

# Considerations for Caring for Adult Wild Mammals in Captivity

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# Are You Prepared?

- Species
- Causes
- Handling
- Housing – rehabilitation & pre-release
- Triage – Emergency Care/Stabilization
- Veterinary Care
  - Euthanasia
- Nutrition
- Release

# Species.....

- Common:
  - EG Squirrel, E Cottontail, V Opossum
- Less Common:
  - S. Flying Squirrel, Bobcat, Groundhog, Nutria, Muskrat, Beaver, River Otter, White-Footed Mouse, E Chipmunk
- Not Permitted:
  - WT Deer (Adults), Black Bear (NCWRC), Coyotes
- Special Permit Needed for RVS



# Causes...

## ■ Injuries

- Hit by Automobiles/Lawnmowers
- Entangled/Trapped
- Cat/Dog Caught

## ■ Illness

- Emaciation
- Parasitic, Bacterial, Fungal, Viral
  - Zoonotic – Rabies, Lepto, Typhus, Tularemia, Hantavirus, Plague...Even Covid

## ■ Other

- Poisoning – treatments are based on type
- Unwilling to leave release site/non-releasable



# Handling...

**SAFETY FIRST!!!!**

## ■ Equipments

- Gloves – exam through to kevlar
- Catch-pole – NEVER by neck alone; neck/limb
- Nets – materials, gauge holes

## ■ Species Specific Techniques

- Scruffing
- Supporting Hind-End (Cottontails)
- NEVER Grab and hold by ears or tails alone

**Prepare in Advance – Don't go it alone!**

**Be Aware of Species Specific Flight or Fight Reactions**



# Housing...

## ■ Minimum Standards

- NCWRC
- IWRC/NWRA

## ■ Safe

- Chew proof
- Ravel free bedding
- Low Stress; Hide areas
- Ability to maintain hygienic standards

## ■ Restrictions

- Injury appropriate
- Incubator for critical patients

## ■ Dangerous Animals

- Shift cages



# Triage...

## ■ Physical exam

- Less than 3 Minutes is ideal!
- WEIGHTS!!!! Body Condition
- Top to Bottom – Eyes to Toes

