

Australian Capital Territory

Nature Conservation (Licensing related to non-exempt animals) Conservator Guidelines 2024

Notifiable instrument NI2024–486

made under the

Nature Conservation Act 2014, s 23 (Conservator—guidelines)

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Nature Conservation (Licensing related to non-exempt animals) Conservator Guidelines 2024*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after its notification day.

3 Conservator guidelines

I make the conservator guidelines set out in the schedule for licensing related to non-exempt animals.

4 Revocation

This instrument revokes the *Nature Conservation (Licensing of non-exempt animals) Conservator Guidelines 2021* (NI2021-434).

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Conservator of Flora and Fauna
26 August 2024

Conservator Guidelines – Licensing related to non-exempt animals under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

These guidelines have been developed to provide greater certainty for persons wishing to apply for a nature conservation licence to keep a non-exempt animal in the Australian Capital Territory. Under section 21 of the [Nature Conservation Act 2014](#) (NC Act), when deciding an application for a licence related to a non-exempt animal (see Box 1 below), the Conservator of Flora and Fauna (the Conservator) must ensure that any decision made is consistent with these guidelines.

These guidelines are made pursuant to section 23 of the NC Act and replace the ACT Reptile Policy which was developed under the *Nature Conservation Act 1980* (repealed).

Under section 262 of the NC Act, a nature conservation licence is a licence that authorises the licensee to carry on one or more activities that would otherwise be an offence under the Act. In accordance with section 268, the conservator can decide which activities are unsuitable for a licence and may not be licensed.

Readers of these guidelines should refer directly to the NC Act as the source of legal obligations, functions and duties, including offences.

Box 1: Statutory protection of animals

For the purposes of these guidelines, 'animal' means a member, dead or alive, of the animal kingdom and includes a part of an animal (such as skin, feathers, horns, shell, egg yolk) and animal reproductive material, but does not include:

- i a human, or
- ii a fish unless it has special protection status or is a protected native species, or
- iii an invertebrate unless it has special protection status or is a protected native species.

This mirrors the 'animal' definition in the NC Act.

Fish and invertebrates that are listed on the [Nature Conservation Threatened Species List 2024](#) and the [Protected Native Species List](#) require a licence to be kept.

All native animals in the ACT are protected under the NC Act, except for declared pest animals. It is an offence to kill, harm, endanger, take from the wild or keep these animals.

The Conservator has declared several species of native and exotic animals to be exempt animals in the current [Exempt Animals Declaration](#), an instrument under the NC Act. These animals include widely-kept domestic species such as dogs, cats, livestock, some commonly kept birds, along with five native reptile species and the tadpoles and juveniles of three native amphibians.

Even though keeping these native animals does not require a licence, it is still an offence to take them from the wild, and kept individuals are required to be sourced from captive-bred populations.

Any animal not listed in the current Exempt Animal Declaration is known as a non-exempt animal, and a nature conservation licence is required to import, keep, sell, export or release these species. Licensing the keeping of these species is one of the ways the ACT

Government protects animal welfare and prevents wild and captive-bred animals from entering the illegal wildlife trade.

1.2. Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to:

- inform decisions by the Conservator to issue licences under the NC Act for any activity involving non-exempt animals, including keeping, selling, import, export or placing on public exhibition;
- assist understanding by applicants about requirements for a nature conservation licence to keep, import, export, sell or exhibit non-exempt animals under the NC Act;
- ensure that a consistent approach is applied in the assessment of all licence applications.

1.3. Objective

The objective of these guidelines is to provide guidance for licensing so that public safety is protected, conservation risks are minimised, and the welfare requirements of captive animals are met.

1.4. Scope

These guidelines apply to:

- all applications to keep, import, export, sell and exhibit non-exempt animals; and
- specific applications to take non-exempt animals from the wild – these generally relate to diseased, ill or injured animals that will be kept temporarily for welfare reasons;
- Specific applications to release non-exempt animals from captivity – these also relate to diseased, ill or injured animals kept temporarily for welfare reasons.

