



**NATURE PROTECTION**

# **ANIMALS**

**GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZERS**




INTERNATIONAL ORIENTEERING FEDERATION




## INTRODUCTION

# CHECKLISTS AND GUIDELINES


## - for the organisation of sustainable orienteering events




The survey “Orienteering and the Environment” carried out in 2022 among IOF Member Federations highlighted the need for practical guidelines for the organisation of sustainable orienteering events.



The Environment and Sustainability Commission of the IOF (IOF-ESC) undertook this initiative and provided a draft for consultation to the network of contact persons that had been indicated by the National Federations. All the comments received were considered with great attention and most of them were incorporated in the current version of the Checklists and Guidelines (C&G). We hope that the reason why not all were accepted will be clarified by this introduction.



The focus of the C&G is the sustainability of orienteering events in all three facets of the concept: environmental, social and economic. A possibly minor emphasis was placed on the economic aspects of events, as circumstances are so varied that generalisations are hardly possible. However, the social aspects, and particularly the relationships with stakeholders, received a notable attention as the context in which orienteering events are organised involve a broad spectrum of interactions with other interest groups that are often “invisible” to the participants but essential for the organisers.



The C&G are not a handbook or a set of rules to be followed verbatim, but rather a list of points that should be considered by organisers and adapted to the local context. Some may be relevant in which case the Guidelines may represent a useful reference; some may not and may then be skipped. For example, relationships with native communities may be relevant in the US, Canada, Australia,



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New Zealand but not in most of Europe (except the far North); hunting is very important as an activity in Northern Europe, less so in Australia.

The C&G are meant to be an agile and practical tool; we have therefore omitted references to sources of information as would be done in a scientific paper; some considerations are mainly the outcome of long-term experience and not necessarily derived from authoritative sources. Scientific papers on environmental aspects of orienteering are indeed very scarce; most of what was published (e.g. on the now discontinued Scientific Journal of Orienteering) is mainly the outcome of empirical observations; they are very useful and reliable but lack the methodological rigour that would be required for a scientific publication in a modern peer-reviewed journal.

Another point to be considered is that the size of orienteering events varies a lot: from local events with less than a hundred participants to events with a huge number of runners (such as O-Ringen or the big relays, like Tiomila and Jukola). It is up to the organisers to decide which of the C&G is relevant in each case.

The document is organised in a hierarchical mode, with Areas, Sectors, Initiatives and Description. The Checklist corresponds to the “Initiatives” and the Guidelines to their “Description”.

The organisation of an event implies different roles and therefore different responsibilities, but whereas some aspects are clearly pertinent to specific roles (e.g. the placement of controls is the responsibility of the course setter) in many cases people fill multiple roles or, on the other hand, especially with big events, a sector of activity is split into different areas with different persons in charge.

We therefore suggest using the Checklist as a support to the subdi-



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vision of tasks in the organisation and the Guidelines as a reference for the persons responsible for each task.

The Checklists and Guidelines will be periodically revised based on new data and on proposals that will come from the users. Your comments and suggestions are therefore most welcome (mail to: [chair-esc@orienteering.sport](mailto:chair-esc@orienteering.sport)).






# NATURE PROTECTION ANIMALS




## TAKE WILDLIFE INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN CHOOSING SITES TO MAP



*The choice of areas for orienteering events normally reflects criteria related to their sporting interest (technical and physical difficulty of the terrain for the practice of orienteering) and landscape. It is, however, of crucial importance to consider criteria related to the use of areas by animals and birds as habitat.*




## MAKE A LIST OF ANIMAL AND BIRD SPECIES OF CONCERN



*Animal species of concern occurring in the competition area must be listed, and their habitats should be identified to prevent their disturbance, in particular their breeding habitats and habits. If an Environmental Authority is present, that should be the appropriate contact; in case it isn't, environmental NGOs or grassroots naturalistic groups should be approached.*



## CONSIDER EVENT DATES TO MINIMISE DISTURBANCE



*When choosing the schedules for holding the events, the critical periods of the species' life cycle should be avoided to minimize the disturbance (e.g., during the breeding period). If an Environmental Authority is present, that should be the appropriate contact; in case it isn't, environmental NGOs or grassroots naturalistic groups should be approached.*



