

REVISED Statement of Work
Peer Review (without attribution) of the Scientific Findings in the
USFWS Review of Lead Exposure and Effects to Scavenging Birds

November 20, 2013

1. Introduction/Background

Brief history of action:

The science regarding the exposure and effects of lead in the environment to birds, particularly species that scavenge on hunter-killed carcasses or offal piles, has received considerable attention from those examining the contribution of lead-containing ammunition. In response, we have undertaken an evaluation of the scientific uncertainty surrounding these issues to help elucidate the effects of lead ammunition to scavenging birds that are trust resources of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). The report will synthesize the existing data regarding exposure and effects of lead to scavenging birds and assess the extent to which ammunition is a contributing factor. Given the long-term conservation implications of this review and its influential information, the report requires a formal, external, independent scientific peer review before distribution. If the report does not provide the best science-based information and analyses, any decisions or conservation actions based on this report may be less effective in the long-term conservation of migratory birds, bald and golden eagles, and endangered species such as the California condor.

This information is distributed solely for the purpose of pre-dissemination peer review under applicable information quality guidelines. It has not been formally disseminated by the Service. It does not represent and should not be construed to represent any agency determination of policy. Until it is made public, no information from the *USFWS Review of Lead Exposure and Effects to Scavenging Birds* may be released by the contractor(s) without express written permission from the Service.

In accordance with the agreement terms and Performance Work Statement, the contractor(s) is (are) reminded of the requirements to protect information and that services shall consist of unbiased assessments through proper management and enforcement of scientific integrity standards, to include conflict of interests.

2. Description of Analyses/Service

The purpose of this review is to provide a formal, independent, external scientific peer review of the information in the, “*USFWS Review of Lead Exposure and Effects to Scavenging Birds*” report. The report, approximately 109 pages long, synthesizes the existing data regarding exposure and effects of lead to scavenging birds and assess the extent to which ammunition is a contributing factor. Where available, the report relied on peer-reviewed literature to help answer questions of science uncertainty, and also incorporated selected cases of unpublished or grey literature that filled a significant data gap where peer-reviewed sources were not available. Requested peer reviewers would

review this approach and assess the sufficiency of the report's conclusions regarding outstanding questions of scientific uncertainty and the contribution of ammunition to lead exposure in the species under consideration. We request the peer review (draft) within 45 -90 days.

It is important that the peer review be conducted by independent qualified experts, independent of the FWS and the specific study that is being reviewed.

3. Methods, Protocols and/or Scientific Standards

It is very important to note the US Fish & Wildlife Service is seeking to award a contract to the contractor who can best demonstrate through submission of their written proposal their ability to provide unbiased, scientific reviews of the information in the "*USFWS Review of Lead Exposure and Effects to Scavenging Birds*", report (Attached).

Written proposals submitted in response to this Request for Proposal must clearly identify how the contractor plans to meet the Office of Management and Budget's Guidance, "Final Information Quality Bulletin for PEER Review" (December 2004 – attached) most notably Section II: PEER Review of Influential Scientific Information Paragraphs 1 and 2.

At least 3 reviews will be provided, with the fourth and fifth reviews being conducted at the discretion of the Service, depending upon funds available. Factors to be addressed include the scientific merit of the report's technical review, which provide the basis for its conclusions regarding the effects of lead exposure in scavenging birds from ammunition sources. The reviewers must ensure that any scientific uncertainties are clearly identified and characterized, and the potential implications of the uncertainties for the technical conclusions drawn are clear. Peer Reviewers will be advised that they are not to provide advice on policy. Rather, they should focus their review on identifying and characterizing scientific uncertainties.

Using the attached, "*USFWS Review of Lead Exposure and Effects to Scavenging Birds*", report, Offeror's shall independently determine the experience and qualifications of the PEER reviewers necessary to meet the OMB Guidance – "Final Information Quality Bulletin for PEER Review" (Dec 2004), specifically;

SECTION II: PEER REVIEW OF INFLUENTIAL SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION:
as follows:

1. Scientific integrity of the PEER review includes;
 - a. Expertise and Balance of the Panel Members
 - b. Identification of the Scientific issues – with clarity of "The Charge to the Panel" –see page 3 of this SOW
 - c. The quality, focus and depth of the discussions of the issues by the panel
 - d. The rationale and supportability of the panel's findings
 - e. Accuracy and clarity of the panel report
2. Process integrity of the PEER review includes;

- a. Transparency and openness
- b. Avoidance of real or perceived conflicts of interest
- c. A workable process for Public comment and involvement –NOT required for this Contract
- d. Adherence to defined procedures

Some suggestions to possibly consider in determining the necessary experience and qualifications of PEER reviewers could be toxicologists, pathologists, or ecologists, who have previously conducted similar reviews or regularly provided reviews of research and conservation articles for the scientific literature.