These guidelines do not apply to:

- applications for activities authorised by an animal ethics committee constituted under the [Animal Welfare Act 1992](#);
- activities of zoological facilities* that operate from a fixed site within the ACT.
- government agencies or statutory authorities;
- applications to take live animals from the wild, kill, injure, endanger animals or destroy nests.
** Zoological facility – means the use of land for the containment of animals for viewing by members of the public. Example uses – aquarium, wildlife sanctuary, zoo.*

1.5. Categories of nature conservation licence for keeping animals

For administrative and fee purposes, nature conservation licences for animals are grouped into five categories:

1. **Keep non-exempt animal** – includes keeping for non-commercial, commercial and wildlife rehabilitation purposes.
2. **Keep non-exempt animal for public exhibition** - includes animals kept in zoological facilities.

3. **Import non-exempt animal** – includes importing into the ACT for non-commercial and commercial purposes.
4. **Export non-exempt animal** – includes exporting from the ACT for non-commercial and commercial purposes.
5. **Sell non-exempt animal** – including barter, exchange, offering for sale and possessing for sale.

1.6. Definitions

Unless otherwise stated, all terms have the same meaning as in the NC Act and the [Nature Conservation Regulation 2015](#) (NC Regulation).

2. LICENSING GUIDELINES BY CATEGORY

2.1. Keeping non-exempt animals

It is an offence under section 133 of the NC Act to keep a non-exempt animal without a licence to do so. Non-exempt animals may be considered suitable for private keeping, provided the Conservator is satisfied that:

- they are readily sourced from captive-bred populations;
- their basic welfare needs are known and can be managed in a captive environment;
- the risks to human safety are negligible.

Persons keeping non-exempt animals are required to comply with any relevant Code of Practice under the *Animal Welfare Act 1992*.

2.1.1. Animals not permitted to be kept

Some animal species, such as endangered native wildlife, native mammals and venomous snakes, may not be kept as pets. Endangered native species, native mammals and some exotic species require higher standards of care than most domestic pets, and it is difficult to adequately provide for them. In many cases they require specialised husbandry and facilities that mimic their natural environment to meet their physiological and ecological requirements. Keeping these animals as pets may pose risks to:

- animal welfare;
- human health and safety;
- biodiversity and the environment.

Due to risks to the animal and potential risk to the environment and/or the public, licences will not be issued or amended to authorise the keeping of the following non-exempt species:

- alligators, crocodiles and gharials (*Crocodylidae*, *Alligatoridae*, *Gavialis* species)
- sea turtles (*Cheloniidae* and *Dermochelyidae* species)
- sea snakes and kraits (*Hydrophiidae* and *Laticaudidae* species)
- venomous snakes
- Collie's snake-necked turtle (*Chelodina colliei*)

- Steindachner’s snake-necked turtle (*Chelodina steindachneri*)
- saw-shelled turtle (*Wollumbinia latisternum*)
- tree dtella (*Gehyra variegata*)
- Canberra grassland earless dragon (*Tympanocryptis lineata*)
- non-local subspecies of eastern water dragon (*Intellagama lesueurii lesueurii*).
- exotic amphibians except for axolotls (*Ambystoma mexicanum*)
- non-native (exotic) reptiles
- native mammals
- non-native (exotic) mammals other than ferrets (*Mustela putorius furo*)
- the following birds:
 - tawny frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*)
 - owls (native and non-native)
 - kookaburras (*Dacelo* species)
 - ratites (e.g. cassowaries and emus)
 - raptors (birds of prey)
 - crows, ravens, magpies, etc (*Corvidae* species)

The above prohibitions do not apply to animal rehabilitation organisations such as ACT Wildlife Incorporated, research institutions covered by an animal ethics committee approval, zoos and travelling zoos*. The licensee must demonstrate there is a clear conservation and/or education purpose for keeping the animal; the welfare of the animal is not compromised; there is minimal risk to the environment and; there is minimal risk to human safety, before approval will be considered.

*Travelling zoo – temporary display of animals at a location other than the location stipulated in the licence to keep the animals. Animals must be returned to permanent enclosures or the location stipulated in the licence at the end of each day. A permit for a Travelling zoo is also required under the *Animal Welfare Act 1992*. A travelling zoo does not include (a) for a zoo located in the ACT – the display of the zoo’s animals at a place other the place where the zoo is permanently located; or (b) a zoo (however described) the main purpose of which is to make animals available for contact with members of the public. Example – a zoo known as a petting zoo that contains animals such as livestock, poultry and rabbits.

