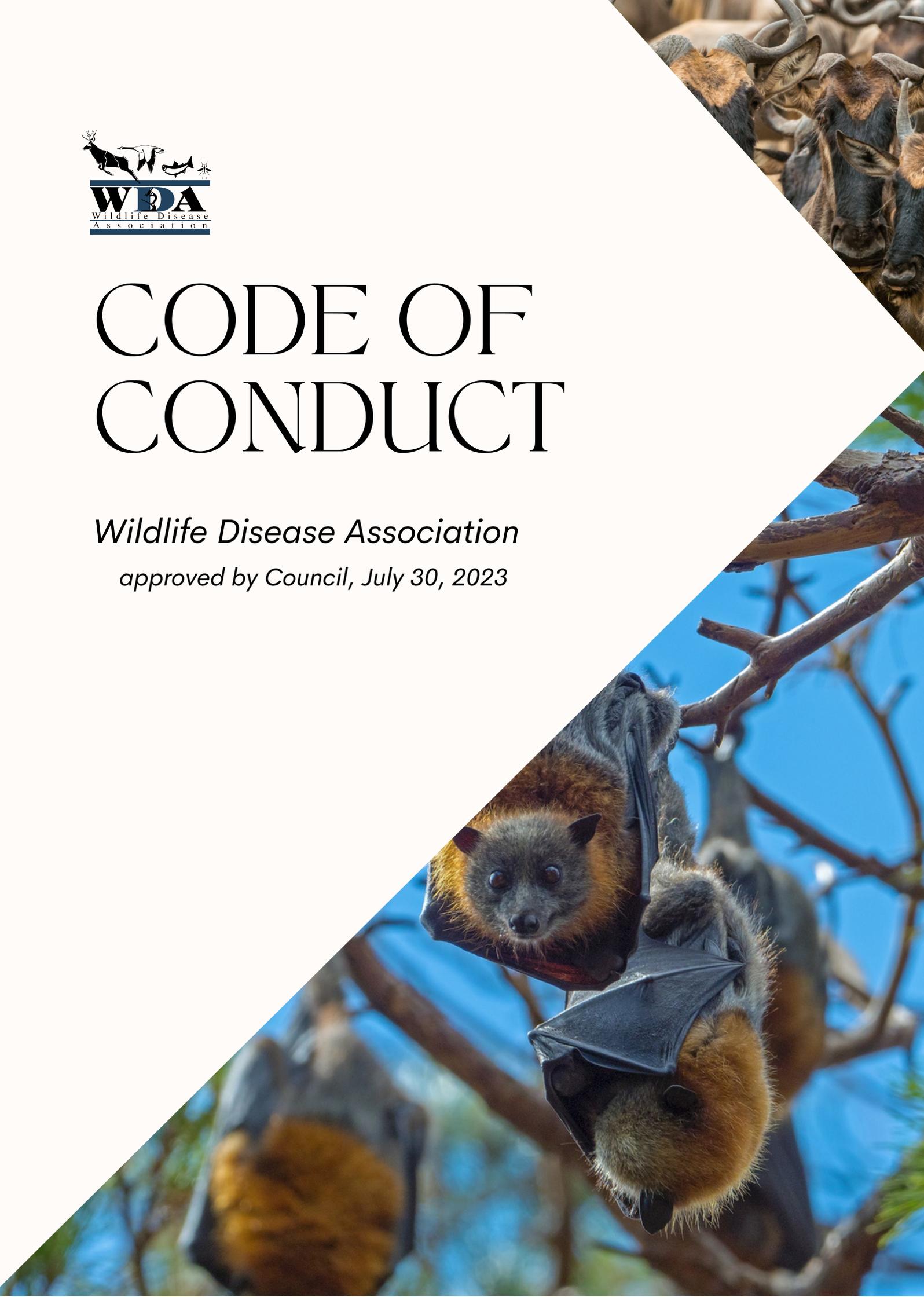




CODE OF CONDUCT

Wildlife Disease Association

approved by Council, July 30, 2023



INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Wildlife Disease Association (WDA) is to promote healthy wildlife and ecosystems, biodiversity conservation, and environmentally sustainable solutions to One Health challenges. Through our Charter of Values, we recognize that we are most effective in advancing our mission when there is respectful and equitable treatment of all those engaged in our community. In this context, respectful means being polite with due regard for another's rights, abilities, achievements, life experiences, and traditions; equitable means being fair, reasonable, honest, and impartial.

We value your, and everyone's, participation in the WDA community and at WDA events. Your support will keep our community and our events a safe, welcoming and friendly space for all fellow participants.

Therefore, all members across our international Association must agree upon application, or renewal, of membership to uphold and conduct their professional and membership-related activities in accordance with the Code of Conduct as prescribed by the Association and set forth in the sections below.

Our Association is committed to providing a safe, positive, and professional environment that is free of prejudice in our meetings, functions, and online forums, and that is free of harassment and fosters active, equal participation. Harassment is defined as speech or behavior that is not welcome, is personally offensive, or causes distress, whether it is based on national origin, ethnicity, race, geographic, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds, gender identity and expression, intersex status, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical appearance, disability, military or veteran status, political beliefs or affiliation, career stage, marital status, carer responsibilities or pregnancy status. Harassment expressed in a joking manner still constitutes harassment and is unacceptable. Behavior that is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to others. As such, one must use words and actions that clearly communicate respect for others.

