



Echidna rehabilitation assessment tool

Department of Climate Change,
Energy, the Environment and Water



Acknowledgement of Country

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

This resource may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

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Purpose of this tool

This echidna rehabilitation assessment tool has been designed to help wildlife rehabilitation groups monitor their level of compliance with the *Code of practice for injured, sick and orphaned monotremes* (the code). Its primary purpose is to proactively help inform and guide improvements to their standards of echidna care and optimise post-rehabilitation outcomes.

The tool is for use by assessors to record observations during a site visit. Assessors may include species coordinators or experienced echidna rehabilitators such as mentors. The assessment aims to provide an objective snapshot of a group member's application 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 echidnas is required to act in accordance with the code. It has been developed to protect the welfare of rescued echidnas and support the conservation of wild echidna populations. Compliance with the code is a condition of a biodiversity conservation licence to conduct wildlife rehabilitation under the NSW *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 so in future they can be compared against previous assessments.

How to use this assessment tool

The tool has 5 sections:

1. Training
2. Records management
3. Facility inspection
4. Field observation of animal rescue and transport
5. Assessment summary.

An inspection may target one or more sections of the tool. Sections 1 to 4 align with specific standards in the code. It is preferable to complete Sections 1, 2 and 3 together or Sections 1 and 4. Section 5 summarises the assessment results from each section.

Contents of each section

- A place to record the assessor's and group member's name, signature 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.
- Check boxes to record responses to the questions.
- Space to score and tally the results of the assessment.
- Space for notes about any observations you make during the inspection and to make specific recommendations.

Planning and what to take to the assessment

Before the site visit

- Contact the group member and arrange a mutually convenient time.
- Consider whether an observer should also attend.
- Explain the purpose of the assessment to the person who will be assessed before the site visit (and again at the start of the site visit).
- Ask if there are echidnas on site and at what stage of rehabilitation.
- Identify which standards you intend to assess.
- Pack a copy of the monotreme code of practice.
- Be familiar with the [data reporting template](#).
- Bring a mobile phone and ask if you can take photos.
- Bring a tape measure, pen and clipboard or laptop.

Scoring each section and collating the results

Each question requires the assessor to select the appropriate answer, as shown in the example below. Only one answer can be selected. The answers can then be collated, scored and converted to a percentage. This sample exercise has 5 target questions:

Example assessment (Records management assessment 2)

Code of practice standards: 12 Record keeping, 10 Release Considerations

Records management assessment 5: Were records on monitoring kept in accordance with the standards?

Prompts: Check the monitoring section in the record sheet. Be familiar with the 'care procedures and record keeping' standards in the code.

Target questions. Select one response for each question:

1. How many echidnas were euthanased in accordance with the criteria in the code?
(List reasons in the notes.)

☒ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

2. How many of the echidnas held in permanent care have written approval from the department?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☒ N/A

3. Of the echidnas released, how many were released in a suitable environment at or as near as possible to their place of rescue (i.e. less than 1 km for lactating females or less than 5 km for all other echidnas)? *

☐ All ☒ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

4. How many echidnas released in a national park have the written approval from the department?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☒ None ☐ N/A

5. How many echidnas released outside the release standards have approval from the department?

☒ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

How to calculate an assessment score

Step 1: Tally the selected responses for each column

2/5 1/5 0/5 1/5 1/5

Step 2: Subtract the number of not applicable (N/A) answers from the total number of questions. In this example 5 questions – 1 N/A = 4. Give the score for each column as a fraction.

2/4 1/4 0 1/4 –

Step 3: Convert the fraction to a percentage (%)

50% 25% 0 25% –

In this example, 2 of the 5 questions were scored as 'All', 1 question as 'More than 50%', 1 question as 'None' and 1 question as 'N/A'. The question about permanent care echidnas did not apply in this example because there wasn't one on site, so only 4 questions apply to this assessment. The total assessment score is therefore 2/4 (50%) for 'All', 1/4 (25%) for 'More than 50%', and 1/4 (25%) for 'None'. The score or percentage for responses 'All' (or 'Yes') is then recorded in the assessment summary (section 5).

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: |

Section 1: Training

Code of practice standards: 11 Training

Training assessment: Is the member trained to rescue and/or rehabilitate echidnas?

