



Canadian Council on Animal Care Conseil canadien de protection des animaux

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CCAC GUIDELINES ON: THE CARE AND USE OF WILDLIFE

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have been developed as a tool to assist investigators and members of animal care committees (ACCs) in the implementation of the *CCAC guidelines on: the care and use of wildlife* (2003).

The FAQs provide a generic response to the many comments and questions received by the CCAC during the development of the *CCAC guidelines on: the care and use of wildlife* (2003). Questions were received both as part of the widespread review of the guidelines and also at the various workshops held across Canada on the subject of wildlife guidelines.

If you do not find the answer to your question here, please contact the CCAC and we will be pleased to provide assistance. These FAQs will be updated regularly and will continue to reflect questions asked by ACCs and investigators in implementation of the *CCAC guidelines on: the care and use of wildlife* (2003).

1. WHY DO SOME GUIDELINES CONTAIN ‘MUST’ AND OTHERS CONTAIN ‘SHOULD’?

The word ‘must’ is used to emphasize the importance of a specific practice. It is also used in instances where there may be an enforceable statutory requirement.

2. WHAT IS THE INTENTION OF ‘VETERINARY CONSULTATION’ AND ‘VETERINARY SUPERVISION’ AS DESCRIBED IN THE GUIDELINES?

In general, the guidelines encourage opportunities for combining the expertise of wildlife biologists and other wildlife professionals with that of veterinarians in order to maximize the likelihood of safe, humane and efficient use of wild animals. While investigators may have expertise in the application of field techniques to a particular species, veterinarians are in a position to provide advice on issues concerning animal health and well-being.

Section B, Introduction, states: “Consultation and/or participation of veterinarians having experience with wildlife should be sought in projects involving potential animal health concerns...” Veterinarians have particular expertise in areas of animal

health, and this statement encourages investigators to seek out the opinion of a veterinarian when their projects could have an impact on the health of an animal.

Section G, Medical/Surgical Procedures, states that major surgical procedures should only be done by a veterinarian or under a veterinarian's supervision. This does not mean that a well trained biologist should not perform such widely used surgical procedures as radio transmitter implants; rather, it implies that a veterinarian should be informed of surgical procedures to be carried out, ensure that personnel carrying out the procedures are well trained and supervised, and be consulted if any problems arise. It does not mean that surgical procedures must be performed exclusively by a veterinarian or in the presence of a veterinarian.

It is also recommended that veterinarians be consulted as part of the planning for translocation projects in order to ensure that the health of the animals to be released, as well as the health of the resident population, is evaluated.

3. IS IT WITHIN THE CCAC'S MANDATE TO INCLUDE POPULATION MANAGEMENT, PROBLEM ANIMAL CONTROL AND OTHER FORMS OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT? THE OBJECTIVES OF PEST MANAGEMENT MIGHT RUN EXACTLY COUNTER TO THE GUIDELINES OUTLINED IN THIS DOCUMENT.

The mandate of the CCAC states: "The purpose of the Canadian Council on Animal Care is to act in the interests of the people of Canada to ensure through programs of education, assessment and persuasion that the use of animals, where necessary, for research, teaching and testing employs optimal physical and psychological care according to acceptable scientific standards, and to promote an increased level of knowledge, awareness and sensitivity to relevant ethical principles."

A number of wildlife agencies have established animal care committees to review protocols and standard operating procedures (SOPs) as a means of ensuring public accountability for their work and because some aspects of their work requires scientific studies, as described below. In addition, while some aspects of wildlife management, such as the removal of problem animals, do not fall directly within the CCAC mandate of 'research, teaching and testing', they do require the development of standard operating procedures, which have implications for the welfare of animals. These guidelines should provide useful advice to those involved in the preparation of SOPs.

A number of wildlife agencies have expressed interest in becoming participants in the CCAC program, in order to provide assurance for their work. If these agencies do become participants, they will be expected to adhere to the relevant CCAC guidelines and policies.

4. IN THE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT CONTEXT, WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 'PROTOCOLS' AND 'STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES' (SOPS)?

