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Dear Volunteer

Welcome to Friends of Texas Wildlife (FTWL)

We appreciate your interest in our role as wildlife rehabilitators and we believe that there are many rewards to be found as an active volunteer. This manual has reference to a Wildlife Center, but the information is of equal value to all that operate from their homes as a care guideline.

FTWL relies on volunteers to assist with the day-to-day care and maintenance of the animals brought to our rehabilitators for treatment. As a volunteer, you agree to function as an extension of the FTWL program. This position will provide you with many rewards and benefits, but it also requires a high level of responsibility.

Reliability, safety and consistency are very important aspects of this position. This manual has been prepared in order to ensure the safety of you, the proper care of the animals and to maintain a high degree of professionalism. Volunteers are expected to read, understand and abide by the policies and information contained herein.

Please carefully review the attached information and make sure you fully understand all issues, then fill out the attached application and sign the attached contract. On completion return it to a board member of FTWL. This will indicate to us that all information has been provided to you and you fully understand it. Please refer to this information frequently. This volunteer manual will be updated periodically as the wildlife programs develop and change.

Any time you have questions or suggestions; feel free to speak with us. We are glad to answer your questions and respond to your suggestions and concerns. Your input is very valuable to FTWL operations.

We are pleased to have you join us and look forward to working with you in the coming months and years.

Sincerely,

Janette Winklemann
President, Friends of Texas Wildlife
MISSION STATEMENT

FRIENDS OF TEXAS WILDLIFE supports the rehabilitation of native Texas wildlife and promotion of co-existence of wildlife and humans through education.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of FTWL include the following:

1. Establish a facility with high professional standards of veterinary care and rehabilitation for injured, ill and orphaned wildlife.

2. Contribute to the body of knowledge of diseases, treatment and captive care of wildlife species.

3. Train interested individuals in handling, care and treatment of affected wildlife.

4. Provide an information and referral service for wildlife and environmental issues in order to educate the public of the importance of wildlife and the interdependence of all species.

5. Support responsible use of land, water and natural resources for the benefit of humans and the environment.

6. Network effectively with allied organizations and agencies in the wildlife, environmental and public health fields.

PROGRAMS OF FRIENDS OF TEXAS WILDLIFE

Wildlife Rehabilitation

Wildlife rehabilitation is the cornerstone of FTWL. This organization was established for primary and secondary care of sick and injured native wild birds, mammals and reptiles. Initial evaluation including first aid, diagnosis, medical and surgical treatment of injuries and illnesses are provided as well as physical therapy and pre-release conditioning for those animals, which are able to return to the wild.

Wildlife Education

Education of the public about wildlife species and their problems is carried out through numerous avenues. A telephone information and referral service is available to answer questions about the natural history of wild animals and problems often encountered with wildlife in an urban/suburban environment.
Training in wildlife rehabilitation and care can be provided for new volunteers with no background or experience, as well as training for educational outreach programs.

Educational outreach programs are presented to school, scout and community organizations as time and volunteers’ resources allow.

**Environmental Monitoring**

Monitoring the incidence of wildlife-borne diseases (including rabies), which may be communicable to humans is another valuable aspect of this program. This zoonosis surveillance is ongoing with frequent communication with the Texas Department of Health as part of an informal wildlife disease surveillance project.

Many toxins and environmental contaminants such as pesticides, chemicals and heavy metals (lead, mercury etc) are building up in the tissues of plants and animals, particularly predators at the top of the food chain. Many of these toxins are affecting the health of wildlife species (as well as humans) that live in the surrounding counties of South East Texas. Wildlife populations, particularly birds, are very sensitive indicators of the health of the environment.

**RULES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

FTWL provides a public service. We are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of quality in the fields of conservation, education and wildlife rehabilitation. This requires hard work, dedication and integrity from each member of FTWL. We expect everyone working on behalf of FTWL to have a positive attitude toward our mission. FTWL cares about its patients, and the people who care for them.

**Legal Considerations**

FTWL volunteers are regulated by several government agencies as we work with protected wildlife. As a volunteer you will not often deal directly with these regulating agencies, but you are subject to their rules and need to understand them. The key agencies are:

**TP&W – Texas Parks and Wildlife**- This is the state agency charged with protecting native Texas wildlife. Three of the common permits issued by TP&W to qualified individuals or organizations are:

a. Scientific Permit for Rehabilitation – This allows us to accept and care for protected species with the ultimate goal of releasing them back into a healthy environment.

b. Education Permit – Allows the use of non-releasable wildlife for educational programs.
c. Salvage Permit – Permits the keeping of carcasses and feathers. Generally, these are used for educational purposes.

**USFWS – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** – This agency manages regulations dealing with the migratory birds. This agency protects all native birds excluding introduced species such as the Rock Dove (Common Pigeon), English House Sparrow and the European Starling.

**Note:** At the end of each year, detailed reports must be submitted to both state and federal agencies regarding where each animal was received and final disposition.

**USDA – U.S. Dept. of Agriculture** – This agency is concerned with mammals that are on exhibit to the public and whether or not facilities they live in are up to standard.

**The Volunteer “Workplace”**

The FTWL Board encourages volunteers to ask questions and make suggestions. Our management goal is to provide two-way communication, in a setting that is conducive to maintaining solid relationships between everyone working on behalf of FTWL. Good teamwork, cooperation and communication are highly valued.

In any workplace, problems will arise from time to time which need to be addressed. When these problems come up, all members are encouraged to seek constructive resolution, sooner rather than later. FTWL is anxious to meet its volunteers’ needs, and in order to do that, the needs must be made known.

All volunteers are expected to demonstrate respectful behavior towards animals, each other, and the environment. Every volunteer is expected to present a professional image and show courtesy to both co-workers and the general public. Volunteers should always demonstrate a positive attitude toward their job and the organization.

In order to maintain our reputation consistent with our goals we have established some ground rules, expectations, and policies for our volunteers.

**Ground Rules for FTWL Volunteers**

*Have Fun!* Everyone who volunteers should plan on having a good time with other people who enjoy what they are doing.

*Be active.* Become involved in any of the activities going on that you have the time and energy to do well. There are many opportunities available.

*Learn.* Come with the goal that you are going to learn something every day that you do volunteer work. Then make sure that you do. Continuously work toward improving quality of
care in wildlife rehabilitation.

*Share.* Be prepared to share the information and skills you learn with other volunteers, but be sure the information is accurate before you pass it on.

*Attend Training Seminars and Workshops.* This is one of the best ways to learn and share. Specific training and experience will be necessary before volunteers will be able to work with certain species of animals.

*Work.* There are many things that must be done for effective wildlife rehabilitation. All volunteers are encouraged to get to know each other and participate.

*Attend meetings.* FTWL meetings are a great place to meet and socialize with other wildlife volunteers.

*Behave in a professional manner.* Everyone volunteering automatically becomes an integral part of FTWL operations and will be in contact with the public. Appropriate behavior and clothing are expected at all times.

*Be careful.* Exercise caution when working with wild animals. Many are capable of inflicting severe injuries. Some may have diseases which may be transmitted to and cause serious diseases in humans.

*Keep all public and work areas clean.* Clean up after yourself and help watch for things that may pose a hazard.

