

REPORTING ANIMAL USE IN FIELD RESEARCH IN THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE

Finn Berntsen, Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, Tungasletta 2, 7485 Trondheim

Applications for the use of experimental animals in Norway are for the most part based on traditional experimental work in clearly defined and approved laboratory animal facilities. Animals can here be monitored, handled and controlled on a daily basis.

Field research on free ranging experimental animals (including fish) represents a considerable challenge to the experimenter. Within a very often short timeframe, a long range of detailed information is normally wanted.

A minimum of parameters concerning health status will give a better basis for understanding the behaviour of animals. Most of the literature on wildlife research today is quite meagre when it comes to health considerations related to the single animal. Exceptions occur, but most of the studies have little or no descriptions in this respect.

A lot of useful information can be obtained if the field biologist prepares a simple list to tick off during processing. Indeed, this has often been a part of field research for many years, but this kind of information has for some reason never been very visible in the final scientific article. Too often, the author settles for a few lines stating that one or more of that specific specie were used.

Authors of scientific literature are occasionally accused of writing for other well-educated colleagues. There is nothing wrong with that, but it would be even better if research could be presented in a way that appeals to a broader public. If authors include a minimum of health information, the reader would be able to get a better picture and impression about what is really the case.