

## Upgrade Request for Provisional Wildlife Rehabilitator

**Provisional's name:** DRP

License number:

Phone:

Email:

Rehabilitation facility location:

Types of animals rehabilitated: passerines and small mammals

Date Provisional License was first granted:

**Sponsor's name:**

License number:

Phone:

Email:

Date:

Attach copies of initial Learning Plan, annual Learning Plan status reports, and annual Wildlife Rehabilitation Annual reports from Provisional period.

Describe the learning and accomplishments as a Provisional that demonstrate the person's readiness for the upgrade to full Wildlife Rehabilitation license based on Chapter 14 requirements and personalized Learning Plan. Use extra paper as needed.

### **Accomplishments and Comments Compared to the Learning Plan**

#### **A. The purpose, ethics, and standards of wildlife rehabilitation, including the Minimum Standards of Wildlife Rehabilitation.**

DRP has read the Minimum Standards of Wildlife Rehabilitation and rehab ethics. We have discussed them and how they apply to day-to-day rehabilitation activities – including caging, recordkeeping, euthanasia decisions, and continually working to improve.

#### **B. Federal, state and local laws, regulations, and ordinances affecting wildlife rehabilitation.**

DRP has read USFWS regulations affecting rehab and Colorado Regulations: Chapter 14 on wildlife rehabilitation, and the additional information on the Special Licensing website. We discussed the regulations as well as the reasons for the regulations. As far as I know, DRP has followed wildlife regulations.

#### **C. Identification of native wildlife species.**

DRP has several field guides for Colorado birds and mammals. She also has a baby bird id chart. That said, she continues to find it challenging to identify some of the nestling birds. I've encouraged her to keep studying this and talking with rehabilitators and Audubon members to continue learning.

#### **D. Wildlife natural history and behavior**

DRP has read an article about understanding the natural history of a species is necessary in order to make reasonable decisions about the animal's rehabilitation, including caging, diet, feeding methods, and ultimate release. She has copies of Mammals of Colorado, Sibley's Guide to Birds, Squirrel Rehabilitation Handbook, and various charts – and she uses them. While she has become familiar with the basic developmental stages of birds and small mammals, she will need to refer often to the references to help her make decisions about rehab and release.

#### **E. Techniques to humanely prevent and resolve human-wildlife conflicts**

DRP has read the CDOW's publications: *Too Close for Comfort Living in Coyote Country*, *Living in Bear Country*, and so forth. She has also used the book *Wild Neighbors* when asked about several human-wildlife conflicts, like raccoons in a chimney and Flickers pounding holes in houses. She attended a session at CCWR about preventing and resolving human-wildlife conflicts and has been willing to call other rehabbers for help. But this is still hard for her – especially if the caller is causing the problem, but wants (demands) her to come fix the problem.

#### **F. Safe capture, handling and transport methods**

DRP has developed some basic handling and capture skills, especially for juvenile animals and adult birds. She has some experience handling adult rabbits, squirrels and raccoons. While she has achieved a minimum level of experience with handling injured adult animals, I believe that she will keep asking for help and practicing so she can further develop her skill and confidence.

#### **G. Identification and general assessment of common health or behavioral problems;**

We spent some time discussing health and behavior problems of animals in rehabilitation when DRP volunteered for me. We have discussed this much more since she became a Provisional.

She is able to conduct a basic physical exam of small birds and mammals. She has a basic level of skill with juvenile birds and mammals, but will benefit from more training and experience.

She has effectively and safely cleaned minor wounds for almost 25 animals, including abrasions, lacerations and punctures. She has learned to identify and stabilize fractures with 20 small birds and provide supportive care. She has seen 20+ cases of severe wounds and injuries when the animal would not be able to recover to release, such as passerines with fractured joints and squirrels with severed spines – and make the appropriate euthanasia decision. She has worked with 8 head trauma cases, 5 of which recovered.

She also admitted several animals that she identified as having developed aspiration pneumonia from being improperly fed by the rescuer. She also recognized early signs of aspiration problems resulting from improper feeding by a volunteer working under her supervision. This unfortunate incident helped her realize that volunteers need close supervision – and that the animals need to be monitored closely, even when the volunteer says that 'everything is fine.'