*Get permission.* Do not go into closed or caged areas without specific authorization to do so.

*Have fun!* Don’t forget this one; it’s one of the highest priorities for doing volunteer work.

**Expectations of FTWL Animal Care Volunteers**

1. Commitment of time.

2. Animal care volunteers are required to attend the scheduled FTWL meetings at the designated place and time sent out via email or by phone. Other volunteers (office, clerical, construction, etc.) are encouraged to attend these meetings.

3. Wildlife volunteers must attend at least one Volunteer Orientation. Dates and times will be announced as the year progresses.

4. Participation in orientation and formal volunteer training or the equivalent as judged by the FTWL board.

5. Ability to perform assigned tasks in a suitable manner. Observe proper safety and health
6. Successful completion of a minimum 100 hour probationary period.

7. Commitment to the goals of FTWL and to the role of education in meeting these goals.

8. Sensitivity to needs of animals and appreciation for their positions in the environment.

9. Cooperation with team spirit, respect for one another.

10. Eagerness to learn and a willingness to help.

11. Demonstrate initiative, common sense and motivation.

FTWL POLICIES

Safety – General Considerations (As they relate to a Wildlife Center or a Wildlife Program)

1. If taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs which cause drowsiness or impair abilities, volunteers should not work during that time. This is for your own safety as well as the safety of the animals.

2. Each volunteer must check with Rehabilitator before moving any animal. There should be no contact with animals without rehabilitator approval. Check daily.

3. Do not handle any species for which you have not received appropriate training. See Handling Safety below.

4. All injuries or accidents must be reported to a permitted rehabilitator or facility staff person immediately. Failure to do so is a minor offense may lead to grounds for dismissal.

5. Safety measures must always be taken, whether handling potentially dangerous animals or various medical instruments that could cause injury. All construction volunteers must follow accepted safety procedures when using any power or hand tool (i.e., goggles or safety glasses, ear plugs, gloves, face mask etc.)

6. Know the locations of the first aid supplies, fire extinguishers, eye wash station and other safety supplies and materials. Know how and when to use them.

7. Be aware of disease potential of the animals with which you are working and appropriate safety precautions. Please see the Zoonosis section of this manual for more information.
8. **ALL VOLUNTEERS** should be current on tetanus immunization. Those volunteers working with animals that are high-risk species for rabies must receive a pre-exposure immunization for rabies.

Handling and Restraint Safety for You and Wildlife

1. Wear leather gloves, safety glasses and any other appropriate safety apparel considering the species and temperament of the animal being handled.

2. Prepare yourself and pay attention to what you are doing. Be patient, yet efficient. Minimize stress, both yours and the animals.

3. Use verbal communication when working with another person so there is no question about who has control of an animal being restrained. Do not attempt to handle any dangerous species alone. Always have someone who can help in compromising situations.

4. Never be over-confident; do not allow yourself to become careless. This is when you, the animal or the person working with you will get hurt. A wild animal will take advantage of any opportunity and will use all of its weapons to escape.

5. Know your limitations! If you are nervous about catching an animal, be patient with yourself. Don’t do anything you are not mentally prepared to do or the animal will become stressed and you could get hurt. Ask for assistance if you are at all uncomfortable or unsure.

6. There is never any circumstance when you must accept getting bitten, scratched, footed or clawed. Always use gloves and a towel or a blanket when holding a bird or mammal, and be careful.

Zoonosis

Zoonosis are diseases of animals that may be transmitted to humans under natural conditions. Many of these diseases represent an important threat to the health of people in many areas including urban and suburban, as well as rural and agricultural. Domestic and exotic companion animals, farm animals and wildlife can all serve as reservoirs and/or vectors of zoonotic disease agents.

Anyone that handles or comes in contact with animals has the potential of exposure to zoonosis. Animal handlers, technicians and any animal care personnel which come into direct or indirect (feed and water bowls, bedding etc.) contact with animals and any body fluids including saliva, blood, urine and feces, are at risk of contact with disease agents which may have zoonotic potential. This includes deep discharges from wounds. Organisms, which may cause or transmit zoonotic diseases, include many classifications from viruses and bacteria to internal
and external parasites.

Examples of zoonosis include rabies, tuberculosis, plague, Lyme disease, chlamydiosis (psittacosis), Rocky Mountain spotted fever, brucellosis, toxoplasmosis, leptospirosis, visceral larva migrans (from ascarid parasites), arbovirus encephalitis, salmonellosis and typhus to name just a few.

An awareness of potential diseases and their modes of transmission (fecal-oral, aerosol, contact, arthropod vector etc.,) is critical to ensure that adequate sanitation, hygiene and personal protection precautions are followed at all times when handling animals and any potentially soiled or contaminated materials. It is essential that any direct contact is minimized for the protection of individuals and the general public health.

Anyone whose immune system is compromised (including but not limited to conditions such as pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, patients under chemotherapy, organ transplant recipients, splenectomized individuals, or persons under high levels of stress) should not do any cage cleaning or animal handling without talking to an FTWL board member and their physician first. Any information discussed will be held in strict confidence.

There are other concerns regarding the animals’ safety and well being. After all, we are here for the animals……..

Stress of Captivity

Stress is the number one killer of wild animals in a captive situation. Any unnecessary handling, holding, viewing or other contact with humans or the trappings of civilization (i.e. television, radio, air conditioning, pets etc.,) is inappropriate and should be avoided as much as possible.

Any handling or holding of a wild animal increases its stress levels as its sympathetic nervous reaction – the “fight or flight” mechanism – kicks into high gear. From a wild animal’s view, we are predators; it is prey and is about to become dinner. For its own survival a captive wild animal will utilize any available defenses to escape, including the use of weapons such as teeth, claws, beak, talons, hooves and defensive behavioral responses, such as remaining motionless (playing ‘possum), scent release by skunks and regurgitation by vultures.

Any wild animal acting “tame”, “friendly” or “like it knows we are trying to help it” may actually be reacting from sheer terror, shock or self-defense. Abnormal behavior may also be due to injury, illness or serious diseases, which affect the brain.

Movement is often the trigger causing a predator to take notice of its prey. For this reason a very common defense used by many species is to remain motionless and blend in with their immediate environment. Camouflage or the ability to look like a bump on a log or to blend in with the leaf litter of a forest floor, may be the best defense an animal has, i.e., a new-born fawn apparently alone in the woods, or a motionless rabbit or baby bird.
Direct eye contact is an additional predatory behavior that must be considered. A direct or steady stare is generally considered an aggressive or sometimes rude behavior in humans. It does not take long to generate varying degrees of discomfort in people simply by staring at someone. With pack animals like wolves and dogs, the dominant animal, or alpha, will always win a “staring contest” with the subordinate animal demonstrating submission by averting a direct stare. After spotting an intended prey victim, a predator will maintain a direct gaze at its intended meal so that escape will be less likely.

Any direct eye contact with a captive wild animal will compound its levels of stress immensely as it perceives it is being watched by a predator and has no chance of escape. The use of peripheral vision is a valuable skill to perfect when handling or dealing with wildlife in a captive situation. Provision of hide boxes in cages and enclosures and covering interior cages with towels or suitable fabric as visual barriers are also helpful techniques to reduce the direct stressors to which captive wildlife are subjected. Wildlife under rehabilitative care should not be subjected to display or exhibition even for a short time period.

