

WCT MAGAZINE WRITER'S GUIDELINES

WCT is a bimonthly magazine committed to serving Wildlife Control Operators (WCOs) actively involved in the wildlife damage control field. Our goals are to provide practical operating information, promote education, professionalism, and a professional image, provide communication within the field, and help resolve human and animal conflicts with respect for the needs of both.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

January / February Issue November 5
March / April Issue January 5
May / June Issue March 5
July / August Issue May 5
September / October Issue July 5
November / December Issue September 5

TOPICS

We're looking for articles on all aspects of wildlife damage control work. Our primary need is for specific, practical information that our readers can apply to their own businesses. We are always looking for how-to methods articles on trapping, removal, or other control techniques for all nuisance species, from raccoon, skunk and beaver to mole, bat, pigeon, alligator, and any other problem wildlife along with how to repair and prevent damage caused by nuisance species.

Proper equipment selection and use (traps, attractants, vehicles, etc.) treating animals humanely, relocation, disposing of carcasses, add-ons such as chimney caps, exclusion work, and other nuts-and-bolts aspects of control work are all good topics. We also want natural history topics, such as coyote territorial behavior, skunk home range size, or any other animal behavior information that will increase the understanding and effectiveness of the wildlife control operator.

We need business-related articles too, on topics like getting a business started, advertising and locating clients, pricing jobs, obtaining insurance, keeping records, dealing with the IRS, and any other information that will help increase profit.

Other good topics are public relations, being professional and presenting a professional image, educating clients, dealing with animal welfare issues, and relating to Fish and Game departments, municipalities and the press.

Our regular departments are focused on specific areas (for example, *Species Profile*), and are written by contributing editors. However, this does not mean we won't use more articles in these same areas.

If you have an idea for an article but aren't sure about it, it's best to contact me by e-mail at editor@wctmagazine.com. so we can fine-tune your approach, and avoid duplicating articles we already have. For example, I might already have two articles on raccoon trapping and may not need another for a while. Or if your topic is marketing, we might focus it on your service area. Usually when a writer and I brainstorm together on a topic, we can come up with some excellent approaches.

ARTICLE GUIDELINES

Articles can be almost any length; however, the shortest we print is around 500 words while the longest are around 2,500 words. A good rule of thumb for a feature article is to be around 1,200 to 1,500 words. If the information is coming easily don't stop until you have it all down, regardless of length.

Aside from feature articles, we also have a need for shorter pieces from 500 to 800 words, describing a brief incident or containing an interesting fact or useful tip. And we're always looking for short, humorous pieces.

Detailed, tightly focused, in-depth treatment of one subject is better than a general discussion of a broad topic. "Selecting Proper Trail Locations for Woodchuck Cage Traps in Urban Situations" is better than "Cage Trapping Woodchucks."

Be as specific as possible. Avoid vague statements like, "Put the trap in a good trail near the den." What exactly is a good trail? What type of terrain features or vegetation help you identify it as such? What type and size trap is best? How is it positioned? And exactly how far from the den? Include as much specific detail as possible. It is easier to edit out extra material than have to ask you for more information to fill a topic out.

If you mention certain products, companies, books, Internet resources etc., be sure to include information on how to contact those resources. Our readers run businesses and may want to learn more about the product or topic of your article.

A good way to find out about our topic needs and preferred writing styles is to read a back issue of the magazine. I'd be glad to look at reprints, articles that have already been published in other magazines you still own the rights to, if the topic is wildlife damage control related.

PHOTO GUIDELINES

Although photos and illustrations aren't essential if the article contains good information, they help greatly. When taking photos yourself, take plenty, from different distances and angles. I routinely shoot one horizontal (landscape) and one vertical (portrait) view of each shot. It's common to shoot 30 or more shots for one article and find only a handful useable, with only one or two excellent. Send all available quality photos as it gives me a selection.

Sketches and diagrams help too. If you're not an artist, we can redo them for you. Digital photos are preferred provided they are of good size and resolution. It is almost impossible to print a photo taken from a cell phone unless the phone settings have been changed so try to use a regular digital camera instead set in high JPG mode. A 5 megapixel camera is adequate for article photos but cover shots should be done with an 8 megapixel or higher camera in portrait format with a resolution of 300 dpi at 11 x 17. Send digital photos to me as JPEG files, by attachment to an e-mail message, or on a disk.

When submitted with an article, photos are purchased as part of the package. Send disks, large digital files, print photos, and drawings by U.S. Postal Service to our business address. I highly recommend Priority Mail with delivery confirmation – the stiff cardboard envelopes protect photos and disks, Priority Mail gets here much faster, and it's good to know when it was delivered.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We prefer articles submitted electronically to *editor@wctmagazine.com*, in a Windows compatible file or text file (Microsoft Word is best). Send the article as an attachment to the email message. If you don't have email, you can save the article on a disk and mail it to me. When writing in a computer word processing program, type single-spaced. Do not use the block paragraph style (no indentation, with double spacing between paragraphs). Rather, end the paragraph by hitting the "enter" key and indenting the beginning of the next paragraph. (Many programs automatically indent when you hit "enter.") This is the way the text will appear in the magazine, and it saves having to manually changing the block style to the normal style.

Also, there is no need to insert two spaces between the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next. This is the old typewriter style, and I have to manually delete the extra space.

Occasionally I get an article typed all in capital letters or has no capitalization or formatting (this commonly happens when using a speech recognition program). Please do not do this, as it means the entire article has to be manually retyped if accepted.

Make sure your name and address are included with the article so we need to know where to mail your check. If you would like your disks or print photos returned, please include a prepaid return envelope with your original submissions.

Except for regular contributors, I will respond to you after I have received and reviewed the article. At that time I will either offer suggestions to improve it, decline it, or make an offer based on the information contained in the Payment section below. Articles are only run after you, the writer, have agreed to the terms and conditions.

PAYMENT

We pay from \$25 for short pieces to \$250 for full-length feature articles with good photo support with submissions for the *Family& Friends* column being the exception. Topic, article length, photo support, quality of information, and amount of time I have to spend editing it all determine the price. All new writers will have to return a W9 sent with your payment to have any future articles accept for that year.

We buy **All Rights**, which means we have the write to publish the work or photograph in print and electronical media including any reprints. Please note that submissions for the *Friends & Family* column are accepted under the ALL Rights terms.

We pay \$50 for cover photos and \$15 for photos used inside to support another's article. Good pictures of animals, and people actively doing wildlife control work, are always needed. Cover photos need to be shot in a vertical manner to fit the entire 8 ½ x 11 cover. There are a lot of good people in this field who can talk for hours about their area of expertise, yet they feel they can't write well enough to submit an article on it. Please don't let that stop you. Write the article as if you were talking casually to another wildlife control operator.

Do the best you can, but don't let concern about perfect spelling, punctuation, or writing style prevent you from writing. I'll edit and correct your article. Our primary need is for good information. If you think you have something valuable to share with other wildlife control operators, we want to hear about it.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions at all. I'm always looking for articles, and I'm always willing to talk writing, and wildlife damage control.