She understands the symptoms of distemper and parvo – which allowed her to recognize distemper in 3 raccoons that were delivered to her. She kept the animals isolated until she could take them to the veterinarian for euthanasia.

#### **H. Intake procedures (e.g., assessment, weight, hydration, first aid).**

DRP has done the initial intake on over 65 animals. She transferred 15 of those to other rehabilitators and accepted 22 birds from other rehabilitators. After a couple of early cases where her recordkeeping was a bit sparse, she maintained good records.

In most cases, she has quickly and effectively identified the animal's developmental stage

and feeding needs by checking the rehab references and/or calling me for help. She was able to do this more quickly as she had more experience and knowledge. I expect she will continue to learn and seek help from other rehabbers.

She understands symptoms of shock and dehydration with birds and small mammals, and has initiated first aid treatments with 65+ individual animals. While she was initially reluctant giving subcutaneous injections, especially to baby animals, she now does them when they are needed. She has a good selection of first aid supplies.

### **I. Nutrition, diet, and feeding methods**

DRP has read several informative papers on nutrition of birds and mammals, and understands the importance of providing a good diet for both recovery and growth. She is aware of the short and long-term problems that can develop from feeding inappropriate diets. She continues to study this subject.

She ordered the appropriate feeding supplies and prepared diets as needed for the birds and small mammals. Her feeding techniques have been appropriate for the species. She has been very contentious in following an appropriate feeding schedule. The animals in her care have shown good growth – and she monitors them closely.

DRP has a good understanding of normal growth, development, and behavior of the more common species that she has rehabilitated to date: finches, robins, jays, fox squirrels, and cottontails. While she needs to learn more about some of ‘less commonly admitted species’, such as warblers and thrushes, she understands enough of the basics and is quick to check her reference books and call other rehabilitators. I believe she has a solid foundation in this area and will keep learning.

### **J. Facilities, appropriate caging, and habitat needs**

DRP has studied the caging section in the Minimum Standards of Wildlife Rehab and attended a class on caging at the state rehab conference. She has done a good job with ensuring that the cages that she built meet those standards and are appropriate for the species. While she is trying to expand her cages, she has not accepted offers of several donated commercial bird cages since she knows that they can damage feathers. I consider this a good example of her applying her knowledge of caging to help the birds in her care. She also maintains good bedding for the species.

She has created appropriate habitat for the species within the cages – and works hard to keep natural items in the cages, such as branches. She also keeps the cages very clean. She had maintained appropriate quarantine for the animals. If she ever decides to rehab mid-sized mammals, she will need to learn a lot more about quarantines.

### **K. Wildlife diseases and parasites**

DRP has read the information provided by the Division about wildlife diseases. She also has studied articles on wildlife diseases in the NWRA Principles of Wildlife Rehab and other references. She follows good sanitation and quarantine protocols.

### **L. Survival skills for wildlife**

DRP handles animals when she needs to examine, feed, clean, and medicate. She tries to minimize their stress, but not habituate them. I have watched her animals in the pre-release cages and they act ‘wild’ and avoid people. She has her animals in the pre-release cage for at least a couple weeks in order to help them build their strength and stamina, able to maneuver

quickly and skillfully (so they can escape predators), and be sure they are ready for release. She does not let anyone near a cage unless they have a rehab purpose. She does not let family, visitors, or others 'play' with the wildlife.

**M. Release criteria, considerations, and preparation;**

DRP has learned about release criteria. She understands the importance of the animals being able to survive on their own: health, age, size, stamina, self-feeding, able to make or find a nest, escape predators, etc. I have worked with her on assessing the animals' readiness for release and believe she understands and follows good release practices.

She has also done a good job in finding the appropriate types of habitat to release the animals. She has released animals within the 10-mile limit required by regulation.

**N. Euthanasia, necropsy and carcass disposal**

DRP has read articles on euthanasia and we have discussed this at length. In several of the early cases her veterinarian explained that the bird would not be able to fly, but that it could live a 'fine life' in captivity. While she understood that not releasing a wild bird back to the wild was not an option, it was difficult for her to make the decision to euthanize it – and to explain that to the vet and staff. While she and many of us still dislike having to make euthanasia decisions, she can do it. She understands different euthanasia methods. She has buried or incinerated euthanized animals.

