

Forest Permit – Research – Conditions

Animal Ethics, Wildlife and Research in State Forests

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 from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) (National Parks and Wildlife Service) 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 survey*
- field studies involving the handling of animals
- field studies involving capture and release of animals (eg radio-tracking)
- collection and removal of live animals for research purposes
- collection of voucher specimens (animals killed for reference purposes)

* With field surveys, projects involving only observational techniques (eg 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.

How do I obtain an Animal Research Authority?

Individuals from recognised research institutions (eg 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 Special Purposes Permit for Research to work in State forests. Independent researchers and wildlife ecologists should apply to the Animal Welfare Unit (NSW Department of Primary Industries).

Further enquiries

For information on animal ethics requirements, contact The Secretary, Forests NSW Animal Care and Ethics Committee on (02) 9872 0111.