

INDIANA DNR
WILD ANIMAL REHABILITATION PERMIT REGULATIONS

312 IAC 9-10-9 Wild animal rehabilitation permit

Authority: [IC 14-10-2-4](#); [IC 14-22-2-6](#)

Affected: [IC 4-21.5](#); [IC 14-22](#)

Sec. 9. (a) This section applies to a permit to possess a wild animal for rehabilitation.

(b) An individual must obtain a wild animal rehabilitation permit from the department to temporarily possess a wild animal that is:

- (1) a mammal;
 - (2) a bird;
 - (3) a reptile; or
 - (4) an amphibian;
- for rehabilitation.

(c) Not later than twenty-four (24) hours after taking possession of a sick, injured, or orphaned wild animal under this subsection or [312 IAC 9-2-17](#), an individual who does not hold a wild animal rehabilitation permit shall transport the wild animal to an individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit under this section.

(d) Not later than twenty-four (24) hours after an individual under subsection (c) receiving the sick, injured, or orphaned wild animal under subsection (c), the individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit that is not applicable to the wild animal received shall transport the wild animal to an individual holding an applicable wild animal rehabilitation permit.

(e) An individual shall apply for a wild animal rehabilitation permit under this section shall be completed in a form and manner prescribed by the department that includes the following:

(1) Documentary evidence the applicant has at least one (1) year of experience with one (1) of the following types of facilities that rehabilitates wild animals:

- (A) A licensed veterinarian.
- (B) A zoological park.
- (C) A university animal clinic.
- (D) An individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit for at least three (3) years.

(2) The name and address of a licensed veterinarian willing to assist the applicant with rehabilitating wild animals. The licensed veterinarian must sign the application and attest that the veterinarian has experience in the care of the species of wild animals to be rehabilitated. If the applicant for the wild animal rehabilitation permit is a licensed veterinarian, the signature of another veterinarian is not required.

(3) A list of the wildlife rehabilitation reference books the applicant possesses. The applicant must have at least one (1) reference book that:

- (A) includes information regarding each species listed on the application for a wild animal rehabilitation permit; and
- (B) is on the list approved by the department.

(4) The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of any other individuals who will assist the applicant.

(5) The species of wild animals that will be accepted for rehabilitation.

(6) A description of the rehabilitation facilities, equipment, and supplies of the applicant. The description must include the following:

- (A) Cages, including the internal dimensions and the materials used for the floors, walls, and perches.
 - (B) Intensive care units.
 - (C) Aviaries.
 - (D) Medical supplies.
 - (E) Any other items to be utilized in the rehabilitation process. used to rehabilitate wild animals under the wild animal rehabilitation permit.
- (7) A copy of the applicant's Indiana:
- (A) driver's license; or
 - (B) identification card.
- (8) The applicant's name and address.
- (9) The address where wild animals are housed for rehabilitation, if the address is different than the applicant's address.
- (f) The first time an applicant applies for a wild animal rehabilitation permit, the applicant must correctly answer at least eighty percent (80%) of the questions on a written examination supervised and administered by the department covering basic biology, care of wild animals, and the laws relating to wild animal rehabilitation.
- (g) An individual who fails to correctly answer at least eighty percent (80%) of the questions on the examination under subsection (f) may retake the examination not more than two (2) times not more than ninety (90) days after taking the first examination. Not less than one hundred eighty (180) days after failing to correctly answer at least eighty percent (80%) of the questions on the third examination, an individual under this subsection may retake the examination for a fourth time.
- (h) Except an individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit under this section for at least ten (10) years who has taken in at least twelve (12) wild animals for rehabilitation, an individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit shall:
- (1) satisfy the requirements under subsection (f) on another examination; or
 - (2) complete at least eight (8) hours of continuing education approved by the division, including courses sponsored by the department, National Wildlife Rehabilitator's Association, or International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council every three (3) years. A permit holder who is exempt under subsection (f) is also exempt from the requirements under this subsection.
- (i) A conservation officer must inspect the cages and any other enclosures where a wild animal will be housed before the department issues a wild animal rehabilitation permit to a new applicant. A conservation officer may inspect the enclosures, wild animals, and any records regarding a wild animal rehabilitation issued under this section at a reasonable time.
- (j) An individual shall notify the division in writing if there is a change to the:
- (1) address of the applicant; the
 - (2) name of the assisting licensed veterinarian;
 - (3) identity of individuals listed on the application as assistants for the applicant; or
 - (4) species of wild animals listed under the original application.
- (k) An individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit holder shall file an application not later than January 31 of each year to renew the wild animal rehabilitation permit. An individual must include the annual report required under subsection (o) with the renewal application. The signature of a licensed veterinarian is not required on a renewal application.