Some of the activities of wildlife management (e.g., studying migration routes, assessing impacts of proposed highways on habitat, evaluating methodologies for pest control, etc.) are best described in protocols. These are 'studies' which may involve a number of different procedures and personnel. Minor changes to the protocol (e.g., addition of personnel) can be made relatively easily without requiring full review of the protocol.

Routine procedures conducted by wildlife managers, such as relocation of nuisance animals or pest control, can be described within SOPs. This will ensure that proper procedures are followed and can be revised as necessary, rather than every year.

5. REVIEW OF PROTOCOLS

a) Many projects involve a number of co-operators. This can really slow down the protocol review process if each ACC is required to review the protocol.

When multiple partners are involved in a project, the ACC of the principal investigator should take the lead in reviewing the protocol. Co-operators can then submit the reviewed protocol to their home institutions, indicating that approval has already been received. Any questions concerning the reviewed procedures should be directed to the lead institution for resolution, usually through communication between ACC Chairs. This is also described in the *CCAC Policy Statement on: Animal-Based Projects Involving Two or More Institutions* (2003).

b) The development and widespread use of a standard protocol form would go a long way to meeting the intent of Section B. 3.1.1.1. Protocols involving the use of wildlife.

A standard protocol form has been developed and is included as Appendix B to the guidelines. In addition, as far as possible, the CCAC will include species-specific protocol forms as additional tools as part of the species-specific recommendations to be posted on the CCAC website.

c) The amount of work that an ACC (particularly that of a provincial agency with the mandate of providing the permits to do all wildlife work in a province or territory) will be overwhelming if an annual renewal process is instituted.

Annual review of the protocol can be relatively quick, if there are no major amendments. However, the annual renewal affords the opportunity for the ACC to receive feedback on the progress of the work and to be informed of any modifications that have been made to the protocol to improve the welfare

outcome for the study animals. This is an opportunity to educate the ACC members, and thus facilitate future review of protocols.

In addition, as described above, full review of the protocol is not required, if the protocol has already been reviewed by the ACC of the lead investigator.

d) Protocols that fall in one or more jurisdictions

If the work is to occur in a geographic location outside of the home institution, how is authority over the work determined?

Where work is to be conducted in a geographical location outside of the jurisdiction of the home institution of the principal investigator, the ACC of the home institution carries the overall responsibility for the work, and a well defined arrangement for monitoring the proposed project and the welfare of animals should be agreed upon between the ACC of the home institution and the local ACC (i.e. the ACC of the host organization located in the jurisdiction where the work will be conducted) before the project begins. The local ACC is often the point of contact for the public and should be able to answer questions concerning the wildlife studies being carried out locally. Additionally, government regulations in the area where the work is being conducted must be respected.

e) Protocols involving the assessment of capture techniques

It may be impossible in a field study design to determine which of a series of capture techniques will minimize pain and/or distress until analysis of data is complete.

Conduct of trials to evaluate the effectiveness of methods of capture (or other management procedures) should be reviewed by ACCs as any other research or testing protocol. As with any study, the ACC should be assured that the study has scientific merit (for management studies, that the goals of the study are likely to be met using the proposed procedures). In addition, the ACC must ensure that strategies are in place to deal with unanticipated pain and distress. For example, this may involve setting endpoints, or intervening to euthanize an animal if the procedure under evaluation does not kill the animal within a pre-defined time period approved by the ACC.

6. 'APPROPRIATELY TRAINED' AND 'ADEQUATELY TRAINED OR EXPERIENCED' ARE MENTIONED IN THE GUIDELINES — IS THE DETERMINATION OF THIS LEFT TO THE DISCRETION OF THE INVESTIGATOR, ACC OR WILDLIFE AGENCY?

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the ACC to ensure that animal users have the necessary training and experience to perform the procedures described in the

protocol. In addition, the ACCs are responsible for ensuring that the investigator has made provision for adequate physical and personnel resources to be available for the duration of the study.

