



Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Native Bird Rehabilitation Training Standards

for the Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector



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Contents

Introduction	1
Structure of the standards	2
Prerequisites	2
Definitions	2
Native bird rehabilitation standards: Core areas of training	3
Foundations of native bird rehabilitation	4
Standard 1: The framework for native bird rehabilitation in New South Wales	4
Standard 2: Work health and safety requirements of native bird rehabilitation	4
Standard 3: Record keeping	5
Standard 4: Biology and behaviour of native birds	5
Standard 5: Stress management in native birds	5
Rescue of native birds	6
Standard 6: Rescue of native birds	6
Standard 7: Transport of native birds	6
Standard 8: Assessment of native birds	7
Rehabilitation and release of native birds	7
Standard 9: Rehabilitation of immature and adult native birds	7
Standard 10: Rehabilitation of native bird chicks	8
Standard 11: Release of native birds	9
More information	10

Introduction

Wildlife rehabilitation organisations and their volunteers play a critical role in rescuing and rehabilitating sick, injured and orphaned native birds in New South Wales. Each year about 40,000 native birds are rescued. Volunteers participating in their care are trained to ensure birds are managed humanely and have the best chance of rehabilitation and release back into the wild.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), has collaborated with leading native bird rehabilitation providers to prepare these *Native Bird Rehabilitation Training Standards* for use by trainers in the NSW wildlife rehabilitation sector. These training standards build on the high level of expertise that already exists within the sector and have been designed as a guide to evaluate, develop and support new and existing training. The intended outcome is to ensure minimum training standards are in place for volunteers across the sector, as recommended in the NSW Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector Strategy (DPIE 2020). This will give greater certainty about the quality of care afforded to native birds in rehabilitation.

These standards must be used for delivering introductory training for native bird rehabilitation. They describe the skills and knowledge that such training must include to ensure volunteers meet the requirements of the NSW Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Native Birds (the Native Bird Code). Any person with an authority to rescue and rehabilitate native birds in New South Wales must be trained to these standards and be assessed as competent.

These training standards have been ordered into 3 suggested core areas of training. Training programs can be structured in their entirety to replicate the standards, or can be broken down to cover individual or multiple standards, or can be based on certain roles within native bird rehabilitation. Irrespective of the structure used, all training must include the standards relevant to a role and must cover the duties this role would be expected to perform upon completion of the training.

All training must be compliant with the Native Bird Code. It must have a written assessment component, be competency-based and be accompanied by ongoing in-field support from experienced wildlife rehabilitators.

Once a person is trained to these standards, they can undertake advanced refresher training and professional development opportunities as determined by their licensed wildlife rehabilitation organisation.

Additional information on training to these standards can be found in the companion *Native Bird Rehabilitation Training Standards for the Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector: Trainers' Guide* (DPIE 2021). The trainers' guide has been designed to support the sector develop their training in line with these standards.

Structure of the standards

There are 11 native bird rehabilitation training standards, organised into the following structure:

- **Objective** is the aim of each standard.
- **Learning outcomes** are the knowledge and skills a learner will have obtained and be able to demonstrate upon completion of training.
- **Sections in the Code** identify sections in the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Native Birds* that are applicable to each standard.

Prerequisites

As required by the Native Bird Code, new wildlife rehabilitators must undertake an introductory training course. For generalist groups this could be in their induction training. For native-bird-specific groups this can be completed as separate induction training or incorporated into Standard 1: The framework for native bird rehabilitation in New South Wales.

Definitions

Advanced refresher training: a standard in each Code of Practice requires wildlife rehabilitators to complete additional training every 3 or 4 years depending on the species. In the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Native Birds* refresher training must be completed every 3 years.

Code of Practice: specifies the minimum standards of care needed to protect the welfare of animals in rehabilitation. There is a general code and species-specific codes. The *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Native Birds* is the relevant code for native birds.

Competency: is defined by the Australian Skills Quality Authority as the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.

Learning outcomes: a clear statement of what a learner is expected to be able to do, know about and value at the completion of a unit of study, and how well they should be expected to achieve those outcomes.

Native birds: means any bird listed or referred to in Schedule 5 of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) that is native to Australia or that periodically or occasionally migrates to Australia (including their eggs and young).

Objective: the aim of each standard.

Prerequisites: something that requires something to happen or be completed before the other; for example, some advanced courses require a prior subject or course to be completed before a learner can enrol in them.

Professional development: activities that develop or maintain skills or knowledge. Examples could include workshops, conferences, mentoring, independent research and courses.

Standards: are a level of accepted quality.

Native bird rehabilitation standards:

Core areas of training

There are 11 native bird rehabilitation standards organised into 3 core training areas.

