

Enhancing Reasoning and Judgment to Improve Research, Management and Implementation

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Designing research and interpreting findings requires sound reasoning. Implementing results through management requires good judgment. Enhancing the intersection of research, management, and implementation requires wildlife professionals to improve reasoning and judgement skills. Our team conducted a study to identify the essential habits of mind and practices associated with the reasoning and judgement of a sample of peer-selected, highly effective wildlife professionals. Their habits and practices fall into five broad categories: being critically inquisitive and continuously learning; using multi-level, integrative systems thinking; apply self-discipline; taking a balanced approach; and employing emotional intelligence in interactions with others. Based on these findings, we developed a series of practical tools individuals can use to assess the degree to which their habits and practices align with those of highly effective wildlife professionals and develop professional development plans to improve their performance. The tools are available for use at no cost on the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Management Assistance Team (MAT) website. MAT staff can provide assistance with use of the tools as well as creation and implementation of professional development plans.