2.1.2. Assessment – licence to keep

Applications to keep non-exempt animals will be considered by the Conservator against the following criteria:

- the conservation status of the animal in the wild;
- evidence that the animal has been sourced from a captive-bred population and has not been obtained in breach of any State or Territory legislation;
- any relevant statutory species conservation plans;
- for reptiles, the risk associated with keeping the reptile according to the *Risk Assessment for the Importation of Native Reptiles into the ACT*;
- whether the animal poses a danger to the keeper or the general public;
- the effect any escaped or released individuals of the species may have on existing species, ecosystems or residents in the ACT;

- the welfare needs of the animal, including the suitability of the housing facilities to be provided relating to the adult size of the animal and its ability to escape from an enclosure;
- the suitability of the location at which the animal is proposed to be kept;
- the suitability of the applicant, including the experience, expertise or qualifications of the applicant, in relation to the husbandry (care) requirements of the animal.

Applicants may nominate referees or be interviewed by a conservation officer to demonstrate the necessary knowledge or expertise.

Box 2: Animal Welfare Act considerations

In addition to a nature conservation licence to keep a non-exempt animal, a separate licence under the *Animal Welfare Act 1992* may be required for the keeping of any animal for research, teaching or breeding purposes. A regulation under the *Animal Welfare Act 1992* specifies which animals used for teaching in schools are exempted from a licence under that Act.

2.1.3. Licence to keep wildlife for rehabilitation and release purposes

The Conservator will only issue a licence to take and keep non-exempt native animals for the purpose of rehabilitation and release to incorporated associations that possess facilities, skill, knowledge and experience assessed as appropriate to provide care to sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. Members of the association must undergo training relevant to the species they are authorised to care for; this may involve a period of mentoring and supervision from within the association. Only animals that have reasonable prospects for release back into the wild may be kept temporarily for rehabilitation. Any animal assessed as unsuitable for release, or rehabilitation and release, must be euthanised as soon as practicable, except under consultation with the Licensing and Compliance team. Venomous snakes must only be cared for by individuals approved by the Conservator, whether or not they are members or an incorporated association.

Wildlife rehabilitation organisations must comply with the [Animal Welfare \(Welfare of Native Wildlife – Rescue, Rehabilitation and Release\) Mandatory Code of Practice 2023 \(DI2023-6\)](#).

Box 3: Dealing with injured wildlife

A nature conservation licence is not required for any person to take a diseased, ill or injured animal from the wild for the purposes of giving the animal to a conservation officer, a veterinary surgeon or a person licensed to accept the animal such as ACT Wildlife. The animal must be handed over as soon as possible and, in any case, under section 133 of the NC Act, cannot be kept for more than 48 hours.

Injured kangaroos, wombats and snakes can be dangerous and should not be approached or handled. Injured kangaroos and wombats should be reported to Access Canberra on 13 22 81. Licensed snake relocators can remove reptiles from places where they may present a danger to people and/or animals, and may charge a fee for this service.

Incorporated wildlife rehabilitation associations must demonstrate the ability to meet necessary hygiene, safety and welfare standards and that appropriate treatment for an animal's injuries, disease or illness is able to be provided or obtained.

2.1.4. Additional assessment criteria – wildlife rehabilitation and release

When assessing an application to keep a non-exempt animal for rehabilitation and release purposes the Conservator will consider all the following:

- any relevant Species Management Plan made under the Nature Conservation Act;
- whether the animal poses a danger to the keeper or the general public;
- the adult size of the animal;
- the animal’s captive diet;
- the animal’s ability to escape from an enclosure;
- the suitability of the housing facilities proposed to be provided;
- the suitability of the location at which the animal is proposed to be kept;
- the effect any escaped or released individuals of the species may have on existing species, ecosystems or residents in the ACT;
- the expertise and/or qualifications of the applicant in relation to the husbandry (care) requirements of the animal.

The applicant’s stated level of expertise must be supported by evidence of previous keeping, or a period of supervision and mentoring. Applicants may nominate referees or be interviewed by a conservation officer as a means of demonstrating this.

2.1.5. Licence to keep animal parts

A licence is required to keep any native or non-exempt animal or the parts of such an animal. This includes taking, keeping, selling or importing animal parts for taxidermy, and using animal parts for art or craft purposes. Applications in relation to elephant tusk or rhinoceros horn will be assessed against their CITES status (see Box 4).

Box 4: Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

CITES is an international agreement between governments. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. Australia is a signatory to CITES and the Federal [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#) (EPBC Act) gives force to its provisions. Roughly 5,800 species of animals and 30,000 species of plants are protected by CITES against over-exploitation through international trade. Species are grouped according to how severely threatened they are by international trade. Further information about CITES is available here: <https://www.cites.org/eng>.

