

# KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE



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## Policy Guidelines on Wildlife Veterinary Practice in Kenya (2018)

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Veterinary Services Division  
Directorate of Biodiversity, Research & Planning  
Kenya Wildlife Service  
P. O. Box 40241-00100  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Telephone: +254 (20) 6000800 or 6002345  
Mobile: +254 726610508/9 or 736663421  
Fax: +254 (20) 6003792  
Website: [www.kws.go.ke](http://www.kws.go.ke)  
Email: [vet@kws.go.ke](mailto:vet@kws.go.ke) , [research@kws.go.ke](mailto:research@kws.go.ke)

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION.....                          | 4  |
| 2. CONTEXT OF THE GUIDELINES .....                      | 5  |
| 3. INTERPRETATION.....                                  | 5  |
| 4. PERSONS ENTITLED TO PRACTICE.....                    | 6  |
| 5. ANNUAL LICENSE FOR NON KWS EMPLOYEES.....            | 7  |
| 6. CONDITIONS TO PRACTICE FOR NON KWS EMPLOYEES.....    | 7  |
| 7. SCOPE OF PRACTICE BY NON KWS EMPLOYEES.....          | 9  |
| 8. RENEWAL OF ANNUAL LICENSE FOR NON KWS EMPLOYEES..... | 10 |

## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) is a body corporate established by the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act (WCMA) 2013 of the Laws of Kenya with the mandate to conserve and manage wildlife in Kenya. Within its organizational structure is the Veterinary Services Department (VSD) under the Biodiversity, Research and Planning Division. The department is located at KWS headquarters and has satellite units strategically located in key conservation areas to ensure efficient and effective provision of veterinary services. The department was established in 1990 and has grown from a rudimentary unit to a fully-fledged department that is regularly consulted on matters of wildlife health in the eastern Africa region and beyond. The department has been modernizing its operations to meet the ever-evolving challenges in conservation and management of biodiversity.

The VSD has a wide range of responsibilities aimed at enhancing wildlife conservation by ensuring healthy and viable wildlife populations. The key functions include:-

- (i) Planning and implementing wildlife veterinary programs country-wide that include:
  - (a) Diagnosis and treatment of sick and injured animals
  - (b) Investigation of mortalities in wildlife and instituting appropriate control and prevention measures
  - (c) Undertaking disease surveillance to act as an early warning system for any disease outbreaks
  - (d) Undertaking research in wildlife diseases so as to inform their management
  - (e) Rescue and rehabilitation of animals in need (orphaned and abandoned young animals)
  - (f) Providing oversight and technical advice on captive wildlife management
  - (g) Inputting into authorisation by the Service and supervision of non KWS veterinary surgeons and veterinary para-professionals
- (ii) Undertaking capture and translocation activities for various management purposes
- (iii) Supporting other divisions/departments to undertake various activities such as fitting animals' monitoring devices (e.g. collars, horn transmitters, transponders) and animals' identification marks (e.g. ear notches)
- (iv) Undertaking DNA-based forensic analysis for the prosecution of wildlife crimes
- (v) Inputting into development of policies and strategies relevant to wildlife health and welfare and coordinating their implementation
- (vi) Planning and organising the development of capacity for wildlife veterinary personnel

- (vii) Mobilizing resources for wildlife health programs internally and externally through engagement with partners and proposal writing
- (viii) Establishing and promoting linkages and collaborations with national and international institutions on animal and public health
- (ix) Disseminating scientific information on wildlife health and welfare and related issues through publications in peer reviewed journals, seminars and workshops
- (x) Reporting notifiable diseases and other diseases of national and international importance to relevant national and international institutions including the Directorate of Veterinary Services (DVS) in the State Department of Livestock and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)

## **2. CONTEXT OF THE GUIDELINES**

This guidelines have been developed to guide veterinary practice in wildlife in Kenya to ensure it is carried out professionally in the context of prevailing national laws and policies pertaining to biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources and veterinary practice, including the:-

- (i) WCMA 2013;
- (ii) Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Para-professional (VSVP) Act 2011;
- (iii) Prevention to Cruelty Act Cap 360;
- (iv) Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Para-Professionals Regulations of 2013;
- (v) Kenya Veterinary Policy of 2015;
- (vi) Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Paraprofessionals (Code of Ethics) Regulations of 2015; and
- (vii) Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Paraprofessionals Act (The Veterinary Medicines Directorate) Regulations 2015

The primary target audience are veterinarians, veterinary para-professionals and wildlife managers.

