



Whatcom Humane Society
Wildlife Rehabilitation Services



Wildlife Care Assistant Volunteer Manual

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Section 1: Welcome

1.1 A Note from the Director

Dear Friend of the Animals,

On behalf of everyone at the Whatcom Humane Society, I would like to welcome you to our team. We are so excited to have you join the dedicated group of staff and volunteers at our wildlife rehabilitation services center.

As an open-admission animal shelter, the Whatcom Humane Society turns no animal away. This year, our facilities will provide care, comfort and services to over 5,000 domestic and wild animals in need.

During the busy spring and summer months, our wildlife rehabilitation center provides life-saving treatment and a second chance for thousands of orphaned and injured wildlife that come through our doors. Interns and volunteers play an important role in providing daily care for these animals, as well as educating the community about issues involving wildlife and the need to respect and peacefully coexist with them.

I hope that you enjoy your time with WHS. I look forward to meeting you and working with you to support the mission of the Whatcom Humane Society. If I can be of any assistance to you, please don't hesitate to contact me. Thank you in advance for your hard work and efforts on behalf of the animals.

Regards,

Laura Clark, Executive Director
(360)733-2080, ext # 3026
director@whatcomhumane.org

1.2 A Note from the Supervisor

Welcome to the team! Wildlife rehabilitation is truly one of the most rewarding fields to work in, but it can also be one of the most challenging. At the WHS Wildlife Center, our patients are at the core of everything we do, even for tasks that are not directly related to their care. In order to ensure the best possible care for our patients (and therefore the best possible outcomes) teamwork is essential. Every one of our practices and policies have been put in place for a reason, and following them at all times ensures the safety of our human team and the welfare of our wild patients. We welcome all questions that you might have, and I am available to address any of your concerns. The deeper you delve into the work at The Center, the more you will learn about the patients we are working with and about rehabilitation as a field!

On behalf of the whole WHS WRC team, I hope you enjoy your time here and learn lots about this wonderful field and the incredible wildlife around us. Thank you for your commitment to kindness, respect, and compassion, especially for our local wildlife and ecosystems. Welcome to the WHS WRC team!

Anna Schwabe, Supervisor, Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator

Section 2: Introduction to Wildlife Rehabilitation

2.1 What is Wildlife Rehabilitation?

Wildlife rehabilitation is a wonderful field! It encompasses all aspects of general care, veterinary medicine, and husbandry.

At Whatcom Humane Society Wildlife Rehabilitation Services Department we believe in rescue, rehabilitation, and release. We will take in any species that needs care and sometimes transfer depending on what that patient needs. WHS Wildlife will never leave a wild animal in need; it is our job to either have the animal transported here, or transport it ourselves - there are no exceptions. This facility sees all sorts of animals from seals to sparrows, and has the ability to help animals in all sorts of predicaments from entanglements to fractures. As a full service hospital, our doors are open to any wild animal in need of assistance.



In the fall and winter there are many desperate cases; animals that have been struck by vehicles, have disease processes, fractures, and emaciation to name a few. In the spring and summer seasons, those cases lessen in frequency, but overall workload increases with the volume of orphaned babies admitted. Sometimes these babies are generally healthy and simply need food and to be raised properly, while others come in with the same injuries and conditions seen in adults.

Wildlife rehabilitators use scientific species-specific natural history to design rehabilitation plans that maximize an animal's chances of recovery, and ultimately release. In addition to hospitalization and medical services, they administer an age-appropriate diet to facilitate proper mental and physical development, enrichment to stimulate natural behaviors and improve psychological health, and provide wildlife education to the public. It is no secret that wildlife rehabilitation is a lot of work, but it is also extremely rewarding!

A position as an intern or volunteer is the ideal way to get involved in this field. If a person wishes to become a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in Washington State through the WHS Wildlife Center, it is WHS policy that that person must be an employee first. Permittees of the WHS Wildlife Center cannot endorse a person for their license without being employed first, and is done at a permittee's discretion. If they are interested in becoming a licensed rehabilitator, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's website has information on the steps needed to acquire their permit. Volunteering is the best way to start the process! Some of the steps involved in getting their permit include shadowing a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for 1,000 hours (500 hours of which must be during the spring/summer) under an apprenticeship agreement, passing the department's exam with 80% or higher marks, passing a facility inspection, and mentoring for at least 6 months under a licensed rehabilitator after receiving their permit.

