



# Code of Ethics for Bat Rehabilitation

Amanda Lollar, Founder & President  
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## 1. **Prison or Paradise**

Bats and other wild animals do not want to be taken into captivity. Regardless of why a bat is in your care, you are its captor. You control everything about a caged bat's life, whether it has fresh water, nutritious and tasty food, enrichment, the company of its kind, and medication for ailments and pain. A barren enclosure is a prison, it leaves a caged bat nothing to look forward to and nothing to occupy its intelligent mind. As a captor, it is YOUR responsibility to create paradise for a bat that you have chosen to cage. Silk foliage, roosting pouches and fleece cloths, foam rocks and rubber netting, bark, proper floor padding and fresh food and water daily are critical items that brighten a bat's life. Enrichment also eases stress and promotes healing, resulting in a faster release time.

## 2. **Respect vs Nurturing**

Most people get involved in wildlife rehabilitation not just for the good it does for the animal but also the good it does for oneself. Providing nurture and watching an animal thrive under your care is a wonderful feeling, however, that feeling should never overpower the proper respect an animal deserves. Every captive bat deserves a peaceful existence, free from stress of being over-handled or over-bothered by constant intrusions. Provide just what they need to be happy and not what YOU need for a warm-fuzzy.

## 3. **Over-Confidence Kills**

A good wildlife rehabilitator always second-guesses his or her self and usually blames themselves over the loss of an animal. Every mistake or loss needs to be an opportunity to learn so that animal did not die in vain. Ask yourself what could have been done differently, or what did you miss? If there was nothing that could have been done, what knowledge did you gain that can be used to help the next bat? Learning from mistakes will make you a better rehabber. Being overly confident ruins your ability to learn from your mistakes and will cause more bats to die in your care.

## 4. **Know Your Limits**

Wildlife rehabilitation is time-consuming, expensive, and it requires significant space. You must be able to provide the time, housing, food, medications, veterinary care and the room it takes to properly care for bats. It also takes a tremendous amount of knowledge to properly care for one species of animal. Attempting to take on multiple species (such as bats as well as raccoons, opossums, squirrels, etc) is a recipe for disaster. Critical details will be missed and all of the animals in your care will suffer as a result. Knowing your limitations is essential to being a successful rehabilitator.