

# Charles Darwin University Animal Ethics Committee

## Standard Operating Procedure:

### SHORT-TERM JOEY INTERVENTION PROCEDURES (WA DBCA)

Version No:	Version 1.3
Date of Approval by the CDU AEC:	29/01/2025
Date for Review by the CDU AEC:	29/01/2028

Please note: this SOP has been developed for animal use in WA. Consideration should be taken to the specific conditions of the region in which your work is being conducted, and modifications to procedures made accordingly to ensure the best welfare of the animal and safety of the project participants. Any modifications required should be outlined in the project application.

The CDU AEC approves the following SOP with the below amendments/conditions:

- Temperature control must stay within 30 to 34 degrees Celsius within the pouch, caution is advised for use of boiling water in heat packs.
- The Committee recommends that timeframes for obtaining care be adjusted according to joey development stage, as survival varies from likely non-viable in unfurred "pinkies" to up to 24 hours for furred pouch young at stable temperatures.
- The AEC recommends that field carers carry rehydration formula rather than milk formula (to assist with challenges with spoilage and temperature control).
- **Section 5.1** In the Northern Territory, it is important to be mindful not to overheat all joeys (not just larger, fully haired joeys). The requirement for recommended heat packs should be based on maintaining pouch temperatures to an optimal range of 30-34 °C
- **Section 5.5.2** In the Northern Territory, Wildcare NT is the licensed rescue organisation. At the time of review the Phone contact details are 89886 121
- **Section 5.5** Euthanising Joeys: The SOP states that joeys' chances of survival without appropriate care within six hours are significantly reduced. The AEC requires that researchers discuss this time frame with the wildlife carer nominated in their project application to determine whether there is adequate justification for euthanasia.

# Standard Operating Procedure

## SC24-05 SHORT-TERM JOEY INTERVENTION PROCEDURES

Animal welfare is the responsibility of all personnel involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

Personnel involved in an Animal Ethics Committee approved project should read and understand their obligations under the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes*.

Version 1.3

August 2024



**Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions**

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions  
Locked Bag 104  
Bentley Delivery Centre WA 6983  
Phone: (08) 9219 9000  
Fax: (08) 9334 0498

[www.dbca.wa.gov.au](http://www.dbca.wa.gov.au)

© Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions on behalf of the State of Western Australia 2024  
August 2024

This work is copyright. You may download, display, print and reproduce this material in unaltered form (retaining this notice) for your personal, non-commercial use or use within your organisation. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, all other rights are reserved. Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

This document was prepared by Species and Communities Program, Biodiversity and Conservation Science, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

Questions regarding the use of this material should be directed to:  
Species and Communities Program  
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions  
Locked Bag 104  
Bentley Delivery Centre WA 6983  
Email: [animalethics@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:animalethics@dbca.wa.gov.au)

The recommended reference for this publication is:  
Department Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, 2024, *Standard Operating Procedure SC24-05: Short-Term Joey Intervention Procedures*, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia.

#### **Disclaimer**

The State of Western Australia and its employees do not guarantee that this publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence that may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

This document is available in alternative formats on request.

Please note: urls in this document which conclude a sentence are followed by a full point. If copying the url please do not include the full point.

## Revision History Log

Version	Date	Details	Author/Reviewer	Approved By	Approval
1.0	2009	Document created	C. Freegard and V. Richter	P. Orell and K. Morris	March 2009
1.1	22/05/2017	Minor revision, with clarification of Procedure Outline and statement about wildlife rehabilitation. *	G. Yeatman, G. Anderson, and M. Page	M. Page	August 2017
1.2	30/07/2021	Revision of content & clarification of procedures	A. Robey, J. Wayne, and J. Renwick	M. Dziminski	February 2023
1.3	25/07/2024	Revision of content & clarification of procedures	A. Robey, J. Wayne, and S. Vitali	J. Richards	August 2024

\* Previously called Care of Evicted Pouch Young, Care of Ejected Pouch Young

## Approvals: Version 1.3



Approved by the DBCA Animal Ethics Committee:

