Guiding Principles

The NWRA is incorporated for the support of the science and profession of wildlife rehabilitation and its practitioners. Wildlife rehabilitation is the treatment and temporary care of injured, diseased, and displaced indigenous wildlife and the subsequent return of healthy animals to appropriate habitats in the wild.

The purposes of the Association are:

1. To foster continued improvement of the profession of wildlife rehabilitation through development of high standards of ethics and conduct.

2. To encourage networking and to disseminate knowledge.

3. To engender cooperation among public and private agencies and individuals in support of its mission.

4. To foster respect for wildlife and natural ecosystems.

Did you know???

- Permits are required to possess any bird parts, nests, or parts of nests.
- Live animals that are purchased are not candidates for release at the end of the school year. Tadpoles, turtles, mice, ducks, or any other animals in your classroom are not animals prepared for life in the wild. Most states have regulations prohibiting the release of such animals.
- The most important lesson to be taught is that these animals have ongoing needs for the rest of their lives for which a person must now be responsible.
- There are many programs, such as Project Wild or Project Aquatic, available to you for classroom use that do not use live animals.
- Even domestic animals in your classroom need a quality of life. This includes a specific plan for life beyond the school year.
Animals should not be taken from the wild, even temporarily, for classroom use. Students should be encouraged to learn from and respect natural ecosystems without taking elements from the environment.

Nests, feathers, and body parts of protected birds should not be kept in a classroom environment unless legally acquired. Birds in captivity need responsible care, training, facilities, equipment, diet, and purpose. In the United States, most birds, nests, eggs, and body parts are protected. Exceptions are European starlings, rock doves (pigeons), and house sparrows. Students should be taught that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service permits are required for the possession of migratory birds (Migratory Bird Treaty Act) and U.S. Department of Agriculture permits are required for the display of mammals.

In the event of a known injury to a wild animal, or if a dependent young animal is known to be orphaned, local wildlife rehabilitation organizations should be contacted immediately. Wildlife rehabilitators are trained in the housing, medical care, diet, rehabilitation, and responsible release of wildlife. Rehabilitators possess federal and/or state licenses and consult with veterinarians who assist in the medical care of wildlife. Contact your local state wildlife office for the nearest licensed rehabilitator.

Education presentations by wildlife organizations (or individuals) can contribute to the classroom experience. These groups are able to provide intimate classroom educational experiences. They must be able to provide to schools and educators evidence of possession permits and, when applicable, health certificates for any non-releasable wildlife entering the classroom.

GPEDelines

The National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (NWRA) is dedicated to promoting the profession of wildlife rehabilitation and its contributions to preserving natural ecosystems. Consistent with its mission, the NWRA has established the following guidelines for classroom educators:

- Educational institutions must comply with national, state, provincial, and local regulations. State and federal laws are applicable to the possession of both living and non-living wildlife by groups and individuals.
- The health and well-being of the animals, educators, and students must be foremost. Keeping animals in classrooms may contribute to health problems of those individuals exposed to them, as well as the animals themselves.
- The most important concept that can be imparted to students is respect for the integrity of animals and natural ecosystems.