Resolution Reaffirming Support for Research and Teaching with Nonhuman Animals

Adopted by the APA Council of Representatives in August 2017

Research with nonhuman animals has contributed significantly to advances in the field of psychology (Carroll & Overmier, 2001; Laborda, Miguez, Polack, & Miller, 2012; Maestripieri & Roney, 2006; Mehta & Gosling, 2008). It has laid the foundation for understanding diverse behavioral and biological processes underlying phenomena such as attention, perception, learning, memory, social behaviors, emotion, and decision making, accounting for diverse behavioral, cultural, and social contexts. Research with nonhuman animals has also furthered our understanding of similarities and differences across species, which has both intellectual and practical significance. Knowledge about other species has been crucial in guiding conservation efforts in various habitats across the world (Higham, 2016; O'Brien & Robeck, 2010; Swaisgood, Zhou, Zhang, Lindburg, & Zhang 2003; Zimbler-DeLorenzo & Stone, 2011).

Nonhuman animal research has proven invaluable for exploring the complexity of diverse behaviors across genetic, molecular, cellular/neuronal, circuit, network, cognitive, and behavioral levels. The assembly and application of findings from nonhuman animal research has contributed to numerous clinical applications that have significantly improved the health and well-being of both human and nonhuman animals (Carroll & Overmier, 2001; Raffel, Hoverman, Halstead, Michel, & Rohr, 2010; Raffel et al., 2013; Tizzi, Accorsi, & Azzali, 2010). Importantly, maintaining high standards of research animal wellbeing is not only of ethical importance to scientists, but is also critical to collecting data that allow for robust conclusions upon which scientific breakthroughs are grounded.

WHEREAS*:* The American Psychological Association has long acknowledged the importance and contributions of nonhuman animal research to advancing scientific knowledge and promoting the wellbeing of human and nonhuman animals (APA, 1990; Dewsbury, 1992); and

WHEREAS*:* Nonhuman animal research is comprehensively regulated through an integrated oversight system comprising federal, state, and local regulations (U. S. Department of Agriculture, 2013), as well as institutional peer review (National Institutes of Health, Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare, 2015) and peer review by funding agencies, both of which attest to the necessity of the research, its scientific validity, and the humane and ethical treatment of the animals involved; and

WHEREAS Scientists bear several responsibilities for the conduct of research with nonhuman animals, which include ensuring humane care and treatment that is sensitive to species-specific needs; being informed about and adhering to relevant laws and regulations pertaining to such research; and communicating respect for these research subjects to employees, students, and colleagues (APA, 2012, 2013, 2016; National Research Council, 2011; Public Health Services, 2015); and

WHEREAS The majority of scientists support and encourage the use of nonhuman animals in scientific research (Pew Research Center, 2015); and

WHEREAS*:* Observational learning through classroom demonstrations and hands-on learning through the conduct of experiments with nonhuman animals are integral to science education (Akins, Panicker, & Cunningham, 2005, National Research Council, 1989, National Science Teachers Association, 2008); and the early exposure of students to such experiences engenders creativity, original thought, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (APA, 2003; Madrazo, 2002); and

WHEREAS: Students exposed to nonhuman animal research are more likely to develop and retain a better appreciation for such research (Akins, Panicker, & Cunningham, 2005; Edwards, Jones, Bird, & Parry, 2014; Offner, 1993); and

WHEREAS: The APA recognizes the general public may not fully appreciate the nature of nonhuman animal research and its benefits to society, due to overabundance of misinformation and simultaneous dearth of accurate information available in the public domain (Speaking of Research, n.d.); and

WHEREAS: The APA recognizes the concerted efforts of entities opposed to research with nonhuman animals and dedicated to the abolition of such research (Speaking of Research, 2013); and

WHEREAS*:* The American Psychological Association deplores harassment of scientists, students, and technical personnel engaged in nonhuman animal research, as well as destruction of nonhuman animal research facilities (APA, 2004; 2014);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the American Psychological Association reaffirms its earlier resolution (APA, 1990) and joins with other scholarly organizations (Alzheimer's Association, 2015;

