

## Wildlife Research Permit and Collection Licence

### What is considered wildlife research?

Alberta Environment and Parks considers wildlife research to include, but not be limited to, scientific research, applied science, surveying, inventory and monitoring and educational activities. For simplicity, this suite of activities will be referred to as 'research'.

### Why do I need a Wildlife Research Permit and Collection Licence?

Alberta's *Wildlife Act* protects wildlife from various activities, which are listed under the definition of "hunt" [section 1(1)(o)]. Under the act, without a licence that authorizes "hunting", a person cannot undertake the following activities in relation to wildlife:

- (i) shoot at, harass or worry,
- (ii) chase, pursue, follow after or on the trail of, search for, flush, stalk or lie in wait for,
- (iii) capture or wilfully injure or kill,
- (iv) attempt to capture, injure or kill, or
- (v) assist another person to hunt in a manner specified in subclause (i), (ii), (iii) or (iv) while that other person is so hunting;

Many research-related activities fall under the above definition of "hunt" and, therefore, require a licence. Research-related "hunting" activities are authorized under a Collection Licence, which enables its holder not only to capture or collect wildlife, but to engage in research or inventory activities that involve following, chasing, or otherwise interacting with wildlife. In the *Wildlife Act*, activities that are not considered "hunting" are outlined in section 1(2)(a); these include watching, photographing, drawing – *as long as these activities do not include actions listed under the definition of hunting.*

The Wildlife Regulation [sections 46+47] states that to have a Collection Licence you have to have a permit (e.g., a Research or Falconry Permit). A Research Permit [section 81+82] authorizes its holder to possess wildlife and live controlled animals. This is why both a Research Permit and Collection Licence are needed to conduct research on wildlife.

### What types of activities require a Wildlife Research Permit and Collection Licence?

Under Alberta's *Wildlife Act*, Alberta Environment and Parks has the responsibility for the management and protection of wildlife. Proposed research activity, on public land (including Provincial Parks) or private land, requires a Research Permit and Collection Licence (a "permit") if it involves any of the following:

- collecting/possessing live or dead wildlife or wildlife parts (does not include feces or naturally shed, "exuviated", hair/feathers/antlers);
- the potential to involve handling, disruption or disturbance of wildlife (e.g., aerial surveys, radio telemetry, techniques that use dogs to locate wildlife or samples, electronic call playbacks, unmanned aerial drones (UAVs), use of artificial lights or deterrents);
- activity that occurs in sensitive habitats during restricted activity periods as delineated in the Wildlife Land Use Guidelines (<http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-land-use-guidelines/default.aspx>) and/or within the Enhanced Approval Process/Master Schedule of Standards and Conditions <http://aep.alberta.ca/forms-maps-services/industry-online->

services/public-lands-dispositions/step-one-pre-application/lat-overview.aspx [found under "LAT Reports"]];

- activity that is included in a Class Protocol (e.g., electronic call playback).

### **Do I require a Permit or Licence for non-invasive research or collections?**

It depends. A Wildlife Research Permit and Collection Licence are generally not required if the research technique does not, or is not likely to disturb wildlife (e.g., some passive survey techniques like point counts, spot mapping, recordings, random transect surveys). However, a Research Permit and Collection Licence are required for passive techniques being conducted in sensitive habitats during restricted activity periods identified in the Wildlife Land Use Guidelines (<http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-land-use-guidelines/default.aspx>) and/or within the Enhanced Approval Process/Master Schedule of Standards and Conditions <http://aep.alberta.ca/forms-maps-services/industry-online-services/public-lands-dispositions/step-one-pre-application/lat-overview.aspx> [found under "LAT Reports"]).

### **How do I apply for a Wildlife Research Permit and Collection Licence?**

Starting June 26, Environment and Parks is offering a new system for applying for Wildlife Research Permits and Collection Licences. The new system is housed within the Online Permitting and Clearance (OPaC) system that is already used by Alberta Culture and Alberta Parks. The Wildlife Research system is joining with the existing system for applying for Parks Research and Collection Permits. New features include:

- One-time registration that provides users with individual password-protected accounts to complete, submit and track the progress of applications
- Communication by e-mail, notifying users when applications have been received, requesting changes if necessary and sending back approved permits and licences

Besides the anticipated ease of application and communication, a significant change is that the permit and licence will now be electronically generated, signed and distributed. Once it is approved, you will receive it almost instantly. A bonus is that in addition to allowing researchers to apply for either a wildlife or a parks permit on its own, the new system will also allow researchers who are working on wildlife in parks to apply for both permits with a single application.

