

the  
accreditation standards &  
related policies

2019 edition

## ACCREDITATION STANDARDS & Related Policies

### *SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONS & CHANGES 2015-2019*

#### 2019

Animal Welfare & Care: **REVISED:** 1.5.5, 1.5.14  
 Safety/Security: **REVISED:** 11.7.1  
 Guest Services: **NEW:** 12.7  
 Master & Strategic Planning: **REVISED:** 13.1, 13.2 **NEW:** 13.3, 13.4, 13.5

#### 2018

Animal Welfare & Care: **NEW:** 1.5.0, 1.5.6.1, **REVISED:** 1.4.4, 1.4.7  
 Veterinary Care: **NEW:** 2.0.4, 2.6.3.1, 2.6.3.2 **REVISED:** 2.6.3  
 Conservation: **REVISED:** General Considerations Box, 3.1.1, 3.2.1, 3.2.2  
 Safety/Security: **REVISED:** 11.7.2  
 Guest Services: **NEW:** 12.5, 12.6 **REVISED:** 12.2, 12.4  
 Standards For Cetacean Care & Welfare  
 Welfare Consideration Boxes, all sections

#### 2017

Preamble **NEW**  
 Animal Welfare, Care, & Management: **NEW:** 1.2.2, 1.5.13, 1.5.15, 1.6.3, 1.6.4. **REVISED:**  
 1.3.1, 1.5.1, 1.5.4, 1.5.7, 1.5.8, 1.5.10, 1.6.1, 1.7.1  
 Veterinary Care: **NEW:** 2.0.1, 2.0.3, 2.5.2. **REVISED:** 2.1.1, 2.2.2, 2.3.2, 2.5.1, 2.6.2  
 Conservation: **REVISED:** General Considerations Box, 3.2.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.4  
 Education and Interpretation: **REVISED:** 4.2.1, 4.3.1, 4.3.3  
 Scientific Advancement [formerly Research]: **NEW:** Section Title, 5.0. **REVISED:** General  
 Considerations Box, 5.2, 5.3  
 Governing Authority: **NEW:** General Considerations Box. **REVISED:** 6.3, 6.5, 6.6  
 Staff: **NEW:** General Considerations Box, 7.8.1, 7.12. **REVISED:** 7.1, 7.3, 7.5, 7.6, 7.8, 7.9, 7.11  
 Support Organization: **REVISED:** 8.1  
 Finance: **NEW:** 9.6. **REVISED:** 9.1, 9.4  
 Physical Facilities: **NEW:** 10.1.0, 10.1.3, 10.2.0. **REVISED:** 10.1.2, 10.2.1, 10.3.1  
 Safety/Security: **NEW:** 11.1.2.1, 11.2.0, General Considerations Box [Diving subsection], 11.7.5.  
**REVISED:** 11.1.4, 11.1.5, 11.2.2, 11.2.5, 11.3.6, 11.5.2, 11.5.3, 11.6.3, 11.7.1, 11.7.2,  
 Guest Services: **REVISED:** 12.3  
 Strategic Planning [formerly Other Programs/Activities]: **NEW:** Section Title  
 General Administrative Policies **NEW:** Elephant Management and Care- Substantial Compliance Extension

#### 2016

Veterinary Care **NEW:** 2.9.1  
 Safety/Security **REVISED:** 11.1.1, 11.2.4  
 Elephant Standards **REVISED:** 5.1, 5.2  
 Occupational Safety of Elephant Care Professionals **REVISED:** III.a  
 AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management: Acquisition, Transfer, Euthanasia, and  
 Reintroduction **REVISED** (*Acquisitions, Transfers, and Transitions Policy replaced by RPM Policy*)  
 General Administrative Policies **NEW:** Achieving Accreditation, Determining Compliance,  
 Elephant Management and Care- Special Welfare Variance, Enforcement of Standards, Last  
 Minute Inspector Replacement  
 General Administrative Policies **REVISED:** Accidents Involving Injury or Welfare