2.2 Laws and regulations governing wildlife rehabilitation

Wildlife rehabilitation is a very regulated field. It is managed by both the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service. These government organizations ensure that wildlife receives standardized care throughout the state by trained professionals, and help to keep the public and wildlife safe. Just a few of these laws include making it illegal for the public to:

- Keep a wild animal for more than 24 hours
- Visit a wild animal within a rehabilitation center
- Release a wild animal from our facility once it has completed its rehabilitation process
- Medicate or otherwise attempt to treat or raise a wild animal

Without prior department approval, it also makes it illegal for anyone to:

- Transport a wild animal across state lines, either into or out of Washington state
- Remove, harass, or otherwise interfere with any birds, their nests, or eggs
- Possess any animal parts including feathers, bones, or eggs
- Trap or shoot any wild animal unless they are a licensed trapper/possess a valid shooting permit for the intended animal

Within our facility, it also makes it illegal to:

- House predatory animals next to prey animals
- Intentionally or neglectfully habituate wild animals in our care
- Display wildlife in our care to the public
- Fail to report to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife any department surveilled disease outbreaks
- Fail to document daily ledgers, patient procedures, and training documents

The Whatcom Humane Society Wildlife Center follows these and many other laws and regulations set by all the governing bodies involved in wildlife rehabilitation. An important part of our job is to educate the public on these laws and the reasons behind them, so that we can give wildlife the best chance of recovery and survival in the wild.

Section 3: Facility Rules & Information

3.1 Facility Rules

The following WHS policies apply to all volunteers, staff, interns, and visitors to the facility:

1. Smoking/vaping is prohibited in the facility and on the property.
2. No alcoholic beverages (including cooking wine), illegal or recreational drugs, or marijuana are allowed on the property.
3. Personnel must not be under the influence of alcohol, illegal or recreational drugs, or marijuana during their shift.
4. Firearms and weapons are not permitted anywhere on the premises, including in motor vehicles.
5. Only interns, staff, or other care-taking personnel may spend the night on the property.
6. For safety and liability reasons, any guests/visitors are not permitted in the facility without prior approval from the Manager and Director.
7. The kitchen **MUST** be kept clean and separated. Dishes should never be left on the counter or in the sinks!
8. Domestic pets are not allowed on the property.
9. No shorts or open - toed shoes may be worn by personnel while on shift.

3.2 Facility Information

Hours

Open for intake 9:00am - 5:00pm year-round.

*Subject to change based on patient load or other emergencies.

During the spring/summer, the center will be closed to the public at a certain time, but work continues after this until all patients are cared for.

All volunteers are expected to work until all animals have received the care they need and all tasks have been completed, even if that means staying longer than scheduled.

The Public

The WHS Wildlife Center is closed to the public; this means that they are only permitted entrance as far as the public (screened off) area of the Admissions Annex, and only if they are bringing an animal or a donation or their visit has been previously arranged with the Wildlife Manager or the Executive Director. No members of the public are allowed in the lodge at any time without permission from the Wildlife Manager or the Executive Director. The animals in our care are not on display, and we do not possess a zoo permit, which makes it illegal for the public to view our patients. We do not have a restroom available for public use, and we do not give out any provisions such as food or water.

Parking

Volunteers should park in the parking area next to the lodge, with overflow on the south side of the pole building. Please be sure to stow any valuables out of sight during your shift. Please be sure that noise is kept to a minimum (voices, music, etc.) as the parking area is adjacent to animal care areas.

*Dress Code**

Volunteers must wear appropriate clothing. They may wear scrubs, WHS t-shirts, t-shirts/sweatshirts with no insignia, cargo-style pants, or work pants. Jeans, open-toed shoes, and shorts are prohibited. Close toed shoes are required. Undergarments of any kind must not be visible, nor should excess/inappropriate skin be visible - if this occurs, volunteers will be given appropriate clothing to put on. It is important for all volunteers to wear nametags at all times. Nametags will be provided on their first day.

Long hair should be pulled back and jewelry should be minimal while working with animals for safety and to avoid contamination between individuals.

Please keep in mind that residue odors on clothing, hair, and skin can be disturbing to the sensitive noses of our wild patients who have a heightened sense of smell. Strong scents such as cigarette smoke, perfumes, and lotions may cause distress to our wild patients and should be kept to a minimum.

*This does not apply for live-in interns on their days off.

Personal Belongings

Volunteers should bring as few personal items as possible to their shifts, due to limited space and security issues. There are several hooks and shelves available to store belongings next to the Volunteer Desk. Please do not leave personal belongings at WHS when you are not here. Volunteers are encouraged to bring food and beverages and use the human refrigerator in the kitchen.

Breaks

Short breaks are taken as needed. When possible, please schedule these around time-sensitive animal care tasks and personnel availability. If you must leave the facility for any reason, please inform your supervisor.

