



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office
MIMAROPA Region

Bgy. Sta. Monica, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan

E-mail: penropalawan@denr.gov.ph

Telfax No. (048) 433-5638 / (048) 433-5638

RED

May 26, 2023
DENR MIMAROPA
RECORDS SECTION
RECEIVED

JUN 09 2023

☐ INCOMING ☐ OUTGOING
BY: _____ DATE: _____
TIME: _____

MEMORANDUM

FOR : The Regional Executive Director
DENR MIMAROPA
1515 DENR By the Bay Bldg., Roxas Boulevard,
Barangay 668, Ermita, Manila

THRU : The OIC, ARD for Technical Services


FROM : The Provincial Environment and
Natural Resources Officer

SUBJECT : **MANUAL FOR MANAGEMENT OF CONFISCATED AND
RESCUED WILDLIFE IN PALAWAN (1ST INSTALLMENT:
CAVITY NESTERS)**


Furnished is a copy of the comprehensive manual for the management of confiscated and rescued wildlife in Palawan covering its first chapter on cavity-nesters from the Katala Foundation Incorporated. This manual conceived as invaluable resource for law enforcers and wildlife managers in Palawan to establish best practices in handling of rescued animals towards the conservation and protection of all wildlife.

For information and record.

“For the PENRO”


WAMALAYDA S. TALABUCON
OIC, Chief, MSD/Chief, Planning Section
In-Charge, Office of the PENRO



DENR-PALAWAN
PENRO-RECORDS
RELEASED
By: 
Date: 30 MAY 2023 23-1545

KATALA Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 390
5300 Puerto Princesa City
Palawan, Philippines




Phone/Fax: +63 48 434 7693
kficacatua2016@gmail.com
www.philippinecockatoo.org

19 May 2023

PENRO FELIZARDO B. CAYATOC
DENR PENRO
Puerto Princesa City

**DENR PENRO
PALAWAN RECORDS
RECEIVED**

BY: 
DATE: 15-2-2023 DN 234644

Re: Manual for Management of Confiscated and Rescued Wildlife in Palawan (1st installment: Cavity-nesters)

Dear PENRO Cayatoc:

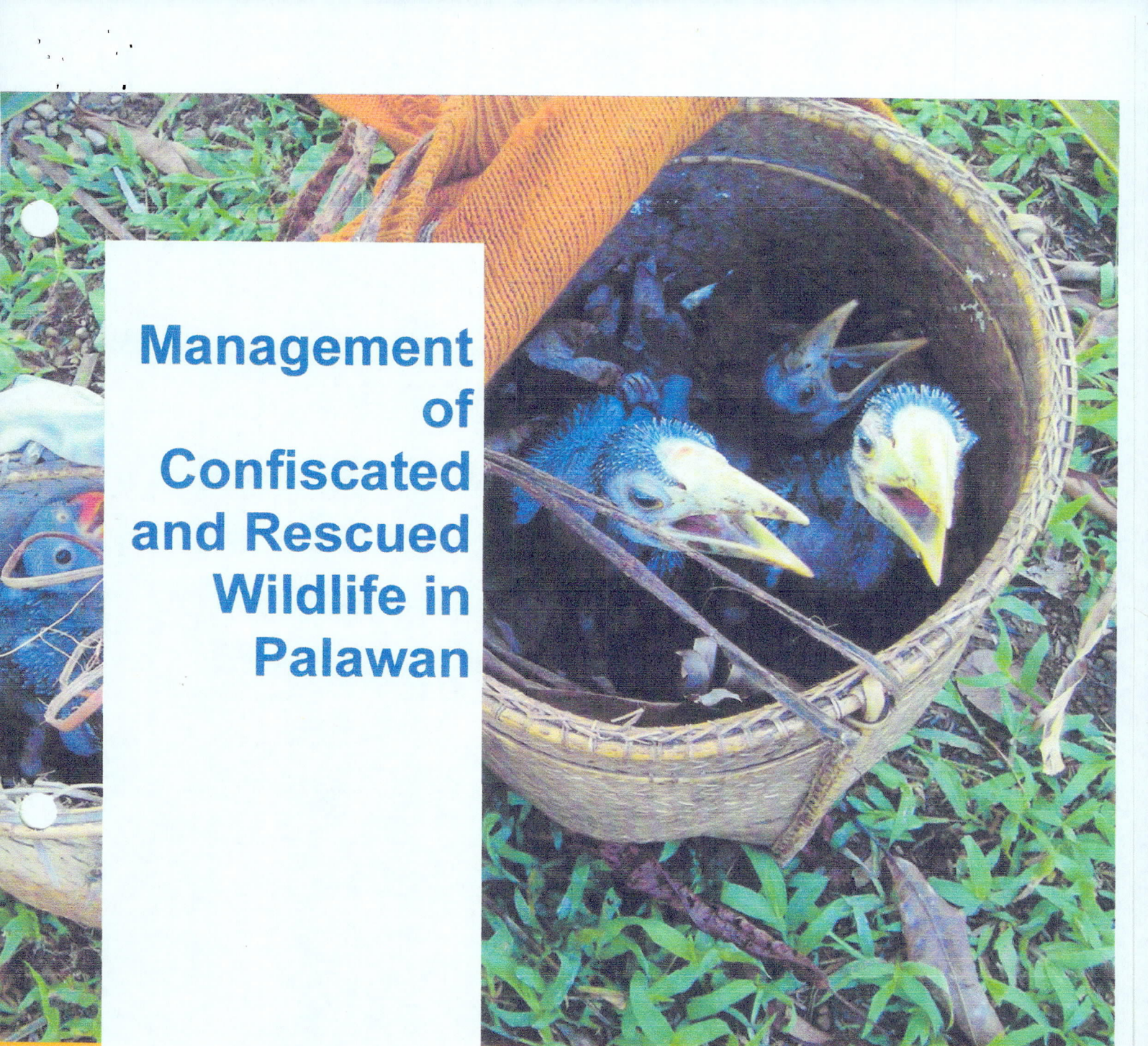
We are pleased to present the comprehensive manual for the management of confiscated and rescued wildlife in Palawan with its first chapter on cavity-nesters. This invaluable resource is the culmination of extensive collaboration among various agencies and organizations, all striving to establish best practices for the handling and care of cavity-nesting birds in Palawan, Philippines. While the initial focus of the manual was on cavity-nesting birds, as discussed in a forum conducted last March 2021 and attended by 39 participants in various agencies and organizations, we have expanded its scope to encompass all wildlife species in need of proper management in Palawan. We look forward that we can pursue the updating of this manual to include other species needing attention and concern pertinent to confiscation and rescue.

