



WEST MIDLAND SAFARI PARK (WMSP)

RESEARCH POLICY

Research and Conservation Officer

West Midland Safari and Leisure Park

Spring Grove

Bewdley

DY12 1LF

E-mail: katie.mcdonald@wmsp.co.uk

Telephone: +44 (0)1299 402114 ext: 270

Website: www.wmsp.co.uk

Introduction

- WMSP supports and encourages all scientific research relevant to its mission: **To facilitate and initiate research that contributes to species conservation and the welfare of animals in our care.**
- This policy applies to **ALL** researchers wishing to undertake research at WMSP or researchers using data/samples collected at/from WMSP.
- All proposed research must demonstrate a potential benefit to one or more of the following
 1. Animal care and welfare at WMSP.
 2. The wider Zoo Community.
 3. The conservation of species and habitats .
- Research must develop skills, knowledge and/or understanding in one or more of the following areas:
 - Conservation (including species conservation and habitat conservation).
 - Species Ecology (including behaviour, feeding, physiology and reproductive biology).
 - Species Taxonomy and Systematics (including genetics, evolution, morphology).
 - Animal Health and Welfare (including husbandry and veterinary care).
 - Conservation Education and Marketing.

Guidance Notes for Researchers, Research Students and Academic Supervisors.

All researchers need to await approval, from the Research Officer, prior to their first data collection visit to WMSP.

Once approved and registered, and £10 research pass charge has been paid, researchers have access to public areas during normal opening hours of the open season and during pre-agreed hours of the closed season.

For general animal and project enquiries, researchers are to contact the Research Officer and to refrain from approaching the keeping staff, although staff are supportive of research and will help out where ever possible, it must be noted that they have their own constraints and requirements.

From time to time unexpected or unavoidable events can occur that may interfere with the research project. Animals may have to be moved, or may not be available for study at short notice. For example, animals may require emergency veterinary treatment or studbook keepers may require animals to be moved to another collection for breeding purposes.

WMSP reserves the right to terminate a research project at any time and will not be held responsible for any problems or costs arising out of research undertaken at WMSP.

Student researchers will have regular meetings with the Research Officer, in order for progress of projects to be monitored. Professional researchers will meet with the Research Officer when requested to do so.

By signing the Research Proposal, researchers and their supervisors agree to be bound by the terms and conditions as set out in the Research Policy and agree to adhere to WMSP Health and Safety Guidelines for Researchers.

Ethical Policy Relating to Research

WMSP are fully committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards in the conduct of their research. Therefore WMSP encourages researchers to use non-invasive research methods wherever possible. Sample/observational data, for research purposes, will have to be taken opportunistically unless prior agreement is made with research officer, Director of Wildlife, Head of relevant animal section and veterinary nurse.

- The Director of Wildlife, Assistant Director of Wildlife, Research Officer, Veterinary Nurse and relevant Head Keeper(s) at WMSP, will review all research proposals to ensure that projects do not cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm to the animals. Where necessary the Park's veterinary consultants and ethics committee will be consulted.
- WMSP acts within the laws of the United Kingdom and abides by all the ethical policies of the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquaria (BIAZA), the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) and the World Association of Zoos and Aquaria (WAZA). These policies can be read in full at their respective websites: www.biaza.org.uk, www.eaza.net and www.waza.org.
- WMSP does not hold a Home Office Licence nor would WMSP allow any research to be undertaken that would require such a license. I.e. "Any scientific procedure which may cause any animal pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm" (The Home Office Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986).

WMSP will not:

- restrain or forcibly separate animals from co-specifics solely for the purposes of research, except where it would not cause the animals any pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm. For example, animals that are trained to be restrained and/or separated for routine veterinary and/ or husbandry procedures.
- introduce any changes in husbandry or modifications of enclosures that are likely to cause an adverse reaction or reduction in animal health and/or welfare, solely for the purposes of research.

WMSP will allow:

- tissue samples to be taken from post mortem specimens for the purposes of research (subject to the necessary protocols mentioned above and any health and safety considerations).
- samples such as hair or blood to be taken from animals, for research, that have been restrained for husbandry or veterinary reasons, provided that taking these samples does not extend the period of restraint, increase stress, or necessitate a procedure that would otherwise not be performed.