3.3 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

In Washington State, a person must possess a current Washington Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit to care for wildlife with the intention of rehabilitation. Wildlife rehabilitation facilities act under the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), and work closely with the Wildlife Rehabilitation Manager of the department. WDFW has guidelines covering all aspects of wildlife rehabilitation, and ultimately makes final decisions for things like dispositions and release sites. These guidelines were developed with the help of the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association (NWRA) and the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC) Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation.

Under WDFW, there are laws that all wildlife rehabilitation facilities must follow, including a list of species a facility is permitted to care for. This list is determined by licensing and training of staff, enclosure dimensions and features, and facility limitations. WHS Wildlife has a list of patients that may be admitted on the back of the WHS Wildlife Center's Wildlife Services Manager's wildlife rehabilitation permit, which is displayed in the lobby. If an animal needs help or is admitted that is not on the wildlife center permit, the Wildlife Center Manager must be notified immediately.

WDFW has laws stating that wild patients cannot be housed with or near any domestic animals. Because the wildlife center is a part of the Whatcom Humane Society, sometimes we are required to temporarily house domestic animals. However, those animals can never be in the same enclosure, same room, in direct view of or within hearing distance of any wild animals in care.

WDFW laws govern all actions of wildlife rehabilitators in regards to patients as well as any educational ambassador animals under their care. Our facility has protocols in place to abide by all State and Federal laws in regards to wildlife rehabilitation.

3.4 Record Keeping

As per WDFW laws, the WHS Wildlife Center keeps legal records, both electronic and physical, of every patient that is admitted. Patient charts are filled out daily anytime a patient is weighed, fed, medicated, or had a procedure done; essentially, every time something is done to or with a patient. This is an essential part of following a patient's progress. Charts must be filled out in a consistent, accurate way.

The WHS Wildlife Center keeps a call log for all calls received as well as all Whatcom Marine Mammal Stranding Network (WMMSN) Hotline calls.

It is very important for us to have an accurate reflection of volunteer hours worked, so please make sure you log all of your service time. You can use the computer at the volunteer desk to sign in to Volgistics. If volunteers need a total hour count for documentation, this is how it is tracked, so it is important to keep this up to date.

3.5 Binders, Level System, and Colors

The WHS Wildlife Center organizes all information regarding species, PPE, handling, housing, husbandry, diet and nutrition, enrichment, and medical information in binders. All binders are located on the bookshelf in the hall near the “pit” with the exception of the Diet binder, which is located in the kitchen. These binders feature protocols and important information at a level of depth appropriate for who is utilizing them.

The levels are denoted as follows:

- Level 1 - Blue
- Level 2 - Purple
- Level 3 - Brown
- Intern only (Level 4) - Green
- Staff do not have a level, but are referenced as “Staff” and are denoted by the color Black

The color system is utilized throughout the facility. It is featured on cage tags, assigned to patients, volunteers, staff, and interns, and used on the whiteboards for important notes, messages, and guidelines.

Advancement is based on individual performance, and is decided by the Wildlife Manager, Volunteer Coordinator, and/or Lead Rehabilitator(s).

Level 1 Volunteers/Interns (BLUE):

These volunteers/interns will go through initial animal care training, and then move on to learning handling and assist-feeding by hand on-the-job.

They will be paired with another volunteer/intern/staff who has been signed off on handling/feeding until they have been signed off themselves, at which point they may go alone. Only STAFF may sign off a volunteer/intern to go on their own. The common animals they will learn to care for at this stage are:

- Passerines (excluding baby hummingbirds)
- Pigeons and Doves
- Cottontails
- Young Opossums
- Reptiles and amphibians
- Ducklings, goslings, and gull chicks

Level 1 volunteers may also assist with the following common animals, if those animals do not need to be handled and only need diet delivered and cage cleaned:

- Squirrels
- Raptors (excluding eagles)
- Adult opossums

All handling of these commonly received animals will be covered in Level 2 training.

Level 2 Volunteers/Interns (PURPLE):

Can handle all of the above, plus the following, after their Level 2 training class and on-the-job training.

In order to be eligible for this class, the volunteer/intern must have completed at least 50 hours of service at Level 1, have ALL Level 1 checklist items marked as “Satisfactory,” and have the recommendation of at least one staff member. After this training, the volunteer/intern will again be paired with other interns/staff/volunteers to gain on-the-job experience and work towards having their Level 2 checklist items completed.

The common animals they will learn to care for at this stage are:

- Squirrels
- Raptors (excluding eagles)
- Adult opossums
- Young mammals needing assist feeds by hand through a syringe with nipple attached
- Adult ducks, geese, and gulls

Level 2 volunteers may also assist with the following common animals, if those animals do not need to be handled and only need diet delivered and cage cleaned:

- Herons
- Eagles

All handling of these commonly received animals will be covered in Level 3 training.

