



Guidelines for Completing Records for Animals Rescued and/or Brought into Care

Introduction: Why Records are Important to Complete

Anyone caring for wildlife in Australia must have a Permit, obtained from the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency; formerly known as the NPWS).

It is a regulation, in carrying a permit, that records must be kept on all fauna that is rescued or kept in care by the permit-holder. These records **MUST** be submitted to the EPA.

Wildcare has an 'umbrella'-like permit, meaning that the permit covers all members of Wildcare. Therefore, it is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** as a Wildcare member to complete accurate records and submit them each month to the Record Keeper for Wildcare.

Records also provide information on figures and trends about our native wildlife, and how they come to need care. This assists the EPA to plan strategies to reduce hazards that impact on our wildlife, and assists Wildcare in increasing community awareness of the need to conserve and protect our unique biodiversity.

The following set of guidelines include the topics:

1. **How to complete record forms**
 - Explanation of sections on front page of record sheet
 - Explanations of sections on back page of record sheet
2. **Common questions and associated answers relating to completing record forms**
3. **How to submit records to Wildcare's Record Keeper**
4. **Common questions and answers relating to submitting records.**

1. How to Complete Record Forms

Please refer to the sample record form supplied.

*Both the front and back of the form must be completed every month.
It also must be signed and dated.*

- **Explanation of Sections on Front Page of Record Form**

MONTH / YEAR: Please enter BOTH.

Sometimes records from previous years are referred to, such as when an animal is in care for an extended period of time, so it is important to distinguish them by the year.

NAME OF CARER: Please enter your full name, both first name and surname.

PHONE: Your phone number is handy as a quick reference if the Record Keeper needs to contact you to clarify details.

DATE RECEIVED: Please include full date, including year, e.g. 28/07/01.
This enables easy tracing of the animal from rescue to outcome.

ANIMAL ID NUMBER:

This is often referred to as '**the code**' by those on phone duty:

- Every rescue is appointed an Animal ID Number. The person doing phone duty, when giving you details of a rescue, usually gives this code to you. If not, please ask them for it.
- The code (---/dd/mm/yy/-----) consists of the following:

1. Initials of Wildcare member on phone duty (usually 3 letters)
2. Date/Month/Year, i.e. dd/mm/yy
3. 5-digit number (this is in chronological order, according to the number allocated to the previous rescue that member coded under their initials).

For example, the sample form has the first code KRJ28/07/01/00167.

It is essential to provide the **complete code** as this provides a lot of information to the Record Keeper. From the above sample code (my own initials), we can determine that I was the member on phone duty, the rescue occurred on the 28th July 2001, and it was the 167th rescue that I had allocated in the time that I had been a member of Wildcare.

- Sometimes you may do a rescue that was not allocated to you via the Wildcare Phone Duty person. E.g., You find an injured animal yourself, someone you know rings you directly or a Vet Surgery gives you additional animals to the one they originally contacted Wildcare regarding. In this case, you may designate your own code to the rescue, using your own initials and following the above coding method.
- **You must use the same code from Start to Finish:** It is essential that the rescue code remains the same code for the associated animal(s), from rescue to outcome (i.e. Release or Death), EVEN IF THE ANIMAL(S) ARE TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER CARER.

This ensures that, in the event of a transfer, the code and all other information pertaining to the rescue (i.e. all other information entered on the front page of the record form) are passed on to the new carer and can be traced back to the original rescue if required.

If this code is not passed on, there will be either missing details on the new carer's records, or they may allocate a new code to the animal. This *duplication* leads to poor representation in our data collection and associated findings.

SPECIES (& Gender if known): The proper name for the species is preferred, rather than the slang name.

E.g. Magpie Lark or Mud Lark are more appropriate names than '*Pee Wee*', of which they are sometimes referred.

If in doubt, you may refer to a book (e.g. A bird ID book), or contact the Record Keeper or the Animal Coordinator for that species.

Gender (if known) can be written simply as M or F.

QUANTITY RECEIVED: Nil explanation required!

NAME OF RESCUER: Again, please write both the first name and surname of the person. If the person is not from Wildcare (e.g. The caller), please include this in this column.

CALLER'S NAME & NUMBER: Both are essential in case you need to contact them on releasing the animal or to obtain more information on the incident leading to the rescue. (These details are also required under the Permit).

SPECIFIC LOCATION WHERE FOUND: The exact location is preferred, not just the town or suburb. This is required to enable the animal to be released back into the original location. By knowing the exact location, the carer can better account for the animal returning to its own territory, which will improve its chance of survival upon release.

- Don't assume that the caller's address is the same location as where they found the animal. If the animal is collected from a vet surgery or other organisation, please ask them where the animal was originally found, and if they can give you the details of the finder. Again, this is to obtain more information to assist in planning the eventual release of the animal.

REASON FOR CARE, RELOCATION OR RESCUE: Some commonly-used reasons are:

- Orphaned
- Road Trauma (includes 'hit by car', 'road accident', 'found on road')
- Unable to fly / walk
- Diagnosis given by Vet or condition that is obvious without Vet's assessment (e.g. Broken wing / leg, fractured jaw / pelvis, poisoning, torn wing if bat, etc)
- Electrocution by power lines
- Human Interference (includes people moving nests or accidentally pruning nests off trees, lawn mowing accidents, disturbing the animal or its home in some way)
- Dog Attack
- Cat Attack
- Attacked by other birds (sometimes this occurs AFTER the animal has already become injured or sick)
- Endangered (e.g. Koala trapped by dog)
- Appears malnourished

Try to consider both the **cause** of injury as well as the **injury itself**,
eg. Writing 'Road Trauma - Fractured Wing' in this column will explain both.

