



Research Policy

2012

1. General Principles

- 1.1. Research should support Marwell Wildlife's charitable delivery by contributing to the conservation of biological diversity and by sharing knowledge with the broader scientific community.
- 1.2. All projects must comply with relevant legislation and recognised standards of best practice.
- 1.3. Research is subject to risk assessment and must comply with Marwell Wildlife's health & safety policy.
- 1.4. The research process should be transparent and open to debate and scrutiny.
- 1.5. Researchers must conduct themselves in a professional manner, adopting high standards of ethical integrity, working in a collaborative and cooperative way with their co-workers, the broader scientific community and anyone else with whom they interact in the course of their work.

2. Research Management

- 2.1. Marwell Wildlife's research strategy, policy & procedure are under the management of the Director of Conservation.
- 2.2. Members of Marwell's scientific staff will be delegated the responsibility of reviewing proposals and managing projects, including facilitation of independent researchers and students. Their own proposals must be peer reviewed, internally and/or externally, before commencement.
- 2.3. All research proposals are subject to review including consideration of scientific rigour, academic supervision, ethics (see ethical review procedure), logistics, health & safety, and resource requirements including staff time and funding.
- 2.4. Projects may be subject to specific terms and conditions agreed in writing before commencement. Material changes arising during the course of a project must be agreed.
- 2.5. Details of all projects must be recorded on Marwell Wildlife's research database, with their status updated as they progress. The database helps our scientific staff track and manage projects and provides summary statistics for reporting Marwell Wildlife's contributions to science.
- 2.6. Scientific staff are responsible for providing regular updates on the status of projects under their leadership, including interim reports and contributions to an annual review.
- 2.7. Any disputes, complaints about conduct or other disagreements arising should be reported to the Director of Conservation who will arbitrate on the matter if it cannot be settled to the satisfaction of all parties involved.
- 2.8. Marwell Wildlife reserves the right to decline proposals and to terminate projects at any time.

3. Data Management

- 3.1. It is the responsibility of the Researcher to establish any requirements concerning data confidentiality with Marwell Wildlife or partner organisations from the outset.
- 3.2. It is the responsibility of the Researcher to establish a system for the safe storage and retention of data and / or samples in agreement with Marwell Wildlife.
- 3.3. Data collected must be available to Marwell Wildlife without restriction. The organisation reserves the right to retain, analyse, copy and distribute data to interested parties at its discretion.
- 3.4. All samples and / or data provided remain the property of Marwell Wildlife. Means of storage, location and custodianship must be recorded on the research database. Any changes, including disposal of data and / or samples, must be agreed in advance.
- 3.5. Marwell Wildlife retains rights to the commercial value or patentable inventions resulting from research or data collection.

4. Publications

- 4.1. Consensus over authorship should be agreed between contributors from the outset, with the principal author taking responsibility for coordinating the process and meeting agreed project deliverables, including submission of publications as appropriate.
- 4.2. Authorship may include any person who has directly participated in the conception or execution of the project.
- 4.3. The principal author should ensure that all people and organisations making a material contribution to the project whether through facilitation, funding or other means, are appropriately acknowledged.
- 4.4. Scientific publications including all forms of written or other media must be approved in advance by the Director of Conservation or delegated member of staff.
- 4.5. Electronic copies of publications or other deliverables must be lodged with the Director of Conservation.

5. Studies with Animals

- 5.1. Studies with animals must benefit the conservation and / or husbandry and care of the species.
- 5.2. Projects must comply with relevant legislation aimed at protecting animal welfare and endangered species. By extension this will be applied to all vertebrates and invertebrates regardless of whether they are part of Marwell's animal collection, maintained in semi-free ranging conditions or wild populations.

- 5.3. Research proposals should demonstrate understanding of species biology and natural history traits, and ensure these are taken into account.
- 5.4. Studies must employ the 'least disruptive' technique available to minimise interference with individuals, populations and ecosystems. The 3Rs (replacement, reduction & refinement) should be considered as part of the design and conduct of animal studies and a cost-benefit analysis may be required to justify chosen methodology as a part of an ethical review.
- 5.5. Home office guidance will be sought when planning a UK-based study which proposes the manipulation of animals or their environment, if there is any doubt about whether the procedures are regulated by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (1986). Such proposals must be reviewed, in advance, by Marwell's Ethics Committee, and there is a presumption against allowing studies that require a Home Office licence.
- 5.6. Where identification of individual animals in a group is required for the study, this will be based on natural features or existing artificial markers (e.g. ear tags). If this is not possible, non-invasive forms of identification may be considered in accordance with Marwell's Animal Welfare Policy.
- 5.7. Biological samples should be taken from animals by using non-invasive techniques, excess material acquired during routine veterinary surveillance or required veterinary intervention, or during wildlife management operations undertaken for conservation purposes and licensed by relevant statutory authorities.
- 5.8. Scientific staff are responsible for monitoring impacts of projects upon animals. Depending on the nature of the research, a pilot study or simultaneous evaluation of animal welfare may be required.

6. Studies with People

- 6.1. Scientific staff are responsible for ensuring that informed consent is sought from people participating in studies indicating their understanding of the nature and purpose of the study and their role within it. Records of how, when and from whom informed consent was obtained, must be kept.
- 6.2. Studies of public behaviour, without the need to seek informed consent may only be undertaken in situations where people would reasonably expect to be observable by strangers, taking into account cultural norms. An ethical review may be required to justify the chosen methodology
- 6.3. Where informed consent is necessary, the withholding of some information about the scope and specific aims of the project from participants may be acceptable in exceptional circumstances when it is essential to the integrity of the study. However, an ethical review is required to justify the chosen methodology and any withheld information must be disclosed to the participants at the earliest feasible opportunity.
- 6.4. People consenting to take part in studies must:
 - have the opportunity to be debriefed at the conclusion of their participation or at the earliest feasible opportunity, to inform them of the nature and outcomes of the study and to address any misconceptions the participant may have.

- be informed at first contact of their right to withdraw, at any time, regardless of any incentives offered. Upon withdrawal, any data personally identifying those individuals (including recordings & video) must be destroyed.
- be informed that their inclusion in the study is dependent upon participating in the manner agreed to when informed consent was given. Marwell Wildlife may remove participants from studies where this has not been possible.

6.5. Risk of any detrimental impact upon people as a result of participating in studies must be considered at the outset and an ethical review may be required.