Bird of Prey Care Assessment Tool

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

Cover photo: Southern booboo owl (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*) chicks in rehabilitation. MK Images/Australian Raptor Care & Conservation/Higher Ground Raptors

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Purpose

This Bird of Prey 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 Birds of Prey* (the code). Its primary purpose is to proactively help inform and guide improvements to their standards of bird of prey care and optimise post-rehabilitation outcomes.

The tool is for use by species coordinators and experienced bird of prey rehabilitators such as mentors. 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 birds of prey are required to act in accordance with the code. It has been developed to protect the welfare of rescued birds of prey and support the conservation of wild bird of prey 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 birds of prey 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

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 bird of prey to determine if rescue is required?	**Yes**	No	Some	N/A
2. Did the rescuer consult with an experienced avian rehabilitator to determine if a bird of prey chick or juvenile requires rescue?	Yes	No	Some	**N/A**
3. Did the rescuer consider all the risks from environmental hazards to themselves, surrounding observers and the bird of prey?	Yes	No	**Some**	N/A
4. Did the rescuer possess the appropriate PPE?	**Yes**	No	Some	N/A
How to calculate an assessment score			
Step 1: Tally the selected responses for each column e.g. 2 Yes; 1 Some 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 **'Yes'** for 2 of the 4 questions, **'Some'** for one question and Not Applicable **(N/A)** for the other. The target question about bird of prey chicks was not applicable to this assessment because the person was not rescuing a bird of prey chick. The group member, therefore, cannot be assessed on the rescue of chicks. This question must then be deducted from the total number of target assessment questions.

The total assessment score is 2/3 applicable questions 67% Yes and 33% Some.

Insert the score or percentage for 'Yes' 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 birds of prey?

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

Target questions	Select one response for each question	
1. Is the member authorised to work with birds of prey?	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 bird of prey records, 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 the birds of prey on-site before commencing this section (Appendix).

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

Code of Practice standards:
12 Record keeping; 10 Release considerations (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: Use the Appendix to record the animals currently on-site. Request to see this report year's record sheet. The fields in the register should be equivalent to the standard, i.e. the data template.

Target questions	**Select one response for each question**			
1. How many birds of prey currently in care are listed in the record sheet?	All	Some	None	N/A
2. How many birds of prey have their rescue date, location and encounter data entered in the record sheet?	All	Some	None	N/A
3. How many birds of prey have their weight, age and species correctly entered in the record sheet?	All	Some	None	N/A
4. How many dead or released birds of prey have had their fates entered?	All	Some	None	N/A
5. How many birds of prey 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, euthanasia and permanent care of birds of prey 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' and 'When to Euthanase' standards in the code.

Target questions	Select one response for each question			
1. Of the birds of prey released, how many were put in a suitable environment at or as near as possible to their place of rescue?*	All	Some	None	N/A
2. How many birds of prey were euthanased in accordance with criteria in the code (list reasons in notes)?	All	Some	None	N/A
3. How many of the birds of prey 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:

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

Section 3: Facility inspection

The purpose of this section is 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 birds of prey, 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 bird of prey enclosures. Only answer if birds of prey are present, otherwise enter N/A in notes.

Target questions	Select one response for each question			
1. How many intensive care enclosures (ICEs) meet minimum floor dimension requirements for large and small raptors?	All	None	>Half	<Half
2. How many ICEs are escape-proof and have no hazards that might harm the bird of prey?	All	None	>Half	<Half
3. How many ICEs are positioned to protect each bird of prey from wild animals, domestic pets and pests?	All	None	>Half	<Half
4. How many ICEs provide a warm, dark and quiet environment for the bird of prey?	All	None	>Half	<Half
5. How many ICEs provide a constant temperature appropriate for the age of the bird of prey?	All	None	>Half	<Half
6. How many ICEs provide a light/dark cycle that replicates outside conditions?	All	None	>Half	<Half
7. How many ICEs use appropriate soft, non-slip substrate?	All	None	>Half	<Half
8. How many enclosures are clean and well maintained?	All	None	>Half	<Half

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

Section 3a: Housing and husbandry – intensive care

Convert to a percentage (%)

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

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 for birds of prey. Only answer if birds of prey are present, otherwise enter N/A in notes.

Target questions	Select one response for each question			
1. How many intermediate care enclosures (ITEs) meet minimum floor dimension requirements for large and small raptors?	All	None	>Half	<Half
2. How many ITEs are escape-proof and have no hazards that might harm the bird of prey?	All	None	>Half	<Half
3. How many ITEs are designed and positioned to protect the bird of prey from domestic and wild animals, pests, loud noises and strong vibrations?	All	None	>Half	<Half
4. How many ITEs provide a sheltered area offering protection from rain, weather conditions and excess heat?	All	None	>Half	<Half
5. How many ITEs are designed to minimise the risk of feather damage?	All	None	>Half	<Half
6. How many ITEs contain benches and feeding shelves?	All	None	>Half	<Half
7. How many ITEs contain wooden perches of varying diameter positioned at different heights?	All	None	>Half	<Half
8. How many ITEs contain substrate of either small pebbles or washed river sand?	All	None	>Half	<Half
9. How many ITEs are clean and well maintained?	All	None	>Half	<Half
10. How many ITEs have clean drinking water available?	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 participate in intermediate care or has no birds of prey.

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 for birds of prey. Only answer if birds of prey are present otherwise enter N/A in notes.

