

ETHICAL GUIDELINES TO PUBLICATION IN THE JOURNAL OF WILDLIFE DISEASES

The guidelines in this document were developed through the Editorial Board of the Wildlife Disease Association, and endorsed by the Wildlife Disease Association Council in August 1995.

PREFACE

The Wildlife Disease Association (WDA) serves the wildlife disease profession and society at large in several ways, including publication of the results of scientific research in the Journal of Wildlife Diseases. The editor of the Journal has the responsibility to establish and maintain guidelines for selecting and accepting papers submitted to the Journal. These guidelines derive from the WDA's definition of the scope of the Journal and from the editor's perception of standards of quality for scientific work and its presentation.

An essential feature of a profession is the acceptance by its members of a code that outlines professional behavior and specifies obligations of members to each other and to the public. Such a code stems from a desire to maximize the benefits to the wildlife disease profession and society at large, and to limit actions that might serve merely narrow self-interests of individuals.

This set of ethical guidelines is presented for those involved in the publication of research in the Journal of Wildlife Diseases. These guidelines are not offered because of specific concerns about past ethical behavior, but rather from a conviction that the observance of high ethical standards is so vital to the whole scientific enterprise that a definition of those standards should be brought to the attention of all concerned. Also, reaching a common understanding on the responsibilities of editors, authors, assistant editors, and manuscript reviewers, and on their expectations of each other, can help all parties work together more effectively in fulfilling the Journal's mission to the wildlife disease profession and the public.

Most guidelines presented here already are followed by experienced scientists. However, the guidelines may be of substantial help to those who are relatively new to research. Even well-established scientists may appreciate an opportunity to review matters so significant to the practice of science.

GUIDELINES

A. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EDITOR

1. The editor should give unbiased consideration to all manuscripts offered for publication, judging each solely on its scientific merits. However, the editor may consider relationships of manuscripts immediately under consideration to others previously or concurrently offered by the same author(s).
2. The editor should consider manuscripts submitted for publication with all reasonable speed.
3. The sole responsibility for acceptance or rejection of a manuscript rests with the editor. Responsible and prudent exercise of this duty usually requires that the

- editor seek advice from assistant editors and reviewers on the quality and reliability of manuscripts submitted for publication. In reaching a final decision, the editor also should consider any pertinent editorial policies.
4. The editor should not disclose any information about a manuscript under consideration to anyone other than the staff of the editorial office and those from whom editorial or reviewing advice is sought.
 5. The editor should respect the intellectual independence of authors.
 6. Editorial responsibility and authority for any manuscript authored by the editor and submitted to the Journal should be delegated to some other qualified person, such as a past editor of the journal or an assistant editor. Editorial consideration of the manuscript in any way or form by the author-editor is not acceptable.
 7. The editor should not oversee evaluation of a manuscript authored or co-authored by a person with whom the editor has a personal or professional connection, if the relationship would bias judgment of the manuscript.
 8. The editor should not oversee evaluation of a manuscript where the editor may experience a possible financial gain or loss with the publication of that manuscript, if this financial connection would bias judgment of the manuscript.
 9. The editor should not oversee evaluation of a manuscript so closely related to the current or past research of the editor as to create a conflict of interest. For any manuscript causing a conflict of interest or biased judgment, the editor should arrange for some other qualified person to take editorial responsibility for that manuscript.
 10. Unpublished information, arguments, or interpretations disclosed in a submitted manuscript should not be used in an editor's own research. However, if such information provides evidence that some of the editor's own research is unlikely to be productive, the editor ethically could discontinue the work.
 11. If the editor is presented with convincing evidence that the substance or conclusions of a report published in the Journal are erroneous, the editor should facilitate publication of an appropriate report pointing out the error and, when possible, correcting it. The report may be written by the person who discovered the error or by an original author.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF AUTHORS