**Imprinting and Socialization**

Every attempt must be made to minimize human contact with animals under rehab care, particularly with infants and animals that do not require handling for treatment or administration of medications. An imprinted or highly socialized animal is put at a tremendous disadvantage if released – with few exceptions imprints should not be released into the wild. Remember, we are working with wild animals, not domestic pets.

There is an important distinction to be made between the concepts of imprinting and socialization. According to Dorland’s Medical Dictionary, imprinting is a species-specific, rapid kind of learning during a critical period of early life in which social attachment and identification of self are established. Konrad Lorenz performed what is now a classic experiment in imprinting behavior with geese in which goslings were hatched and raised in isolation from other geese. During their early critical period, the goslings became imprinted on Lorenz establishing their lifelong attachment to him as their “mother”, and their species identification as human, or more accurately, as “not goose”.

Imprinted animals do not possess the necessary social abilities to interact with others of their species (conspecifics), hence they will not be accepted into their natural population dynamics. Imprinted animals display behaviors that are distinctly abnormal for their species. Imprinted animals will often cause many problems for people and some can be very dangerous because they do not have appropriate fear of humans. A striking and all too common example of this is where white-tailed deer buck fawns are raised as pets then released. Upon reaching breeding age and season (rut) the buck will then challenge others of its kind in competition for does. Almost every year there are stories in the newspaper of someone being chased or attacked by a once “friendly” deer or former pet, often with fatal consequences.

Socialization is the process by which society integrates the individual, and the individual learns
to behave in socially acceptable ways. This is a natural process of all species for successful interaction, breeding, and establishing normal behaviors for that species. This process is used by humans to tame a wild animal whose species identification is appropriately established (conspecific imprint) but has been brought into captivity and is forced to adapt to human conventions, or perish in the process. Some species of wild animals adapt to human socialization much more readily than other species.

In general, socialization of wild species with humans (or domestic pets) is not appropriate as it will often make the animal less fearful of humans, may significantly reduce its chances of long-term survival after release and potentially make them more difficult and dangerous to handle.

There is a critical period of time for both imprinting and socialization to occur in an individual animal. Imprinting occurs within a very short period of time after an animal first opens its eyes. This generally takes place over a period of only a few hours to a few days. The length of time for socialization is longer than for imprinting and in many ways it continues for the life of the animal. The critical period of socialization with many animals is within the first two to three months of life when it takes its cues from its mother, siblings and other conspecifics, especially for more social species (herd, pack, flock or whatever is normal family or social unit).

One further distinction of domestication should be brought into this discussion simply as a matter of completeness. Domestication of a species takes countless generations and centuries of selective breeding to accomplish. Imprinting, socialization and domestication are all-important components for animals that make good pets, but human (and domestic pet) imprinting and socialization are not in the best interests of wildlife or their ability to survive in the wild.

Euthanasia

Euthanasia is one of the most difficult decisions we have to make and procedures we have to perform. No matter what the situation, the act of performing euthanasia involves emotions. Volunteer veterinarians and specifically trained rehabilitators euthanize, if necessary. Euthanasia of a certain percentage of animals that are received is an unfortunate reality that we must often deal with daily. This procedure is not considered as an alternative to treatment for any reason for a native species with a reasonable prognosis for recovery and release. A fairly low survival rate is to be expected with certain types of injuries and illnesses. Wild animals that are incapable of survival in their natural habitat are to be euthanized according to state and federal regulations. The only non-releasable wildlife which may be legally kept in captivity are those animals which are placed in an educational, research or breeding facility or program, threatened or endangered species and those for which specific permits are obtained through appropriate state and federal authorities. All others are to be destroyed and disposed of as required by law.

All methods used to euthanize animals are methods recommended by the Humane Society of the United States, the American Humane Association and the American Veterinary Medical Association Panel on Euthanasia. Volunteers will not be expected to witness or participate in the euthanization of animals if it makes them uncomfortable, but are expected to understand and
accept that it is all too often necessary.

It is not easy to make the decision to euthanize any animal, but we cannot allow a wild animal to experience unnecessary or prolonged suffering for reasons of emotional attachment. These are wild animals, not domestic or companion animals, and must not be treated as pets. If it cannot be returned to the wild, we have an obligation, and the animal has a right to euthanasia.

Euthanasia of any animal, including native wildlife species, involves a great many emotions and causes one to face death often on a very personal level. The animals with a terminal illness or fatal injury deserve the most humane treatment possible. We have no right prolonging the animal’s pain or discomfort by attempting other treatment or even by allowing the animal to die without our assistance. To paraphrase Katherine McKeever from the Owl Rehabilitation Research Foundation, “rehabilitators often must think of euthanasia as the ultimate gift of mercy to a wild creature doomed by its injuries”.

Every death carries with it five stages of grieving. The grief process associated with human death consists of denial, bargaining, anger, grief and resolution. Dr. Kubler-Ross carefully illustrated these stages in the book, On Death and Dying. We frequently see people react to the death of the wild animal they have rescued (or have been working with in home-care rehabilitation) in ways that are consistent with these stages. Grief causes emotional pain and a person’s mind often takes protective steps to prepare for emotional trauma.

We can all agree that the majority of our wildlife patients are received in our care because they have been impacted by humans, either by directly injuring or disturbing the animal, or by damaging or disturbing the animal’s environment. Because human actions have interfered with the animal’s right to live wild, rehabilitators function to fulfill their right to be humanely treated. We also fulfill the animal’s right to euthanasia if that act is more humane than attempting treatment.

Quality of life is a topic which is well beyond the scope of this manual but is an ethical and moral issue, which must be approached on an individual basis. It is just one of a myriad of considerations which must be made when determining whether to pursue treatment and rehabilitation or to opt for euthanasia. It is critical to remember when making decisions about an animal’s life that these are wild animals, which are physically and mentally oriented for life in the wild, not in captivity. What is in the best interest of the particular animal?

Release ability and survivability are concepts that must be approached in the treatment vs. euthanasia decision. There is little argument that an animal blind in both eyes cannot reasonably be released with any realistic chance for long-term survival. Most of the daily decisions that must be made are not so obvious. Some considerations we must face include whether or not the animals has adequate vision, hearing, physical strength and ability to maintain a life in the wild that is normal for its species. The ability to evade predators, find or capture natural food, migrate, dig burrows, have functional mouth parts and normal behavior patterns are critical to survival. Release sites must meet certain requirements of habitat suitability and availability.
An animal should not be released, if it has a high likelihood of transmitting disease to the wild populations at the release site (e.g., Raccoons may shed the canine distemper virus and parvovirus for months following recovery. Carnivores may be asymptomatic carriers of the rabies virus in endemic or epidemic areas). Unfortunately this can happen with animals which may be unapparent carriers of a disease, trapped as a nuisance animal and relocated where the stresses of a new territory may cause the disease to manifest itself or trigger shedding of the disease organism and subsequently contaminate or introduce that disease into the new area. Animals may be viewed as a biological package complete with their own population of bacteria, viruses, internal and external parasites and other organisms.

