

## Practical considerations related to iLCP's Ethical Principles

December, 2021

### Introduction:

This document is designed to help photographers and filmmakers consider some of the potential impacts of engaging in certain behaviours based on iLCP's Ethical Principles. The purpose is that people will ask themselves the tough questions, reflect, discuss and disclose their actions.

The concept of '*Normalisation*', as used here, means that when certain behaviours or outcomes are repeatedly seen, or elevated by role models, they may become seen as normal and acceptable, regardless of any context or ethical consequences.

The definition of '*facilitating/enabling*', as used here, refers to action or lack of action, that people are potentially causing, or allowing, questionable behaviours to occur.

This list is dynamic, and all additional questions and additional references welcome.

## PRIMARY IMPACTS

### A: Proximity

i) How close is too close to an animal?

#### Consider

*Negative impacts - animal welfare (e.g. physical, behavioural, emotional)*

*Negative impacts - conservation (e.g. breeding success)*

ii) Can one leave an unmanned camera with a remote trigger in front of a den/nest etc?

#### Consider

*Negative impacts - animal welfare (e.g. physical, behavioural, emotional)*

*Negative impacts - conservation (e.g. breeding success)*

### B: Use of a drone

i) Is there an appropriate distance to keep a drone from wildlife, and does this differ depending upon the type and their situation (e.g. flock of wading birds vs rookery, marine mammal vs one with young)?

#### Consider

*Negative impacts - animal welfare (e.g. physical, behavioural, emotional)*

*Negative impacts - conservation (e.g. breeding success)*

### C: Impact of noise

i) How do we manage the negative impacts of our noise pollution, especially in aquatic environments, when gaining access (e.g. boat engine noise around marine mammals).

#### Consider

*Negative impacts - animal welfare (e.g. physical, behavioural, emotional, navigational)*

*Negative impacts - conservation (e.g. breeding success)*

#### **D: Use of additional lighting**

i) What consideration should be given when using additional lighting?

Consider

*Negative impacts - animal welfare (e.g. physical, behavioural, emotional)*

*Negative impacts - conservation (e.g. breeding success)*

*Normalisation*

ii) Is it ok to use a softbox up close with amphibians, reptiles, and insects?

Consider

*Negative impacts - animal welfare (e.g. physical, behavioural, emotional)*

*Negative impacts - conservation (e.g. breeding success)*

#### **E: Use of camera traps**

i) Can I set up camera traps on nests or den sites?

Consider

*Negative impacts - animal welfare (e.g. physical and emotional) and conservation (e.g. behavioural)*

ii) Is it OK to bait animals (including fish) to photograph them?

Consider

*Negative impacts - animal welfare (e.g. physical, behavioural, emotional) and conservation*

#### **F: Use of call back**

i) Is it OK to use playback to call in birds to photograph them?

Consider

*Negative impacts - animal welfare (e.g. physical, behavioural, emotional) and conservation*

#### **G: Accidental negative impact**

i) If a photographer unintentionally harms a subject while photographing it, should this be reported, and if so, how? Can these photographs still be used for conservation purposes?

Consider

*Honesty and accuracy in captioning*

#### **H: Photographing captive wildlife**

i) When filming/using video, when is it okay to film animals in captivity, how should this be labelled in the credits?

Consider

*Honesty, authenticity, and accuracy*

- ii) When filming a documentary, can you use captive animals in order to get an easier b-roll?  
(Eladio)

Consider

*Honesty, authenticity, and accuracy*

- iii) What kinds of captive facilities are OK to photograph?

Consider

*Negative impacts - animal welfare (e.g. physical, behavioural, emotional)  
Integrity and Professionalism  
Normalisation/enabling/facilitating*

**I: Scene/subject manipulation**

- i) Is it ever OK to manipulate people (dress, actions etc) to align with the photographers or publishers' cultural expectations and stereotypes?

Consider

*Honesty, authenticity, and accuracy  
Respectfulness*

- ii) Is it ok to manipulate the habitat to get a better picture?

Consider

*Honesty, authenticity, and accuracy  
Normalisation*

- iii) Is it ever ok to reposition/manipulate animals for a better shot?

Consider

*Negative impacts - animal welfare (e.g. physical, behavioural, emotional) and conservation  
(e.g. breeding success)  
Honesty, authenticity, and accuracy  
Normalisation*

- iv) Can we place animals in portable studios in order to make portraits of them for educational or conservation purposes?

Consider

*Negative impacts - animal welfare (e.g. physical, behavioural, emotional) and conservation  
(e.g. breeding success)  
Honesty, authenticity, and accuracy*

- v) Can you cut a flower in order to photograph it under controlled conditions?

