

SOP No: AHT 26

SUBJECT: Toe clipping in lizards (March 2015)

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POLICY: Where it is necessary to permanently identify lizards, the least painful method must be used however, toe-clipping is recognized as the only practical and reliable long-term technique. Where possible, the same tissue should also be used for tissue typing/aging where required. The life history and behaviour of the species must be considered. Fore limbs should be used in preference to the hind limbs.
This procedure must be performed by an experienced operator and must not be used on climbing species.
Only one digit may be removed from each extremity. The amount of digit removed should be minimised and confined to the removal of the distal phalanges only.

PRECAUTIONS: Protective clothing, closed in shoes

EQUIPMENT scalpel blade or
sharp scissors
dilute betadine/alcohol
local anaesthetic of choice

PROCEDURE:

1. Hold the lizard firmly behind the head.
2. Sterilise the foot using dilute betadine/alcohol
3. Using scissors or scalpel blade cut off no more than one digit from each extremity.
4. Clipping should be directed to the interphalangeal space
5. Apply pressure with a sterile swab to encourage clotting.
6. Administer analgesia to the wound

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Consider alternative sources of identification (photo ID, branding, tattooing, paint bands or tags and pit tags)
2. The choice of technique should be based on a thorough review of the literature and consultation with colleagues experienced in this technique.

3. **Animals should be monitored to assess the impact of this procedure.**
4. **Toe clipping should be used as a last resort and will only be considered by Committee members as a viable option in exceptional circumstances with strong justification.**



CHAIR OF AEC

REFERENCES

1. Langkilde T and Shine R (2006) How much stress do researchers inflict on their study animals? A case study using a scincid lizard, *Eulamprus heatwolei* J Exp Biol., 209:1035-1043.
2. Mellor DJ, Beausoleil NJ and Stafford KJ. (2004) Marking amphibians, reptiles and marine mammals: animal welfare, practicalities and public perceptions in New Zealand. pp48-49
3. Toe Clipping of Lizards. Position Statement No1 Australian Society of Herpetologists.