We have conceived this manual for law enforcers and wildlife managers in Palawan to prevent or reduce the suffering of rescued animals, safeguard safety of personnel and the general public, prevent damage to natural wildlife populations and their habitat, and ideally effect positive conservation outcomes of the process. We hope that you will find this manual invaluable in your work towards the conservation and protection of all wildlife.

For queries/concerns about this activity, kindly coordinate with the undersigned at email add idlacerna@gmail.com/ kficacatua2016@gmail.com or tel/cel no. 4347693 / 09063764912.

Best regards,


INDIRA DAYANG LACERNA-WIDMANN
COO, KFI



Management of Confiscated and Rescued Wildlife in Palawan

**A Manual for Law
Enforcers and
Wildlife Managers**



Management of Confiscated and Rescued Wildlife for Palawan

A Manual for Enforcers and Wildlife Managers

Peter Widmann, Indira Dayang L. Widmann, Lemuel A.
Pabico & Dr. Emilia A Lastica-Ternura (Eds., 2022),
Katala Foundation, Inc., Palawan Council for Sustainable
Development Staff, University of the Philippines Los Baños,
Puerto Princesa City and Los Baños, Philippines

Rationale

Confiscation and rescue of wild animals, often destined for the illegal pet trade, has increased in Palawan as a result of intensified poaching activities, but also more effective law enforcement operations.

Proper short-term and longer-term captive management are vital to assure minimum standards for animal welfare and are preconditions for eventual successful release. There is a wealth of experience present among practitioners within zoological and botanical gardens (Conde et al., 2013), which is only insufficiently tapped by personnel involved in wildlife confiscation, as well as operators of rescue centers.

Ideally, the successful release of rehabilitated individuals should support the protection of wild populations, but should not cause damage to such wild populations, their habitat, or the livelihood of local communities at the very least. The development and implementation of best practices in the management of confiscated and rescued wildlife requires considerable technical expertise and input, which is best provided by a pool of experts organized in a Confiscation Advisory Network, as recommended by IUCN.

The IUCN guidelines for the management of confiscated, live organisms rank " ... the prevention of species extinctions and the maintenance of healthy wild populations and biodiversity above all other criteria", and this should particularly include the assessment of "... risks both to the confiscated species, and also to any species in the wild in a potential release site" (IUCN, 2019). Information gathering and immediate management of recently acquired organisms play a particularly important role in the process. Whereas the IUCN guidelines do not consider "immediate release" as a viable management option for confiscated wildlife, there is a limited justifiable cause, particularly for certain types of wildlife rescue, or confiscations of wildlife within their original habitat in certain limited cases. Under no circumstances this should be pursued, if there is the slightest chance of endangering wild populations, for example through the introduction of diseases, or by causing other disruptions.

Many rescues of wildlife are done by the general public, and there needs to be a system where quick and reliable information is available for these cases. Information campaigns for animal rescue etiquette, legal aspects, risks, and procedures are also desirable.

How to use this manual

This manual aims to provide consistent and best-practice guidance for law enforcers and other parties involved in the rescue/confiscation of wildlife and its follow-up management. The main objectives of the guidelines are to prevent or reduce the suffering of involved animals, safeguard safety of personnel and the general public, prevent damage to natural wildlife populations and their habitat, and ideally effect positive conservation outcomes of the process.

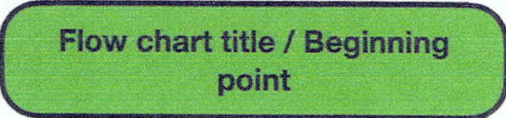
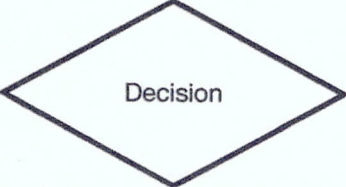


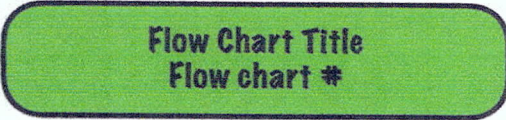
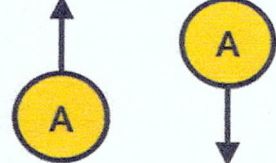
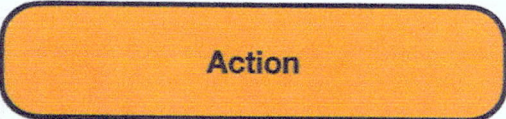
This is achieved by running through checklists and/or flowcharts;

- directly after acquisition of the wildlife
- after arrival at the rescue center
- for the longer-term management of wildlife (release, captive management, conservation breeding, etc.).

A core publication on the topic for further information is the IUCN guidelines on the management of confiscated, live organisms (IUCN, 2019).

Background: The Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS) partnering with Katala Foundation Inc. (KFI) hosted the first forum for best-practice procedures for management of confiscated and rescued cavity-nesting birds in Palawan, Philippines on 23-24 March, 2021 via Zoom Meet. Thirty-nine participants from various sectors such as the academe, government agencies, non-government, and private organizations attended the forum. The forum was initiated to develop best-practice procedures to be implemented by PCSDS, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and other concerned stakeholders for the Palawan setting, including rescue, captive management and release of cavity-nesting birds. The flow charts however are formulated in a way that they are applicable to a wide array of rescued or confiscated wildlife.