## **3. INTERPRETATION**

In these guidelines, unless the context otherwise requires: -

**“Wildlife”** includes all species of wild animals, whether free ranging or kept in captivity

**“Veterinary practice”** shall have the same meaning as in Section 14 of the VSVP Act 2011. Thus, in these guidelines, a person provides wildlife veterinary services if such a person engages in the:

- (i) Prevention of an infectious or organic disease or pathological condition in wildlife;
- (ii) Performance of a surgical operation in a wild animal;
- (iii) Dispensing or administration of veterinary medicines in wild animals;
- (iv) Giving of any advice, consultancy services, training or research in wildlife health and welfare matters or other related services;
- (v) Performance of diagnosis and treatment or attendance of sick and injured wild animals and other related veterinary services;
- (vi) Provision of animal welfare services; or
- (vii) Performance of post-mortem procedures in wild animals

**“Veterinary medicine”** shall have the same meaning as in Section 2 of VSVP Act 2011 to include any curative or preventive substance, formulated medicament, or mixture of substances, whether proprietary or in the form of a preparation effective in animals, which is used, or is manufactured, sold or represented as suitable for use in:

- (i) The diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention of disease or abnormal physical or mental state or the symptoms thereof in an animal;
- (ii) Restoring, correcting or modifying any physical, mental or organic function in an animal; or
- (iii) Controlling internal or external pests and parasites and includes insecticides, vaccines, hormones, alternative medicines, antiseptics, disinfectants, surgical, nutrients and biological products;

**“Annual license”** means a license issued by KWS to a veterinary surgeon, or veterinary paraprofessional not employed by KWS to provide veterinary services to wildlife in Kenya.

#### **4. PERSONS ENTITLED TO PRACTICE**

- (1) A veterinary surgeon, or veterinary para-professional who is an employee of KWS, which is the competent authority in wildlife conservation and management in Kenya pursuant to WCMA 2013;
- (2) A veterinary surgeon, or veterinary para-professional who being a citizen of Kenya is duly authorised by KWS as provided for in Section 5 of this policy guidelines;

- (3) The persons in 4 (1) and 4 (2) shall be duly qualified and registered as veterinary surgeons, or veterinary para-professionals as provided for in Sections 15 and 17, respectively, of VSVP Act 2011; and/or
- (4) Foreign veterinary surgeons, and veterinary para-professionals intending to be in Kenya for the purposes of carrying out any activity in wildlife to which the VSVP Act 2011, or on any other related assignment, engagement or consultancy for which he has been engaged, shall, before embarking on the assignment, apply to the Kenya Veterinary Board (KVB) for temporary registration as a foreign veterinary surgeon or veterinary para-professional pursuant to Section 16 of the Act, and thereafter obtain an annual license to practice in wildlife as provided for in Section 5 of this policy guidelines.

**No person shall practise, or hold himself out, whether directly or indirectly, as practising or being able to do veterinary practice in wildlife unless the person fulfils conditions 4 (1), 4 (2), 4 (3), and/or 4 (4).**

## **5. ANNUAL LICENSE FOR NON KWS EMPLOYEES**

- (1) A veterinary surgeon, or veterinary para-professional, citizen or foreign, intending to do veterinary practice in wildlife in Kenya shall make an application to the Director General, Kenya Wildlife Service;
- (2) The applicant shall have fulfilled the requirements of the VSVP Act 2011, and any other applicable laws for foreigners intending to work in Kenya. Documentary evidence of fulfilment of requirements of applicable laws shall be provided
- (3) The person shall provide evidence of experience, skills and competencies to handle wildlife and dangerous narcotic drugs used in wildlife capture. Narcotic drugs are controlled veterinary medicines in category IA of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate.
- (4) The person shall provide documentary evidence of a license to own and handle a dart gun from the Central Firearms Bureau. Every dart gun shall be registered with the KWS Staff Quarter Master
- (5) The decision to grant or deny the annual license to practice by KWS shall be made within 14 days of application and KWS shall not be obliged to give reasons for rejecting any such application.

## **6. CONDITIONS TO PRACTICE FOR NON KWS EMPLOYEES**

- (1) A person issued with the annual license shall before undertaking any intervention contact the KWS Head of Veterinary Services (HVS) and submit a brief report of every intervention to HVS within 24 hours after the intervention. This shall be made through phone, email or any other means of communication;

- (2) The person shall also compile a detailed report of all interventions carried out every month and submit the report to the HVS by the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the subsequent month
- (3) Dangerous narcotic drugs shall be procured through and secured by the KWS HVS. The drugs shall be issued in small amounts upon making a full account on use of the preceding issue in the prescribed Narcotics Control Form.
- (4) Veterinary services in wildlife provided by a KWS veterinarian or KWS veterinarians supported by other wildlife organisations shall be provided free of charge. Authorised private practitioners may seek affiliations with partners to support their activities with the intent of enabling such a practitioner to:
  - (i) Meet the costs of the services
  - (ii) Invest in the best technology and to help the practitioner advance his/her career;
  - (iii) Pay for annual licenses; and/or
  - (iv) Advance his/her career through continuous professional development
- (5) A person issued with the annual license shall indemnify KWS from any loss or injury arising due to or during veterinary practice in wildlife
- (6) The annual license shall specify the area(s) where a person issued shall be allowed to practice. Any practice outside of the specified area(s) shall require an approval by the KWS HVS on a case by case basis
- (7) The guiding principles for the ethical conduct of veterinary surgeons and veterinary para-professionals practicing in wildlife shall be guided by the Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Paraprofessionals (Code of Ethics) Regulations of 2015. For instance, a veterinary surgeon and a veterinary para-professional shall:-
  - (i) Have the paramount duty to safeguard the welfare of an animal and alleviate animal suffering
  - (ii) After taking into consideration all relevant circumstances and without any application of personal interest or external influence, exercise professional and independent judgment
  - (iii) Not engage in fraud in the performance of his duties
  - (iv) Always seek to foster and maintain good understanding with and among professional colleagues
  - (v) Refrain from being involved in any situation where conflict of interest may arise



