

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)



**sensory
acts**

More than Human Communication
in the Circumpolar North

Organization:	University of Regina	SOP #	SOP-SACTS-KWH-001
Division:	Dept. of Anthropology	Effective Date:	August 10, 2023
Issued by:	Alex Oehler, PI	Location/Camp:	Aklavik HTC territory
Subject:	Killing of Wildlife in Hunter-wildlife Interactions		
Revision:		Replaces:	

Purpose:

The purpose of this SOP is to provide proper protocols and assist research staff in determining proper conduct prior and during all field operations involving **Killing of Wildlife in Hunter-wildlife Interactions**.

Scope:

Encompasses all SACTS research associates, including University of Regina SACTS project staff and co-leading members of the Aklavik HTC located in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region during periods of collaborative fieldwork on-the-land (outside of communities).

Responsibilities:

- The Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for development/implementation of the plan.
- Research Staff (university researchers):
 - Successfully complete Animal Care Course (CCAC)
 - Adhere to protocols set out by University of Regina Research Ethics Board
 - Maintain Wilderness First Aid certification
 - Successfully complete provincial or territorial Hunter Safety Training (if applicable)
- Research Staff (Aklavik Hunters & Trappers members)
 - Adhere to Wildlife Act Aklavik HTC Regulations R-031-93
 - Pass Superintendent-approved trapping education program
 - Successfully complete provincial or territorial Hunter Safety Training (or equivalent)

Goal:

The goal of this SOP for **Killing of Wildlife in Hunter-wildlife Interactions** is to guide data collection on nonverbal communicative strategies used by hunters and wildlife. By recording hunter/wildlife interactions (e.g., how each observe/detect/interpret the presence and movement of the other) we can contribute important insight to the general state of knowledge about non-linguistic communication between species. Some non-linguistic communicative modalities in hunting contexts can include mimicry, calling, driving, and flushing. Communicative capacity also includes understanding the use of posture, gesture, scent, and sound. Our researchers will apprentice in the use of such skills under the guidance of experienced local hunters and trappers, while not altering established hunting practices.

Conservation:

This research does not in and of itself encourage or require the capture, handling, or killing of animals. However, activities such as mimicry, calling, driving, and flushing can be aimed at capturing and killing game species. We choose to work in a hunting context, because previous research indicates hunters and trappers possess rich knowledge of the communicative capacity of wildlife. Some of the hunted

species in the NWT have special conservation status (e.g. Polar bear, Beluga whale), yet constitute legal game for (some) Indigenous harvesters. Our research does not alter the number or type of game taken. We follow the “three Rs” by: 1) replacing lethal action with non-lethal observation where possible; 2) reducing the number of potential wildlife encounters from a statistically representative sample size to numbers adequate for qualitative analysis; 3) refining observational protocols through recursive methodology that allows previous interactions to immediately inform subsequent instances.

Pre-Fieldwork Procedures:

	Steps	Check
1	Ensure Travel Authorization Request Form has been approved prior to fieldwork departure (https://www.uregina.ca/policy/browse-policy/policy-EMP-050-005.html).	
2	Ensure Travel and Fieldwork Risk Assessment has been logged with required individuals (https://www.uregina.ca/hr/hsw/assets/docs/pdf/Procedures/travel-and-fieldwork-risk-assessment-form.pdf).	
3	Ensure adequate health and dental insurance plans have been selected for remote fieldwork (student researchers: https://www.ursu.ca/services/health-dental-plan/)	
4	Ensure all applicable Travel and Fieldwork Safety Procedures are being followed (https://www.uregina.ca/hr/hsw/assets/docs/pdf/Procedures/travel-and-fieldwork-procedures.pdf).	
5	Ensure Student Agreement Assumption of Risk form is filled and submitted, if applicable (https://www.uregina.ca/hr/hsw/assets/docs/doc/student-travel-and-fieldwork-assumption-of-risks.doc).	