(l) An individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit under this section shall comply with any requirement of a federal permit. If the terms of a federal permit and the wild animal rehabilitation permit issued under this section differ, the individual shall comply with the more restrictive permit.

(m) An individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit may not publicly exhibit or display a wild animal possessed under a wild animal rehabilitation permit. Except for:

- (1) an individual authorized in writing by the department;
- (2) an assistant of the wild animal rehabilitator; or
- (3) an individual surrendering a wild animal to an individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit to the wild animal rehabilitation facility;

an individual may not view or have contact with a wild animal. Electronic viewing and photographs of the wild animal are permitted.

(n) An individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit shall maintain facilities while the retention of individual possesses a wild animal under this section in a sanitary condition and comply with the following:

- (1) Clean cages at least one (1) time each day using nonirritating methods, unless medical treatment necessitates otherwise.
- (2) Observe and provide care for wild animals at least one (1) time each day unless otherwise specified by the permit.
- (3) Keep wild animals in enclosures and in an environment that minimizes human contact to prevent imprinting and bonding with humans. The individual issued a wild animal rehabilitation permit holder or assistant of an individual issued the wild animal rehabilitation permit may interact with a wild animal only to the extent necessary to provide adequate care and treatment.
- (4) Limit contact of the wild animals with:
 - (A) a wild animal rehabilitation permit holder;
 - (B) an individual listed as an assistant under a wild animal rehabilitation permit;
 - (C) a licensed veterinarian;
 - (D) an animal control officer;
 - (E) a law enforcement officer; or
 - (F) an authorized department employee of the department.

Contact with a person not listed under this subsection is prohibited.

(5) House wild animals in a cage to prevent physical contact of the wild animals undergoing rehabilitation with:

- (A) domestic animals;
- (B) companion animals; or
- (C) animals kept under any other license or permit unless authorized in writing by the department.

(6) If suspected of having an infectious disease, quarantine wild animals in areas designated for that purpose.

(7) Separate wild animals from human living quarters and activities unless intensive care is required. but Unweaned wild animals may be housed in human living quarters that are away from human activities.

(8) House wild animals must be housed in enclosures that:

- (A) are structurally sound;
- (B) are of sufficient strength for the species; involved;
- (C) are maintained in good repair to prevent escape or injury to wild animals being rehabilitated;
- (D) are constructed to allow sufficient space for individual posture and social movements, unless medical treatment necessitates restricted mobility;
- (E) are secured when unattended;
- (F) have protective devices at entrances and exits:
 - (i) to prevent escapes;
 - (ii) if needed to prevent injuries to humans; or

