

Easy Reference Sheet

Wildlife Permits in Queensland

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Queensland native wildlife are protected by legislation, which is governed by the Department of Environment and Science (DES). The DES is responsible for issuing the various types of licenses and permits which regulate the taking, keeping, using or moving of wildlife for commercial, recreational and other purposes. It is important for wildlife volunteers to understand the difference between the various types of permits and possible ways that they may affect our work with sick, injured and orphaned wildlife.

The four main types of permits involving wildlife in Queensland can be summarized as follows: -

Native Animal Keeping Licence (NAKL) (*issued under S11(D) Nature Conservation (Administration) Regulation 2006*)

- From 22 August 2020, there are three new Native Animal Keeping Licence (NAKL) —Standard, Specialised, and Advanced—which allow people to keep, breed or trade protected animals in Queensland. This replaces old Recreational Wildlife Licence (RWL) and the Commercial Wildlife Licence (CWL) which you can continue to use until the expiry of your licence, upon which you will need to apply for one of the new licences.
- Under NAKL, the distinction between commercial purposes and recreational purposes has been removed and licences are based on the number of animals in possession and the intention to keep, breed or trade them. This means that until 2025, the movement of native wildlife in Queensland will occur across both the old and new licensing systems.
- Animals kept under RWL and NAKL are not ‘wild caught’ – that is, they have been bred for the pet industry.
- You cannot place a ‘wild caught’ native animal on either a RWL and NAKL without going through appropriate procedures and obtaining authority from the DES.
- Holding a RWL or NAKL does not entitle you to keep sick, injured or orphaned wildlife (see Rehabilitation Permit).
- Animals held under a RWL or a Standard NAKL cannot be taken or moved from your registered address without DES approval. The exception to this is transporting the animal for veterinary treatment. That means that you cannot take your pet reptile to visit a friend, take it to the beach or park or take it to a friend’s house to be cared for whilst you are on holidays.
- Holding animals under either RWL and NAKL is subject to strict record keeping and movement guidelines, hardcopy forms for the former and online reporting for the later.
- You cannot transfer an animal to or from a person that does not hold a valid RWL or NAKL.
- Only Specialised and Advanced NAKL holders are allowed to breed animals subject to the conditions of their NAKL option.
- If you hold animals under RWL or NAKL, you must ensure that your hygiene and quarantine procedures are impeccable to ensure that there is no risk of the spread of disease between captive and wild individuals. Some diseases have the potential to be devastating to valuable captive collections and to wild populations.
- For more information, refer to the DES website: <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/wildlife-permits/permit-types/wildlife-licence/native-animal>

Rehabilitation Permit (RP) (*issued under S12(E) Nature Conservation (Administration) Regulation 2006*)

- Rehabilitation Permits cover individuals who take and keep protected animals from the wild for the purpose of rehabilitation and subsequent release back to the wild (e.g. wildlife rehabilitators caring for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife).
- A Rehabilitation Permit (or your Permit Authorisation from Wildcare) lists the species that is permitted to be kept under such Permit. It generally excludes specialised species such as koalas, echidnas, platypus, venomous snakes, birds of prey (raptors), some sea and water birds and marine animals.

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Wildlife Permits (continued)