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

Target questions. Select one response for each question:

1. Is the member authorised to work with echidnas?

☐ 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 out of 3

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes:

Recommendations:

Section 2: Records management

The purpose of this section is to assess the group member's echidna records, including decisions made about the fate of animals in care. It may help to review the previous year's records before starting the assessment.

| | | |
|----------------|------------|-------|
| Member name: | Signature: | Date: |
| Assessor name: | Signature: | Date: |

Section 2: Records management

Code of practice standards: 12 Record keeping, 6 Care procedures, 10.2 Release site selection, 10.3 Release techniques, 5.1 When to euthanise, 5.2 How to euthanise

Records management assessment 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 standards i.e. the data template.

Target questions. Select one response for each question:

1. How many echidnas currently in care are listed in the record sheet?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

2. How many echidnas have their rescue date, location and encounter data entered in the record sheet?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

3. How many echidnas have their weight and stage of development entered in the record sheet?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

4. How many dead or released echidnas have had their fates entered?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

5. How many released echidnas had a microchip number correctly recorded?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

6. How many echidnas transferred to or from another facility have a dated identification record and location of transfer?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ 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 2: Records management (continued)

Records management assessment 2: Were decisions made about euthanasia, permanent care and the release of echidnas in accordance with the standards?

Prompts: Check the fate details section in the record sheet. Be familiar with the 'When to euthanise' standards in the code. 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 echidnas were euthanised in accordance with the criteria in the code?
(List reasons in the notes.)

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

2. How many of the echidnas held in permanent care have written approval from the department?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

3. Of the echidnas released, how many were released in a suitable environment at or as near as possible to their place of rescue (i.e. less than 1 km for lactating females in breeding season or less than 5 km for all other echidnas)? *

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

4. How many echidnas released in a park have written approval from the department?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

5. How many echidnas released outside the release standards have approval from the department?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ 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 animals that received approval from the department to be placed elsewhere.

Section 2: Records management (continued)

Records management assessment 3: Were records on monitoring kept in accordance with the standards?

Prompts: Check the monitoring section in the record sheet. Be familiar with the care procedures and record keeping standards in the code.

Target questions. Select one response for each question:

1. How many echidnas are monitored and have their body condition, hydration levels, scat quantity, urine quality and behaviour recorded?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

2. How many echidnas are monitored for stress and pain?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

3. How many echidnas in intensive care are weighed at least twice a week?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

4. How many orphaned milk-dependent echidna puggles are weighed before and after each feed?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

5. How many burrow young echidnas or echidnas in intermediate care are weighed at least once a week?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

6. How many echidnas are weighed prior to release?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ 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

The purpose of this section is to assess the group member's rehabilitation facility (including the housing) and rehabilitation care procedures. If the facility does not participate in the intensive care, intermediate care or pre-release of echidnas, then move to another section and place N/A in the notes.

| | | |
|----------------|------------|-------|
| Member name: | Signature: | Date: |
| Assessor name: | Signature: | Date: |

Section 3a: Housing and rehabilitation – general care

Code of practice standards: 6.1 Assessment, 7 Rehabilitation care, 8 Housing requirements

General care assessment: Are the echidnas in the facility managed according to the standards?

Prompts: Observe the echidnas in care and ask to view the rehabilitation care plans and leaf storage area. Ask the following questions and record the appropriate response. If no echidna is present, record 'N/A' in the notes.

Target questions. Select one response for each question:

1. How many echidnas have undergone assessment within 24 hours of rescue:

- by a veterinarian for rescues involving major trauma, respiratory distress or severe illness?
- by an experienced echidna rehabilitator for all other types of rescue?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

2. How many echidnas have a rehabilitation care plan?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

3. How many echidnas suspected of or confirmed to be carrying an infectious disease are in isolation?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

4. How many enclosures are escape-proof and have no hazards that might harm the echidna? (i.e. smooth-sided, at least 54 cm for adult echidnas, 90 cm high for outdoor enclosures, no logs or furnishings near walls)?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

5. How many enclosures are well ventilated and designed and positioned to avoid extremes of temperature (not exposed to prevailing winds, include areas of shade and outdoor enclosures have a gradient of temperature)?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

6. How many enclosures are positioned to protect each echidna from domestic pets, wild animals, livestock, pests, excessive noise, noxious smells and strong vibrations?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

7. How many enclosures are clean and well maintained?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

8. How many enclosures (exclude intensive care housing enclosures for orphaned milk-dependent young) have fresh drinking water available