Project application and completion process:

Preparation for application

Researcher should

1. Select a project area from the Priority Research Projects. These are areas selected as priority for research, by WMSP. (The park may consider project proposals in on topics that do not fit into these areas if there is a clear and substantial benefit to welfare of WMSP animals or species conservation.)
2. Obtain adequate knowledge and relevant information regarding the animals, appropriate for research, prior to application and undertaking projects.
3. Read the Zoo Research Guidelines on the BIAZA website, prior to application and undertaking projects.
4. Discuss project idea with university supervisor.

Application

1. Researcher will complete a Research Proposal Form down loadable from WMSP website or from Research Officer (RO).
2. Research proposals will be considered, by the Director of Wildlife (DOW), relevant Head Keeper(s) (HK), and the RO with respect to WMSP's ethical policies, the practical implications of the research for staff and animals and the scientific validity of the research. WMSP reserves the right to reject any research proposal.
3. (if proposal passed) 1st interview with RO to agree details of project and suggest any changes to proposal. Researcher carries out preliminary obs session if conducting a behavioural project.
4. RO will email WMSP research policy and paperwork to researcher.
5. 1st data collection visit researcher must:
 1. Bring completed Visiting Researcher Declaration Form, sample request form (if applicable) and health questionnaire in order to register their details with WMSP and agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of the Research Policy.(If researcher not visiting forms can be sent by post).
 2. Pay research pass fee (£10) and RO will then issue research pass.

Data gathering and project completion

1. Researcher will gather data on schedule agreed with RO.

2. RO will maintain regular contact with researcher and university project supervisor during this phase.
3. On completion of data collection RO and researcher will have exit meeting and research pass will be returned.
4. Within a fortnight of data collection completion researcher will give WMSP a summary of work completed and outline of work still to be completed on project.
5. By a fortnight before project hand in/publication date Researcher will give WMSP an electronic file of all raw data and a copy of current project draft. RO will then reply with comment within a week. If researcher misses 2 week deadline RO cannot guarantee to give feedback.
6. After final work has been submitted WMSP requires a copy of the final manuscript and, if project was a piece of work that has been graded, supervisor must make WMSP aware of the standard the work was judged to be.

Conditions of Undertaking Research at WMSP

Before any projects can begin, all researchers are required to read, understand and agree to comply with the terms and conditions of the Research Policy, the Health and Safety Guidelines for Researchers and WMSP Animal Reserves Health and Safety Document.

In signing the research policy Researchers/research students agree that they will:

- arrange accommodation and/or travel to/from WMSP prior to undertaking research. The Research Officer can advise on accommodation within the area if necessary.
- fully co-operate with all WMSP employees at all times and respect their constraints and requirements.
- to use the companies' internet, e-mail and any other resources provided by WMSP only in relation to the research project and not for personal use. No resources are to be removed from site without explicit written consent from the Director of Wildlife.
- provide WMSP with:
 - a full Research Project Report (which may be in the form of a scientific publication) at least two weeks prior to submission of their Project Report (either for academic purposes or scientific publication).
 - provide WMSP with an interim report (1-2 pages long) within 1 month of research being undertaken at WMSP.
 - an electronic copy of raw data collected (See Ownership, Authorship and Publication agreements).
 - inform the Research Officer immediately, if it becomes clear that for any reason projects are going to extend past the proposed finished date, or if projects can't be completed.
 - Repay any funding by WMSP, for a research project that can't be completed

WMSP agrees that:

- Researchers' details will be held for our use only and will not be passed to any third parties without explicit consent.
- The Research Officer :
 1. will supply researchers with basic information about animals being studied and will facilitate the practical requirements of the study.
 2. will give general academic supervision but will not provide detailed tuition or undertake data collection, data entry or detailed statistics unless specified in a separate agreement with researchers.
 3. meet regularly with research officer on schedule agreed by both parties.

WMSP reserves the right to:

- terminate a research project and withdraw a Research Pass at any time i.e. in cases where the WMSP are dissatisfied in any way with the researchers' conduct.
- postpone or terminate any project due to animal health issues, such as Foot and Mouth, Blue Tongue or Avian Influenza.

WMSP makes no warranty that any advice, information or samples given to researchers during the course of a project, by any WMSP employee is accurate, fit for a particular purpose, viable, uncontaminated or safe. WMSP will not be held responsible for any problems arising from research carried out at WMSP.

