



How to Become a Wildlife Carer

Our goals at ACT Wildlife Inc are to **rescue, rehabilitate** and **release sick**, injured and orphaned native wildlife, as well as **community education**. Effective animal rehabilitation is a complicated process which involves learning about animals and their environment and applying that knowledge to methods of caring so that animals are able to return to the wild as complete and capable individuals. Some important aspects to consider for potential carers are licensing, your level of commitment, your motivation, training and equipment.

Knowledge / training:

Prospective carers will need to have an extended knowledge of every aspect of animal care.

The minimum requirement of ACT Wildlife Incorporated in terms of training is:

1. Orientation and First Aid / Infection control (Full day course).
2. Basic bird care course. It is preferable for beginner carers to do the basic bird course, as the majority of animals coming into care are birds. Carers need to meet the basic requirements to care for native animals.
3. There is further training available in other species such as possums, bats, lizards, macropods (such as wallabies) and raptors. Training is also supplied for other volunteering 'jobs', such as phone training.

Previous experience in caring with wildlife and further training can be discussed and assessed individually. Once you are a trained carer you will be allocated a mentor. This mentoring is essential for you to start rescue and care successfully for a range of native wildlife.

Equipment:

On successful completion of your training, you are required to be available to care for wildlife in your own home. You are also expected to meet the costs of travel, animal food and equipment and be available to help within the organisation (occasional rescues, transport, wildlife phone when possible).

Before starting to care for your first animal, your equipment will be assessed. We will advise you on the specific husbandry depending on the type of animal you want to care (adequate home environment, aviary size, etc.). Some equipment is available to purchase or for loan from time to time.

Licensing:

In the ACT it is **illegal** to keep a wild animal more than 48 hours. To keep an animal for rehabilitation you need to have a licence and be a financial member of a licensed wildlife organisation in your state or territory. See the link for licences wildlife organisation in your area at www.fauna.org.au. You need to reside in the ACT to care for native animals in the ACT.



ACT wildlife Incorporated is fully licensed to care and rehabilitate native wildlife in the ACT. To become a member, complete the annual membership application form at www.actwildlife.net and pay the annual fee.

Level of Commitment:

The type of commitment depends on your home situation; a full-time job with children may leave too little time for caring. A considerable amount of time is needed for day-to-day management in areas of cleaning, maintenance and breeding of food supplies, preparation of housing, general observation and care of an animal. More time is required for trips to and from the vet, organising same species companions for your animals and rescuing and releasing them.

Answering the Wildlife phone can be challenging, interesting and rewarding, exposing members to a wide range of scenarios and people. The phone is an important part of the organisation – if the phone is not answered, animals are not rescued.

Motivation:

Why do I want to become a carer? Is it really for me?

Prior to beginning to care please think carefully. Wildlife rescue and rehabilitation is not for everyone as it has its rewards and burdens.

You need to be able to handle animals confidently. Wild animals, even injured, will do all they can to escape and bites and scratches are common. Wild animals are not to be tamed or treated as pets. A carer needs to keep some distance from the animals so no cuddling or petting, as imprinted animals cannot be released.

Caring is time consuming and sometimes distressing. You need to accept that many animals you receive and care for may die or may not be viable and have to be euthanased. You will be exposed to a wide range of rescue situations, sometimes challenging. The reward of the carer is often the satisfaction of knowing that you have given an animal good care and a second chance, as well as its freedom.

If you believe you have what it takes, complete the membership form on <http://actwildlife.net/become-a-member.html> and follow instructions for payment.

Training details can be found at actwildlife.net/wildlife-training

If you have any questions, please email info@actwildlife.net