Consider

*Negative impacts - conservation  
Honesty, authenticity, and accuracy*

vi) Can insects be taken from the wild to document metamorphosis?

Consider

*Negative impacts - animal welfare (e.g. physical, behavioural, emotional)*

*Negative impacts - conservation (e.g. breeding success)*

vii) Is it okay to chill or gas insects or chill reptiles to make them easier to photograph?

Consider

*Negative impacts - animal welfare (e.g. physical, behavioural, emotional)*

*Normalisation/facilitating*

### **J: Working with/for others**

i) Should I you join a trip with a tour operator that baits animals in the wild?

Consider

*Enabling/facilitating*

### **K: Captioning**

i) What elements should you consider when captioning and disclosing information?

Consider

*Honesty, authenticity, and accuracy*

*Normalisation/ Facilitating*

### **L: Breaking the principles**

i) If the animal of plant has never been documented, can you forego the principles to photograph the subject for conservation?

Consider

*Impacts versus benefits*

*Honesty, authenticity, and accuracy*

ii) Do the same principles apply to all animals including insects?

Consider

*Why not?*

iii) If accompanied by a specialist/expert/biologist, does a photographer have greater leeway?

Consider

*Can this be justified?*

*Honesty, authenticity, and accuracy*

## SECONDARY CONSEQUENCES

### **L: Competitions**

i) Should we ever judge or enter competitions that do not have rules which align or support iLCP's key principles e.g. minimise negative impacts, respectfulness to wildlife.

Consider  
*Enabling/facilitating*

### **M: Consequences of what we portray**

i) Should we portray snakes in an aggressive posture, an action that might promote fear among the public and thus result in a lack of empathy?

Consider  
*Negative impacts (animal welfare e.g. physical, behavioural, emotional) vs benefits*  
*Honesty, authenticity, and accuracy in captioning*  
*Facilitating*

ii) How (and should) we ensure that the use of our images does not have a negative impact in some way?

Consider  
*Honesty, authenticity, and accuracy in captioning*  
*Facilitating*

iii) How do we ensure our portrayal of a culture is accurate?

Consider  
*Honesty, authenticity, and accuracy*  
*Facilitating*

### **N: Travel**

i) How can fellows who travel across the world for assignments justify their large carbon footprint?

Consider  
*Impacts versus benefits*

### **O: Reporting/engaging**

i) What should I do if I see someone behaving unethically in the field?

Consider  
*Enabling/facilitating*

## OTHER

### **P: I'm still not sure. What should I do?**

How do I know if what I am doing is unethical?

Consider  
*Informed behaviour*

**Q: Additional resources**

Where can I find additional online resources on ethics in photography?

See *Reference section following as a start*

## REFERENCES:

### PAPERS, REVIEWS, and OPINION PIECES

**A: Camera traps (including impact of flash)**

**B: Competitions**

**C: Drones**

**D: Flash**

**E: Normalisation**

**F: Bird Specific**

- i) General
- ii) Baiting
- iii) Nesting
- iv) Playback

**G: Noise**

**H: Other (inc. interesting animal/wildlife welfare)**

**A: Camera traps (including impact of flash)**

Wegge, P. *et al.*, (2004). 'Effects of trapping effort and trap shyness on estimates of tiger abundance from camera trap studies'. *Anim. Conserv.*, **7**, 251- 256.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1367943004001441>.

Schipper, J. (2007). Camera-trap avoidance by kinkajou *Potos flavus*: rethinking the "non-invasive" paradigm. *Small Carniv. Conserv.*, **36**, 38– 41.

<http://nebula.wsimq.com/bccbcfe7eb917ac64c611cc97647691b?AccessKeyId=35E369A09ED705622D78&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>

Henrich, M. *et al* F. and Heurich, M. (2020). 'The influence of camera trap flash type on the behavioural reactions and trapping rates of red deer and roe deer'. *Remote Sens Ecol Conserv.*, **6**: 399-410. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rse2.150>

Taggart, P. *et al.*, (2019). Camera trap flash-type does not influence the behaviour of feral cats (*Felis catus*) <https://www.publish.csiro.au/am/am18056>

Séquin ES, Jaeger MM, Brussard PF, Barrett RH (2003) Wariness of coyotes to camera traps relative to social status and territory boundaries. [\*Canadian Journal of Zoology\* 81: 2015–2025.](#)

Gibeau ML, McTavish C (2009) Not-So-Candid Cameras: how to prevent camera traps from skewing animal behaviour. [\*The Wildlife Professional\*: 35–37.](#)

Meek PD, Ballard GA, Fleming PJ, Schaefer M, Williams W, Falzon G. Camera traps can be heard and seen by animals. [\*PLoS One\*. 2014;9\(10\):e110832. Published 2014 Oct 29.](#)

**B: Competitions**

McDonough, B. and Gimesy, D. (2020). Winning at What Cost? Ethical Considerations for

Wildlife and Nature Photo Contests.