Core training area	Relevant standard
Foundations of native bird rehabilitation	Standard 1: The framework for native bird rehabilitation in New South Wales
	Standard 2: Work health and safety requirements of native bird rehabilitation
	Standard 3: Record keeping
	Standard 4: Biology and behaviour of native birds
	Standard 5: Stress management in native birds
Rescue of native birds	Standard 6: Rescue of native birds
	Standard 7: Transport of native birds
	Standard 8: Assessment of native birds
Rehabilitation and release of native birds	Standard 9: Rehabilitation of immature and adult native birds
	Standard 10: Rehabilitation of native bird chicks
	Standard 11: Release of native birds

Foundations of native bird rehabilitation

Standard 1: The framework for native bird rehabilitation in New South Wales

Objective: To familiarise learners with the relevant policies and procedures of native bird rehabilitation and provide them with an understanding of the framework that exists to support and regulate native bird rehabilitation in New South Wales. Learners must be aware of and understand the NSW Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Native Birds (the Native Bird Code).

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 1.1 Discuss the Native Bird Code.
- 1.2 Ensure organisational policies and procedures applicable to native bird rehabilitation are defined and understood by learners.
- 1.3 Ensure objectives of native bird rehabilitation are understood by learners.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and demonstrate understanding of the Native Bird Code • identify organisational policies and procedures for native bird rehabilitation • recognise the objectives of native bird rehabilitation. 	All

Standard 2: Work health and safety requirements of native bird rehabilitation

Objective: To ensure that learners are able to prioritise their safety and that of the people around them when undertaking native bird rescue and rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 2.1 Explain the work health and safety (WHS) risks associated with the site, equipment or activity and how they can be minimised.
- 2.2 Explain the WHS risks associated with handling and restraining native birds and how they can be minimised.
- 2.3 Discuss the WHS risks associated with zoonotic diseases relevant to native birds and how they can be minimised.
- 2.4 Discuss rehabilitator wellbeing and the potential mental health impacts of wildlife rehabilitation.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify WHS risks associated with native bird rehabilitation • employ techniques to minimise the WHS risks to themselves and other people. 	3. Rescue 4. Transport 6. Care procedures 7. Husbandry 8. Housing 10. Release considerations

Standard 3: Record keeping

Objective: To explain the record keeping requirements for native bird rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, rehabilitation organisations must:

- 3.1 Explain the NPWS reporting requirements.
- 3.2 Explain organisational reporting requirements.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep records in accordance with NPWS and organisational requirements. 	12. Record keeping

Standard 4: Biology and behaviour of native birds

Objective: To ensure detailed knowledge of native birds is taught to learners. This is done by providing learners with the foundational tools to understand native bird biology and behaviour and how these aspects inform interactions with native birds undergoing rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 4.1 Explain features of native bird biology including anatomy, physiology, social structure, stages of development and habitat and relate them to native bird rehabilitation.
- 4.2 Provide a basic understanding of native bird ecology including population dynamics, habitat selection, competition and predator–prey interactions.
- 4.3 Provide the tools and understanding required to identify different species of native birds recorded in New South Wales.
- 4.4 Provide the tools and understanding required to identify normal behaviour in native birds.
- 4.5 Provide the tools and understanding required to recognise signs of abnormal behaviour in native birds.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relate native bird biology, ecology and behaviour to native bird rehabilitation • understand how to use the different tools to identify different species of native birds • recognise signs of normal behaviour in native birds • recognise signs of abnormal behaviour in native birds. 	All

Standard 5: Stress management in native birds

Objective: To communicate the importance of managing stress in native birds and to provide mechanisms for minimising this stress.

To comply with this standard, rehabilitation organisations must:

- 5.1 Explain the effects of stress on a native bird at various stages of rescue and rehabilitation.

- 5.2 Provide the tools and understanding required to recognise signs of stress in a native bird.
- 5.3 Discuss methods for minimising stress on a native bird at various stages of rescue and rehabilitation.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise signs of stress in native birds and its impact apply methods for minimising stress on a native bird. 	3. Rescue 4. Transport 5. Euthanasia 6. Care procedures 7. Husbandry 8. Housing 10. Release considerations

Rescue of native birds

Standard 6: Rescue of native birds

Objective: To ensure learners have the skills to safely, efficiently and humanely rescue a native bird.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 6.1 Outline common reasons for native bird rescue.
- 6.2 Detail how to perform a situational assessment, including the use of the decision tree in the Native Bird Code, to establish the appropriate course of action.
- 6.3 Detail the correct method and equipment required to capture, handle and rescue a native bird, as suitable to common rescue situations, conditions and stage of development of a native bird.
- 6.4 Detail how to rescue a native bird to humanely minimise pain, stress and potential injury.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> list the common reasons why native birds require rescue assess a rescue situation and plan the rescue of a native bird safely rescue a native bird using correct equipment determine the type of intervention required at a rescue site. 	2. Case assessment 3. Rescue 4. Transport 5. Euthanasia

Standard 7: Transport of native birds

Objective: To ensure learners have the skills to safely, efficiently and humanely transport a native bird.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 7.1 Demonstrate how to appropriately contain a native bird for transport based on different sizes, stages of development and conditions.
- 7.2 Outline how to secure the transport container to prevent escape and further injury.

