

IACUC: Field Study Guidelines

USA IACUC defines a field study as a study performed on free-living vertebrates, not performed in the laboratory. The IACUC is responsible for oversight of vertebrate animal activities impacting animal behavior or their environment.*

KEY POINTS: This document discusses the following topics:

- Conditions for exemption from IACUC review
- OLAW requirements
- General instructions

CONDITIONS FOR EXEMPTION FROM IACUC REVIEW

A study can be considered EXEMPT from IACUC oversight if the field studies are only observational in nature and do not involve capturing/trapping or tagging; physical/chemical restraint; changing the environment in any way (including providing food and/or nesting material); and/or any procedure where the “observer” is in contact with the animal.

OLAW REQUIREMENTS

As per OLAW: the following information MUST be provided to the IACUC during the review of a field study proposal:

- where the activity will be conducted;
- what procedures will be involved;
- a brief description of how those procedures are likely to affect the biology and ecology of the study animals by describing the relationship of that species to the habitat and to other species found in the study area (including the nature and duration of potential effects); and
- Assurance that permit requirements of pertinent local, state, national, and international wildlife regulations will be obtained before work begins.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

If the study does not meet the conditions for EXEMPTION from review as detailed above, please submit an IACUC protocol through IRBNet to the IACUC. Follow the instructions on the USA IACUC website, including enrollment in OHP and completion of training requirements. Provide the information required by OLAW in the description section of the IACUC protocol application. Copies of permits can be uploaded into IRBnet as separate supporting documents.

Approved by: IACUC Committee

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*<https://olaw.nih.gov/guidance/fags>