Level 3 (BROWN):

In order to be eligible for this level, the volunteer/intern must have ALL Level 2 checklist items marked as “Satisfactory,” and have the recommendation of at least one staff member.

These volunteers/interns must go through the Level 3 training class, and then may begin gaining on-the-job experience through hands-on training with staff/interns for the following:

- Gavage (tube) feeding select mammals
- Gavage (tube) feeding select birds
- Care and handling of webbed/lobed footed birds
- Care and handling of eagles, weasels, and herons

Level 3 volunteers may also assist with the following common animals, if those animals do not need to be handled and only need diet delivered and cage cleaned:

- Beavers
- Porcupines

Level 4 INTERN ONLY (GREEN):

Interns must have completed Level 2-3 training to begin working with the following species. The training to care for and handle the following animals will be done on-the-job by staff.

- Skunks
- Baby shorebirds
- Baby gamebirds
- Baby hummingbirds
- Raccoons
- Marine mammals
- Coyotes
- Beavers
- Porcupines
- River otters
- Mink

Staff Only (BLACK):

Volunteers and interns do not ever handle or care for these species, regardless of age:

- Bats
- Swans
- All cervids
- Large carnivores such as bobcat, bear, mountain lion, wolf, lynx
- Venomous snakes
- Any state or federal sensitive, threatened, or endangered species

3.6 Staff Positions

Wildlife Center Manager (1)

The Wildlife Center Manager is responsible for managing all subordinate positions in addition to taking part in staff duties and responsibilities. The Wildlife Center Manager holds a current Washington State wildlife rehabilitation license as well as a Federal rehabilitation permit. The Wildlife Center Manager creates protocols, carries out training of all subordinate positions, takes charge of communications with other departments as well as all communication with Fish and Wildlife and Veterinary Hospitals. The Wildlife Center Manager is a licensed veterinary technician and therefore is in charge of all medical care. Approach the Manager for questions about protocols, grievances, or references.

Lead Rehabilitator (0-1)

In addition to carrying out staff duties and responsibilities, the Lead Rehabilitator creates protocols, carries out training of all subordinate positions, takes charge of communications with other departments, and carries out duties of the Wildlife Center Manager in their absence. The Lead Rehabilitator must hold a current Washington state wildlife rehabilitation license. The Wildlife Center may not always have this position filled. Approach the Lead Rehabilitator for questions about protocols, grievances, or references.

Wildlife Care Technicians (4-5)

Wildlife care technicians carry out staff duties and responsibilities, including all aspects of patient care, carrying out protocols, and euthanasia.

Volunteer/Intern Coordinator (1)

The volunteer and intern coordinator is responsible for assisting with the development, implementation, and maintenance of the volunteer/intern program under the Wildlife Center Manager and WHS Volunteer Manager. The volunteer and intern coordinator carries out all aspects of the volunteer/intern program, including recruitment, screening, training, placement, retention, recognition, tracking, and reporting. Approach the Volunteer and Intern Coordinator for questions about protocols, grievances, or references.

3.7 Volunteers

Volunteers are an essential part of the WHS Wildlife Center. There is typically one volunteer per shift, but in the spring/summer there are sometimes two per shift. If any problems arise with a volunteer, please report to the Wildlife Center Manager, Lead Rehabilitator, or Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteers do not answer the door or phone for safety reasons.

The WHS Wildlife Center hires interns between April and October. Interns are involved in almost every aspect of the rehabilitation process, and often assist staff in helping volunteers learn, find items, and care for patients, and are responsible for helping to train new volunteers and filling out training documents.

Volunteers and interns have the right to:

- An assignment based on your interests, skills, and availability, as well as the needs of WHS.
- A meaningful and rewarding volunteer experience.
- Staff support and resources necessary to be successful in your position.
- Recognition for your contribution.
- An opportunity to give feedback.
- A chance to grow and develop as a volunteer through participation in special training events, meetings, and more responsible positions.

3.8 Veterinary Care

The WHS Wildlife Center's partnering veterinarian is Maplewood Animal Hospital. All veterinary care is under their supervision and is carried out by wildlife center staff as per their protocols. The wildlife center has a licensed veterinary technician (LVT) on staff as well to provide additional medical procedures in house as needed.

There are many other veterinarians/permitted rehabilitators that are consulted with for both medical and non - medical patient care related questions. The manager works with these centers to collaborate and establish best practices.

Section 4: Performance

4.1 Learning Objectives

It is the goal of the WHS Wildlife Center to have every volunteer gain knowledge and hands-on experience in all aspects of wildlife rehabilitation. Every volunteer should leave with a basic knowledge of natural history, animal handling, diet and feeding, enrichment, and cleaning techniques. These are basic learning objectives; there is much more to be learned and gained in one's experience as a wildlife care volunteer. All interns and volunteers must complete the Wildlife Ethics Workshop within 6 months of their start date, and if returning for the next season, must attend a Baby Season Kickoff event each March.