- 7.3 Detail suitable transport conditions, including ambient temperature, to safely transport a native bird.
- 7.4 Discuss the most suitable person or location that a native bird should be transported to, based on different stages of development, conditions and organisational policies.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:	2. Case assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prepare a carrier for transport 	3. Rescue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> outline the transport conditions required to safely transport a native bird 	4. Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the appropriate person or location to transport a native bird to, based on different stages of development, conditions and organisational policies. 	5. Euthanasia
	10. Release considerations

Standard 8: Assessment of native birds

Objective: To equip learners with the skills necessary to assess the health status of a native bird.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 8.1 Explain how to conduct an initial assessment of a native bird.
- 8.2 Explain the requirements of a thorough assessment of a native bird.
- 8.3 Emphasise the need to seek prompt advice and assistance for a native bird from a coordinator, veterinarian or other relevant person, as appropriate to its condition.
- 8.4 Distinguish signs of and ways to determine common diseases and injuries affecting native birds.
- 8.5 Explain how to manage an injured or diseased native bird based on the severity of its condition.
- 8.6 Outline criteria and approved methods for humane euthanasia.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:	5. Euthanasia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conduct an initial assessment of a native bird 	6. Care procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assess the health status of a native bird and recognise stages, symptoms and severity of common diseases and injuries 	7. Husbandry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> determine the appropriate course of action for a native bird based on its condition 	8. Housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> outline criteria for and approved methods of euthanasia. 	

Rehabilitation and release of native birds

Standard 9: Rehabilitation of immature and adult native birds

Objective: To provide learners with an understanding of the requirements for the rehabilitation of immature and adult native birds, and equip learners with the skills to provide quality rehabilitative care at the relevant stages of rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 9.1 Explain the importance of and process for quarantining individual native birds entering rehabilitation.
- 9.2 Detail the facilities required to safely rehabilitate immature and adult native birds, relevant to stages of housing (intensive, intermediate and pre-release).
- 9.3 Describe appropriate equipment and furniture for each stage of housing.
- 9.4 Illustrate disease control and hygiene practices appropriate to stages of housing.
- 9.5 Explain how to appropriately provide food and water based on the condition of a native bird.
- 9.6 Detail common conditions and diseases that affect native birds.
- 9.7 Discuss how to monitor a native bird in accordance with stages of housing and condition.
- 9.8 Demonstrate how to complete a husbandry plan.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outline the requirements for immature and adult native bird rehabilitation • demonstrate correct set-up for housing immature and adult native birds • provide food and water appropriate to the condition of immature and adult native birds • monitor a native bird undergoing rehabilitation • apply hygiene and disease control processes to native bird rehabilitation • complete a husbandry plan for an immature or adult native bird. 	2. Case assessment 5. Euthanasia 6. Care procedures 7. Husbandry 8. Housing

Standard 10: Rehabilitation of native bird chicks

Objective: To provide learners with the specialised knowledge required to rehabilitate a native bird chick.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 10.1 Specify key stages of chick development.
- 10.2 Explain the different intervention methods for chicks at a rescue site.
- 10.3 Describe appropriate housing for a chick based on its stage of development.
- 10.4 Discuss appropriate food, feeding methods and monitoring protocols for a chick based on its stage of development.
- 10.5 Explain the importance of maintaining records on growth, behaviour and feeding of chicks throughout the rehabilitation process.
- 10.6 Detail common conditions and diseases that affect native bird chicks.
- 10.7 Illustrate disease control and hygiene practices appropriate to stages of housing.
- 10.8 Demonstrate how to complete a husbandry plan for a native bird chick.
- 10.9 Describe mechanisms to reduce stress and encourage natural behaviour in native bird chicks.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
<p>Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify stages of development for native bird chicks and relate these to rehabilitation • determine the type of intervention required for native bird chicks at a rescue site • outline the requirements for native bird chick rehabilitation • apply hygiene and disease control processes to native bird chick rehabilitation • reduce stress and encourage natural behaviours in native bird chicks • prepare a hand-raised native bird for release. 	<p>2. Case assessment 5. Euthanasia 6. Care procedures 7. Husbandry 8. Housing</p>

Standard 11: Release of native birds

Objective: To ensure learners understand suitability for release and criteria for releasing a native bird.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 11.1 Discuss release considerations for native birds, including timing and site selection.
- 11.2 Explain how to determine a native bird's suitability for release.
- 11.3 Detail the correct techniques and equipment for releasing a native bird.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
<p>Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess a native bird for release suitability • competently release a native bird. 	<p>9. Suitability for release 10. Release considerations</p>

More information

- [NSW Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector Strategy](#)
- [Australian Skills Quality Authority](#)
- [Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016](#)