

On the Proper Use of Succinylcholine in Elk

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RESPONSE TO LETTER TO THE EDITOR . . .

On the Proper Use of Succinylcholine in Elk

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to the letter of Cooper et al. regarding the use of succinylcholine as reported in our paper published in the *Journal of Wildlife Diseases*. Please be assured that we were cognizant of our actions at all times. The elk on which we used this drug were all in hard antler at the time (mid-October) and not in velvet. As such it was not necessary to use an analgesic or anaesthetic since there is no invasion of living tissue during the procedure.

In addition, Parks Canada policy has been amended to discontinue use of succinylcholine in any handling procedures in order to avoid having it used inadvertently in a manner contrary to accepted procedures.

We resent the suggestion that our program may have used succinylcholine as a drug of choice due to "cost or ease of use." The paper states clearly the time frame when antlers were removed. In addition, as also stated in the paper (and noted by Cooper et al.), when the procedures involved invasive or prolonged handling, appropriate means of chemical restraint were used.

We trust this matter has been laid to rest.

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