# Data reporting instructions

For the volunteer wildlife rehabilitation sector

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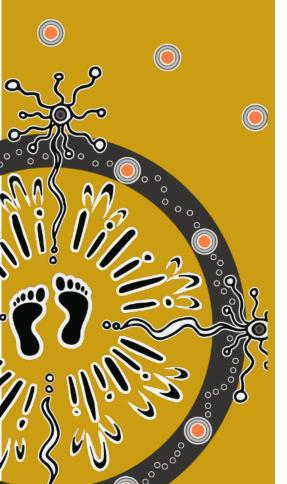
We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

This resource may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

**Find out more at:**

## environment.nsw.gov.au

# Contents

# Introduction

This document is an instructional reference guide for wildlife rehabilitation providers to assist them with their annual reporting requirements. The data provided by wildlife rehabilitators is valuable information that offers an insight into rehabilitation practices, emerging wildlife trends and conservation outcomes.

Each year the wildlife rehabilitation sector in New South Wales rescues over 110,000 animals from over 500 species. The wildlife rehabilitation volunteer network extends across 40 service providers and more than 8,600 individuals. The service provided by this sector is an invaluable contribution to the NSW community and the wildlife they rescue.

As part of their licensing conditions, wildlife rehabilitation providers in New South Wales must maintain a current register of all protected fauna encountered or rescued. These records must be submitted annually to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

The data collected by wildlife rehabilitation providers is being increasingly recognised as a valuable tool for research, decision-making and conservation. It is also important for the sector to understand trends in rehabilitation and identify threatening processes. This reference guide was created to encourage quality and consistent data collection across the sector.

The annual reporting required by each licence holder consists of 2 separate reports:

1. Detailed report – a register of all animal records for the financial year
2. Combined report – a register of all animals that are transferred in accordance with licence conditions, approved animals in permanent care, all preserved specimens, and a register of members.

The following instructions refer specifically to the 2 reports listed above. Individual wildlife rehabilitation providers may have additional reporting requirements for their members.

The *Reporting wildlife rehabilitation data* video series provides practical instructions on collecting and recording wildlife rehabilitation data and can be accessed on the department's website (see link in the 'More information' section below).

# Detailed report

The detailed report records all animal records (excluding sightings) for the financial year (1 July to 30 June). The purpose of the report is to record key data on rescued wildlife including:

- species common name
- encounter details
- location details
- fate details.

There are 7 different tabs on the spreadsheet that you should familiarise yourself with:

1. Datasheet – this is where the data should be entered
2. Species list – a reference list of species names that must be used to fill in the 'Common name' column in the Datasheet. The species list is derived from NSW BioNet and is updated annually
3. Encounter type – provides a list of the encounter type options and an example and definition for each
4. Animal condition – provides a list of the animal condition options and an example and definition for each
5. Fate – provides a list of the fate options and an example and definition for each
6. Reference data – this is a combination of other reference options required to complete the Datasheet tab
7. Privacy notice – the NPWS privacy notice.

When filling out this report there are a few general tips to help keep the information as accurate as possible. These include:

- ensure you have the correct spelling, particularly for addresses
- do not create your own species common name, use the names in the Species list provided
- do not leave a field blank or listed as unknown if you know the reason or condition; doing so leads to inaccurate and diluted data that does not reflect the true impacts on wildlife across the state
- be as accurate as possible when recording location.

## Data entry

The following sections provide instructions on how to populate each column in the Datasheet tab of the detailed report.

## Species name

The species name column has a drop-down list for the common name of the species. This list can also be found in the Species list tab on the template.

The species names in the list are updated annually and are the same as those used by the government's NSW BioNet data repository tool.

> It is extremely important that the Species list names are used, so that species are being labelled correctly and consistently across organisations. This will improve the consistency of data being recorded across the sector.

The use of inconsistent naming creates inaccuracies in the records and can make it difficult to attribute a record to a particular species. This means that the records may not accurately reflect what is happening with certain species, and core trends in diseases and distribution could potentially be impacted.

A common example is using 'lorikeet' as the species name. There are 4 species of lorikeet that occur within New South Wales and 'lorikeet' cannot be accurately attributed to any of these species. This dilutes the data and impacts the value of the overall data set.

While there are times when the exact species may be unknown, it is vital that the correct and full species name is entered wherever possible.

The species drop-down list has the top 30 rescued species listed first and then lists every species in alphabetical order.

**Species not listed**

If the species name is not in the Species list, there is an option at the end of the drop-down list called 'Species not listed'. If this option is selected, please write the full species name in the 'Notes' column of the Datasheet. Where it is found that a particular species is often being recorded in this way, the Species list will be updated to include this species in the following year.

