rescue, hold and care for sick, injured and orphaned native fauna for rehabilitation and release purposes;
 - 1.1.2 relocate native fauna causing distress to property owners.
- 1.2 Under the terms of the General Licence, WIRES will authorize individual Authorised Members. Their Authority will be renewed annually in June, after WIRES is issued its General Licence by the NPWS. By renewing their Authority, Authorised Members are agreeing to abide by WIRES Constitution, its policies and Code of Conduct..
- 1.3 The decision as to who will receive individual authorizations will be made solely by WIRES.
- 1.4 WIRES will submit twice-yearly reports to the NPWS as per section 2 of the Conditions of the General Licence GL:581.

2. RESCUE

- 2.1 WIRES Authorised Members' must have a Driver's Licence or access to a licenced driver and motor vehicle.
- 2.2 Authorised Members will successfully complete the WIRES Rescue and Immediate Care Course, which includes WIRES Policies, NPWS involvement, First Aid, Basic Rehabilitation Techniques, Care and Handling of Birds, and any other subjects deemed necessary by the Branch Committee.
- 2.3 WIRES does not authorise persons under eighteen and no persons under eighteen will be permitted to handle animals.
- 2.4 The Authorised Member should carry their ID card and current WIRERS authorisation when attending all animal calls.
- 2.5 Rescuers should not engage in climbing activities by way of ropes or other methods, excepting a ladder. If the rescue is too difficult or dangerous the Police or other emergency services should be called.
- 2.6 Most if not all injured animals are in shock and further stress can kill them. All care should be taken not to exacerbate stress. No Authorised Member, or any other person in their company should smoke or have music playing during the rescue or transportation of any animal. Pets are not to be present during rescues.
- 2.7 A non-WIRES person should not help in handling or rescuing the animal because of legal liability if the helper is injured. If difficulties arise, the Branch Coordinator should be contacted to provide the assistance of another Authorised Member.
- 2.8 All care should be taken not to damage property where the injured animal is found. If the Authorised Member has not already spoken to the caller on the telephone, permission should be sought to enter, re-arrange or remove items, and the site left in order. Authorised Members should ensure their equipment and actions do not endanger people or property.
- 2.9 The Authorised Member should explain the function of WIRES to the caller and any interested persons present: for example that the animal will be released to the wild and not treated as a pet. Each caller should be given a WIRES brochure. All donations to WIRES are tax deductible. If monies are donated to the local Branch, the Branch Treasurer shall ensure that a tax deductible receipt is given to the caller.
- 2.10 The caller should be asked to sign the WIRES Animal Report, confirming that the animal is and remains the property of the Crown, was rescued by a WIRES Authorised Member and is now in the care and custody of WIRES. This form should –
 - a) be filled out by the Authorised Member

- b) be signed by the caller
 - c) include the animal call number and date
 - d) should accompany the animal at each step of rescue, rehabilitation and release
 - e) on completion be sent to WIRES
- 2.11 The decision as to whether the animal will be taken to a veterinary surgery, Authorised Member, a more suitable environment, or left undisturbed will be made jointly by the Authorised Member and a WIRES Species Coordinator.
- 2.12 The WIRES Authorised Member will seek further information on the animal after rescue by calling the vet and ascertaining the next step required, for example whether a Rehabilitator is needed and if so, for what type of care, or whether the animal is ready for release. No attempt should be made to influence the opinion of the vet, unless the animal is included in the Threatened and Notable Species List.

The information should be relayed to the WIRES branch species coordinator as soon as possible. Wherever possible the Authorised Member should transport the animal from the vet to the next stage.

3. REHABILITATORS AND WILDLIFE CARE FACILITIES

- 3.1 Rehabilitators will successfully complete the WIRES Rescue and Immediate Care Course.
- 3.2 WIRES does not authorise persons under eighteen and no person under eighteen will be permitted to handle WIRES animals.
- 3.3 After completion of the Rescue and Immediate Care Course and an inspection of Rehabilitator's facilities by the Species Coordinator, the Rehabilitator will be authorised by WIRES if the facilities are considered up to standard, to hold all species other than raptors, reptiles and flying foxes for a maximum of 24 hours.
- 3.4 The number of authorities granted by WIRES will be contingent on the resources available to maintain a minimum annual inspection of facilities.
- 3.5 WIRES reserves the right not to authorise any individual whose philosophies and attitude are not compatible with those of the organisation.
- 3.6 The Rehabilitator should accept visits to the animals by the Branch species Coordinator, or delegated persons at mutually acceptable times with the best interests of the animal in mind.
- 3.7 WIRES reserves the right to withdraw the authority of any Rehabilitator if care facilities or management become detrimental to the welfare of the animal and its eventual release into the wild.