American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1990; American Heart Association, 2010; Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, 1994; Society of Toxicology, 1999) in continuing to support ethically sound and scientifically valid research with nonhuman animals; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that scientists support the efforts to improve research animal wellbeing through the implementation of evidence-based policies and regulations that do not compromise the scientific integrity of the research (Thulin et al, 2014); and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the American Psychological Association supports the integration of student research projects with nonhuman animals in institutions capable of providing proper oversight and supervised by teachers who are trained in the care and treatment of nonhuman animals in laboratory and/or field settings (Akins, Panicker, & Cunningham, 2005); and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that scientists support initiatives that further the education of students, colleagues, and the general public on the merits of nonhuman animal research and its benefits to public health, the environment, and society at large; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the APA and affiliated societies and research institutions publically defend research with nonhuman animals and the scientists who conduct such research from the sustained, multi-pronged attacks by entities opposed to such research; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the American Psychological Association encourages affiliated societies and research institutions to endorse this resolution.

Suggested Citation

American Psychological Association. 2017. *Resolution Reaffirming Support for Research and Teaching with Nonhuman Animals*. Retrieved from: http://www.apa.org/about/policy/use-animals.aspx

References

Akins, C. K., Panicker, S., & Cunningham, C. L. (2005). *Laboratory animals in research and teaching: Ethics, care, and methods*. Washington, DC: APA

Alzheimer's Association. (2015). *Use of animals in research*. Retrieved from http://www.alz.org/documents_custom/statements/Animals_in_Research.pdf

American Association for the Advancement of Science. (1990). *Use of animals in research, testing, and education*. Retrieved from http://archives.aaas.org/docs/resolutions.php?doc_id=381

American Heart Association. (2010). Public Policy Agenda 2010-2014. Retrieved from https://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@adv/documents/downloadable/ucm_301674.pdf

American Psychological Association. (1990). *Resolution on the use of animals in research and testing*. Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/about/policy/use-animals.aspx

American Psychological Association. (2004). *APA condemns vandalism at University of Iowa lab facility*. Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2004/11/vandalism-iowa.aspx

American Psychological Association. (2012). *Guidelines for ethical conduct in the care and use of nonhuman animals in research*. Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/science/leadership/care/care-animal-guidelines.pdf

American Psychological Association. (2013). *Guidelines for the use of nonhuman animals in behavioral projects in schools (K-12).* Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/science/leadership/care/animal-guide.aspx

American Psychological Association. (2016). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct.* Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/

Breckler, S. J. (2014, May 13). [Letter to Janet Napolitano] Copy in possession of the APA Science Directorate.

Carroll, M. E., & Overmier, J. B. (2001). *Animal research and human health: Advancing human welfare through behavioral science*. Washington, DC: APA

Dewsbury, D. A. (1992). Essay on contemporary issues in ethology: On the problems studied in ethology, comparative psychology, and animal behavior. *Ethology, 92*, 89–107.

Edwards, A., Jones, S. M., Bird, F., & Parry, L. (2014). Enhancing learning through the use of animals in undergraduate biology teaching: the student voice. *International Journal of Innovation in Science and Mathematics Education, 22*(2), 35-54.

Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology. (1994). *Principles for the use of animals in research and teaching*. Retrieved from http://www.the-aps.org/mm/SciencePolicy/About/Policy-Statements/FASEB-Statement-of-Principles-for-Animal-Use.htm

Higham, J. P. (2016). Field endocrinology of nonhuman primates: Past, present, and future. *Hormones and Behavior, 84*, 145-155.

Laborda, M. A., Miguez, G., Polack, C. W., & Miller, R. R. (2012). Animal models of psychopathology: Historical models and the Pavlovian contribution. *Terapia Psicologica, 30*(1), 45-59.

Maestripieri, D., & Roney, J. R. (2006). Evolutionary developmental psychology: Contributions from comparative research with nonhuman primates. *Developmental Review, 26*(2), 120-137.