Ownership, Authorship and Publication Agreements:

- Data ownership must be discussed and agreed with WMSP before the project commences. WMSP reserves the right to have an electronic copy of raw data collected, regardless of ownership. A contract of agreement will be drawn up prior to projects commencing.
- Data and samples acquired at WMSP may not be used by researchers for any other purpose than those stated in the Research Proposal and may not be passed to any third party without the explicit written consent of WMSP, regardless of ownership.
- Where data is owned by WMSP, data may be passed onto third parties without notifying the researcher.
- If a third party requires access to data that is not owned by WMSP, permission will be sought from the researcher.
- In all cases, authorship and acknowledgements are to be agreed prior to projects commencing. If not co-author WMSP will be credited in the acknowledgements of any resulting publications.
- The contents of Research Project Reports may be used by WMSP for non-scientific publicity purposes without notifying the researcher. For example, in WMSP annual reports and information provided under the Research and Conservation section of the WMSP website.
- If WMSP wishes to use the content of a Research Project Report for scientific purposes, following completion of a project, then permission will be sought from all authors. Any

publications will be sent to all authors at least two weeks prior to submission to allow for constructive comments and feedback.

Health and Safety Guidelines for Researchers.

Researchers will comply with all directives, such as health and safety rules and regulations, at all times whilst on the premises of WMSP. A copy of these can be found in the WMSP Animal Reserves Health and Safety Document, which will be issued to researchers prior to projects commencing.

Personal Health and Safety

- Researchers must complete a health questionnaire prior to projects commencing. This questionnaire is strictly confidential and functions to identify any conditions that may pose a risk to researchers, WMSP employees or animals.
- It is the responsibility of the researcher (and for student projects the Supervisor) to ensure that appropriate Safe Working Practices and Risk Assessments are in place for the proposed work on WMSP premises and travel to/from these premises, prior to research commencing.
- Researchers working on the premises of WMSP are covered by the public liability insurance and a copy is available upon request.
- Under no circumstances are researchers to have unsupervised physical contact with any animals at WMSP, all animals should be regarded as dangerous and researchers should not under any circumstances enter any enclosure with any animal, without supervision.
- Researchers are not permitted to enter off show holding areas, unless required to do so for their work. Permission must be sought from the Research Officer and keeper responsible before entering any such area and researchers must be supervised in off show areas at all times.
- Researchers must inform the Research Officer of dates, times and locations of work. If these change for any reason, the Research Officer must be informed immediately.
- Researchers must not wander around the premises of WMSP outside of public opening hours. (Full details regarding opening hours can be found on the WMSP website). All access times must be authorised by the Research Officer.
- Researchers are not permitted to undertake any keeping duties or operate any machines or tools within WMSP premises. This includes carrying heavy loads, climbing ladders and chopping food. If such activities are required in order to undertake the project, this will have to be agreed with the Research Officer and academic institution, and a Risk Assessment must also be in place prior to undertaking any such activity.
- In the event of animal escape or fire, researchers will follow the instructions of WMSP staff at all times.
- In the event of a fire, human safety is paramount, livestock and buildings are secondary and researchers should not intervene under any circumstances.
- If researchers become injured whilst working on the premises of WMSP, they must inform a keeper or the Research Officer immediately and a listed first aider must be contacted.
- Assembly points and a list of first aiders can be found in the WMSP Animal Reserves Health and Safety Document.

Animal Health

- Smoking is not permitted when working with the animals or in any building on the premises of WMSP. Researchers must adhere to WMSP's smoking policy as set out in the WMSP Animal Reserves Health and Safety Document.
- Researchers must tell a keeper immediately if they see anything in an enclosure that may harm an animal or if they think an animal is sick or injured.
- Researchers are not to feed any animal without prior permission from the keepers responsible for the animal.
- Researchers are not to introduce any enrichment, food or other item into an enclosure, or allow an animal to have access to such items, without the explicit consent of the Research Officer and Deputy Warden or Senior Keeper responsible.
- Researchers are not permitted to unlock or open any gate, hatch, or door to an animal enclosure or building unless specifically instructed to do so by a keeper.

Visitor Safety and Public Relations

- Researchers will wear their research passes at all times whilst undertaking work on WMSP premises.
- Visitors may ask questions. Researchers will always be polite and answer questions if they can. If researchers can't answer a question they should not try to guess, but inform the member of public that they do not know the answer and try to direct them to someone who can answer their question(s).
- If researchers see visitors attempting to enter animal enclosures, including getting out of their vehicle in an animal reserve, or off show areas, researchers must politely ask them to stop. If they become confrontational then the researcher must contact a member of staff.
- Researchers are not to talk to any media reporters or other parties about the Park's business and management, information gained in relation to these matters whilst working at WMSP is strictly confidential.

Visiting Researcher Declaration Form.