Protocol Legends

	<p>Shows the beginning of the protocol flow chart, and starts the flow of decisions and actions under each portion of the protocol</p>
	<p>Represents a question in which there are two or three alternatives. In this protocol, only two alternatives are presented</p>
 	<p>Represents a yes answer to a decision</p> <p>Represents a no answer to a decision</p>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Checklist <input type="checkbox"/> Conditions that need to be met </div>	<p>This symbol can either be criteria, checklist, or conditions that need to be met to determine the answer to a decision. For all "YES" decisions, all boxes needs to be checked; for all "NO" decisions, at least one box needs to be ticked.</p>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #FFDAB9;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Forms <input type="checkbox"/> Data <input type="checkbox"/> Information needed </div>	<p>Forms/Data/Information checklist. Shows which forms are needed to be accomplished, or data needed for this part of the protocol.</p>
	<p>Indicates next flowchart to follow: contains the flow chart title and flow chart number. Color coded to indicate the flow chart starting point.</p>
	<p>Indicates next flowchart to follow: contains the flow chart title and flow chart number. Color coded to indicate the flow chart starting point.</p>
	<p>Next steps to take within the protocol</p>

Flow Chart 1. First Response

Animal arrives /Animal is found

Inform the Wildlife Rescue Advisory Network (WRAN)

Is the animal alive?



- ☐ Lack of heartbeat
- ☐ Dilated pupils
- ☐ Agonal gasping
- ☐ No breathing, no reflexes
- ☐ Glazed corneas

Carcass processing
Flow chart 6



- ☐ With heartbeat
- ☐ With pupillary response
- ☐ Breathing
- ☐ Responsive



Is the animal responsive?



- ☐ Very weak/moribund
- ☐ Unable to eat / drink on its own
- ☐ Animal is juvenile/very young
- ☐ Animal is pregnant/gravid
- ☐ Animal appears unhealthy
- ☐ Animal has wounds, sores or parasites

Clinical
assessment
Flow Chart 2

- ☐ Fights back
- ☐ Eyes bright
- ☐ Mobile
- ☐ Able to eat /drink on its own



Was the animal acquired within 12 hours or less?



- ☐ Had contact with other animals
- ☐ Transported in a closed vehicle
- ☐ Retrieved from human homes
- ☐ Animal is exotic
- ☐ Animal was acquired outside its natural range
- ☐ Animal cannot be identified
- ☐ Animal has behavioral anomalies
- ☐ Animal is tame

- ☐ Did not have contact with other animals (wild or domestic)
- ☐ Not transported from retrieval site
- ☐ Retrieved from the habitat
- ☐ Animal can be monitored for 12-24 hours
- ☐ Animal can be released in original habitat

- ☐ Fill up animal acquisition form (Form 1)
- ☐ Collect samples (Checklist 2)
- ☐ Take photos (Checklist 3)

Release

Checklist: management and information gathering immediately after acquisition of live organism

- Ensure that the individual is safe and secure, and that any suffering has been alleviated as much as possible.
- Assess if the individual is injured or unhealthy. Conduct initial health and behavioral check.
- Conduct First Aid and initial health treatment, if necessary.
- Identify species/subspecies.
- Assess if acquisition happened within the natural range of the species.
- Assess the circumstances of acquisition: rescued, confiscated, abandoned, turned over, or donated.
- Assess the duration and circumstances in human care (hours, days, years, conditions of transport, captive management).
- Document the acquisition (in addition to the information above, also record date, location, name of the recorder, no. of individuals, gender, per species, status: immature, juvenile, adult, pregnant/gravid, supporting/feeding young, in heat, tame, otherwise dependent, shows abnormal behavior, other than caused by stress alone).
- Document information needed for legal purposes (personal data and statements of suspects, witnesses, description of acquisition, description, and confiscation of accessories, etc.)
- Photo-document the acquired individual, and take measurements only if the status of the individual allows.
- Collect, label, and preserve fecal, blood, (dead) tissue, cloacal and pharyngeal swabs, and ectoparasites, if applicable.
- Inform and consult the Wildlife Rescue Advisory Network (WRAN).

Immediate Release:

- Immediate release options are taxon-specific (e.g. large marine mammals, sharks, rays virtually always, juvenile cavity nesters never).
- Additional rehab procedures are formulated for certain taxa which currently cannot be kept in rescue centers in Palawan, e.g. marine turtles, and marine mammals.
- The time window for immediate release (e.g. for cavity-nesting birds) is very short: usually hours, not days!
- No release under any circumstances if sickness cannot be ruled out!
- The closer to the place of origin, the better (Release in original habitat).
- Individuals to be immediately released should be fit, health is only ONE aspect of this! The definition of fitness should be taxon-specific.
- The decision to release/not to release is often done by laypeople, therefore needs to be communicated well.
- Public information (inform public when rescue is not needed, "wildlife in cities").
- Networking and consultation of Wildlife Rescue Advisory Network.

Immediate Release: information needs

- Species/subspecies id
- Health exam: physical, complete blood count, parasites, (species-specific list of parasite load that triggers quarantine): minimum lab equipment and expertise in field offices.
- Sampling before release (blood; swabs, feces, down feathers; legal considerations to take and store samples)
- IUCN status
- Are the animals uninjured, healthy, independent, and otherwise fit?
- Circumstances of acquisition (confiscated, rescued, ...)
- How long have they been removed from the wild? Hours or days?
- Was there any potential exposure to disease (domestic animals, vehicles, transport containers?)
- Will the immediate release cause adverse effects on released organisms, wild populations, the ecosystem, human populations, or property?
- Can it be released in place of origin?
- Are the individuals needed as court evidence? What information needs to be collected and procedures followed if animals are released on the spot?

