

## Guidelines for Obtaining a Provisional Wildlife Rehabilitation License



CDOW regulations ([Chapter 14](#)) describe how people can become licensed wildlife rehabilitators. These guidelines help explain the various regulations, and provide considerations for selecting and working with a sponsor.

The process of becoming a rehabilitator requires commitment and extensive preparation. It also requires the development of specific knowledge and skills. Any person who would like to rehabilitate and release orphaned, sick or injured wildlife in his/her own home or facility must first work under the sponsorship and supervision of a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. He or she also must obtain a [state provisional wildlife rehabilitation license](#), and a [federal permit](#) if rehabilitating birds. The sponsor will help the provisional licensee become a capable and skilled rehabilitator, obtain supplies, and prepare a rehabilitation facility.

### Process overview

These general steps for those considering becoming a wildlife rehabilitator in Colorado are described in this document:

- Learn about wildlife rehabilitation by volunteering and reading introductory materials
- Find a sponsor
- Develop a Learning Plan with the sponsor, including topics from the Study Guide
- Prepare a wildlife rehabilitation facility and acquire supplies
- Identify and arrange for a veterinarian to treat wildlife
- Apply for the Provisional license
- Facility inspection by the CDOW with sponsor in attendance
- CDOW decision on the application
- Learn about wildlife rehabilitation, including regulations, rehabilitation practices, and more
- Rehabilitate wildlife
- Communicate with sponsor within 24 hours of admission of each animal and regularly during its rehabilitation, and about key decisions
- Submit annual wildlife rehabilitation records, progress report on Learning Plan, and documentation of the use of unlicensed individuals helping with wildlife care (if any)
- Evaluate rehabilitation knowledge, skills and experience
- Apply for rehabilitation license with Request for Provisional Upgrade
- Facility inspection and interview by the CDOW with sponsor in attendance
- Completing or terminating the sponsor/provisional relationship

### Learn about wildlife rehabilitation

Many people think they would like to rehabilitate or to work with wildlife in some capacity. They are interested in animals and wish to contribute in a helpful way. However, wildlife rehabilitation tends to be quite different from, and far more difficult than, most people expect. If a helpful person lacks knowledge, skill, experience, supplies and/or facilities, this can result in the



suffering or death of the wild animal, harm to people, and spread of disease to other wildlife. It is essential that someone who sincerely believes he or she would like to become a wildlife rehabilitator learn about the daily activities and requirements of rehabilitation *before* applying for a license.

Anyone interested in becoming a wildlife rehabilitator should read [Learn About Wildlife Rehabilitation](#). This easily downloaded brochure describes the activities of licensed, home-based wildlife rehabilitators who have a rehabilitation facility on their own property (e.g., home and yard), as well those who work in larger, free-standing wildlife rehabilitation centers.

More specific information about wildlife rehabilitation is available in the downloadable booklet, [Wildlife Rehabilitation: Is It For You?](#) This booklet describes many of the basic requirements for wildlife rehabilitators, including time, commitment, space, funding, knowledge and skill, risk management, working with a veterinarian, and relevant state and federal permits. The booklet addresses commonly held myths about wildlife rehabilitation. It dispels notions such as: loving wildlife qualifies someone to be a rehabilitator, or wildlife rehabilitation is a hobby, or that the government pays for rehabilitating wildlife.

If someone is still interested in wildlife rehabilitation after reading these materials, he or she is encouraged to volunteer with one or more wildlife rehabilitators or centers. Volunteering provides an opportunity to directly experience wildlife rehabilitation work. A person should plan on volunteering for several months – long enough to become familiar with the full scope of the work. This allows the person to assess whether wildlife rehabilitation activities are compatible with his or her interests and available time – and if it is something that he or she enjoys.

First, the volunteer learns about rehabilitation objectives, safety procedures, daily activities and so on. Then, the volunteer provides indirect wildlife care. After the volunteer has shown the ability to follow instructions, reliability and so forth, the rehabilitator may choose to increase his or her responsibilities and involvement. He or she may assist in activities such as food preparation, cage cleaning, and release site identification.

