



University
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Science

of

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BSc (University of Victoria, 2016)

**“Uniting non-anthropocentric approaches to human-animal
interactions in science: towards improved welfare of research animals
in practice and policy”**

Department of Geography

Friday, April 5, 2019
10:00 A.M.

David Turpin Building
Room B215

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Christopher Darimont, Department of Geography, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Paul Paquet, Department of Geography, UVic (Member)

Dr. Douglas Clark, School of Environment and Sustainability, University of Saskatchewan (Outside
Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Donald Kramer, Department of Biology, McGill University

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Charles Curry, School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

Drawing on anthropocentric, ecocentric and biocentric theories, I examine the use of research animals as a case to investigate human-animal interactions. Specifically, I examine a case of potential tensions between eco- and biocentric theories by taking a deep dive into oversight mechanisms of animal care during research. Despite abundant focus on responsible care of laboratory animals, I argue inattention to the treatment of wildlife constitutes an ethical blind spot in contemporary animal research. I review significant shortcomings in legal and institutional oversight, and argue for the relatively rapid and transformational potential of editorial oversight at journals in preventing harm to vertebrates studied in the field and outside the direct supervision of institutions. Straightforward changes to animal care policies in journals, which the analysis of 206 journals suggests are either absent (34%), weak, incoherent, or neglected by researchers, could provide a practical, effective, and rapidly imposed safeguard against unnecessary suffering. The ARROW (Animal Research: Reporting on Wildlife) guidelines, coupled with strong enforcement, could result in significant changes to how animals involved in wildlife research are treated. The research process would also benefit. Sound science requires animal subjects to be physically, physiologically, and behaviorally unharmed. Accordingly, publication of methods that contravenes animal welfare principles risks perpetuating inhumane approaches and bad science. I conclude by assessing whether paradigms have shifted from anthropocentric to non-anthropocentric approaches to interacting with animals in research, and offer practical and conceptual suggestions for ensuring humane human-animal interactions.