**O. Public contact regarding wildlife (e.g., reasons, issues, risks, safety, liabilities)**

As mentioned earlier, DRP has read several articles and books on this, and attended training at the conference. We had discussed and practiced answering common questions before she put her name on the public list of rehabbers. She has taken lots of calls on baby critters – and learned the importance of preventing the public from kidnapping the fledglings and bunnies. She has helped arrange for some reunions and renestings. She hasn't hesitated in referring callers to others if she feels that she doesn't have enough knowledge to handle the case or caller (like with the skunk with its head in the pickle jar).

**P. Wildlife rehabilitation recordkeeping**

DRP has done a good job with her recordkeeping. Her daily records are detailed and legible for her. She has reviewed her records with me on a regular basis. Her annual rehab records were complete and accurate, and were submitted to the state and USFWS by the deadline.

**Additional subject areas:**

**Q. Working effectively with veterinarians**

DRP has done a great job of identifying several vets who can help with wildlife and are willing to help educate her as well. As mentioned, she had to explain to one of the vets that a wild animal that cannot recover to be released to live independently cannot live indefinitely in captivity. While it wasn't an easy discussion, it had a positive outcome. She has also helped the vets understand that wild animals are stressed by being a clinic environment and handling. She works hard to maintain positive and regular communications with her vets.

She understands types of first aid that she can do and when to take an animal to the vet.

**R. Minimizing wildlife stress**

DRP is concerned about things that can cause stress on animals in rehab. She works to reduce the stress by keeping a quiet and natural environment, providing safe caging, feeding a healthy diet, and minimizing handling and exposure to people.

## **S. Safety**

DPR has used good safety practices when handling animals, administering medical treatments, moving cages, etc. She thinks about safety for others as well, such as when the bird finder places them back in a nest. She demonstrated appropriate caution when handling chemicals that can cause toxic reactions, such as pest control chemicals or cleaning agents.

## **T. Other**

### **Managing personal stress and boundaries**

Ever since DPR began volunteering for me 3 years ago, we've talked about the stresses of rehabbing wildlife. She admitted that she wanted to help every animal and found it difficult to set boundaries. But she also saw situations where rehabbers who took on too many animals were unable to provide good care. And they burned out and quit. So we talked about the numbers of animals, species, ages and conditions that she could admit. She stayed with those limits. It wasn't easy, but she did it. While it probably helped that she could say that her sponsor was 'strict' about her limits. I think that she will try to not overload herself when she gets her full license since she doesn't want to compromise care or quit.

### **Working with other rehabilitators**

DPR has developed good contacts with other rehabbers. She calls them about cases and to get suggestions. When she got in a single crow fledgling she called another rehabber who had crows and transferred the fledgling so it could be with other crows. She has accepted a few birds from others for the same reason. She has learned the importance of networking.

## **Summary of Wildlife Rehabilitated During Provisional License Period**

In the two years since she got her Provisional rehab license, DPR has worked with

- 15 cottontails (13 juveniles and 2 adults) of which 8 were released
- 19 squirrels (15 juveniles and 2 adults) of which 14 were released
- 47 passerines (13 nestlings, 25 fledglings, and 9 adults); some she admitted, others were transfers – and of which 28 were released

She has worked with all ages of animals in those categories. She has worked with individual animals from initial intake to release or euthanasia. She has worked with a variety of health problems, including wounds, injuries, fractures, and diseases. She monitors the growth and development, recovery, and overall condition of each animal. She monitors the changes in individual animals, makes decisions and takes action.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Both before and during the time she has had her Provisional license, DPR has been studying the Provisional Wildlife Rehabilitator's Study Guide on the Divisions website. We built in the Study Guide to her Learning Plan. She has worked hard to understand the various subjects and studied them with several different rehabilitators as well as reading many rehab publications. She can answer or find the answers to the questions in the books because she knows the material.

DPR watched the Division's videotapes in her first year (15 months) as a Provisional. She has attended two state rehab conferences and 5 four-hour workshops on rehab. She read the information on wildlife diseases, including CWD. She joined NWRA and ordered many of their references, including the NWRA Principles of Wildlife Rehabilitation. She works closely with vets and other rehabilitators.

She has good basic caging and hopes to build more. She also has done a good job with releases and stays within the 10-mile limit. She has followed the regs.

I recommend that she be upgraded to full Wildlife Rehabilitation.