

Animal Ethics for Observational Studies

1. Observational only activities will be defined as those activities where the activity does not involve the 'use' of the animal, as outlined on the Queensland Regulator's website:
 - a. They involve only observation and recording of information, and
 - b. Where the animals involved are unlikely to be able to perceive they are being observed, and
 - c. Where the risk to the animals is negligible and there nothing more than a minor alteration to the animals' behaviour or routine as a result
2. An evolving list of observational only activities (Appendix 1) will be maintained and approved by the AEC, with any new activities also approved by the AEC as they arise.
3. Applications involving observational only activities can use the Observational Activities Application Form, which will only require details of the activity, target species and the justification for conducting the activity.
4. Researchers wishing to conduct an activity that has been approved by the AEC as being observational only, should email the ethics office for advice on whether to submit the Observational Only Application Form.
5. Observational activities will be recorded in the ethics database and allocated an approval number, Annual Progress and Final Reports will need to be submitted to the AEC for review, and amendments submitted if there are any changes to the research, but do not require the submission of animal usage numbers annually as they are not reported as animal use to the regulator.
6. *The Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* and *Animal Care and Protection Act* will still need to be applied to observational only activities.

Appendix 1

List of Approved Observation Only Activities (for discussion)

- Visual surveys/direct observation
- Bird watching
- Spotlighting with a light no stronger than a 30 watt/50watt bulb??? Time limit??
- Anabat detector surveys of bats
- Camera traps
- Underwater video/photographic surveys
- Video cameras
- Aerial surveys plane/helicopter – 100m from animal or more (Queensland legislation requires this for marine mammals)
- Searching/recording animal tracks
- Recording animal tracks in a shallow sand pan
- Non-invasive collection of faeces or feathers
- Audio recordings

Queensland Parks advice on the use of drones near wildlife in Queensland parks.

Information on altitude and parks where drone use is prohibited

<https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/before-you-visit/visit-with-care/drone-safety#toc-1>

RSPCA Australia advice on drone use in animal research <https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/what-are-the-effects-of-drones-on-wildlife-and-domestic-pets/>