

BIOE 440R/521, Conservation Biology.
Research paper Instructions

Due: Wednesday 11/12 in class. Please feel free to turn it in earlier if that fits your semester's schedule better.

1. Identify a species of conservation concern (it does not have to be formally endangered) and identify a conservation issue (or issues) that is clearly related to some aspect of biology. While most conservation problems intersect at least to some degree with disciplines other than biology, I would like you to stay relatively close to ecology, evolution or some other aspect of biology.

Once you've picked a topic, please talk to me before you start working. Graduate students: do not use your own thesis topic. Feel free to use a topic that is close enough to your own work that it will be directly useful to you.

2. Read papers from scientific research journals (peer-reviewed) that relate to the species/issue. BIOE 440R: ≥ 5 papers. BIOE 521: ≥ 10 papers. At least half of these papers must present results based primarily on empirical data (real-world observation or experimentation, rather than theory). They do not all have to be focused on the same species or population. For instance, you can use a good study of another species (or community, or landscape, or ecosystem, etc) to illustrate approaches that could usefully be applied to your focal species. Or you could use a bad study to illustrate problems to be avoided if possible.

3. Write a paper that does the following:

- a. Describes and explains a general issue in conservation biology.
- b. Introduces a particular species for which this issue is of concern.
- c. Lays out the current state of knowledge (and perhaps action) about this case.
- d. Offers an opinion about the current situation and suggests future priorities for research and/or management.
- e. Cites published work in the normal way.

BIoE 521: Length limit is 8 pages double spaced, not including literature cited. I would suggest something more-or-less like 4 pages for parts a & b, 3 pages for c, and one for d. Journals are increasingly stringent about the length of papers these days, and it is important to know how to make your arguments clear but concise, avoiding logical oxbows and extraneous information.

BIOE 440R: Length limit is 5 pages double spaced, not including literature cited. See the recommendations above for BIOL 521 for guidelines on the relative length of each section.

GRADING: We will grade the papers based on how well it does accomplishes tasks 3a-e, but will also take into account the writing itself, including grammar, spelling, sentence construction, paragraph structure, and logical flow.