

JOURNAL OF WILDLIFE DISEASES - Notes for Reviewers

The Wildlife Disease Association (WDA) is an international organization of scientists, academicians, wildlife and fisheries specialists, and other individuals concerned with the objectives as outlined in Article 1, Section 2 of the WDA Constitution “...to advance knowledge of the effect of disease and other factors upon the health and survival of free-ranging and captive wild animals, upon populations of wild animals and upon their relationship to man”. The quality of, and high standards set for, the Journal of Wildlife Diseases (JWD) depends upon critical evaluation of the manuscripts submitted for publication by expert reviewers such as yourself. We are primarily interested in your evaluation of the scientific content of the manuscript under review, especially achievement of research objectives, adequacy of the experimental design, rigor of the hypothesis, and acceptability of the data analyses. We hope you will assist us in evaluating the enclosed manuscript and thank you for your help in making our manuscript review process a judicious one.

Subject or Topic: Manuscripts on subjects unsuitable for publication in the JWD are normally returned to the authors without being forwarded for review. Please assume that the enclosed paper is consistent in terms of subject matter with the guidelines established by the WDA for publishing in the JWD.

Reviewer Anonymity: Reviewers for manuscripts submitted for publication in the JWD generally remain anonymous to the Author(s) in the interest of securing an unbiased review. However, while not specifically encouraged, reviewers wishing to sign a review may do so.

Endangered Species and Humane Treatment of Animals: The JWD, as the primary publication of the WDA, subscribes to the rules, regulations, and laws as established by national and international agencies of all countries represented by WDA membership. We would appreciate your notifying us of any concerns regarding the procurement or research on endangered species, or on the humane collection, maintenance, or treatment of animals used in studies.

Standards for Publication: The JWD publishes results of original research and observations on the health and diseases of wild animals. Except for review articles, submission of manuscripts is with the understanding by the Author(s) that the ideas and information are original, have not been published previously, and are not being submitted for publication elsewhere. If a Reviewer, suspects or has knowledge that a submitted manuscript does not meet these criteria, this should be called to the attention of the Assistant Editor or Editor. The JWD publishes in all areas of wildlife disease research, including fields covered by many other specialty journals. In the interest of maintaining the highest standards of quality, we ask that Reviewer’s evaluate submitted manuscripts to JWD by the same high standards they would for papers submitted to the leading specialty journals. We are interested in manuscripts that present new information, are interesting and important to the disciplines represented in wildlife disease research, and are technically well executed.

Management Implications: Fundamental biological relationships must be emphasized. We also are concerned that the Author(s) include, where relevant, the wildlife and fisheries management implications of their research; discuss possible impacts on animal populations; and emphasize the importance of their findings to humans.

Alternative Reviewers: We are very concerned about selecting the best and most appropriate Reviewers for submitted manuscripts. Your suggestions of other individuals who should be consulted regarding a specific manuscript are welcome.

Review Deadline: Through the cooperation of our Reviewers, the JWD has maintained a relatively short review time for most submitted manuscripts. The period required for the review process from the time of submission until the fully evaluated manuscript is returned to the Author(s) for appropriate action is usually about 3 months. Your cooperation in minimizing the review time is urgently requested. If you cannot review and return a manuscript within TWO WEEKS, please return immediately the entire contents of the review package to the corresponding Assistant Editor. This will allow us to find another suitable Reviewer, without necessarily delay of the review process.

Correspondence: Although the review process for some manuscripts is handled directly through the Office of the Editor, review of most manuscripts is directed through an Assistant Editor. These individuals are appointed by the Editor and approved by the President of the WDA. All correspondence regarding a manuscript under review should be directed to the individual from whom you received the initial correspondence and who requested your services as a Reviewer. However, the Editor may be contacted for unique problems.

Other Guidelines: The WDA Council has approved a set of Ethical Guidelines to Publication in the Journal of Wildlife Diseases for Editors, Authors, Assistant Editors, and Reviewers. The full set of guidelines is given in the January, 1996 issue of the JWD (Vol. 32, pp. 163-167) and at <http://www.wildlifedisease.org/>. A copy of the Responsibilities for Reviewers is reprinted here for your information:

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 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 is being 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.

Acknowledgments: The peer review system in which Reviewers evaluate the merit and quality of manuscripts is the core of present day scientific communication. Our Reviewers are selected because they are authorities in their fields, through no small expense of effort on their part. They are not paid a fee for their services, and all are very busy people with their own responsibilities and careers. Sometimes their comments are not well received by prospective authors. Despite that, each Reviewer is expected to read

carefully, evaluate critically, and comment wisely and profoundly within a few days upon a research paper that has taken the Author(s) months to prepare. You have our sincere thanks for assisting us in the review of our submitted manuscripts. Annually, we publish an Editorial Acknowledgment in which we thank all our Reviewers collectively. If your name inadvertently is omitted from that list, please inform the Editor.