## ID number

The ID number refers to the unique identification attributed to each animal that comes into care. This can be a number or an alphanumeric ID. A unique ID number is required for keeping track of an individual animal. It is particularly valuable when animals are being transferred between organisations so as not to have a duplication of records in the data.

> The ID must stay with the animal throughout its rehabilitation, even if it is transferred from one group to another.

# Encounter details

Data about the time, location, type of encounter and the animal's condition are required to be reported.

**Date of encounter**

This refers to the date the animal was rescued or first received into care. Format is dd/mm/year.

**Encounter type**

Encounter type refers to the immediate cause or reason for encountering an animal. Selecting the correct encounter type is important because it enables us to better understand trends in why animals are being rescued. This enables conservation managers and researchers to analyse the data and develop ways to mitigate these causes.

The Encounter type column has a drop-down list for the common encounter types. Please select one of these encounter types. A list of the encounter types, definitions and examples can be found in the Encounter type tab.

**Encounter location details**

The location details record the place the animal was encountered or rescued. These details must be as accurate as possible. Accurate location details help in determining hotspots, mapping geographic ranges and determining other patterns associated with an animal's encounter location.

> If an animal is collected from a veterinarian, the address of where the animal was **found**, not the vet's address, should be recorded in this column.

There are 2 options for recording location details:

- GPS coordinates
- address.

*GPS coordinates – latitude and longitude*

GPS coordinates are the preferred format for providing location details as they are the most accurate. A GPS location can be found easily using a smart phone or a computer; watch the video series *Reporting wildlife rehabilitation data* for practical instructions.

The Encounter location: latitude and Encounter location: longitude columns should be used when recording the rescue location in the form of latitude and longitude coordinates.

*Address*

If location details cannot be provided in the form of GPS coordinates, the next best thing is an accurate street address.

The Encounter location: address and Encounter location: suburb/town & postcode columns should be used when recording the address. The suburb/town & postcode column has a drop-down menu that can be used to enter suburbs and postcodes in New South Wales.

> The address should include the street number, street name, suburb/town and postcode.

**Animal condition**

The animal condition is defined as the state the animal is in when it is initially assessed. To input the animal condition, you must select one of the options from the drop-down list. As you can only select one option, select the most relevant condition based on your assessment of the animal. The list of animal condition options, together with a definition and example, can be found in the Animal condition tab.

## Animal information

Additional information about the animal — such as sex, life stage, weight and pouch condition — provide valuable demographic information and improve our understanding of wildlife rehabilitation practices.

**Sex**

The gender of the animal should be recorded in the Sex column. This information can help determine gender patterns in animals requiring rescue or for certain encounter types. The category options in the drop-down menu include male, female, hermaphrodite and unknown. Hermaphroditism, also referred to as intersex, is a condition where an animal has both female (ovarian) and male (testicular) reproductive tissue. This is occasionally seen in koalas.

> Use the 'Unknown' category only for species where sex is hard to determine and cannot be confirmed, for example, very young animals or birds and reptiles that don't display sexual dimorphism (physical characteristics different from each other).

**Life stage**

Life stage refers to broader developmental stages, not age in months or years. The categories in the drop-down menu have been purposely designed to be broad to encompass the various life stages and terminologies used across species. The categories are adult, young, egg and unknown.

Use the 'Adult' option for animals that are sexually mature and the 'Young' option for an animal that has not yet reached its adult form or sexual maturity (for example fledglings, sub-adults).

**Initial weight**

The weight of the animal when it comes into rehabilitation should be recorded here; that is, the first time the animal is weighed. It is important to specify what units the weight has been recorded in, for example, grams (g) or kilograms (kg).

**Pouch condition**

This is used to record the pouch condition of female marsupials; in particular, to record the breeding status of females coming into care. Mothers with back young can also be recorded here.

There are 6 categories in the drop-down menu to choose from:

1. Lactating – if a female is lactating but there is no joey
2. Non-lactating – if the animal rescued is a female but she is not lactating
3. Pinkie attached – if there is a pinkie fused to the teat
4. Pouch young – if there is a pouch young that is not fused to the teat
5. Back young – a female with a joey at the back-riding stage
6. N/A – not applicable, for example, if it is a male.

## Rehabilitator name

This is the name of the person who undertakes the majority of rehabilitation for this animal. When researchers are looking into this data they may have further questions about certain animals, and knowing the name of the rehabilitator will help them direct their queries.

If the animal has been cared for by more than one rehabilitator, enter the name of the member the animal was last in care with.

## Fate details

Details about the fate of a rescue can provide valuable information regarding the outcomes of rehabilitation and can inform improvements to rehabilitation practices.

**Fate**

For the purposes of reporting, fate is defined as the outcome for the animal or rescue. A list of the categories available in the drop-down menu for fate and accompanying definitions and examples can be found in the Fate tab.

