



MASSWILDLIFE

DIVISION OF
FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581

p: (508) 389-6300 | f: (508) 389-7890

[MASS.GOV/MASSWILDLIFE](https://www.mass.gov/masswildlife)

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION PERMIT INFORMATION PACKAGE

MASSWILDLIFE

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APPLICANT INSTRUCTIONS

In order to receive a Massachusetts Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit, an applicant must first pass the written Massachusetts Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit exam. The only prerequisites for taking the exam are that the applicant must be at least 18 years of age, domiciled in the state of Massachusetts, and have no animal cruelty convictions. There is no fee to take this exam. This exam may be taken at any of the six MassWildlife Offices (listed below). Please contact your local office to schedule an appointment to take the exam.

Exams will be graded within two weeks of the test date, and applicants will be notified via letter from the Field Headquarters with results. A score of 80% or higher is required to obtain a permit. If an applicant does not pass on their first attempt, the exam can be retaken two months from the initial test date.

A study guide for the exam is available at mass.gov/wildlife-rehabilitation under the downloads section of the “Apply to become a licensed wildlife rehabilitator” webpage.

Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Directory:

Field Headquarters

1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA 01581
(508) 389-6360

Western District

88 Old Windsor Road
Dalton, MA 01226
(413) 684-1646

Connecticut Valley District

341 East Street
Belchertown, MA 01007
(413) 323-7632

Central District

211 Temple Street
West Boylston, MA 01583
(508) 835-3607

Northeast District

85 Fitchburg Road
Ayer, MA 01432
(978) 772-2145

Southeast District

195 Bournedale Road
Buzzards Bay, MA 02532
(508) 759-3406

AFTER being notified of successfully passing the Massachusetts Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit Exam, complete the Application for a Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit, enclose a check or money order for \$10.00 made payable to “Comm. of MA – DFW”, and mail to:

Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
ATTN: Wildlife Rehab
1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA 01581

Please email wildlife.rehab@mass.gov with any questions.

RECOMMENDED REFERENCE MATERIALS

Wild Mammal Babies: The First 48 Hours and Beyond (Third Edition)

Irene Ruth and Debra Gode

NWRA Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation (Fourth Edition)

Edited by Erica A. Miller, DVM

NWRA Quick Reference (Third Edition)

Erica A. Miller, DVM

Hand-Rearing Birds

Laurie J. Gage, DVM and Rebecca Duerr, DVM

Exotic Animal Formulary (Fourth Edition)

James W. Carpenter

Wild Mammals of North America: Biology, Management, and Conservation (Second Edition)

Edited by George A. Feldhamer, Bruce C. Thompson, and Joseph A. Chapman

Peterson Field Guide to Mammals of North America (Fourth Edition)

Fiona A. Reid

Peterson Reference Guide to the Behavior of North American Mammals

Mark Elbroch and Kurt Rinehart

Wild Mammals of New England

Alfred J. Godin

New England Wildlife: Habitat, Natural History, and Distribution

Richard M. DeGraaf and Mariko Yamasaki

The Sibley Guide to Bird Life & Behavior

David Allen Sibley

The Crossley ID Guide: Eastern Birds

Richard Crossley

The New Stokes Field Guide to Birds: Eastern Region

Donald Stokes and Lillian Stokes



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APPLICATION FOR A WILDLIFE REHABILITATION PERMIT

AFTER being notified of successfully passing the Massachusetts Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit Exam, complete this application form and send it with check or money order to the DFW Field Headquarters office.

Fee: \$10.00. Make check or money order payable to: "Comm. of MA – DFW"
(Veterinarians exempt from fee)

Mail to: Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
ATTN: Wildlife Rehab
1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA 01581

Pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 131, Section 4 of the Massachusetts General Laws, and 321 CMR 2.13, I apply for a license to acquire and hereby possess sick, injured, debilitated, or orphaned wildlife and provide necessary care and treatment to return the animal to live in the wild, independent of human aid and sustenance.