Regulations require that any unlicensed individual assisting with direct wildlife care have training in wildlife rehabilitation ethics; wildlife rehabilitation regulations; common wildlife diseases and parasites, including zoonotic diseases; safe capture and handling of the applicable species; diet and nutrition of the applicable species; and the use of written protocols related to any activity the unlicensed person may perform. Further training is required if the unlicensed person will be performing direct animal care tasks in addition to those listed above, such as administering first aid.

The volunteer may then assist with direct animal care, such as capture and handling, conducting an examination, responding appropriately to an animal's care needs, basic first aid, releases, euthanasia decisions, and more. A licensed wildlife rehabilitator will always directly supervise the unlicensed person working with animals. While unlicensed people may transport wildlife to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, the Division of Wildlife, animal control agency, local law enforcement agency or licensed DVM, they are not allowed to keep wildlife at their homes.

Many people find that wildlife rehabilitation is not exactly what they expected. Some do not have the time, space, or financial resources to be home-based wildlife rehabilitator, but they want to continue volunteering for a licensed rehabilitator or rehabilitation center. Others decide to become involved with different conservation or animal activities. A few volunteers, however,

choose to continue in wildlife rehabilitation and apply for their own provisional wildlife rehabilitation license.

## Find a sponsor

The first step after the volunteer experience and prior to applying for a provisional license is to find a wildlife rehabilitation sponsor. CDOW regulations require that the sponsor has had a full wildlife rehabilitation license for the types of animals that the provisional license applicant wants to rehabilitate for a minimum of three years. It is critical for the applicant to decide which types of animals he or she wants to learn to rehabilitate before searching for a sponsor. If an applicant wants to work with more types of animals than a particular sponsor is licensed to rehabilitate, then the applicant must apply to have another sponsor for those additional types of animals. For example, if a sponsor rehabilitates small mammals and the provisional also wants to learn to rehabilitate waterfowl, the applicant must find another sponsor for waterfowl.

Most provisional rehabilitators begin by learning to rehabilitate small mammals or birds. It is easier to learn capture and handling skills working with smaller and less dangerous species. The initial start-up costs also are less than for larger species.

Even if the applicant eventually plans to rehabilitate a wide variety of species, it is important to start with a limited number. Limiting the number of species, as well as the number of animals, he or she initially rehabilitates is necessary because the provisional still must learn essential knowledge, build skills and prepare his or her facility in a reasonable time. While it is possible to have two sponsors for different types of animals, doing this will require more training and experience and be likely to lengthen the time the applicant has a provisional license.

For names of potential sponsors, applicants should check the CDOW [state listing of rehabilitators](#) or contact the CDOW Special Licensing Unit at 303-291-7143. Applicants may talk with several rehabilitators before finding a potential sponsor. Some rehabilitators will not want, or be able, to sponsor provisionals. Distance between the sponsor and provisional is another factor. Some sponsors will work only with provisionals who are nearby. Occasionally, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator will consider sponsoring someone located up to a couple of hours away, depending on the types of animals to be rehabilitated and communication and supervision needed.

While CDOW regulations allow rehabilitators with a full rehabilitation license for a minimum of three years to sponsor provisional rehabilitators, effective sponsors have much more than a license. They have considerable knowledge and experience in rehabilitating wildlife. They have dealt with a wide range of health conditions and ages for the species they work with. They have conducted effective and timely releases as well as made appropriate euthanasia decisions. Potential sponsors should have a good safety record and the ability to train others in safety procedures. Sponsors should be knowledgeable about and able to respond to the questions in the *Colorado Study Guide for Provisional Wildlife Rehabilitators and Wildlife Rehabilitation Sponsors*.



In addition, a prospective sponsor must be someone who has the time and interest in sponsoring new provisional licensees. He or she should be a good communicator, teacher and supervisor. The following questions are helpful for applicants to use when searching for a sponsor. It also is a good idea for the applicant to talk with other provisional rehabilitators that

the person has sponsored to determine how the process worked for them and to get their suggestions.