- If a wildlife volunteer holds an animal that is **not** specifically listed on their RP, then they are deemed to be holding the animal as an unlicensed person.
- Animals held under an RP that are listed as Extinct in the Wild, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened must be reported to the DES without 24 hours of taking possession of the animal.
- Animals held under a Rehabilitation Permit cannot be sold or given away.
- A Rehabilitation Permit does not allow the holder to keep or hold pet birds or reptiles that are subject to Recreational Wildlife Licenses. For example, if you rescued a Central Bearded Dragon (which is not endemic to South-east Queensland and therefore assumed to be an escaped or released pet), it cannot be held under a Rehabilitation Permit – it must be relinquished to the DES (even if you hold a NAKL).
- The care of sick, injured and orphaned wildlife is governed by the *Code of Practice – Care of orphaned, sick or injured protected animals by wildlife care volunteers* and all wildlife rehabilitators should be well versed in its contents.
- Animals held under an RP cannot be displayed in public unless authorized to do so. This means that you cannot take an animal to a shopping centre, talk, display or expo without written authority. The DES will only issue approval to use wildlife held under a RP to a wildlife care association (such as Wildcare) – not to an individual wildlife carer. If you wish to take an animal in your care to a school or community talk or function for education purposes, you need to make application to the Wildcare Management Committee who will assess the need and may elect to make application to DES for such approval. Wildlife volunteers who hold individual wildlife permits cannot make application to DES for this purpose.
- Wildlife being held under a Rehabilitation Permit cannot be moved from their registered address except in the following instances: -
 - From the rescue location to your address where you will be caring for the animal;
 - To a veterinarian for treatment;
 - To a release site for the purpose of releasing back to its natural habitat;
 - To another licensed person who is taking over the care of the animal;
 - To a location as instructed by DES;
 - To a Species Coordinator or mentor for advice or assessment;
 - To your workplace but only if it requires regular feeding and you have the approval of your employer and do not breach any local laws or health regulations;
 - To a wildlife training workshop or course provided the animal is placed in a quiet room during the duration and is fed away from other course participants.
- Animals held under a Rehabilitation Permit that are deemed to be ‘unreleaseable’ need to be referred to the Wildcare President (the holder of the Wildcare group rehabilitation permit). In some cases, it may be suitable for an application to be made to DES for the animal to go through the Queensland Species Management Plan (QSMP) for placement within a zoo exhibit.
- Holders of Rehabilitation Permits are not licensed to deal with animals that need to be removed/relocated due to human activity. This means that a wildlife carer is not permitted to remove uninjured wildlife, such as a snake or possum, from a property because it poses a risk or inconvenience to the homeowner. Calls of this nature need to be referred to a DMP holder (see below). Demands from both homeowners and commercial enterprises for volunteers to undertake these types of ‘rescues’ are becoming more frequent in an effort to reduce costs (i.e. a wildlife volunteer is free compared to a DMP holder who charges a fee). ***It is important for wildlife volunteers to be aware that they are breaching the Regulation by undertaking these types of activities.***

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Wildlife Permits (continued)

Damage Mitigation Permit (Removal and Relocation of Wildlife) (DMP) *(issued under S12(a) Nature Conservation (Administration) Regulation 2006)*

- There are a number of different types of Damage Mitigation Permits (DMPs see below) however the most common one that wildlife volunteers will come across are ones that allow the permit holder to remove and relocate wildlife.
- The most common species covered under a DMP are snakes, possums and magpies.
- DMPs exist to help deal with situations where wildlife and humans come into conflict (e.g. snake in the house, possum living in a roof, aggressive swooping magpies).
- DMP holders operate on a commercial basis i.e. they provide a service to the public and charge a fee for their service to offset their expenses, such as licence fees and insurance cover.
- DMP holders need to keep detailed records of animals that they remove and relocate.
- A DMP does not allow the permit holder to keep protected species collected in the normal course of their business.

Wildlife Spotter Catcher Endorsed Rehabilitation Permit (WSCRPE) *(issued under S12(e) Nature Conservation (Administration) Regulation 2006)*

- A Wildlife Spotter Catcher is a licensed individual with a demonstrated ability to handle a wide variety of wildlife including macropods and reptiles, has well-developed wildlife identification skills and has knowledge of fauna, flora and habitat requirements.
- Most WSCs have experience in zoo-keeping, wildlife rehabilitation or other relevant industry experience.
- A WSC deals with wildlife whose habitat has or is about to be destroyed by human activity (such as land clearing).
- WSCs are called upon to undertake activities such as: -
 - Checking hollows and nest sites in trees prior to the felling;
 - Removing wildlife from inappropriate areas (such as removing microbats or gliders from telecommunication boxes to allow work to be conducted);
 - Conducting fauna and flora surveys on sites which will be subject to clearing.

If you are ever in doubt as to what activities you are permitted to undertake under your Permit, you should seek clarification from either Wildcare (for Rehabilitation Permits) or DES directly (for other permits). The DES is active in ensuring compliance with all licences and permits and you should ensure that you are aware of the limitations of the Permit held by you.

For more information, visit the DES website at www.des.qld.gov.au