- in a smooth-sided, non-porous container
- positioned to minimise spillage and contamination
- shallow and wider than 10cm?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

Section 3a: Housing and rehabilitation – general care

9. How many echidnas with open wounds have had steps taken to minimise flystrike (wounds are covered or housed inside)?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

10. How many enclosures (excluding puggles) experience a daily light-dark cycle?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ 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:

Record 'N/A' here if the group member has no echidnas

Recommendations:

Section 3b: Housing and rehabilitation – intensive care

Code of practice standards: 8.2 Intensive care housing

Intensive care assessment 1: Are intensive care housing enclosures (ICEs) constructed, positioned and maintained in accordance with the standards?

Prompts: Ask to see the intensive care echidna enclosures. Answer only if echidnas are present, otherwise record 'N/A' in the notes.

Target questions. Select one response for each question:

1. How many intensive care enclosures (ICEs) have floor dimensions (exclude orphaned dependent puggles):

- 0.35 m² (e.g. 0.7 m long x 0.5 m wide and 0.54 m high) for echidnas less than 1.5 kg
- 0.55 m² (e.g. 1.1 m long x 0.5 m wide and 0.6 m high) for echidnas greater than 1.5 kg?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

2. How many ICEs are designed or positioned to reduce auditory stimuli?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

3. How many ICEs provide a constant temperature appropriate for the stage of development and condition of the echidna?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

4. How many enclosures using electrical heat sources are regulated by a thermostat and are placed on the outside of the enclosure for adults and on the outside of the pouch for pouch young puggles?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

5. How many ICEs use a soft substrate that covers the floor and can also be used to provide shelter?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

6. How many ICEs for orphaned pouch young are supplied with clean and sterilised feeding equipment (e.g. pipettes and bowls)?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None ☐ N/A

7. How many artificial pouches are made from cotton or bamboo and have no loose threads?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ 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:

Record 'N/A' here if the wildlife rehabilitator does not participate in intensive care or has no echidnas.

Recommendations:

Section 3c: Housing and rehabilitation – intermediate care

Code of practice standards: 7 Rehabilitation care, 8 Housing (8.1 General requirements and 8.3 Intermediate-care housing)

Intermediate care assessment: Are intermediate care housing enclosures (ITEs) constructed, positioned and maintained in accordance with the standards?

Prompts: Ask to see the intermediate care enclosures for echidnas. Answer only if echidnas are present, otherwise record 'N/A' in the notes.

Target questions. Select one response for each question:

1. How many intermediate care enclosures (ITEs) have floor dimensions at least 1.5 m² (e.g. 1.5 m long by 1 m wide and 0.6 m high for indoor enclosures and 0.9 m high for outdoor enclosures)?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

2. How many ITEs contain a hide or log and sticks leaves or rocks?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

3. How many ITEs provide an area for the echidna to bask?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

4. How many ITEs contain a substrate that is absorbent and easily cleaned or replaceable, and not straw, wood shavings or sawdust?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

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

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes:

Record 'N/A' here if the group member does not participate in intermediate care or has no echidnas.

Recommendations:

Section 3d: Housing and rehabilitation – pre-release housing

Code of practice standards: 7 Rehabilitation care, 8 Housing (8.1 General requirements and 8.4 Pre-release housing)

Pre-release housing assessment: Are pre-release care enclosures (PREs) constructed, positioned and maintained in accordance with the standards?

Prompts: Ask to see the pre-release enclosures for echidnas. Answer only if echidnas are present, otherwise record 'N/A' in the notes.

Target questions. Select one response for each question:

1. How many pre-release enclosures (PREs) have floor dimensions at least 5.8 m² (e.g. 2.9 m long by 2 m wide and 0.9 m high)?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

2. How many PREs contain habitat elements such as areas that allow digging?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

3. How many PREs contain a variety of natural objects such as logs, bark, leaf litter or native ground cover?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

4. How many PREs contain a hide or small log?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

5. How many PREs provide areas where the echidna can gain exposure to outside weather and areas it can shelter?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

6. How many PREs provide contaminant-free dirt and bark?

☐ All ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None

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

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes:

Record 'N/A' if the wildlife rehabilitator does not have pre-release housing or has no echidnas.