But what about animals which don’t appear to be suffering? Animals which we could help over a long period of time? Animals which might fully recover from their illness or injury? How do we determine when to perform euthanasia and when to attempt treatment? How much is too much?

If an animal cannot be returned to a normal life in the wild, the only options we have for it are a life in captivity, or euthanasia. If we opt for a captive life, we must be certain that we have a just cause for keeping the animal. Non-releasable wildlife could be used for educational programs, as a surrogate parent, or in a breeding program, if the animal can be kept in a situation where it has adequate caging. With proper stimulation, correct diet, minimal stress, and any other factors we can contribute, we could provide the animal with a quality life. The stress of captivity is too great for many species to justify captivity over euthanasia. There are also numerous federal and state laws that govern any possession, handling and utilization of native wildlife species.

Above all else when making decisions about an animal’s life, we need to remember that these are wild lives, designed physically and mentally for life in the wild.

1. No animal with vision impairment in both eyes should be released.

2. No bird can survive normally in the wild with any portion of its wing missing.

3. Fractures involving a joint (or even very close to the joint) in a bird’s wing will generally not heal well enough for that bird to regain normal flight.

4. No mammal with impaired use in two or more legs can move well enough for release to the wild.

5. Raptors and mammals, which are human-imprinted, are not behaviorally equipped for life in the wild, and they may pose a significant threat to humans.

6. Compound fractures more than 24-48 hours old are generally irreparable and necessitate amputation, i.e. will make the animal non-releasable.

7. Raptors and waterfowl require both legs to hunt and swim, so amputees cannot be released. Many small songbirds can be released if they have only one leg.
8. No animal should be released if it has a high likelihood of shedding/transmitting a disease to the wild population.

**Treatment vs. Euthanasia Decision Considerations**

1. Will the animal be able to maintain a life in the wild which is normal for others of its species?
   a. Does it have adequate vision, hearing and physical ability? Can it find food, evade predators, etc?
   b. Does it have the strength to perform activities needed by that species? Can it roam large territories, fly to certain heights, migrate, dive to certain depths, dig burrows, etc?
   c. Does it have adequate functions of its limbs to perform necessary functions? Can it hold food in its paws or talons, climb trees and jump from limb to limb, fly between tree branches, etc.?
   d. Are its mouthparts adequately functional? Do rodents have apposing incisors to prevent malocclusion, does the pelagic bird have a beak that will still spear fish, does the hard-billed songbird have a beak which can crack seed shells, etc?
   e. Is the animal behaviorally normal?

2. Can we provide an adequate habitat in which to release the animal once it has recovered?

3. If the animal is to be kept in captivity during a long recovery period or permanently, can it be provided proper housing and nutrition, and fulfill its other needs for an adequate quality of life?
   a. Will cages prevent feather, foot or paw damage?
   b. Will cages provide room for adequate exercise?
   c. Will cages provide shelter and options for a variety of locations (high, low, shade, sun and various perch sizes)?
   d. Can we provide the necessary nutrition in terms of quantity and quality for the life of the animal?
   e. Can we provide proper conspecific socialization and other forms of stimuli?
   f. Will the animal serve a useful purpose such as education, breeding or being a surrogate? wild animals weren’t “designed” for life in a cage.
OTHER POLICIES

Schedule and Time Log (At a Wildlife Center or Wildlife Program)

The services you provide through your volunteer activity here are not only greatly appreciated but are very important in the success of FTWL. Please schedule your regular hours of volunteer help in advance. It would be most helpful to consider this volunteer job much as you would your regular employment in the time commitments made. If you have signed up for a time we will count on you being there. If for some reason you cannot be there for your scheduled times, please call us as much in advance as possible to let us know. This is particularly important if your job entails feeding animals and cleaning cages so that other arrangements can be made.

Each volunteer needs to accurately log volunteer time spent working with rehabilitators in the volunteer log book. It will be helpful if you think of this as a type of volunteer employment. It is important that each volunteer maintains an accurate record of hours spent monthly, as these records are used for recognition purposes and annual reports as well as foundation and corporate fundraising proposals.

Absentee Policy (At a Wildlife Center or Wildlife Program)

We understand that circumstances will occasionally arise such as vacation, family emergencies, illness, etc. As a courtesy, we ask that you call the rehabilitator to inform them of any sudden or unexpected absences for the time you have scheduled. A volunteer is encouraged to find a substitute for any prearranged absence and be willing to fill in for other volunteers who are absent.

Dismissal

Major offenses are listed below and can be immediate grounds for dismissal pending review by the board.

1. Lying, cheating and stealing.


3. Possession, transfer, sale or use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs at the wildlife facility.

4. Any rude or offensive language or behavior directed at the public or another volunteer.

5. Harassment (sexual or other), of another volunteer or the public.
6. Theft and/or damage of any personal or FTWL property.

7. Entering into restricted cages or areas without specific authorization.

8. Falsifying or fabricating information pertaining to wildlife patient documentation.

9. Handling species or individual animals for which you are not specifically authorized (such as raptors, deer, wading birds, venomous reptiles and wildlife at high-risk for rabies, including bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes and coyotes). Authorization must be given by your permitted rehabilitators after completion of your probationary period.

10. Using clinic instruments, equipment or tools improperly, causing damage or loss (this includes any construction materials).

11. Not following a directive given by a FTWL board member.

12. Falsely impersonating a FTWL member or another volunteer.

13. Harassment, excessive restraint, “discipline” or any act of cruelty or abuse to any animal at any time.

**Minor offenses** – one warning per violation and then volunteer is dismissed. This will be documented by the FTWL Board of Directors.

1. Smoking in designated non-smoking area.

2. Violation of any safety rules, such as improper use of equipment, no gloves, etc.

3. Not following recipe or feeding instructions for animal diets.

4. Not reporting an injury or accident that occurred at a Wildlife Center or a Wildlife Program to a FTWL board member.

5. Scheduling a time and then failing to arrive or failing to contact rehabilitator of unexpected absence. Please consider this a serious commitment and remember that the rehabilitators/facility staff and wildlife are relying on you.

**Volunteers Under 18 Years of Age**

Volunteers under the age of 18 can help in the care of wildlife in a number of important ways. All underage volunteers however, must observe some additional guidelines if they are interested in helping in the animal care areas. Any violation of these rules will be treated as a major offense.

1. The volunteer’s parent or legal guardian must be immediately available at the location.
2. The volunteer and a parent or legal guardian must sign the Liability Release and Wildlife Volunteer Contract.

3. The volunteer will not be allowed to be in the animal holding areas if the veterinarian, vet technician or rehabilitator is not on the premises.

4. The volunteer will not have contact with any animal, unless approved by and under the direct supervision of a trained FTWL member.

Additional Considerations

Good Housekeeping – Every volunteer should take pride in the care of our wildlife area. To keep the areas safe and productive, each volunteer is expected to maintain a clean and orderly workspace and to contribute to the overall cleanliness of the wildlife areas.

Liability Release and Volunteer Contract – A current, signed Liability Release and Volunteer Contract must be on file before each volunteer begins work.

Address – Please inform the FTWL board of any change of address, email address, or telephone number. This will assist us with mailing lists and contacting of volunteers for volunteer training, schedule changes, etc.