- (iii) if needed for the wild animal's health;
- (G) have ambient temperatures that are appropriate for the species in the enclosure;
- (H) have adequate ventilation by:
 - (i) windows;
 - (ii) doors;
 - (iii) vents;
 - (iv) fans; or
 - (v) air conditioning;
 to protect wild animal health and to minimize drafts, odors, and condensation;
- (I) have adequate lighting by artificial or natural means that is cycled for appropriate photoperiod, if necessary for the species; and
- (J) provide adequate shade, weatherproof shelters, nest boxes, perches, and dens to protect wild animals from inclement weather and direct sun if kept outdoors.
- (9) Have enclosures which do not contain:
 - (A) exposed sharp objects;
 - (B) ponds with steeply sloped banks;
 - (C) toxic paints or sealants; or
 - (D) poisonous vegetation.
- (10) Provide visual barriers for the enclosures or separate the enclosures by distance to restrict a wild animal's view of humans and other species being rehabilitated to reduce inappropriate imprinting, socialization, habituation, or stress, unless a view of humans and other wild animals will not affect the wild animal's ability to survive when released.
- (11) Feed the wild animals must be fed as follows:
 - (A) With food that is appropriate and adequate to meet nutritional needs of the wild animal, unless medical treatment necessitates restricted food intake.
 - (B) With food that is palatable, free of contamination, and of sufficient quantity and nutritive value for the wild animal, including the use of supplemental vitamins and minerals when necessary for recovery.
 - (C) With food receptacles that are appropriately sized, easily accessible, and kept sanitary and safe.
- (12) Provide water to the wild animals as follows:
 - (A) Provide fresh clean water for drinking throughout the day unless medical treatment necessitates restricted water intake.
 - (B) Provide additional water for species requiring bathing, swimming, or misting unless medical treatment necessitates restricted water exposure.
 - (C) Use water receptacles that are appropriately sized, easily accessible, kept sanitary as much as possible, and safe.
- (13) Remove and dispose of wild animal food wastes, feces and urine, and bedding from an enclosure and premises at least one (1) time each day to maintain sanitary conditions and to protect wild animal and human health. Trash, garbage, debris, and carcasses must be removed and appropriately disposed of from the enclosure as soon as they are observed.
- (14) Cages, rooms, hard surfaced pens, kennels, runs, equipment, and food and water receptacles must be sanitized between each adult wild animal use and between litters to prevent disease transmission. The department may further limit the number or species of wild animals a wild animal rehabilitator may possess if the rehabilitator does not satisfy the standards under this subsection.
- (o) An individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit holder shall maintain current records for each wild animal with the following information:
 - (1) The species and condition of the wild animal.
 - (2) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor or other source of the wild animal.
 - (3) The date of receipt by the individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit.

(4) The treatment provided to the wild animal while in captivity, including the identification of and date of a pharmaceutical product or other chemical is administered to a mammal, an amphibian, or a reptile.

(5) The method and date of disposition of the wild animal.

All records must be maintained at the facility of the individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit for at least three (3) years.

(p) The individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit shall provide a signed annual report to the division by not later than January 31 of each year. The report shall list the following:

(1) The species and condition of each animal.

(2) The date the animal was received.

(3) The name and county of the donor or other source.

(4) The method, location, and date of disposition of the animal.

The report may be a computerized record signed by the individual holding the wild animal rehabilitation permit under oath or affirmation to be a true and accurate account of all wild animals taken in for rehabilitation during the previous calendar year in a form and manner prescribed by the department and must be maintained at the facility of the individual holding the wild animal rehabilitation permit for at least three (3) years.

(q) As soon as a wild animal is capable of fending for itself, the individual holding the wild animal rehabilitation permit must release the wild animal into the wild as follows:

(1) The wild animal may be released on land only with permission of the landowner.

(2) Mammals must be tagged or marked as required by the department if given a pharmaceutical product or other chemical for the purpose of tranquilizing or anesthetizing the mammal unless the product administered is labeled as safe for human consumption and the mammal is released after the clearance period.

(3) A bird must be released in the county from which it was originally found unless the bird meets any of the following conditions:

(A) The bird that is being released outside the breeding season for that species.

(B) The bird that has been in a rehabilitation facility for at least ninety (90) calendar days.

(C) The bird that is not in the order Anseriformes, Charadriiformes, Columbiformes, Falconiformes, Galliformes, Gruiformes, or Strigiformes. or

(D) The bird that is a juvenile.

A bird under clauses (A) through (C) may be released in an appropriate habitat in any county that is within that species' normal range in Indiana.

(4) A reptile or amphibian may be released at the site where the reptile or amphibian was found, unless the origin of the reptile or amphibian is unknown. If the origin is unknown, the reptile or amphibian may be released in an appropriate habitat in the county of residence for the individual holding the wild animal rehabilitation permit.