**Dr Jacqui Richards**  
Chairperson, Animal Ethics Committee  
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

# Contents

1 Acknowledgements .....	5
2 Purpose .....	6
3 Scope.....	6
4 Animal Welfare Considerations .....	6
4.1    Injury and unexpected deaths .....	7
4.2    Level of impact .....	7
5 Procedure Outline .....	7
5.1    Equipment .....	7
5.2    What to do immediately after the pouch young is ejected.....	7
5.3    Taping in pouch young.....	8
5.4    Releasing mother and joey .....	9
5.5    Reuniting, retaining or euthanasing joeys .....	12
6 Competencies.....	14
7 Approvals.....	15
8 Occupational Health and Safety .....	15
9 Further Reading.....	16
10 Glossary of Terms .....	16

# 1 Acknowledgements

This standard operating procedure was originally developed by Christine Freegard and Vanessa Richter, with contributions from Peter Orell, Peter Mawson and Stephanie Hill.

## 2 Purpose

Ejecting pouch young is common in some members of the Macropodidae, Potoroidae and Peramelidae families (particularly woylies *Bettongia penicillata ogilbyi*, boodies *Bettongia lesueur*, and quenda *Isoodon fusciventer*). Any joey caught with an adult female should never be released by itself.

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) details protocols for four possible courses of action in response to a pouch young being ejected from its mother's pouch: taping, soft release, retention and euthanasia. Additionally, the SOP includes guidance for managing scenarios where a dependent young-at-heel has been trapped with its mother.

## 3 Scope

This SOP has been written specifically for scientific and education purposes, and approved by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions' (DBCA) Animal Ethics Committee (AEC). However, this SOP may also be appropriate for other situations.

This SOP applies to all fauna survey and monitoring activities undertaken across Western Australia by DBCA (hereafter department) personnel. It may also be used to guide fauna related activities undertaken by Natural Resource Management groups, consultants, researchers and any other individuals or organisations. All department personnel involved in fauna research and management should be familiar with the content of this document.

This SOP complements the *Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* (The Code). The Code provides the ethical framework and governing principles to guide decisions and actions of all those involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, and should be referred to for all AEC approved projects. A copy of the code may be viewed by visiting the National Health and Medical Research Council website (<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-care-and-use-animals-scientific-purposes>).

## 4 Animal Welfare Considerations

To reduce the level of impact of ejected pouch young on the welfare of animals, personnel must consider, address and plan for the range of welfare impacts that may be encountered. Strategies to reduce impacts should be identified during the planning stage to ensure that they can be readily implemented during animal handling, and contingencies for managing welfare issues have been identified. Ensure that all personnel involved in the project are aware of the range of issues that they may encounter, the options that are available for reducing impacts and improving animal welfare, and the process for managing adverse events.

Department projects involving animal handling will require approval from the department's AEC. Key animal welfare considerations that should be considered when interacting with species that eject their young are listed below and highlighted throughout the document.

## 4.1 Injury and unexpected deaths

If adverse events including injury, unexpected deaths or unplanned requirement for euthanasia occur then it is essential to consider the possible causes and take action to prevent further issues. Adhering to the guidance in this SOP will assist in minimising the likelihood of adverse events. For projects approved by the department's AEC, adverse events must be reported in writing to the AEC Executive Officer as soon as possible after the event by completing an *Adverse Event Form*. Guidance on first aid for animals and field euthanasia procedures are described in the department SOPs for *First Aid for Animals* and *Euthanasia of Animals Under Field Conditions*. Where infectious disease is suspected, refer to the department SOP for *Managing Disease Risk and Biosecurity in Wildlife Management* for further guidance.

## 4.2 Level of impact

The intention of this procedure is to achieve the best welfare outcome for animals involved. Inappropriate care of joeys can have a negative impact on the welfare of animals (e.g. if the young develop hypothermia, dehydration etc.). Euthanasia is a possible end point of this procedure if considered the best outcome for the animals involved.