Procedures for Preparing Departure from Communities:

	Steps	Check
1	Ensure Safety Planning Record has been logged with appropriate (HTC/UofR) individuals in nearest community prior to departure. (https://www.uregina.ca/hr/hsw/assets/docs/doc/travel-and-fieldwork-safety-planning-record.doc).	
2	Ensure all Emergency Equipment has been updated and packed prior to each departure from community (First Aid Kit, 2-Way Satellite Messenger, Winter Road Survival Kit, Personal Floatation Devices, compass/topographic maps, etc.).	
3	Ensure sufficient gasoline (for skidoos, boats, vehicles) has been obtained and securely stored for all days of travel based on planned route (including emergency ration) before each departure from community.	
4	Ensure sufficient food (freeze dry/canned), water (purifier/filter), and shelter (tents, sleeping bags) have been packed for anticipated number of people and days spent on the land.	

Procedures for Killing Wildlife:

1	Personnel who engage in hunting (i.e., killing) of wildlife in the Yukon and/or NWT must be competent and licensed to do so, helping ensure an effective and humane death for each animal harvested. They are also liable to follow Yukon and/or NWT Hunting & Trapping
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	Regulations. The same applies for self-defence against Grizzly and Polar Bears and/or wolves with the aid of a firearm.
2	Personnel who engage in trapping (i.e., killing) of wildlife in the Yukon and/or NWT must be competent and licensed to do so, helping ensure an effective and humane death for each animal harvested. They are also liable to follow Yukon and/or NWT Hunting & Trapping Regulations.
3	Where the use of firearms is required in this research, the marksperson must be legally permitted to use the firearm, and they must be familiar with the anatomy of the target animal. Acquisition and use of non-restricted firearms in Canada requires formal training and holding of a PAL: https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/firearms .
5	In the Yukon and NWT, non-resident (out-of-territory Canadian) and non-resident alien (non-Canadian) personnel who will engage in hunting require an outfitter to hunt big game but not small game. Small game hunting requires a hunting license, and big game hunting requires wildlife tags. (NWT H&T Regulations)
4	When using a firearm, personnel must always ensure they are using appropriate ammunition gauge for any given target species to ensure minimal suffering and a humane death.
5	Lead-free ammunition should be used whenever possible to prevent contamination of the environment and the food chain. (CCAC Wildlife Guidelines and Provincial/Territorial Hunter Safety)
6	Personnel must always attempt to shoot the target species in such a way as to minimize stress for non-target animals. (CCAC Wildlife Guidelines)
7	Avoid shooting animals in terrain from which carcass recovery may pose special challenges. (CCAC Wildlife Guidelines)
8	Before approaching large game, wait for 15 minutes after a presumed lethal shot was fired. (Provincial/Territorial Hunter Safety)
9	Hunters may orchestrate their pursuit of a target-species by taking advantage of the presence of a non-targeted species. This strategy does not involve the use of an explicit lure or bait animal and therefore does not call for reporting.
10	Hunters are not allowed to hunt until 12 hours following the landing and/or departure of their aircraft (plane or helicopter).

Procedures to Ensure Human Safety:

1	When handling raw flesh, blood, innards, excrement, or any other part or fluid of a killed animal, be sure to properly wash and/or disinfect all contact points to avoid the transmission of zoonotic diseases.
3	Carry legal non-expired bear spray canisters when traveling outside community, and follow ECC Bear Safety guidelines (https://www.gov.nt.ca/ecc/en/services/bear-safety) and ECC Wolf Safety Guidelines (https://www.gov.nt.ca/ecc/sites/ecc/files/resources/fact_sheet_wd_wolves_in_the_northwest_territories_nov_2018.pdf)
	Bear spray must be registered to the name of its operator at point of purchase. All un-used, non-expired bear spray canisters can be donated to ARI in Inuvik prior to departure by air.
	During fieldwork in remote locations, all foods should be stored in bear-proof food containers and at least 100 meters downwind from camp.
4	Be prepared for other risks and hazards by always wearing a helmet when traveling by skidoo, ATV, or side-by-side. Always wear a PFD when on or near open water bodies.

5	Follow all Travel and Fieldwork Safety Procedures (UofR) as preventive measures to minimize risks.
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Supporting Documents:

1	Wildlife Research Permit (GNWT): pending
2	Wildlife Observation Permit (GNWT): issued June 27, 2023
3	Wildlife Handling Permit (GNWT): letter confirming non-requirement, issued June 27, 2023
4	Animal Care Committee Approval (University of Regina): pending
5	Aklavik Hunters & Trappers Letter of Support: issued March 29, 2023
6	Inuvialuit Game Council Letter of Support: issued April 11, 2023