

THE ROLE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE IN WILDLIFE REHABILITATION WORLDWIDE

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The increased role of human activity is creating new and growing conservation problems and new diseases that affect the long-term survival of endangered free-range and captive species, as well as dangerous impacts on ecosystems and human health. Veterinarians not only have extensive education in comparative medicine (rather than focusing on a single species), but are also highly trained in recognizing, diagnosing, and understanding the impact of diseases on public health, as well as individuals, populations, and entire ecosystems. Their skills and experience make them valuable key players in the planning, implementation and effective promotion of projects which imply both the technique of conservation of all levels of biological diversity outside their natural habitats through different techniques like zoo, captive breeding, aquarium, botanical garden, and gene bank and the technique of conservation of a species in its natural habitat and the maintenance and recovery of viable population of species in their original place. In parks and zoological gardens, priority is now given to the main goals: the conservation of the world's fauna and flora and the protection of animal welfare. Today, animal welfare can be scientifically assessed to determine the quality of life of humans, in which behavioral assessment and behavioral enrichment are the main tools [1].

Wildlife rehabilitators provide a number of important services in their communities. Wildlife rehabilitation can improve the welfare of hundreds, thousands of animals, and in larger centers up to ten thousand animals a year. Due to very strict release criteria and the progressive nature of many of the diseases and injuries seen in rehab centers, more than half of the animals admitted to rehab centers are not released. Humane euthanasia of animals unsuitable for release may have the greatest impact on the welfare of individual animals. Without this service, severely ill animals will experience prolonged suffering and eventually death in the wild or at the hands of humans. Removing wild animals from common use not only improves their well-being, but can also have a positive impact on public health. Without the presence of licensed wildlife treatment centers, many well-meaning but unprepared citizens would attempt to care for wild animals in their own homes, potentially resulting in injury to the public, transmission of zoonotic diseases, or transmission of infectious diseases to and from pets. Wildlife centers also play an important role in educating the public about the importance of conservation and how to coexist peacefully with their wild neighbors. They can also contain vast amounts of data that can contribute to biological and veterinary research. Wildlife rehabilitators are often the first to spot infectious disease outbreaks or toxins affecting wild populations and can alert governments and regulators. Veterinarians can make a great contribution to this area, as well as learn a lot through collaboration with rehabilitators, biologists and those who can teach how the natural environment functions, and in particular how people can manage their behavior and ecosystems in order to live well.

Referințe

1. MULLINEAUX E. *Veterinary treatment and rehabilitation of indigenous wildlife*. In: Journal of Small Animal Practice (2014) 55, 293–300. Disponibil: **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**