(5) The following apply to the release of a mammal:

(A) A mammal must be released in the county from which it was originally found or obtained, unless the origin is unknown or the mammal is a juvenile.

(B) If the mammal's origin is unknown, the mammal may be released in an appropriate habitat in the county of residence of the individual holding the wild animal rehabilitation permit.

(C) If the mammal is a juvenile and is housed with other wild animals of the same species, the group of wild animals may be released in an appropriate habitat in a county where at least one (1) member of the group of wild animals originated.

(D) In addition to the requirements in subdivisions (1) and (2) and clauses (A) through (C), raccoons, Virginia opossums, striped skunks, coyotes, and foxes must be released only as follows: or be euthanized:

(i) The release site must consist of at least two (2) contiguous acres.

- (ii) Not more than eight (8) animals per species may be released per two (2) acres of any site per calendar year.
- (E) In addition to the requirements in subdivisions (1) and (2) and clauses (A) through (C), white-tailed deer must be released only as follows or be euthanized:
 - (i) The release site must consist of at least five (5) contiguous acres.
 - (ii) The release site must be outside city limits.
 - (iii) Not more than ten (10) deer may be released per site per calendar year.
 - (iv) If obtained from a chronic wasting disease positive area, the release site must be in a chronic wasting disease positive area.
 - (v) If the permit holder resides in a chronic wasting disease positive area, the release site must be in a chronic wasting disease positive area.
- (r) A wild animal possessed lawfully prior to July 1, 2010, is exempt from the requirements under this subsection. An individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit may keep a nonreleasable wild animal, other than a deer, only if approved by the division of fish and wildlife as follows:
 - (1) For educational purposes under a special purpose educational permit under section 9.5 of this rule as follows:
 - (A) Possess a mammal other than a deer, as follows:
 - (i) With a wild animal possession permit obtained under [312 IAC 9-11](#).
 - (ii) Possess not more than three (3) mammals per species and six (6) mammals total if not more than twelve (12) mammal programs are presented to the public each calendar year.
 - (iii) Possess not more than five (5) mammals per species and not more than twenty (20) mammals total if at least thirteen (13) or more total mammal programs are presented to the public each calendar year.
 - (iv) The division may grant possession of more than the permitted number of mammals, other than a deer, under this subsection with prior written approval based on the number of educational programs presented to the public in the previous calendar year.
 - (B) Possess a bird as follows:
 - (i) With a special purpose educational permit under section 9.5 of this rule.
 - (ii) Possess not more than three (3) birds per species and six (6) birds total if not more than twelve (12) programs with each bird are presented to the public each calendar year.
 - (iii) Possess not more than five (5) birds per species and not more than twenty (20) birds total at least if thirteen (13) or more bird programs with each bird are presented to the public each calendar year.
 - (iv) The division may grant possession of more than the permitted number of birds under this subsection with prior written approval based on the number of educational programs presented to the public in the previous calendar year.
 - (C) To possess a reptile as follows:
 - (i) With a turtle possession permit under [312 IAC 9-5-11](#) to possess an eastern box turtle or endangered species of turtle.
 - (ii) With a wild animal possession permit under [312 IAC 9-11](#) to possess an endangered species of reptile.
 - (iii) Possess not more than three (3) reptiles per species and six (6) reptiles total if not more than twelve (12) total reptile programs are presented to the public each calendar year.
 - (iv) Possess not more than four (4) reptiles per species and not more than twenty (20) reptiles total if at least thirteen (13) or more total reptile programs are presented to the public each calendar year.
 - (v) The division may grant possession of more than the permitted number of reptiles under this subsection with prior written approval based on the number of educational programs presented to the public in the previous calendar year.
 - (2) To foster another wild animal only if five (5) mammals or birds of the same species were reported in at least the two (2) previous calendar years.

(3) A wild animal:

(A) used in for an educational program; or

(B) used as a foster parent;

that is no longer capable of being used for that purpose due to age or health may be kept with written permission from the division.

