



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY & ENVIRONMENT

Bird of Prey Rehabilitation Training Standards

for the Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector



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Introduction

Wildlife rehabilitation organisations and their volunteers play a critical role in rescuing and rehabilitating sick, injured and orphaned birds of prey in New South Wales. Each year over 1000 birds of prey are rescued. Volunteers participating in their care are trained to ensure the birds are managed humanely and have the best chance of rehabilitation and release back into the wild.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), has collaborated with leading bird of prey rehabilitation providers to prepare these *Bird of Prey Rehabilitation Training Standards* for use by trainers in the NSW wildlife rehabilitation sector. These training standards build on the high level of expertise that already exists within the sector and have been designed as a guide to evaluate, develop and support new and existing training. The intended outcome is to ensure minimum training standards are in place for volunteers across the sector, as recommended in the NSW Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector Strategy (DPIE 2020). This will give greater certainty about the quality of care afforded to birds of prey in rehabilitation.

These standards must be used for delivering introductory training for birds of prey undergoing rehabilitation. They describe the skills and knowledge that such training must include to ensure volunteers meet the requirements of the NSW Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Birds of Prey (the Bird of Prey Code). Any person with an authority to rescue, rehabilitate and release birds of prey in New South Wales must be trained to these standards and be assessed as competent.

These training standards have been ordered into three suggested core areas of training. Training programs can be structured in their entirety to replicate the standards, or can be broken down to cover individual or multiple standards, or can be based on certain roles within bird of prey rehabilitation. Irrespective of the structure used, all training must include the standards relevant to a role and must cover the duties this role would be expected to perform upon completion of the training.

All training must be compliant with the Bird of Prey Code. It must have a written assessment component, be competency-based, and be accompanied by ongoing in-field support from experienced bird of prey rehabilitators.

Once a person is trained to these standards, they can undertake advanced refresher training and professional development opportunities as determined by their licensed wildlife rehabilitation organisation.

Additional information on training to these standards can be found in the companion Bird of Prey Rehabilitation Training Standards for the Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector: Trainers' Guide (DPIE 2021). This document has been designed to support the sector develop their training in line with these standards.

Structure of the standards

There are 11 bird of prey rehabilitation training standards, organised into the following structure:

- **Objective** is the aim of each standard.
- **Learning outcomes** are the knowledge and skills a learner will have obtained and be able to demonstrate upon completion of training.
- **Sections in the Code** identify sections in the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Birds of Prey* that are applicable to each standard.

Prerequisites

As required by the Bird of Prey Code, new wildlife rehabilitators must undertake an introductory training course. For generalist groups this could be covered in their induction training. New bird of prey rehabilitators must have proven experience in native bird rehabilitation and complete specialist training before undertaking bird of prey rehabilitation.

Definitions

Advanced refresher training: a standard in each Code of Practice requires wildlife rehabilitators to complete additional training every 3 or 4 years depending on the species. In the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Birds of Prey*, refresher training must be completed every 3 years.

Birds of prey: refers to animals classified as Accipitriformes, which means 'hawk-shaped birds' (diurnal hawks, kites and eagles), Falconiformes ('falcon shaped birds') and Strigiformes (nocturnal owls). The Nightjar family (e.g. tawny frogmouths) are not birds of prey.

Chick: refers to bird of prey hatchlings, nestlings and fledglings.

Code of Practice: specifies the minimum standards of care needed to protect the welfare of animals in rehabilitation. There is a general code and species-specific codes. The Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Birds of Prey is the relevant code for birds of prey.

Competency: is defined by the Australian Skills Quality Authority as the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.

Learning outcomes: a clear statement of what a learner is expected to be able to do, know about and value at the completion of a unit of study, and how well they should be expected to achieve those outcomes.

Objective: the aim of each standard.

Prerequisites: something that requires something to happen or be completed before the other; for example, some advanced courses require a prior subject or course to be completed before a learner can enrol in them.

Professional development: activities that develop or maintain skills or knowledge. Examples could include workshops, conferences, mentoring, independent research and courses.

Standards: are a level of accepted quality.

Bird of prey rehabilitation standards: Core areas of training

There are 11 bird of prey rehabilitation standards organised into 3 core training areas.

Core training area	Relevant standard
Foundations of bird of prey rehabilitation	Standard 1: The framework for bird of prey rehabilitation in New South Wales
	Standard 2: Work health and safety (WHS) requirements of bird of prey rehabilitation
	Standard 3: Record keeping
	Standard 4: Biology and behaviour of birds of prey
	Standard 5: Stress management in birds of prey
Rescue of birds of prey	Standard 6: Rescue of birds of prey
	Standard 7: Transport of birds of prey
	Standard 8: Assessment of birds of prey
Rehabilitation of birds of prey	Standard 9: Rehabilitation of birds of prey
	Standard 10: Rehabilitation of bird of prey chicks
	Standard 11: Release of birds of prey

Foundations of bird of prey rehabilitation

Standard 1: The framework for bird of prey rehabilitation in New South Wales

Objective: To familiarise learners with the relevant policies and procedures for bird of prey rehabilitation and provide them with an understanding of the framework that exists to support and regulate bird of prey rehabilitation in New South Wales. Learners must be aware of and understand the NSW Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Birds of Prey (the Bird of Prey code).