1. The ultimate responsibility for all material published in a manuscript lies with the author(s). An author is obligated to present an accurate account of the research performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. All work must be free of any plagiarism, falsification, fabrications, or omission of significant material.
2. Because journal space is limited and costly, an author has an obligation to use it wisely and economically.
3. A primary research report should contain sufficient detail and reference to public sources of information to permit the evaluation and repetition of the study by skilled workers.
4. An author should cite those publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work and that will guide the reader quickly to the earlier work that is essential for understanding the present investigation. Conflicting

- evidence from the work of others should be included to help readers judge the soundness of the conclusions presented in the manuscript. Except in a review, citation of work that is not essential to building a foundation or interpreting the reported research should be avoided.
5. Any previously unrecognized and unusual hazards identified in an investigation should be clearly noted in a manuscript in which that work is reported.
 6. Authors are responsible to be aware of, and adhere to, all laws, treaties, and regulations currently applying to their work. This includes the review and approval of the research protocol by an institutional animal care and use committee, where applicable, and the acquisition of all appropriate permits.
 7. Fragmentation of research reports should be avoided. A scientist who has done extensive work on a system or group of related systems should organize the publications so that each report gives a well-rounded account of a particular aspect of the general study. Fragmentation excessively consumes journal space and unduly complicates literature searches. The convenience of readers is served if reports on related studies are published in the same journal, or in a small number of journals.
 8. Research findings should not be presented as original material in more than one scientific publication. It is inappropriate for an author to submit manuscripts describing essentially the same research to more than one journal, except for the resubmission of a manuscript rejected by, or withdrawn from, another journal.
 9. In submitting a manuscript for publication, an author should inform the editor of related manuscripts that the author has under editorial consideration or in press. The relationships of such manuscripts to the one submitted should be clarified, and copies of the related manuscripts should be included with the manuscript submission.
 10. An author should identify the source of all information quoted or offered, except that which is common knowledge. Information obtained privately, as in conversation, correspondence, or discussion with third parties, should not be used or reported in the author's work without explicit permission from the investigator with whom the information originated, usually by a personal communication. Information obtained in the course of professional services, such as refereeing manuscripts or grant applications, also should be treated as confidential.
 11. Strong criticism of the work of another scientist may be given. However, in no case is sarcasm or criticism of a personal nature appropriate. Authors of a criticized work will have the opportunity to respond.
 12. The co-authors of a paper should be those persons who have made significant scientific contributions to the work reported and who share responsibility and accountability for the results. Good guidelines for determining co-authorship are presented by Dickson et al. (1978) and Neter et al. (1983). Other contributions should be indicated in the Acknowledgments section. Deceased persons who meet the criterion for inclusion as co-authors should be so included, with a footnote noting their death. No fictitious name should be listed as an author or co-author. The author who submits a manuscript for publication accepts the responsibility of having included as co-authors all persons appropriate and none inappropriate.

- The submitting author should have sent each living co-author a draft copy of the manuscript and have obtained the co-author's assent to co-authorship of it.
13. All funding sources should be identified in the manuscript. Authors should disclose to the editor any potential conflict of interest, such as a consulting or financial interest in a company, that might be affected by publication of the results contained in a manuscript. Authors should ensure that no contractual relations or proprietary considerations exist that would affect the publication of information in a submitted manuscript.
 14. When appropriate, representative biological material should be deposited in a nationally or internationally recognized professional museum. Accession numbers should be reported in the manuscript.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASSISTANT EDITORS