Madrazo, G. (2002). The debate over dissection: Dissecting a classroom dilemma. *The Science Educator, 11*(1), 41-45.

Mehta, P. H., & Gosling, S. D. (2008). Bridging human and animal research: A comparative approach to studies of personality and health. *Brain Behavior and Immunity, 22*(5), 651-661. doi:10.1016/j.bbi.2008.01.008

National Research Council (1989). *Principles and guidelines for the use of animals in precollege education.* Retrieved from http://www.nabt.org/websites/institution/File/Principles%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20the%20Use%20of%20Animals%20in%20Precollege%20Education.pdf

National Research Council. (2011). *Guide for the care and use of laboratory animals* (Eighth edition). Retrieved from http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12910.html

National Science Teachers Association. (2008). *Responsible use of live animals and dissection in the science classroom.* Retrieved from http://www.nsta.org/about/positions/animals.aspx

O'Brien, J. K., & Robeck, T. R. (2010). The value of *ex situ* cetacean populations in understanding reproductive physiology and developing assisted reproductive technology for *ex situ* and *in situ* species management and conservation efforts. *International Journal of Comparative Psychology, 23*(3), 227-248.

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare. (2015). *Public Health Service policy on humane care and use of laboratory animals*. Retrieved on from http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/references/PHSPolicyLabAnimals.pdf

Offner, S. (1993). The importance of dissection in biology teaching. *The American Biology Teacher, 55*(3), 147-149.

Pew Research Center, January 29th, 2015, "Public and Scientists' Views on Science and Society"

Raffel, T. R., Hoverman, J. T., Halstead, N. T., Michel, P. J., Rohr, J. R. (2010). Parasitism in a community context: Trait-mediated interactions with competition and predation. *Ecology, 91*, 1900-1907.

Raffel, T. R., Romansic, J. M., Halstead, N. T., McMahon, T. A., Venesky, M. D., & Rohr, J. R. (2013). Disease and thermal acclimation in a more variable and unpredictable climate. *Nature Climate Change,* 3, 146-151. DOI:10.1038/NCLIMATE1659

Society of Toxicology. (1999). Animals in research public policy statement. Retrieved from https://www.toxicology.org/pubs/statements/Animals_in_Research.pdf

Speaking of Research (n.d.) Animal rights pseudoscience. Retrieved from https://speakingofresearch.com/extremism-undone/bad-science/

Speaking of Research (2013). Fair partners in dialog: Staring assumptions matter and they should be spelled out. Retrieved from https://speakingofresearch.com/2013/06/12/fair-partners-in-dialogue-starting-assumptions-matter-and-they-should-be-spelled-out/

Swaisgood, R. R., Zhou, X., Zhang, G., Lindburg, D. G., & Zhang, H. (2003). Application of behavioral knowledge to conservation in the giant panda. *International Journal of Comparative Psychology, 16*(2-3), 65-84.

Thulin, J. D., Bradfield, J. F., Bergdall, V. K., Conour, L. A., Grady, A. W., Hickman, D. L., Nortno, J. N., & Wallace, J. M. (2014). The cost of self-imposed regulatory burden in animal research. *The FASEB Journal*, *28*, 3297-3300.

Tizzi, R., Accorsi, P. A., & Azzali, M. (2010). Non-invasive multidisciplinary approach to the study of reproduction and calf development in bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*): The Rimini Delfinario experience. *International Journal of Comparative Psychology*, *23*(4), 734-776.

United States Department of Agriculture. 2016. Animal welfare act and animal welfare regulations. Retrieved from https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/downloads/Animal%20Care%20Blue%20Book%20-%202013%20-%20FINAL.pdf

Zimbler-DeLorenzo, H. S., & Stone, A. I. (2011). Integration of field and captive studies for understanding the behavioral ecology of the squirrel monkey (*Saimiri sp.). American Journal of Primatology*, *73*(7), 607-622.