4.2 Responsibilities and Expectations

At our facility, volunteers are involved in most aspects of wildlife rehabilitation. They earn valuable knowledge and hands-on experience in working with wildlife. Volunteers are expected to be mature, honest, enthusiastic to learn, prioritize animal care and welfare, have a good work ethic, and a strong desire to work with animals and people. No experience is required. This is a mentally and physically demanding position; many responsibilities are put on our volunteers' shoulders, and it is not uncommon to be conducting multiple hours of strenuous physical activity in a single shift. This program is not for college credit unless previously arranged. We aim for volunteers to understand what they are responsible for and what is expected of them so they can perform to the best of their ability.

The primary responsibilities of the volunteers will be: food preparation and feeding, cage cleaning and sanitation, laundry, facility cleaning and sanitation, and special projects. Volunteers are expected to utilize this volunteer manual as well as the Protocol binders in order to give the animals the best care possible. Strict training is conducted either by staff or experienced volunteers/interns, and records of this training are documented as they are completed. Volunteers are expected to perform tasks as they have been trained and treat all animals humanely. Volunteers are to be on time for their shifts, carry out tasks as they are prioritized in staff-made lists, work on projects around the facility as they have time, be honest, and approach all tasks with a positive attitude. Volunteers are expected to respect off-limit areas for patient safety.

All volunteers are expected to keep up with all WHS communications through email, phone, and whiteboards.

Job Description

Volunteers must be on time and stay for the duration of their shift. If a volunteer has a grievance, they must report to the Wildlife Center Manager, the Lead Rehabilitator, or Volunteer Coordinator for further guidance. Volunteers must adhere to all protocols laid out by staff in order to provide the most humane and responsible care to all animals. A staff member will assign each volunteer on shift duties that they must complete during their shift. It is imperative that volunteers adhere to their assignments on the shift whiteboard.

Commitment Agreement

Wildlife rehabilitation is not a hobby, it is a lifestyle. All volunteers are expected to be 100% committed to their volunteer service, both physically and mentally. We expect volunteers to be here when scheduled and willing to do what is asked of them to the very best of their ability.

Attendance

It is the expectation that all WHS volunteers will regard their shifts with the same consideration and respect as a paid position. The nature of wildlife rehabilitation necessitates that each shift is properly scheduled with a certain number of staff, volunteers, and interns. If those personnel do not come as scheduled, it can be difficult if not impossible to adequately care for our animals, particularly young that need to be fed on a rigorous schedule. We understand that volunteers have commitments outside of the WHS Wildlife Rehabilitation Center; however, we do expect you to adequately communicate regarding your attendance.

Failure to show up on time for your shift without communicating with staff may result in a verbal warning. WHS reserves the right to dismiss any volunteer who repeatedly fails to show up for their shifts or is chronically late.

If you must miss a shift due to illness or emergency, please text the staff cell phone at 360-961-1605 as soon as possible. Leave your name, reason for calling out, and the shift that you were supposed to be working.

No call/no shows are grounds for dismissal from the volunteer program. Volunteers are expected to miss no more than 5 shifts in a 6-month period unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Whiteboards

The WHS Wildlife Center uses a whiteboard system to assign tasks to every person on shift. Staff design these assignments and customize them for whoever is on shift. They are designed to be in a prioritized order: what is assigned first or “on top” of the list must be completed before the next task, and so on. It is crucial that volunteers adhere to their assignments in the correct order.

Project Time

Maintenance, cleaning, and husbandry tasks that need to be completed are denoted in a prioritized list in the “Projects” section of the main whiteboard and categorized. These projects are to be worked on only when all other tasks (such as patients and opening duties) are completed. Projects are placed on the

board by staff and are prioritized for multiple reasons, so it is important they are completed in the order written.

If a volunteer has an idea for a project they would like to work on that is not on the board, they must consult with staff before doing them, and any other projects assigned by staff must be completed first. This is essential for keeping the hospital running smoothly and preventing project back-up.

Outline of a typical shift

1. Sign in using the volunteer computer and put on your nametag.
2. Stow your belongings, including your phone, in the designated area.
3. Read the “Volunteer Notes” section on the Announcement whiteboard (in breakroom).
4. Thoroughly read the Shift whiteboard (in breakroom).
5. Participate in rounds.
6. Complete tasks in the order provided, keeping in mind baby feeding schedules.
7. Check in with staff at the end of shift.
8. Sign out on the volunteer computer.

