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# Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation in the UK

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# Introduction – What is Wildlife Rescue?

Wildlife rescue and rehabilitation is the **treatment and care** of injured, orphaned, or ill wild animals, with the aim to eventually **release them** back into the wild.

Many rescue centres also run an **ambulance service** and attend call-outs to animals in distress.



# Introduction – What is Wildlife Rescue?

There are many reasons why wild animals need rescuing. Sadly most admissions are the result of **human activity**.

Wildlife Rescue can be broken down into three broad categories:

- > **Orphans**
- > **Injuries**
- > **Illness**



# Wildlife Orphans



# Wildlife Injuries



# Wildlife Illness





Wildlife rescue is not regulated in the UK, as it is in the USA and Australia. This means rescue organisations come and go frequently, and are not listed on an official registry.

There are around 500 individual wildlife rescue organisations across the UK – including four purpose built RSPCA wildlife hospitals.

# What Does a Wildlife Rehabilitator Do?

When an animal is admitted for rehabilitation a wildlife rehabilitator will **determine the extent of the injury or illness** and the probability of successful rehabilitation. If it appears that the animal can make a recovery and return to the wild, the animal will be **medically taken care of**. A wildlife rehabilitator needs to understand basic anatomy and physiology, natural history, behavioural issues, nutritional requirements, and how to safely handle and restrain the animals in their care.



# Different Types of Rescue Organisations

## **Wildlife Hospitals;**

Main focus is on the rescue and medical treatment of wild animals, with the goal of re-releasing them.

## **Wildlife Sanctuaries;**

Main focus is on the rescue and housing of wild, and often domestic animals, with the goal of providing permanent accommodation if they cannot be re-released.

## **Specialist Carers;**

Main focus is on the rescue and care of a specific species of wild animal eg. Bats, Foxes, Hedgehogs

# Wildlife Rescue as a Career

Positions in this field are available both on a volunteer and salaried basis.



Most wildlife rescue centres in the UK (and internationally) are run on a voluntary basis; often from people's own homes



# Salaried Positions

1. **Veterinary Surgeons** can find paid positions in large wildlife hospitals, or exotic veterinary practices
2. **Veterinary Nurses** can find paid positions in large wildlife hospitals, or exotic veterinary practices
3. **Zoologists** often work in conjunction with wildlife rescues, carrying out research.
4. Some wildlife rescue centres offer seasonal positions to **Wildlife Care Assistants**
5. **RSPCA** Collection Officers and Inspectors often work with wildlife rescues

# Voluntary Positions

1. Many wildlife rescues require volunteers to help with the **day to day running** of the rescue centre.
2. **Rescue drivers** work with rescue centres, collecting and transporting animals.
3. **Fundraisers** are vital to the continuation of the work carried out by wildlife rescue centres.
4. Organisations such as the Hedgehog Preservation Society need **carers** for individual species
5. Some rescue centres require **foster carers** for orphaned animals in the spring and summer





# Why Pursue a Career in Wildlife Rescue

- Day to day work is **varied**
- Continued learning and development
  - **Opportunities** to work within multidisciplinary team
- The **privilege** of working with animals that are rarely seen in other professions
- Rewarding to **release animals** back into the wild

# Education

There is only one **degree** in the UK dedicated to the rehabilitation of native British animals. Kendal College in Cumbria announced that they would be hosting this brand new degree from Autumn 2017.

There are multiple **online courses** and **diplomas** that teach the basics of wildlife rescue.

Many wildlife rescue centres in the UK host hands-on **educational courses** for beginners, and courses on rehabilitating individual species, such as hedgehogs, and bats.



The best  
education in  
wildlife  
rescue comes  
from hands-  
on volunteer  
experience

# International Wildlife Rehabilitation Opportunities

There are many countries in Europe, Africa, Australasia, and North and South America with established wildlife rescue and conservation programmes.

Many organisations have career opportunities for rehabilitators, wildlife carers, zoologists, vets, and veterinary nurses.



Check out the  
International  
Wildlife  
Rehabilitation  
Council for further  
information:

[www.theiwrc.org](http://www.theiwrc.org)

# Conclusions

- Wildlife Rescue is a wide and **varied** career.
- There are numerous **different career options** to work with wildlife in the UK and Internationally.
- Wildlife Rescue is **incredibly rewarding**, but requires an enormous amount of dedication and **passion**.





**Thank you!**  
**Any Questions?**



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