Wildlife rehabilitation organisations play an important role in providing advice to the community about wildlife interactions. Where a call for help or rescue is resolved by providing advice, this should be recorded. Use the category 'Advice provided' for

situations where a physical rescue was not required, but was instead resolved by providing advice.

## Date of fate

The date of the fate of the animal or rescue should be recorded in this column. For example, if the animal was released, the date of its release should be entered in this column in dd/mm/year format.

## Release location details

The location details record the place the animal was released or relocated. These details must be as accurate as possible.

All animals with a fate of 'Released' or 'Relocated' must have release location details recorded.

There are 2 options for recording location details:

- GPS coordinates
- address.

### *GPS coordinates – latitude and longitude*

GPS coordinates are the preferred format for providing location details as they are the most accurate. A GPS location can be found easily using a smart phone or a computer; watch the video series *Reporting wildlife rehabilitation data* for practical instructions.

The Encounter location: latitude and Encounter location: longitude columns should be used when recording the rescue location in the form of latitude and longitude coordinates.

### *Address*

If location details cannot be provided in the form of GPS coordinates, the next best thing is an accurate street address.

The Encounter location: address and Encounter location: suburb/town & postcode columns should be used when recording the address. The suburb/town & postcode column has a drop-down menu that can be used to enter suburbs and postcodes in New South Wales.

The address should include the street number, street name, suburb/town and postcode.

**Tag/Band colour and number**

Any external tag or band applied to an animal as an identification tool should be recorded in this column. Both the colour of the tag and the number/text written on it should be recorded.

**Microchip number**

If an animal is microchipped, the microchip number should be recorded in this column. Ensure you transcribe the complete microchip number accurately. Reporting data on individual identification such as tags and microchips can provide valuable post-release monitoring data. This data can be very useful to understand rehabilitation outcomes and inform improvement to rehabilitation practices.

## Notes

The notes column can be used to capture any additional information relevant to the rescue, rehabilitation or release of an animal. Addition information about the release, such as if the animal was soft-release or released with a buddy, can be included in this column.

If you have selected the 'Species not listed' option in the Common name column, the species name should be recorded in the Notes column.

# Frequently asked questions about the detailed report

## What if I cannot find the species I have rescued in the species list?

Ensure you thoroughly check the species list to confirm presence or absence.

If the species does not appear in the drop-down list, select (or type in) 'Species not listed' and add the species name in full in the Notes column.

## Do I need to record domestic species?

No. Although you might take a call for a domestic species (for example a rabbit or cockatiel) needing help and refer the member of public to another organisation to assist them, it is not necessary to include this information in the detailed report.

## Can I use the name I have given to the animal as its ID number?

No. The ID number must be a unique number or alphanumeric ID ascribed to the animal. Using the animal's name in this field can lead to confusion as to which animal it is because many of the same names are repeatedly used and can appear as duplicate records. The unique ID number is also important for when animals are transferred between groups and when trying to identify multiple animals from the same location.

## Do I record sightings in the detailed report?

No. The detailed report is specifically for sick, injured or orphaned animals. Sightings of healthy free-living animals should not be recorded in this register and instead can be submitted to NSW BioNet.

## Do I need to record each animal individually?

Yes. For example, if there are 3 chicks from the same nest, each chick should have its own record and ID number.

## If the animal is picked up from the vet should I record the vet's address?

No. The location the animal was found and not the address of the vet should be recorded in the Location details column.

## What type of information should be included in the Notes column?

If you selected the 'Species not listed' option in the Common name column the full name of the species should be recorded in the Notes column. If you have any additional information you think is important to record for an individual animal, you can add this in the Notes column, for example details about the method of release or the animal's condition.

## How do I record animals I receive from another wildlife rehabilitation organisation?

The most important information to carry with the animal is its individual ID number. Ensure you use the same individual ID allocated by the rehabilitation group from which you are receiving the animal. This ensures that the animal will not be duplicated when data from all the groups is analysed.

The original encounter details can also be recorded in the Datasheet. For example, if the animal coming into your care from another organisation was hit by a car, you would record the encounter type as 'Collision – Motor vehicle'.

# Common reported scenarios – examples

This section includes example of common rescue scenarios and how the data should be captured for each scenario. These examples are provided to ensure consistency in reporting.

## Scenario 1:

An eastern grey kangaroo has been hit by a car, she has sustained physical trauma to the head and is deceased with an uninjured, viable joey in the pouch.

