



## WILDLIFE ETHICS COMMITTEE

### Lodging a wildlife ethics application for statewide fauna surveys

The Department for Environment and Water (DEW), Zoos SA and the South Australian Museum (SAM) have formed a combined animal ethics committee, called the Wildlife Ethics Committee (WEC). The WEC may grant a statewide wildlife ethics approval to conduct multiple fauna surveys in South Australia. This approval is intended for researchers or consultants who have provided satisfactory reports on a previous WEC approval to carry out surveys on fauna in SA, and who can provide a set protocol that can apply to surveys at more than one location. In the first instance, this form of approval will be for 12 months. Based on satisfactory reporting, subsequent approvals of this kind may be granted for up to three years.

The WEC must receive a final report and an annual statistics form to finalise the previous approval, and be satisfied with the results lodged and the work that was carried out for the duration of the approval.

Researchers are required to complete the [wildlife studies form](#) located on the WEC website.

The WEC application form needs to address all methods and techniques that will be used during the 12 month approval, and explain all capture methods, tissue sampling, voucher specimen collection, tracking and monitoring technologies in detail.

Researchers are also required to submit credentials and experience of all persons listed on the application, including the principal researcher.

The WEC meet at least once every ten weeks. Refer to the [Wildlife Ethics Committee's](#) website for submission deadlines and meeting dates.

The WEC assesses all submissions at committee meetings and may grant a 12 month approval of a statewide project subject to the following conditions:

1. The Executive Officer must be notified as soon as a tender is received, and a list of proposed survey locations and dates for field work must be submitted (approximately 4–6 weeks prior to the commencement of any survey work being carried out).

Prior to any survey, applicants must establish the current state of knowledge of vertebrate diversity within the proposed survey area, and what species may be required as voucher specimens. The SAM holds the state's reference wildlife collections and can be consulted to clarify the current state of vertebrate specimen records from the proposed survey area. A species list of all specimen records that have been vouchered may be obtained from the [Atlas of Living Australia](#) website.

2. A critical element in fauna surveys is accurate, challengeable and reviewable taxonomic identifications. All applicants are expected to liaise with the South Australian Museum's Herpetology, Mammalogy and Ornithology Sections to seek advice on the identification of species, numbers, and species that may need to be collected as voucher specimens.
3. Any adverse incidents, including unplanned deaths, must be reported immediately by phone or email (attach [adverse incident report](#) form) to the Executive Officer of the WEC. Whenever possible, a necropsy should be conducted if the cause of death is unknown. Researchers are reminded that they must include in the report their determination of the likely cause or causes of each incidents, and outline the steps they took to minimise the likelihood of repeat incidents.
4. The researcher must promptly lodge a [minor amendment to approved project](#) form following any change in researcher, methodology, or animal numbers during the 12 month approval.
5. A progress report, using the [reporting and statistics](#) form, must be submitted within two months of each survey's completion, providing numbers of animals captured or collected.

*NOTE:* Holders of a statewide approval need to consult the [Use of live traps to capture terrestrial vertebrates policy](#) if it is proposed that a semi-permanent monitoring grid will be established, using pitfall traps left in the ground between surveys. All surveys incorporating such semi-permanent traps will need to include (using the [minor amendment to approved project](#) form) a nominee of the landholder or company who will be responsible for the maintenance and visual inspections of these traps between trapping events.

## **CONTACT**

Executive Officer – Wildlife Ethics Committee

Department for Environment and Water

Telephone: (08) 8463 6851 Email: [DEW.WildlifeEthicsCommittee@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEW.WildlifeEthicsCommittee@sa.gov.au)