



POSITION STATEMENT

USE OF BATS IN FIELD AND LABORATORY RESEARCH

Bat World Sanctuary understands the need to increase knowledge through field and laboratory research with the use of live specimens. In accordance with the Office of Lab Animal Welfare *8th Edition Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, this position statement establishes guidance for the use of live bats in both field and laboratory research, and addresses crucial questions of housing, care, and final disposition of such animals.

In Chapter 1, *Key Concepts*, the *Guide* states that

“The goal of the *Guide* is to promote the **humane** (*emphasis added*) care and use of laboratory animals by providing information that will enhance animal well-being, the quality of research, and the advancement of scientific knowledge that is relevant to both humans and animals. The Committee recognizes that the use of different species in research is expanding and that researchers and institutions will face new and unique challenges in determining how to apply the *Guide* in these situations.”

In Chapter 2, the *Guide* further states

“The *Guide* does not purport to be a compendium of all information regarding field biology and methods used in wildlife investigations, but the basic principles of humane care and use apply to animals living under natural conditions. IACUCS engaged in the review of field studies are encouraged to consult with a qualified wildlife biologist.”

While the collection of specimens for study has long been accepted as part of field and laboratory research, it is Bat World Sanctuary’s position that researchers must refrain from euthanizing animals for the purpose of adding to museum collections, especially when to do so threatens an already at-risk population. Museum specimens may be gathered when specimens are found already dead without impacting the survivability of these species. Data should instead be collected via tissue and hair sampling, measurements and photographs.

It is Bat World Sanctuary’s position that IACUCs reviewing research protocols involving wildlife should not only consult with qualified wildlife biologists, but also with private-sector experts in the captive care and maintenance of those species.

Additionally, researchers working with animals in any setting are charged by the Animal Welfare Act with providing appropriate, humane care for the animals with which they work, and are held to a high ethical standard in promoting the responsible use of animals in research. Accordingly, it is Bat World Sanctuary’s position that any bats used in field or laboratory research must be surrendered to a qualified, permitted/licensed rehabilitation or sanctuary facility upon conclusion of the research, to be released back to their natural habitat or, in cases where this is not possible, to be afforded permanent sanctuary and care for the remainder of their lives.