

ISU's Field Research Exemption Policy

Field research and teaching that uses free-living, wild vertebrate and protected species falls under the purview of IACUC to ensure that protocols are consistent with the humane care and use of animals. These studies contribute to the conservation and well-being of wild animals.

Research and teaching using field methodology often involves the following types of procedures, including, but not limited to: assessing animal population changes in the wild, evaluating animals' behavior in their natural habitat, gauging and managing naturally-occurring disease among wildlife populations, measuring the impact of environmental alterations on animal populations, collecting animals for exhibition, assessing teratogenic and mutagenic effects of a polluted area on select species, trapping, tagging, and releasing animals as part of data collection, and collecting scat, tissue, or other samples from wildlife for analysis. As many of these procedures involve direct interaction with animals, the IACUC uses the *Guide*, PHS policy and these resources for specific species to evaluate humane care:

- **Fish** ([American Fisheries Society](#))
- **Amphibians & Reptiles** ([American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists](#))
- **Birds** ([The Ornithological Council](#))
- **Mammals** ([American Society of Mammalogists](#))
- [AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals](#)

Some field research, however, is non-invasive and does not directly impact animals. In this case, a field researcher may apply for an exemption from IACUC approval. These types of field studies must satisfy ALL of the following criteria for an exemption from IACUC approval:

1. **Field studies that do NOT involve an invasive procedure, harm, or do not physically alter the behavior of an animal under study.** Some examples of these procedures may include: observation from a distance, photography or video from a distance, or collection of physically discarded products, such as scat or sheds. If the research alters the activities of animals through environmental manipulation, uses invasive procedures (e.g., tissue sampling), or potentially causes pain, distress, or harm to animals, this activity must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC
2. **Field studies that do NOT involve the capture, handling, housing, transportation, treatment, or euthanasia of animals.** Any study in which an animal is handled, trapped, captured, transported, tagged, exposed to a drug, or euthanized does not qualify for an exemption.
3. If a study is funded by an agency that requires IACUC approval (e.g., National Science Foundation) an exemption cannot be granted. Field studies assigned exempt status may be subject to reevaluation by the IACUC for conditions including, but not limited to, changes in federal, state, local or institutional policy or changes in funding source.

An exemption must be filed by completing this form. Contact the IACUC administrator (Tom Bailey, tombailey@isu.edu) or the IACUC chair (Dr. Erin Rasmussen, erinrasmussen@isu.edu) with questions.

Field Research Exemption Form

Name of Principal Investigator:

Department:

Title of Study:

1. Will your study involve handling, capture, tagging, trapping, transporting, or an invasive procedure (e.g., tissue sampling, drug exposure) on free-ranging animals in their natural habitats?

No

Yes

If yes, stop- a full animal care and use protocol and IACUC approval is required.

2. To the best of your knowledge, will your study cause any pain, distress, or harm to any animals?

No

Yes

If yes, stop- a full animal care and use protocol and IACUC approval is required.

3. To the best of your knowledge, will your study involve manipulating the environment of any animals in a manner that will affect their behavior?

No

Yes

If yes, stop- a full animal care and use protocol and IACUC approval is required.

4. Please provide the funding source of your study.

(If funding source requires IACUC oversight, an exemption cannot be granted.)

5. Please provide a brief description (a few sentences) of the procedures you will use in your study with emphasis on how researchers and animals will interact.

INVESTIGATOR ASSURANCES (all must be checked):

- To the best of my knowledge, I certify that the information provided in this Request for Waiver is complete and accurate.
- I understand that any change in the study that introduces direct animal contact will require review of an animal care and use protocol and approval of that application by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee before proceeding.
- I understand that consultation with the Attending Veterinarian is available to me.
- I further acknowledge that certain free-ranging species are endangered, threatened, or are of an otherwise special status such that required permits, clearances, or other permission must be obtained prior to proceeding with work. I will verify if target species for this project are listed as threatened, endangered, or of other special status at the state, federal, or international level prior to beginning work. For any such listed species I will abide by all pertinent regulatory requirements, including securing all required permits, clearances, or other permissions prior to the commencement of work. I understand that this waiver does not supersede or substitute for any such permissions.
- All personnel, including students, involved in this study have received proper training appropriate to the nature and scope of the study to ensure that the health and safety of animals and persons in the field are not compromised. If my field work might increase the risk of harm to humans, I will discuss this risk with Chuck Rizzo (chuckrizzo@isu.edu), who can help assess and mitigate this risk.