## ■ Stable vs. Critical

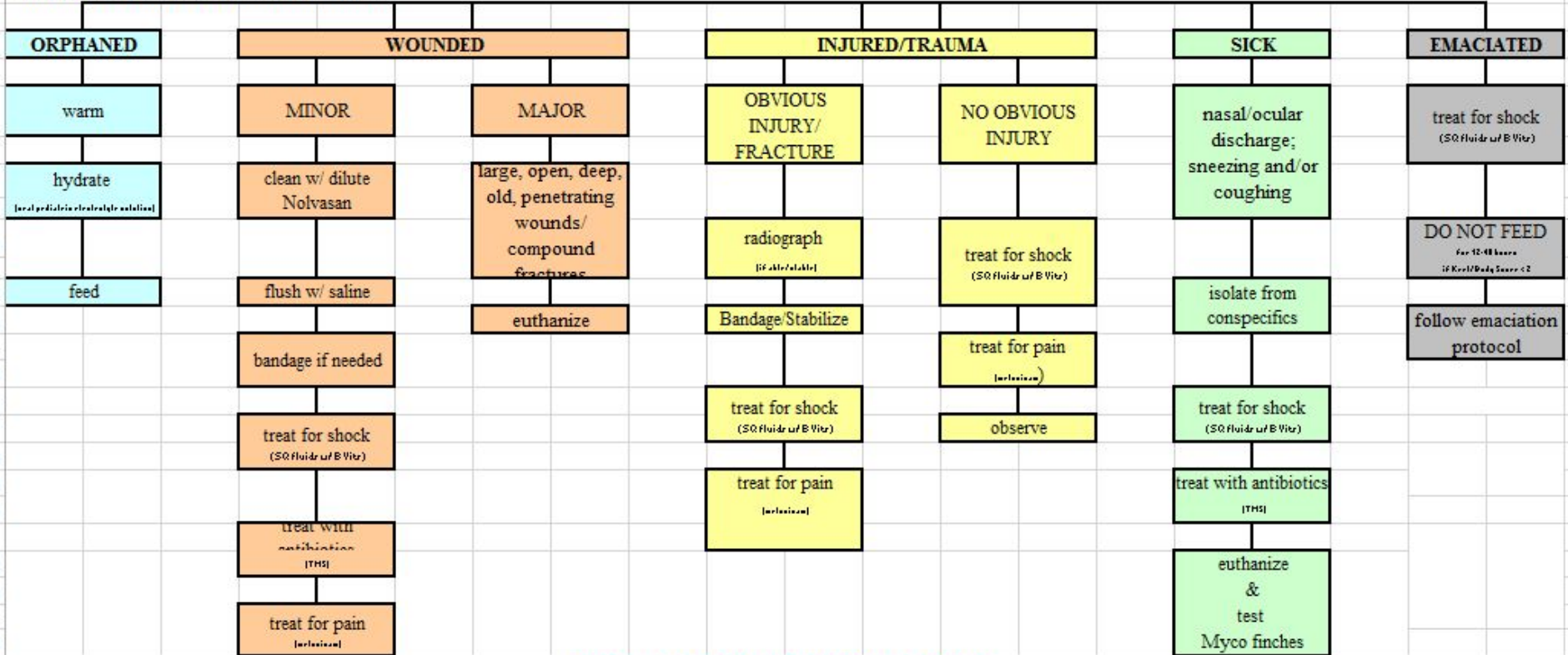
- A. Airways – clear, unobstructed, no blood
- B. Breathing – Respiratory Rate, Strength Sound
- C. Circulation – Heart Rate, Strength, MM Color, CRT, Bleeding
- D. Drugs – Fluids, Treatments



**Stop, Look, Listen – Be Observant and Considerate**  
**Avoid Unnecessary Stress!!!**



**GUIDELINES FOR TRIAGE & INITIAL CARE:**



**DO NOT TREAT IF NOT BEEN APPROVED TO DO SO**

REFER TO CLASS SPECIFIC CHARTS FOR DOSE INFO

OBTAIN WEIGHT BEFORE TREATING

KEEP RECORDS/BOARDS/ROUNDS LIST UPDATED - DOCUMENT TREATMENTS; RECORD & LOG RADIOGRAPHS

HAVE ANIMAL/TREATMENT PLAN ASSESSED BY VETERINARIAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

# Emergency Care...

- Hypothermic – too cold
  - Warm slowly
- Hyperthermic – too hot
  - Cool Rapidly
- Shock/Stress
  - Physiologic state, not a mental status; Various levels
  - Dehydration Status – Fluid Loss/Replacement
    - SQ vs. PO
- Hemorrhage/Wound Care
  - Internal vs. external
  - Pressure Bandage
  - Flushing/Cleaning
- Fractures
  - Bandaging – Robert Jones Bandage; Triple Layer Bandage  
DO NOT align fractures, musty be done by vet under anesthesia

