



1.4 Code of Practice

As a condition of membership, Full Institutional Members of the Zoo and Aquarium Association:

- **are licensed zoological parks or aquaria defined as permanent facilities maintaining captive wild animals and providing for the public benefit (hereafter referred to as “zoos” but encompassing all captive display facilities including zoos, aquaria, fauna parks and wildlife sanctuaries)**
- **comply with all statutory requirements relevant to the operation of a zoological park or aquarium**
- **support the Mission Statement of the Association¹**
- **comply with the *Zoo and Aquarium Association Animal Management Guidelines* for the holding of animals for display purposes²**
- **comply with the *Zoo and Aquarium Association Code of Practice*³**

The Code of Practice is intended to maintain a high standard of conduct in Full Institutional Members of the Zoo and Aquarium Association, thereby ensuring responsible stewardship of the species entrusted to their care and ensuring their position as leaders in the zoological profession in Australasia.

Association members found to be in breach of the Code of Practice will be dealt with in accordance with the Procedures for Non-compliance, as laid out in the Constitution of the Zoo and Aquarium Association. Sanctions include measures up to, and including, expulsion from the Association.

1. Animal Welfare

Recognising that the welfare of the animals in their care is of paramount importance, Association institutions provide for the physical, psychological and physiological needs of their animals by:

- 1.1 Complying with (or exceeding) the *Zoo and Aquarium Association Animal Management Guidelines* (where they exist) and legislative standards in animal husbandry; and,
- 1.2 Supporting periodic evaluation of the *Zoo and Aquarium Association Animal Management Guidelines* to continue and accelerate advances in animal care.

¹ “To harness the collective resources of zoos and aquariums to help conserve biodiversity in the natural environment.”

² The Zoo and Aquarium Association has implemented its accreditation program and has initiated a process whereby animal management guidelines will be produced through industry consultation. See appendix for more information regarding accreditation.

³ The Zoo and Aquarium Association endorses a number of policy statements and guidelines including several produced by the IUCN-World Conservation Union and the World Zoo Organisation and provisions of these documents are reflected in the Zoo and Aquarium Association Code of Practice.

2. Animal Display

Recognising that captive animals are representative of species that exist in the wild as components of complex biological communities, Association institutions:

Incorporate in animal displays, components of the animals' natural environment to promote visitor understanding of the species and its environment and to facilitate communication of relevant conservation issues.

3. Conservation

Recognising that the plants and animals in their care are representative of species, communities or ecosystems that are often under some form of threat in the wild and acknowledging that zoos have a responsibility to manage their collections as a resource for conservation, Association institutions:

- 3.1 Have, as part of their stated mission, the promotion of efforts to conserve biodiversity.
- 3.2 Allocate resources to conservation efforts;
- 3.3 Engage the community in conservation issues and projects;
- 3.4 Aim to implement practices that are ecologically sustainable (e.g. improving energy efficiency, recycling water and/or materials);
- 3.5 Regularly evaluate and document conservation efforts to demonstrate their on-going effectiveness and make that information available on request; and,
- 3.6 Where conservation programs involve introduction or reintroduction into the wild or the restocking of wild populations, ensure that the programs comply with the *IUCN Position Statement on Translocation of Living Organisms* (September 1987) and the *IUCN/SSC Reintroduction Specialist Group Guidelines* (May 1995) and/or are endorsed by the relevant wildlife management agencies.

4. Education

Acknowledging education as an effective tool for conservation and recognising how well-placed zoos are to use this tool, a highly educational content should be evident throughout zoo operations. Educational tools may include interpretive displays, keeper talks, staff lectures, brochures, fact sheets, formal classes and/or targeted campaigns. Association institutions:

- 4.1 Operate educational programs that stimulate awareness, understanding and involvement with the conservation of biodiversity.
- 4.2 Allocate a component of their annual resources to education efforts.
- 4.3 Regularly evaluate and document education efforts to demonstrate their on-going effectiveness.

5. Research

Recognising the role that the plants and animals in their care could take in furthering scientific knowledge, Association institutions:

- 5.1 Facilitate appropriate biological research on collection plants and animals by suitably qualified researchers.
- 5.2 Encourage and support staff to record, publish and present advances in the methodology of the profession.

- 5.3 Establish a protocol for approving animal research projects including, where necessary, the use of a recognised ethics committee as defined by relevant animal research legislation.

6. Animal Breeding

Acknowledging responsibility for all animals produced within their collection, Association institutions:

- 6.1 Take action to avoid the production of unwanted⁴ animals through unplanned breeding (e.g. by employing commonly used techniques such as contraception, neutering and separation of the sexes).
- 6.2 Do not selectively breed, import or otherwise obtain wildlife with characteristics not representative of corresponding wild populations, unless it can be demonstrated, that the result of such will assist in delivering a positive message about conservation values and the conservation of wildlife, or where such acquisitions are in response to animal welfare-directed requests from government or non-government organisations. Spaces needed for direct conservation and/or education purposes should not be compromised by such a decision.
- 6.3 For program species for which population management is coordinated regionally, select pairings in accordance with the recommendations of the Captive Management Program.

7. Animal Euthanasia

Recognising the sensitivity of the issue of animal euthanasia and the need for transparency in the decision-making process, Association institutions:

- 7.1 Comply with the Zoo and Aquarium Association Guidelines on Animal Euthanasia.

8. Animal handling for presentation purposes

- 8.1 Acknowledging the potential educational benefits of appropriate animal presentations, Association institutions:
- 8.2 Ensure that animal handling for presentation purposes is done in a way that does not compromise the welfare of the animal or the safety of the handler.
- 8.3 Ensure that all presentations engender positive and respectful attitudes towards the animal and the species.
- 8.4 Ensure that presentations convey education and/or conservation messages.

9. Regional Collection Planning and Species Management

Recognising the benefits of both a strategic and collaborative approach to the development and management of their animal collections, Association institutions:

- 9.1 Comply with the *Zoo and Aquarium Association Guidelines on Regional Collection Planning and Species Management*. In particular, Association institutions acknowledge that, on leaving the Association, the placement of animals of Program Species acquired while a member of the Association, will be subject to ASMP recommendations.

⁴ Animals not planned to be held in the breeding institutions, and for which there is no reliable demand elsewhere.

Approval

This Policy was endorsed by the Zoo and Aquarium Association Board on March 2009.