*Questions to consider when talking with potential sponsors:*

- What species do they rehabilitate?
- What type of state or federal rehabilitation license or license do they have?
- How long have they been involved in rehabilitation and had their license?
- What kind of experience do they have (e.g., species, ages of animals, types of conditions treated, general numbers)?
- How many animals do they rehabilitate annually? How many do they have in rehabilitation during the “busy season” and how does sponsoring provisionals impact those numbers?
- What kind of wildlife rehabilitation training have they had?
- How do they continue their rehabilitation education?
- Are they members of state or national rehabilitation associations?
- How much time can they give to help a new volunteer or provisional?
- What are their training, mentoring and supervisory styles?
- How are mutual expectations clarified?
- What types of reference materials do they have and suggest?
- What do they expect you to learn and do as a provisional?
- What kind of learning plan do they have or want to develop for their provisionals?
- How will they communicate on cases? Timing? Frequency?
- How will the provisional’s progress be determined?
- How will regular feedback and learning support be provided?



After gathering information from the responses to these questions, the applicant should consider how he or she now feels about learning from and working with this potential sponsor. If one sponsor does not seem to be a close match for an applicant’s interests and learning style, it is acceptable to consider others. Making the arrangement for a rehabilitation sponsor is a joint decision that affects both the applicant and the sponsor, so it should be done carefully.

Applicants should expect that a prospective sponsor will screen them as well. Due to regulations as well as the time and workload commitments necessary to train, supervise and coach provisional license holders, sponsoring rehabilitators limit the number of people they sponsor to three or less.

Many sponsors first gather information from potential applicants about their wildlife interests, animal experience, and available time before making a choice. They may ask you to complete an application for them that is different from the CDOW application, and even conduct an interview. They may want to visit your home to assess your potential space for a wildlife rehabilitation facility (i.e., where cages would be kept, the separation from people and pets, space for quarantine). Sponsors take these steps in order to select potential provisional applicants who are the best match for their rehabilitation activities.

### **Develop a Learning Plan with the sponsor**

Provisional licensees must acquire considerable knowledge and skills to become effective

wildlife rehabilitators. In 1996, a national task force of wildlife rehabilitators, including leaders from the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (NWRA) and the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC), developed the following list as a starting point:

- A. The purpose, ethics, and standards of wildlife rehabilitation (Minimum Standards of Wildlife Rehabilitation);
- B. Federal, state and local laws, regulations, and ordinances affecting wildlife rehabilitation;
- C. Identification of native wildlife species;
- D. Natural history and behavior of wildlife;
- E. Humane techniques to prevent and resolve human-wildlife conflicts;
- F. Public contact regarding wildlife;
- G. Safe capture, handling and transport of wildlife;
- H. Identification and general assessment of common wildlife health or behavioral problems;
- I. Intake procedures;
- J. Basic first aid for wildlife;
- K. Nutrition, diet, and feeding methods;
- L. Facilities, appropriate caging, and habitat needs;
- M. Wildlife diseases and parasites, including zoonoses;
- N. Release criteria, considerations, and preparation;
- O. Euthanasia, necropsy and carcass disposal;
- P. Recordkeeping;
- Q. Working with veterinarians;
- R. Basic resources and references;
- S. Managing workload;
- T. Other topics

Because provisional licensees must learn so much to become effective wildlife rehabilitators, a “Learning Plan” is required. The plan identifies essential information and learning sources. The plan acts as a road map to ensure key material is covered in a reasonable sequence and timeframe. Plus, the Learning Plan helps the provisional and the sponsor avoid misunderstandings and future problems. Examples of learning plans are available at (Learning Plan EXAMPLE 1 and Learning Plan EXAMPLE 2).

The [Colorado Study Guide for Provisional Wildlife Rehabilitators and Wildlife Rehabilitation Sponsors](#) was developed to identify the types of information and skill that the provisional needs to learn before being upgraded to a full wildlife rehabilitation license. The Study Guide is a key tool in developing the Learning Plan for a provisional.