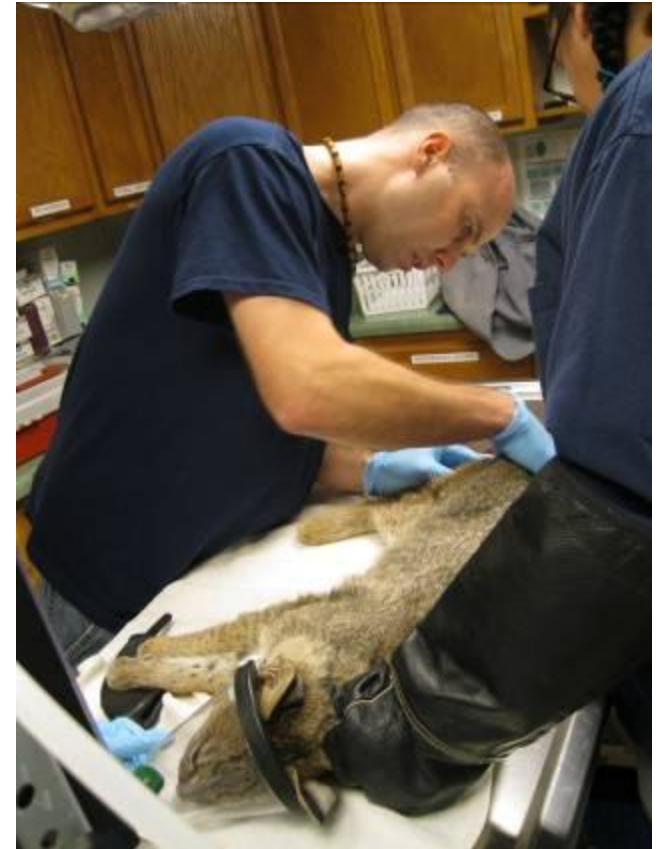


### Emergency Supportive Care

<b>Handling</b>	<b>Minimize handling and other stressors. Keep in quiet environment; Keep warm</b>
<b>Bleeding</b>	<b>Stop any hemorrhage</b>
<b>Fluids</b>	<b>Place IV catheter and initiate shock dose of fluids for first hour and then slow to maintenance dose (shock = weight (gm) x % dehyd; Maintenance = X ml/kg/day); If unable to get a vein, start SQ fluids</b>
<b>Oxygen</b>	<b>Deliver supplemental O2 if needed</b>
<b>Hypoglycemia</b>	<b>Give oral dextrose especially for young or small animals</b>

# Veterinary Care...

- Fees
  - Written Agreement
- Scheduling/Emergencies
- Diagnostics
  - Radiographs
  - Blood Work
  - Fecal Parasitology
- Medication
  - Pain Management
  - Dosaging
  - Prescriptions
  - Controlled Substances
- Euthanasia



# Nutrition...

- Daily Caloric Requirements – Kcals
  - Physiologic State/Taxonomic Constant
- Condition Status Appropriate
  - Body Condition, Injury, Illness
- Commercial Feeds vs. Natural Items
- Whole Prey
- Supplementation
- Presentation of food items



# Release...

- Pre-Release Housing/Outdoor Conditioning
  - Upholding recommended standards (as above)
  - Exercise space
  - Enrichment, Natural behaviors
  - Predator/Prey Proof
- Evaluation of Recovery Status
- Release!
  - Time of Year; Weather Permitting
  - To return from Whence They Came?... **YES**



# The Do's.....NWRA Principles

- **Do** get a history upon admission and find out exposure.
- **Do** avoid stress.
- **Do** provide adequate caging.
- **Do** provide enclosure furniture/hide areas.
- **Do** isolate new patients.
- **Do** run diagnostic tests when needed.
- **Do** wear protective gear, wear gloves when cleaning.
- **Do** practice good hygiene and keep cages clean.
- **Do** place enclosures away from pets and people.
- **Do** provide proper nutrition.
- **Do** make sure animal is functioning properly for release.
- **Do** release into appropriate habitat.
- **Do** release into familiar territory if possible.
- **Do** network with experienced rehabilitators!

# The Don'ts....NWRA Principles

- **Don't** take in animals/species that you can't care for.
- **Don't** place new admissions with existing patients.
- **Don't** habituate wildlife to humans or pets.
- **Don't** allow friends, neighbors, children, public or pets around convalescing wildlife.
- **Don't** release all of your mammals on the same property
- **Don't** keep animals alive that are not releasable or able to be placed within a reasonable time frame.
- **Don't** release animals with disabilities that would not be able to survive in the wild.
- **Don't** be afraid to say “NO”!!!



# Resources...

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# Questions....

