

Wildlife Welfare and Operational Ethics

Jaguar Rescue Center

1. Commitment to Ethical Wildlife Care

The Jaguar Rescue Center is dedicated to the **rescue, rehabilitation, and release of injured, orphaned, or displaced wildlife**, with a firm commitment to animal welfare, biodiversity conservation, and environmental education.

Our operations are guided by the principles and standards set forth by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación (SINAC), ensuring that every action taken reflects respect for wildlife and their ecosystems.

We pledge to:

- Safeguard the physical and psychological well-being of all animals in our care.
- Respect the intrinsic value and natural behaviors of wildlife.
- Promote conservation through science-based practices, transparency, and community engagement.
- Contribute to the protection and restoration of Costa Rica's natural heritage.
- Align our work with global conservation and welfare frameworks, including OIE, GFAS, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG 15 and SDG 17).

2. Veterinary & Scientific Oversight

All animal care protocols are developed and reviewed by **our licensed wildlife veterinarians and biologists**, ensuring they meet or exceed international standards. This includes alignment with World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS). Veterinary expertise informs rescue, rehabilitation, and release planning, ensuring decisions are science-based and welfare-first.

3. Animal Welfare Principles

The Jaguar Rescue Center adheres to the **Five Domains of Animal Welfare**, ensuring comprehensive and humane care:

1. **Nutrition** – Providing balanced, species-appropriate diets.
2. **Environment** – Maintaining safe, enriched enclosures that reflect natural habitats.
3. **Health** – Delivering preventive and responsive veterinary care.
4. **Behavior** – Encouraging natural behaviors through appropriate husbandry and minimal human interference.
5. **Mental State** – Promoting calm, comfort, and dignity in all stages of care.

These domains inform daily management, veterinary protocols, and long-term welfare planning.

4. Biosecurity & Quarantine

We apply rigorous **biosecurity and quarantine protocols**, integrating post-COVID best practices to minimize zoonotic and cross-species disease risk. Measures include:

- Health screening of incoming animals.
- Species-appropriate quarantine and isolation facilities.
- Sanitation and disinfection protocols.
- Documentation of health checks, treatments, and quarantine duration.
- Regular staff training on biosecurity compliance.

5. Rescue and Rehabilitation

- All rescues are carried out in coordination with SINAC and under proper legal permits.
- Each animal receives a thorough veterinary evaluation upon arrival.
- Individualized rehabilitation plans are developed with the objective of **successful release into suitable habitats**.
- Non-releasable animals receive permanent care in species-appropriate environments that prioritize welfare and enrichment.

6. Release and Post-Release Monitoring

- Release decisions are guided by IUCN reintroduction and translocation guidelines.
- All releases are authorized by SINAC and follow strict health and behavioral assessments.
- Where feasible, **post-release monitoring** is conducted to evaluate adaptation, survival, and ecological impact.
- Data collected contribute to international, national and regional wildlife databases to support conservation science.

7. Human–Wildlife Interaction & Ethical Tourism

- Direct contact with wildlife is strictly limited to essential veterinary and rehabilitation procedures.
- Visitors are never permitted to touch, feed, or handle animals.
- The Jaguar Rescue Center maintains a **welfare-first visitor policy** that prioritizes animal well-being over tourism or entertainment.
- Volunteer programs require structured training on animal welfare, biosecurity, and ethical conduct.

8. Ethical Research and Data Use

- All research must align with ethical standards, contribute to conservation, and respect animal welfare.
- Projects require appropriate permits and ethical review.
- Data is shared transparently with authorities, scientific networks, and conservation partners to advance national and international goals.
- The center contributes to global knowledge through partnerships with organizations, universities and other research bodies.

9. Community & Indigenous Inclusion

- The Jaguar Rescue Center engages with local and Indigenous communities to promote wildlife conservation, anti-trafficking education, and environmental stewardship.
- Educational initiatives emphasize coexistence, habitat protection, and legal frameworks.
- Inclusion and collaboration are key to sustainable conservation outcomes.

10. Training and Professional Standards

- All staff and volunteers receive comprehensive training in animal welfare, safety, ethics, legislation, and biosecurity.
- All decision-making is science-based and overseen by qualified professionals.
- The Center maintains a **zero-tolerance policy** for mistreatment, negligence, or unethical conduct.

11. Governance, Donor Accountability & Compliance

- Operations comply with national wildlife legislation and SINAC requirements.
- Accurate records are maintained for all animals, including intake, medical care, rehabilitation, release, and mortality.
- Restricted funds are tracked and reported transparently, and the Jaguar Rescue Center undergoes an **official annual financial review**.
- Governance practices align with the principles of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

12. Education, Partnerships & SDGs

- Conservation education is central to our mission, fostering respect for wildlife and ecosystem protection.
- Outreach empowers communities and visitors to become active participants in conservation.
- Partnerships with national and international networks strengthen impact, contributing directly to SDG 15 (*Life on Land*) and SDG 17 (*Partnerships for the Goals*).

13. Continuous Improvement

The Jaguar Rescue Center recognizes that ethical standards and scientific understanding evolve. We are committed to:

- Ongoing review and refinement of welfare and operational protocols.
- Integrating the latest veterinary, ecological, and regulatory findings.
- Collaborating with global partners to strengthen wildlife protection and conservation outcomes.