1. The assistant editors should act on each manuscript sent to them by the editor with all reasonable speed.
2. Normally, at least two reviewers should be chosen for each manuscript, in addition to the evaluation made by the assistant editor. Reviewers should be chosen to best ensure an objective, balanced, and knowledgeable assessment of each manuscript.
3. Assistant editors should not disclose any information about a manuscript under consideration to anyone other than those from whom professional advice is sought, and to the editor.
4. Assistant editors should respect the intellectual independence of authors.
5. After receiving all reviews, assistant editors will evaluate all reviewer comments and recommendations, and promptly give an overall recommendation to the editor on the suitability of a manuscript for publication, and provide a brief summary of the most persuasive reasons for that recommendation. If reviewers provide divergent opinions on a manuscript, the assistant editor may seek additional reviews on that manuscript.
6. When reviewers are delayed in returning reviews, assistant editors will contact reviewers as needed to arrange for return of the late reviews.
7. Unpublished information, arguments, or interpretations disclosed in a submitted manuscript should not be used in an assistant editor's own research. However, if such information provides evidence that some of the assistant editor's own research is unlikely to be productive, the assistant editor ethically could discontinue the work.
8. An assistant editor should not oversee evaluation of a manuscript authored or co-authored by a person with whom the assistant editor has a personal or professional connection, if the relationship would bias judgment of the manuscript.
9. An assistant editor should not oversee evaluation of a manuscript if the assistant editor may experience a possible financial gain or loss with the publication of that manuscript, if this financial connection would bias judgment of the manuscript.
10. The assistant editor should not oversee evaluation of a manuscript so closely related to the current or past research of the assistant editor as to create a conflict of interest. For any manuscript causing a conflict of interest or biased judgment,

the assistant editor should return the manuscript promptly to the editor with a brief explanation.

11. Flaws in a study sometime may justify strong criticism of the work of an author. However, in no case is sarcasm or criticism of a personal nature appropriate.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF REVIEWERS OF MANUSCRIPTS

1. Inasmuch as the reviewing of manuscripts is an essential step in the publication process, and therefore in the operation of the scientific method, every scientist has an obligation to do a fair share of reviewing.
2. A reviewer should submit a report in a timely manner. If circumstances preclude prompt attention to a manuscript, it should be returned immediately to the assistant editor (or editor). Alternatively, the reviewer might notify the assistant editor (or editor) of probable delays and propose a revised completion date for the review.
3. A reviewer who feels inadequately qualified to judge the research reported in a manuscript should return it promptly to the assistant editor (or editor), with a brief explanation.
4. A reviewer should judge objectively the quality of the manuscript, of its experimental and theoretical work, of its interpretations and its exposition, with due regard to the maintenance of high scientific and literary standards. A reviewer should respect the intellectual independence of the authors.
5. A reviewer should be sensitive to the potential for a conflict of interest when the manuscript under review is closely related to the reviewer's work in progress or published. If in doubt, the reviewer should return the manuscript promptly without review, advising the assistant editor (or editor) of the conflict of interest or bias. Alternatively, the reviewer may wish to furnish a signed review stating the reviewer's interest in the work, with the understanding that it may, at the editor's discretion, be transmitted to the author.
6. A reviewer should not evaluate a manuscript authored or co-authored by a person with whom the reviewer has a personal or professional connection if the relationship would bias judgment of the manuscript.
7. A reviewer should not evaluate a manuscript if the reviewer may experience a possible financial gain or loss with the publication of that manuscript, if this financial connection would bias judgment of the manuscript.
8. A reviewer should treat each manuscript received as a confidential document. It should neither be shown to nor discussed with others except, in special cases, to persons from whom specific advice may be sought; in that event, the identities of those consulted should be disclosed to the editor.
9. Reviewers should explain and support their judgments adequately so that assistant editors, the editor, and authors may understand the reasons for their comments. Any statement that an observation, derivation, or argument in the manuscript was reported previously should be accompanied by the relevant citation. Unsupported assertions by reviewers (or by authors in rebuttal) should be avoided.
10. A reviewer should be alert to failure of authors to cite relevant work by other scientists.

11. A reviewer should call to the editor's attention any substantial similarity between the manuscript under consideration and any published paper or any manuscript submitted concurrently to another journal.
12. Although not specifically encouraged, reviewers may sign a review.
13. Reviewers should not use or disclose unpublished information, arguments, or interpretations contained in a manuscript under consideration. However, if this information provides evidence that some of the reviewer's work is unlikely to be productive, the reviewer ethically could discontinue the work.
14. Flaws in a study sometime may justify strong criticism of the work of an author. However, in no case is sarcasm or criticism of a personal nature appropriate.

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LITERATURE CITED

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