This common rescue scenario has 2 records:

One for the deceased mother:

- Species name: Eastern grey kangaroo
- Encounter type: Collision – motor vehicle
- Animal condition: Injury to head
- Fate: Dead prior to rescuer arriving

One for the joey:

- Species name: Eastern grey kangaroo
- Encounter type: Abandoned/orphaned
- Animal condition: Orphaned
- Fate: In care

## Scenario 2:

An uninjured shingleback lizard has been found outside of its normal distribution and is ascertained to be an escaped pet. The shingleback has no injuries and attempts to find its original owner are unsuccessful, so it is rehomed with a person who has the relevant licence.

- Species name: Shingle-back
- Encounter type: Domestic pet – escaped
- Animal condition: No apparent distress
- Fate: Rehomed

### Scenario 3:

An adult rainbow lorikeet is found on the ground. It is not injured but is unable to fly with poorly developed wing and tail feathers. The lorikeet is confirmed to have psittacine beak and feather disease by a veterinarian and is euthanased.

- Species name: Rainbow lorikeet
- Encounter type: Disease – PBFD
- Animal condition: Diseased
- Fate: Euthanased by vet

### Scenario 4:

An adult grey-headed flying-fox is found with severe dehydration after a week of extremely high temperatures. The flying-fox is still in care at the time of reporting.

- Species name: Grey-headed flying-fox
- Encounter type: Event – extreme heat
- Animal condition: Dehydrated
- Fate: In care

### Scenario 5:

A juvenile male koala has been attacked by a dog. He has several puncture wounds to his neck. He also has mild symptoms of ocular chlamydia. The koala is seen by a veterinarian who treats its wounds and provides pain relief. The koala unfortunately dies overnight.

- Species name: Koala
- Encounter type: Attack – dog
- Animal condition: Multiple health issues
- Fate: Died in care
- Notes: Had symptoms of ocular chlamydia, samples collected for PCR

# Combined report

The combined report records information for the financial year (1 July to 30 June). The combined report is a spreadsheet comprised of 6 tabs:

1. Nil return – if you have no information to declare for the combined report then you only need to complete this tab
2. Transferred animal register – if any animals have been transferred from your group during the reporting period the details must be recorded here
3. Permanent care register – any animals that are in permanent care during the reporting year must be recorded here
4. Preserved specimen register – any preserved specimens being held need to be listed here
5. Register of members – an organisation's members, including their premise address, email and phone numbers must be recorded here
6. Privacy notice – the NPWS privacy notice.

> The first row of each register is an example of how to complete the fields, to assist you with filling out the report.

## Data entry

The following sections provide instructions on how to populate each tab in the combined report.

### Nil return

This page provides an overview of the entire report. Some individual licence holders will have had no animals that have been transferred or are in permanent care, nor will they have any preserved specimens or members, so they will only need to fill out this first tab of the report. Organisations will need to answer 'Yes' or 'No' to the questions asked and for any question they answer 'Yes' to, they must fill out the corresponding tab in the report.

### Transferred animal register

This register is broken up into 3 sections: animal details; transfer details; and the institution, organisation or individual that received the animal.

One of the most important details when transferring an animal is ensuring you record the unique ID number of that animal for your organisation and that this unique ID number is reported to the receiving organisation. This is so we can keep track of animals that have been transferred and cross-reference records to avoid duplications.

## Permanent care register

The permanent care register has 4 sections to record information on animals that are in permanent care with your organisation. Any animal in permanent care must have approval from the NPWS Licensing Team.

This register is a living document that should be added to each reporting year. This means you report every animal in permanent care during the reporting year, not just the ones that were approved for permanent care during the reporting year.

If an animal in permanent care dies during the reporting year, this should be recorded in the Animal status column for the annual report and then this animal does not need to be recorded in the following year's report.

## Preserved specimen register

Any preserved specimens held by your organisation should be recorded in this register. It is a condition of your licence that a preserved specimen is given a register reference number and that this number is kept with the specimen. The register reference number should also be recorded here.

## Register of members

This register provides valuable information about the number of people and positions across the wildlife rehabilitation sector and offers valuable insight into the skills and capacity within the sector.

This register provides details on the members within your group. For each member you will need to record their member ID number, name, address, email address and phone number. Further to this, there are columns in this register for you to indicate if a member holds an executive, coordinator or mentor position; and record if they are authorised to rehabilitate koalas, flying-foxes, birds of prey, venomous snakes or marine reptiles.

The member list should include all members that are authorised under the licence. That is, everyone actively involved in rescue and rehabilitation, as well as committee members and anyone engaged in administration.

# More information

If you have any questions about the wildlife rehabilitation reporting you can email the NPWS Wildlife Rehabilitation Team at Wildlife.Rehabilitation@environment.nsw.gov.au.

More information can be found using the following links:

- Reporting wildlife rehabilitation data video series
- Wildlife rehabilitation reporting – webpage, including links to the data collection spreadsheets for detailed reports and combined reports
- NSW BioNet