NAME _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____
(Applicant must be at least 18 years of age)

MAILING ADDRESS _____
(Applicant must be domiciled in MA)

CITY & STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE # _____

EMAIL ADDRESS **(required)** _____

ORGANIZATION (if applicable) _____

ADDRESS WHERE ANIMALS WILL BE KEPT _____
If different than mailing address. (Physical Street Address; No P.O. Boxes)

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AS ATTACHMENTS WITH YOUR APPLICATION:

A: A description of the wildlife species or types of wildlife (such as small mammals, songbirds, waterfowl, reptiles and amphibians, etc.) which the applicant is prepared to rehabilitate.

B: A description of the cages and other facilities which the applicant has available for rehabilitation purposes. Diagrams, drawings in scale, or photographs may be used.

CONSULTANT VETERINARIAN (Printed name) _____

VETERINARIAN ADDRESS _____

CITY & STATE _____ ZIP _____

ORGANIZATION/BUSINESS _____

VETERINARIAN PHONE # _____

CONSULTANT VETERINARIAN SIGNATURE _____

Please indicate the category(ies) of wildlife you intend to rehabilitate for public listing on Mass.gov (M= mammals, B= birds, R= reptiles) _____

Brief comments for Website: _____

(Listing on the Mass.gov website as an active rehabilitator is mandatory.)

Have you been convicted of a violation of any provision of M.G.L., c. 131 or any provision of M.G.L., c. 266 or c. 272 involving cruelty to animals, or of any provision of 321 CMR, or any related Federal statute or regulation within the past five years? No _____ Yes _____ If yes, please explain:

NOTE: If you plan to rehabilitate migratory birds (i.e. raptors/birds of prey, songbirds, and/or waterfowl), you must obtain a Federal Migratory Bird Rehabilitation Permit *after* obtaining a state permit.

(With a state wildlife rehabilitation permit, you may accept wild turkey, ruffed grouse, rock pigeon, mute swan, ring-necked pheasant, house sparrow, starling, and northern bobwhite.)

I certify under the pains and penalties of perjury that the information provided above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

APPLICANT SIGNATURE

DATE

321 CMR: DIVISION OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

2.13: Wildlife Rehabilitation

(1) Purpose. The purpose of 321 CMR 2.13 is to provide for the care of sick, injured, debilitated, and orphaned wildlife by trained wildlife rehabilitators and to provide criteria for the issuance of permits to such wildlife rehabilitators. In accordance with M.G.L. c. 131, § 4, wildlife rehabilitators issued permits pursuant to 321 CMR 2.13(11) or 2.13(14), or persons exempted from the permit requirement pursuant to 321 CMR 2.13(15), may acquire sick, injured, debilitated, or orphaned wildlife and provide necessary care and treatment so that the animal may be returned to live in the wild independent of human aid and sustenance. Nothing in 321 CMR 2.13 shall authorize or be construed to authorize a wildlife rehabilitator permitted under 321 CMR 2.13(11) or (14) to practice veterinary medicine contrary to M.G.L. c. 112.

(2) Definitions. For the purposes of 321 CMR 2.13 and unless the context requires otherwise, the following words or phrases shall have the following meanings:

At or Near the Point of Capture means a location within five miles of the point of capture, or within the same county in which the permittee maintains facilities inspected and approved pursuant to 321 CMR 2.13(16), provided that in the case of a permittee whose inspected and approved facilities are located in Suffolk County "at or near the point of capture" shall further include any county which borders on Suffolk County.

Contact: shall include, but not be limited to, physical contact between the public and wildlife, including the unauthorized provision of food and liquids, and also visual, auditory, or olfactory contact between the public and wildlife which may cause or result in subjecting the wildlife to stress, behavioral anomalies including taming or imprinting, or in any diminishment of the capacity of such wildlife to subsequently survive in the wild independent of human aid and sustenance.

Director: the Director of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, or his or her agents.

Division: the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Emergency Basis means the rehabilitation of six or less animals per calendar year.

Environmental Police Officer: the Director of the Office of Law Enforcement, deputy directors of enforcement, chiefs of enforcement, deputy chiefs of enforcement, environmental police officers, and such other enforcement officers of the Office of Law Enforcement as may be appointed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 21, § 6.

