

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE

FIELD RESEARCH SOP

I. Definitions

- A. PHS Policy for Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals ([FAQ A.6](#)) defines field research as animal activity that is likely to alter or influence the activity of the study animals or other species found in the study area.
- B. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal Welfare Act (AWA) [Section 1.1](#), defines field research as: "...a study conducted on free-living wild animals in their natural habitat. However, this term excludes any study that involves an invasive procedure, harms, or materially alters the behavior of an animal under study."

II. IACUC Responsibilities

- A. The UT Arlington Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) is responsible for oversight of vertebrate animal activities in accordance with their Animal Welfare Assurance and PHS Policy, including animal activities conducted in the field.
- B. If the IACUC determines that the proposed activity meets the definition of field research according to PHS Policy and AWA regulations, then protocol review and approval is required. However, if the IACUC determines that the proposed activity will not alter or influence the activity of the study animals, IACUC review and approval is not needed.
- C. If the field study involves SOLELY invertebrates, or the salvage of dead vertebrates, it does not need to be reviewed by the IACUC.
- D. When capture, handling, confinement, transportation, anesthesia, euthanasia, or invasive procedures are involved, the IACUC will ensure that proposed studies are in accord with the *Guide* ([page 32](#)).

III. PI Responsibilities

- A. The standard IACUC Protocol Application Form should be used for field research. It includes questions about live trapping methods, captivity, and biopsy techniques and can be found on the [UTA IACUC Forms](#) website.
- B. To conduct activities in the field, the Principal Investigator (PI) must provide the IACUC with the following information:
 - 1. where the activity will be conducted;
 - 2. what procedures will be involved;
 - 3. a brief description of how those procedures are likely to affect the biology and ecology of the study animals by describing the relationship of that species to the habitat and to other species found in the study area (including the nature and duration of potential effects);

4. a description of the long- and short-term impacts on the population if animals are removed from their habitat;
 5. assurance that permit requirements of pertinent local, state, national, and international wildlife regulations will be obtained before work begins; and
 6. a description of the safety hazards likely to be encountered in the field (including chemical safety, venomous/poisonous animals, zoonoses, etc.) and what precautions will be taken to minimize the risks.
- C. PIs are encouraged to consult relevant professional societies, available guidelines, wildlife biologists, and veterinarians, as applicable, in the design of the field studies (*Guide* [page 32](#), [Appendix A](#)). Some available guidelines are:
1. [*Guidelines for Proper Care and Use of Wildlife in Field Research*](#)
 2. [*Guidelines to the Use of Wild Birds in Research*](#)
 3. [*Guidelines for the Use of Fishes in Research*](#)
 4. [*Guidelines for the Use of Wild Mammals in Research and Education*](#)
 5. [*Guidelines for Use of Live Amphibians and Reptiles in Field and Laboratory Research*](#)
 6. [*American Veterinary Medical Association \(AVMA\) Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals: 2020 Edition*](#)
- D. All personnel listed on a field research protocol must complete the Field Research online training module in the [UTA Profiles](#) system before commencement of research.
- E. PIs are responsible for training protocol personnel on protocol procedures before commencement of research.
- F. A UTA IACUC Amendment Form must be submitted to the IACUC for review and approval before implementation of modifications. (See [UTA IACUC Forms](#) webpage.)
- G. PIs must follow continuing review procedures for field research protocols according to [UTA IACUC Review Procedures](#).