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## Clarification Regarding Vermont Veterinarians Treating Wildlife

Veterinarians are often asked to provide medical care for wildlife, either by the general public or by a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. While there are no specific statutes that prohibit Vermont veterinarians from treating wildlife, there are some important considerations when dealing with rabies vector species (RVS). The VVMA contacted Chris Bernier from the VT Department of Fish and Wildlife to help clarify what veterinarians should do when presented an abandoned, sick or injured wild animal.

Vermont statute requires anyone who rehabilitates wildlife to obtain a special license from the VT Fish and Wildlife Department. A wildlife rehabilitator cannot practice veterinary medicine on wildlife and must work in cooperation with a veterinarian. A veterinarian may apply to become a wildlife rehabilitator. A separate permit is required for rehabilitation of RVS (foxes, raccoon, skunk, woodchuck, and bats). Additionally, there are specific federal and state authorizations required to rehabilitate threatened and endangered species.

In order to house endangered or threatened species, a veterinarian needs either their own permit (state and/or federal depending on the species) or can work as a sub-permittee under the license of an accredited rehabilitator.

Veterinarians are allowed to treat or euthanize injured non-rabies vector species as needed. If the animal does not need medical treatment (abandoned), contact a licensed rehabilitator ([www.vtfishandwildlife.com/wildlife\\_rehabilitation.cfm](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/wildlife_rehabilitation.cfm)) to discuss appropriate transfer to their care.

However, if an **injured rabies vector species** is presented to you, first contact State Public Health Veterinarian Dr. Bob Johnson at the VT Department of Health (802-863-7240) and then, second, the USDA Wildlife Services rabies hotline (800-472-2437) for instructions on how to proceed.

The AVMA has a helpful flow chart called "Managing Wildlife Emergencies" available at [https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/wildlife/Pages/default.aspx?utm\\_source=prettyurl&utm\\_campaign=mktg&utm\\_keyword=wildlife](https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/wildlife/Pages/default.aspx?utm_source=prettyurl&utm_campaign=mktg&utm_keyword=wildlife).

Any veterinarian interested in becoming a licensed rehabilitator should contact the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department at 802-241-3700 or [http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/wildlife\\_rehabilitation.cfm](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/wildlife_rehabilitation.cfm)

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