Target questions	Select one response for each question				
1. How many rectangular pre-release enclosures meet minimum floor dimension requirements for large and small raptors?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A
2. How many circular aviaries meet circumference, diameter and height requirements for large and small raptors?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A
3. How many PREs are escape-proof and have no hazards that might harm the bird of prey?	All	None	>Half	<Half	
4. How many PREs are designed and positioned to protect the bird of prey from domestic and wild animals, pests, loud noises and strong vibrations?	All	None	>Half	<Half	
5. How many PREs provide both a sheltered area and an area exposed to prevailing weather conditions?	All	None	>Half	<Half	
6. How many PREs are designed to minimise the risk of feather damage?	All	None	>Half	<Half	
7. How many PREs are designed and positioned to minimise exposure to humans.	All	None	>Half	<Half	
8. How many PREs are designed to encourage the bird of prey to express natural behaviours?	All	None	>Half	<Half	
9. How many PREs contain clean benches and feeding platforms?	All	None	>Half	<Half	
10. How many PREs contain appropriate wooden perches of varying diameter positioned at different heights?	All	None	>Half	<Half	
11. How many PREs contain substrate of either small pebbles or washed river sand?	All	None	>Half	<Half	
12. How many PREs are clean and well maintained?	All	None	>Half	<Half	
13. How many PREs have clean drinking water and bathing water available?	All	None	>Half	<Half	

Section 3c: Housing and husbandry – pre-release housing

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 birds of prey.

Recommendations:

Section 3d: Housing and husbandry – pre-release care of bird of prey chicks

Code of Practice standards:
8 Housing (8.4 Pre-release housing)

Assessment Question: Are pre-release care facilities (PREs) for orphaned nestling raptors (hacking boxes) constructed, positioned and maintained in accordance with the standard?
Prompts: Ask to see the hacking boxes for birds of prey. Only answer if hacking boxes and birds of prey are present otherwise enter N/A in notes.

Target questions	Select one response for each question			
1. How many hacking boxes have dimensions at least 1m long by 1m wide by 1m high?	All	None	>Half	<Half
2. How many hacking boxes are at least 1.5m above the ground and contain a landing platform?	All	None	>Half	<Half
3. How many hacking boxes are positioned to avoid direct sun and minimise access by predators?	All	None	>Half	<Half
4. How many hacking boxes provide unrestricted flight space from the box platform?	All	None	>Half	<Half

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

Convert to a percentage (%)

Section 3d: Housing and husbandry – pre-release care of bird of prey chicks

Notes: Enter N/A if the person does not have hacking boxes or has no birds of prey.

Recommendations:

Section 3e: Housing and husbandry – general care

Code of Practice standards:

6 Care procedures (6.1 Assessment, 6.2 Monitoring and 6.3 Controlling disease transmission); 7 Husbandry; 9 Suitability for release; 10. Release considerations

Assessment Question: Are the birds of prey in the facility managed according to the standard?

Prompts: Observe the birds of prey in care and ask to view the husbandry plan if there is one. Ask the following questions and circle the appropriate response. If a bird of prey is not present enter N/A.

Target questions	Select one response for each question				
1. How many birds of prey have undergone a veterinary assessment or assessment by an experienced bird of prey rehabilitator	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A
2. How many birds of prey suspected of an infectious disease are in isolation?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A
3. How many birds of prey in intensive care are monitored for body condition, hydration levels, food intake, quantity and quality of mutes and pellets and behaviour (view record)?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A
4. How many birds of prey in intermediate care are monitored (body condition, hydration levels, food intake, quantity and quality of mutes and pellets and behaviour) daily (view record)?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A
5. How many birds of prey ready for release are monitored daily (view record)?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A

Section 3e: Housing and husbandry – general care

	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A
6. How many birds of prey are provided with a balanced diet (view record)?	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 birds of prey about to be released If no birds of prey are ready for release, circle N/A.	N/A		
1. Has the release suitability of the bird of prey been confirmed by an experienced bird of prey 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. Are hand-reared birds of prey provided with temporary post-release support?	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 bird of prey to determine if rescue is required?	Yes	No	Some	N/A
2. Did the rescuer consult with an experienced avian rehabilitator to determine if a bird of prey chick or juvenile requires rescue?	Yes	No	Some	N/A
3. Did the rescuer consider all the risks from environmental hazards to themselves, surrounding observers and the bird of prey?	Yes	No	Some	N/A
4. 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:				

Assessment Question 2: Was the rescue of the bird of prey undertaken in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Observe the method and conduct of the bird of prey'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 use the correct method to capture the bird of prey?	Yes	No	N/A
3. Did the rescuer limit the exposure to additional stressors such as prolonged capture, onlookers, loud noises and other animals?	Yes	No	N/A
4. Prior to rescuing a bird of prey chick or juvenile, did the rescuer check for a nest and an adult bird of prey?	Yes	No	N/A
5. If the member is not a raptor specialist, did they arrange to transfer the bird of prey to an authorised bird of prey rehabilitator within 24 hours?	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 bird of prey transported in accordance with the standard?

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

Target questions	Select one response for each question		
1. Was the transport container appropriate for the species, size and condition of the bird of prey?	Yes	No	N/A
2. Was the transport container secure, lined with appropriate substrate and well-ventilated?	Yes	No	N/A
3. Was the bird provided something to grip during transport?	Yes	No	N/A
4. Was the transport container placed in the correct position in the vehicle?	Yes	No	N/A
5. Was the transport container covered with a dark-coloured cover?	Yes	No	N/A
6. Was the container designed to minimise noise, vibrations and prevent contact with people and animals during transport?	Yes	No	N/A
7. Was the temperature and condition of the bird monitored during transport?	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	Records Management (Assessment Q1)		
Yes	Records Management (Assessment Q2)		
Yes	Housing/Husbandry (Intensive care)		
Yes	Housing/Husbandry (Intermediate care)		
Yes	Housing/Husbandry (Pre-release care)		
Yes	Housing/Husbandry (Pre-release care of bird of prey chicks)		
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 the group member to confirm the taxonomic identification of each species.

Common name e.g. Peregrine falcon	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.