- 3.8 In the event of a dispute about the treatment, release or euthanasia of an animal in care, WIRES will have the final decision. In arriving at that decision, all views will be considered and the best possible advice be sought.
- 3.9 WIRES will inform NPWS in the event that an Authority is withdrawn due to conflict in animal caring standards.
- 3.10 A current list of authorised Rehabilitators and Rescuers will be forwarded to NPWS twice yearly in December and June with the WIRES animal statistical report.

4. RELEASE

4.1 Preamble

Then ultimate aim of WIRES is the return of the rescued animal to an area suitable to its wild needs. All rescue and rehabilitation procedures should therefore be carried out with this in mind.

WIRES has been granted special permission to release animals into areas under the control of the NPWS, provided approval is given by the local District Office.

In determining the most suitable conditions for the release of an animal, considerations should be given to such things as the territoriality, social structure, food requirements and other needs of the species, each individual animal's history, the time of day for release and the effect of the release on the existing local fauna population. (See NPWS specifications on release locations).

4.2 Immediate Release

On attending a rescue, a Rescuer may decide, after consultation with the relevant Species Coordinator to release an animal immediately into a more appropriate or safer environment. The decision as to where the animal shall be released shall be made jointly by the Rescuer and the Species Coordinator.

4.3 Release after Rehabilitation

Wherever possible, a record should be kept of the exact location where the animal was originally found, and every attempt should be made to return the animal to that location. Where this is not possible or unsuitable the animal should be released into an area deemed suitable by WIRES.

The decision regarding when the animal is ready for release shall be made in accordance with WIRES policies and the guidelines set down by WIRES Standards Teams.

4.4 Animals Unfit for Release

- 4.4.1 In all cases if it is decided that an animal is unsuited to life in captivity or in confined space, it will be humanely euthanased. The exceptions are those listed in the Threatened or Notable Species List.

No WIRES animal should be kept in permanently in captivity without approval of the DECC. (see Policy 1.15)

- 4.4.2 WIRES animals held in the rehabilitation program shall not be subject to public display or exploited in any way.

4.4 Research Program

- 4.5.1 WIRES will endeavour to establish a data base and research program to monitor the effectiveness of policies, the survival rate of the released animals and the effect on the endemic population. This will involve keeping detailed records of each animal and may include authorised banding or tagging. The result of this program will be used to continually improve the rehabilitation and release techniques employed.

- 4.5.2 Every effort should be made to band and tag all animals. This feedback assists WIRES rehabilitators to ascertain whether their rehabilitation techniques are effective.

5. FATALLY INJURED AND VERY IMMATURE ANIMALS

- 5.1 In some cases it will be necessary to humanely euthanase rescued animals that are so severely injured, or so recently born with no fur or plumage, that they have no chance of survival.

- 5.2 With a great deal of experienced care, some young animals may survive. This avenue should be explored, but if the few experienced people cannot assist it will be necessary to humanely euthanase the animal.

- 5.3 In all cases, every effort should be made to seek the service of a veterinarian to euthanase an animal. In the case where a rescued animal is in the care of a veterinarian, the decision to euthanase will be made by the veterinarian and will be accepted by WIRES.

6. FERAL ANIMALS

- 6.1 Definition – There are two kind of feral animals:

- 6.1.1 those animals and their progeny which were once domesticated and have reverted to living in the wild, for example cats, dogs and certain birds; and

- 6.1.2 those animals which were originally introduced into Australia as wild animals, for example foxes and starlings.

- 6.2 Feral Animals in NSW – *Please check NPWS website for up-to-date listing*

Birds:

European Goldfinch

Spotted Turtle Dove

Mallard

European Greenfinch

Starling

Blackbird

Indian or Common Mynah

Tree Sparrow

Spice Finch (Nutmeg Mannikin)

Domestic or Rock Pigeon

House Sparrow

Red-whiskered Bul Bul

Mammals:

Cat

Pig

Cattle

Dog

Rabbit

Rat

Goat

Deer

Horse

Sheep

Hare

Mouse

6.3 Impact of Feral Animals: Feral animals may have harmful effect on native animals –

- i) directly by preying on them
- ii) indirectly –
 - by taking over habitat, thus competing with native animals for food and nest sites
 - by acting as vectors for disease
 - by interbreeding with native animals, thus weakening the genes of the offspring

6.4 WIRES Role in Assisting Feral Animals in Distress

If a feral animal is suffering and the caller is unable to assist, a WIRES Authorised Rescuer may be called on to help. In these instances WIRES recommends that the feral animal be humanely euthanased, unless alternative arrangements can be made. In no instances should feral animals be released back into the wild because they have a destructive influence on the native environment. It is illegal to release a feral animal into the wild.

