



The Wildlife Veterinarian's Role in Championing Animal Welfare Programs & Policies

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*Animal Welfare Challenges in Research and Education on
Wildlife, Non-Model Animal Species and Biodiversity
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Veterinary Microbiology
and Pathology

I propose that...

- A veterinarian's role is not limited to clinical medicine
- A veterinarian has a legal and ethical responsibility to champion animal welfare practice and policy
- Formal guidance for wildlife research is limited and often unclear, but helpful models exist



Veterinarian's Role in Research: Clinical Medicine

- Conduct tasks that are deemed to fall under the practice of veterinary medicine
- Conduct complex tasks or tasks with uncertain outcomes
- As available



Veterinarian's Role: Consultant

- Train researchers on basic medical sampling and procedures
- Provide training and approval for administration of drugs to animals
- Consult on study plans and protocols
- Observe procedures in the field
- Available for follow-up



Veterinarian-Patient-Client Relationship

- Veterinarian
 - Veterinarian with wildlife experience
- Patient
 - Individual in a wildlife population 
- Client
 - Biologist/researcher acting in a public trust role



Veterinarian-Patient-Client Relationship

- Veterinarian assumes responsibility for clinical judgments; researcher agrees to follow instructions
- Veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the patient (population)
- Veterinarian available for follow-up
- Veterinarian provides oversight
- Patient records are maintained



Veterinarian's Role: Knowledge of Animal Laws

- Veterinary practice
- State pharmacy, DEA, and FDA laws on drugs and drug use in animals
- Animal welfare laws



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Veterinarian's Role: Uphold Veterinary Oath

*"...I solemnly swear to use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society through the **protection of animal health and welfare**, the **prevention and relief of animal suffering**, the **conservation of animal resources**, the **promotion of public health**, and the **advancement of medical knowledge**..."*



Veterinarian's Role: Policy Development

- Support implementation of existing policy
- Champion development of new policy



Veterinarian's Role: Policy Development

Reasons agencies fail to comply with AWA (*Mulcahy 2017*):

- Conduct only management, not research
- Lack of enforcement allows self-exemption
- To avoid perceived burden of compliance



Additionally,

- Lack of clarity in regulations and policy regarding which wildlife activities meet requirements of the AWA

Guidance exists...if you look for it

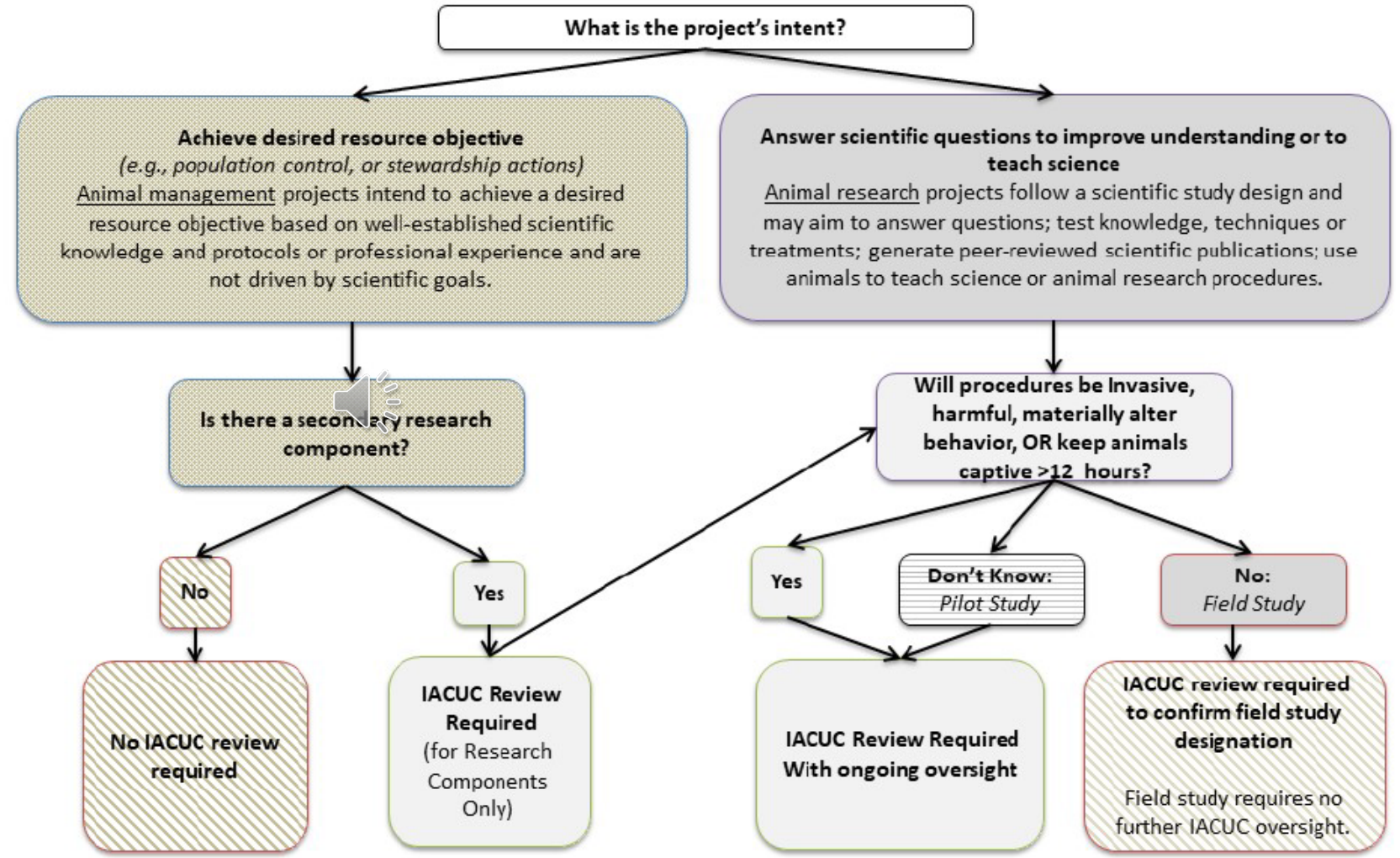
- Literature
- Examples from other agencies
- Additional guidance could further clarify



Example Decision Tree from the National Park Service

Determining need for IACUC review and oversight for animal use projects

The need for IACUC review and oversight of a project involving vertebrate animals is based on the **intent** of the proposed activities. According to **intent**, projects are classified as *research* or *management*. **Who** is conducting the work may also direct whether IACUC review is needed.



Thompson et al. in revision

Veterinarian's Role: Support Relationship Building



