

## ***Annual intake trends of a large urban animal rehabilitation centre in South Africa: a case study***

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### **Abstract**

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*Each year, worldwide, large numbers of wild animals are taken to rehabilitation centres for treatment, care and release. Although analysis of intake records may provide valuable insight into the threats and impacts to wildlife, there are few such published reports. Four years of intake records from a large urban rehabilitation centre in South Africa were examined for trends. Animal intake rate was high (2,701 [ $\pm$  94] per annum). Most of the intake (90%) was birds, with few mammals (8%) and reptiles (2%), and most of these were of locally common species (eg doves, pigeons). This reflects the findings of other studies, namely that species living in close association with humans are the most frequently admitted to rehabilitation centres. In total, most of the animals admitted (43%) were juveniles, which were assumed to be abandoned or orphaned. The implications of then rehabilitating these juveniles, which were largely uninjured, are three-fold: should humans be interfering with nature if the cause was not human-related, can each juvenile (especially in these large numbers) be adequately prepared to survive and thrive when released into the wild, and is there space in the environment for them, without causing harm to others already in the environment. This study suggests that the large numbers of animals currently being admitted to the centre may be reduced, possibly through increased public education; in particular to leave uninjured juveniles in the wild. Furthermore, improvements in the centre's recording system may allow for use in funding requests and various research opportunities.*

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