Guests – Bringing guests into rehabilitation areas is generally discouraged for the benefit of the animals. It is important to get pre-approval if you wish to bring guests to tour these areas. If permission is given, use discretion when walking through the wildlife facilities, i.e., be quiet, do not lift towels covering cages and use caution entering areas inhabited by nervous animals. There will be times when areas are off-limits to all volunteers because of a very nervous or high-strung animal. As a rule, children should not go into any of the animal care areas.

Dress Code – Neatness and professional appearance are important no matter what your duties are. A positive professional appearance will reflect well on FTWL. All personnel are required to dress appropriately for their duties and for public contact. Should any volunteer report to work dressed inappropriately, they might be required to change their attire before commencing work. As a rule of thumb, athletic clothing, torn or patched garments, or clothing with controversial or offensive decoration are not appropriate. We must maintain a high degree of professionalism at all times and what you wear should be a reflection of this. Your clothing should be comfortable, clean, without stains or holes and appropriate for your duties. Shoes or boots should be worn at all times; sandals, flip-flops or open-toes shoes are not acceptable. Remember that we are dealing with hospitalized animals, which often have diseases and parasites that you need to take precautions to avoid. Your clothing is often your first line of defense against infection and injury.
Public Contact and Telephone Etiquette

The success of Friends of Texas Wildlife depends greatly on volunteers like you, the help and support of the public and donations and grants from individuals, foundations and corporations. Any contact with the public must always be met with the utmost courtesy and diplomacy.

As an individual’s initial contact with FTWL, whether by telephone or in person, you will likely create a permanent impression of our organization. We must do everything possible to make that contact a positive experience, especially when that individual is frustrated, discourteous, rude, or otherwise difficult to deal with. Thankfully, unpleasant encounters are few and far between. If a situation arises that is getting out of control for any reason, politely excuse yourself for some breathing room and find an experienced volunteer to handle the offensive visitor or phone call. There will be no tolerance for any behavior that is rude or discourteous on the part of anyone volunteering at any time. Please report any situations that you witness or are a party to directly to a board member as soon as possible following the incident.

Telephone contact is an important aspect in the role we play as a wildlife information resource. Many of the “problems” that are faced by the public with regard to wild animals can be addressed over the phone without the average citizen having direct contact with the animal. There is a great deal of misinformation perpetuated by ‘old wives tales’ and the internet concerning wildlife, which makes the information we can provide an important and valuable service to the public. There are several guidelines to be followed that will be addressed specifically in telephone training workshops. The main things to remember initially are:

Never be afraid to say, “I don’t know, but I’ll try to find out,” or to refer certain calls to another organization or knowledgeable individual when appropriate. Don’t guess or make up a story. You don’t have to tell people only what they want to hear.

Never try to identify the species of an animal with the description you receive over the telephone. For example, it’s amazing how many baby eagles, vultures or brown pelicans turn out to be pigeon squabs.

Never try to diagnose a disease or injury problem. Ever!

Again, telephone and personal contact with the public are a constant part of the work we do. Most is very positive and rewarding. It is very important that all of the people, who call or bring you an animal, leave with a positive impression and the feeling that they have been helped.

Education

As one of the main purposes of FTWL is wildlife education, try to learn as much as you can about whatever fields or topics interest you. Then share it. Knowledge doesn’t do anyone any good if it stays hidden away in dusty neurons. Don’t be afraid to ask questions. More importantly, don’t be afraid to say, “I don’t know.” There are many very knowledgeable people
with a great deal of experience working with native wildlife within our rehabilitation and communication networks. There is usually a way to find an accurate or valid answer, although it sometimes does take a little time and effort.

It is only through education that the public is able to comprehend the scope of wildlife needs. Be aware of various opportunities to educate the public. Your commitment to FTWL should be a positive effect on your life and others around you. Remember that you must educate yourself so that you can educate others. Be confident in the accuracy of information that is passed on. Bad or misinformation is worse than no information at all.

**FTWL Library and Property**

Books, journals, publications, file information, cages, etc., may be available upon request. A documented log sheet for these items will be required.

**Media Policy**

Volunteers are asked not to make any statements to the news media on behalf of FTWL, or in any FTWL related capacity, unless authorized to do so by the FTWL Board of Directors’ President or Vice President. Refer any calls, letters or information requests from media persons directly to the FTWL Board of Directors. Violation of this policy may be treated as either a major or minor offense.

**Obtaining Donations Policy**

Members of Friends of Texas Wildlife agree to only secure donations of food, supplies, etc. as specifically approved by the Board of Directors of Friends of Texas Wildlife. An ongoing list will be on file at all times of any and all persons and businesses that make contributions to Friends of Texas Wildlife.

**VOLUNTEER JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

Animal care and feeding (special training will be provided)
- Daily feeding and cage cleaning
- Assist with some treatments
- Raise baby birds
- Raise baby mammals

Design and construction of cages and animal enclosures
Telephone assistance
   Answer Wildlife calls
   Consultation for wildlife problems
   Make calls to announce meetings, network with other rehabilitators

Clerical assistance
   Organize and file training materials
   Make copies
   Update and expand information and referral directories
   Update mailing and membership lists
   Maintain libraries – books, journals, audio/visual and slides
   Clip, index and file newspaper and periodical articles

Creative writing and photography for newsletter and newspaper articles, internal information services (fliers, pamphlets, presentations) - Assist newsletter editor with articles and format

Video and broadcast communications specialists
   Public service announcements
   Training and educational videos

Educational outreach programs
   Development
   Presentation

Fundraising
   Proposal writing
   Special events planning and execution

Horticultural/botanical
   Harvest native food items for rehab patients

Transport
   Pick-up and delivery of supplies or animals

ANIMAL CARE TEAMS

The purpose of the Animal Care Teams is to provide an improved public service for the care and protection of native wildlife in the field and within the network of home-care rehabilitators and volunteers.

Each team consists of a coordinator and any number of team members. Teams may be subdivided as needed by individual species, method of care of physical conditioning needs, special projects or programs, etc., but always under the directions of a Team Coordinator.

If you are interested in working directly with the animals here, or becoming a home-care
rehabilitator, there are many guidelines, laws and policies that must be followed which will be
covered in considerable depth in the training workshops.

Animal Care Team coordinators are generally available to you by phone to help solve certain
wildlife questions, give you hands-on training and provide phone numbers of sources where
supplies can be obtained. If you have any questions about handling or feeding animals under
you care, ask the animal care team coordinator. There are many resources available, please use
them.

**Responsibilities of Team Members**

Wildlife Animal Care Team members are expected to:

Abide by all federal, state and local laws regulating the care, handling, treatment and
confinement of native wildlife species.

Attend and participate in team meetings as set by the Team Coordinator.

Handle only species for which they have been adequately trained and authorized.

Understand any risks involved in dealing with the animals under their care, take precautions at
all times to prevent any threat to public (including other volunteers, rehabilitators and wildlife)
or personal (including family members and pets) health and safety.

Communicate any problems or difficulties to the Team Coordinator.
If working directly with and under a rehabilitator’s permit, the Team Member must be a current
active volunteer and have completed a volunteer orientation.