2.1.5.1. Licence to keep animal parts or taxidermy specimens

Professional and amateur taxidermists need a licence to keep non-exempt animal specimens. A licence to keep is also required by anyone who keeps preserved specimens of non-exempt animals including animal parts (such as eggs, limbs, claws or bones).

Applications to take native animal carcasses from the wild will not be approved. Applicants must provide evidence that any dead non-exempt animal or animal part was held under a licence whilst alive.

For threatened species, animals that are not permitted to be kept or birds of prey (such as eagles or owls), a taxidermist licence will only be issued for scientific or educational uses – for example, to keep at a school or other educational facility or a museum. A licence will not be issued to a private person, or to a non-educational facility, to possess a specimen of a bird of prey, an animal that is not permitted to be kept, or a threatened species, unless the applicant can demonstrate there is a legitimate and worthwhile public scientific or educational reason for keeping the specimen.

Taxidermy specimens may only be sold to or traded with appropriately licensed persons.

2.1.5.2. Animal parts to make or sell animal-based art or crafts

A licence is required to use non-exempt animals (including wild native animals) or their parts to make jewellery, handicrafts or artwork including any that may be sold or displayed. This relates to the taking and keeping of both native and non-native non-exempt animals. A licence will not be issued for threatened species or birds of prey (such as eagles or owls). Applications to take native animal carcasses from the wild will not be approved.

2.1.6. Term – animal keeper licence

A licence to keep non-exempt animals for non-commercial purposes will be issued for a maximum period of three (3) years, to maximise the ongoing welfare of animals.

The term of the following licences:

- a) a taxidermy licence for non-exempt animals;
- b) a licence to make or sell art or crafts from non-exempt animal parts;

will be assessed using a risk-based approach. Licences for activities assessed as low-risk may be issued for a period of up to five years. Licences for activities assessed as medium- or high-risk may be issued for periods up to three years.

2.2. Keeping a non-exempt animal for public exhibition

The keeping of non-exempt animals for public exhibition, e.g. a zoo, a travelling zoo or circus, requires a nature conservation licence issued by the Conservator under the NC Act. Specific animal welfare legislation may also apply (see Box 5 below).

Box 5: Animal Welfare Act requirements for circuses and travelling zoos

Keeping animals for the purposes of a “travelling zoo” or “circus” requires a permit under the *Animal Welfare Act 1992*, whether or not they are exempt animals under the current Exempt Animals Declaration. A permit under the Animal Welfare Act will not be granted for prohibited animals under that Act, including bears, elephants, giraffes, primates (other than a human), felines (other than a domestic cat), or other animals prescribed by regulation.

2.2.1. Applications for public exhibition of non-exempt animals

The following animals will not be considered for import, export or exhibiting at a circus or travelling zoo (Zoo licensees excepted):

- alligators, crocodiles and gharials (*Crocodylidae*, *Aalligatoridae*, *Gavialus* species);
- sea turtles (*Cheloniidae* and *Dermochelyidae* species);
- sea snakes and kraits (*Hydrophiidae* and *Laticaudidae* species);
- Collie’s snake-necked turtle (*Chelodina colliei*)
- Steindachner’s snake-necked turtle (*Chelodina steindachneri*)
- saw-shelled turtle (*Wollumbinia latisternum*)
- tree dtella (*Gehyra variegata*)
- Canberra grassland earless dragon (*Tympanocryptis lineata*)
- non-local subspecies of eastern water dragon (*Intellagama lesueurii lesueurii*).
- Little whip snake (*Parasuta flagellum*) non-native (exotic) reptiles;
- ratites (e.g. cassowaries and emus);
- raptors (birds of prey);
- exotic amphibians except for axolotls (*Ambystoma mexicanum*).
- Prohibited animals under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* (bears, giraffes, primates (other than humans) or felines (other than a domestic cat) or any animal prescribed by regulation.
- Any animal declared a pest species under ACT legislation

A circus or travelling zoo does not require a nature conservation licence to import, export or exhibit an animal listed in the current Exempt Animals Declaration.