Person: any individual, partnership, profit or non-profit corporation, firm, business or other commercial or non-commercial entity, club, organization, or association.

Promptly Released means for birds a period not to exceed 90 days from the time of acquisition, and for mammals, a period not to exceed one year (365 days) from the time of acquisition.

Public includes, but is not limited to, all persons other than wildlife rehabilitators permitted under 321 CMR 2.13(11) and 2.13(14), members of their immediate family, providers of temporary care authorized under 321 CMR 2.13(17), veterinarians licensed under M.G.L. c. 112, Environmental Police Officers, and employees of the Division.

Rehabilitate means the provision of care and treatment to sick, injured, debilitated, or orphaned wildlife for the purpose of returning such animals to the wild in a condition which enables them to survive independent of human aid and sustenance.

Wildlife: non-domesticated amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals.

Wildlife Rehabilitator or Permittee: a person who has been issued a permit, or who has been exempted from the permit requirement in accordance with the provisions of 321 CMR 2.13 for the purpose of providing care, aid, and treatment to sick, injured, debilitated, or orphaned wildlife with the goal of returning such wildlife to the wild independent of human aid or sustenance.

Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit: a permit issued pursuant to 321 CMR 2.13, including a provisional wildlife rehabilitation permit and such equivalent permit as may have been issued by the Division prior to the publication of 321 CMR 2.13 in the Massachusetts Register.

(3) Scope of Permit Requirement. No person, except as otherwise authorized under provisions of M.G.L. c. 131, or as exempted in 321 CMR 2.12(11) and 321 CMR 2.13(15), shall rehabilitate wildlife without complying with the provisions of 321 CMR 2.13.

(4) Application. A person seeking a wildlife rehabilitation permit shall complete a written application on forms supplied by the Director. Completed applications shall be addressed to the Permit Section of the Division.

(5) Information. All initial permit applications shall contain the following information. Renewal applications, including applications for a provisional permit, shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, those items in 321 CMR 2.13(5)(a), (c), (h), and (i):

- (a) the applicant's name, address, and telephone number where he or she can be reached between the hours of 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.;
- (b) the applicant's date of birth;
- (c) in the event the applicant is a corporation, partnership, firm, business or other commercial entity, club, organization, or association, either public or private, the name, address, telephone number, and date of birth of the president, director, head, or principal officer;
- (d) the location or locations where the activity to be permitted under 321 CMR 2.13(11) or 2.13(14) will be conducted;
- (e) the species or categories (such as "small mammals", "songbirds", "waterfowl", "reptiles and amphibians") of wildlife which the applicant is prepared to rehabilitate;
- (f) a description of the cages and other facilities which the applicant has available for rehabilitation purposes;
- (g) the name, address, and telephone number of a veterinarian registered and

- licensed under provisions of M.G.L. c. 112 to practice veterinary medicine in Massachusetts who is available for consultation with and advice to the applicant;
- (h) the date the application was executed; and
 - (i) the applicant's signature, executed under the pains and penalties of perjury.

