

# AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MAMMALOGISTS DOCUMENT RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION POLICY

Adopted 27 June 2009

## **General Policy Statement**

The purpose of this document is to define the process for retaining and disposing of records that are produced by and for the American Society of Mammalogists (ASM).

The ASM is required to maintain certain types of records for specific periods of time for legal or operational reasons. Failure to retain records and otherwise follow this policy could subject the ASM and its Officers and Board to penalties and fines and could cause legal issues, such as loss of legal rights, obstruction of justice, restrict evidence in a lawsuit, place the ASM in contempt of court, or disadvantage the ASM in litigation.

The ASM requires all members fulfilling roles of responsibility to the Society to fully comply with this *Document Retention and Destruction Policy*. Individuals who knowingly destroy documents in violation of this policy or otherwise violate the requirements herein are subject to removal from the position in which they serve the Society under the guidelines set forth in the Bylaws.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the President, Secretary–Treasurer, or Archivist. The ASM encourages questions about this policy and compliance.

## **Document Retention**

The ASM Archives Committee was established in 1966 to provide a centralized repository and archivist for historical material of value to the Society. The committee consists of an Archivist, an Historian, and an Assistant Historian, when needed for special projects.

The Archives Committee works with the Archives Division of the Smithsonian Institution to assure that appropriate documents of the American Society of Mammalogists are added to existing Archives of the Society. The Archives of the Society are professionally managed by the Smithsonian Institution under written agreement. The Archivist will work with researchers to be certain that they have appropriate access to the Society's Archives.

The documents that the Archivist will seek to add to the Archives have been designated by the ASM Board for permanent retention. These include the following: publications, including special reports and documentation; financial reports; trustees' reports; officers' correspondence; board members' correspondence; committee correspondence and reports; editors' correspondence (except correspondence soliciting reviews and old manuscripts);

photographs of all ASM activities and any mammalogically important activities; résumés of all officers, editors, board members, honorary members, and awardees; photographs of presidents, honorary members, and awardees.

Retention of all listed documents is intended to be permanent. E-mail correspondence involving the above described types of communications and reports should be printed and added to paper files. Electronic media are not considered to be permanently stable.

Society members shall not make individual determinations regarding which files to retain. All documents will be turned over as described, allowing the professionally trained Smithsonian staff in consultation with the ASM Historian and Archivist to determine which materials are appropriate for permanent retention.

The Historian will work with the Archivist to assure that the documents delineated above are obtained and added to the Society's Archives.

The Historian will submit a written annual report to the Board of Directors before each annual meeting.

The Society shall establish through contract language that financial records maintained on behalf of the Society by any firm hired for the purpose of managing membership accounts shall be retained in compliance with IRS and banking regulations.

All manuscripts submitted for publication to the ASM, whether accepted or rejected, are kept in electronic form for 3 years. All reviewers of manuscripts are guaranteed anonymity unless otherwise instructed by the reviewer; all reviews are destroyed after 3 years. Original hardcopy copyright forms of published papers are kept by the editorial offices for a minimum of 7 years.

### **Document Destruction**

Irrespective of the retention policies specified above, upon (a) receiving a notice of a lawsuit, government investigation, or other legal action against or involving the ASM, or (b) learning of circumstances likely to give rise to such an action, proceeding or investigation, all documents in any way relating to such matters shall be preserved and safeguarded.

No Officer, Director, Committee Chair, or other agent or member of the Society shall knowingly destroy a document with the intent to obstruct or influence the investigation or proper administration of any matter within the jurisdiction of any government department or agency or in relation to or contemplation of any such matter.