Cavity-nesting birds: initial management

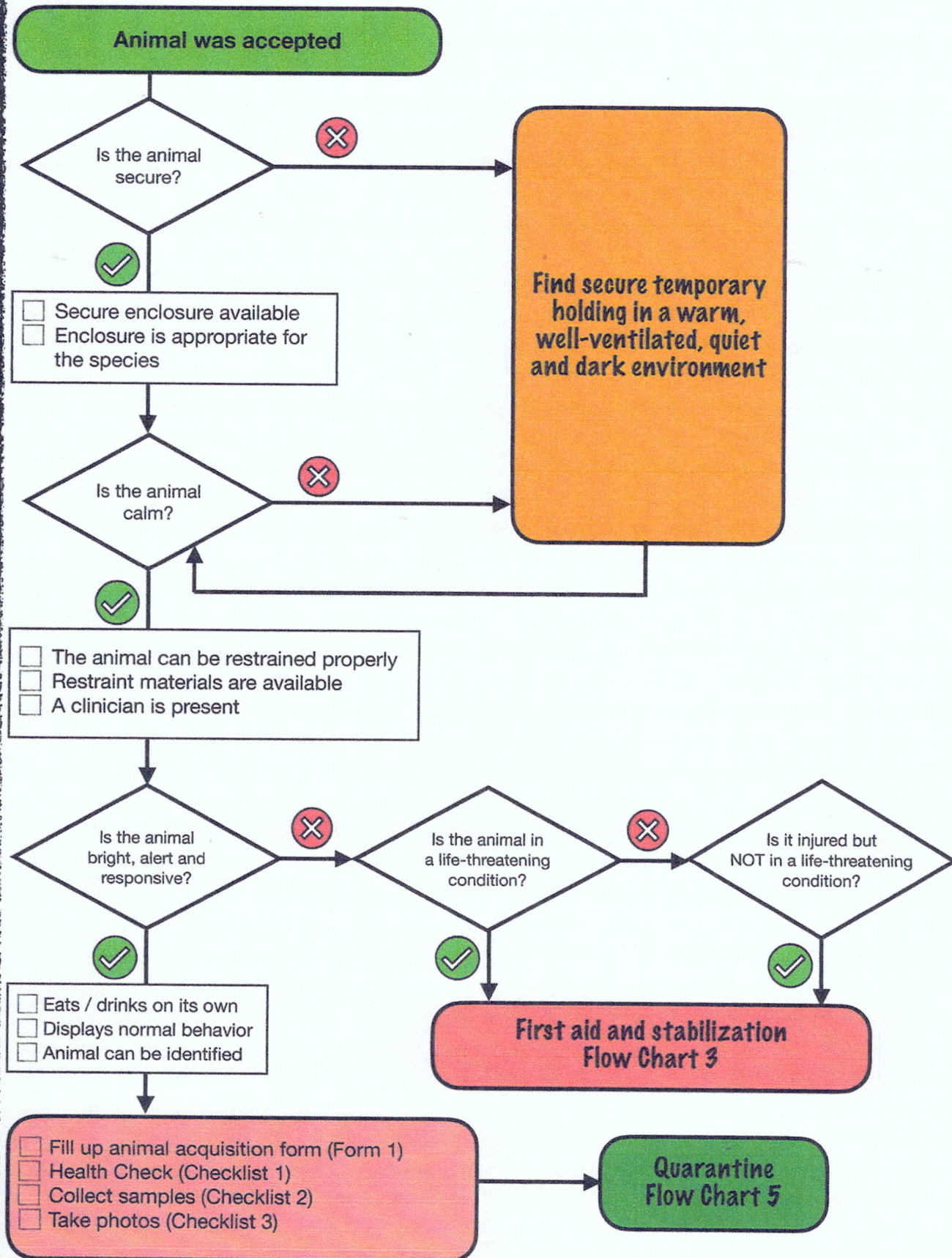
The window for immediate release of cavity-nesting birds after rescue or confiscation is very narrow. This is because the potential of introducing diseases into existing wild bird populations is high compared to other wildlife groups (Sanchez et al., 2016). Birds, and particularly cavity nesters, are prone to a high number of infectious diseases and parasites, which also are partly transmissible between and among poultry and occasionally even humans (Ramey et al., 2022; Wallensten, 2009). Competition among cavity-nesting birds is usually high (particularly when it comes to nest sites) (Brightsmith, 2005).

Most cavity nesters have extended parental care, well beyond the fledging age (Martin and Li, 1992). Immature birds therefore are dependent on parents (or sometimes flock mates) for weeks or even years. Such birds therefore should not be considered for immediate release. All releases should only be attempted by persons very familiar with the ecology of the species in question, and follow-up monitoring must be attempted. Immediately rescued birds that got disoriented ended up in buildings, or bumped against glass windows, are sometimes suitable for immediate release, if the bird is not injured (usually after being given the chance to calm down in a cool dark place, e.g. inside a carton). Many birds, including some cavity nesters, sometimes get entangled in fishing nets, wires, or (plastic) trash). If they are not too exhausted and uninjured, they could be candidates for immediate release.

