

Code of conduct for members of the Pennsylvania Biological Survey



Adopted by the PABS Steering Committee, 3 February 2023

The Pennsylvania Biological Survey (PABS) was formed to “increase the knowledge of, and foster the perpetuation of the natural biological diversity of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.” PABS members collaborate through technical committees and a steering committee to fulfill this purpose. To maintain productive and civil discourse, establish a welcoming environment for the diversity of biodiversity professionals involved in PABS, and best fulfill our purpose, PABS has adopted this code of conduct, which all members are expected to follow as they participate in PABS activities.

In their personal and professional activities outside of PABS, members are expected to avoid bringing PABS into disrepute or damaging relationships with partner organizations. PABS members should be aware that engaging in private activity that jeopardizes PABS’s reputation or is perceived by staff of agencies or other partner organizations who work with PABS as offensive is incompatible with PABS membership.

PABS members are expected to follow basic rules of professional integrity. For example:

- Avoid even the suspicion of dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, or unprofessional demeanor.
- Refrain from plagiarism and give credit to the works and ideas of others.
- Refrain from fabrication, falsification, or suppression of results, and do not deliberately misrepresent research findings.
- When acting as a member or representative of PABS, act in the public interest of biodiversity conservation and independent of other roles, consistent with a fiduciary duty under of the Pennsylvania Constitution’s Environmental Rights Amendment (Article I, section 27; see Chapter 3, page 3-5, of this *PABS Handbook* for details).
- Do not use status as a PABS member to imply influence with state agencies.
- Do not accept rewards or compensation intended to influence professional judgment or otherwise in a conflict of interest (if in doubt, consult with the PABS Steering Committee officers).

Conduct expectations for PABS participation¹:

Show respect for others.

- Discuss topics and ideas, not people.
- Only one person should be speaking at any given time.
- Do not interrupt when others are speaking.
- Use helpful, not hurtful language.

Speak as you would like to be spoken to.

- Restate ideas when asked.
- Use a civil tone of voice.

¹ Adapted from the Wildlife Society Code of Ethics adopted in 2019: wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/20190304-Code-of-Ethics.pdf

Agree to listen.

- Respectfully hear and listen to differing points of view.
- When unsure, clarify what you heard.
- Realize that what you say and what people understand you to have said may be different.
- Recognize that people can agree to disagree, personally and professionally.

Speak for yourself, not others.

- Speak from your own experience.
- Use “I” statements (“I think that the ideas presented ...”).
- Any public statements made on behalf of PABS must be authorized by the Steering Committee officers.
- Focus professional advice and guidance on subjects in which you are informed and qualified through professional training and experience.

Focus on the work of PABS.

- Topics of conversation should be placed on an agenda by the committee chair in advance of the meeting.
- Agenda items should be related to the work of PABS.

Unacceptable behaviors²:

Harassment, aggression, and intimidation are hurtful and interfere with other people’s experience and participation in our community. These behaviors are inappropriate and unacceptable.

These behaviors can be related to, but not limited to: race, color, creed, gender (including pregnancy, perceived pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions), gender identity, sexual orientation, religion (including religious dress and grooming), political perspectives, marital status, domestic partner status, genetic information, age, national origin or ancestry, military or veteran status, physical or mental disability, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local laws.

Inappropriate behavior can take many forms such as slurs; jokes; derogatory statements; foul or obscene language; offensive clothing; leering; stalking; staring; gestures; pictures, drawings or cartoons; violating personal space by impeding or blocking another person's movement or otherwise physically interfering with them; harassing photography or recordings; unwanted or offensive letters or poems; offensive email, text, chat, voicemail messages; or social media postings.

Procedure for reporting inappropriate behavior and conduct:

Code of Conduct violations should be reported to an officer of the PABS Steering Committee (President, Secretary, Treasurer, Immediate Past President, and President Elect).

The officers as a group will take appropriate action in consultation with the involved technical or standing committee chair(s). If the complaint is against a technical or standing committee chair, the Steering Committee officers will take appropriate action in consultation with a cross-section of committee members. If the complaint is against an officer of the PABS Steering Committee, the remaining officers will take appropriate action. Action may consist of warning an offender to change their behavior or immediate termination of PABS membership.

² Adapted from the Waterbird Society Code of Conduct adopted in 2021: waterbirds.org/wp-content/uploads/WaterbirdSociety_ConductPolicy.pdf