# 5 Procedure Outline

## 5.1 Equipment

If undertaking a project where the ejection of pouch young is likely, at least one 'joey kit' should be kept in a location readily accessible to all personnel/trapping teams. The number of joey kits carried should be proportional to the expected risk. The joey kit should comprise the following:

- a well-ventilated box with a lid
- a heat pack/pad or hot-water-bottle and thermos of hot water
- appropriate makeshift pouches (e.g. knitted wool outer with a removable cotton inner lining)

Animal Handlers should carry makeshift pouches when checking traps so that this is readily accessible if needed.

## 5.2 What to do immediately after the pouch young is ejected

The most common time for pouch young to be ejected is when the mother becomes aware of someone approaching the trap. Occasionally young are ejected whilst inside a handling bag or upon release. It is important to be efficient at separating the mother and young, however it is also important to take care not to rush as this can lead to the mother escaping and leaving an orphan. Place each in a separate bag as soon as possible to reduce the chance of the young being injured.

Minimise direct handling of joeys with cold hands to reduce potential for rapid heat loss. Ejected young should be immediately placed in a makeshift pouch somewhere warm. This is usually inside someone's clothing, preferably against skin for maximum heat transfer. Human body temperature is too cool for pouch young, so this is only a temporary solution. The joey

and its makeshift pouch should be transferred to a heat pack/pad or hot-water-bottle inside appropriate containment until it is reunited with its mother, delivered to a licenced wildlife rehabilitator or euthanased.

**ANIMAL WELFARE:** Records need to be kept on ejected pouch young, their care and fate for annual reporting requirements of projects approved by the department's Animal Ethics Committee.

## 5.3 Taping in pouch young

Taping is the preferred option for ejected pouch young and should be used wherever possible.

### 5.3.1 When to tape

Tape in small pouch young that have been ejected or are likely to be ejected when their mother is released. Only tape in those pouch young that are small enough to fit back into the pouch such that the opening of the pouch can be completely closed. Hairless or lightly furred pouch young are never too large to reinsert into their mother's pouch (and should never be left with the mother out of the pouch). Generally, woylies smaller than 200 g (fully haired, eyes open) should be taped in (pouch young up to 260 g have been successfully taped in and released).

Before inserting larger joeys, check the pouch for any hairless infants. If there are any infants present in the pouch, the larger joey (young-at-heel) has already permanently emerged from the pouch (i.e. should not be taped in) but probably is still dependent on the mother and therefore should be 'bagged' for soft release.

### 5.3.2 How to tape

- (a) Pouch young insertion is a lot easier when the mother is not struggling and not completely stretched out. Her back should be slightly curved and legs not completely stretched back. At least two people are required: one to hold the mother and the other to insert the pouch young.
- (b) Open the pouch and then place the pouch young in the pouch opening, allowing it to pull itself in while guiding it into position: head first, upside down with its back to its mother's stomach, pouch lifted out and forward. Ensure the pouch lining is not pulled out when opening as this reduces the size of the pouch available for the joey to climb back into.
- (c) Once the pouch young is in the pouch it should be allowed to settle and rest with its side flush against the body wall of the mother. Hind legs and tail should be inside the pouch and not protruding through the pouch opening.

**ANIMAL WELFARE:** Be gentle when tucking tails and legs into the pouch; they are fragile.

- (d) Use a piece of Fixomull® (adhesive surgical tape) longitudinally to close the mouth of the pouch, keeping clear of the cloaca and placed no higher than the lower edge of the mother's rib cage (Figure 1).

Ensure the pouch opening is completely closed and that no part of the joey's body is exposed to the adhesive tape. Ensure the hind legs and their ranges of movement are not impeded.

Take particular care in positioning tape on bandicoots because the pouch opening and cloaca are close together. A 'V' shape may be cut out of one end of the tape to assist placing the tape with sufficient adherence without blocking the cloaca.

- (e) Massage the tape into the fur by gently pinching and rolling the tape and fur/skin between fingers to ensure good adhesion. Ensure the tape is not stuck to any part of the handling bag.
- (f) If the first piece of tape is narrow and there is some doubt about the tape holding (e.g. if the pouch young is large), another piece of tape may be placed across the belly over the top of the existing tape covering the pouch opening.
- (g) The tape should extend no further than the laterals (sides) of the animal (i.e. not onto the back).
- (h) Extending further than the laterals may cause the tape to remain attached to the mother longer than is desirable and threaten the survival of the joey. If the tape is too long where the ends join over the back, it will result in the death of the joey and is debilitating and potentially lethal for the mother.
- (i) Be patient and take the time to secure the pouch young.