Submit a list of home-care patients monthly to the Team Coordinator at team meetings.

As a volunteer with FTWL, you will hear of and work with other rehabilitation groups. These
will include:

**IWRC** – International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council, dedicated to the furthering of
knowledge and experience in the field of wildlife rehabilitation, through education, networking,
and professional standards and review.

**NWRA** – National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association, committed to promoting and improving
the integrity and professionalism of wildlife rehabilitation, and contributing to the preservation
of natural eco-systems.

**Note:** Both NWRA and IWRC provide quarterly newsletters for their members, which provide a
wide variety of topics on rehabilitation and education.

**Friends of Texas Wildlife** – is the organization of volunteers that supports the ongoing
programs and activities of our wildlife rehabilitators. Friends provide funding as a tax-exempt non-profit group, and acts as a resource to the rehabilitators and the community.

INTAKE PROCEDURES FOR WILD ANIMALS WHEN ADMITTED AT A WILDLIFE CENTER OR WILDLIFE PROGRAM

First. Welcome the person and thank them for their time, caring and consideration in bringing the animal to us for care and treatment. Keep in mind that the person probably feels that this is an urgent or emergency situation and we must therefore act accordingly. It is very important to maintain a professional demeanor and decorum at all times when dealing with the public.

Next. The Wildlife Admission Form must be completed. Become familiar with this form so that you may help them with this important task. Please be sure that they have filled in all of the pertinent information. Please emphasize the importance of e-mail addresses for the distribution of newsletters, etc. The shaded/specified boxes are to be completed by volunteers only.

While the person is filling out the admission form, bring the animal to the treatment area immediately for evaluation and treatment. Be sure the person remains in the admitting area. Do not allow the person to follow you inside any restricted area. The clinical and holding areas for all of the wildlife are restricted access areas where the public is not to be allowed without appropriate authorization by a rehabilitator or Day Captain.

In emergency or critical situations where the veterinarian is not immediately available, a call to local permitted rehabilitators for instructions can be made.

Then, since most situations will not be critical, you should locate a cardboard box or vari-kennel of sufficient size in which to place the animal for a short period of time. Find a warm, dark, quiet, secure area until one of the rehabilitators or experienced volunteer can attend to it. Do not leave any animal for an extended period (hours, overnight) without getting instructions for its care or transferring it to an experienced individual for care.

Please do not try to feed it or give it water without obtaining proper instructions first. Be sure that the animal and its identification number are kept together at all times. Don’t forget to make sure one of the wildlife volunteers knows the animal is here, where it is located and what has been done with it so far.

Lastly, be sure to thank the person again for their concern for the animal. Assure them we will do everything we can to release the animal if possible. They should feel free to call back and check on the animal’s condition or progress, but that we, unfortunately, cannot call them with progress reports. Give them any brochures or handout information that may be appropriate. Thank them again on their way out.
YOUR DAILY SHIFT

What to Do When You Arrive For Your Shift

1. Be sure to sign your name, date and time in the Volunteer Log book.

2. Please familiarize yourself with any notes posted on the daily treatment sheets for each animal. On these sheets will be special medical instructions, special feeding or watering instructions and/or information needed for special care. New information is posted daily.

3. Make it a habit to follow the listed job schedule and to initial it after each job is done. There are numerous daily and weekly jobs, which need to be done routinely.

4. Check with a rehabilitator or Day Captain to line up special assignments for the day.

End of Shift

1. Check each cage for fresh water and food. Repaper or change bedding only if wet or soiled. Remember that we do not want to handle the animals any more than absolutely necessary.

2. Check with a rehabilitator or Day Captain for any final instructions.

3. Communicate with the volunteer(s) on the next shift those tasks, which have been done, and those that still need to be accomplished. Utilize the checklists.

End of Day

1. Make a routine check of all patients, being sure each animal has adequate food and water for the night. Also, for patients caged outside, make sure enough shredded newspaper or a hide box is in appropriate cages.

2. Sweep and mop the floors and any soiled areas.

3. Empty all trash containers; make sure that the sinks and counters are clean ready for the following morning.

4. Certain foods need to be prepared each night and refrigerated. Frozen fish, if needed, can also be stored in the fridge overnight. If feeder rats, mice or quail are needed in the fridge for the next day, please restock.

5. Complete end-of-day checklist.
Basic Feeding Guidelines

Every patient has its own record and treatment sheet. All patient treatment sheets are together on one clipboard for each of the areas they may be in. The treatment sheet will contain medical care instructions, and dietary specifics. Before cage cleaning or feeding can be done, treatments sheets are to be examined for those patients needing medication, as certain medications must be given at specific times during the day. It’s important that you check their charts daily and check with a rehabilitator or the Day Captain for further instructions as needed.

You should become familiar with the various wildlife information books, manuals or files we have on hand to learn specific feeding information. Through continuous learning of wildlife diets and habits, your role as a volunteer will be an increasingly important asset. Being confident and correct in your actions will further enhance your volunteer experience.

Basic Hygiene Procedures

Working in an atmosphere with sick and injured animals is much like working in a hospital. The elimination of disease agents and organisms is paramount. The only way we can achieve this is through practicing good hygiene. Here are some examples for you to follow:

**Cage Cleaning** – By sure all cages are cleaned, disinfected and rinsed thoroughly. Cages basically have six interior surfaces, all of which need to be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

**Dishes** – Be sure all dishes are cleaned in hot, soapy water, rinsed thoroughly and disinfected.

**Laundry** – Be sure all laundry has been washed in soap and bleach. If something comes out less than clean, wash it again. Only certain volunteers will be authorized to do the laundry.

**Food** – Date any food or leftovers that are placed in the refrigerator. If you’re not sure how old some prepared food is, pitch it. Many vegetables can be chopped and prepared ahead of time for convenience. If there is a surplus of fruits and vegetables, please package and freeze in small freezer bags to prevent spoilage.

**Housekeeping** – If you see a mess somewhere (feces, urine, food, dirt, etc.), take care of it. Don’t wait for someone else to do it.

**Flies and Ants** – If there is an infestation of flies or ants, tell the rehabilitators or Day Captain. Do not use any insecticides without specific authorization.

**Syringes, Needles and Medical Waste** – Handling syringes and needles is restricted to certain volunteers. We must abide by strict health regulations in the handling of medical wastes. Specific volunteers will be trained in these procedures.

**Gloves** – Disposable latex examination gloves should be used routinely when working with disinfectants and cleaning cages, handling feeder rats and mice, and other times where you may
contact materials which may be contaminated with feces, urine, blood, other body fluids or some food items. These gloves are a primary line of defense to prevent contact with chemicals that may cause injury or infectious agents, which may cause zoonotic diseases.

Cleaning Procedures – General Guidelines

The cleaning procedures that follow are guidelines that will help to ensure that the wildlife areas are maintained in a clean and orderly manner. It is extremely important that we maintain high standards of cleanliness at all times as this is a medical facility with an almost continual influx of animals, many of which are ill or may carry infectious disease organisms. There are many opportunities to spread disease from one animal to another or to those humans who work and volunteer here. **Good personal hygiene is essential** at all times as well as an awareness of the necessity to keep all work and confinement areas clean and disinfected between animal patients. Please take every precaution that you do not jeopardize yourself or the health and safety of others.