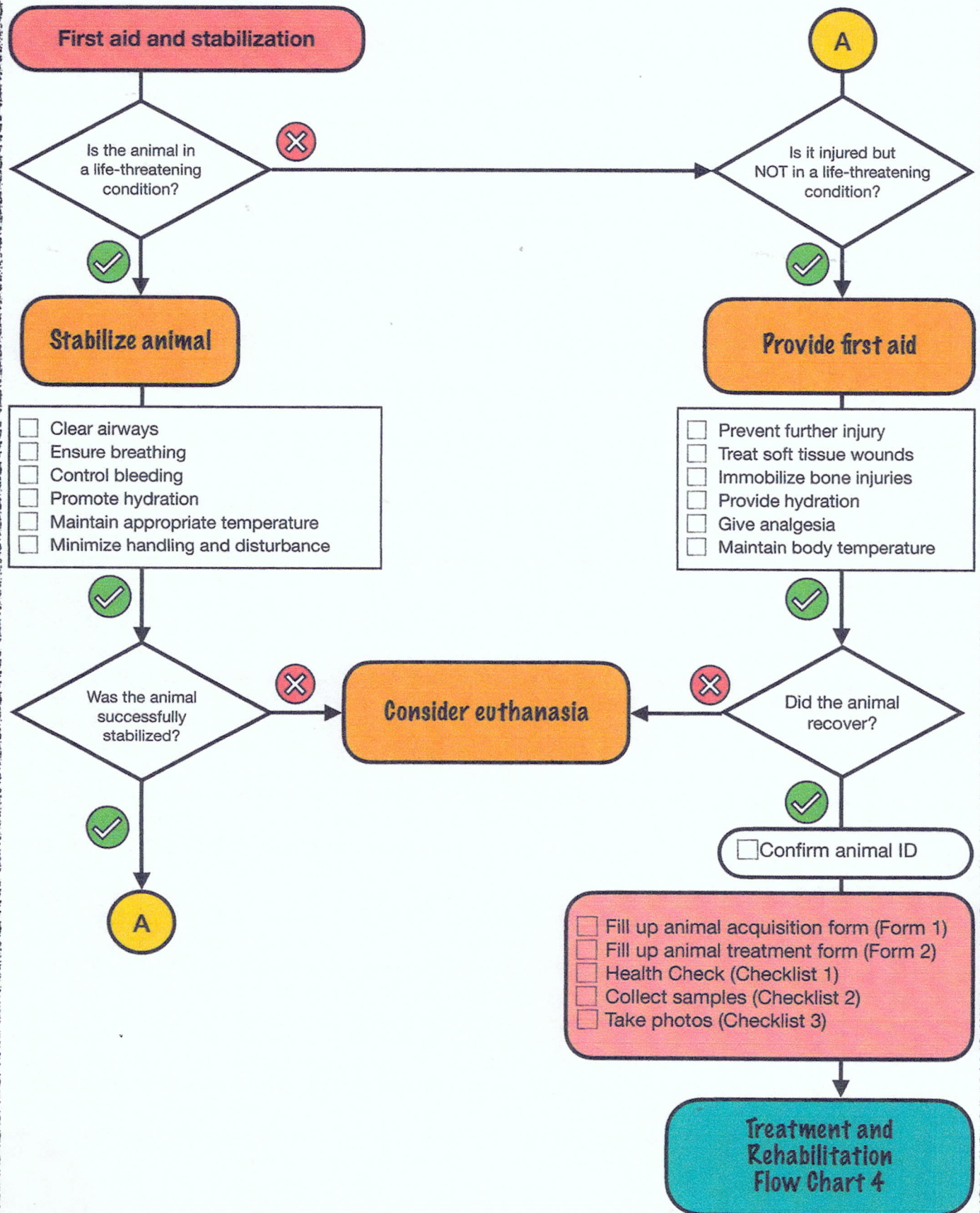
If birds are confiscated by patrols from poachers within their habitats and shortly after the poaching event, they could be released, if they are otherwise fit.

In almost all other circumstances, birds are NOT suitable for immediate release and should be handed over to rescue centers for proper management. Particularly, if they are confiscated from houses, closed vehicles, or as a batch of other captured wildlife from different origins, they are not suitable anymore for immediate release, since the possibility of spreading diseases into wild populations cannot be ruled out anymore.

