



Department of Planning and Environment

Possum and Glider Care Assessment Tool

Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector
An application check against the Code of
Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Possums
and Gliders



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Purpose

This Possum and Glider Care Assessment Tool (the tool) has been designed for wildlife rehabilitation groups to monitor their level of compliance with the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Possums and Gliders* (the code). Its primary purpose is to proactively help inform and guide improvements to these species standards of care and optimise post-rehabilitation outcomes.

The tool is for use by species coordinators and experienced possum and glider rehabilitators such as mentors and/or buddies. It aims to provide an objective snapshot of a group members application of all, or specific parts of the code. When applied across multiple members, the tool can also strategically inform future training and guide grant applications for replacement enclosures or other assets which are not code compliant.

Everyone authorised to interact with possums and gliders is required to act in accordance with the code. It has been developed to protect the welfare of rescued possums and gliders and support the conservation of wild populations. Compliance with the code is a condition of a Biodiversity Conservation Licence to conduct wildlife rehabilitation under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. The person applying the tool must be familiar with the content and application of the code.

Wildlife rehabilitation groups are encouraged to maintain a register of volunteers who have been assessed under this tool and to compare against previous inspections.

How to use this assessment tool

The tool is divided into 4 sections:

1. training
2. records management
3. facility inspection
4. field observation of animal rescue and transport.

An inspection may target one or more sections of the tool. Each section aligns with specific standards in the code. It is preferable to complete Sections 1, 2 and 3 together or Sections 1 and 4.

Content of each section

- A place to enter the assessor and group members names, signatures and date of inspection.
- Code standards to be assessed.
- An overall assessment question and prompts to help guide the assessment.
- Targeted questions which align with specific standards in the code.
- Each section provides places to select a response, score and tally the results of the assessment.
- Notes about any observations you make during the inspection and to make specific recommendations.

What to take to the assessment?

It is important to do some planning before you go on-site.

Things to think about

- Contact the group member and arrange a mutually convenient time.
- Consider if an observer should also attend with the assessor.
- Explain the purpose of the assessment to the person before coming and at the premises.
- Ask if there are possums and gliders on-site and at what stage of rehabilitation.
- Identify which standards you intend to assess.
- Pack a copy of the relevant code of practice.
- Be familiar with the data report template.
- Bring a mobile phone and ask if you can take photos.
- Take a tape measure.
- Bring a pencil, pen and clipboard or laptop.

Scoring each section and collating the results

Each targeted question requires the assessor to circle the appropriate answer in the adjacent column. Only one answer can be selected. The answers can be then be collated, scored and converted to a percentage.

This worked example has 4 target questions

Code of Practice standards: 10.2 Release site selection; 10.3 Release techniques				
Assessment question: Were decisions made about the release of possums and gliders in accordance with the standard?				
Target questions	Select one response for each question			
1. How many possums and gliders were released in a suitable environment at, or as near as possible to their place of rescue?	All	Some	None	N/A
2. How many hand-reared brushtail and ringtail possums were released within 50 km of their rescue location?	All	Some	None	N/A
3. How many possums and gliders hand-reared with a buddy were released together?	All	Some	None	N/A
4. How many possum and gliders were tagged prior to release?	All	Some	None	N/A
How to calculate an assessment score				
Step 1: Tally the selected responses for each column e.g. 2 All; 1 None and 1 N/A	2	0	1	1
Step 2: Subtract the number of Not Applicable (N/A) answers from the total number of target questions. In this example 4 - 1 = 3 Display the score for each column as a fraction.	2/3	0/3	1/3	
Step 3: Convert the above fraction to a percentage (%)	67%	0%	33%	

In this example, the assessor recorded '**All**' for 2 of the 4 questions, '**None**' for one question and Not Applicable (**N/A**) for the other. The question about hand-reared possums and gliders was not applicable to this assessment because the person did not have any hand-reared possums and gliders in care. The group member, therefore, cannot be assessed on the release of these animals. This question must then be deducted from the total number of target assessment questions.