All investigating researchers involved with undertaking a research project on the premises of WMSP; must complete, sign and return a copy of this form **BEFORE** the project commences. Students must also obtain their academic tutors signature on this form.

Investigating Researcher's Title and Full Name:

Current Contact Address:

.....

Tel: **Mobile:** **E-mail:**

Permanent Contact Address (If different from above E.g. Parents):

.....

Tel: **Mobile:** **E-mail:**

Sex:..... **Nationality:**..... **DOB:**.....

Academic Institution:

Name and Contact Details of Academic Supervisor (students only):

.....

.....

Course/Level:

Reason for Research Project (e.g. Dissertation, Scientific Publication etc.):

Research Project Title:

.....

Declaration.

I have read, understood and agree that I (my student) will comply with the terms and conditions of the Research Policy and the Health and Safety Guidelines for Researchers:

Signature.....Date.....

Academic Supervisor:.(Student's only).....Date.....

An interim report will be submitted to WMSP within 1 month, an electronic copy of the full Project Report and an electronic copy of the raw data will be submitted to WMSP on completion. If funding is supplied by WMSP, this will be repaid in full, should the project not be completed, for any reason.

Signature.....Date.....

Academic Supervisor:.(Student's only).....Date.....

Visiting Researcher Health Questionnaire

Introduction

WMSP is committed to the health and safety of its employees, animals and visitors. As part of this commitment all visiting researchers are required to complete a health questionnaire prior to projects commencing.

This health questionnaire is part of WMSP's fulfilment of legal responsibilities in respect to The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to enable WMSP to identify any potential risks or to improve the ability of a visiting researcher to undertake the full duties of their research project.

The completed questionnaire will only be seen by the Human Resources Officer and when necessary, the Director of Wildlife. All information will be treated with the strictest confidence.

Please complete the form as fully and as honestly as you can.

Visiting Researcher Health Questionnaire.

Title and Full Name.....

Name and Address of GP (Emergency use only).....

Details for Next of Kin (Emergency Use Only).....

Please complete the following questions by ticking the appropriate box. If the answer is yes then please provide any details that you feel would aid WMSP in an emergency, reduce any potential risk or enable you to carry out necessary tasks.

Do you suffer from any of the following?

Condition	Yes	No	If Yes Please Give Appropriate Details
Visual defects/eye conditions (including colour blindness).			
Hearing defects/ear conditions			
Severe anxiety, depression, or other psychiatric disorders.			
Fainting attacks, blackouts, epilepsy or fits			
Recurrent headaches/migraines			
Vertigo, giddiness or tinnitus			
Heart disease or high blood pressure			
Asthma, bronchitis, TB or other chest disease			
Any blood disorder			

Diabetes, thyroid or other gland problems			
Any impairment to immunity of infection			
Hay fever or allergies to animals			
Any physical disability necessitating special aids, or requirements			
Any other relevant medical condition, physical or mental.			

Have you recently undergone any surgery or are you on any medication that you feel WMSP ought to be aware of? Y/N

If Yes Please Give Details.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Are you allergic to any types of medication? Y/N

If Yes Please Give Details.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Do you have up to date vaccinations for tetanus? Y/N

Declaration

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, the information is correct.

Signature.....Date.....

Request for Data/Samples Collected at WMSP.

All investigating researchers wishing to utilise data/samples collected on the premises of WMSP; must complete, sign and return a copy of this form **BEFORE** the project commences. Students must also obtain their academic tutors signature on this form.

Investigating Researcher's Title and Full Name:

Current Contact Address:

.....

Tel: **Mobile:** **E-mail:**

Permanent Contact Address (If different from above E.g. Parents):

.....

Tel: **Mobile:** **E-mail:**

Sex..... **Nationality**..... **DOB**.....

Academic Institution:

Name and Contact Details of Academic Supervisor (students only):

.....

.....

Course/Level:

Reason for Research Project (e.g. Dissertation, Scientific Publication etc.):

.....

Research Project Title:

.....

Data/Samples Required:.....

.....

Declaration.

I have read, understood and agree that I (my student) will comply with the terms and conditions of the Research Policy and the Health and Safety Guidelines for Researchers:

Signature.....Date.....

Academic Supervisor:.(Student's only).....Date.....

An interim report will be submitted to WMSP within 1 month, an electronic copy of the full Project Report and an electronic copy of the raw data will be submitted to WMSP on completion. If funding is supplied by WMSP, this will be repaid in full, should the project not be completed, for any reason.

Signature.....Date.....

Academic Supervisor:.(Student's only).....Date.....