

WCT MAGAZINE WRITER'S GUIDELINES

WCT Magazine is a bimonthly magazine committed to serving Wildlife Control Operators (WCOs), Pest Control Operators (PCOs) and government agencies 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 continuously 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.

WCT Magazine does not commission articles nor do we offer writing on spec assignments. If you have an idea for an article and feel it would make an interesting read or benefit the industry, write it and submit it for consideration. I've found that when someone feels strongly about a specific topic, they tend to produce some fantastic work. If you are unsure if the topic would make a good article, I still recommend writing it and submitting it for consideration. This allows me to review the article and make recommendations if I feel it is a good fit. For example, if you want to send an article about polar bears, make sure there is information regarding how polar bears are managed in conflict situations at a minimum. Don't send an article about why polar bears need to be saved because of global warming as that is not the focus of this publication. I've never had an issue with duplicating articles as everyone's perspective is unique, but there may be some time between it being accepted and when it prints. For example, I might already have two articles on raccoon trapping and may not print another for a while. Or if your topic is

marketing, we might focus it on one or more specific key points. 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 and there is no submission word limit; however, the shortest we print is around 500 words while the longest are around 2,500 – 3,000 words. A good rule of thumb for a feature article is to be around 1,500 to 2,000 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 1,500 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 and one vertical view of each shot. It's common to shoot a whole series of shots (20 or more) 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 to choose from.

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. 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 also 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.

PAYMENT

We pay from \$25 for short pieces to \$200 for full-length feature articles with good photo support. Topic, length, photo support, amount of time I have to spend editing it, and quality of information all determine the price.

We buy **All Rights**, which means we have the right to publish the work or photograph in print and electronic media including any reprints. We do not buy the **Copyright** which you retain as the author or photographer. What this means is that you are able to offer the material to another for consideration or use, but they need to have our permission before it can be used.

We pay \$50 for cover photos and \$10 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 (portrait orientation) 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.