The total assessment score is 2/3 applicable questions 67% All and 33% None.

Insert the score or percentage for 'Alls' in the Assessment Summary.

Section 1: Training

The purpose of this section is to assess the currency of training. This should be done before other sections of the assessment and verified with the group member.

Member Name:	Signature:	Date:
Assessor Name:	Signature	Date:

Code of Practice standard: 11 Training

Assessment question: Is the member trained to rescue and/or rehabilitate possums and gliders?

Prompts: Check the member's details and group training register before the inspection. Confirm what tasks the member does with possums and gliders and what training they require.

Target questions

Select one response for each question

1. Is the member authorised to work with possums and gliders?	Yes	No
2. Has the member completed the required training for the tasks they perform?	Yes	No
3. Is the member's training current?	Yes	No

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes:

Recommendations:

Section 2: Records management

The purpose of this section is to assess the group member's record keeping, including decisions made about the fate of animals in care. It may help to review the previous year's records before commencing the assessment. Conduct a count of possums and gliders on-site before commencing this section (see Appendix).

Member Name:	Signature:	Date:
Assessor Name:	Signature	Date:

Code of Practice standards:

12 Record keeping; 10.2 Release site selection; 10.3 Release techniques and 5.1, 5.2 Euthanasia

Assessment Question 1: Is the member's record sheet current, accurate and compliant with the standard?

Prompts: Request to see this report year's record sheet. The fields in the register should be equivalent to the standard, i.e. the National Parks and Wildlife Service data template.

Target questions

Select one response for each question

1. How many possums and gliders currently in care are listed in the record sheet?	All	Some	None	N/A
2. How many possums and gliders have their rescue date, location and encounter data entered in the record sheet?	All	Some	None	N/A
3. How many possums and gliders have their weight entered in the record sheet?	All	Some	None	N/A
4. How many dead or released possums and gliders have had their fates entered?	All	Some	None	N/A
5. How many possums and gliders transferred to or from another facility have a dated identification record and location of transfer?	All	Some	None	N/A

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

(remember to deduct any N/As from the total)

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes:

Recommendations:

Records Management (continued)

Assessment Question 2: Were decisions made about the release of possums and gliders in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Check the fate and release location details section in the record sheet. Be familiar with the 'Release site selection' standards in the code.

Target questions

Select one response for each question

1. How many possums and gliders were released in a suitable environment at, or as near as possible to their place of rescue?*	All	Some	None	N/A
2. How many hand-reared brushtail possum and ringtail possums were released within 50 km of their rescue location?	All	Some	None	N/A
3. How many possums and gliders hand-reared with a buddy were released together?	All	Some	None	N/A
4. How many hand-reared possum and gliders from social species were released with members of the same species?	All	Some	None	N/A
5. Are limits for releasing large numbers of possums in a single location met?	All	Some	None	N/A
6. How many possums and gliders were released with knowledge of their exact or general rescue location?	All	Some	None	N/A

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

(remember to deduct any N/As from the total)

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes:

Recommendations:

*Exclude those animals that received approval from National Parks and Wildlife Service to be placed elsewhere.

Records Management (continued)

Assessment Question 3: Were decisions made about the euthanasia and permanent care of possums and gliders in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Check the fate details section in the record sheet. Be familiar with the 'When to Euthanase' standards in the code.

Target questions

Select one response for each question

1. How many possums and gliders were euthanased in accordance with criteria in the code (list reasons in notes)?	All	Some	None	N/A
2. How many of the possums and gliders held in permanent care have written approval from National Parks and Wildlife Service?	All	Some	None	N/A

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

(remember to deduct any N/As from the total)

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes:

Recommendations:

Section 3: Facility inspection

This section aims to assess the group members rehabilitation facility, including its housing, husbandry, and care procedures. If the facility does not participate in the intensive care, intermediate care or pre-release of possums and gliders, then move to another section and place **N/A** in notes.