Performance Feedback and Progressive Discipline

WHS Wildlife Rehabilitation Center has adopted standards and protocols to ensure productive, harmonious operations which ensure fair treatment of all volunteers. Volunteers and their supervisors are encouraged to have informal, open, and honest discussions on an ongoing basis about work performance. Informal discussions may be used to ensure that volunteers know and follow rules and standards. These discussions should focus on clarifying expectations, providing appropriate training and development, and coaching volunteers. A more formal performance review may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the volunteer's supervisor. Performance reviews are intended to reflect the volunteer's effectiveness on the job, and are a continuing record of work performance. They allow the supervisor to measure the volunteer's work against the requirements of their position and assess general performance behaviors. As a result of performance feedback, volunteer development activities may be pursued. Volunteer development is a collaborative effort between the WHS Wildlife Rehabilitation Center supervisors and volunteers and is focused on building the capabilities of all volunteers. WHS Wildlife Rehabilitation Center endorses a philosophy of progressive discipline in which it attempts to provide volunteers with notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to improve whenever practical or reasonable. In some cases, formal disciplinary action may be deemed appropriate. Progressive discipline steps may include, but are not limited to, verbal warnings, written warnings, suspension, and dismissal from service. WHS Wildlife Rehabilitation Center retains the right to administer discipline in any manner it deems suitable and any of the steps listed above may be skipped. Dismissal from service may occur at any time without any progressive discipline steps having been taken.

Volunteering After a Leave of Absence

Volunteers who wish to return after a leave of absence may be required to go through training once again if they have been inactive for more than 6 months. A return to volunteer service is subject to documented performance review assessment.

References and Recommendations

The Wildlife Center Manager is the contact for all reference requests. Requests made for a reference or recommendation to other staff will be forwarded to the Wildlife Center Manager.

Section 5: Education Ambassadors

5.1 Education Ambassadors

Education Ambassadors occasionally become associated with wildlife rehabilitation facilities for many reasons. They are animals that have been deemed non-releasable for either physical or psychological reasons, and have been thoroughly evaluated for their fit to a humane life in captivity. To become an education ambassador is never a goal for any animal that is admitted into care; rather, it is an opportunity that arises and may be taken into consideration, but never at the expense of an animal's humane wellbeing. Education ambassadors are not pets, but rather serve to educate the public on their species, natural history, and individual story of how their lives were impacted such that they could never be free in the wild. Education ambassadors can be either on static display or take part in public education programs. Education ambassadors are permitted under the WDFW (and USFW if appropriate), and wildlife rehabilitators must adhere to WDFW laws with every aspect of their care.



The WHS Wildlife Center is never guaranteed to house an education ambassador, but regardless has strict rules and guidelines in place with the goal of humane care for the animals, safety of all personnel involved, and appropriate education of the public. Those rules are as follows:

1. WHS Wildlife Center staff are the only personnel to handle an education ambassador unless cleared by the Wildlife Center Manager or Lead Rehabilitator, and must adhere to protocols designed for those animals by the Wildlife Center Manager and/or the Lead Rehabilitator.
2. Out of respect for the education ambassador, no media (photo or video) is to be taken by the public, volunteers, or interns unless otherwise directed by staff.
3. Only staff only are permitted to educate and share information about any education ambassadors to the public; all other personnel are prohibited from doing so.

Section 6: Euthanasia

6.1 Euthanasia Policy

Animals are euthanized at the WHS Wildlife Center to relieve suffering (physical or mental), but it is not something taken lightly. Each case is seriously considered before the decision is made to euthanize. Staff must successfully complete a course in humane euthanasia and receive licensing through the DEA, as well as thorough training by the Wildlife Center Manager and/or trained Wildlife Care Technicians. Euthanasias are always performed in the fastest, most humane way possible.



The only people that have the authority to make the decision to euthanize an animal are staff and our partnering veterinarian(s). Animals are typically euthanized if their injuries or illnesses are so severe that there is no hope for their recovery, release, or education, or if it would be inhumane to prolong the animal's suffering by keeping it alive.

While it is not required of volunteers to be present during euthanasia, they must understand that it is a part of wildlife rehabilitation. The goal of our facility is to provide humane care, not to keep an animal alive at all costs, and sometimes euthanasia is the most humane act we can provide for an animal.

Excerpt from the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association "Wildlife Rehabilitator's Code Of Ethics"

“A wildlife rehabilitator should strive to provide professional and humane care in all phases of wildlife rehabilitation, protecting the welfare, respecting the wildness, and maintaining the dignity of each animal in life and in death. Releasable animals should be maintained in a wild condition and released as soon as appropriate. Nonreleasable animals have a right to euthanasia.”