Bacteria are everywhere. Most infectious organisms are microscopic. We are working with animals, which easily may carry or be infected with disease agents, which could be transmitted to careless or unsuspecting individuals. Extreme care and caution must be exercised at all times when handling soiled newspaper and bedding. Good personal hygiene is essential. Latex examination gloves and surgical masks are encouraged for everyone, especially for anyone whose immune system is compromised (including but not limited to conditions such as pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, patients under chemotherapy, organ transplant recipients, splenectomized individuals, or persons under high level of stress). Those who fall under any of these categories should not do any cage cleaning or animal handling without talking to an experienced rehabilitator and their physician first.

Cleaning essentially consists of the removal of any soil and organic matter (food, urine, feces, saliva, etc.,) from the surface being cleaned. This process usually will involve the use of soap or a detergent but in some cases may be accomplished using only tap water (hot if feasible). This often requires some physical or determined effort, particularly when you are confronted with old or dried materials. It is very important, however, to be certain that all soil and organic matter is removed from the surface being cleaned prior to disinfecting it. Many disinfectants are neutralized or inactivated by contact with organic materials. Bleach is very corrosive – always rinse objects after using bleach or bleach solutions.

If you make a mess or see a mess, please clean it up. We must always maintain strict cleaning and disinfecting procedures. If in doubt about the cleanliness or condition of cages, bowls, etc., clean and disinfect it again. **Over-cleaning is not a problem, under-cleaning is.**

Please take care when using any of the cleaning solutions, sprayers, hoses, etc. After using the hoses, be sure to turn the water off and relieve the pressure in the hose by draining the water from it. Then coil the hose neatly in its resting location until it is needed again.

**Waste/Garbage** – Garbage/trash/waste needs to be disposed of properly and in appropriate
containers. Medical wastes will be dealt with separately. Containers can be found in each of the animal care or holding areas. All trash cans need to have a plastic liner in them. Don’t throw waste into a trash can that is not lined.

**Disinfection** – Disinfection of floors, counter tops, cages, feeding bowls and utensils will be done using one of three or four disinfecting solutions. Some of them will already be prepared from concentrates and can be used directly on the surface that is being disinfected. Contact time is important, i.e., the disinfectant needs to be in direct contact with microorganisms for sufficient time for the disinfectant to kill the organisms, usually about 5-10 minutes.

If you need to prepare a disinfecting solution from a concentrate be sure to **measure properly**. Too little of the active ingredient will not be effective. More than the recommended amount will not be any more effective, and is quite wasteful. Some of the disinfectants can cost over $40.00 per gallon for the concentrated solution. If you have not been trained or are not absolutely sure of what you are doing, do not continue without asking and/or being trained. **Do not mix any of these disinfectants with each other or anything other than water.** Be sure of labeling of each spray bottle, making sure the ingredients listed are used in that spray bottle. Also, if you notice a spray bottle has lost its labeling, please label appropriately.

**Food and Water Bowls** – Food and water bowls should be removed from each cage daily and washed and disinfected. For resident and long-term patients, if their water bowl appears to be clean it may be rinsed with fresh water and returned to their cage. A fresh water bowl should be provided for residents at least every other day (every day for patients). Fresh water must be given to all animals in our care at least once daily. Food bowls must be switched out with a clean and disinfected bowl daily.

**Stainless Steel Cages** – Please make sure a thorough, complete cleaning is done. Feathers and dried food need to be completely removed. Cages have six sides (including door) all of which need to be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Be aware of corners, cracks and crevices where waste, food and other organic material may hide. Pay attention to hinges and latches especially in mammal cages. Dried fecal material or food may require extra attention, and may need to be soaked for a few minutes to allow easier removal.

Using the spray disinfectant, be sure to spray all surfaces of the cage, including the door and its hinges and latches, the top, bottom, back and sides of the cage. Allow disinfectant to remain in contact with the surfaces for a few minutes. Wipe walls, top and doors with paper towels paying close attention to all areas of the cage. After final disinfection of the cage, it may be set up with clean newspaper for arriving patients.

**Vari-kennels and Portable Cages** – Vari-kennels and portable cages will be cleaned in the area specifically designed for soap and water run-off. Cleaning of the vari-kennels includes the use of long-handled cleaning tools and detergent to remove soil and organic matter on all surfaces of the kennels. A small amount of detergent is usually necessary. Make sure all side, bottom, top, door and window areas are cleaned and rinsed thoroughly. Remember, many of our patients are curious or determined to escape and all areas inside and out can be contaminated. After final rinsing and drying, the next step would be disinfecting the kennel.
Disinfectant solutions are to be sprayed so that complete coverage of the top, sides, bottom, windows and door has been covered with a fine mist. Since small paws can reach the outside of windows and doors make sure that these areas are disinfected also. Please store the kennels in a neat and orderly fashion.

**Floor Cleaning** – All floors should be swept and mopped daily. Be careful not to go around objects on the floor, but to move them and sweep/mop underneath when possible. Check in corners, etc., where dirt accumulates. If there are pieces of food or fecal material, scrape it up and scrub with cleanser.

**Dishes and Lab Utensils**

**Animal Dish Cleaning** – Fill up the sink with hot soapy water. Wash and rinse dishes and allow them to drain in sink. The next step is disinfection. Each dish needs to be covered thoroughly with disinfectant. Pour or spray the disinfectant over all surfaces. Do not add water. Allow this to remain for at least 15 minutes. Rinse thoroughly and allow them dry in dish rack.

**Syringes, tubes, instruments, etc.,** - Wash syringes in hot soapy water, thoroughly flush out, rinse and place in Nolvasan solution. After soaking 10 to 20 minutes, rinse and air-dry. Surgical and treatment instruments need to be cleaned, using proper procedures. Special training for cleaning and pack preparation will be done under supervision of a permitted rehabilitator.

**Surface/Counters** – It’s important to clean all leftover pieces of food and debris from all surfaces. Throw away what you can, clean thoroughly with cloth and soapy water. In the exam room and counters, you should spray with Nolvasan. If bleach is used, there should be a final rinse of water. A regular cleaning of all cabinet surfaces (cabinet doors and drawers) should also be done.

**Laundry** – Do no pile it on the floor. Be sure all towels, sheets, etc., are free from food, feces, or debris before loading in the basket. It’s important to keep up with the laundry and not let it pile up. If the basket is full, start a load of laundry in the washer using the instructions above the washer. Be sure and not overfill the washer with laundry. Next, place clean laundry in the dryer and place on an appropriate setting. Be sure to clean out the lint filter before each load.

**WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR’S CODE OF ETHICS**

1. A rehabilitator should strive to achieve high standards of animal care through knowledge and an understanding of the field. Continuing efforts must be made to keep informed of current rehabilitation methods.

2. A rehabilitator should have documented formal or informal education/training related to the field of wildlife rehabilitation (i.e., biology, zoology, veterinary medicine, wildlife management).
3. A rehabilitator’s attitude should be responsible, conscientious and dedicated; working toward improving the quality of care given to wild animals undergoing rehabilitation.