## **7. SCOPE OF PRACTICE BY NON KWS EMPLOYEES**

(1) The services to be performed by a veterinary surgeon duly issued with an annual license shall include the following:-

- (i) Diagnosis and treatment of sick and injured animals;
- (ii) Investigation of disease outbreaks in wildlife, and instituting appropriate control and prevention measures with KWS veterinary surgeons;
- (iii) Rescue of animals in need (orphaned, abandoned young, seriously sick or injured animals) and referring them to either the KWS Director General, Director Biodiversity Research and Planning, HVS or Head Species Conservation and Management or any other KWS officer for appropriate action;
- (iv) Undertaking disease surveillance and research in wildlife;
- (v) Collaring of animals;
- (vi) Performing post-mortem procedures in wildlife;
- (vii) Capture of problem animals and referring them to the nearest KWS office for appropriate action;
- (viii) Other interventions shall be considered and approved by KWS HVS on a case-by-case basis; and
- (ix) Capture and translocation of wildlife within Kenya duly pre-authorized by the KWS Director General and supervised by a KWS veterinary officer

Notwithstanding this provision, the performance of these services shall be subject to:-

- (i) Initial consultation with the KWS HVS, the local KWS veterinary officer and local KWS warden
  - (ii) Authorisation to all species of wildlife with the exception of the Black Rhino which shall be attended to by KWS veterinary officers only.
- (2) The services to be performed by a veterinary para-professional duly issued with an annual license shall be as provided for in the second schedule of the VSVP Act 2011, which include:
- (i) Implementation of parasite control programmes in animals;
  - (ii) Delegated duties pertaining to regulated animal diseases, including the various eradication schemes;
  - (iii) Extension services (including training and education) to wildlife managers, ranchers and community members;
  - (iv) The collection, capturing and evaluation of data and the compiling of reports whilst assisting with epidemiological and research projects;

- (v) The collection of samples, including blood smears, impression smears, skin scrapings, and hair scrapings and faecal samples (excluding the collection of samples by biopsy);
- (vi) The examination and analysis of samples, including blood smears, skin and hair scrapings, urine analysis and faecal samples and elementary clinical chemistry;
- (vii) Basic post-mortem examinations and the collection and submission of samples;
- (viii) Under the responsibility or direction of a veterinary surgeon, the lancing of abscesses, treatment of septic wounds and the administration of injections and medicines; and
- (ix) Any other function which may be assigned pursuant to provisions of the Act.

Notwithstanding this provision, a veterinary para-professional shall perform these services only during the course of delegated responsibility as an employee of KWS or as an employee of a registered veterinary surgeon duly authorised by KWS to provide veterinary services to wildlife.

- (3) Volunteers and interns intending to work at KWS shall make their applications to the Training and Development Department. They shall not require the annual license to practice but shall work under the supervision of a KWS veterinary surgeon or veterinary para-professional.

## **8. RENEWAL OF ANNUAL LICENSE FOR NON KWS EMPLOYEES**

- (1) The annual license to provide veterinary services in wildlife shall be renewed at the expiry of every year;
- (2) Renewal shall not be automatic. A person issued with the annual license shall make an application for renewal to the Director General;
- (3) Renewal of the annual license shall be subject to meeting the following requirements:
  - (i) Proof of retention in the register of practicing veterinary surgeons and veterinary para-professionals pursuant to Section 19 of VSVP Act 2011;
  - (ii) Timely submission of accurate reports and narcotics' returns as specified in Section 6 of this policy guidelines; and
  - (iii) Satisfactory performance of approved functions
- (4) The decision to grant or reject renewal of the annual license shall rest solely with KWS. KWS shall not be obliged to give reasons in the case of rejection; and
- (5) KWS may cancel the annual license with or without reference of any person authorised to provide animal welfare services to wildlife. KWS

may or may not give reasons for such cancellation. The decision shall be communicated to the person affected within a reasonable time, but not later than three (3) days from the date of cancellation, and that person shall return the annual license and narcotic drugs within two (2) weeks of that communication.