

The Wildlife Society Code of Ethics

(As amended and approved March 2019)

Section 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS -- All members of the Society must pledge upon application, renewal, or recertification to uphold and conduct their professional and membership-related activities in accordance with the Code of Ethics as prescribed by the Society in the TWS Code of Ethics as prescribed by the Society and set forth in Sections 2 and 3 below. A person accepting membership in the Society incurs the obligation to conduct his or her professional and membership-related activities in a responsible and ethical manner. The Code of Ethics sets forth the required principles of conduct for Society members.

Section 2. GENERAL PROVISIONS -- Members of the Society have a responsibility for contributing to an understanding of human society's proper relationship with natural resources, and in particular for determining the role of wildlife in satisfying human needs and addressing the management of wildlife-related impacts. All members of the Society shall adhere to the following principles and practices in the conduct of their professional and membership-related activities. All members shall:

1. Subscribe to the highest standards of integrity and conduct and will proactively promote and address ethical behavior.
2. Recognize research and scientific management of wildlife species, their environments, and their stakeholders as primary goals.
3. Encourage and sustain the use of sound biological, physical, and social science information in management decisions.
4. Disseminate information to promote understanding of, and appreciation for, values of wildlife and their habitats.
5. Strive to increase the knowledge and skills needed to advance the practice of wildlife management.
6. Promote competence in the field of wildlife management by supporting high standards of education, employment, and performance.
7. Support fair and uniform standards of employment and treatment of those professionally engaged in the practice of wildlife management.
8. Refrain from speaking for or representing the Society or any of its Chapters, Sections, or Working Groups in any way, or implying such representation, without appointment or approval by the Council of the Society, its officers, or the Executive Boards of Chapters, Sections, or Working groups.

Section 3. STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT -- Members of the Society who are employed or otherwise engage in professional activity shall adhere to all provisions of the Code of Ethics, including the following Standards for Professional Conduct. These standards express the intent, practices, and procedures of the Code of Ethics as they particularly apply to wildlife professionals. Wildlife professionals shall at all times:

1. Uphold the dignity and integrity of the wildlife profession. They shall endeavor to avoid even the suspicion of dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, or unprofessional demeanor.
2. Refrain from plagiarism in verbal or written communications and shall give credit to the works and ideas of others.
3. Refrain from fabrication, falsification, or suppression of results, and shall not deliberately misrepresent research findings, or otherwise commit scientific fraud.

4. Exercise high standards in the care and use of live vertebrate animals used for research, in accordance with accepted professional guidelines for the respective classes of animals under study.
5. Protect the rights and welfare of human subjects used in research and obtain the informed consent of those individuals, in accordance with approved professional guidelines for human subjects.
6. Be mindful of their responsibility to society, and seek to meet the needs of all people when seeking advice in wildlife-related matters. They shall studiously avoid discrimination in any form, or the abuse of professional authority for personal satisfaction.
7. Recognize and inform clients or employers of the wildlife professional's prime responsibility to the public interest, conservation of the wildlife resource, and the environment. They shall exercise professional judgment, and avoid actions or omissions that may compromise these broad responsibilities. They shall cooperate fully with other professionals in the best interest of the wildlife resource.
8. Provide maximum possible effort in the best interest of each client or employer, regardless of the degree of remuneration.
9. Accept employment to perform professional services only in areas of their own competence, and consistent with the Code of Ethics. They shall seek to refer clients or employers to other natural resource professionals when the expertise of such professionals shall best serve the interests of the public, wildlife, and the client or employer.
10. Maintain a confidential relationship between professionals and clients or employers except when specifically authorized by the client or employer or required by due process of law or the Code of Ethics to disclose pertinent information. They shall not use such confidences to their personal advantage or to the advantage of other parties, nor shall they permit personal interests or other client or employer relationships to interfere with their professional judgment.
11. Refrain from advertising in a self-laudatory manner-beyond statements intended to inform prospective clients or employers of one's qualifications-or in a manner detrimental to fellow professionals and the wildlife resource. They shall clearly distinguish among facts, hypotheses, and opinions. They shall provide professional advice and guidance only when qualified to do so by training and experience.
12. Refuse compensation or rewards of any kind intended to influence their professional judgment or advice or to secure preferential treatment. They shall not permit a person who recommends or employs them, directly or indirectly, to regulate or impair their professional judgment. They shall not accept compensation for the same professional services from any source other than the client or employer without prior consent of all the clients or employers involved.
13. Avoid performing professional services for any client or employer when such service is judged to be contrary to the Code of Ethics or detrimental to the well-being of wildlife resources and their environments. If a wildlife professional believes that his or her employment activities conflict with the Code of Ethics, that person shall advise the client or employer of such conflict.
14. Advise against an action by a client or employer which violates any statute or regulation.