7. THE REQUIREMENT FOR TWO OR MORE FIELD BIOLOGISTS ON AN ACC IS UNREALISTIC.

The statement made in the guidelines is: “ACCs that regularly deal with field-based projects should have two or more field biologists on the committee”. Because wildlife studies include a wide range of species and methodologies, having two field biologists would provide a broader knowledge base for the review of protocols. It is also noted that because of this diversity in studies, even committees most experienced with protocols from field biologists will have to periodically seek outside reviews from other field biologists or wildlife veterinarians.

It is also beneficial for wildlife investigators to have people on the ACC who understand the logistics of field studies. Consultation with personnel specialized in the particular species of interest cannot be emphasized enough.

8. LEVEL OF INVASIVENESS AND OBSERVATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

If observational activities will require ACC approval, then strict definitions of what is meant by observational activities will be required.

CCAC operates a precautionary approach when considering categorization of protocols. Observational studies would in general be categorized as Category A level of invasiveness, provided that there is no disturbance of the animals.

ACCs are expected to use their best judgements, based on common sense and previous experience with similar studies, to determine the level of disturbance likely to occur and to ensure that the investigator has assigned the protocol to the appropriate level of invasiveness.

For example, observing cetaceans from an existing commercial whale watching operation should constitute category of invasiveness level A. However, if the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) guidelines for whale watching operators were exceeded, or if the investigator needed to approach the cetaceans more closely, for example to better identify an individual using photo ID, then the protocol would need to be assigned to a more invasive category.

The CCAC publishes numbers of animals used in the various categories of invasiveness, based on a precautionary approach, on an annual basis. Investigators and ACCs are required to assign categories based on the potential level of pain and distress. When the numbers are published and presented, this is explained in order that the various communities understand the context in which the numbers are reported.

9. WHAT DOES TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND RETURNING KNOWLEDGE TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES HAVE TO DO WITH ANIMAL CARE AND USE?

The benefits of establishing a mutual exchange of information between scientists and holders of traditional knowledge is well recognized by the International Council for Science and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Local people may have knowledge of aspects of the behavior or history of the animals under study that could assist an investigator in designing an effective study with useful results. In turn, this traditional knowledge may be considered intellectual property and in accessing it, investigators must follow the human research ethics guidelines (MRC, NSERC & SSHRC, Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998). Aboriginal views on wildlife research are discussed in Byers (1999).

10. WHY ARE HUMAN SAFETY CONCERNS IN THE GUIDELINES?

A section on human safety considerations has been added as animal care committees are responsible for ensuring that there has been institutional approval for the use of biohazardous, infectious, biological, chemical or radioactive agents (CCAC Policy Statement on: Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees, 2000) and that institutions are aware of the hazards to which their personnel may be exposed.

11. WHY ARE INVESTIGATORS ASKED TO SUBMIT AN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT TO THE ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE?

Progress reports are useful for ACCs in order to be able to report accurate animal use numbers to the CCAC, as well as to provide feedback on the efficacy of the procedures carried out. Progress reports are an important means of educating ACC members and improving the evaluation of future protocols. In particular, this exercise provides feedback to the ACC to assist in further development and understanding of good welfare practices in field-based research.

12. WHAT ARE 'BEST PRACTICES' AND HOW CAN INVESTIGATORS AND ACCS BE SURE THAT THE MOST APPROPRIATE METHODS ARE USED IN THE FIELD?

In the context of wildlife research, the term 'best practices' refers to procedures which minimize pain and/or distress for the animal in the short term, and which cause the least impediment to the normal behavior of the animal and its long-term survival. The procedures used may vary, depending on a number of factors including local environment and climate conditions. In order to assist in dissemination of best practices (often not published in the literature), the CCAC encourages investigators

and ACCs to submit information on new or improved procedures to the Guidelines Development Program. Information received in this manner will undergo peer review, and will be included in the species-specific recommendations posted on the CCAC website for use in conjunction with *the [CCAC guidelines on: the care and use of wildlife](#)*.