

Report Writing in Wildlife Forensics: Morphology and Genetics



WHAT IS AN AAFS STANDARD FACTSHEET?

The AAFS produces clear, concise, and easy-to-understand factsheets to summarize the contents of technical and professional forensic science standards on the OSAC Registry. They are not intended to provide an interpretation for any portion of a published standard.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STANDARD?

This standard provides minimum information requirements for reporting on wildlife forensics cases using both morphological and genetic methods.

The standard applies to wildlife forensic reports generated by forensic science service providers that often examine different taxa and use different markers. Tests to answer specific questions asked in the course of wildlife crime investigation and legal proceedings must be documented.

WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS?

Wildlife forensic reports serve a variety of audiences and must provide a clear, concise, and complete summary of the methods used to perform the testing, the subsequent interpretation of results, and known limitations in a way that is understandable to submitting investigators and others involved in legal proceedings.

The focus of this standard is on the information required in wildlife forensic reports to address investigators' questions and provide a clear flow of information from receipt of evidence through genetic and morphological testing to reporting of results and disposition of evidence.



HOW IS THIS STANDARD USED, AND WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS?

Wildlife forensics covers a breadth of species, substrates, and questions encountered in casework. This standard is used by wildlife forensic scientists to standardize the information in reports to promote increased understanding by investigators, legal professionals, and the court.

The standard details the information required in wildlife forensic reports for these suggested sections:

1. administrative information,
2. chain of custody information,
3. examination requested,
4. case information,
5. examination conducted,
6. examination results, and
7. examination conclusions.

Additional information outside of these headings, such as references cited or a glossary of terms used in the report, may be appropriate to include depending on the circumstances of the case. Example reports are provided in Annex B of the standard. These examples show the required information in various types of wildlife forensic cases.