Section 4. ENFORCEMENT -- Violations of this Code by a current member of The Wildlife Society (TWS) may result in censure, censure and suspension of membership for a specified time period, termination of current and future membership in the Society, and/or revocation of any certification credential conferred by TWS. All reported violations will be addressed by the procedures outlined in Clause A and Clause B.

CLAUSE A -- Ethics Board – Upon receipt of a complaint, the President will promptly form an Ethics Board of no less than 5 and no more than 7 members of the Society, and appoint one of the members as Chair.

If allegations are against a Certified Wildlife Biologist® (CWB) or an Associate Wildlife Biologist®, at least the Chair will be a CWB.

CLAUSE B -- Procedure for Addressing Code of Ethics Violations

1. This procedure will be applied to alleged violations of The Wildlife Society's Code of Ethics by current TWS members.
2. An allegation of a violation of the Code of Ethics made against a TWS member shall be filed with TWS by transmitting a signed and dated complaint and any supporting documentation to the TWS President, copying the Executive Director. All complaints must be signed and dated by the person filing the same. TWS will not consider an anonymous or unsigned complaint.
3. Once the Ethics Board is appointed, the President will immediately transmit a copy of the signed complaint and any supporting documentation to all members of the TWS Ethics Board.
4. Each member of the Ethics Board will confirm to the TWS President that they have received the complaint and any supporting documents.
5. Within thirty (30) days of the date the complaint and any supporting documents were sent to the Ethics Board, the Board will render one of two possible initial findings: 1) The complaint warrants further review and consideration by the Ethics Board, or 2) The complaint does not warrant further review and consideration by the Ethics Board.
6. If the initial finding by a majority of the Ethics Board is that there is not sufficient evidence or documentation to support a finding of a Code of Ethics violation, the Chair of the Ethics Board will notify the complaining party, the President, and the Executive Director, and the matter will be deemed closed.
7. If the initial Ethics Board finding is that there is sufficient evidence and documentation to warrant further review and consideration by the Board, the Chair of the Ethics Board shall transmit to the party against whom the charges/complaint have been made a full copy of the signed complaint and any supporting documentation submitted as well as a copy of the TWS Code of Ethics. The Chair will also notify the complaining party in writing of such initial finding.
8. The member against whom the complaint is directed shall have thirty (30) days from the date of receipt of said transmission to respond in writing to the charges/complaint. The response shall be sent to the Ethics Board Chair, who will promptly transmit such response to each Ethics Board member.
9. The Ethics Board shall have thirty (30) days from the date of its receipt of the written response to the charges/complaint to render a majority finding. In the event of a finding that a violation of the Code of Ethics occurred, the Ethics Board may impose disciplinary actions as it reasonably deems appropriate, including but not limited to, censure, censure and suspension of membership for a specified time period, termination of current and future membership, and/or revocation of any certification credential conferred by TWS.
10. The Chair of the Ethics Board shall promptly notify the parties in writing, copying the TWS President and Executive Director, of the finding of the Ethics Board and the nature of any disciplinary action.
11. The member shall have thirty (30) days from the date of written notice of the Ethics Board's determination that a violation of the Code of Ethics has occurred and the resulting disciplinary action imposed by the Ethics Board to appeal the decision to the full TWS Council. Such notice of appeal shall be in writing and submitted to the TWS President and Executive Director to be distributed to the entire TWS Council. The member's notice of appeal must include the basis for such appeal to the TWS Council.

12. Upon receipt of the notice of appeal, the Council will review all materials at its next scheduled meeting in Executive Session and render by majority vote a final and binding decision from which there shall be no appeal.
13. The member will be notified in writing of the Council's final and binding decision on appeal within thirty (30) days of its issuance.
14. The written decisions of the Ethics Board and Council, if applicable, along with all supporting documents shall be included in the TWS file on this matter and stored by TWS staff with other TWS documents.