Recommendations:

Section 3e: Pre-release assessment

Code of practice standards: 9 Suitability for release

Pre-release assessment: Have all echidnas deemed ready for release been assessed according to the standards?

Prompt: Ask to see the echidnas that have been assessed as suitable for release. If none have been assessed as suitable for release, record 'N/A' in the notes.

Target questions. Select one response for each question:

1. Has the release suitability of the echidna (s) been confirmed by a veterinarian or experienced echidna rehabilitator?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Some

2. Has the member correctly described why the animal is physically ready for release?
(See Standard 9.1.1 of the code.)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Some

3. Has the member correctly described why the animal is behaviourally ready for release?
(See Standard 9.1.2 of the code.)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Some

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

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes:

Record 'N/A' here if no echidnas are ready for release.

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 may be completed as part of the facility inspection and record management sections.

| | | |
|----------------|------------|-------|
| Member name: | Signature: | Date: |
| Assessor name: | Signature: | Date: |

Section 4a: Rescue

Code of practice standards: 3 Rescue

Rescue assessment 1: Did the member prepare for the rescue in accordance with the standards?

Prompts: Observe how the member prepares for a rescue.

Target questions. Select one response for each question:

1. Did the rescuer assess the echidna to determine if 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 echidna?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Some ☐ N/A

3. Did the rescuer possess the appropriate PPE?

☐ 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:

Section 4b: Rescue (continued)

Rescue assessment 2: Was the rescue of the echidna undertaken in accordance with the standards?

Prompts: Observe the method and conduct of the echidna's 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 echidna?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

4. Did the rescuer closely monitor an adult echidna being rescued during pouch young carrying period as it may be carrying an egg or puggle which could become dislodged?

☐ 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:

Section 4c: Transport

Code of practice standards: 4 Transport

Transport assessment: Was the echidna transported in accordance with the standards?

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

Target questions. Select one response for each question:

1. Was the transport container appropriate for the size and condition of the echidna?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Was the transport container solid and smooth-sided?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Was the transport container deep enough that the echidna cannot reach the top when standing on its hind legs?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Was the transport container well ventilated?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Was the echidna positioned so its breathing is not restricted?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Was the transport container placed in the correct position in the vehicle?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Is the transport container escape-proof and designed, set up and secured to prevent injuries to the echidna?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Was the echidna transported at a temperature appropriate to the age and condition? (see Standard 4.1.11.)

☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Did transport containers using electrical heat sources have them placed on the outside of the enclosure or on the outside of an artificial pouch if a puggle?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

10. Was the ambient temperature and condition of the echidna monitored during transport?

☐ Yes ☐ No

11. For a sub-adult and adult echidna, did the transport container have a dry, tangle-free, non-slip, non-ingestible substrate?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Section 4c: Transport

12. Was the echidna transported individually (excluding a mother and dependent puggle pairs)?

☐ 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:

Section 5: Assessment summary

There is no pass or fail associated with this assessment. Its purpose is to identify those standards where compliance with the code can be improved. Specific recommendations for improvement can be recorded 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' in the left-hand column for each section assessed.
- Record the total score as a fraction (i.e. X/Y) for answers with 'All' or 'Yes'.
- Record the percentage score (%) for answers with 'All' or 'Yes'.

| Assessed | Section | Score (fraction) All/Yes | Percentage (%) All/Yes |
|--|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sections 1 and 2: Training and records management | | | |
| Yes | 1 Training | | |
| Yes | 2 Records management (assessment 1) | | |
| Yes | 2 Records management (assessment 2) | | |
| Yes | 2 Records management (assessment 3) | | |
| Section 3: Facility inspection | | | |
| Yes | 3a Housing and rehabilitation – general care | | |
| Yes | 3b Housing and rehabilitation – intensive care | | |
| Yes | 3c Housing and rehabilitation – intermediate care | | |
| Yes | 3d Housing and rehabilitation – pre-release housing | | |
| Yes | 3e Pre-release assessment | | |
| Section 4: Field observation | | | |
| Yes | 4a Rescue (assessment 1) | | |
| Yes | 4b Rescue (assessment 2) | | |
| Yes | 4c Transport | | |

Recommendations:

More information

DCCEEW (2025) Code of practice for injured, sick and orphaned monotremes, NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

Wildlife rehabilitation reporting requirements and template for wildlife rehabilitation providers (data reporting template).