(4) A nonreleasable wild animal may be transferred:

(A) to an individual with holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit under this section to:

(i) foster the wild animal; or

(ii) use the wild animal in an educational program;

under this subsection;

(B) to a person holding a special purpose educational permit under section 9.5 of this rule;

(C) if the wild animal is a raptor, to an individual with holding a falconry license under section 13.1 of this rule that has held the falconry license for at least three (3) consecutive years;

(D) if the wild animal is a migratory bird, to an individual with holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit or obtains authorization from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to possess the migratory bird; or

(E) to a zoo accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and licensed or registered with the United States Department of Agriculture.

(s) An individual who is not holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit under this section may assist a wild animal rehabilitator if the following conditions are met:

(1) The individual is listed as an assistant on a wild animal rehabilitation permit issued under this section.

(2) The individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit supervises the individual who does not hold a wild animal rehabilitation permit.

(3) The individual is at least sixteen (16) years of age.

(4) If the individual is less than eighteen (18) years of age, the individual is under the direct and on-site supervision of the individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit.

(5) If the individual is at least eighteen (18) years of age, the individual may provide assistance:

(A) at the permit holder's wild animal rehabilitation facility; or

(B) as follows:

(i) With written authorization from the division, an individual listed as an assistant on the wild animal rehabilitation permit may possess a wild animal under this section at a location not authorized on the wild animal rehabilitation permit for not more than thirty (30) consecutive days, unless otherwise authorized by the department.

(ii) The individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit maintains responsibility for the care of the wild animal.

(iii) The individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit supervises the individual listed on the wild animal rehabilitation permit as an assistant with written instructions and is available for phone contact with the individual listed as an assistant at all times.

(iv) The facilities of the individual listed as an assistant meet the same facility standards as the individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit.

(v) The wild animal possessed by an individual listed as an assistant on the wild animal rehabilitation permit is returned to the individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit at the time of weaning or release of the wild animal, whichever is earlier.

(t) Except as otherwise provided under this subsection, an individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit may possess a wild animal for rehabilitation under this section for one hundred eighty (180) days except as follows:

(1) If authorized by the department. Additional time will not be authorized for the sole purpose of releasing the wild animal outside the hunting season for that species.

(2) Migratory birds may be possessed in accordance with the federal migratory bird permit of the individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit.

(3) Turtles with shell fractures may be possessed for not more than two (2) years if housed separately from all other turtles.

(u) A deer taken in for rehabilitation that is determined to be nonreleasable must be euthanized.

(v) A mammal, nonmigratory bird, reptile, or amphibian taken in for rehabilitation that is:

(1) diseased;

(2) severely injured, unless determined by a licensed veterinarian to be treatable and released not later than one hundred eighty (180) days after the date obtained by the individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit; or

(3) a turtle with a shell fracture, unless determined by a licensed veterinarian to be treatable and released not later than two (2) years after the date obtained;
must be euthanized.

(w) Euthanasia must be carried out with the:

(1) safest;

(2) quickest; and

(3) most painless;

available method as recommended and approved by the division of fish and wildlife.

(x) Carcasses of wild animals that are euthanized or otherwise die while in the care of a an individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit may be:

(1) buried;

(2) incinerated on private property with prior permission of the landowner;

(3) given to a veterinarian or landfill for proper disposal;

(4) put in the trash if double-bagged;

(5) if euthanized with chemicals, disposed of only according to the chemical label;

(6) kept for educational purposes only if the individual who is issued a wild animal rehabilitation permit holds a special purpose salvage permit issued under section 13.5 of this rule;

(7) donated to a properly licensed university or other educational or scientific institution that has a special purpose salvage permit issued under section 13.5 of this rule; or

(8) donated to a person with a permit from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for Native American religious purposes.

(y) An individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit holder shall not:

(1) commercially advertise rehabilitation services or solicit for rehabilitation of a wild animal that is subject to this section;

(2) have a wild animal spayed or neutered, or in any way have the wild animal's reproductive function altered; or

(3) mark or tag the wild animals in any way, such as with a collar or ear tag, except as required under subsection (q)(2) as authorized in writing by the department.

