



Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife Services Code of Conduct

Guiding Principles

Sydney Wildlife was established to rescue, rehabilitate and release native wildlife, and this remains its central mission.

Key to our success is the strength of our relationships with our members, with other wildlife and government organisations and with the general public. All of our actions and behaviors in relation to native wildlife, to other members and to non-members, are governed by the Code of Conduct.

Summary

Members are required to:

1. Work within the central mission of rescuing native animals with the sole intention to rehabilitate and release, consistent with our rehabilitation licence from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

[https://smws.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Licence/Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife Service Licence.pdf](https://smws.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Licence/Sydney%20Metropolitan%20Wildlife%20Service%20Licence.pdf)

[https://smws.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Licence/Rehabilitation of Protected Fauna Policy.pdf](https://smws.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Licence/Rehabilitation%20of%20Protected%20Fauna%20Policy.pdf)

2. At all times comply with the law, with particular regard to the care and treatment of all animals.
3. At all times comply with the policies of Sydney Wildlife.

4. Always act in the best interests of all animals, and without cruelty whether it be by direct action or by neglect.
5. Act in a friendly, polite, tolerant, professional and supportive manner in order to promote a culture of safety and positive relationships between members, other organisations and members of the public.
6. Ensure that safety of members, members of the public and animals is paramount at all times
7. Refrain from bullying, discrimination, harassment or defamation.
8. Act honestly, and not commit fraud, or misuse the resources of the organization.
9. Sign a Confidentially Agreement at the commencement of their tenure if they are on the Board of the organisation.
10. Declare and record any relevant or potential conflicts of interest by submitting the declaration of conflict of interest document to the Board when requested.
[https://smws.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Conflict of Interest Policy.pdf](https://smws.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Conflict%20of%20Interest%20Policy.pdf)
11. Abide by the organisation's policy on social media: i.e.:
 - a. avoid expressing opinions contrary to the organisation's policies and in ways that could bring Sydney Wildlife into disrepute and/or damage relationships between members and/or with other organisations.
 - b. not show wildlife in care being inappropriately handled (i.e., they are not pets) on personal Social Media sites
 - c. not imply Sydney Wildlife's endorsement of personal views or for personal gain

[https://smws.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Sydney Wildlife Social Media Policy.pdf](https://smws.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Sydney%20Wildlife%20Social%20Media%20Policy.pdf)

Care of Native Animals

All members are to read and abide by the terms of Sydney Wildlife's rehabilitation licence.

Native animals that come into care must be assessed for rehabilitation and release, and treated in the best way to minimize suffering.

Native animals in care are not pets, and must be rehabilitated in a manner that will maximize their chance of survival when they are returned to the wild.

If there is a need to report an incident this should be done in a way that promotes the best animal care and supports the member to improve their care practices. An incident can be reported to the appropriate coordinator, the Branch Chair or the appropriate Species Advisory Group. Serious instances, such as neglect, or animal hoarding should be reported to the Board normally via the branch representative.

All details of an animal's care and fate must be reported to Sydney Wildlife using the standard Animal Record Form online or hard copy. As well as for statistical purposes, these details allow us to build up an understanding of emerging threats to wildlife, such as problem areas for road kill or netting, and effective rehabilitation treatments.

Sydney Wildlife provides training for new and current members. Completion of the basic training is required for full membership. Approved refresher courses are required for all members every three years.

Relationship with other members

Professional standards of behavior are required by all members. Discrimination; bullying or harassment; physical or verbal intimidation; or behavior that publicly undermines other members, such as negative personal comments on social media or in meetings, or to other members of Sydney Wildlife will not be tolerated. Members are entitled to their private views, but are not to express personally destructive or intimidating comments in any public forum or forum within the association.

Breaches of Sydney Wildlife's policies, including this Code of Conduct, should be reported to the co-ordinator, Branch Chair, a Species Advisory Group or the Board, as appropriate. Members are strongly encouraged to discuss issues before they become critical.

The Sydney Wildlife Board will attempt to resolve incidents referred to them, in accordance

with our disputes policy. Where necessary, disciplinary action may be taken. The Board will be responsible for investigating the situation and determining an appropriate response.

(Refer to Constitution Part 3, 1.3)

The Board may undertake disciplinary action against members if the complaint or incident is upheld. Repeated or serious offences can result in a member being expelled from the organisation. *(Refer to Constitution Part 3, 1.4)*

Sydney Wildlife is obliged to report any member to NSW Police who are suspected of criminal actions, particularly with regard to animal cruelty, assault or fraud.

Members who are charged with, and/or convicted of serious criminal offences, such as animal cruelty, or assault can be banned from the organisation permanently. Any member closely associated with those charged or present when animal cruelty offences occurred may also have restrictions placed on their membership.

Relationship with members of the public

Any member of the public who reports an animal in need of care has taken an important first step toward allowing it to be rehabilitated.

Members of the public who have been inadvertently, either directly or indirectly responsible for injuries to animals, should be treated courteously. Where possible rescuers should advise the public how to avoid these injuries in future. Rescuers could take appropriate Sydney Wildlife educational material, such as leaflets, to rescues.

A polite and responsive rescuer is our best chance to persuade members of the public to behave sympathetically to native animals. Understanding the view point of the public allows us to frame a response that may help educate them, and gives us insights into better strategies.

In cases of suspected or proven intentional cruelty, it is advisable for the member to call the relevant authority eg. NSW Police or RSPCA and then report this matter to the Board.

Public Relations and Educational Activities

Members involved in public relations activities, such as making comments in the media, or participation in public events, should be conscious that they are representing Sydney Wildlife, and behave accordingly. The Sydney Wildlife Board Public Relations Officer should be

consulted for guidance and notified of such activities in advance.

Educational activities, such as visits to community groups or schools, should be made in compliance with our Education Policy and terms of our current Licensing Requirements.

<https://smws.wildapricot.org/Policies-and-Documents>

If permission has been given for the use of education animals, handlers must never put the animals in positions of stress, and members should be aware of and follow the latest guidelines.

Animals undergoing rehabilitation should not be used in educational events

Relationships between Sydney Wildlife and other wildlife organisations

Sydney Wildlife works co-operatively with several other organisations, including the RSPCA and WIRES. These relationships are extremely valuable and allow us to provide the best care for animals across the Greater Sydney Metropolitan area. Members should refrain from participating in 'competitive' behavior or making disparaging comments about other organisations, but should strive to enhance our relationship with these organisations at every opportunity.

Confidentiality

All, in confidence, matters must be treated as such.

Members have access to a variety of documents related to many aspects of policy, procedure and governance of the organisation. These documents are the property of the organisation and can only be shared with those outside the organisation with advanced notice and permission of the Board.