- (6) Agreement. All permits issued pursuant to 321 CMR 2.13 shall be signed by the permittee. Such signature shall constitute:
- (a) an agreement by the permittee to fully comply with all relevant provisions of law including but not limited to M.G.L. c. 131, 321 CMR and all applicable conditions and restrictions of the license; and
 - (b) liability agreement.
- (7) Qualifications. In order to qualify for a wildlife rehabilitation permit a person must:
- (a) be at least 18 years of age and domiciled in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and
 - (b) pass a written examination as stipulated in 321 CMR 2.13(18) administered by the Director or his authorized agent, except as provided for in 321 CMR 2.13(15) and 2.13(20).
- (8) Fees. A fee may be charged for the issuance of a wildlife rehabilitation permit and for the administration of a written wildlife rehabilitation examination. The amount of the fees shall be determined by the commissioner of administration under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 7, § 3B, unless otherwise determined by the Legislature.
- (9) Abandoned Applications. Incomplete or improperly executed applications shall be treated as provided for in 321 CMR 2.12(8).
- (10) Denial. Applications for a wildlife rehabilitation permit shall, unless otherwise provided, be denied when:
- (a) the applicant has within five years preceding the date of application been assessed a civil or administrative penalty for, or been convicted of a violation of any provision of M.G.L. c. 131, or of any provision of M.G.L. c. 266 or c. 272 involving cruelty to animals, or of any provision of 321 CMR, or of any federal statute or regulation which is related to the activity for which the permit is sought;
 - (b) the applicant has failed to disclose material information or has made false statements as to any fact in connection with the application;
 - (c) the applicant has failed to submit the required fee with the application, unless the applicant is exempt from such fee as provided in 321 CMR 2.13(15), or unless no fee has been established;
 - (d) an inspection by a duly authorized state or federal official of the facilities where wildlife will be maintained has disclosed that the facilities do not meet the requirements of 321 CMR 2.13(16);
 - (e) the applicant fails, when required, to fulfill the examination requirement established at 321 CMR 2.13(18); or
 - (f) the applicant fails, when required, to meet the recertification requirement established at 321 CMR 2.13(19).
- (11) Permit. A wildlife rehabilitation permit may be issued to a person based on his or her

demonstrated experience, successful completion of a written examination, the availability of adequate facilities at his or her rehabilitation site or sites, and other provisions of 321 CMR 2.13.

(12) Provisional Permit. A provisional wildlife rehabilitation permit may, at the discretion of the Director, be issued to an applicant in accordance with the provisions of 321 CMR 2.13(11) and 2.13(14).

(13) Expiration Date. The expiration date for a wildlife rehabilitation permit shall be midnight of December 31 in the calendar year. The expiration date for a provisional wildlife rehabilitation permit shall not exceed 180 days from the date of issuance.

(14) Provisional Status. Upon receipt of a properly executed application and the completion of a satisfactory inspection of the applicant's facilities, a person who has held a wildlife rehabilitation permit for at least one full calendar year, but for less than three full calendar years, immediately prior to the publication date of 321 CMR 2.13 in the Massachusetts Register may be granted a provisional wildlife rehabilitation permit. A provisional wildlife rehabilitation permit authorizes the permittee to carry out all activities of a wildlife rehabilitator until such time as the applicant passes or fails the written examination. Such examination shall be taken within 180 days following the issuance of a provisional wildlife rehabilitation permit. A person may hold a provisional wildlife rehabilitation permit for a period not to exceed 180 days. A person who, having passed the written examination and been issued a wildlife rehabilitation permit, shall not subsequently be issued a provisional wildlife rehabilitation permit. A provisional wildlife rehabilitation permit held by any person who fails the written examination shall automatically be void. A person who has not held a wildlife rehabilitation permit for at least one full calendar year immediately prior to the publication of 321 CMR 2.13 in the Massachusetts Register shall not be grandfathered or granted provisional status.

(15) Exemptions. The following exemptions shall apply to veterinarians properly licensed in the Commonwealth.

(a) Veterinarians licensed under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 112 who rehabilitate animals only on an emergency basis shall be exempt from the fees, permit, inspection, examination, and recertification requirements of 321 CMR 2.13(8), 2.13(11), 2.13(16), 2.13(18), and 2.13(19) provided that such veterinarians comply with 321 CMR 2.13(22), 2.13(24) and all other provisions of 321 CMR 2.13 wherein not specifically exempted. Veterinarians exempted under 321 CMR 2.13(15)(a) shall not advertise or otherwise promote their services as a wildlife rehabilitator.

(b) Veterinarians licensed under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 112 who rehabilitate or intend to rehabilitate animals on a regular basis or who advertise or promote or intend to advertise or promote their services as a wildlife rehabilitator and who are not otherwise exempt under the provisions of 321 CMR 2.13(15)(a) shall be exempt from the fees and examination requirements of 321 CMR 2.13(8) and 2.13(16), provided that such veterinarians comply with all other provisions of 321 CMR 2.13.

