

# Clemson University

## Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

**Policy Number: 3.16**

**Policy Title: Research Involving Wildlife**

### Section 1: Purpose

The following policy describes IACUC oversight for research, teaching, testing, and demonstration involving wildlife.

### Section 2: Scope

This policy applies to all research, teaching, testing, and demonstration activities conducted on wildlife by agents of Clemson University.

### Section 3: Policy

Approved Animal Use Protocols (AUP) are generally, but not always, required for activities involving vertebrate wildlife.

The USDA definitions of Field Study vs. Field Research are used to determine the need for an IACUC protocol during fieldwork involving vertebrate animals.

- Field Study: Observation/data collection without impacting the animal(s).
- Field Research: Observation/data collection requiring capture, redirection, behavior modification, sedation, etc.
- Both “field study” and “field research” only apply to free-living wild animals.

**Field research is subject to the IACUC review process.** When evaluating field investigations, the IACUC considers the following:

- species involved
- scientific merit of the research
- safety and occupational health of personnel and animals
- length of time the animals are held
- time between monitoring or checking trapping devices
- site for release after capture and justification if not the same
- emergency euthanasia methods
- pain and distress associated with field procedures

The IACUC reviews applicable professional society guidelines for wildlife capture and release in addition to information in The Guide.

**Field studies**, defined in Animal Welfare Act regulations as “any study conducted on free-living wild animals in their natural habitat, which does not involve an invasive procedure, and which

does not harm or materially alter the behavior of animals under study,” **may be exempted from IACUC review**. See the attached flow chart for further details.

If IACUC approval of a field study is required by the funding agency, 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.

It is the responsibility of the PI to obtain all necessary permits prior to the start of research and to include relevant permit information within the IACUC protocol or exemption request. Copies of the permits should be made available upon request.

References:

[USDA Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations](#)

[Clemson University IACUC Policy 2.1: Guidelines on Which Activities Require an Animal Use Protocol](#)  
[A Word from OLAW and USDA: The IACUC’s Wildlife Classification](#)

## Wildlife Studies Flow Chart

### Does my protocol require IACUC review?