Flow Chart 2. Clinical Assessment



Flow Chart 3. First aid and stabilization

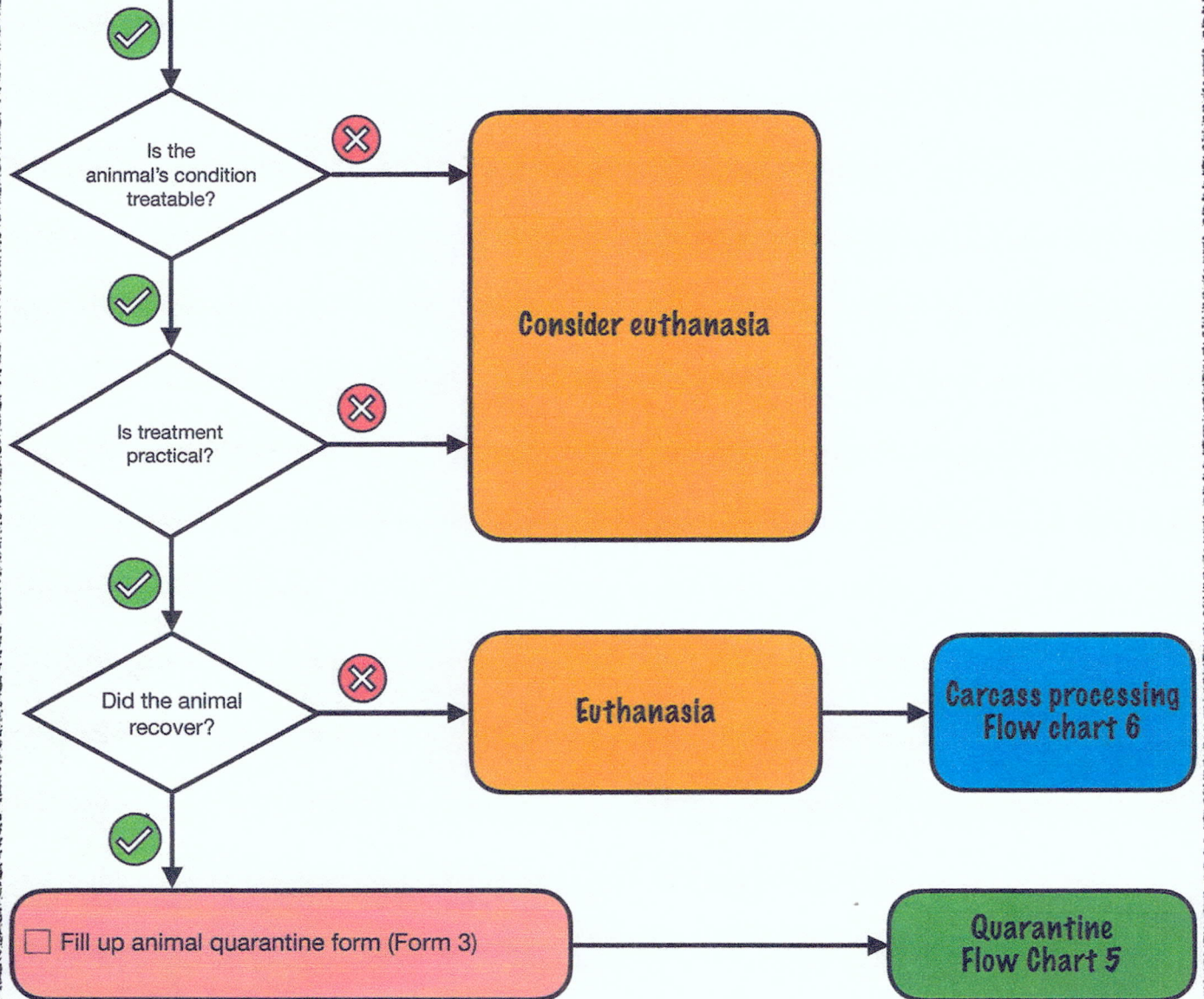


Flow Chart 4. Treatment and rehabilitation

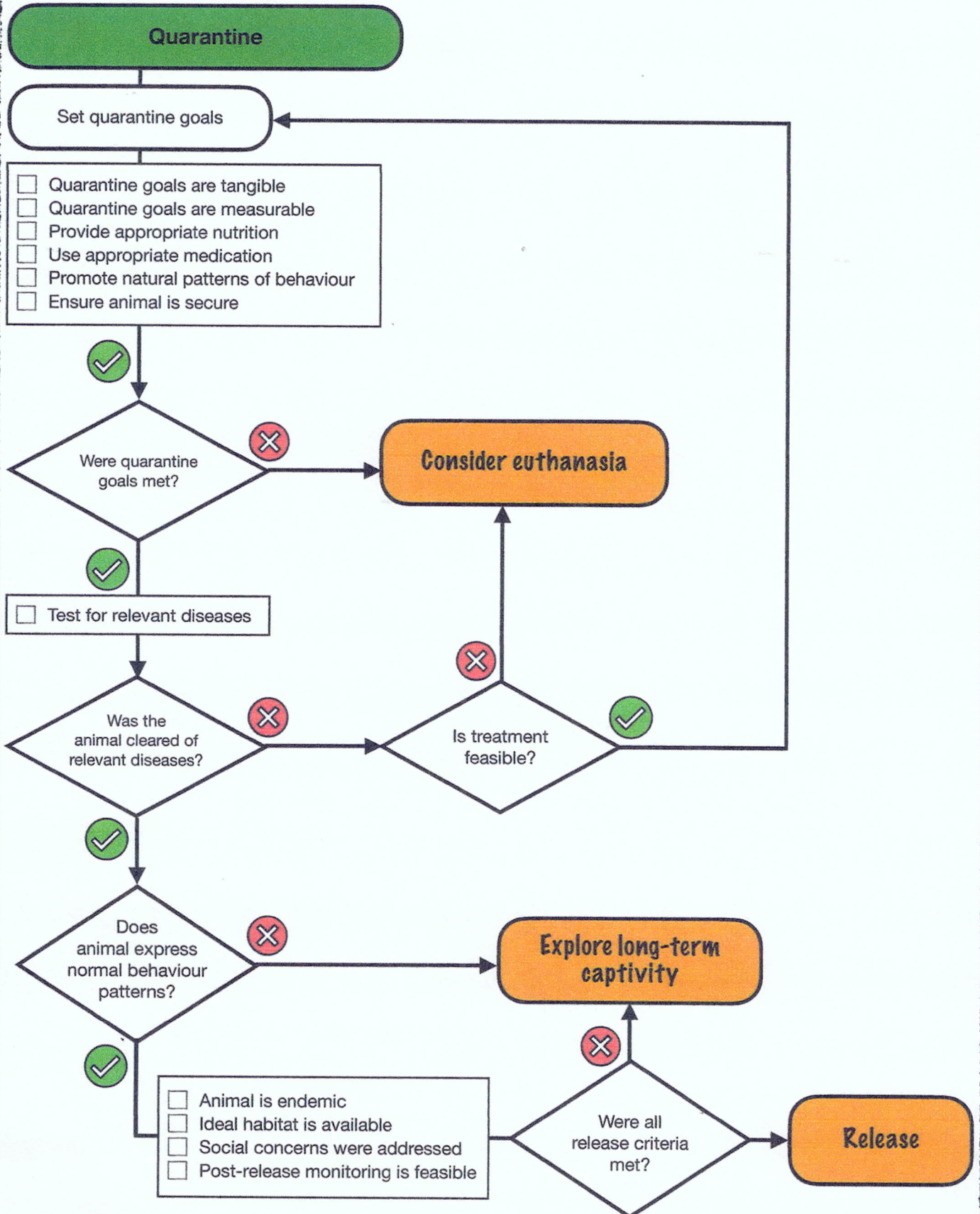
Treatment and rehabilitation

Set treatment goals

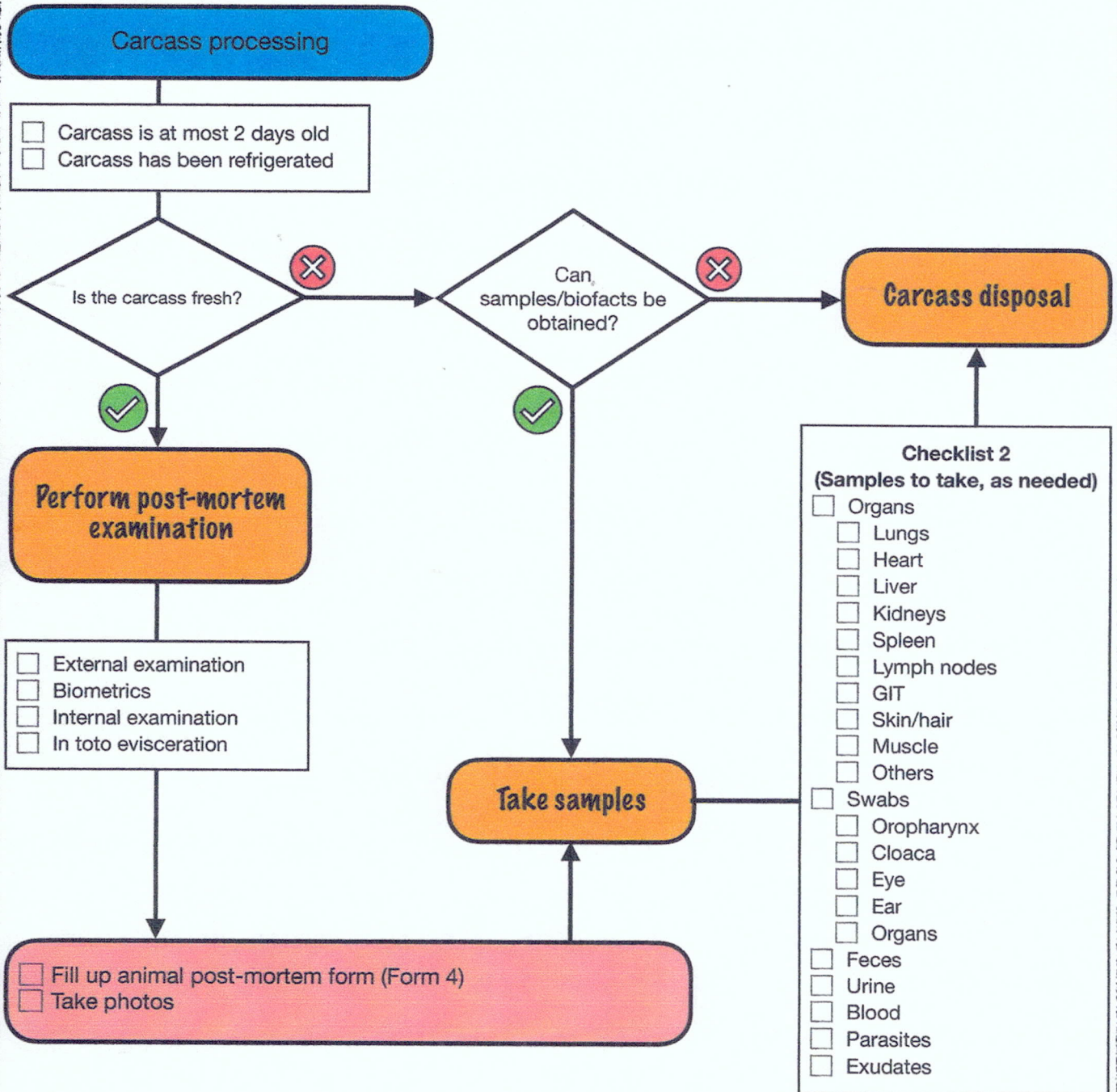
- ☐ Treatment goals are tangible
- ☐ Treatment is measurable
- ☐ Provide appropriate nutrition
- ☐ Use appropriate medication
- ☐ Prevent stereotypic behaviour
- ☐ Ensure animal is secure



Flow Chart 5. Quarantine



Flow Chart 6. Carcass Processing



Checklist: management and information gathering after arrival in the rescue center

All wildlife arriving in the rescue center needs to be placed in obligatory quarantine, or into hospital if injured or sick, with quarantine afterward. The duration of quarantine is taxon-specific. Under no circumstances new arrivals should immediately be integrated into existing stock within the facility. Initial management and information gathering will inform the follow-up management options for rescued and confiscated wildlife which includes repatriation, release (which then needs to be considered a translocation and needs to follow the respective IUCN guidelines), longer-term captive management (within the facility, or through breeding loans in other monitored facilities), or euthanasia. Another option, which however needs very careful assessment, is the transfer of the wildlife into the legal wildlife trade.

- Ensure that the individual is safe and secure, and that any suffering has been alleviated as much as possible.
- Reassess and validate steps taken and information gathered immediately after the acquisition of wildlife, particularly species/subspecies identification and related information (legal and red-list status, natural range, etc.).
- Conduct thorough health checks (taxon-specific), and initiate necessary treatment, including treatment against parasites and transmittable diseases.