While the sponsor is certainly a key resource, the provisional should expect to learn from a variety of sources. Reading, talking with experienced rehabilitators, veterinarians and others, and attending training and conferences are all good ways to increase knowledge and skills essential to wildlife rehabilitation. Some good publications include:

- A. Journal of Wildlife Rehabilitation (IWRC)
- B. Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin (NWRA)
- C. NWRA Principles of Wildlife Rehabilitation, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition
- D. Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation 1AB Manual (IWRC)
- E. Proceedings from wildlife rehabilitation conferences
- F. Wildlife rehabilitation newsletters

There are also several wildlife rehabilitation Web sites, such as:

- A. [International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council \(IWRC\)](#)

- B. [National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association \(NWRA\)](#)
- C. [National Center for Wildlife Health](#)
- D. [Wildlife International](#)
- E. [Humane Society of the United States](#)
- F. [“Useful Sites” by the NWRA](#)

Colorado-based rehabilitation Web sites of interest include:

- A. [Birds of Prey Foundation](#)
- B. [Colorado Council for Wildlife Rehabilitation](#)
- C. [Urban Wildlife Rescue](#)
- D. [WildAgain Wildlife Rehabilitation, Inc.](#)
- E. [Rocky Mountain Raptor Program](#)
- F. [Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center](#)
- G. [Wild Forever Foundation](#)

Wildlife rehabilitation associations provide access to a wide range of educational opportunities, such as publications and conferences. These associations include the [National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association \(NWRA\)](#), [International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council \(IWRC\)](#) and the [Colorado Council of Wildlife Rehabilitators \(CCWR\)](#).

In addition to a Learning Plan, it is important for the sponsor and provisional to discuss and agree upon the most effective ways for them to communicate about the provisional's rehabilitation activities. The sponsor and provisional must expect to communicate directly at least three to four times per week, and sometimes even daily. The sponsor also will monitor the provisional's care of wildlife closely, which will include frequent conversations about the animals' health and development and regular examinations of wildlife in the provisional's care. It is a good idea to discuss to document these understandings to ensure that expectations are clear.

### **Prepare a wildlife rehabilitation facility and acquire supplies**

Wildlife may only be rehabilitated at a CDOW inspected and approved facility. After a licensed rehabilitator agrees to serve as a sponsor, the applicant needs to prepare his or her rehabilitation facility and acquire cages and supplies. The sponsor and other rehabilitators can offer suggestions.

It is also possible for a provisional to use the sponsor's rehabilitation facility and cages, such as when the sponsor's rehabilitation facility is located at a rehabilitation center. If the provisional and sponsor plan to use the sponsor's facility to meet the caging requirements, the sponsor's facility will be re-inspected by the CDOW. If the provisional is approved to use his or her sponsor's rehabilitation facility, and has not had a personal rehabilitation facility inspected and approved by the CDOW, the provisional may *only* rehabilitate wildlife at the sponsor's facility.

Prior to sending in the provisional application and scheduling a time for the CDOW inspection, the sponsor will conduct a 'trial facility inspection' using the CDOW [inspection form](#). This trial inspection allows the provisional to ensure that the facility is adequately prepared. This should increase the likelihood of CDOW approval.

### **Identify a veterinarian to treat wildlife**

An applicant for a provisional rehabilitation license must identify at least one veterinarian who will provide services to sick or injured wildlife under his or her care. Finding the right veterinarian may require some persistence. Not all veterinarians will be interested, willing, or have the skills to work with wildlife. Some veterinarians will charge for treating wildlife, while others may donate services. The sponsor usually can help to identify potential veterinary support.

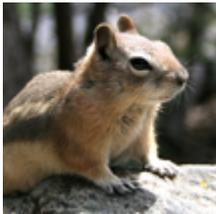
After the arrangement for veterinary services is made, the veterinarian must complete the [Consulting Veterinarian Agreement Form](#). That form must be included in the application packet.

