



Policy and Procedures: PROGRAM ANIMALS

Purpose: To ensure the safe and responsible use of non-human animals that are used outside their normal exhibit for performances, shows or acts and/or are intended to have regular, physical contact with the public within their normal exhibits.

File Number: 07

Last Reviewed: March 7, 2008

Pertains To: All employees, part time and temporary staff, contract workers, volunteers, interns and co-op students (collectively referred to as "STAFF")

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Up-close experiences and personal contact with animals is a powerful educational tool that provides a variety of benefits to zoo and aquarium educators seeking to convey cognitive and emotionally inspiring messages to the public about wildlife and environmental conservation.

Advantages of this method of teaching include: lengthened learning periods, increased knowledge acquisition and retention, enhanced environmental attitudes, and the creation of positive perceptions concerning zoo and aquarium animals.

However, the use of any program animal comes with a host of responsibilities including the welfare of the animals used (i.e.-physiological and psychological well-being), the safety of the animal handlers and public, and accountability for the message received by the audience.

POLICIES AND PROTOCOL

- The use of program animals must always be done or supervised by trained zoo staff.
- The setting of the show, performance, act or contact area is appropriate. Individual integrity, professional ethics and socially accepted moral values should be considered.
- Animal health and welfare is assured. Animals should not be trained or forced to perform activities that may endanger them. Appropriate breaks and rest should be given between use.
- Human health and safety is not at risk. This includes the zoo staff as well as the public.
- The animal is used in a respectful, safe manner that is not misrepresenting or degrading. They should be trained and perform only actions or tasks, which are considered to be part of their natural behaviour.
- The educational material being relaying is pertinent and accurate. Every opportunity should be taken to appropriately interpret the behaviours involved in the performance as they relate to the animal's natural behaviour, physiology and anatomy.
- Suitable species and individual specimens are used. Animals that are a relevant part of a captive management program, such as the Species Survival Plan (SSP), should not be used.



REFERENCES

- Peter Klose, Director, Safari Zoo Camp
- CAZA Policy Re: Use Of Wild Or Exotic Animals For Performance, Shows Or Acts.
http://www.caza.ca/media/Pdf/Policies/oct_15_2007_position_on_animals_in_shows_eng.pdf
- Association of Zoos and Aquariums: Program Animal Position Statement
<http://www.aza.org/ConEd/ProgAnimalPosition/>
- Association of Zoos and Aquariums: AZA Program Animal Policy
<http://www.aza.org/ConEd/proganimalpolicy/>
- AZA: Recommendations for Developing an Institutional Program Animal Policy
<http://www.aza.org/ConEd/progranimalrecs/>