- Collect, label, and store tissue, feces, and parasite samples, if applicable.
- Consult with the RWAN on captive management, if necessary.

Checklist: management of wildlife originating from Palawan

- All releases of wildlife after quarantine and other extended human care need to be treated as a translocation and follow the IUCN guidelines (IUCN/SSC, 2013).
- It is assumed that the wildlife has undergone quarantine and the minimum of taxon-specific health checks.
- Species/subspecies identification is available, as well as information with regards to the respective natural range, red list (IUCN, PCSD), and legal status (PCSD, DENR) of the species/subspecies.
- Information on ownership, legality, and possible evidence for court cases and legal procedures is available.
- Information on ongoing conservation measures on the taxon in-situ Palawan and ex-situ is available.
- An assessment of available resources for the further management of wildlife is available.
- Beyond the health status, information on the fitness of wildlife is available for each individual, particularly concerning age, reproductive stage, behavior, skill sets needed for survival in the wild, tameness or imprinting, and morphological abnormalities.
- Information on the origin of the wildlife within Palawan is available, and suitable habitats for release have been preliminarily identified and assessed against a taxon-specific list of criteria.

Cavity nesting birds: after arrival in the rescue center

Birds in general are more prone to succumb to stress than most mammals or reptiles, for example. Particular care, therefore, needs to be taken to administer first aid and stabilization of each bird, since these are often immune-compromised. This can be particularly challenging since many cavity-nesting birds are often confiscated in large numbers, particularly Asian Hill Mynas and Blue-naped Parrots.