4. A rehabilitator should maintain accurate and up-to-date records. Documentation of all animals received must abide by local, state, and federal laws concerning the possession of wildlife and wildlife rehabilitation.

5. A rehabilitator should establish good and safe work habits, abiding by current health and safety practices at all times.

6. A rehabilitator should enlist the assistance of a veterinarian for diagnosis and treatment recommendations.

7. A rehabilitator should encourage community support and involvement. This may be accomplished through the use of educational programs or volunteer training. Educational efforts should be recognized as a means of preventing further wildlife loss or abuse.

8. Rehabilitators should respect and share skills and knowledge with other rehabilitators and work toward a common goal – a responsible concern for living beings and the welfare of the environment.

9. Rehabilitators should establish guidelines for evaluating rehabilitation efforts in order to improve and excel.

10. A rehabilitator should work on the basis of sound ecological principles, incorporating appropriate conservation and preservation ethics, and should strive toward a stewardship of the planet that is shared by all living beings.

11. A rehabilitator should strive to maintain all animals in a wild condition and release them as soon as appropriate.

12. A rehabilitator should acknowledge that a non-releasable animal, inappropriate for education, fostering or captive breeding, has a right to euthanasia.

13. A rehabilitator should place optimum animal care above personal gain.

14. A rehabilitator should conduct all business and activities in a professional manner, with honesty, integrity, compassion, and commitment; realizing that an individual’s conduct reflects on the entire field of wildlife rehabilitation.
Release of Liability Agreement  
Friends of Texas Wildlife

1. The undersigned is a volunteer for Friends of Texas Wildlife, and is voluntarily performing services, without monetary or other consideration, for Friends of Texas Wildlife. Because the undersigned desires to provide services for Friends of Texas Wildlife, the undersigned has executed this Release of Liability Agreement of his or her own free will.

2. The undersigned understands and agrees that he or she may be involved in manual labor, indoors and outdoors, and may be exposed to and come in to physical contact with domestic and wild animals, plants and other organisms. The undersigned voluntarily and willingly undertakes any and all risks directly related to such work, services, involvement, exposure and physical contact, and accepts all responsibility therefore.

3. The undersigned hereby forever releases and discharges Friends of Texas Wildlife, its directors, agents and all representatives, from any and all claims, actions, causes of action, damages, injuries, costs, expenses, liabilities and/or responsibilities, whether now know or unknown, whether past, present or future, incurred in connection with services performed for Friends of Texas Wildlife whether directly or indirectly.

4. In exchange for the Release of Liability, Friends of Texas Wildlife will allow services to be performed through volunteer action by the undersigned, on or off premises. Friends of Texas Wildlife reserves the right to select which services are to be performed by the undersigned.

5. All parties agree that the mutual consideration given by each party herein has been received and is sufficient. The parties agree that this Release of Liability Agreement and allowance for performance of services extends both on and off any premises operated by Friends of Texas Wildlife/Rehabilitators. This agreement is effective the date signed below, and thereafter. This agreement is binding on all parties’ heirs, representatives, successors and assigns.

DATE____________________________
UNDERSIGNED                                                              FRIENDS OF TEXAS WILDLIFE

NAME:___________________________                        BY:__________________________
Executive Board Member.
Office held:

(pARENT or guardian if under 18)
The Board would like to convey our thoughts and position on a few topics that will help build a stronger organization for us all - an organization that we can take pride in and feel a sense of belonging to.

1. When we deal with the public, we should always conduct ourselves in a professional manner and dress appropriately. We are not only representing FTWL but also representing all permitted wildlife rehabilitators.

2. FTWL does not suggest that rehabilitators go out on calls, and cannot be responsible if a rehabilitator chooses to do so. You have to make that choice yourself. Remember it is safer to meet the public in a crowded area, such as a shopping mall parking lot or other well-populated areas.

3. If a rehabilitator chooses to respond to a wildlife call, we advise that they only respond if they have specific training for, or specialize in that animal. No rehabilitator should handle animals that they are not familiar with, or handle calls regarding high-risk animals, if they have not had the required pre-exposure shots. Remember our networking, and refer calls about such animals to an appropriate rehabilitator.

4. **Recommendation letters:** When writing a letter of recommendation for an individual to obtain his/her rehab permit, it is strongly urged that you have **firsthand** knowledge of this individual’s abilities, and willingness to represent Friends of Texas Wildlife in a manner that is conducive to our organizations policies and public representations.

5. **Sub-Permitted:** When you are sub-permitted on a rehabilitators permit, you have a responsibility to that Permit holder. She/he is responsible for your handling of Wildlife, and the reporting connected to that animal. **Be aware that your actions could jeopardize that person’s permit.** Under ideal circumstances it would be preferable to only accept animals from your permit holder, but if you do accept animals from other sources, your permit holder **MUST** be advised at the earliest opportunity.
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<td>We all know how important donations are to our organization. However, we feel that the public shouldn’t be badgered, coerced or made to feel uncomfortable when obtaining donations. We want the public to feel good about giving, and good about dealing with Friends of Texas. Our first goal is to make them feel that they made the right choice in calling Friends for help. <strong>All donations should be made out to Friends of Texas Wildlife, not the rehabber, and should be mailed into the Treasurer for deposit.</strong></td>
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| 7 | **Media Interviews:**
- There has been an occasion where inappropriate materials have been published in the newspaper connected with FTWL. To avoid further problems in this area, we are requesting that the board approve all materials before publication. |
| 8 | Please remember that domestic animals and the wildlife in your care should never come in contact with each other. Cats and dogs are harmful to wildlife and a healthy fear of these pets **must be maintained** if they are to have a second chance out in the wild. |
| 9 | **Guest Speakers:**
- When we have a guest speaker, please refrain from shouting out questions during his/her presentation. Unless otherwise instructed by the speaker, it is preferable to make a note of your questions and ask them at the end of the presentation. Also refrain from talking among yourselves whilst the speaker has the floor. We don’t want to appear rude and unappreciative. The president of FTWL will signal the end of the presentation by thanking the guest speaker on our behalf. |
| 10 | **DISPUTES**
- Problems can usually be resolved between two parties without creating hurt feelings throughout our group. Let’s show each other a little of that same respect and kindness we show to our animals. Should a mediator be required to resolve an issue, the FTWL board should be contacted **before** the situation gets out of hand. |

I understand these goals and guidelines and will endeavor to follow and promote them.

Signed: _________________    Dated: ___________________
I have read and fully understand the information in the Friends of Texas Wildlife Volunteer Manual and agree to abide by these rules, regulations, goals, guidelines, expectations, procedures and policies.

____________________________
NAME (Please Print)

____________________________   __________________
SIGNATURE      DATE
Friends of Texas Wildlife Volunteer Application

Name: _________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________

City: ____________________________  State: ________ Zip code: ____________________

Name of Spouse or emergency contact: _______________________________________

Employer: _________________________

Number and ages of children in home: _______________________________________

Number of domestic pets and type: __________________________________________

Wildlife experience: _______________________________________________________

Wildlife training:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Species of animal interested in working with: __________________________________

Volunteer efforts that interest you: ___________________________________________

Can you assist rehabbers during illness, vacation, etc? ____________________________