2.2.2. Assessment – public exhibition licence

When assessing an application to keep, import or export a non-exempt animal for the purposes of public exhibition, the Conservator will consider all of the following:

- the conservation status of the animal in the wild;
- evidence that the animal has been obtained from a legal source and has not been obtained in breach of any State or Territory legislation;
- whether the animal poses a danger to the keeper or the general public;
- the welfare needs of the animal including:
 - the suitability of the housing facilities proposed to be provided, relating to the adult size of the animal and its ability to escape from an enclosure;
 - the suitability of the location at which the animal is proposed to be kept;
 - dietary and water requirements;
 - quarantine requirements;
 - reproductive management;
 - euthanasia (including appropriate method);
 - capture, handling and restraint (including any written procedures proposed to be used, equipment and facilities available);
 - transportation;
- the effect any escaped or released individuals of the species may have on existing species, ecosystems or residents in the ACT;
- a risk management plan in accordance with AS/NZS ISO 3100:2018 risk management guidelines;
- the suitability of staff members including their expertise or qualifications in relation to the husbandry (care) requirements of the animal.

Applicants may nominate referees or be interviewed by a conservation officer to demonstrate the necessary expertise or knowledge.

Box 6: ISO 31000 Risk management guidelines

[ISO 31000:2018 - Risk management — Guidelines](#) provides a process for managing risk. Using the guidelines improves the identification of threats and the resources necessary to treat them.

2.2.3. Additional requirements – public exhibition licence

Applicants who wish to import animals into the ACT for the purposes of public exhibition must be able to provide details of:

- the relevant State or Territory authority under which the animals are held, and
- the authority to export from that jurisdiction.

Licences for the purposes of public exhibition or education will only be issued for more than one day when it can be demonstrated that the animals are returned to permanent enclosures overnight, or are otherwise housed in accordance with the conditions of the licence to keep relevant to the animal.

Section 11 of the NC Regulation prescribes that licences authorising the keeping of an animal for public exhibition are subject to the condition that the licensee must comply with a risk management plan approved by the Conservator for the licence.

Any animals kept for public exhibition must be kept according to [The Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Exhibited Animals](#).

2.2.4. Term – public exhibition licence

Public exhibition licences will be issued for a maximum term of 1 year.

2.3. Importing non-exempt animals

A licence is required to import a non-exempt animal into the ACT from another Australian State or Territory.

Box 7: Commonwealth import requirements

Australia is an active signatory of CITES, and the importation of wildlife from overseas is strictly controlled under the EPBC Act. Importation of animals from outside Australia will usually require a permit from the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water under the EPBC Act.

2.3.1. Assessment – licence to import

When assessing an application to import a non-exempt animal the Conservator will consider all of the following:

- the conservation status of the animal in the wild;
- evidence that the animal has been obtained from a licenced source or captive-bred population and has not been obtained in breach of any State or Territory legislation;
- whether the animal poses a danger to the keeper or the general public;

- the welfare needs of the animal;
- the effect any escaped or released individuals of the species may have on existing species, ecosystems or residents in the ACT;
- method of transportation and transport enclosure;
- relevant knowledge, skills and experience of the person seeking to import the animal;
- a risk management plan in accordance with AS/NZS ISO 3100:2018 risk management guidelines.

2.3.2. Term – licence to import

Licences to import non-exempt animals for non-commercial purposes are issued for a maximum period of 3 months, and commercial import licences are issued for a period of 1 year.

2.4. Exporting non-exempt animals

A licence is required to export a non-exempt animal from the ACT to another Australian State or Territory.

Box 8: Commonwealth export requirements

Australia is an active signatory of CITES, and the export of wildlife is strictly controlled under the EPBC Act. Exportation of animals outside Australia will usually require a permit from the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water under the EPBC Act.

2.4.1. Assessment – licence to export

When assessing an application to export a non-exempt animal the Conservator will consider all of the following:

- the conservation status of the animal in the wild;
- evidence that the animal has been obtained from a licenced source or captive-bred population and has not been obtained in breach of any State or Territory legislation;
- whether the animal poses a danger to the keeper or the general public;
- the welfare needs of the animal;
- relevant knowledge, skills and experience of the person seeking to export the animal;
- method of transportation and transport enclosure.

2.4.2. Term – licence to export

A licence to export an animal from the ACT for non-commercial purposes will only be issued for a maximum period of 3 months, and commercial export licences are issued for a period of one year.

2.5. Selling non-exempt animals

A nature conservation licence is required to sell non-exempt animals. Selling includes:

- sell by wholesale, retail, auction or tender;

- barter or exchange;
- supply for profit or other commercial gain;
- offer for sale, receive for sale or expose for sale;
- have in possession for sale.

