



## Ethical Wildlife Research The Black Institute at Bosque School



Through its environmental education initiatives the Black Institute at Bosque does two things. First, it orchestrates learning opportunities that help people understand river ecosystems and their associated watersheds. Second, it provides people with time in an urban, riverside forest that allows them to gain a sense of place. Both the school and institute work under the premise that to be wise stewards of a resource, people must both know facts about how a particular ecosystem functions and also have a personal connection with that place and its ecological components including its wildlife.

Since wildlife is a vital and charismatic part of any ecosystem it is both natural and necessary to study it within the context of gaining a greater understanding of the environment as a whole. All wildlife and human interactions that are a part of the Black Institute's programs shall be guided by a respectful and humane wildlife ethic and shall conform with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. The underlying assumptions of that ethic are: that people are a part of and not apart from the environment; disturbance of and harm to wildlife shall be minimized; and that there is benefit to the well being of both humans and wildlife when people better understand and build positive and responsible connections with wildlife.

The scope of the Black Institute's programs regarding wildlife varies widely. They range from formal scientific research to informal and incidental human and wildlife encounters. Under all circumstances the priorities shall be human safety first, animal safety and well being second, and educational and research goals third. When in doubt, decisions and actions will be driven by that hierarchy.

Formal wildlife research will have a clear scientific purpose, follow a written protocol, incorporate existing knowledge as expressed in the appropriate literature, and fully consider the animal's welfare. The lead researcher shall submit a proposal for review and consideration by Bosque School's Institutional Review Board/Animal Care and Use Committee (IRB/ACUC) prior to commencing any wildlife research.

In both formal and informal work with wildlife, an adult who has the proper training to conduct that activity will supervise any direct animal handling. All personnel involved in wildlife handling shall receive training on these guidelines, the research's protocol, and the use of any necessary safety procedures and equipment.