THE CHARGE TO THE PANEL

The peer reviewers must consider and respond to the questions listed below, at a minimum, in their reviews.

1. Are the objectives of the *USFWS Review of Lead Exposure and Effects to Scavenging Birds* clearly stated and logical? Is the content of the report within the parameters of these objectives? If not, please identify the specific objectives that are unclear or illogical, or where content has strayed from the stated objectives.
2. Do the authors of the *USFWS Review of Lead Exposure and Effects to Scavenging Birds* draw the correct conclusions for each section of the report (see Discussion Points boxes), and are they supported by the material presented within that section? If not, please identify those that are not and the specifics of each situation.
3. Do the authors of the *USFWS Review of Lead Exposure and Effects to Scavenging Birds* draw reasonable and scientifically sound conclusions from the scientific information presented in the report? Are there instances in the report where a different but equally reasonable and sound scientific conclusion might be drawn that differs from the conclusion drawn by the Service and is supported by data in the literature? If any instances are found where that is the case, please provide the specifics of that situation.
4. Does the *USFWS Review of Lead Exposure and Effects to Scavenging Birds* base its interpretations, analyses and conclusions upon the best available science? If any instances are found where the best available science was not used, please provide the specifics of each situation.
5. Are there any seminal peer-reviewed scientific papers that the *USFWS Review of Lead Exposure and Effects to Scavenging Birds* omits from consideration that

would enhance the scientific quality of the document, or contribute to alternate conclusions that are scientifically sound? Please identify any such papers.

6. Are there other potential threats to condors that are not addressed in this report that should be considered in the overall assessment of the condor recovery program?
7. Is the scientific foundation of the *USFWS Review of Lead Exposure and Effects to Scavenging Birds* reasonable and how can it be strengthened? Please identify any options to strengthen the scientific foundations.

4. Required Service (Work) Items - Task Line Item Numbers (TLIN): As described in the agreement’s Performance Work Statement, paragraph 2B, the below TLINs are required in the performance of this requirement. The TLINs are different, but interrelated to the tasks listed in task/deliverable and payment schedule:

TLIN 001: Selecting for peer reviews or review panels, or for task orders to provide scientific support.

TLIN 002: Organizing, structuring, leading, and managing the scientific reviews and task order products.

TLIN 003: Managing and producing a final report/product.

TLIN 004: Responding to any follow-up questions from FWS on original review comments (not to exceed 7 consecutive days)

TLIN 005: Maintaining an official record for peer reviews or task orders.

5. Deliverables

The following deliverables are in addition to the agreement’s Performance Work Statement paragraph 3, which states, “The Contractor shall provide the COR with three key deliverables: (1) Proposed Timeline 45 to 90 days, (2) Original and summarized scientific reviews, and (3) Complete Official Record.” – This deliverable will include the providing the names of the PEER reviewers-without retribution and their original review comments.

There are no additional deliverables. However, the contractor will be required to respond to questions, inquiries, or other related requests after the contract expiration date, and final acceptance, as needed. These request(s) will be by the Contracting Officer Representative (in coordination with the Contracting Officer). Inquires or requests are limited to the products provided, and work performed under this contract (order). Responses include, but not limited to: phone calls, written responses, and/or meetings.

Review comments by the Contracting Officer Representative will be provided to the contractor via the Contracting Officer.

6. Task Schedule.

The period of performance shall not exceed the contract expiration date without a contract modification. In accordance with the terms of the contract, the contractor shall notify the Contracting Officer of any delays. Delays by the Government or Contractor must be rectified by accelerating the next deliverable on a one to one basis (i.e., if the delay was 2 days then the next deliverable must be submitted 2 days early). Deliverables that fall on a holiday or weekend must be delivered on the first work day after the weekend or holiday. The period of performance (contract expiration date) includes all possible holidays or weekend deliveries:

TO BE COMPLETED BY OFFEROR AS PART OF PROPOSAL

Contractor shall propose a contract time period to complete this project between 45-90 days.

NOTE: This will become part of the contract if awarded

TASK/DELIVERABLE	CALENDAR DAYS AFTER AWARD-FILL IN
Task 1: Contracting Officer and COR will provide access to materials needed for the review	_____
Task 2: The contractor(s) shall review appropriate information that will assist in their review, including the _____ report.	_____
Task 3: The contractor(s) shall conduct a thorough, objective peer review of the _____ report.	_____
Task 4: The contractor(s) will provide 3 to 5 expert peer reviews (combined without attribution) and all applicable official records to the project manager	_____
Task 5: The project manager summarizes the individual peer reviews and prepares a summary report for the Service	_____
Task 6: The project manager facilitates specific follow-up questions/answers between the Service and the reviewers, without attribution (task limited to a 7-day period, 26 days after delivering initial review comments to the Service).	_____
Task 6: Final report and official record is submitted to the Service –including providing the names of the PEER reviewers without retribution and their original review comments.	_____

7. Official Administrative Record

The preparation of an official administrative record is required.