<https://www.conservationphotographers.org/ethical-considerations-photo-contests>

Bug Photographer of the Year Under Fire for Drugging His Subjects (2021) [PetaPixel](#)

### **C: Drones:**

Ditmer, M., *et al.* (2015) Bears Show a Physiological but Limited Behavioral Response to Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

[https://www.cell.com/current-biology/fulltext/S0960-9822\(15\)00827-1](https://www.cell.com/current-biology/fulltext/S0960-9822(15)00827-1) (study)

Ditmer, M., *et al.* (2015) Bears habituate to the repeated exposure of a novel stimulus, unmanned aircraft

systems <https://academic.oup.com/conphys/article/7/1/coy067/5248551> (study)

Weston M *et al* (2020) Escape responses of terrestrial and aquatic birds to drones: Towards a code of practice to minimize disturbance. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, Vol 57, Issue 4 p777-785 <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1365-2664.13575>

The Impact of Drones on Birds

<https://www.thespruce.com/birds-and-drones-3571688> (Lay summary of some considerations)

Unmanned aircraft systems as a new source of disturbance for wildlife: A systematic review

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0178448> (study)

Drones May be the Answer to Less-Invasive Ecological Monitoring

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/drones-may-be-answer-less-invasive-ecological-monitoring> (lay summary)

Krause, D. *et al.*, (2021) Drones Minimize Antarctic Predator Responses Relative to Ground Survey Methods: An Appeal for Context in Policy Advice

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2021.648772/full> (study)

Approaching birds with drones: first experiments and ethical guidelines

<https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsbl.2014.0754>

Keeping bald eagles and other wildlife safe from drones

<https://www.fws.gov/midwest/news/DronesAndWildlife.html>

Of drones and birds <https://bou.org.uk/of-drones-and-birds/>

Evaluation of unmanned aerial vehicle shape, flight path and camera type for waterfowl surveys: disturbance effects and species recognition

<https://peerj.com/articles/1831/>

### **D: Flash**

De Brauwer, M., *et al.* (2019) Behavioural and pathomorphological impacts of flash photography on benthic fishes. *Sci Rep* **9**, 748.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-018-37356-2>

Spoelstra, K. *et al.* (2017), 'Response of bats to light with different spectra: light-shy and agile bat presence is affected by white and green, but not red light'. *Proc. R. Soc. B.* **284**20170075,

<http://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2017.0075>

Gimesy, D (2021). A light touch: Reflections on the use of additional lighting with wildlife. Discussion paper.

Is Flash Photography Safe for Owls?

<https://www.audubon.org/news/is-flash-photography-safe-owls>

### **E: Normalisation:**

Brown, J (2017), The powerful way that 'normalisation' shapes our world.

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20170314-how-do-we-determine-when-a-behaviour-is-normal>

### **F: Bird Specific**

#### **i) General**

Slater, C *et al.*, (2019) Camera shy? Motivations, attitudes and beliefs of bird photographers and species-specific avian responses to their activities. [Biological Conservation 237; 327–337](#)

Audubon's Guide to Ethical Bird Photography and Videography

<https://www.audubon.org/get-outside/audubons-guide-ethical-bird-photography>

Code of Birding Ethics

<https://www.aba.org/aba-code-of-birding-ethics/>

Mindful Birding

<https://www.mindfulbirding.org/existing-guidelines>

Signs of Stress in Owls

<http://artusobirds.blogspot.com/2014/12/signs-of-stress-in-owls.html>

Raptor Photography Ethics

<https://hawkwatch.org/blog/item/809-raptor-photography-ethics>

An expert photographer's advice on bird photography ethics

<https://www.birdwatchingdaily.com/photography/how-to-photograph-birds/an-expert-photographers-advice-on-bird-photography-ethics/>

Why Closer Is Not Always Better When Photographing Birds

<https://www.audubon.org/news/why-closer-not-always-better-when-photographing-birds>

A Guide to the Laws and Treaties of the U.S. for Protecting Migratory Birds

<https://www.fws.gov/birds/policies-and-regulations/laws-legislations.php>

#### **ii) Baiting**

Baiting Owls

<https://blog.lauraerickson.com/2014/02/baiting-owls.html>

Why Baiting Owls Is Not the Same as Feeding Backyard Birds

<https://www.audubon.org/news/why-baiting-owls-not-same-feeding-backyard-birds>

Why You Shouldn't Feed or Bait Owls

<https://www.audubon.org/news/why-you-shouldnt-feed-or-bait-owls>





When It's Okay (or Not) to Feed Birds

<https://www.audubon.org/news/when-its-okay-or-not-feed-birds>

Should I Feed Snowy Owls?

