



State of California - Natural Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
<http://www.wildlife.ca.gov>

**EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor**  
**CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director**



## General Instructions for Completing California Department of Fish and Wildlife Mortality Reporting Form

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Wildlife Investigations Lab, Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) and other functions within the Department need to collect and track fish and wildlife mortality and disease information in a timely manner so as to improve our ability to respond to these events. An important part of solving disease and mortality problems is the need for information. With your assistance, your report could help us better understand these phenomena, may lead to more effective prevention and control and help us detect emerging diseases affecting fish and wildlife. Your report is a valuable contribution to the information we are trying to collect and a source for disease outbreak monitoring and real-time surveillance of emerging health threats.

Please help us monitor the fish and wildlife populations in California. If you notice dead fish and wildlife, please do not touch or handle them; simply let us know by filling out the Mortality Reporting Form.

### **IMPORTANT !**

California Department of Fish and Wildlife does not encourage the handling of sick, injured, or dead wildlife without proper training. Individuals who do this, do it at their own risk and should be aware of the risk of exposure to zoonotic diseases and injuries. Additional information on zoonotic diseases may be found at:

- <http://dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/WIL/disease/zoonoticdiseases.html>
- [USGS National Wildlife Health Center - Avian Zoonotic Diseases: Work Smart, Stay Safe](#)
- [USGS National Wildlife Health Center - Zoonotic Diseases \(Mammalian\): Work Smart, Stay Safe](#)
- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention - National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases](#)

The Mortality Reporting Form is now available on the Internet. The completed form is submitted by email to the Wildlife Investigations Lab, <mailto:WILab@wildlife.ca.gov>. The following table details what kind of information is desired for each field on the form. Please make sure that you fill out the location section of the mortality form by providing us with a detailed location description or a set of coordinates with datum. An example of determining coordinate information from Google Earth is provided at the end of this document. Remember that your name, telephone number, and email address are very important in case we have questions about the information.

*Conserving California's Wildlife Since 1870*

Additional assistance with species identification may be found at:

**Birds**

<http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/browse>

<http://imnh.isu.edu/digitalatlas/bio/birds/main/ident/bvk1.htm>

<http://www.enature.com/fieldguides/intermediate.asp?curGroupID=1>

**Mammals**

<http://www.enature.com/fieldguides/intermediate.asp?curGroupID=5>

**Fish**

<http://www.enature.com/fieldguides/intermediate.asp?curGroupID=3>

**Reptiles and Amphibians**

<http://www.enature.com/fieldguides/intermediate.asp?curGroupID=7>

**Invertebrates**

<http://www.seanet.com/~leska/Online/Guide.html>

## Introduction to the California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Mortality Reporting Form

The California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Mortality Reporting Form is used to report mortalities involving wild birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, and amphibians. Please provide as many details as possible so we may determine if a follow up investigation is necessary. Data generated by these reports are used to monitor fish and wildlife population health and to alert us to potential emerging diseases or pollution and contaminant issues.

### Directions for completing form:

Complete the form as accurately as possible. You can click in each text box to complete information or use the tab button on your keyboard to move between fields. Click on the "Submit" text at the bottom of the completed form to send the information to the Wildlife Investigations Lab. If you have any questions, please contact the Wildlife Investigations Laboratory at [WILab@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:WILab@wildlife.ca.gov) or 916-358-2790.

<b>Fish and Wildlife Mortality Reporting Form field names and descriptions and/or definitions.</b>	
Observation Date	Date mortality was observed in mm/dd/yyyy format.
Reporter	Reporting person's name, affiliation, postal address, email address, and phone number. Reporter is person reporting the mortality to the Wildlife Investigations Lab.
Witness	Name and phone number for someone who may have witnessed the wildlife mortality or injury event.
Animal Classification	Check whether animal is a bird, mammal, fish, reptile, or amphibian.
Suspected Cause	Check the suspected cause of the mortality including disease, pollution or contaminant, trauma, or unknown.
Location Description	Record specific location where mortality occurred, including county and city. Include as many details as possible.
Datum	Select the specific datum used to determine the location coordinates.
Coordinate system	Indicate UTM (including either Zone 10 or 11) or geographic (Latitude/Longitude) coordinates for the location.
Coordinates	Record numeric values of coordinates (e.g. Northing/Easting for UTM; decimal degrees, decimal degrees minutes, degrees minutes seconds for Geographic Lat/Long).
Coordinate source	Provide the source of the coordinates, such as GPS device, topographic map, Google Map, Google Earth, or computer software program.
Mortality onset date	Date mortality began (estimate date if actual date is unknown) using mm/dd/yyyy format.
Mortality end date	Date mortality ended (estimate date if actual date is unknown) using mm/dd/yyyy format.
Species affected	Record all fish and wildlife species involved in die-off.
Known dead/Known sick	Actual counted number of each species found dead or sick.
Estimated dead/Estimated sick	Estimated number of each species found dead or sick after considering removal by scavengers or other means, density of vegetation, etc.
Unsure About Species	Provide detailed description of animal including size, color, and any distinctive markings; if bird, describe bill color and shape, leg color and length, and foot shape.
Incident description and Population at risk	Describe what may have happened to cause the mortality event. Estimate the number of animals in the area that might become affected.
Clinical signs	Describe unusual behaviors or characteristics (labored breathing, salivating, unable to walk or fly, or any visible wounds or injuries).
Environmental factors	Describe weather (rain/excessive heat or cold), changes in water levels, food shortages, algal blooms, pollutants, or contaminants.
Problem area description	Describe the location where the mortality occurred including urban, rural, agriculture, industrial (oil wells), grazing, habitat type, waterbody type and access to artificial food or water.

# Example of using Google Earth to submit location information:

The screenshot displays the Google Earth desktop application. On the left, the 'Places' panel shows a placemark named 'Bobcat' highlighted with a yellow box. A green callout box with the text 'Use pin tool to show location' has an arrow pointing to the yellow box. Another green callout box with the text 'Pin tool properties will show coordinate information' has an arrow pointing to the 'Edit Placemark' dialog box. The dialog box is open, showing the following fields:

- Name: Bobcat
- Latitude: 34.236235°
- Longitude: -117.484484°

Below these fields are tabs for 'Description', 'Style, Color', 'View', and 'Altitude'. The 'View' tab is selected, showing a 'Center in View' checkbox (unchecked) and the following fields:

- Latitude: 34.236235°
- Longitude: -117.484484°
- Range: 391m
- Heading: 0.000000°
- Tilt: 0.000000°
- Date/Time: None

At the bottom of the dialog are buttons for 'Snapshot current view', 'Reset', 'OK', and 'Cancel'. The main map area shows a satellite view of a mountainous region with a road labeled 'Lytle Creek Rd'. The status bar at the bottom indicates 'Imagery Date: 1/31/2009', '1994', 'lat 34.233378° lon -117.482817° elev 2755 ft', and 'Eye alt 5956 ft'.