Section 7: Property Hazards and General Safety

7.1 Caging/Enclosure Safety

- Caging/enclosure must be securely fixed to the ground to prevent falling and injuring personnel and patients
- Cages/enclosures that are housing patients must get locked at the end of each day for safety
- Volunteers must ensure that the caging/enclosure has no loose metal wires, broken plastic, etc. to prevent injuring personnel and patients including ingestion of foreign objects
- All caging/enclosures must be able to be securely fastened/locked to prevent patient escapes
- Caging/enclosures/carriers must be properly transported bearing the weight with the legs to prevent spinal injuries to personnel.
- When cleaning caging/enclosures/carriers, wear gloves and mask to prevent contact with zoonotic/communicable diseases



7.2 Chemical Safety

- Volunteers will receive Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard training during orientation
- Refer to MSDS/SDS sheets for information on chemicals used for cleaning/sanitizing
- Use appropriate cleaning solutions/tools for the job
- Never mix multiple cleaning solutions together
- Wear gloves and a mask when cleaning with chemicals

7.3 Property Hazards

- No public persons are allowed on the property other than the parking area and admission area.
- Areas that are restricted are not to be entered unless previous authorization has been given for personnel safety and patient safety reasons.

7.4 Soiled materials

Soiled materials encompass anything contaminated with hazardous material such as feces, saliva, urine, blood, and other bodily fluid. These materials can be harmful when in contact with humans and patients due to the risk of transmission of communicable diseases, parasites, etc. Wash your hands after handling and safely discarding your gloves and other protective equipment.

7.5 Zoonosis/Communicable Diseases

Zoonoses is the term used to define diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans. They can be transmitted through saliva, blood, urine, feces, and skin contact. Examples include but are not limited to: rabies, plague, psittacosis, leptospirosis, tularemia, salmonella, giardia, baylisascaris, and echinococcus. In addition, the following are diseases that are transmittable to pets: parvovirus, canine distemper, and feline panleukopenia.

As a volunteer, you may be exposed to these diseases. It is imperative that every volunteer is educated about the diseases and the techniques used to minimize disease transmission. If you own pets, it is recommended that you inform your veterinarian that you work with wildlife and keep their vaccines up-to-date. Cages and other items are properly sanitized before being used by other animals. Disinfectants are always available and their use is encouraged.

It is recommended that you inform your healthcare provider that you work with wildlife. Volunteers may choose to have work-only clothes and shoes and change before and after their shifts.

7.6 Rabies Vector Species

Bats are the only rabies vector species in Washington state. Bats are strictly **STAFF ONLY** and are never to be handled by volunteers or interns unless otherwise directed by staff. Interns and volunteers are not to: intake, examine, or handle a bat in any way; do bat laundry or dishes; clean/sanitize bat enclosures.

7.7 In Case of Injury

If you have received a bite, scratch, or wound while on shift:

- If appropriate, immediately flush with sterile saline solution or warm water and soap for at least 15 minutes.
- First aid supplies are in the first aid kits hanging on the walls throughout the facility and property. There is a labeled map detailing these locations in the safety binder.
- Report to your supervisor immediately after flushing to report the incident and fill out an incident report form, found in the Safety binder. Leave to go get further medical attention if necessary.
- If appropriate, flush eyes at the eye wash station in the lodge lobby (or other locations detailed in the Safety binder) for at least 15 minutes.
- Consult your health care provider for medical advice and/or treatment if necessary.
- All WHS volunteers are covered under WHS L&I insurance. If you are injured and need to seek medical attention, please list WHS as your "employer" for claims purposes.

All injuries incurred at the WHS Wildlife Rehabilitation Service Dept. must be immediately reported to your supervisor and human resources.

7.8 Emergency Action Plan

Please refer to the emergency action plan and protocols in the Safety binder. There are fire extinguishers located throughout the facility, please see the Safety binder for a map of exact locations.

7.9 Handling and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

While working with or around animals, laundry, dishes, enclosures and the public, everyone must wear latex disposable gloves and masks at all times. Remember that the patients are wild animals, and will use everything in their power to defend themselves, especially adults. Always use safe handling techniques, appropriate PPE, and the help of another person when necessary. Unless directed by staff, it is prohibited to attempt to handle a species or age class you have not been trained on (including educational ambassadors), and disregard for this policy is grounds for immediate dismissal. For information on handling patients and proper PPE, please refer to the pertaining sections in the Protocols and Husbandry binders.

Staff will occasionally have special instructions for certain patients for various reasons that are not included in the species' protocol. They will make notes on patient charts as well as the patient whiteboards if extra PPE is required for handling that animal. Volunteers must adhere to these notes and use assigned PPE.