### **Apply for the provisional license**

The completed Provisional Wildlife Rehabilitation application, Learning Plan and Consulting Veterinarian Agreement are sent to the CDOW Special Licensing Unit according to the procedures described in the [Wildlife Rehabilitation Application](#). Those applicants wishing to rehabilitate birds or federally threatened or endangered species must submit a wildlife rehabilitation application to the [US Fish and Wildlife Service](#) at the same time.

The application will be forwarded to the CDOW District Wildlife Manager (DWM) responsible for the applicant's geographical area. A day and time will be scheduled for a facility inspection. The sponsor also must be present at that inspection. The DWM generally inspects a provisional license applicant's facility within about 60 days after the application is received by the CDOW. The DWM who conducts the inspection will use the [wildlife rehabilitation facility inspection form](#). The DWM will give a copy of the completed facility inspection form to the applicant so that he or she knows the results.

If the facility does not pass inspection, the inspection form will indicate the needed changes.



Unit, if needed.

The applicant can make the necessary changes and schedule another inspection. If the applicant also applied for a federal wildlife rehabilitation permit, a copy of the completed CDOW inspection form and decision (i.e., approval or denial) will also be sent to the USFWS Migratory Bird Permit Office (USFWS MBPO). The applicant may discuss the inspection, decision, or other administrative appeal processes with CDOW Special Licensing

### **Decision on the application**

If the applicant passed the facility inspection, the DWM forwards the full application packet and inspection form to the Area Wildlife Manager and Regional Wildlife Manager for next level approvals. The approved packet is then sent to the Special Licensing Unit for final review, approval, and processing. If the provisional application is approved, the Special Licensing Unit sends the license to the provisional wildlife rehabilitator.

If the CDOW denies the provisional's application for any reason, the applicant has several choices. He or she may correct the condition that caused the denial (e.g., expand and improve caging, arrange for a licensed veterinarian). Or, he or she may decide to not become a wildlife rehabilitator. Applicants with questions about the denial and/or an administrative appeal process should contact the Special Licensing Unit at [303-291-7143](tel:303-291-7143).

The USFWS will not issue a wildlife rehabilitation permit unless the applicant passes the CDOW rehabilitation facility inspection and obtains a state wildlife rehabilitation license. If the CDOW approves the provisional license, the applicant should send a copy of the license to the USFWS MBPO. If the CDOW denies the provisional wildlife rehabilitation license, the applicant is not eligible for the USFWS wildlife rehabilitation permit.

If the provisional wildlife rehabilitator wants to rehabilitate migratory birds, he or she *must* have both the CDOW rehabilitation license and the USFWS rehabilitation permit *prior* to rehabilitating migratory birds. A provisional rehabilitator working only with mammals, herpetiles, and/or birds that are not federally protected may start rehabilitating those species at his or her facility after receiving the CDOW provisional license. A Colorado wildlife rehabilitation or provisional license is required to rehabilitate some bird species that are not protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, such as House Sparrows and English Starlings. A CDOW rehabilitation license is not required to rehabilitate common “street” pigeons.

### **Learn about wildlife rehabilitation**

The sponsor and provisional wildlife rehabilitator will arrange for a variety of learning opportunities. The sponsor is likely to provide considerable one-on-one training and coaching, as well as suggest publications, workshops, classes, and conferences. The sponsor also may help arrange for training with other rehabilitators, veterinarians, and resource people. The provisional may identify and seek training from a variety of sources. As part of this process, the provisional will begin to learn how to evaluate the information and sources.

[The Study Guide for Provisional Wildlife Rehabilitators and Sponsors](#) provides a list of questions and resources. These questions generally correspond to the topics in the Learning Plan. These questions suggest a minimum of information that provisional license holders should know before they are upgraded. The provisional may learn these subjects from a variety of sources, not just the sponsor. These questions are examples of the questions that the DWM may ask during the upgrade interview.