Member Name:	Signature:	Date:
Assessor Name:	Signature	Date:

Section 3a: Housing and Husbandry – Intensive care

Code of Practice standards:

7 Husbandry; 8 Housing (8.1 General requirements and 8.2 Intensive care housing)

Assessment Question 1: Are intensive care housing enclosures (ICEs) constructed, positioned and maintained in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Ask to see the intensive care enclosures. Only answer if possums and gliders are present otherwise enter N/A in notes.

Target questions

Select one response for each question

1. How many intensive care enclosures (ICEs) have floor dimensions that meet the requirements in the code?	All	None	>Half	<Half
2. How many ICEs are positioned to protect each possum and glider from wild animals, domestic animals, pests, excessive noise and vibrations?	All	None	>Half	<Half
3. How many ICEs are escape-proof and have no hazards that might harm the possum or glider?	All	None	>Half	<Half
4. How many ICEs are 0.8 metres off the ground (exclude mountain pygmy-possum)	All	None	>Half	<Half
5. How many ICEs provide a constant temperature regulated by a thermostat?	All	None	>Half	<Half
6. How many ICEs use a soft substrate?	All	None	>Half	<Half
7. How many ICEs provide a light-dark cycle that replicates outside conditions? (exclude pouch young)	All	None	>Half	<Half
8. How many ICEs are supplied with clean and sterilised teats, bottles and syringes?	All	None	>Half	<Half

Section 3a: Housing and Husbandry – Intensive care

9. How many ICEs are clean and well maintained?	All	None	>Half	<Half
10. How many ICEs have fresh drinking water available? (exclude pouch young)	All	None	>Half	<Half
11. How many ICEs have the food and water placed in several locations?	All	None	>Half	<Half
12. How many ICEs have browsed from at least 2 different species?	All	None	>Half	<Half

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes: Enter N/A here if the person does not participate in intensive care or has no possums or gliders.

Recommendations:

Section 3b: Housing and Husbandry – Intermediate care

Code of Practice standards:

7 Husbandry; 8 Housing (8.1 General requirements and 8.3 Intermediate care housing)

Assessment Question 1: Are intermediate care housing (ITEs) enclosures constructed, positioned and maintained in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Ask to see the intermediate care enclosures. Only answer if possum and gliders are present, otherwise enter N/A in notes.

Target questions	Select one response for each question			
1. How many intermediate care enclosures (ITEs) have floor dimensions that meet the requirements in the code?	All	None	>Half	<Half
2. How many ITEs are positioned to protect each possum and glider from wild and domestic animals, pests, excessive noise and sheltered from weather conditions?	All	None	>Half	<Half
3. How many ITEs are escape-proof and have no hazards that might harm the possum or glider?	All	None	>Half	<Half
4. How many ITEs use an absorbent substrate that is easily cleaned or replaceable but not particle based?	All	None	>Half	<Half
5. How many small portable ITEs (<1.5m x1.5m x1.5m) are 0.8metres off the ground (exclude mountain pygmy-possum)	All	None	>Half	<Half
6. How many ITEs provide a light-dark cycle that replicates outside conditions?	All	None	>Half	<Half
7. How many ITEs contain at least three climbing branches at different heights and textures?	All	None	>Half	<Half
8. How many ITEs provide dreys or nest boxes that meet the requirements listed in the code?	All	None	>Half	<Half
9. How many ITEs are clean and well maintained?	All	None	>Half	<Half
10. How many ITEs have fresh drinking water available?	All	None	>Half	<Half
11. How many ITEs have the food and water placed in several locations and secured to the enclosure wall or on shelf above the floor?	All	None	>Half	<Half
12. How many ITEs provide browse from at least two different species?	All	None	>Half	<Half
Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction	All	None	>Half	<Half

Section 3b: Housing and Husbandry – Intermediate care

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes: Enter N/A if the person does not participate in intermediate care or has no possums and gliders.

