

Veterans in Citizen Science – Wildlife Images and Sympathetic Stress Response Study Wildlife CSI (Compost Scene Investigation)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The purpose of this consent form is to ensure that you understand the purpose of the study and any benefits or risks that might arise from your involvement.

Research Personnel. The following people are involved in this research project and may be contacted at any time, if you have questions or concerns:

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Purpose. The purpose of this study is to understand how veterans find the experience of viewing wildlife images, as part of a larger citizen science project in which members of the public

contribute to actual ecological research by identifying and counting animals from wildlife monitoring camera images of compost piles. Specifically, we wish to determine veterans' level of interest in this activity and their anxiety or stress levels are influenced by viewing wildlife images.

Below are examples of the types of images you will view. If you believe, for any reason, that these types of images will be particularly distressing to you, please let the Research Assistant know that you do not wish to proceed with the study.

Study Tasks. Initial interaction with the project staff is conducted simultaneously on-line and over the phone (with project's research assistant available to answer questions). After submitting this consent form on-line, you will complete a PCL-M inventory (5-10 minutes) of post-traumatic stress symptoms and a HELPS brain injury screening tool. These inventories are conducted on-line, with your results known immediately upon completion and they will determine your eligibility for this particular study. Note that eligibility also requires that you are not visually impaired beyond what can be addressed with corrective lenses.

If eligible for the study, and if you choose to participate, you will visit the Trinity College Counseling Center (135 Allen Place, Hartford, CT) for an hour-long session. There you will complete a questionnaire regarding your background characteristics (age, race, branch of military service, etc.). In the beginning of the session you will provide a saliva sample, by chewing on a cottonball. The saliva sample will be utilized to measure specific enzymes associated with stress levels. You will also be connected to a galvanic skin response (gsr) device through the placement of two small electrodes on two fingers. The gsr will monitor the level of skin conductance which is a measure also associated with physiological stress symptoms. You will then take two psychological inventories, after which you will be presented with 20 wildlife images representative of those you would see as part of the citizen science project described above. You will be asked a series of questions about your reactions to these images. Following this you will take a final psychological inventory. To conclude the on-campus session, you will view a 5-minute video about our plans to involve veterans in ecological research through citizen science. We will then ask a few questions about features that you find interesting. At the close of your session, you will choose either to return to campus in approximately 48 hours for some brief follow-up questions (5 min) or to cover them over the phone. Upon completion of your participation, in appreciation for your help, you will receive \$20 in Subway or Barnes and Noble gift card.

Potential Benefits. Through your involvement in this study, you will help shape the design and planning of a proposed nation-wide, citizen science project with anticipated benefits to veterans by enabling them to participate in actual wildlife ecology research. Furthermore, you will be helpful in determining how viewing wildlife images influences the stress levels of veterans with various levels of post-traumatic stress.

Potential Risk/Discomfort. Although we do not expect there to be discomfort associated with viewing the wildlife images, in the event that you do feel uncomfortable, you may choose to discontinue viewing the images at any time. That is, you can stop your participation in this study at any point by simply letting the Research Assistant know you do not wish to proceed and there will be absolutely no negative consequences if you choose to stop.

Since you will view the wildlife images at Trinity College's Counseling Center, if you experience discomfort while viewing the images and answering related questions, you may speak with a licensed, clinical psychologist on site, who can talk with you about your reactions and any necessary follow-up plans. If you experience discomfort after returning home, you can contact one of the resources below (these will also be given to you on a wallet-sized card) for assistance.

The Veterans Crisis Line is available 24 hours, so this resource should be used in the event you require immediate assistance.

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Speak to a crisis counselor at any time.

Newington VA: 860-666-6951
Provides a variety of counselor/mental health care options.

West Haven VA: 203-932-5711
Provides a variety of counselor/mental health care options.

Rocky Hill Vet Center: 860-563-8800
Provides a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to combat Veterans and their families. Services may include individual and group counseling in areas such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), alcohol and drug assessment, and suicide prevention referrals. All services are free of cost and are strictly confidential.

Connecticut Military Support Program (MSP): 866-251-2913
MSP offers free, confidential and timely counseling services to service members and their families.

Military and Family Life Consultant Program (MFLC): 860-593-7786
MFLC provides non-medical, short-term, situational problem-solving counseling to service members and their families.

Confidentiality. *The data collected in this study will be kept confidential. Only the researchers will see your responses. Any identifying information will be stored separately from your questionnaire so that your name is not kept with the survey responses.*

This study is approved by Trinity College's Institutional Review Board. Should you have ethical concerns about this research, please contact: Dr. James J. Hughes, 300 Summit St., Hartford, Connecticut, 06106; James.Hughes@trincoll.edu; 860-297-2376.