This Code of Conduct is intended to establish the expectation for respectful and equitable speech and behavior for all those engaged in our community, as well as a process for reporting and responding to harassment. Retaliation for reporting harassment and making false reports are a violation of this Code of Conduct. The failure to uphold these expectations harms the well-being of individuals and the broader community, our scientific credibility, our respective professions, and our mission.

REPORTING A HARASSMENT ALLEGATION

It is the responsibility of the WDA community to promote an inclusive and positive environment for our scholarly activities. If you are being harassed or notice that someone else is being harassed, and this has not been resolved immediately, e.g. through an appropriate apology or explanation acceptable to the injured party, please take action by making either an informal or formal report.

An informal report can be made verbally (via phone or in-person) to a Diversity Champion at the annual meeting (recognizable by name tag badge), the Chair of the Ethics Committee or the designated ombudsman for the event. An informal report is appropriate if the reporter does not want an investigation, but simply wants to report an incident. It may also be appropriate if they would prefer to explore resolution options before filing a formal report and identifying the accused. A formal report is, however, needed for the Association to investigate an incident.

A formal written report should be sent to the Chair of the Ethics Committee or the designated ombudsman for the event, detailing the allegation, including all of those involved and any supporting documentation as well as clearly stating that they have read the "Wildlife Disease Association Code of Conduct" and that "The statements made are truthful and factual to the best of my knowledge" and the complaint should be signed and dated.

Anonymous reports may be submitted, however, more information is required for a formal report. Anonymity may limit the extent to which the Committee can and/or will respond to the concern. The shorter the period between an incident and report, the greater the committee's ability to investigate and respond effectively.

At any point, if an individual is in immediate danger, venue security (if applicable) and/or the local emergency authority (for example, call 911 in the United States) should be contacted.

COMMITTEE RESPONSE TO A HARASSMENT ALLEGATION

Once a complaint is received, the Chair of the Ethics Committee will ensure that the complaint has been properly filled out and will record the date received and confirm receipt with the sender within 24 hours (or the next business day). If no response from the Chair is received in that period, the report should also be sent to the Association President and Executive Manager. Reports will be reviewed by the Ethics Committee within seven (7) calendar days from the receipt of the complaint.

The WDA is committed to confidentiality when addressing harassment allegation reports. However, the Association also acknowledges that full confidentiality is not always possible when investigating a complaint, and disclosure may in some cases be legally required.

Ethics Committee members named in a report, or with a close working or personal relationship with anyone named in the report, will be required to recuse themselves from the review, investigation, and determination process.

If there is not sufficient evidence or documentation to support a Code of Conduct violation, the chair of the Ethics Committee will notify in writing, the individual filing the report, indicating that the complaint has been dismissed and the rationale for the decision.

If there is sufficient evidence or documentation to support a Code of Conduct violation, the chair of the Ethics Committee will prepare a letter to the individual about whom the complaint was made. The letter will include:

- 1. Notification that a complaint has been filed and that there is adequate information in the complaint to justify it be processed.
- 2. A copy of the complaint, as received by the Ethics Committee
- 3. A copy of the WDA Code of Conduct
- 4. A request for a written response to be received in 14 days.

Once a written response by the offender(s) has been received, the Ethics Committee may choose to investigate further before any decisions on the outcome of the investigation are made. Any requests for further information should be in writing, and only written responses from these individuals will be accepted. Such investigations should not exceed four (4) weeks.

If the Ethics Committee determines that a Code of Conduct violation occurred, then an appropriate, formal response(s) will be determined. The Ethics Committee will provide a recommendation to the Council at the next scheduled council meeting. The Council may accept the recommendation of the Committee or elect another response. All responses from the Ethics Committee must be in writing. Depending on the severity of the violation, an appropriate, formal response may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Requesting a formal apology or mediation process
- Encouraging the offender(s) to participate in relevant training or counselling
- Removing the offender(s) from a WDA meeting, function, sponsored activity, or online forum without refund of any expenses
- Reporting the actions of the offender(s) to their home institution
- Suspending the offender(s) from WDA for a specified period. During this suspension, individuals may not receive any awards/honors or serve in leadership positions
- Banning the offender(s) from WDA and revocation of past and future awards/honors

All records regarding the incident shall be kept in a confidential file for seven (7) years from the date of the complaint having been lodged. Repeated offenses by the same individual within a calendar year may result in increased action on the part of the Executive Council.

CONSTITUTION OF THE ETHICS COMMITTEE

The WDA Ethics Committee shall consist of at least one member from each section, including one Council member-a-Large, and at least one, but no more than two, student members. Members of the committee are nominated based on a demonstrated interest in promoting diversity and equity and are selected by Council. Each member including the chair is selected for a 36-month term and may be re-selected for one additional term. The Committee Chair shall act as the primary contact for complaints and convene the committee when a complaint is received and shall be the primary contact with Council.

The Code of Conduct shall be reviewed by the Membership Committee in consultation with the Ethics Committee and re-approved by the Council at least every 36 months.