(16) Inspections. Upon receipt of a properly executed application for a wildlife rehabilitation permit and all required supporting documentation, an Environmental Police Officer or an official of the Division or both shall inspect the facilities to be used by the applicant for the rehabilitation of wildlife and shall certify that they meet or fail to meet the minimum requirements established in 321 CMR 2.12(16) or requirements otherwise established by the

Director. Wildlife rehabilitation facilities and records, including those of persons exempted under 321 CMR 2.13(15)(a), shall be available for inspection by Environmental Police Officers or officials of the Division at any reasonable hour in order to examine or inspect the conditions, standards, and methods of care and keeping of wildlife. The applicant agrees as a condition to a renewal of his or her application that the facilities and records will be subject to periodic and unannounced inspections at reasonable hours. When authorized by the Director, Environmental Police Officers or officials of the Division may order that specific wildlife be released, transferred, surrendered, or humanely destroyed, and may seize and remove wildlife from the custody of the permittee if they deem it necessary for the welfare of such wildlife, of other wildlife, of domestic animals, for the welfare and safety of humans, or for failure to comply with any provision of the permit, or 321 CMR 2.12, or 2.13.

(17) Temporary Care. Any other person may care for the wildlife held by a permittee when authorized in writing by the permittee provided that if the period of care exceeds 30 days the Director shall be notified in writing of such temporary care provisions within three calendar days from the inception of temporary care. Such written notification shall include the name or names of the persons providing temporary care, the reason or need for temporary care status, and the number of days temporary care is to be maintained. Nothing in 321 CMR 2.13(17) shall be construed to allow the provision of temporary care at facilities other than those approved and inspected pursuant to 321 CMR 2.13(16) unless so approved in writing by the Director. An Environmental Police Officer or an official of the Division may remove wildlife from temporary care when such temporary care has been instituted contrary to provisions of 321 CMR 2.13(17) or for those reasons specified in 321 CMR 2.13(16). Those persons specified in 321 CMR 2.13(10)(a) may not be authorized to perform temporary care.

(18) Examination Requirements.

- (a) Except as provided for in 321 CMR 2.13(15) and (20), applicants a wildlife rehabilitation permit shall successfully complete a written examination relating to biology, care, handling, diets, animal welfare, statutes and regulations, and such other appropriate subject matter as shall be determined by the Director. A person must attain a passing grade as determined by the Director. An applicant who fails may not be eligible to retake the examination for two months or more from the date of the failed examination.
- (b) The maximum duration of a provisional wildlife rehabilitation permit shall be 180 days. If the written examination is not passed within the above stated time period for provisional status, the applicant shall no longer be authorized to possess and rehabilitate wildlife until such time as the written examination is successfully completed.

(19) Periodic Recertification. Except as provided for in 321 CMR 2.13(15)(a) proof of participation in a wildlife rehabilitation seminar, workshop, or training session approved by the Director, at least once in every three consecutive years shall be required for continued renewal of a wildlife rehabilitation permit. Failure to complete such periodic recertification by December 31st of the third calendar year following the most recent renewal, or issuance of the initial permit, whichever is most recent, shall result in non-renewal of the permit until such time as the recertification requirement is satisfied.

(20) Grandfather Clause. All persons who held a valid wildlife rehabilitation permit for three

or more consecutive calendar years immediately prior to the initial publication of 321 CMR 2.13 in the Massachusetts Register shall be exempt from the written examination requirement set forth in 321 CMR 2.13(18). However, such grandfathered persons shall not be exempt from the recertification requirements set forth in 321 CMR 2.13(19).

(21) Revocation and Non-renewal. A wildlife rehabilitation permit, or an exemption pursuant to 321 CMR 2.13(15) may be revoked by the Director at any time upon failure to comply with any condition of the permit, or 321 CMR 2.13, or failure to provide the care and treatment necessary to prepare wildlife held under authority of the permit for successful release to the wild. Wildlife possessed or maintained by a person whose permit or exemption has been revoked or which has not been renewed shall be disposed of by that person in a manner required in writing by the Director. Any wildlife not disposed of may be seized by an Environmental Police Officer or official of the Division and disposed of in the best interest of the Commonwealth.