- Birds need to be separated by species, age, and health condition.
- Great care needs to be taken so that individual enclosures are not overcrowded since this leads to aggression, and stress and may lead to the spread of diseases.
- Cavity nesters are often poached at a young age. Possibly some are not able to feed themselves and need to be handfed. Handfeeding formula (e.g. for "softbills" and parrots should be purchased ahead and can be frozen until needed in suitable amounts).
- Since treatment usually needs to be specific for a bird, individual marking needs to be applied (leg bands, microchips, etc.) and exact and individual recordkeeping is needed.
- Particularly if later release is intended, birds should be kept away from visitors or other avoidable human interaction. Blinds, one-way mirrors, etc. may be necessary particularly for (hand)feeding of nestling parrots and starlings to avoid undue tameness or even imprinting on humans.
- There is a lot of experience in captive management particularly for parrots and starlings, which are often kept in captivity. Lots can be found online or in birdkeeping publications.
- Information on the rehabilitation of more specialized cavity nesters (e.g. owls, woodpeckers, rollers) can be found on websites of wildlife rescue centers or specialized literature (Gage and Duerr, 2007).

Indications for long-term captive management

- Insufficient information is available to allow translocation to go ahead, for example, unclear species identity, disease risk, etc.
- The age or life stage of the individual, or other reasons, indicates that it lacks the skills necessary for survival in the wild.
- There are concerns about the physical or psychological health of the individual.
- The ecological needs of the species to which the individual belongs (e.g., habitat requirements, carrying capacity limits, etc.) make translocation difficult.
- The social/behavioral needs of the species to which the individual belongs (e.g., age structure, sex ratios, social structure, etc.) make translocation difficult.
- There is a lack of resources available for a release program.
- There is a lack of available habitat.
- The individual(s) is/are not representative of wild forms (e.g., hybrids, non-wild color morphs, etc.).
- Permit requirements and/or delays in permissions from relevant government agencies make translocations problematic.
- Immediate threats to the survival of the species (such as hunting, or human/wildlife conflicts causing individuals of the species to be regarded as 'pests').
- There is a health risk for other species, or there is a public health concern.

Long-term captive management: information needs

- Guiding question: Is long-term captive management the best option versus all other management options?
- Is there existing information on the captive management of the species?
- Are the requirements of the species (or closely related ones) regarding housing, feeding, behavioral enrichment, vet med., disease prevention, security for keepers, etc. known? What are they?
- Are resources available for long-time management? Are these resources diminishing resources for more important conservation measures?
- Is there an existing conservation breeding program (threatened species? Flagship?)?
- Is there potential for education use?
- Is there scientific interest in the species justifying *ex-situ* management? Can captive management inform conservation issues?
- Are there animal welfare issues? Can the species be maintained in long-term captivity meeting animal welfare standards?

Euthanasia

- Can only be performed by a veterinarian or under the supervision of a veterinarian.
- An animal is suffering, irretrievably sick, or without chances for successful treatment.
- Exotic invasive species, or exotic species which can cause damage to health and property.
- Only in coordination with PCSDS/DENR: animals cannot be released or repatriated and there are no feasible options and resources for long-term management.

Release after rehabilitation in the rescue center

- Poorly planned or executed releases can cause a lot of damage to individual animals (e.g. introduction of diseases, wild populations, ecosystems, property, or people).
- All releases, therefore, need to undergo an assessment following the respective IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and other Conservation Translocations (IUCN/SSC, 2013)!
- Exceptions are only the rare cases, where immediate release after an acquisition is possible (see there).
- SOME minimum requirements to be assessed in the IUCN framework include fitness of to-be-released animals (including health, genetic makeup, sufficient numbers and "supply", behavior, among others), impacts expected on local populations of the same species, on other species and the ecosystem, suitability of habitat within the natural range, legal requirements, community consent, logistical and economic feasibility.
- Releases need to have a planning, implementation, and monitoring phase, all with their own budgets. Particularly the monitoring of released animals needs to be carefully budgeted since this can last for weeks or even years.
- Some releases need extensive preparation phases, for example, to assess impacts, improve habitats, address existing threats, and so on.
- All releases need to be carefully documented so that lessons can be learned and procedures can be refined.
- Releases should have a positive conservation impact to make efficient use of scarce resources. Species of high conservation importance (for example such in high categories in the Red List) should be prioritized over unthreatened and widespread species.
- Space, budget, or time constraints in the rescue center are not good reasons to justify releases. In these cases, other long-term management options should be considered.

Key references

- Brightsmith, D.J. (2005). Competition, predation and nest niche shifts among tropical cavity nesters: ecological evidence. *Journal of Avian Biology* 36, 74-83.
- Conde, D.A., Colchero, F., Gusset, M., Pearce-Kelly, P., Byers, O., Flesness, N., Browne, R.K., and Jones, O.R. (2013). Zoos through the Lens of the IUCN Red List: A Global Metapopulation Approach to Support Conservation Breeding Programs. *PLoS ONE* 8, e80311.
- Gage, L.J., and Duerr, R.S. (2007). *Hand-rearing Birds* (Ames, Iowa, USA: Blackwell Publishing).
- IUCN (2019). Guidelines for the management for confiscated, live organisms. IUCN, ed. (Gland, Switzerland, IUCN), p. iv + 38.
- IUCN/SSC (2013). IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and other Conservation Translocations. Ver. 1.0 (Gland, Switzerland: IUCN Species Survival Commission).
- Martin, T.E., and Li, P. (1992). Life History Traits-of Open- vs. Cavity-Nesting Birds. *Ecology* 73, 579-592.
- Ramey, A.M., Hill, N.J., DeLiberto, T.J., Gibbs, S.E.J., Camille Hopkins, M., Lang, A.S., Poulson, R.L., Prosser, D.J., Sleeman, J.M., Stallknecht, D.E., *et al.* (2022). Highly pathogenic avian influenza is an emerging disease threat to wild birds in North America. *The Journal of Wildlife Management* 86.
- Sanchez, S., França, M., and Nemeth, N.M. (2016). Microbiological Hazards of Wild Birds and Free-Range Chickens. In *Food Safety Risks from Wildlife*, pp. 89-130.
- Wallensten, A. (2009). Influenza virus in wild birds and mammals other than man. *Microbial Ecology in Health and Disease* 19, 122-139.