

Fort Worth Zoo Conservation Research & Internal Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) Guidelines

Policy

In order to ensure that research is in keeping with the Zoo's mission and is in conformity with high standards of humane care, all research projects (internal and external) at the Fort Worth Zoo must be submitted to and approved by the Research Committee and if appropriate, IACUC, prior to initiation. In general, invasive or manipulative research which will result in serious physical or psychological discomfort to zoo animals will not be allowed (but all projects are evaluated on a case by case basis).

Application

1. All applications for research at the Fort Worth Zoo must be sponsored by an internal (Zoo) Project Coordinator. The internal Project Coordinator serves as a liaison between the Principal Investigator and the Research Committee Chair to ensure that proper documents are filed.
2. Applications will be made by completing a Research Proposal Form and submitting this form to the Zoo's Research Committee Chair [by either the internal Project Coordinator or the Principal Investigator].
3. Research Proposal Forms should be received two weeks prior to the monthly IACUC meeting for committee review (Level 4-5 projects)
4. Applications from Fort Worth Zoo staff must follow all outlined procedures.

Project Type

1. Level 1
 - conservation surveys
 - behavior observations
2. Level 2
 - non-living material (e.g. necropsy tissues, banked serum or urine)
 - involving invertebrate animal species
3. Level 3
 - non- invasive sample collection from vertebrate species (e. g. fecal or urine collection)
4. Level 4
 - non-invasive or invasive manipulation that requires animal restraint for a short period (e.g. ultrasound, injections, blood sampling)
 - diet manipulation for the purposes of research
5. Level 5
 - invasive sample collection that involves tranquilization and/or anesthesia (e.g. ultrasound, blood sampling)

Evaluation Criteria

1. Scientific merit (content, project design and methods, appropriate literature review, qualifications of personnel, importance for management, likelihood of success)
2. Conservation merit (support of appropriate species management group if appropriate, conservation status of species)
3. Logistics (animals, personnel, time, funds)
4. Humane concerns (degree of stress compared with project justification)
5. Educational/collaborative merit (dissemination of results, involvement of other zoos or institutions)

Review

1. Level 1 -3 projects will receive an expedited review by the Research Chair unless any member calls for a full committee review. Research Committee members include Committee Chair, Director of Animal Collections, Asst. Director of Animal Collections and Project Coordinator.
2. Level 4 and 5 projects will receive full IACUC committee review. IACUC members include the Research Committee Chair, Director of Animal Collections, Asst. Director of Animal Collections, Veterinarian, Curator of area in which the study is to be conducted, and the PR Manager.
3. Level 4 or 5 projects that may be conducted opportunistically during any instances of manipulation, restraint, anesthesia or surgery for the primary purpose of routine health evaluation, disease diagnosis or genetic management will not require IACUC review. These projects will, however, still be reviewed by the Research Committee.
4. Level 4 and 5 projects will either receive or be declined approval as written by majority vote. Those projects declined as written may be accepted with changes outlined in writing to the Principal Investigator by the IACUC Committee Chair.
5. Re-submitted projects will receive an expedited review by the Research Committee for compliance with requested changes.
6. Principal Investigators will receive notice in writing on all projects as to the status of their proposal.

Additional Documentation

1. All projects involving sample disposition outside the Zoo, will require a completed Sample Collection Form.
2. Copies of any appropriate permits (e.g. CITES) must be provided.

Acknowledgments

1. Reports or published articles resulting from the analysis of data or samples collected at the Fort Worth Zoo should acknowledge the Zoo in the publication.
2. The Research Committee Chair should receive a copy of any publication resulting from the analysis of data or samples collected at the Fort Worth Zoo.

Research guidelines and forms used by the Fort Worth Zoo are adapted from those developed for the following institutions: Bronx Zoo/Wildlife Conservation Society, Knoxville Zoo, Oklahoma City Zoo and Riverbanks Zoo.