Box 9: Code of Practice for the Sale of Animals in the ACT

The [Animal Welfare \(Sale of Animals in the ACT other than Stock and Commercial Scale Poultry\) Mandatory Code of Practice 2021 \(DI2021-192\)](#) is a mandatory code of practice under the Animal Welfare Act and applies to the sale of all animals other than stock animals and commercial scale poultry. The Code contains strict requirements for enclosures, nutrition, safety and hygiene. Any intended sellers should familiarise themselves with this Code.

2.5.1. Assessment – licence to sell

In addition to adhering to the terms and conditions of any licence held, a seller of non-exempt animals must meet the following criteria:

1. Non-exempt animals may only be kept at the location specified in the licence.
2. Evidence of the licence to sell must be provided to potential buyers and listed in any advertisement.
3. Non-exempt animals may only be sold to another holder of an appropriate nature conservation licence (e.g. the buyer must hold a licence to keep the specific kind of animal sold).
4. The welfare needs of the animal for sale must be met, including the suitability of transport arrangements.

2.5.2. Term – licence to sell

The term of a licence to sell non-exempt animals is fixed at 1 year.

2.6. Relocating venomous snakes

A person must be licensed to provide a service as a snake relocater. A snake relocater licence enables a person to take from the wild, keep for up to 48 hours if necessary and subsequently release snakes. The purpose of such a licence is to enable the relocation of snakes, particularly venomous snakes, from places where they may present a danger to people. A fee may be charged by the snake relocater for providing this service.

2.6.1. Assessment – licence to relocate snakes

When assessing an application for a licence to relocate snakes the Conservator will consider all the following:

- the animals' ability to escape from captivity and the consequences of any such escape;
- the suitability of the equipment or facilities proposed to be provided;
- the suitability of any location or facilities at which the animals are proposed to be kept (short-term);
- the expertise, experience and/or qualifications of the applicant in relation to the activity proposed and the husbandry (care) requirements of the animals.

The applicant's stated level of expertise must be supported by explanation or evidence of:

- previous appropriate experience or training received; and
- equipment and techniques proposed to be used.

Applicants may nominate referees or be interviewed by a conservation officer as a means of demonstrating this.

Applicants must also:

- possess a current first aid certificate; and
- be covered by public liability insurance for the activity proposed.

2.6.2. Veterinary extensions for snake rehabilitation and release

A licensed snake relocater who captures a sick or injured snake as part of their licensed activities may care for the snake beyond the 48-hour window provided under section 133 (3) of the NC Act, if all the criteria outlined below are met. Such care is referred to in these guidelines as a ***veterinary extension***. A veterinary extension is for the purpose of rehabilitation and release back into the wild only, with the primary focus on the snake's welfare.

Keeping snakes may pose risks to animal welfare, human health and safety, biosecurity and biodiversity. Ensuring good animal welfare goes beyond preventing pain, suffering or distress. Good animal welfare means providing the snake with all the necessary elements to ensure their physical and mental health and a sense of positive wellbeing. This includes providing specialised husbandry (care) and facilities that meet the snake's physiological and ecological requirements. The knowledge, skills and facilities required for care beyond 48 hours are more comprehensive than those required for the purpose of snake relocation only.

The Conservator may approve a veterinary extension if satisfied that:

- (i) the snake relocater possesses equipment, facilities, skills, knowledge and experience appropriate to provide the care required;
- (ii) the snake has a reasonable prospect for release back into the wild. NOTE: Any snake assessed as being unsuitable for release, or rehabilitation and release, must be euthanised as soon as possible;
- (ii) the physical and mental state of the snake is ensured; and
- (iii) the snake's return to health and release is facilitated through regular collaboration with a veterinarian.

Veterinary extensions are assessed on a case by case basis, with approval in writing from the Conservator (or delegate) required. Assessment and approval of a veterinary extension is subject to the following criteria and procedures:

- The snake relocater must have safe, secure and suitable enclosures to manage and house the snake while in care. Ascertaining this may require an in-person inspection of the proposed facilities by a conservation officer.