Figure 1 A woylie joey taped into its mother's pouch Photo: Christine Freegard/DBCA.

## 5.4 Releasing mother and joey

There are different options for releasing the mother depending on whether the joey has been taped into the pouch and depending on the mother's stress level. The options are to either release immediately after taping the joey in, or to conduct a soft release.

### 5.4.1 Immediate release

- (a) When releasing the mother with a taped pouch, plan and ensure an exit from the bag which is clear of ALL obstructions including field kits people, logs and trees within at least 2 m. Ensure all is quiet and people are behind the release point.

- (b) With the mother still in the handling bag, place her feet on the ground before carefully removing the bag. This will help ensure that the mother does not kick or scratch the tape off during release or before she has found refuge.
- (c) Alternatively, place the bag on the ground and allow the animal to settle down close to the mouth of the bag in a way that will allow a clean release, and then quietly fold the bag off the eyes of the animal. Allow the animal to leave on its own terms and in its own time. **CAUTION:** If the mother has struggled in the bag after you have released your grip she may have kicked the tape off. Check and re-tape if necessary.
- (d) Observe the animal as it moves away to make sure that the tape stays on. Keep quiet and listen out for the calls (a hissing noise) of an ejected pouch young. If in doubt trace the path of the mother and look and listen for abandoned young. If the mother has ejected the pouch young and the pouch young is found, refer to Section 5.5.
- (e) Check that there is no pouch young in the bag. If the pouch young is left in the bag, refer to Section 5.5.

#### 5.4.2 Soft release

A soft release is when the mother and joey (whether or not it is taped in) are left in an untied bag in a sheltered location, allowing them to leave the bag on their own terms. This bag should be heavy weight with a dense weave (e.g. dark cotton drill or fleece) and should ideally be the bag the mother is initially restrained in after she has exited the trap. If a change of handling bag is required for soft release this should be done immediately at the start of processing and before the joey is reunited with the mother. Transferring an animal from one bag to another prior to soft release is likely to cause stress and increase the risk of the mother kicking the tape off or leaving without her joey.

Soft release should be considered if the pouch young is particularly large, attempts to return the pouch young to the pouch have not succeeded, or if a young-at-heel is still present and a new born infant is also present in the pouch. Soft release should also be considered if the pouch young has been successfully taped in but the mother is highly stressed/agitated.

If the pouch young is unfurred and the initial attempt to reinsert has failed, it will be necessary to leave the mother in the bag in a quiet and secure place to settle down and then re-attempt to reinsert the pouch young into the pouch rather than conduct a soft release.

***Note: When conducting a soft release, personnel MUST be able to return to the release site the next day to check that the bag has been vacated.***

- (a) Find a well contained and sheltered position to leave the animals. Any sheltered depressions are ideal (e.g. under logs, rocky outcrops, dense bushes or in burnt out stumps). Ensure it is a suitable distance from any road which may have vehicle use to avoid disturbance of the animals. Avoid locations adjacent to active kangaroo pads, ant nests or other potential disturbances or welfare risks. Consider how the shade will move during the day to ensure that the position will not be exposed to direct sunlight.
- (b) Mark the location with flagging tape and label the tape with the day's date. Ensure this mark is visible from the reference point/road.
- (c) Clearly record the location of the bag in relation to a particular trap point on the data sheet.

(d) Ensure equipment is packed away, all is quiet and all other people are at a distance.

**ANIMAL WELFARE:** If the joey is not taped in, do not introduce the joey to the bag with its mother until you are situated at the soft release site.

