

FIVE STEPS TO BECOMING A WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR IN VIRGINIA

The Wildlife Center of Virginia
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STEP 1:

- **Attend a *minimum* of six hours of approved education related to wildlife rehabilitation.**
Please see the included page on “Continuing Education Opportunities.” Note that six hours of continuing education are required annually to renew your rehabilitation permit.

STEP 2:

- **Locate/Obtain a sponsor – if you are applying for a wildlife rehabilitators permit for the first time you will need to establish a relationship with another rehabilitator that currently holds a valid Category II permit.** A sponsor is a licensed wildlife rehabilitator who will provide education, training, and support for you for the first two years of your wildlife rehabilitation experience (i.e., apprenticeship). This step is necessary in obtaining your permit.
- **The WCV can assist with locating a sponsor in your area. Please also see the included page on rehabilitation groups in Virginia.**
The DGIF website also has a list of permitted Category II rehabilitators who can serve as sponsors at <http://www.dgif.state.va.us/wildlife/injured/rehabilitators.asp>

STEP 3:

- **Establish a relationship with a veterinarian –** Your veterinarian will not only be the person who signs your permit, but will also help to provide medical care and support for your patients. It is *essential* for successful rehabilitation that such a relationship exists. As a new (Category I) rehabilitator, you will not need a vet to sign off on your permit until you are ready to apply for a Category II permit (after two years), but it’s never too early to start thinking about who you will be working with.

STEP 4:

- **Set-up/Organize your facility –** Obtain the necessary equipment (i.e., cages, heating pads, scale, hygrometer, handling gloves and syringes) and food (i.e., formulas, solid foods) needed to care for your patients. Create medical logs/log sheets and feeding charts, build outdoor caging (if applicable), organize and clean work areas and housing areas. The area in which you rehab must be a separate area of your home (i.e., a spare bedroom, basement, or outbuilding).

STEP 5:

- **Apply for permit – Contact Dianne Waller with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) at (804)-367-9588.** Dianne will send you a copy of Virginia’s Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit Conditions, and depending on the type of permit desired, an application. If you are applying for a Category I permit, she will contact a conservation police officer in your area who will come to inspect your facility within the next three weeks. The conservation police officer will have a permit application when s/he arrives; if you pass the inspection, the application will be left for you to fill out and mail to VDGIF, along with a \$10.00 application fee. Please see <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/forms/PERM/PERM-044.pdf> for more information on the types of permit categories in Virginia.
- **As a Category I, you may accept orphaned wildlife from your sponsor only after you have completed all of the above steps and have received a valid permit for the calendar year (1/31-2/1).**

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ABOVE GUIDELINES APPLY TO VIRGINIA RESIDENTS ONLY!

Continuing Education Opportunities for Obtaining/Renewing Permits

In the state of Virginia, wildlife rehabilitators must attend a *minimum* of 6 hours of education related to wildlife rehabilitation to obtain and renew permits. There are a variety of opportunities offered by the Wildlife Center of Virginia, rehabilitation organizations around the state, national organizations, and out-of-state wildlife centers and groups. Here are just some of opportunities that are available:

- **The Wildlife Center of Virginia’s “On the Road” classes.**
The Wildlife Center offers a variety of introductory and beginner classes around the state of Virginia throughout the year. Please visit the Wildlife Center’s website (www.wildlifecenter.org) under “rehabilitator training” for a current class schedule or contact the WCV for an “On the Road” class brochure.
- **The Wildlife Center of Virginia’s annual *Call of the Wild* conference.**
The WCV’s annual wildlife rehabilitation conference typically takes place in October or November and is held in Waynesboro, VA. This two day event offers a variety of classes for beginner to advanced wildlife rehabilitators, environmental educations, veterinary professionals, and wildlife enthusiasts. One day of the conference equals 6 hours of continuing education. Please check the Wildlife Center’s website for dates and schedules.
- **Rehabilitation groups around the state of Virginia may offer various classes, seminars, and other forms of continuing education. These groups are also excellent contacts for finding sponsors in your area.**
 - *Wildlife Rescue League:* Primarily serves the Northern Virginia area, also has members throughout Northern Neck and into Maryland. Offers classes throughout the year. Hotline: 703-440-0800
www.wildliferescueleague.org
 - *Area Rehabbers Klub:* Serves Richmond and surrounding areas. Hotline: 804-598-8380
<http://welcome.to/arkva>
 - *Wildlife Care Alliance:* Serves Roanoke, Bedford, Lynchburg and southwest Virginia.
www.wildlifecarealliance.org
 - *Wildlife Response, Inc:* Hampton Roads area and Virginia Beach. Offers annual seminar (typically in February/March) on a variety of wildlife rehabilitation topics. Hotline: 757-543-7000
www.wildliferesponse.org
 - *Virginia Beach SPCA Wildlife Program:* Through the VA Beach SPCA. 757-427-0070
www.vbspcawildlife.com
 - *Native Wildlife Rescue, Inc:* Group of rehabilitators in the Rappahannock, Madison, Culpeper area. Offers an annual one-day seminar on a variety of rehabilitation topics, typically in February. Contact Amo Merritt at amo134134@yahoo.com.
- **There are two national/international professional wildlife rehabilitation organizations that offer opportunities for continuing education.** These groups also offer high quality publications on an assortment of rehabilitation topics. It is highly recommended that those who are interested in wildlife rehabilitation look into one or both of these groups.
 - *National Wildlife Rehabilitator Association:* www.nwrawildlife.org The National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (NWRA) is dedicated to improving and promoting the profession of wildlife rehabilitation and its contributions to preserving natural ecosystems. NWRA offers an annual conference in March at a different location in the U.S. each year.
 - *International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council:* www.iwrc-online.org The International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC), preserving and protecting wildlife and habitat through wildlife rehabilitation. IWRC offers an annual symposium (typically in October), as well as rehabilitation seminars throughout the U.S. and Canada. On-line classes are also offered.