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 1.1 Discuss the Bird of Prey Code.
- 1.2 Ensure organisational policies and procedures applicable to bird of prey rehabilitation are defined and understood by learners.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and demonstrate understanding of the Bird of Prey Code • identify organisational policies and procedures for bird of prey rehabilitation • recognise the objectives of bird of prey rehabilitation. 	All

Standard 2: Work health and safety requirements of bird of prey rehabilitation

Objective: To ensure that learners are able to prioritise their safety and that of the people around them when undertaking bird of prey rescue and rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 2.1 Explain the Work health and safety (WHS) risks associated with the site, equipment or activity and how they can be minimised.
- 2.2 Explain the WHS risks associated with handling and restraining birds of prey and how they can be minimised.
- 2.3 Discuss the WHS risks associated with zoonotic diseases relevant to birds of prey and how they can be minimised.
- 2.4 Discuss rehabilitator wellbeing and the potential mental health impacts of wildlife rehabilitation.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify WHS risks associated with bird of prey rehabilitation • employ techniques to minimise the WHS risks to themselves and other people. 	3. Rescue 5. Euthanasia 6. Care procedures 7. Husbandry

Standard 3: Record keeping

Objective: To explain the record keeping requirements for bird of prey rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, rehabilitation organisations must:

- 3.1 Explain the NPWS reporting requirements.
- 3.2 Explain organisational reporting requirements.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep records in accordance with NPWS and organisational requirements. 	12. Record keeping

Standard 4: Biology and behaviour of birds of prey

Objective: To ensure detailed knowledge of birds of prey is taught to learners. This is done by providing learners with the foundational tools to understand bird of prey biology and behaviour and how these aspects inform interactions with birds of prey undergoing rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 4.1 Explain features of bird of prey biology, including anatomy, physiology, flight mechanics, social structure and stages of development and relate them to bird of prey rehabilitation.
- 4.2 Provide a basic understanding of bird of prey ecology, including population dynamics, habitat selection, competition and predator–prey interactions.
- 4.3 Provide the tools and understanding required to identify different species of birds of prey recorded in New South Wales.
- 4.4 Provide the tools and understanding required to identify normal behaviour in birds of prey.
- 4.5 Provide the tools and understanding required to recognise signs of abnormal behaviour in birds of prey.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relate bird of prey biology, ecology and behaviour to bird of prey rehabilitation • identify various species of birds of prey found in New South Wales • recognise signs of normal behaviour in birds of prey • recognise signs of abnormal behaviour in birds of prey. 	All

Standard 5: Stress management in birds of prey

Objective: To communicate the importance of managing stress in birds of prey and to provide mechanisms for minimising this stress.

To comply with this standard, rehabilitation organisations must:

- 5.1 Explain the effects of stress on a bird of prey at various stages of rescue and rehabilitation and any differences between species.
- 5.2 Provide the tools and understanding required to recognise signs of stress in a bird of prey.
- 5.3 Discuss methods for minimising stress in birds of prey at various stages of rescue and rehabilitation.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recognise signs of stress in birds of prey and its impact• apply methods for minimising stress in birds of prey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3. Rescue4. Transport5. Euthanasia6. Care procedures7. Husbandry8. Housing10. Release considerations

Rescue of birds of prey

Standard 6: Rescue of birds of prey

Objective: To ensure learners have the skills to rescue a bird of prey safely, efficiently and humanely.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 6.1 Outline common reasons for bird of prey rescue.
- 6.2 Detail how to perform a situational assessment, including the use of the decision tree in the Bird of Prey Code, to establish the appropriate course of action.
- 6.3 Detail the correct method and equipment required to capture, handle and rescue a bird of prey, as suitable to common rescue situations, species, age and condition of the bird of prey.
- 6.4 Detail how to rescue a bird of prey to humanely minimise pain, stress and potential injury.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • list the common reasons why birds of prey require rescue • assess a rescue situation and plan the rescue of a bird of prey • safely rescue a bird of prey using correct equipment • determine the type of intervention required at a rescue site. 	2. Case assessment 3. Rescue 4. Transport 5. Euthanasia

