

Science Advisor/ARL/R9/FWS/DOI

To

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cc

Subject Review of Scientific Publications

Thanks to the effort and commitment of the Service Science Committee, and particularly John Wenburg, Teresa Woods and Anne Roy, the Service is on the verge of launching two agency-sponsored, peer-reviewed scientific journals, the *Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management* and *North American Fauna* (<http://www.fws.gov/science/publicationsys.html>). I believe this marks our increasing commitment to science excellence and professionalism.

In conjunction with this effort, the Science Committee wrestled with the age-old conundrum of "policy review" and their recommendation was endorsed in Director's Order No. 196. The order is available at <http://www.fws.gov/policy/do.cfm>, and will ultimately be incorporated into the Service manual.

With this order, the Service has eliminated the confusing and inconsistently applied requirement for policy review of scientific papers that employees publish in agency-sponsored and external peer-reviewed journals. This is a significant step forward in encouraging and empowering employees to publish and to do so using their official agency and office affiliation. The policy requires the use of a standard disclaimer stating:

"The findings and conclusions in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service."

The policy explains that this disclaimer does not question or diminish the quality of the work, or in any way limit its applicability for use in decision making or in developing Service policy. Its purpose is simple – to get our employees out from underneath an ill-defined, cumbersome, and potentially stifling process of "policy review." Under this new policy, peer-reviewed publications authored by Service employees, in both internal and external outlets, will stand on their scientific merit, and will be considered equally along with similar scientific publications during decision- and policy-making processes.

As always, documents that require the full endorsement and imprimatur of the Service, must undergo specific review for both scientific quality and policy, defined elsewhere, and will be published as official Service publications, through outlets such as the *Federal Register*. This process remains unchanged and is not addressed in Director's Order No. 196.

Director's Order No. 196 is an empowering permission and encouragement for employees to publish their scientific work, with official attribution, but without the glare

and uncertainty of "policy review." Moreover, it is a hearty vote of confidence in your responsibility and professionalism.

Questions concerning Director's Order No. 196 should be directed to scipublishing@fws.gov.