WIRES may deal with calls relating to feral animals by giving basic information on how to care for the animal until it can receive veterinary attention if necessary, or by referring callers to people or organisations who will care for them.

WIRES will not always be able to ascertain over the phone whether or not the animal in question is native or introduced. If in doubt, an Authorised Rescuer may be sent or the caller advised to take the animal to a vet.

6.5 Non-Indigenous Injured Native Animals

From time to time, native animals are brought into areas to which they do not normally belong. WIRES will rescue these animals and they will be cared for and released back into the area of origin after consultation with the NPWS.

6.6 Escape of Aviary Birds

Aviary escapees will be taken to a WIRES Rehabilitator, if native. Exotic species will be referred to a suitable organization or recommended for humane euthanasia.

7. BRANCHES

7.1 Preamble

In order to fulfill the WIRES charter to rescue and care for injured native animals in NSW the establishment of Branches is encouraged.

As an incorporated body with a high public profile, WIRES must protect its good name and not endanger its financial base. Agreement for the establishment of a WIRES Branch legally binds that Branch to the WIRES organisation and its Constitution, Code of Conduct and Policies.

7.2 Obligations of WIRES to a Branch

7.2.1 Upon agreement by the WIRES State Council & Board to establish a Branch, the Committee may delegate some or all of objectives 1.2 a - k inclusive, of the Objectives and Rules of NSW WIRES Inc. and the power to seek funds for the Branch. The WIRES State Council & Board reserves the right to rescind its agreement.

7.2.2 Assist with the organisation of training courses for Authorised Members

7.2.3 Administer the authorisation of Authorised Members.

7.2.4 Provide adequate personal accident and public liability insurance for authorised volunteers.

7.2.5 Supply up-to-date information on rescue and rehabilitation techniques.

7.2.6 Administer the reporting of animal data reports to NPWS twice yearly.

7.2.7 Provide Branch representation on the WIRES State Council.

WIRES will not underwrite expenditure by Branches.

7.3 Obligations of Branches to WIRES

7.3.1 Policies

Implement WIRES Policies. No Branch may develop policies contrary to those of WIRES, but may adopt region specific policies provided they are in accordance with WIRES policies and submitted for approval by the WIRES State Council.

7.3.2 Finance

- 7.3.2.1 To provide a comprehensive quarterly report on financial activities to the WIRES State Council, following the format provided by the Administration Office.
- 7.3.2.2 To ensure all funds raised are collected and recorded and receipts obtained for purchases by individuals before reimbursement.
- 7.3.2.3 Generally to practice good financial management ensuring that liabilities do not exceed assets.
- 7.3.2.4 Present an audited statement to the WIRES State Council for the period July 1 to June 30 each year.
- 7.3.2.5 The financial, real and personal property of the organisation and any income derived therefrom shall be applied solely for the promotion of the objectives of the organisation and no portion shall be paid or transferred by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise to the members of the organisation.

Nothing in this section shall prevent the payment of remuneration in return for services actually rendered to the Branch.

7.3.3 Property

Unless otherwise agreed by the WIRES State Council, all equipment bought with Branch funds shall be held in trust for the whole Service and applied towards furthering the objectives of the Service. The Equipment Officer shall forward an inventory to WIRES Administration Office by end of June in any given year.

7.3.4 Legal Action

No Branch is authorised to initiate legal action or to join legal action. Any situation requiring legal action shall be referred to the WIRES State Council & Board.

7.3.5 Public Statements

No statements likely to be controversial shall be made without first being approved by The Administration Office's General Manager and Chair of WIRES State Council & Board and at all times should be in accordance with WIRES policies. WIRES is non-political and all members must not make political statements on behalf of WIRES.

7.3.6 Officers and Meetings

- 7.3.6.1 A Branch should democratically elect all of the following positions each year: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Equipment Officer and WIRES State Council Representative.

7.3.6.2 Only financial members of a Branch shall be eligible to vote and stand for election to any branch management committee position .

7.3.7 Affiliations with other Groups

A Branch may not affiliate with any other group without first obtaining the agreement of the WIRES State Council & Board.

7.3.8 Regional NPWS Involvement

WIRES will seek official representation of the NPWS on the Management Committee of Branches.

7.3.9 Animal Information

Animal call forms will be completed for each animal to allow incorporation into annual reports and research. Country Branches must provide quarterly animal data reports to Administration Office following the format provided by Administration Office.

8. INSURANCE

Please contact your Branch Secretary for information on insurance cover.