Collecting this information is useful to Wildcare in gaining insight into how our local wildlife is endangered and what causes them to require our care. This information can then be passed on to the EPA and local community.

The reason for rescue is also useful in planning a release, i.e. to avoid recurrence of a similar injury.

- **Explanations of sections on back page of record sheet**

ANIMAL ID NUMBER: Again, please include **complete code** to enable the Record Keeper to trace the animal back to the original rescue, and to reduce the chance of duplication or lost details (both have occurred in the past when an animal is transferred to another carer).

SPECIES: As explained previously.

It is also helpful to include *quantity* if more than one animal was involved in the same rescue.

Outcomes:

A. Transfer

TRANSFERRED TO & DATE: Please ensure the person's FULL name is entered. If they are an independent carer with their own wildlife permit, or from another organisation, please include this:

Eg. Jane Smith, ONARR

John James, Independent Carer.

Please also ensure the *full date* of transfer is also included. Again, this enables the Record keeper to trace the animal back to the original rescue and accompanying details.

B. Release

RELEASE DATE: Again *full date* is required.

RELEASE AREA: Exact location is preferred, rather than only the town or suburb.

C. Death

DATE DIED / DATE EUTHANASED: Again, *full date* is required.

COMMENTS:

This is any brief comment that is relevant to the outcome.

Examples:

- DOA (Animal was dead on the arrival of the rescuer to the incident scene)
- 1 euthanased, 2 others still in care (for 3 ducklings rescued together but having different outcomes)
- The reason for the animal dying or needing euthanasia.
- The weight (gm) of the pinkie or joey on rescue.

STILL IN CARE:

This section is the **MOST USEFUL** to the Record Keeper, as it saves a lot of effort in chasing up records of animals, as it is a quick identifier of animals whose outcomes have failed to be recorded. Previously this section did not exist, and it was assumed that an animal, whose outcome had not been documented, was still in care. If this animal's outcome was forgotten to be recorded, months could go by before the error was realised, making it difficult to trace the details.

This section requires the **Animal ID Number** (the Code), **Species** (& Quantity) and any relevant **Comments**. Again, as previously explained, the *full code* of the animal is required to avoid incorrectly identifying the animal and to trace it back to the original rescue.

SIGNED AGREEMENT:

Please read, acknowledge and sign the agreement.

Please also include the **YEAR** with the month, as it prevent mixing records for the month with those of previous years.

2. Common questions and associated answers relating to completing record forms

1. WHAT IF THE ANIMAL IS DEAD WHEN I REACH THE SITE OF RESCUE?

PLEASE STILL RECORD THIS, adding DOA in the "Comments" section on the back of the records form.

Reasons:

- Our records are a source of identifying what impacts on our local wildlife. Therefore, even if the caller informs you that the animal has died, when you phone them to arrange collecting the animal, you should still record and code the animal.
- It also acknowledges the intervention by Wildcare, i.e. the initial call to Wildcare and the rescuer's involvement.

2. WHAT IF MORE THAN ONE ANIMAL ARE COLLECTED ON ONE RESCUE?

- The same code can be used for all animals of the **SAME** species, e.g. 7 sibling ducklings that are orphaned and rescued together. If they end up having different outcomes, you can separate them by adding a different letter onto the end of the code, eg. KRJ28/07/01/00167a, KRJ28/07/01/00167b.
- However, if you receive two different animals in the one rescue, e.g. You go to collect a crow from a vet, and they also give you a crested pigeon and figbird when you arrive (and this **DOES** happen!!), then you must issue separate codes, i.e. The code given by the Phone Duty person to the animal you had anticipated collecting, and your own designated codes to the additional animals if the vet did not call Wildcare about these other animals.
- In the situation of a parent and its young being rescued, it is preferable that a separate code is given to the parent animal than to its young, if it is likely that their outcomes will be different. E.g. If a

3. WHAT IF I FORGET TO SUBMIT MY RECORDS?

If you are likely to forget, please put a system in place to remind yourself at the end of each month, e.g. Mark in your diary or calendar.

If you do forget, please contact the RECORD KEEPER as soon as you remember, indicating when you will be submitting them.

You may also receive a reminder call from the Record Keeper or see your name listed in the WILDNEWS newsletter, reminding you to submit records.

However, hopefully forgetting to submit your records will not occur. As you can imagine, the Record Keeper's role of chasing up lost or late records can be very expensive in call costs, not to mention time-consuming. Remember the Record Keeper, like the main committee members of Wildcare, is VOLUNTARILY performing this role.

4. WHAT IF I RUN OUT OF RECORDS FORMS?

If able, please photocopy blank forms for your ongoing use.

Otherwise, please advise the Record Keeper if you need more forms, either by attaching a note to your last submitted record, or by phone / email.

These forms are also available at Wildcare Workshops, at Wildcare Carers' Meetings, or from the Wildcare Office).

In Conclusion

Thankyou for taking the time to read these guidelines, as it will benefit the efficiency and accuracy of Wildcare's records and also the useful information obtained through them.

If you have any further queries, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE to contact the Record Keeper, using the phone or e-mail details listed above.

Kiersten Jones
Record Keeper
WILDCARE Australia

Date Revised: Sept 2003.