- (e) Carefully lay out the bag in the sheltered position and allow the mother to settle. If possible, secure a rear corner of the bag to reduce the risk of the animal getting tangled in the bag when exiting, or from hopping away in the bag.
- (f) If the joey is not taped in, introduce the joey into the bag and place as close to the mother as possible without aggravating the mother. **CAUTION:** Take care to ensure the mother does not see an escape route as this will increase the risk of her escaping and leaving her joey.
- (g) Twist or fold the mouth of the bag in a way that will allow the mother and joey to exit from the bag with moderate ease. Ensure the positioning of the bag does not hinder their exit.
- (h) Allow the mother and joey to settle whilst lightly securing the bag opening and then retreat slowly and quietly (e.g. avoid crunching leaf litter and rubbing of wet weather gear). The first couple of minutes after your retreat are the most crucial as the mother may still be agitated.
- (i) Later that afternoon, you can return to the release site and observe the bag from a distance to check if the animals have already left. Note: you must do this with considerable caution to avoid the risk of disturbing the animals and causing the mother to bolt. Often both the mother and joey will still be in the bag and will likely leave in the evening. If the bag appears to be empty, approach the bag quietly as you sometimes may find that the mother has left but the joey is still in the bag. Refer to Section 5.5 for guidance on what to do if only the joey is left in the bag.
- (j) If the bag appeared to have both mother and joey in it in the afternoon, you must return again the following morning to check whether the mother and joey have left. Approach the bag quietly as sometimes you may find the mother and joey are still in the bag. If just the joey is still in the bag, refer to Section 5.5. If they are both still in the bag, quietly gather the mouth of the bag in one hand and then make sure that they are still alive by softly placing a hand on the animal on the outside of the bag.

If the mother and joey are still in the bag and alive, you will need to assess the situation and make some decisions:

- If the joey was taped in, check on the taping and consider immediate release if the taping is still secure and/or the mother has significantly calmed down.
- If mother and joey appear to be fine, consider providing them with a bait ball/food and leaving them in the bag for another day. Check to make sure the exit from the bag is not too difficult. Repeat steps (h) to (j).

**ANIMAL WELFARE:** Some peanut butters use xylitol as a sugar substitute. There are no data available regarding the toxicity of xylitol to Australian wildlife, but xylitol is toxic to dogs. If using universal bait, please check the ingredient list on the peanut butter and avoid brands containing xylitol.

- Depending on the situation, you may need to consider taking the mother and joey into care, euthanasing the joey or euthanasing both the mother and joey.

## 5.5 Reuniting, retaining or euthanasing joeys

### 5.5.1 Reuniting joeys

If competent personnel with experience in joey rehabilitation are available and there is a possibility of the mother being recaptured on the grid or transect, then it may be possible to reunite the mother with its joey. If the joey is furred, and is not looking lethargic or dehydrated, keep it warm in a joey kit. The joey can be cared for by the experienced rehabilitator and accompany the trapping team to the original capture location until such a time as the mother can be recaptured. **CAUTION:** Once a mother and pouch young are separated, the mother's milk supply starts reducing and therefore this option should only be attempted for 1-2 days, and therefore reuniting the joey with the mother is only an option if achievable within 48 hours.

Competent personnel with experience in joey rehabilitation may provide oral fluid support while attempting to locate the mother. Electrolytes should be fed instead of joey formula for the first 24 hours, followed by a gradual transition to joey formula as per standard joey feeding regimes. Oral feeding should **not** be attempted by personnel without the relevant rehabilitation experience.

**ANIMAL WELFARE:** It is important to keep accurate records to ensure ejected pouch young are returned to the correct mother and trap location.

An animal handler needs to be allocated responsibility for the care of the joey. If the mother is recaptured, conduct another soft release to give them another chance to reunite. If the mother and joey cannot be reunited, then the animal handler will need to arrange euthanasia or co-ordinate/organise rehabilitation of the joey (see Sections 5.5.2 and 5.5.3 for further guidance).

The following is general advice on temporarily caring for joeys:

- a) The first priority in caring for pouch young is to keep them warm and at a stable temperature. The pouch young should be placed in a makeshift pouch under clothing against skin until they are transferred to a joey kit with a heat pack/pad or hot water bottle. A joey placed against skin will not keep the joey sufficiently warm for extended periods because the warmth does not surround the joey as it would in a pouch. Note: be mindful not to overheat larger, fully furred joeys.
- b) Record the date, mother's ID, and place of capture on flagging tape tied to the joey pouch. Make sure that the incident is clearly noted on the trapping data sheet (e.g. 'Joey ejected & abandoned, UNDER CARE').