These learning activities will address what the provisional needs to understand and activities to be performed while rehabilitating wildlife and correlate with the topics in Learning Plan. If the provisional plans to use any unlicensed individuals to help with direct animal care, the provisional must have completed training on the following: Wildlife rehabilitation ethics; Wildlife Rehabilitation regulations; Common wildlife diseases and parasites, including zoonotic diseases; Safe capture and handling of the applicable species; Diet and nutrition of the applicable species; use of written protocols related to any activity the unlicensed person may perform.

If the unlicensed person will be performing other activities, the provisional and the unlicensed person helping with those tasks must have completed training provided by a fully licensed rehabilitator on those subjects, such as cage cleaning, release, admission and intake, and administering first aid. In many cases, the sponsor will be conducting that training. More information on these training expectations is available at ([LINK](#)).

The provisional must maintain records about the involvement of unlicensed people helping with wildlife (name, contact information, when the training occurred, dates worked, type of activities performed). Copies of the forms ([paper](#) and [electronic](#)) are available on the internet.

## Rehabilitate wildlife

The newly licensed provisional rehabilitator may now, with the sponsor's approval and supervision, start rehabilitating wild animals at his or her facility. He or she should limit the number of animals, species and difficulty of cases at his or her facility. This allows the person the chance work at a more balanced and reasonable pace, rather than becoming overloaded with animals and trying to learn and do too much at one time.

The sponsor will be closely monitoring and supervising the provisional's wildlife care. Frequent communication and supervision will help the provisional licensee provide a higher quality of rehabilitation and learn needed skills. Regulation requires that a provisional notify the sponsor, another fully licensed wildlife rehabilitator or the CDOW within 24 hours of admission of each animal. The sponsor provides guidance on the care of the animals, as well as monitors the status of each animal and key decisions. This helps ensure that animals get acceptable care and that quality decisions are made in a timely manner, and that the provisional is given coaching and feedback.



The provisional rehabilitator must also maintain complete and accurate records on each animal in rehabilitation. An annual wildlife rehabilitation [year-end report](#) of all animals rehabilitated must be submitted to the CDOW by January 31 each year in order for the rehabilitation license to be renewed. The sponsor reviews and signs the provisional's annual wildlife rehabilitation record.

## Evaluate rehabilitation skills

The provisional period may range from one to several years, depending on the knowledge, skills and prior experience of the applicant. During this time, the provisional gradually will develop knowledge, experience and skills with many animals in various conditions. The sponsor will document the provisional's progress. The Study Guide for Wildlife Rehabilitators and Sponsors is a key resource for this process.

The sponsor will assess the provisional's rehabilitation activities and knowledge throughout the provisional period. He or she will identify areas of growth as well as problems. The sponsor will observe the health, development, and care of the animals in the provisional's care. He or she will keep tabs on facility sanitation, diet, feeding, capture, handling, decision-making, release, and more. Sponsors will note how the provisional rehabilitator works with all aspects of the rehabilitation process, from talking with the public to admitting animals, providing health care, solving problems, making euthanasia decisions, releasing animals, working with different aged animals and so forth.

The sponsor and provisional licensee will discuss the provisional's progress at regular intervals to determine the need for additional training and experience. Sponsors are likely to encourage the provisional to acquire additional learning. They may suggest networking with other rehabilitators, attending rehabilitation-related training and conferences, and reading rehabilitation literature.

The provisional and sponsor should discuss, assess and document the provisional's progress

on a regular basis. The provisional submits a progress report on the Learning Plan developed with and signed by the sponsor with their year-end report to the CDOW by January 31 each year.

Prior to the second annual license renewal or renewal (whichever occurs first), the provisional also must have watched the CDOW wildlife rehabilitation videotapes. Other training options may meet this regulatory requirement in the future. The provisional must also read and understand the [Zoonoses Information and Prevention packet](#), and information on [Chronic Wasting Disease](#). While this must be accomplished prior to the second license renewal, it is strongly recommended that this be completed prior to or shortly after the provisional license has been issued.

