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FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 13, 2023
TO: All FWC Personnel
FROM: Roger Young, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Euthanizing/Humane Killing of Wildlife

This memorandum will serve as interim guidance to all FWC staff regarding euthanizing or humanely killing wildlife to ensure FWC actions are consistent, humane, and safe. This memorandum shall not replace program-specific policies related to euthanizing or humanely killing wildlife.

Definitions:

For the purposes of this memorandum, the term 'euthanize' shall mean the act or practice of causing or permitting the death of sick or injured wildlife.

The term 'humanely kill' shall mean to intentionally cause the death of wildlife that is neither sick nor injured.

Training:

All staff whose job duties include euthanizing or humanely killing wildlife must receive training on safe and humane methods prior to conducting such job duties.

Procedure:

Prior to euthanizing wildlife, staff must receive first level supervisor approval or act in accordance with processes outlined in program-specific policies.

Humanely killing wildlife will require section leader, or designee, approval before dispatch, unless acting in accordance with processes outlined in program-specific policies.

Staff may humanely kill wildlife that poses an immediate public safety risk without prior supervisory approval. This shall be considered an exigent circumstance. Once wildlife is no longer a public safety risk, a supervisor shall be notified as soon as practicable.

Setting:

- Wildlife held in captivity shall not be euthanized or humanely killed at any privately-owned facility without prior approval from the Section Leader unless in exigent circumstances, or in accordance with processes outlined in program-specific policies.

- Staff shall make every effort to euthanize or humanely kill wildlife away from public view.
- Chemical immobilization of sick or injured wildlife may be used for the purposes of transporting wildlife to a location where euthanasia may occur away from public view. In these circumstances, consideration must be given to the safety of staff and others involved in the transport and euthanasia of the sick or injured wildlife and the risk to the public. Additional considerations include, but are not limited to, the density of the populated area and the presence of members of the public or the media.
- In situations where wildlife must be euthanized or humanely killed in view of the public, staff shall attempt to obstruct public views as much as possible by using sheets, tarps, etc.

Methodology:

- FWC staff shall only use equipment, supplies, and approved methods outlined in program-specific policies with which they have training for the purposes of euthanizing or humanely killing wildlife.
- Chemical immobilization drugs may be used to immobilize wildlife and transfer to a more appropriate location before euthanasia or humane killing occur.
- Unless otherwise required by agency policy, staff shall not video record or photograph euthanizing or humanely killing wildlife without prior supervisory approval.
- Staff shall be respectful of all by-standers, including members of the public, members of the media, and license holders.
- Staff needing non-emergency assistance may contact their regional call center.

Communication:

Staff may refer questions related to the activities of euthanasia or humane killing of wildlife to a supervisor. All media inquiries shall be referred to the Community Relations Office.

This memorandum shall remain in effect until internal policy is developed and supersedes this memorandum or an amended version of this memorandum replaces such.