### 5.5.2 Retaining joeys

A decision to retain or euthanase a joey must take into consideration:

- The chances of the animal's survival: This will depend on levels of stress, injury and the stage of development and elapsed time since separation from mother. Unfurled pouch

young have a low chance of survival, especially if trauma or hypothermia have occurred and if immediate skilled care is unavailable.

- The time required to reach appropriate care: If care cannot be given within six hours, the joey's chances of survival are significantly reduced and the amount of suffering increases.
- The likely fate of the animal if taken into care: Rehabilitation of dependent offspring must only be considered if consistent with the department guidelines *Making Decisions on the Fate of Rehabilitated Fauna* and the department *Code of Practice for Wildlife Rehabilitation in Western Australia*. As outlined in the Code of Practice for Wildlife Rehabilitation in Western Australia, wildlife must be promptly euthanased when:
  - it is necessary to alleviate unreasonable and/or incurable pain, distress, trauma, sickness or injury;
  - further treatment is not practical, including where extensive veterinary intervention is likely to be required for the animal to be rehabilitated;
  - recovery is not expected such that the animal can be successfully released to the wild; or
  - an animal requires an extended period in captivity which is likely to be detrimental to its future release

Joeys should only be kept alive if the animal has a good chance of survival, appropriate care can be given within six hours and the animal can be successfully rehabilitated back into the wild.

It is preferable to screen and select an appropriate wildlife rehabilitator prior to the survey or monitoring activity, ensuring that they are appropriately licenced, have experience with the specific species and capacity to provide care. The Wildcare Helpline can be reached on (08) 9474 9055 to assist with locating an appropriate licenced wildlife rehabilitator. Go to <https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/wildlife-and-ecosystems/animals/wildcare-helpline> for more information.

*Note: The Chief Investigator is responsible for the fate of the animal after rehabilitation, and must ensure the animal is released back to the capture site or elsewhere in consultation with a Wildlife Officer. This is particularly important for threatened species.*

Keeping track of the ultimate fate of the joey is also important for annual reporting requirements for projects approved by the department's AEC.

### 5.5.3 Euthanasing joeys

Pouch young are sometimes ejected from the pouch long before the trap is checked and these young, particularly when unfurred, loose heat rapidly which greatly reduces their chances of survival. Joeys may also be trampled by their mother, inflicting injuries such as scratches, punctures and bruising. Joeys that are very cold and/or injured have a poor chance of survival and the most humane option is to euthanase.

Refer to the department SOP for *Euthanasia of Animals Under Field Conditions* for further guidance. Euthanasia should only be conducted by, or under the supervision of, experienced personnel.

## 6 Competencies

A person who is competent has the knowledge, skills, and experiences that allow them to capture and handle animals successfully, and appropriately manage adverse events as required. Department personnel, and other external parties covered by the department's Animal Ethics Committee, undertaking projects involving trapping of species that may eject pouch young require approval from the committee and will need to satisfy the competency requirements detailed in Table 1. Other groups, organisations or individuals using this SOP to guide their decision making in relation to ejected pouch young are encouraged to also meet these competency requirements as well as their animal welfare legislative obligations.

It should be noted that sampling design details such as intensity and scope of the project being undertaken will determine the level of competency required and Table 1 provides advice for standard monitoring only.

*Table 1 Competency requirements for Animal Handlers of projects that may involve the management of ejected pouch young*

Competency category	Competency requirement	Competency assessment
<b>Knowledge</b>	Broad understanding the framework governing the use of animals in research and environmental studies in Western Australia	Training (e.g. DBCA Fauna Management Course or equivalent training). In applications, provide details on the course provider, course name and year.
	Understanding species biology and ecology	Personnel should be familiar with the behaviour of species prone to ejecting pouch young and be aware of ways to reduce the stress of these species. This knowledge may be gained through sufficient field experience and consultation of field guides and other literature.
<b>Animal handling and processing skills/experience required</b>	Experience handling marsupials	Personnel should be experienced in handling and restraint of species prone to ejecting pouch young. This experience is best obtained under supervision of more experienced personnel. In applications, provide details on experience relating to the expected species or species groups.
	Experience managing disease risk in wildlife management	Personnel should be familiar with hygiene procedures. This knowledge may be gained through sufficient field experience and consultation of literature.