### **How long does it take to process an application?**

All new and renewal wildlife research applications undergo review by a regional Wildlife Biologist or Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch Wildlife Biologist ("Permit Coordinators"), depending on where you are proposing to do your research. Applications are reviewed for animal care aspects of the proposed work and, if animals are being handled, may be forwarded for review by the Alberta Wildlife Animal Care Committee (AWACC) before approval and issuance. The time frame to review and process each application is dependent on a number of factors including:

- 1) **Following AWACC Class Protocols** - our website (<http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-research-collection/default.aspx>) contains Class Protocols that provide AWACC-approved guidelines for a number of methods utilized by researchers in the province of Alberta. Following these Class Protocols will fast-track your application. However, any proposed methods not included within the set of approved Class Protocols will undergo a more detailed review, which may result in it being referred to AWACC; this can take **up to a month** to complete.

Non-invasive procedures are not reviewed by the AWACC.

- 2) **Time of the year** - February to June is our busiest time for processing applications. During this period, we receive upwards of 300 applications. Each application is processed and

reviewed “first come, first serve” and depending on where your application is within the bulk of these applications, processing may take **4-6 weeks**. **It is advised that applications for Research Permits be submitted at least 1 month prior to the commencement of work.**

**Permits are issued by the Resource Management Regional Office in the region where you will be doing all, or the majority, of the proposed work. The exception to this is for educational projects (e.g., those relating to museum/school specimen collection), which are issued by Fish and Wildlife Policy (Edmonton). Permits are emailed to the applicant via the Online Permitting and Clearance (OPaC) system.**

### **Is it possible to receive one permit for research or collections at multiple sites?**

Yes. As long as the proposed methods in the application do not change between work sites, one permit can cover multiple work sites or multiple species. You must, however, list the geographic and taxonomic breadth of work that is being proposed, and clearly demonstrate your experience and proficiency to conduct the proposed activities. If you do not know the location of the sites on the initial permit application, you are required to amend your current permit and licence **by submitting an amendment application** through the Online Permitting and Clearance (OPaC) system with the appropriate changes to the locations noted.

### **Is it possible to amend a Permit and Licence?**

Yes. Amendments to current permits are possible and can have a quick turnaround, especially if the changes are minor. To do this you must **access the Online Permitting and Clearance (OPaC) system and select “Amend/Renew Parks and/or Wildlife Permit and Licence”**. Select “Parks/Wildlife Amendment” and choose the permit/licence you want to amend. Make any changes that are appropriate (e.g., adding to the list of “Other Project Members”, or altering methods), and submit the amendment application (along with an updated research proposal if methods have changed). If the changes to the original methods conflict with approved Class Protocols, the application may require review by the AWACC and may take longer to be processed.

When you receive the amended Permit and Licence, destroy all copies of the old one and carry the new one with you (a copy of the original permit will remain as a record within the OPaC system).

### **Do I have to submit my data for uploading to FWMIS (Fisheries and Wildlife Management Information System) prior to renewing a Research Permit and Collection Licence?**

Yes. As a condition to all issued permits and licences, data must be received in condition suitable for entry into FWMIS prior to a new or renewal permit being issued (this does not include amendments to current permits). Information on how to do this is provided with the issued permit and on our web site (<http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-research-collection/default.aspx>). Submitting the complete data set promptly and in the proper format will expedite permit renewal.

### **Do I require a Collection Licence for falconry?**

Yes, a Collection Licence is required for falconry. Applicants must have a valid Recreational or Commercial Falconry Permit. Application forms for collection of falconry birds from the wild can be found at: <http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-research-collection/default.aspx>.

### **If have an Alberta Wildlife Research Permit/Collection Licence, will I require any other permits?**

You might. It is up to the applicant to ensure that all appropriate permits are in place, for example (but not limited to), those for federal migratory birds, federal species at risk, or provincial parks.

If you are doing wildlife research in a Provincial Park or Protected Area, you can apply for an Alberta Parks Research and Collection Permit within the Online Permitting and Clearance (OPaC) system at the same time as you apply for your Wildlife Research Permit/Collection Licence.

Additional information on research in Alberta Parks can be found at:

- <http://albertaparks.ca/albertaparksca/science-research.aspx>.

Information on some federal permits can be found at:

- <https://www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=12AF79B6-1> .