



# Rehabilitating Protected Fauna

## Policy, licences and codes

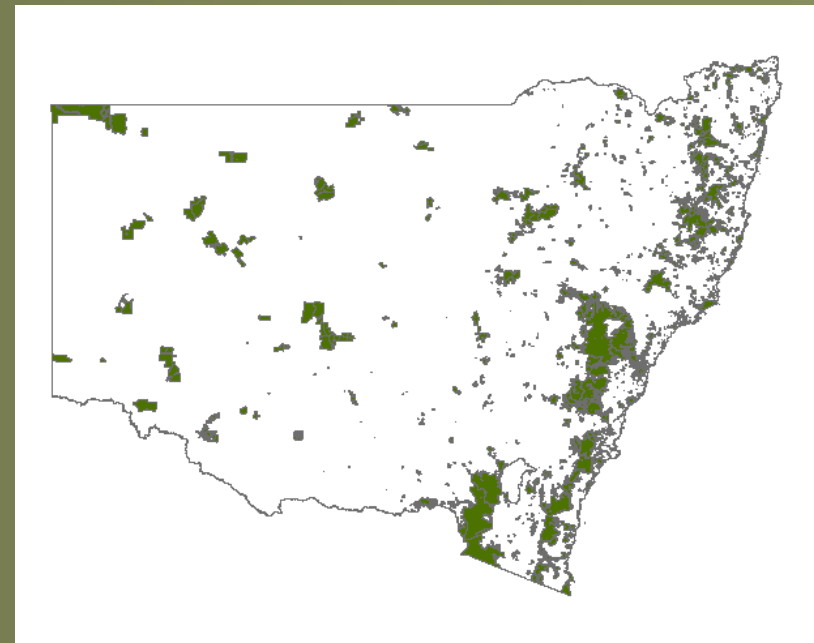
*NPWS Ranger's name*

# The Big Picture

- The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is part of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW)
- NPWS is responsible for:
  - the conservation of nature
  - the conservation of cultural heritage
  - fostering public appreciation and understanding of natural and cultural heritage

# The Protected Area System

- NPWS manages over 800 parks and reserves which constitute over 8.5% of NSW
- These include:
  - national parks
  - nature reserves
  - Aboriginal areas



# Protected Fauna

- All native amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals have legal protection under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*
- Generally speaking all activities involving native animals requires a NPWS licence, e.g. -
  - Buying, selling or keeping animals
  - Catching animals for research
  - Killing animals for damage mitigation
  - Rehabilitating and releasing animals



# Injured, Sick and Orphaned Fauna

- Each year tens of thousands of native animals lose the ability to survive in the wild
- Human activities are often to blame, e.g.
  - car accidents
  - dog or cat attacks
- NPWS does not have the resources to be involved in every incident or the expertise to care for animals



# Injured, Sick and Orphaned Fauna

- NPWS typically responds to 'large-scale' events such as oil spills and whale strandings
- Taronga Conservation Society and RSPCA assist with veterinary treatment and care
- The vast majority of rehabilitation is carried out by community-based volunteer organisations



# The Fauna Rehabilitation Sector

- 28 independent fauna rehabilitation groups with a combined membership of 2,000
- 28 WIRES branches with a membership of 2,600
- 4 zoological parks
- 29 individual general licence holders
- The NSW Wildlife Council is the peak representative body



# The Fauna Rehabilitation Sector

- 20 groups are generalists (i.e. care for a wide range of species)
- 4 groups specialise in koalas
- 2 groups specialise in flying-foxes
- 2 groups specialise in marine animals
- 1 groups specialises in kangaroos





# Fauna Rehabilitation Groups

- How groups are regulated is described in the *Rehabilitation of Protected Fauna Policy*
  - Objective: the maintenance of biodiversity through the successful return of temporarily disadvantaged animals to their natural habitat
- Groups are issued with a NPWS licence which allows them to authorise their members to rescue and rehabilitate fauna
- Groups are responsible for training, coordination, record keeping and compliance with the codes of practice



# Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Protected Fauna

- Developed in 2010 in collaboration with the NSW Wildlife Council, RSPCA and Taronga Conservation Society
- Compliance with minimum Standards ('must') is a licence condition
- Also contains recommended Guidelines ('should')



# Code of Practice

- Includes standards on case assessment, rescue, transport, euthanasia, care procedures, husbandry, housing, release suitability/considerations, training and record keeping
- Failure to comply with these standards can lead to your authority being revoked



# Euthanasia

- The code identifies circumstances in which euthanasia is necessary
- These include:
  - death is imminent regardless of treatment
  - un-relievable pain or distress
  - incurable infectious disease
  - permanent impairment of the mouth/beak

# Suitability for Release

- An animal **must not** be released until it is physically and behaviourally ready
- Readiness for release **must** be confirmed by a veterinarian or experienced rehabilitator
- Once an animal is deemed ready for release, it **must** be released as soon as conditions are suitable



# Release Site Selection

- If the exact encounter location is known and it is suitable, the animal **must** be released there
- If the exact encounter location is known but it is unsuitable, the animal **must** be released as near as possible to the encounter location without transporting the animal across a physical boundary that it would not **normally cross** or further than it would **normally move**
- If there is no information about where the animal was found, it **must not** be released

# Release Site Selection

- An animal can only be released in a national park or reserve if:
  - The animal was originally encountered in that location
  - The NPWS Area Manager approves the release
  - The release complies with DECCW policies on translocation and environmental integrity



# Record Keeping

- NPWS maintains a central database of fauna rehabilitation activities
- Records of animal admissions represents a vital resource for the Department, rehabilitators and researchers
- Data can be used to develop better treatments, educate rehabilitators, identify state-wide trends in fauna incidents and mitigate threatening processes.





# Associated Codes of Practice

- Guidelines for the Rehabilitation of Birds of Prey
- Guidelines and Conditions for Koala Care in NSW
- Guidelines for the Rescue and Rehabilitation of Oiled Wildlife
- Guidelines and Conditions for Marine Reptile Strandings, Rehabilitation and Release in NSW