- The Conservator must be satisfied that the expertise of the snake relocater is suitable for providing the care required. The snake relocater may nominate referees or be interviewed by a conservation officer as a means of demonstrating this.
- The sick or injured snake must be physically assessed by a registered veterinarian within 48-hours of the snake's capture.
- The snake relocater must provide a copy of these guidelines to the veterinarian before the veterinarian's assessment.
- The veterinarian must prescribe in writing that, for the snake to be rehabilitated and released back into the wild, the snake requires care by the snake relocater for a specified period of time, beyond the initial 48-hour window.
- The veterinarian's prescription must also include:
 - the date of the veterinarian's assessment;
 - a description of the snake;
 - the history, assessment and diagnosis whether provisional, final or other;
 - the recommended treatment and management plan for the snake, including reasoning as to why;
 - the time period required and justification for this period to rehabilitate the snake;
 - where and when the snake was captured;
 - details identifying the snake relocater involved; and
 - the veterinarian's signature, legible full name and registration details.
- Annexure 1 is to be used for the veterinarian's prescription, and may include additional information the veterinarian considers relevant to the care, rehabilitation and release of the snake.
- Immediately following the assessment, or within 24 hours after the veterinary assessment, the snake relocater must provide a copy of the veterinarian's written prescription to the Conservator by email to pcs.licensingandcompliance@act.gov.au
- The veterinarian's prescription serves as interim approval for the veterinary extension in the period between the veterinarian's assessment and the Conservator's assessment of the request. **Note:** Approval by the Conservator is not guaranteed.
- If a veterinary extension is not approved, the snake, as soon as is practicable, must be:
 - released back into the wild; or
 - surrendered into the care of a conservation officer, a veterinary surgeon or a person licensed to keep the animal (such as a zoo); or
 - euthanised,

as instructed by the Conservator (or delegate).

- The snake relocator caring for a snake under a veterinary extension must:
 - Maintain daily records of the snake's demeanour, food consumption, faecal/urine output, behaviour observed, medical treatment, and weekly records of the snake's weight and body condition;
 - Keep the veterinarian's prescription with the snake; and
 - Be able to immediately provide the prescription and records for inspection by a conservation officer at the premises where the snake is being kept, if requested to do so by the conservation officer.
- The snake relocator must release the snake back into the wild before the expiry of any current veterinary extension.
- The snake relocator must advise the Conservator (or delegate) in writing of the snake's release within 24 hours of the release.
- A snake relocator who intends to make use of the veterinary extension framework should ensure in advance that they can meet the above criteria relating to facilities and expertise. This may involve a visit by a conservation officer to "pre-approve" snake care arrangements.
- A veterinary extension may be approved subject to conditions, and the snake relocator's existing licence may be amended in accordance with Part 11.5 of the NC Act to include conditions relating to any veterinary extension or veterinary extensions generally.

Annexure 1

Veterinarian declaration and prescription for the purposes of a veterinary extension application

I,.....
.....(name),
of.....
.....(veterinary practice or address), (Veterinarian
Registration Number) declare the following:

- i. I have been provided a copy of the *Nature Conservation (Licensing related to non-exempt animals) Conservator Guidelines 2024*; and
- ii. I have read 2.6.2 of the guidelines “veterinary extensions for snake rehabilitation and release”; and
- iii. The information provided below, to the best of my knowledge, is authentic; and
- iv. I have physically examined the snake listed below; and
- v. In my opinion, there is a reasonable prospect that the snake will be suitable for release into the wild following reasonable and appropriate treatment.

Licensed snake relocater details:

Name:
.....

Capture location, date and time:
.....
.....

Reason for seeking veterinary attention:
.....
.....
.....

Snake details:

Date and time examined:
.....

Species:
.....

Annexure 1 to *Nature Conservation (Licensing related to non-exempt animals) Conservator Guidelines 2024*

Identifying features:

.....
.....

Physical examination findings:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Clinical observations:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Diagnosis:

.....
.....
.....

Does this snake have a reasonable prospect for release back into the wild?

- Yes No Unsure

Veterinary recommendations

Reason the snake requires care (*beyond 48 hours*):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Expected length of time in care:

- 1 week 2 weeks 3 weeks 4 weeks
 Other (*provide timeframe and justification*)

.....
.....

Treatment and management plan:

.....
.....
.....
.....
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.....
.....

Advice provided to licensee:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Re-assessment date *(no longer than 14 days after this examination):*

.....

Additional information *(relevant to the care and rehabilitation of the snake enabling it to be released into the wild):*

.....
.....
.....
.....

Veterinarian's signature:

Date:

.....

Contact details (phone):

.....