Standard 7: Transport of birds of prey

Objective: To ensure learners have the skills to safely, efficiently and humanely transport a bird of prey.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 7.1 Demonstrate how to appropriately contain a bird of prey for transport based on species, size, age and condition.
- 7.2 Outline how to secure the transport container to prevent escape and further injury.
- 7.3 Detail suitable transport conditions, including ambient temperature, to safely transport a bird of prey.
- 7.4 Discuss the most suitable person or location that a bird of prey should be transported to, based on species, age, condition and organisational policies.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare a carrier for transport • outline the transport conditions required to safely transport a bird of prey • understand the appropriate person or location to transport a bird of prey to, based on species, age, condition and organisational policies. 	2. Case assessment 3. Rescue 4. Transport 5. Euthanasia

Standard 8: Assessment of birds of prey

Objective: To equip learners with the skills necessary to assess the health status of a bird of prey.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 8.1 Explain how to conduct an initial assessment of a bird of prey.
- 8.2 Explain the requirements of a thorough assessment of a bird of prey.
- 8.3 Emphasise the need to seek prompt advice and assistance for a bird of prey from a coordinator, veterinarian or other relevant person, as appropriate to its condition.
- 8.4 Distinguish signs of and ways to determine common diseases and injuries affecting birds of prey.
- 8.5 Explain how to manage an injured or diseased bird of prey based on the severity of its condition.
- 8.6 Outline criteria and approved methods for humane euthanasia.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:	5. Euthanasia
• conduct an initial assessment of a bird of prey	6. Care procedures
• assess the health status of a bird of prey and recognise stages, signs and severity of common diseases and injuries	7. Husbandry
• determine the appropriate course of action for a bird of prey based on its condition	8. Housing
• outline criteria for and approved methods of euthanasia.	

Rehabilitation of birds of prey

Standard 9: Rehabilitation of birds of prey

Objective: To provide learners with an understanding of the requirements for the rehabilitation of birds of prey and equip them with the skills to provide high quality rehabilitative care at the relevant stages of rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 9.1 Explain the importance of and process for quarantining individual birds of prey entering rehabilitation.
- 9.2 Detail the facilities required to safely rehabilitate birds of prey relevant to species and stage of housing (intensive, intermediate and pre-release).
- 9.3 Describe appropriate equipment and furniture for stages of housing.
- 9.4 Illustrate disease control and hygiene practices appropriate to stages of housing.
- 9.5 Explain how to appropriately provide food and water based on the species-specific diet requirements and condition of a bird of prey.
- 9.6 Detail common conditions and diseases that affect birds of prey.
- 9.7 Discuss how to monitor a bird of prey based on its condition and stage of housing.
- 9.8 Demonstrate how to complete a husbandry plan.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outline the requirements for bird of prey rehabilitation • demonstrate correct set-up for housing birds of prey • provide food and water appropriate to the species and condition of a bird of prey • monitor a bird of prey undergoing rehabilitation • apply hygiene and disease control processes to bird of prey rehabilitation • complete a husbandry plan for a bird of prey. 	5. Euthanasia 6. Care procedures 7. Husbandry 8. Housing

Standard 10: Rehabilitation of bird of prey chicks

Objective: To provide learners with the specialised knowledge required to rehabilitate bird of prey chicks.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 10.1 Explain the importance of and process for quarantining bird of prey chicks entering rehabilitation.
- 10.2 Provide the tools and understanding required to identify developmental stages in bird of prey chicks.
- 10.3 Describe appropriate housing for a bird of prey chick based on its condition and stage of development.
- 10.4 Discuss appropriate food and feeding methods for bird of prey chicks based on species and stage of development.

- 10.5 Explain the importance of maintaining records on growth, behaviour and feeding of chicks throughout the rehabilitation process.
- 10.6 Explain the hacking process and the appropriate use of this technique.
- 10.7 Detail common conditions and diseases that affect bird of prey chicks.
- 10.8 Illustrate disease control and hygiene practices appropriate to stages of housing.
- 10.9 Demonstrate how to complete a husbandry plan for a bird of prey chick.
- 10.10 Describe mechanisms to reduce stress and encourage natural behaviour in bird of prey chicks.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outline the requirements for bird of prey chick rehabilitation • identify stages of development for bird of prey chicks and relate these to rehabilitation • outline requirements and criteria for hacking bird of prey chicks • apply hygiene and disease control processes to bird of prey chick rehabilitation • reduce stress and encourage natural behaviour in bird of prey chicks • prepare a bird of prey for release. 	2. Case assessment 5. Euthanasia 6. Care procedures 7. Husbandry 8. Housing

Standard 11: Release of birds of prey

Objective: To ensure learners understand suitability for release and criteria for releasing birds of prey.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 11.1 Discuss release considerations for birds of prey including timing and site selection.
- 11.2 Explain how to determine a bird of prey's suitability for release.
- 11.3 Detail the correct techniques and equipment for releasing a bird of prey.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess a bird of prey for release suitability • competently release a bird of prey. 	9. Suitability for release 10. Release considerations