### **Apply for upgraded rehabilitation license**

At some point, either the sponsor or provisional will believe that the provisional has the appropriate level of knowledge, skill and experience to independently rehabilitate wildlife without regular supervision. If the sponsor and provisional discuss this and both agree that the provisional is ready, they prepare the [Request for Provisional Upgrade](#). The provisional must have a minimum of one year's experience with all aspects of rehabilitation for the applicable species, completed all sections of the Learning Plan, and met the requirements.

The provisional then submits the [Request for Provisional Upgrade](#) signed by the sponsor to the CDOW Special Licensing Unit. The sponsor's upgrade request should thoroughly describe the person's knowledge, skill, experience and readiness to apply for wildlife rehabilitation license. The [Request for Provisional Upgrade](#) form and two completed examples are provided (see [Example 1](#) and [Example 2](#)).

He or she must have caging for all ages of animals within the license category at the facility where he or she will rehabilitate wildlife in order to be granted a wildlife rehabilitation license. While a provisional may have relied on some of the sponsor's cages during the provisional period, now he or she must have the full range of cages for species to be rehabilitated at his or her own facility. If the provisional did not have the full range of cages at the time of the DWM's initial inspection of his or her facility, the DWM inspect the facility to ensure that the regulatory requirements are met.

After the [Request for Provisional Upgrade](#) and completed Learning Plan have been reviewed by the Special Licensing Unit and DWM, an upgrade interview will be scheduled with the provisional. The sponsor must attend that upgrade. The interview will review the provisional's learning and experience, and include a facility inspection if the person has expanded rehabilitation facilities in order to meet the regulatory requirements. The DWM will ask the provisional a variety of questions during that interview to help assess the person's readiness for the upgrade. The upgrade interview questions will be taken from the [Study Guide for Provisional Wildlife Rehabilitators and Wildlife Rehabilitation Sponsors](#).

The DWM will forward his or her decision about the upgrade request to the Area and Regional Wildlife Managers for approval or denial. Upon concurrence, the Special Licensing Unit will send the results of the decision to the applicant and sponsor.

### **Completing or terminating the sponsor/provisional relationship**

The official sponsorship concludes when the provisional's application for a full wildlife rehabilitation license is approved by the CDOW. Many rehabilitators continue close communications with their former sponsors or provisionals.

There are circumstances that may result in the premature conclusion of the sponsor/provisional relationship. A provisional may decide that he or she no longer wants to be, or can be, a wildlife rehabilitator. Or, the provisional may decide that he or she wants to work with another sponsor due to a desire to work with other species or learn other skills. The provisional may need to relocate. Sometimes, there may be relationship and communication issues.

On the other hand, the sponsor may decide that he or she does not want to sponsor that provisional any longer before the provisional is ready for an upgrade. There could be problems with the provisional that the sponsor is unable to resolve. There could also be circumstances that are unrelated to the provisional could cause the sponsor to discontinue the sponsorship.

The sponsor notifies the CDOW Special Licensing Unit about the conclusion of the sponsorship relationship within 48 hours. The initial notification may be made via telephone to the Special Licensing Unit, but it must be confirmed in writing (i.e., email, fax, or letter).

If the sponsorship arrangement is concluded prior to the provisional obtaining the wildlife rehabilitation license, the wild animals in the provisional's care must be transferred to the sponsor or another rehabilitator licensed for that species as soon as possible, not to exceed 48 hours. The exception would be if the provisional arranges for another sponsor prior to the conclusion of the sponsorship. The new sponsor needs to be approved in writing by the CDOW before it is considered official and the provisional can maintain wildlife at his or her facility.

### **An involved process**

It should be evident by now that wildlife rehabilitation involves regulations, challenges, work, and commitment. While it takes time and effort to obtain a license and to become a qualified wildlife rehabilitator, providing skilled and effective care to wild animals in need and seeing them released back to the wild is very rewarding. While the steps necessary to become a wildlife rehabilitator are not easy or quick, the goal is achievable and worthwhile.