

GUIDELINES FOR FIELD METHODS

For research sponsored by Huron Mountain Wildlife Foundation

Revised, 2013

General statement

No research is without potential effects on the system being studied. The Huron Mountain Wildlife Foundation (HMWF) accepts that the value of research performed at the Huron Mountains can justify some impacts. However, one of the greatest values of the Huron Mountains as a research site lies in the area's 'reference ecosystem' status – its relative freedom from direct effects of human manipulation. Additionally, most HMWF research makes use of the lands of the Huron Mt. Club, and must recognize the rules and interests of the the Club as landowner and host. For these reasons, research sponsored by HMWF should be designed to minimize both functional and visual impacts on the research area, and some high-impact experimental research may be inappropriate.

All research proposals will be reviewed with this standard in mind, and may be denied due to a judgment of unacceptable impact, even if scientific merit is high.

The following guidelines should be considered in design and implementation of research. In instances where questions about impact might be raised, researchers should specifically address these concerns in terms of 1) the scientific value of the work as proposed, and 2) possible alternate approaches to the research problem.

Questions about these issues should be addressed to the Director of Research at HMWF.

Specific Guidelines

1. 'Taking' of organisms for research purposes:

A. Research resulting directly in the death of study organisms is permissible only if such mortality is judged very unlikely to affect the status and dynamics of the population (this may not apply in the case of non-indigenous species). It is the researcher's obligation to make this case.

B. If removal/killing of organisms is required (for example, for purposes of documentation, experimental manipulations, genetic studies, etc.), such takings should be minimized. Photographic documentation is preferred where possible, tissue samples should be taken non-lethally, experimental organisms should be reintroduced to habitat when feasible, etc.

C. Proposals and research plans should be explicit about numbers of organisms to be taken and sample areas from which individuals are to be removed.

D. Specimens (vouchers, etc.) should be deposited in secure repositories accessible to researchers, and deposition documented in researcher reports to HMWF.

E. *The same guidelines apply to activities that impose inherent risk to study organisms* (for example, catch-and-release studies, implanting or attaching sensors/transceivers to animals, increment coring of trees). Researchers should make the necessity of such activities clear and provide an assessment of risk involved.

F. Research on Huron Mt. Club lands may be subject to further restriction or

review on 'takings'.

G. The Director of Research may require procedural revision or further consideration or explanation to address these concerns.

2. Installation of field marks and apparatus:

HMWF encourages long-term research, and this may require installations of samplers, sensors, or markers that will remain in the field between research visits.

A. *Installations should be as visually unobtrusive as possible* consistent with research requirements. Generally, *keep installations well away from trails, roads, and boat-houses (> 100 m if possible OR so as to be invisible from these areas)*. If requirements of project make this impossible, consult with Director of Research.

B. *Any long-term installations should include an all-weather notice including project name and primary investigator, mention of the Huron Mt. Wildlife Foundation as sponsor, and a BRIEF, simple explanation of research purpose.*

C. Threat of vandalism or tampering is very low, but HMWF may not be held responsible for damage due to these or natural causes.

D. Locations of installed equipment or markers should be indicated in proposals where possible *or reported to Director of Research as soon as possible* after installation (preferably, UTM coordinates as well as descriptive information). Consult Director of Research with any questions concerning placement.

E. Researchers are required to *remove all equipment, installations, or field-marks* at the termination of their study (or sooner). If relocation of study-sites could be valuable to future researchers, it may be appropriate to leave unobtrusive location markers in place; this possibility should be addressed with the Director of Research.

3. Experimental manipulation:

Large-scale, manipulative experimentation may not be consistent with work on Huron Mt. Club lands. However, experimental approaches are encouraged if impact is modest, temporary, and valuable.

A. Proposals should be explicit about any experimental methods that may alter habitat, manipulate populations or ecosystem function, or otherwise alter the study area.

B. Proposals should address the importance of such manipulations in the context of available alternatives.

C. Researchers will be responsible, upon completion of experiments, for restoring the experimental system, so far as possible, to pre-experiment status.

4. Vehicles and watercraft:

A. *No vehicles of any kind* are permitted off maintained roads on Club lands.

B. Water-craft may not be used on Club waters by researchers without prior arrangement with the Club manager. Researchers should arrange to use Club boats if possible. If boats from 'off-Club' are to be used, they must be disinfected according to Club requirements. Arrangements for use of Club boats may be made through the HMWF Site Managers.

D. NO MOTORIZED WATERCRAFT are generally permitted on Club waters. In rare instances, where research needs require, electric trolling motors may be permitted, but only after Club approval as to type of motor and time and location of use.

5. *Incidental and visual impacts:*

Research should be designed to minimize 'casual' impact due to foot or vehicular traffic to, from, and around field sites. Research on the lands of the Huron Mountain Club should be designed to minimize visual impact.