



FACT SHEET:

How do I Become a Wildlife Rehabilitator

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What is wildlife rehabilitation?

Wildlife rehabilitation involves providing care and treatment to injured or orphaned wildlife for the purpose of returning them to the wild. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission regulates rehabilitation of wildlife other than birds and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regulates rehabilitation of birds.

Should I become a rehabilitator?

Anyone thinking of becoming a wildlife rehabilitator should spend time considering whether this is an avocation that is right for them. Some factors to consider are:

- * Do you have adequate space separate from people and pets in which to house and care for wildlife?
- * Do you have the money needed to buy food and supplies to care for wild animals?
- * Are you prepared to see and care for animals with serious injuries or disease? Are you prepared to euthanize animals for which treatment cannot be effective?
- * Can you keep from getting emotionally attached to animals in your care so that you will be able to release them when they're ready?
- * Do you have the time to care for wild animals? It may require 1 or 2 hours or more each and every day in order to provide adequate care.
- * Is it legal in your town? Some towns have rules prohibiting the possession of any wildlife.

What do I need to do?

If you've decided that wildlife rehabilitation is right for you, here are the steps you should take to eventually getting an AGFC Wildlife Rehabilitation permit for wildlife other than birds:

1. Thoroughly read all AGFC wildlife rehabilitation regulations.
2. Find a currently permitted wildlife rehabilitator that will agree to assist in your training. It would be preferable if this person is located near you but they do not have to physically oversee your activities, but are there to provide advice.
3. After you've found a rehabilitator that will supervise you, apply for a Commission Apprentice Class Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit. You will need a letter from a county judge or sheriff or municipal planning agency saying that your facility would not violate any local ordinances. A form provided by the AGFC may also be used.
4. At this point you can start caring for wildlife. Record the time spent on the AGFC Apprentice Training Record form and information on the animals on the AGFC Wildlife Rehabilitation Record Sheet. Apprentices can care for up to 6 animals at a time (except that you can care for up to 20 baby opossums at a time). You will need to submit an annual report of your activities to the Commission.
5. When you've accumulated 250 hours of training or experience you can apply for a General Class Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit which has no restrictions on the number of animals you can care for.
6. Individuals who have held a Commission General Class Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit (or an equivalent permit issued by another state) within the last 5 years prior to application and those who are a current International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council Certified Wildlife Rehabilitator do not need to meet the experience requirement to apply for a General Class Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit.