

# Frequently asked questions:

## Online Permitting and Clearance (OPaC) System for Parks and Wildlife Research

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How do I use the Online Permitting and Clearance (OPaC) system?

Information on, and links to detailed guidance to help you with accessing the OPaC system, setting up a profile, applying for, amending, renewing and reporting on Wildlife Research Permits and Collection Licences and/or Parks Research and collection Permits can be found on our web site and in the OPaC User Guide:

- <https://albertaparks.ca/albertaparksca/science-research/>
- <https://www.alberta.ca/wildlife-research-and-collection.aspx>
- [https://albertaparks.ca/media/3166192/opac\\_manualandtips.pdf](https://albertaparks.ca/media/3166192/opac_manualandtips.pdf)

What if I can't remember my User ID or password?

If you have forgotten your password, you can access the system using your User ID and request a password change.

If you have forgotten your User ID, please do not set up a new account. Instead, contact us directly and request help. You can contact us via:

- [AEP.WildResPermits@gov.ab.ca](mailto:AEP.WildResPermits@gov.ab.ca); or:
- [AEP.ParksResearch@gov.ab.ca](mailto:AEP.ParksResearch@gov.ab.ca)

What do I do if I work for a company and someone will eventually take over my permits when I leave?

Each Permit is issued to a single person by name and, for each project, all permits, amendments, renewals and reports are linked to each other under the User ID within the Online Permitting and Clearance (OPaC) system. If the lead on a project within the same company changes, you cannot transfer a permit to another user; however, all information within a user profile, **except for the User ID**, can be changed. So if you are starting a new account for your work within a company, you can set up your account so that it can be transferred to another person within that company by setting the account up with a User ID that is not associated with your name (e.g., use the company's name instead). Then when a project changes hands, the new person takes over the account and can change everything except the User ID. This way, a company's permit can be renewed in subsequent years without the need to start a new account every time the staff lead changes (an effective if inelegant solution). (Note, after a change, when the first application is being drafted, the old user's name will still appear in the draft

application, but once the permit is issued by the system, the new user name will show up on the permit and within the application) (Also note that it is not sufficient to change the name of the permit holder within an application; the name must be changed in the profile itself)

When do I need to check that “Will you be working with wildlife as defined in the Wildlife Act?” box?

The answer to this question depends on both the species you are planning research on, and the particular activities you are planning.

Species: You may need to check this box if you are doing research on any Wildlife, Endangered Animals and/or live Controlled Animals, as defined under the *Wildlife Act*:

- Wildlife means big game, birds of prey, fur-bearing animals, migratory game birds, non-game animals, non-licence animals and upland game birds – essentially native vertebrate animals that are not fish as listed in the Wildlife Regulation, Schedule 4;
- Endangered animals are those listed in the Wildlife Regulation, Schedule 6, Part 1 (this excludes endangered fish, invertebrates and plants and federally-listed Species at Risk are only “Wildlife” in this context if they are also listed in Schedule 4, or Schedule 6, Part 1);
- Controlled animals are generally exotic/non-native vertebrate, non-fish, animals as listed in the Wildlife Regulation, Schedule 5 – only live ones require a research permit.

Activities: Research in this context means:

- Possession of any of the above animals (for Wildlife and Endangered Animals, it includes live or dead, whole or in part; for Controlled Animals, only live ones matter) – a Research Permit authorizes possession;
- Activities consistent with the *Wildlife Act* definition of “hunt” e.g., chase, worry, capture, follow after, kill, etc. (in research terms, it means things like, e.g., capture, call playbacks, and various survey methods that are inherently disturbing to the target animals) – when held under a Research Permit, a Collection Licence authorizes these activities;
- If your activity does not involve possession and does not fall under the definition of “hunt”, you may not need a wildlife research permit/collection licence (e.g., passive observation methods or any work on animals that are not “Wildlife”).

For more information please view Wildlife Research Permit and Collection Licence Process and FAQ at:

- <https://www.alberta.ca/wildlife-research-and-collection.aspx>

The Wildlife Act and Wildlife Regulation can be viewed at

- [http://www.qp.alberta.ca/Laws\\_Online.cfm](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/Laws_Online.cfm).

I can't find the park I need in the list, what do I do?

If the park name is spelled incorrectly, the wrong management area is selected, or the wrong district is selected, the park will not show up in the search results. Try typing only the first letter or first few letters of the park name and leave the district and management area dropdown lists blank [“(all)”]. If the park still does not appear in the search list, please contact us at:

- [AEP.ParksResearch@gov.ab.ca](mailto:AEP.ParksResearch@gov.ab.ca)

When I try to submit my application, why am I getting an error message requiring 'an Attachment with a Type of "Proposal"'?

The Attachments section of the application in the Online Permitting and Clearance (OPaC) system is designed to make sure that certain types of documents are uploaded. When you select the attachment "Type", **there must be at least one file uploaded for which you have selected "Proposal" as the attachment "Type"**. The file you upload under this Type can be as simple as, for example, a text file summarizing what you plan to do, or it can be as complicated as a copy of a detailed multipage research proposal for the project. You may need to either upload a file and call it "Type"/"Proposal", or change the "Type" of an existing attached file to "Proposal".

Why can't I renew last year's permit; why can't I see it in the list of permits that I can renew?

There are two common causes of this problem:

1. The original application indicated on the main page that it was not a multi-year permit – the system will not allow renewal.
  - Solution: in this case, you will have to submit a new application; within it, indicate that the new application is linked to the old permit (quote the old permit number), and explain that it has been changed from a one-year project to a multi-year project (remember to change that on the main page as well!)
2. Sometimes, Online Permitting and Clearance (OPaC) system users looking at their accounts see a permit in the lists of permits that can be renewed or amended and click on it to look at it. This creates a new renewal or amendment application – which removes the permit from the list, even if the application remains a draft and is not submitted.
  - Solution: if this has happened, draft applications can be found in your profile under "My Applications". If there is an application there relating to the permit you are looking for, it can be either deleted (click the "delete" box on right hand side, which will return the permit to your list of renewable and/or amendable permits) or opened up, completed and submitted. If you cannot find a related draft application under "My Applications", or if you can find it but can't open or delete it, please contact us via:
    - [AEP.ParksResearch@gov.ab.ca](mailto:AEP.ParksResearch@gov.ab.ca); or:
    - [AEP.WildResPermits@gov.ab.ca](mailto:AEP.WildResPermits@gov.ab.ca)

What do I do if I am trying to renew my permit before the end of the year and get an error message about the expiry date?

The Online Permitting and Clearance (OPaC) system is designed to issue and track permits based on a calendar year. It will not allow you to apply for, and it will not issue, a permit that spans more than one calendar year. This means, for example, that an application for a 2021 permit or 2021 renewal of a 2020 permit cannot be submitted or processed until January 2021. It is best to wait, BUT if you have started a new or renewal application early, the application that you have started can still be completed and saved for later – just enter dates from the current year for now (to circumvent the error message), add anything else you need to, save all the pages **and exit before submitting**. The saved application will be found under "My Applications" when you next enter OPaC, and you can

I am writing a new application late in the year, why am I getting an error message about the expiry date?

open it up in January, change the dates to the appropriate dates (e.g., change 2020 to 2021), and THEN submit the application.

If you will be working through the early weeks of January, to ensure that you have authorization in place while waiting for your permit renewal, please contact the permit issuer directly and request a short extension to this year's permit to allow you to continue your work while next year's renewal is being processed. If it is a new application for work that starts just before or just after the New Year, you can apply for a permit for the remainder of the current year, then renew it in January for the next year, which might result in a quicker turnaround in January compared to starting a new application in January. If you are not sure who to contact, email us at:

- [AEP.WildResPermits@gov.ab.ca](mailto:AEP.WildResPermits@gov.ab.ca); or:
- [AEP.ParksResearch@gov.ab.ca](mailto:AEP.ParksResearch@gov.ab.ca)

The guidelines say to renew a permit before November 30, but the OPaC system won't let me renew this year's permit until next year?

What this means is that if you are going to renew your current e.g., (2020) permit, the renewal has to be done before November 30 **of the following year** (e.g., 2021); it is no longer renewable after that date. You can (in fact you must) wait until the year following the year your permit was issued to submit your renewal.

When I try to submit my report, why am I getting an error message requiring 'an Attachment with a Type of "Progress Report"?'

The report section in the Online Permitting and Clearance (OPaC) system is designed to make sure that certain types of documents are uploaded. When you select the attachment "Type", **there must be at least one file uploaded for which you have selected "Progress Report" as the attachment "Type"**. The file you upload under this Type can be as simple as, for example, a text file stating that you completed a type of survey on certain dates and there were no issues and data are contained in the data file, or it can be as complicated as a copy of a multipage report on your project. You may need to either upload a file and call it Type/"Progress Report", or change the "Type" of an existing attached file to "Progress Report". Even if your project is ending and your report is a final report, the OPaC system will require a "Progress Report" attachment; if desired, you may identify within your report that it is your final report.

If I still have questions, where can I get more details?

The Environment and Parks website has several tools that will give you more information, including a detailed "process"/guidance document and FAQ for Wildlife Research Permits and Collection Licences, an OPaC User Guide, information and forms for data submission, class protocols outlining commonly used wildlife research techniques and contact information.

Additional information can be found at:

- <https://albertaparks.ca/albertaparksca/science-research/>

- <https://www.alberta.ca/wildlife-research-and-collection.aspx>
- [https://albertaparks.ca/media/3166192/opac\\_manualandtips.pdf](https://albertaparks.ca/media/3166192/opac_manualandtips.pdf)

For questions about Wildlife Research Permits and Collection Licences, you can contact us at:

- [AEP.WildResPermits@gov.ab.ca](mailto:AEP.WildResPermits@gov.ab.ca)
- [780-422-9533](tel:780-422-9533) (for toll-free in Alberta dial 310-0000 first)

For questions about Parks Research and Collection Permits, you can contact us at:

- [AEP.ParksResearch@gov.ab.ca](mailto:AEP.ParksResearch@gov.ab.ca)