Section 8: Organizational Culture

8.1 “We are here for the animals” Policy

The WHS Wildlife Center is a non – profit center dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing wildlife. We will take in any wild animal that is injured, orphaned or sick.

We are extremely teamwork oriented and believe in a positive environment. We encourage constant communication; no question is ever unwarranted.

WHS Wildlife has high morals and ethics in regards to patients. Every patient is to be treated as an individual. We must remember that the animals in our care are debilitated and are experiencing traumatic levels of stress. We must act calmly, take an extra level of care with them and treat them with the utmost respect. We are to be a voice for these animals and their wellbeing.

Since every patient is treated as an individual and with respect, neglect is not tolerated. Every animal has the basic rights of: food, water and shelter. There is a zero tolerance policy for any sort of neglect.

At the Whatcom Humane Society, we keep the wildlife 'wild'. Our ultimate goal is to release physically and behaviorally healthy animals back into the wild. It is very important that all personnel understand that this is not a job where anyone gets to "cuddle cute wildlife". A minimum of contact with the animals is important in order to reduce their stress and prevent them from becoming habituated, tamed, and imprinted with humans. There is zero tolerance for any petting or talking to patients, as well as unnecessary touching or watching of our patients.

There is to be no music played or phone calls taken while working near the animals, headphones included. Talking is prohibited to or near animals unless in an emergency. This includes, but is not limited to: in patient rooms, patient enclosures, and the exam room. If a conversation must be had in the vicinity of a patient (such as training), it is to be kept to a minimum and must be kept to a whisper.

When at the center, please turn your phone to silent. Out of respect for the animals and each other, our facility has a strict no cell phone or media policy. Phones must be left in the designated area and are not permitted to be on your person while working. This means that while at WHS, interns and volunteers are prohibited from sharing any photos or videos of patients in our care on social media that have not been approved by the director or manager, including photos or videos of or from any and all cameras/security systems. If this policy is not adhered to, it is grounds for immediate dismissal.

All documents worked on are property of WHS and are to be worked on only using Google Workspace. Emails and other documents should not be forwarded to other email addresses outside of Google Workspace as this is grounds for immediate dismissal.

We are excited to have you as part of our team!

8.2 WHS Wildlife Rehabilitation Center Organizational Culture

As a part of the Humane Society, it is important for all team members to uphold humane values and be sensitive when discussing humane issues with colleagues. We strive to uphold these principles in our organizational culture:

Mission:

- Advocate for animals
- Educate the community to promote humane treatment and respect for animals
- Provide for abandoned, injured, abused or neglected animals

Vision:

All animals in our community are treated with kindness, respect, and compassion.

Statement of Principle:

The Whatcom Humane Society believes that all animals, as sentient beings, have value beyond economic measurements and are entitled to legal, moral, and ethical consideration and protection.

Whatcom Humane Society has a zero tolerance policy towards violence, threats, intimidation, or bullying towards fellow volunteers, interns, and staff. WHS does not tolerate actions, words, or gestures that are abusive or harmful to others, are intimidating, or create an offensive or hostile work or living environment. This includes but is not limited to: social isolation or manipulation; offensive conduct; derogatory jokes or comments; microaggressions; name-calling; remarks about personal choices, physical characteristics, or appearance; unwanted sexual advances, invitations, or comments; untitling, addressing, or referring to a transgender or non-binary person by a name that they no longer use (also referred to as deadnaming), or addressing or referring to them by word or a pronoun that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify (also referred to as misgendering) after being asked not to do so.

8.3 Fraternalization

Personnel at Whatcom Humane Society are encouraged to develop and maintain professional relationships in the workplace, so long as these relationships do not interfere with the effective functioning of the workplace and the goals of WHS Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. This policy does not prevent the development of friendships or even romantic relationships between coworkers, but it does establish boundaries as to how relationships are conducted during working hours and within the working environment.

Before developing romantic relationships, consider the potential for:

- Workplace gossip
- Conflicts of interest
- Sexual harassment allegations
- Favoritism
- Repercussions of a break-up
- Work distractions

Personnel who engage in consensual romantic relationships must conduct themselves in an appropriate professional manner while on WHS property. They should not engage in any inappropriate behaviors that may cause their coworkers to feel embarrassed, awkward, or uncomfortable. This includes, but is not limited to, intimate contact like:

- Kissing
- Prolonged hugging
- Hand holding
- Massaging
- Personal texting, emails, and calls

Romantic relationships between current employees and current interns/volunteers are discouraged; however we recognize this may occur and ask those involved to speak with management to sign a code of conduct. This situation can be unhealthy for workplace morale and creates a conflict of interest, plus the chance for coercion and/or preferential treatment. Failure to comply with this fraternization policy may result in termination, departmental transfers, or voluntary resignation.