

## Reports and Comments

### Conservation, education, research, and ethical review in zoos

The European Directive on zoos, which is promulgated in England and Wales through the The Zoo Licensing Act 1981 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2002, includes provisions requiring zoos to implement the following conservation measures:

- participating in research from which conservation benefits accrue to the species, and/or training in relevant conservation skills, and/or the exchange of information relevant to species conservation and/or where appropriate, captive breeding, repopulation or reintroduction of species into the wild; and,
- promoting public education and awareness in relation to the conservation of biodiversity, particularly by providing information about the species exhibited and their natural habitats.

Since it came into force in 1981, the Zoo Licensing Act has required that licences to run zoos are dependent on regular inspections to satisfy local authorities that animal care and zoo management are satisfactory. The inspection process has now to include the audit of the conservation and education activities to ensure that zoos are implementing the new measures listed above (as specified in their more carefully drafted form in the ZLA 2002 Regulations). Furthermore, the most recent edition of the Secretary of States Standards of Modern Zoo Practice (March 2000, available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/gwd/zooprac/index.htm>) requires that zoos '*should establish ethical review processes or seek appropriate help in planning and implementing their conservation, education and research strategies*' particularly for '*...situations where the use of animals (eg acquisition, management or disposal for conservation, education or research) may be in conflict with the best welfare interests of the animal or animals involved.*'

In order to assist both zoos and zoo inspectors regarding the scope and scale of activities that might be judged to be appropriate to meet these new conservation provisions of the Zoo Licensing Act Regulations 2002, and regarding the establishment of suitable ethical review processes, the Zoos Forum has produced chapters on these subjects in its newly published 'Zoos Forum Handbook' (see details below).

The chapter on the ethical review process provides guidance on establishing and auditing ethical review processes in zoos. These review processes provide a mechanism for consideration of ethical dilemmas in order to provide advice to the zoo management. Advice is provided on the conduct of such reviews, suggested committee formats, and on issues that may need to be considered.

The second chapter of the Handbook expands on what zoos might consider doing to take forward their new legal obligations for conservation (which may or may not include research) and education. Many examples are provided of *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation activities that large and

small zoos have been involved in. The section on education discusses the development of suitable strategies and programmes appropriate for the size of zoo and the scale of the resources available.

This Handbook is likely to be helpful to, and to be more or less essential reading for, those responsible for zoo management, and for zoo inspectors in the UK. However, it is likely that it will be of interest and value more widely and especially to those concerned with zoo animal management around the world. The Handbook is produced in loose-leaf format to facilitate updating and the inclusion of further chapters on aspects of zoo and zoo animal management in the future.

**Zoos Forum Handbook** (November 2003). Produced by the Zoos Forum. 80 pp A4 ring file. Published by and available from DEFRA, Eagle Wing, Zone 1/16, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6EB, UK. Available also at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/gwd/zoosforum/handbook/index.htm>.

### Welfare in animal sanctuaries, shelters and re-homing centres

There are a large, but unknown, number of enterprises in the UK which take in, look after, and try to re-home unwanted or otherwise displaced animals. This has been going on for a long time, for example: the Home for Lost and Starving Dogs, which later became the Battersea Dogs Home, was founded in 1861. Whilst many cater mainly for dogs and cats, others take in a wide range of species and some deal exclusively with sick and injured wildlife. Although the numbers of animals kept or passing through these enterprises each year are undoubtedly very large (tens or hundreds of thousands in the UK), there is no specific legislation setting out principles and standards for their operation. In response to 'general concerns about perceived variations in the standards of welfare' at such premises, the Companion Animal Welfare Council (CAWC) began, in 2001, a review of the animal welfare aspects of these sanctuaries, shelters and re-homing establishments. The report of this study was published in February 2004.

The report reviews the various types of sanctuary/shelter/re-homing centres and what they do, discusses principles of the animals' welfare and their needs, considers health and disease aspects and euthanasia, and makes many recommendations about management of these centres and about the need for regulation. Although its main focus is on companion animals, the report also includes a section on wildlife rescue/rehabilitation centres.

Among the major recommendations are:

- that it should be a duty for all establishments to maintain and update their knowledge concerning the needs of animals in their care,
- that establishments should have clear policies regarding the numbers of animals they can house, and their short-term and long-term care,

- that establishments should have designated animal welfare officers and nominated veterinary surgeons
- that the Animal Welfare Bill that DEFRA is presently drafting should include provision for statutory regulation of establishments which hold out to undertake such activities (but from which individuals who may occasionally rescue, keep and re-home individual animals would be exempt).