<https://www.projectsnowstorm.org/no-need-to-feed-snowy-owls/>

On the Ethics of Photographing Owls (and other wildlife)

<http://artusobirds.blogspot.com/2017/04/on-ethics-of-photographing-owls-and.html>

Some Wildlife Photographers Use Bait, But Is It Worth The Shot?

<https://www.wbur.org/npr/521101207/some-wildlife-photographers-use-bait-but-is-it-worth-the-shot>

Parks Ontario warns against baiting, harassing wildlife for Instagram worthy photos

<https://toronto.citynews.ca/2018/05/20/parks-ontario-wildlife-instagram-photos/>

The Ethics of Wildlife Photography (2021)

<https://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/environment/ethics-wildlife-photography/>

### iii) Nesting

Dos and Don'ts of Nest Photography

<https://www.audubon.org/news/dos-and-donts-nest-photography>

Know When Birds Think You're Too Close to Their Nests

<https://www.audubon.org/news/birdist-rule-28-know-when-birds-think-youre-too-close-their-nests>

BirdLife Photography Policy for 'Nesting Bird' Photography and the use of Call Playback to Observe and/or Photograph Native Birds

[https://birdlifephotography.org.au/bl\\_documents/General%20Information/Nesting%20Bird%200&%20Call%20Playback%20Ethics.pdf](https://birdlifephotography.org.au/bl_documents/General%20Information/Nesting%20Bird%200&%20Call%20Playback%20Ethics.pdf)

How I Learned to Safely Photograph Beach-Nesting Birds

<https://www.audubon.org/news/how-i-learned-safely-photograph-beach-nesting-birds>

Effect of Approaching Boats on Nesting Black Skimmers: Using Response Distances to Establish Protective Buffer Zones

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229922024\\_Effect\\_of\\_Approaching\\_Boats\\_on\\_Nesting\\_Black\\_Skimmers\\_Using\\_Response\\_Distances\\_to\\_Establish\\_Protective\\_Buffer\\_Zones](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229922024_Effect_of_Approaching_Boats_on_Nesting_Black_Skimmers_Using_Response_Distances_to_Establish_Protective_Buffer_Zones)

### iv) Playback

BirdLife Photography Policy for 'Nesting Bird' Photography and the use of Call Playback to Observe and/or Photograph Native Birds

[https://birdlifephotography.org.au/bl\\_documents/General%20Information/Nesting%20Bird%200&%20Call%20Playback%20Ethics.pdf](https://birdlifephotography.org.au/bl_documents/General%20Information/Nesting%20Bird%200&%20Call%20Playback%20Ethics.pdf)

Perceived predation risk reduces the number of offspring songbirds produce per year

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22158817/>

Did you call? Misuse of bird call audio is disturbing bird behavior

<https://india.mongabay.com/2019/09/did-you-call-misuse-of-bird-call-audio-is-disturbing-bird-behaviour/>

Perilous choices: landscapes of fear for adult birds reduces nestling condition across an urban gradient

<https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ecs2.3665>

### **G: Noise**

Underwater Noise Pollution Is Disrupting Ocean Life—But We Can Fix It (Time magazine, Feb, 2021)

<https://time.com/5936110/underwater-noise-pollution-report/>

Understanding ocean noise pollution and its deadly impact on marine animals (June 2020)

<https://www.ifaw.org/au/journal/interview-ocean-noise-pollution-impact-marine-animals>

The Impact of Ocean Noise Pollution on Marine Biodiversity (Linda S. Weilgart)

[https://awionline.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Weilgart Biodiversity\\_2008-1238105851-10133.pdf](https://awionline.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Weilgart_Biodiversity_2008-1238105851-10133.pdf)

Documentary *Sonic Sea* - about protecting life in our waters from the destructive effects of oceanic noise pollution (2018).

<https://www.sonicsea.org/film>

Underwater Noise: Consequences (Ocean conservation)

<https://www.oceancare.org/en/our-work/ocean-conservation/underwater-noise/underwater-noise-consequences/>

### **H: Other (inc. interesting wildlife/animal welfare)**

Why insects are more sensitive than they seem (Nov 2021)

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20211126-why-insects-are-more-sensitive-than-they-seem>

Do animals suffer from post-traumatic stress? (Aug 2021)

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20210827-do-animals-suffer-from-post-traumatic-stress>