8. Information Sources

List the key information sources and links.

9 Payment Schedule: In accordance with and in addition to the agreement, the contractor will submit invoices via the Internet Payment Platform (IPP) (see agreement). Invoices that do not coincide with a deliverable shall be submitted with a brief status report (not to exceed 1 page). The status report will detail the period of performance, the services performed during the period, key personnel involved, and percentage of the task(s) complete, if other than 100%. Partial payment for task(s) that are not 100% complete will be paid in an amount up to, but not to exceed, 65% of the task’s total cost. For instance, if the total cost of the project is \$100.00, 100% of task 2 related cost would be \$10.00. If task 2 is 75% complete, the invoice amount will not exceed 65% or \$6.50.

The payment schedule is as follows:

TASK/DELIVERABLE	% OF EFFORT & PRICE
Task 1: Contracting Officer and COR will provide access to materials needed for the review	0%
Task 2: The contractor(s) shall review appropriate information that will assist in their review, including the _____ review	10%
Task 3: The contractor(s) shall conduct a thorough, objective peer review of the _____ report.	30%
Task 4: The contractor(s) will provide their individual review, and all applicable official records to the project manager	0%
Task 5: The project manager summarizes the individual peer reviews and prepares a summary report for the Service.	20%
Task 6: The project manager receives follow-up questions from the Service on any review comment, obtains the reviewers reply and provides the reply comment, without attribution to the Service (limited to a 10-day period)	10%
Task 6: Final report and official record is submitted to the Service	30%
Total	100%

10. Points of Contact:

Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR):,Dr, Richard A. Coleman, who can be reached at 303-236-4443 or rick_coleman@fws.gov

Contracting Officer, Mr. Steve Gess. Mr. Gess’s phone number is 303-236-4334 or email: steve_gess@fws.gov.

Project Leader: Nancy H. Golden, Ph.D. Environmental Contaminants Specialist
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, (703) 358-2077, email: Nancy_Golden@fws.gov

11. List of Enclosures/Attachments

OMB –“Final Information Quality Bulletin for PEER Review” (Dec 2004), specifically SECTION II: PEER REVIEW OF INFLUENTIAL SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION

And

USFWS Review of Lead Exposure and Effects to Scavenging Birds-REPORT

12. Required proposal Submission/Evaluation Criteria (This paragraph will be deleted upon award)

This requirement will be awarded based on best value.

Offeror’s shall submit the following proposal requirements:

1. Project Approach: Provide a detailed narrative limited to no more than 10 pages, which completely explains your approach to this project. Most notably how you plan to meet the detailed requirements of the OMB –“Final Information Quality Bulletin for PEER Review” (Dec 2004), specifically SECTION II: PEER REVIEW OF INFLUENTIAL SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION- for recruitment and selection of Qualified PEER reviewers and your approach to insuring the PEER review is properly executed.
2. PEER Reviewer Experience and Qualifications: US Fish & Wildlife does not want the names or specific resumes of the PEER reviewers you plan to use. (this may be construed as to taint the required independence of the PEER process) However, we do require a generalized summary of the cumulative experience and qualifications of the top 3 PEER reviewers you have gathered and plan to use along with how your proposed group of reviewers meets the requirements of the above referenced OMB Guidance. EG: PEER reviewer has 24 years’ experience as pathologists and has authored several publications in last 5 years in scientific journal, ect ect.. We are not interested in any information in which an evaluator may be able to determine who the PEER reviewer is, only general information which can be translated into qualifications or experience of the individual for evaluation purposes. A fourth and fifth reviewer shall also be included in your proposal but are considered optional and subject to a determination by the Government and subject to the availability of funds.
3. PRICE : Price must detail cost in accordance with the agreement. (to include the level of effort applied to each major task), approach (to include the labor categories, TLINs applied to each major task.
4. Proposed Performance Period: Offeror’ shall include the above timeline with your proposed timeline for completing the PEER review – 45-90 days is

acceptable. (This timeline will be incorporated as part of the contract if you are awarded the TASK order).

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Proposals will be evaluated independently by an evaluation committee using the following criteria in order of importance to determine BEST VALUE;

1. PRICE
2. PROJECT APPROACH- Ability to meet OMB GUIDANCE –“Final Information Quality Bulletin for PEER Review” (Dec 2004), specifically SECTION II: PEER REVIEW OF INFLUENTIAL SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION
3. QUALIFICATION and EXPERIENCE of PEER reviewers
4. PROPOSED TIME