

# Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) Research Misconduct Policy

## 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The **Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA)** is committed to ensuring the integrity of research conducted under its auspices. This policy establishes procedures for addressing research misconduct related to amphibian conservation, ensuring adherence to ethical standards, scientific rigor, and credibility in conservation efforts.

This policy applies to all researchers, collaborators, and institutions receiving support from or working in association with the ASA. It encompasses all research activities, including data collection, publication, grant applications, and scientific communications.

## 2. DEFINITION OF RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

Research misconduct is defined as **fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism (FFP)** in research activities, as follows:

- **Fabrication:** Making up data or results and recording or reporting them.
- **Falsification:** Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing, omitting, or misrepresenting data such that the research record is not accurately represented.
- **Plagiarism:** The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.

Research misconduct **does not include** honest errors, differences in opinion, or disputes over authorship that do not involve FFP.

## 3. RESPONSIBILITIES AND REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

All ASA-affiliated researchers, staff, and partners must:

- Uphold ethical research practices and report suspected misconduct.
- Maintain accurate and transparent research records.
- Disclose conflicts of interest that may compromise research integrity.

Any individual who suspects research misconduct must report their concerns to the **ASA Secretariat** in writing. Reports should include evidence supporting the claim to facilitate an initial assessment.

## 4. PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING ALLEGATIONS

### 4.1. Initial Assessment

Upon receiving an allegation, the ASA Secretariat will refer the information to the ASA Global Council that will:

- Conduct a **preliminary review** within 30 days to determine if the claim is credible and falls under the definition of misconduct.
- Protect the confidentiality of both the complainant and respondent.
- If warranted, proceed to a formal **investigation**.

## 4.2 INVESTIGATION

A formal investigation will:

- Be conducted by an independent panel with subject-matter expertise.
- Review all relevant research records, data, and communications.
- Include interviews with the respondent and other relevant parties.
- Be completed within **120 days**, with possible extensions under exceptional circumstances.

## 4.3 DETERMINATION AND ACTIONS

If misconduct is found, appropriate actions may include:

- Retraction or correction of published work.
- Disqualification from future ASA research funding or collaborations.
- Removal from the ASA Partnership.
- Notification of funding agencies, institutions, and relevant stakeholders.
- Other corrective measures as deemed necessary.

If misconduct is not substantiated, ASA will take reasonable steps to protect the reputation of the respondent.

## 5. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION

ASA will maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved to the maximum extent possible. Individuals who report misconduct in **good faith** will be protected against retaliation. False or malicious accusations will be subject to review and potential disciplinary action.

## 6. RECORD RETENTION

All records related to research misconduct proceedings shall be retained for at least **seven (7) years**. These records include evidence, reports, communications, and final decisions.

## 7. POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATES

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure alignment with best practices in research integrity and conservation ethics. Any amendments will be communicated to all ASA-affiliated researchers and institutions.