

Wildlife Rehabilitation Protocol – Euthanasia

Facility/Rehabilitator Name: _____

This is only a recommendation of what your protocol should cover. Your facility may insert, change or delete any sections of this protocol to fit the mission of your rehabilitation facility, or submit an existent protocol in a different format. All protocols must be reviewed and approved by a consulting veterinarian.

Protocol: Establish clear euthanasia protocols regarding euthanasia. Well-defined protocols regarding euthanasia have been established and help eliminate uncertainty when making decisions about euthanasia. Endangered or Threatened species may not be euthanized without first consulting with the Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Endangered Resources or, in the case of federally Endangered or Threatened birds, with the USFWS.

Policy: Whenever possible, the decision to euthanize an animal is reached by the consensus of at least two staff members. This process is intended to insure that each animal receives the appropriate treatment for its circumstances. This process is also intended to help alleviate the emotional stress associated with euthanasia. If staff are not available to consult on a case, the animal receives appropriate treatment and care until such time that a decision can be reached, unless, 1) it is severely maimed and obviously has no hope for rehabilitation; 2) it is moribund (dying); 3) fits the established facility protocols for frequently-encountered diseases or injuries such as canine distemper, rabies, paralysis, etc.

Only veterinarians or staff members who hold certification as a Euthanasia Technician perform euthanasia.

Animals are euthanized when:

- An animal is suffering from injuries that cannot be corrected and will prevent the animal from surviving in the wild by a means reasonable for its species (for example, animal with vision impairment in both eyes, amputee raptors or waterfowl, raptors or mammals that are human imprinted or irreversibly habituated, or a bird missing any portion of its wing), and for which captivity in a sanctuary or educational facility is not appropriate or such a facility cannot be found.
- An animal is diagnosed with an untreatable or incurable contagious disease that may pose a threat to humans or other animals.
- An animal is presented at a time when facility capacity for the species has been reached and transfer to another licensed facility is not possible.
- A mammal is suspected of having rabies, including all sick or injured skunks*, or a mammal is known or suspected to have bitten a human in which the bite penetrated the skin, and rabies testing is ordered by a local or state health department or a physician.
- The animal is an injured or sick fawn or adult deer from any county where deer rehabilitation is prohibited.

* Skunks may not be kept in captivity for rehabilitation, but healthy skunks that are merely trapped (e.g. fell in a window well) may be liberated where they are found.



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The following methods are considered inhumane by the American Veterinary Medical Association and are not practiced in this facility.

Physical: Drowning, electrocution, freezing

Chemical: Acetone, cyanide, nitrogen, argon gas, nitrous oxide (used alone), strychnine, neuromuscular blocking agents (succinylcholine, potassium chloride, magnesium sulfate) used alone.

The following are methods of euthanasia routinely used at our facility:

Physical

- Cervical dislocation
- Gunshot
- Penetrating captive bolt

Chemical

- Inhalants (list types):

- Injections (list types):

Other (please describe or attach additional sheet if necessary):

Rehabilitator Signature

Date

Consulting Veterinarian Signature

Date

