

**This statement is to be attributed to Lisa Bates, Executive Director, Tucson Wildlife Center,
8/16/2024**

The Arizona Game and Fish Department regulates the Tucson Wildlife Center, including providing my license as a wildlife rehabilitator. Game and Fish was obligated to investigate allegations made by former Tucson Wildlife Center employees. While I'm not going to dive into the specific accusations those former staff members levied, I want to stress that I am proud of the quality of the work we do to ensure the safety and well-being of the 3,000-5,000 injured, sick, and orphaned animals we rescue every year. The welfare of each animal and the safety of staff and the public are always our top priorities.

Ultimately, as part of the administrative hearing process, we reached a settlement agreement with Game and Fish that will allow our center to continue its important work. As part of the agreement, my license has been extended through August 9, 2025. On or before that date, a new licensee will take over operations of Tucson Wildlife Center. This will allow me to continue my long-planned transition into retirement while confirming that our mission moves forward.

When Assistant Attorney General Patrick Boyle presented the agreement to the Commission for approval, he said, "Tucson needs a large wildlife rehabilitation center that's working well. And we believe that this settlement agreement allows that to take place."

We couldn't agree more. It is our full intention that Tucson Wildlife Center will continue to serve Tucson and Southern Arizona wildlife for decades to come.

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