(22) Restrictions:

- (a) A wildlife rehabilitation permit may not authorize the rehabilitation of endangered or threatened wildlife listed in 321 CMR 10.60, venomous snakes, black bear, moose, or white-tailed deer. All wildlife held under authority of a wildlife rehabilitation permit may not be maintained as pets, intentionally tamed, transferred to a person not properly licensed or otherwise authorized, sold, exchanged for consideration, bartered, maintained in unapproved facilities or by unauthorized persons, or maintained for a period longer than that specified in 321 CMR 2.13(22). All wildlife which has recovered from disease, injury, or debilitation, or successfully raised as an orphan, shall be promptly released into the wild at or near the point of capture unless otherwise instructed by the Director. The Director may authorize in writing a longer holding period or a more distant release site when, in his judgment, such holding period or release site is necessary for the welfare of the wildlife so held or released and is not detrimental to human health and safety or the health and welfare of free-ranging wildlife or domestic animals.
- (b) Wildlife, except endangered, threatened, or special concern species listed in 321 CMR 10.60 for which recovery from disease, injury, or debilitation in the permittee's judgment is not anticipated shall be donated to an approved zoo, museum, or natural history organization, or shall be euthanized, unless the permittee is otherwise instructed by the Director. Orphaned wildlife which, in the judgment of the permittee, cannot be released to the wild due to a lack of behavioral traits enabling such wildlife to survive without dependence on human aid and sustenance, or to imprinting on humans, shall be disposed of as stipulated in 321 CMR 2.13(22)(b). Dead wildlife shall be transferred to the Division upon request of the Director. If not requested by the Director dead wildlife shall be disposed of at an approved museum, or scientific or educational institution, or disposed of by lawful incineration or burial. The Director reserves the right to make final judgment as to the capacity of wildlife to recover from disease, injury, or debilitation, or for orphans to be successfully reared and released. He may direct the disposal of such wildlife by transfer to another rehabilitator, release to the wild, or euthanasia when, in his judgment, the health, welfare, and safety of such wildlife, the public, free-ranging wildlife, or domestic animals shall be best served by such disposal. In making such judgments, the Director may consult with veterinarians, rehabilitators, or such other experts or qualified persons as he shall deem advisable.

- (c) The acquisition of endangered, threatened, and special concern wildlife, as listed in 321 CMR 10.60 whether dead or alive shall be reported immediately to the Division for special instructions relative to the disposition of such wildlife. In the case of an acquisition on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday it shall be reported on the work day, Monday-Friday, immediately following.
- (d) A federal permit issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or such other federal agency as may have jurisdiction shall be obtained by the permittee prior to receiving or rehabilitating any wildlife protected by federal law. This shall not preclude emergency care by licensed veterinarians pursuant to 321 CMR 2.12(11). Salvage and rehabilitation of raptors by falconers licensed under provisions of 321 CMR 3.04 may only be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of 321 CMR 3.04 and other applicable state and federal law.
- (e) No public contact shall be allowed with any wildlife held under a wildlife rehabilitation permit unless otherwise approved in writing by the Director.

(23) Costs. Any costs, charges, or fees, including but not limited to food, shelter, equipment, labor, veterinarian or other specialist consultation or services, transportation, federal or other licensing fees, and any other expenses associated with the rehabilitation of wildlife shall be the responsibility of the permittee. The permittee shall not charge the Director, the Division or any third party for such costs or expenses. Donations may be accepted if otherwise permitted by law.

(24) Reporting Requirements. An annual report shall be filed with the Permit Section of the Division at the end of each calendar year. Such report shall be filed no later than January 31st for the preceding calendar year. The report shall be on forms provided by the Director or in a format specified by the Director and shall report full details on the wildlife handled or rehabilitated, including, but not limited to, species, number of individuals, acquisition source, reason for acquisition, disposition, and such other information as the Director may require. Failure to submit such annual report or failure to provide required information or the making of false statements shall be cause for suspension, revocation, or non-renewal of the permit.

(25) Compliance with Other Laws. Issuance of a wildlife rehabilitation permit under 321 CMR 2.13 shall not exempt the permittee from compliance with the provisions of any other local, state, or federal law.