(z) An individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit holder shall notify the department not later than twenty-four (24) hours after acquiring an endangered species, or a bald or golden eagle whether live or dead, and the location and date of acquisition.

(aa) An individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit must notify the department not later than twenty-four (24) hours of a suspicion that a wild animal was subjected to criminal activity.

(bb) Wild animals, including their carcasses and parts, possessed under this section may not be sold, bartered, or transferred to another individual or to an individual holding a game breeder license except:

(1) for carcasses and parts, as authorized under subsection (x);

(2) for a live wild animal that is in need of continued rehabilitation, the wild animal may be transferred to another individual:

(A) who is issued a wild animal rehabilitation permit under this section; or

(B) if a raptor, to an individual with a falconry license under section 13.1 of this rule; or

(3) for nonreleasable wild animals, under the requirements of subsection (r).

(cc) An individual shall possess a copy of the wild animal rehabilitation permit issued under this section when transporting a wild animal possessed under this section to another location and be available and on-site at a wild animal rehabilitation facility when possessing and caring for wild animals authorized under this section.

(dd) A wild animal rehabilitation permit may be suspended, denied, or revoked under [IC 4-21.5](#) if the individual who is issued the wild animal rehabilitation permit fails to comply with any of the following:

(1) A wild animal rehabilitation permit issued under this section.

(2) This article or [IC 14-22](#).

(Natural Resources Commission; [312 IAC 9-10-9](#); filed May 12, 1997, 10:00 a.m.: 20 IR 2730; readopted filed Jul 28, 2003, 12:00 p.m.: 27 IR 286; filed Sep 23, 2004, 3:00 p.m.: 28 IR 550; readopted filed Nov 24, 2008, 11:08 a.m.: [20081210-IR-312080672RFA](#); filed Feb 9, 2011, 10:30 a.m.: [20110309-IR-312100418FRA](#); readopted filed May 20, 2014, 9:43 a.m.: [20140618-IR-312140017RFA](#); filed Sep 23, 2015, 9:57 a.m.: [20151021-IR-312140477FRA](#); readopted filed Sep 18, 2019, 1:16 p.m.: [20191016-IR-312190325RFA](#); filed Mar 11, 2025, 10:26 a.m.: [20250409-IR-312240385FRA](#))

[312 IAC 9-1-5.2](#) "Chronic wasting disease positive area" defined

Authority: [IC 4-22-2-37.1](#); [IC 14-10-2-4](#); [IC 14-22-2-6](#)

Affected: [IC 14-22](#)

Sec. 5.2. A "chronic wasting disease positive area" means a county designated by the department where:

(1) there is a confirmed case of chronic wasting disease by a laboratory in the national animal health laboratory network; or

(2) the scientific model used by the department predicts the spread of chronic wasting disease in Indiana based on the:

(A) location of positive cases;

(B) knowledge of disease transmission in the Midwest; and

(C) landscape characteristics of Indiana.

(Natural Resources Commission; [312 IAC 9-1-5.2](#); filed Mar 11, 2025, 10:26 a.m.: [20250409-IR-312240385FRA](#))

[312 IAC 9-1-11.2](#) "Nonreleasable" defined

Authority: [IC 4-22-2-37.1](#); [IC 14-10-2-4](#); [IC 14-22-2-6](#)

Affected: [IC 14-22](#)

Sec. 11.2. "Nonreleasable" means a determination based upon a licensed veterinarian's examination and statement that a wild animal may not be released from an individual holding a wild animal rehabilitation permit under this section because the wild animal:

(1) cannot obtain food without assistance in the wild;

(2) does not exhibit locomotive skills needed to survive;

(3) does not possess adequate vision to find or catch food or to maneuver in a normal manner; or

(4) cannot otherwise fend for itself without medical care due to disease or injury.

(Natural Resources Commission; [312 IAC 9-1-11.2](#); filed Mar 11, 2025, 10:26 a.m.: [20250409-IR-312240385FRA](#))