In conjunction with possessing the required understanding and knowledge of ejected pouch young management procedures and animal welfare requirements, a guide to the experience

and skill requirements for an animal handler to be considered competent to manage ejected pouch young is as follows: (noting that some personnel with experience may still require initial supervision in unfamiliar locations or with species that they have not encountered previously):

- Minimum 30 individuals of similar species handled.
- Minimum 6 successful joey interventions (taping of pouch young and soft release).
- Recency of time in field: within the past 5 years.

## 7 Approvals

In Western Australia any person using animals for scientific purposes must be covered by a licence issued under the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*, which is administered by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

Projects involving wildlife may also require a licence/authorisation under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (examples below). Personnel should consult the department's Wildlife Licensing Section for further guidance. It is your responsibility to ensure you comply with the requirements of all applicable legislation.

- Fauna taking (scientific or other purposes) licence (Reg 25)
- Fauna taking (biological assessment) licence (Reg 27)
- Fauna taking (relocation) licence (Reg 28)
- Section 40 Ministerial Authorisation to take or disturb threatened species

If a pouch young is taken into care, the rehabilitator must comply with the requirements of Regulation 35 of the Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018.

## 8 Occupational Health and Safety

The following departmental SOPs for wildlife survey and monitoring activities are relevant to occupational health and safety:

- SOP *Managing Disease Risk and Biosecurity in Wildlife Management*
- SOP *Hand Restraint of Wildlife*

Departmental personnel, contractors and volunteers have duties and responsibilities under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* and Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 to ensure the health and safety of all involved. Fieldwork is to be undertaken in line with the department's corporate guidelines, policies and standard operating procedures, including but not limited to, risk management and job safety analyses. Further information can be found at

<https://dpaw.sharepoint.com/Divisions/corporate/people-services/HS/SitePages/SOPs.aspx>

If department personnel or volunteers are injured, please refer to the departmental Health, Safety and Wellbeing Section's 'Reporting Hazards, Near-misses and Incidents' intranet page, which can be found at

<https://dpaw.sharepoint.com/Divisions/corporate/people-services/HS/SitePages/Reporting-Hazards,-Near-Misses-and-Incidents.aspx>

## 9 Further Reading

The following SOPs have been mentioned in this advice and it is recommended that they are consulted when proposing to handle and restrain animals using soft containment:

- Department SOP *First Aid for Animals*
- Department SOP *Managing Disease Risk and Biosecurity in Wildlife Management*
- Department SOP *Euthanasia of Animals Under Field Conditions*

For further advice refer also to:

National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes*, 8th edition. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council.

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (2019) *Code of Practice for Wildlife Rehabilitation in Western Australia*, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Perth. [Code of Practice for Wildlife Rehabilitation in Western Australia \(dpaw.wa.gov.au\)](https://dpaw.wa.gov.au)

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (2020). Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines – Making decisions on the fate of rehabilitated fauna. [Wildlife Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines - Making decisions on the fate of rehabilitated fauna \(dpaw.wa.gov.au\)](https://dpaw.wa.gov.au)

## 10 Glossary of Terms

**Animal handler:** A person listed on an application to the department's Animal Ethics Committee who will be responsible for handling animals during the project.

**Joey:** A dependant juvenile marsupial encompassing both 'pouch young' and 'young-at-heel'.

**Pouch young:** Offspring of a marsupial residing within the mother's pouch.

**Soft release:** Procedure where an animal is left inside an open bag to self-release.

**Taping:** Procedure where a pouch young is returned to its mother's pouch and adhesive tape applied to the opening to temporarily prevent the mother ejecting the young.

**Young-at-heel:** A fully developed and furred dependant offspring living outside the pouch but still drinking its mother's milk.