Recommendations:

Section 3c: Housing and Husbandry – Pre-release housing

Code of Practice standards:

7 Husbandry; 8 Housing (8.1 General requirements and 8.4 Pre-release housing)

Assessment Question 1: Are pre-release care facilities (PREs) constructed, positioned and maintained in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Ask to see the pre-release enclosures. Only answer if possums and gliders are present otherwise enter N/A in notes.

Target questions	Select one response for each question			
1. How many pre-release enclosures (PREs) have floor dimensions that meet the requirements in the code?	All	None	>Half	<Half
2. How many PREs are positioned to protect each possum and glider from wild and domestic animals, pests, excessive noise and vibrations?	All	None	>Half	<Half
3. How many PREs are escape-proof and have no hazards that might harm the possum or glider?	All	None	>Half	<Half
4. How many PREs provide areas where the possum and glider can shelter and gain exposure to outside weather?	All	None	>Half	<Half
5. How many PREs provide dreys or nestboxes that meet the requirements listed in the code?	All	None	>Half	<Half
6. How many PREs have foliage, branches or logs to allow a possum or glider to climb if they fall to the ground?	All	None	>Half	<Half
7. How many PREs are clean and well maintained?	All	None	>Half	<Half

Section 3c: Housing and Husbandry – Pre-release housing

8. How many PREs have fresh drinking water available?	All	None	>Half	<Half
9. How many PREs have at least two containers for both food and water placed in several locations and secured to the enclosure wall or on shelf above the floor?	All	None	>Half	<Half
10. How many PREs provide browse from at least two different species?	All	None	>Half	<Half

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes: Enter N/A if the person does not have pre-release housing or has no possums and gliders.

Recommendations:

Section 3d: Housing and Husbandry – General care

Code of Practice standards:

6 Care procedures; 6.3 Controlling disease transmission; 7 Husbandry; 9 Suitability for release?

Assessment Question: Are the possums and gliders in the facility managed according to the standard

Prompts: Observe the possums and gliders in care and ask to view the husbandry plan if there is one. Ask the following questions and circle the appropriate response. If a possum or glider is not present enter N/A.

Target questions

Select one response for each question

1. How many animals have undergone a veterinary assessment or assessment by an experienced possum and glider rehabilitator?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A
2. How many animals with major trauma have undergone a veterinary assessment or assessment by an experienced possum and glider rehabilitator supervised by a wildlife veterinarian?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A

Section 3d: Housing and Husbandry – General care

3. Have all greater gliders, yellow bellied gliders, feathertail gliders been transferred to, or supervised by a wildlife rehabilitator experienced with these species and the species coordinator consulted?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A
4. How many possums and gliders suspected of an infectious disease are in isolation?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A
5. How many possums and gliders are monitored and have their body condition, pelage condition, hydration levels, scat quantity and behaviour recorded?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

(remember to deduct any N/As from the total)

Convert to a percentage (%)

For possums and gliders about to be released

N/A

If no animals are ready for release, circle N/A.

1. Has the release suitability of the animal been confirmed by a veterinarian or experienced possum and glider rehabilitator?	Yes	No	Some
2. Has the member correctly described why the animal is physically ready for release?	Yes	No	Some
3. Has the member correctly described why the animal is behaviourally ready for release?	Yes	No	Some
4. Have the possums and gliders that have been in care for more than a week or hand-reared spent time in pre-release?	Yes	No	Some

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes:

Recommendations:

Section 4: Field observation

This section is a practical assessment of the application of the rescue, transport and release standards in the code. It is best conducted in the field through observation, although parts such as personal protective equipment (PPE), rescue equipment and release considerations maybe completed as part of the facility inspection and record management sections.