The case for regulation is clearly set out in a separate chapter. This deals in detail with many of the complexities that will be faced in the drafting of legislation, including definitions, and proposals regarding methods of registration and licensing. The report also deals with legal and other issues relating to the ownership of displaced animals.

This is a very useful, dispassionate and well-balanced review. It makes many sound recommendations towards high standards of animal welfare in all these establishments. There has been a growth of interest in such animal rescue in many countries and this CAWC report is likely to be helpful widely.

**The Report on Companion Animal Welfare Establishments: Sanctuaries, Shelters and Re-homing Centres** (February 2004). Companion Animal Welfare Council Report. 58 pp A4 paperback. Published by and available from the Companion Animal Welfare Council, c/o The Donkey Sanctuary, Sidmouth, Devon EX10 0NU. Email: [cawc@cawc.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:cawc@cawc.freeserve.co.uk).

### **InterNICHE publishes their policy on the use of animals and alternatives in education**

InterNICHE is the International Network for Humane Education. It aims to promote high quality, fully humane education in biological sciences, and veterinary and human medicine. It supports progressive science teaching and the replacement of animal experiments by working with teachers to introduce alternatives, and with students to support freedom of conscience.

The 'Policy on the Use of Animals and Alternatives in Education', which was first published in the book 'From Guinea Pig to Computer Mouse (2nd edition, 2003)', has recently been put online by InterNICHE; it can be found on their website <http://www.interniche.org>. The document aims to address all aspects of work with animals and alternatives in life science education. The article consists of ten sections, beginning with the InterNICHE Position Statement. This is followed by a definition of alternatives in education and a definition of harm. The document then outlines policies on animal dissection; sourcing of animal cadavers and tissue; live animal use for clinical skills and surgery training; live animal field studies; and the use of live animals, animal cadavers and tissue for making alternatives.

The position statement says that *'InterNICHE supports a high quality humane education within the life sciences, and the use of alternatives to meet teaching objectives. InterNICHE is against all harmful use of animals in education, including the harming and killing of animals for their cadavers and tissue, for live experimentation and skills training, for ethology and field studies, and for making alternatives'*.

Within the context of the InterNICHE position statement, the policy on animal dissection states that animal dissection can be a useful tool for knowledge and skills acquisition, and may encourage an appreciation of life, when certain conditions are met. For example, the animal cadaver must be ethically sourced, the dissection should be carried out at no lower than the university level, instructors are ethically aware and responsible and have appropriate training and competence for all activities and procedures that involve animals.

With regard to sourcing animal cadavers and tissue, InterNICHE would recognise an animal cadaver or tissue as ethically sourced only if nine conditions are met. These include: that the animal was not captured, bought, bred, kept, harmed or killed to provide the cadaver or tissue, that the animal died from natural causes or an accident, or was humanely euthanased secondary to natural terminal disease or serious non-recoverable injury, and the decision to euthanase was made by a veterinary surgeon based on the interests of the animal and not motivated by practical or financial interests.

The policy on live animal use for clinical skills and surgery training lists 14 conditions that must be met before the use of animals for these purposes is considered acceptable. These conditions include: that clinical skills training is beneficial or neutral to individual animals, that the training should be supervised by a qualified instructor at all times, and that ethics, including animal rights and welfare, animal use, alternatives, and the human-animal bond are explored openly and fully.

The InterNICHE policy provides substantial material for those working in this field to consider when embarking upon the use of animals in education. A list of some other sources of information on the subject of the use of animals in education is also available at the InterNICHE website.

**InterNICHE Policy on the Use of Animals and Alternatives in Education** (2004). Available at: <http://www.interniche.org>.

### **Farm animal welfare in the UK National Curriculum**

The Compassion in World Farming Trust (CIWF Trust) has produced a report entitled 'Educating Humane Citizens: Farm Animal Welfare and the Curriculum', which examines how well the educational curriculum helps young people in England to understand both the factual and ethical aspects of animal farming. The report has reviewed how these issues are tackled in the National Curriculum, in relevant GCE Advanced level courses and in associated textbooks. Proposals are made for the development of the existing curriculum.

The CIWF Trust argues that the curriculum should include greater detail on animal farming since a majority of people make use of animal products on a daily basis and because humane education should be an essential part of education for sustainability; furthermore, animal welfare interests and concerns most young people. It is suggested that much more needs to be done to ensure that students have a better under-