Field Collection Protocol Overview

Pre-deployment Preparation

- Review and understand all field collection protocols.
- Ensure all equipment is packed and in working order.
- Charge all batteries and pack spares.
- Format SD cards and label them with unique IDs.
- Access Jotform for data entry, with a paper backup.
- Confirm team roles and responsibilities.

Site Identification and Mapping

Location Selection

- Use GPS to identify and mark locations for camera traps and bioacoustic sensors.
- Ensure locations cover diverse habitats and wildlife corridors.
- Create a map of the field site with marked locations for each team.

Site Location Log

Maintain a log with the following details for each site: - Site ID - Descriptive name - GPS coordinates - Habitat description - Access notes - Deployment history

Naming Conventions

- **Site ID:** Use a consistent format (e.g., "TW-001" for The Wilds site 1).
- **Camera Trap ID:** Combine site ID with camera number (e.g., "TW-001-CT01").
- **Bioacoustic Sensor ID:** Combine site ID with sensor number (e.g., "TW-001-BS01").
- **SD Card ID:** Use a unique identifier for each SD card (e.g., "SD001", "SD002").
- **Date Format:** Use YYYYMMDD for all date entries (e.g., 20240615 for June 15, 2024). - **Time Format:** Use 24-hour format (e.g., 1430 for 2:30 PM).

Team Roles and Responsibilities

Work in pairs, one person handling setup and maintenance, the other documenting data. Rotate roles as needed.

Team Lead: Oversees the entire field operation, ensures protocols are followed, and manages communication with external parties.

Data Manager: Responsible for data collection, entry into Jotform, and ensuring data integrity.

Camera Trap Set Up: Handles the deployment, maintenance, and retrieval of camera traps.

Camera Trap Documenter: Records all relevant information about camera trap deployments and maintenance in Jotform or field notebook.

Bioacoustic Sensor Set Up: Manages the deployment, maintenance, and retrieval of bioacoustic sensors.

Bioacoustic Sensor Documenter: Records all relevant information about bioacoustic sensor deployments and maintenance in Jotform or field notebook.

Lead Pilot (if drones are used): Responsible for the safe operation of the drone, including pre-flight checks and flight execution.

Pilot Assistant: Assists the Lead Pilot with situational awareness, including monitoring airspace, ground conditions, and wildlife. Handles communication between the Lead Pilot and third parties.

Ground Crew: Assists with equipment setup, packing, and other logistical tasks, and ensures the safety of the operational area by monitoring for ground obstacles and wildlife.

Assign Locations to Each Crew

- Divide the field site into zones, assigning each team to specific areas for camera traps and bioacoustic sensors.
- Ensure each team has a map and GPS coordinates for their assigned locations.
- Rotate teams between zones as needed to ensure comprehensive coverage of the field site.
- Determine rally points and times for teams to regroup and share data.

Field Safety & Best Practices

- Always inform supervisor of field schedule and expected return
- Carry communication device (cell phone/radio)
- Work in pairs when possible
- Be aware of wildlife activity and seasonal considerations
- Follow all Wilds safety protocols and vehicle operation procedures
- Weather monitoring - avoid deployments during severe weather
- Respect all facility rules regarding animal enclosures and restricted areas

In the event of an emergency

- Follow established emergency protocols.
- Ensure all team members are accounted for and safe.
- Contact emergency services if necessary.
- Document the incident and report it to the Team Lead.

Post-Fieldwork

- Refer to the Data Transfer & Storage instructions for detailed steps.
- Back up all data to OSC using Globus or rsync.
- Ensure all equipment is cleaned, checked for damage, and stored properly.
- Conduct a debrief with the team to discuss what went well and what could be improved for future fieldwork.
- Complete any remaining data entry and ensure all records are accurate and complete.
- Prepare a summary report of the fieldwork activities and findings.