Member Name:	Signature:	Date:
Assessor Name:	Signature	Date:

Section 4a: Rescue and Transport

Code of Practice standards: 3 Rescue; 4 Transport

Assessment Question 1: Did the member prepare for the rescue in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Observe how the member prepares for a rescue.

Target questions

Select one response for each question

1. Did the rescuer assess the situation to determine if a rescue is required?	Yes	No	Some	N/A
2. Did the rescuer consider all the risks from environmental hazards to themselves, surrounding observers and the possum and glider?	Yes	No	Some	N/A
3. Did the rescuer possess the appropriate PPE?	Yes	No	Some	N/A
4. Did the rescuer assess the number of possums and gliders requiring rescue, their sex and presence of back young?	Yes	No	Some	N/A

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

(remember to deduct any N/As from the total)

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes:

Recommendations:

Assessment Question 2: Was the rescue of the possum and glider undertaken in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Observe the method and conduct of the possum and gliders physical rescue.

Target questions

Select one response for each question

1. Did the rescuer use the correct rescue equipment?	Yes	No	N/A
2. Did the rescuer limit the exposure to additional stressors such as onlookers, loud noises and other animals?	Yes	No	N/A
3. Did the rescuer use the correct method to capture the possum and glider?	Yes	No	N/A
4. Did the rescuer ensure the trap was set up and used so that the requirements of the code are met?	Yes	No	N/A
5. Did the rescuer protect the possum or glider's tail during rescue?	Yes	No	N/A
6. Did the rescuer conduct any surrounding searches for orphaned young or adult female (mother)?	Yes	No	N/A
7. Did the rescuer check a deceased female possum or glider for pouch young and remove it using the correct method?	Yes	No	N/A

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

(remember to deduct any N/As from the total)

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes:

Recommendations:

Assessment Question 3: Was the possum or glider transported in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Observe the method and conduct of the animal's physical transport.

Target questions

Select one response for each question

1. Was the transport container appropriate for the size and condition of the animal?	Yes	No	N/A
2. Was the animal positioned so its breathing is not restricted?	Yes	No	N/A
3. Was the transport container escape-proof and placed in the correct position in the vehicle?	Yes	No	N/A
4. Was the transport container covered with a breathable cloth?	Yes	No	N/A

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

(remember to deduct any N/As from the total)

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes:

Recommendations:

Assessment summary

There is no pass or fail associated with this assessment. Its purpose is to identify those standards in the code that can be improved upon. Specific recommendations for improvement can be provided below. A timeframe should be discussed and agreed with the group member to implement any recommendations.

Summarise the outcome of the assessment in the table below:

- circle Yes for each section assessed
- enter the total score as a fraction (i.e. X/Y) for answers with a Yes or All
- enter the percentage score (%) for answers with a Yes or All.

Assessed	Section	Grade score Yes/All	Grade score (%) Yes/All
Yes	Training		
Yes	Record Keeping (Assessment Q1)		
Yes	Record Keeping (Assessment Q2)		
Yes	Record Keeping (Assessment Q3)		
Yes	Housing/Husbandry (Intensive care)		
Yes	Housing/Husbandry (Intermediate care)		
Yes	Housing/Husbandry (Pre-release care)		
Yes	Housing/Husbandry (General care)		
Yes	Rescue and Transport (Assessment Q1)		
Yes	Rescue and Transport (Assessment Q2)		
Yes	Rescue and Transport (Assessment Q3)		

Recommendations:

More information

- [Code of Practice](#)
- [Data report template](#)

Appendix: Animals currently on-site

This species summary sheet should be completed before conducting an assessment. It will help the assessor reconcile the animals currently on-site with what is listed on the record sheet. Assessors should ask with the group member to confirm the taxonomic identification of each species.

Common Name(s) e.g. ringtail possum	Number in rehabilitation	Number in permanent care
Total ()		

Calculate the total number of animals on-site by adding together the number of animals in rehabilitation plus the number of animals in permanent care.