## BE AWARE OF ARENA START, FINISH AND FREQUENTLY VISITED CONTROLS

*Control points in greater concentration spots like start and finish must be in areas where the impact generated is minimal on animal and bird species and their habitats.*



## KEEP PETS UNDER CONTROL

*Dogs in the arena and surrounding areas should be kept on leash in order to avoid their interference with wildlife. In some areas it may be necessary to prohibit pets altogether.*



## KEEP AT DISTANCE FROM FARM ANIMALS AND CLOSE FENCES IF FOUND CLOSED

*Farm animals must be kept at a distance, and gates should be kept closed. If it is necessary to establish a passage through a gate for the athletes, then a solution for confining the animals in an enclosed area should be agreed upon with the owners.*



## PROVIDE REFUGE AREAS FOR WILD ANIMALS

*Refuge areas for wild animals should be provided where relevant. In some cases, it may be appropriate for animals to be driven out or into refuge areas, possibly with the support and participation of local hunters.*



## **AVOID OPPOSING FLOWS OF ATHLETES**

*To mitigate wildlife disturbance, the courses should be planned in a way to avoid opposing flows of athletes, and to minimize the risk of animal attack, allowing the animal to escape without being confused.*



## **ABOUT NIGHT ORIENTEERING**

*Wildlife, mostly nocturnal in their habits, may be disturbed by headlamp light. When selecting the venue for night events, especially large scale ones, it is recommended to select areas where this impact is low; environmentally conscious orienteers are also invited to avoid the use of extremely bright lamps.*



## **AVOID EATING SITES AND WATER HOLES**

*Avoid placing points close to the refuge and feeding areas for wild animals (e.g., water holes).*



## **KEEP DISTANCE FROM BUSY ROADS**

*Keep a distance from busy roads to prevent the animals from being run over by vehicles.*



## **PUT UP GAME WARNING SIGNALS ON ROADS**

*Wild animals fleeing from athletes may cross roads and risk collision with passing cars. It is recommended to place warning signals along roads that cross or flank orienteering race areas.*



## REPORT ANY ACCIDENTS INVOLVING ANIMALS OR WILDLIFE IMMEDIATELY

*Report any event accident and other negative effects on wildlife to Environmental Authorities, landowners and, where appropriate, to local hunting associations.*



## AVOID LOUD MUSIC IN THE ARENA

*Prevent the sound emitted from the arena from exceeding acceptable limits (avoid loud noise).*



## AVOID UNINTENDED SPREAD OF ANIMAL DISEASES

*In some areas of the world, including parts of Europe, pathogens of livestock and wild animals are present, and they represent a risk to wildlife and livestock of other territories if accidentally spread. Pathogens may be inadvertently transferred with mud sticking to shoes used in an orienteering event or directly with clothes.*

*Organisers and orienteers must observe the rules set by the health authorities and land managers as far as limitations to access and activities in areas at risk are concerned. As a general recommendation, wash shoes and clothes thoroughly after a race or a training session, especially when the next use of them would be in a distant territory. Also avoid dispersing food or food residues in the environment. It would be a good practice to advertise such measures in race bulletins.*





# CHECKLIST

*A quick list for crossing off guidelines and actions.*

## **For event directors and managers**

- ☐ Take wildlife into consideration when choosing sites to map
- ☐ Consider event dates to minimise disturbance
- ☐ Make a list of animal and bird species of concern
- ☐ Inform course setters and arena planners in order to avoid identified areas
- ☐ Consider areas with low impact on nocturnal animals when organizing night orienteering events
- ☐ Report any accidents involving animals or wildlife immediately

## **For coursesetters and controllers**

- ☐ Consider arena, start and finish location and frequently visited controls
- ☐ Provide refuge areas for wild animals
- ☐ Avoid opposing flows of athletes



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- Avoid eating sites and water holes
- Keep at distance from farm animals
- Keep distance from busy roads

### ***For arena planners and controllers***

- Put up game warning signals on roads
- Avoid loud music in the arena
- Keep pets under control