

Animal Ethics Conditions - Forest Permit (Non-commercial Research)

BACKGROUND

The Animal Research Act 1985, and Animal Research Regulation 2010, protect the welfare of animals used for “research” purposes. The Act and Regulation apply only to vertebrate animals (mammals, birds, amphibians and fish) and specify a “Code of Practice” which provides guidelines for the handling of animals. Proposals to undertake fauna research in State forests must be evaluated by an Animal Care and Ethics Committee who, once the project is approved, will issue an Animal Research Authority. Holding a scientific licence does not exempt researchers from animal ethics considerations.

WHEN IS AN ANIMAL RESEARCH AUTHORITY REQUIRED?

Any activity (involving vertebrate animals) that involves the following activities is considered to be “research” and therefore requires an Animal Research Authority before the work can be undertaken.

- Field survey¹
- Field studies involving the handling of animals
- Field studies involving capture and release of animals (e.g. radio tracking)
- Collection and removal of live animals for research purposes
- Collection of voucher specimens (animals killed for reference purposes)

HOW DO I OBTAIN AN ANIMAL RESEARCH AUTHORITY?

Individuals from recognised research institutions (e.g. universities) should have their projects evaluated by that institution’s Animal Care and Ethics Committee (ACEC). A copy of the project proposal and the Animal Research Authority should then accompany the application for a Forest Permit – Non-commercial Research to work in State forests. Independent researchers and wildlife ecologists should apply to the Animal Welfare Unit (NSW Department of Primary Industries).

¹ With field surveys, projects involving only observations techniques (e.g. bird-watching, general observation of behaviour) do not require an Animal Research Authority. Projects involving trapping, handling of animals, spotlight observation, hair tubes and projects which may have vertebrate bycatch (wet pitfall for invertebrates) **DO** require an Authority.

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