#### 2015

Important Notes: **NEW** 1. Documentation  
 Animal Welfare, Care, & Management **NEW** 1.4.0, 1.5.12 **REVISED** 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.4.4, 1.4.7, 1.4.9  
 Conservation **REVISED** 3.2.1  
 Physical Facilities **REVISED** 10.2.2  
 Safety/Security **REVISED** 11.1.2  
 Related Policies: **NEW** Acquisitions, Transfers, and Transitions Policy; Maximizing  
 Occupational Safety of Elephant Care Professionals At AZA-accredited and AZA-certified Facilities  
 General Administrative Policies: **NEW** Accidents Resulting In Human Fatality , Mid-Cycle Inspections

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## ***IMPORTANT NOTES REGARDING THESE STANDARDS:***

**1. Documentation:** Having proper documentation of programs, activities, and other occurrences is essential to meeting these standards. If an institution is taking proper steps to comply with a standard but fails to document such action, it will not be considered in compliance (for example, having determined that collectors have the necessary permits, but having no documentation of this).

**2. Accreditation and certification standards:** These standards are for accreditation applicants and certification applicants alike. In the case of certification, an education program is not required, nor are standards directly related to the presence of the visiting public. However, if the facility has an education program, and/or hosts public groups on a regular basis, all related standards must be met.

**3. Authority:** The Accreditation Commission, and its agents, shall determine if a facility is meeting standards, and incorporating modern zoological practices and philosophies. The Visiting Committee is an arm of the Accreditation Commission. However, the Accreditation Commission is the final authority in interpreting these standards and assuring they are applied equally to all.

**4. Order of Sections:** Placement of items in this document has no bearing on importance to accreditation processing as *all* areas are considered pertinent for the operation of a professional institution.

**5. Performance standards versus engineering standards:** With few exceptions, AZA standards are primarily *performance* standards (i.e., measuring the level of achievement considered acceptable to fulfill a performance characteristic, and choice in method for meeting the goal). This differs from *engineering* standards, where exact and precisely measured steps are required to fulfill an engineering characteristic, with little or no variation in method for meeting the goal.

**6. Subjectivity:** Due to the large number of variables existing between institutions, some standards necessarily allow for certain levels of subjectivity by both the Visiting Committee and the Accreditation Commission. In addition, the opinion of one team may be slightly different than another team. In such cases, the Accreditation Commission is the final authority in interpreting these standards and assuring they are applied equally to all.

**7. Continuous Progress and Rising Standards:** As the science of zoology and aquatic studies grows in knowledge, so too do AZA standards rise to accurately reflect current understanding and modern practices, and to drive continuous improvement in institutions accredited by AZA. What was acceptable under AZA standards in the past may not be considered sufficient five years later when an institution's next accreditation inspection takes place. Institutions are expected to continually progress and improve in all areas so as to keep up with rising standards and qualify for AZA accreditation.

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**DEFINITIONS:**

**ACCREDITATION:** the establishment and maintenance of professional standards and the qualitative evaluation of organizations in the light of those standards. Through this process a profession is judged based on criteria selected by experts in that field, rather than by outside agencies and/or individuals that are not actively employed in that field.

**ADJACENT:** Next to, close to, adjoining.

**AESTHETIC:** pertaining to the beautiful.

**AQUARIUM:** Usually at least one public building which contains aquatic animals. However, the animals are usually split into numerous exhibits. [For full definition see *Basic Definition, 2019 Guide To Accreditation of Zoological Parks and Aquariums.*]

**CEO/DIRECTOR:** The person with the authority and responsibility for the operation of the institution. Other titles may include president, chief executive officer, superintendent, supervisor, manager, etc.

**CERTIFICATION:** A process similar to accreditation (see “Accreditation” above). In AZA’s case, certification involves review and assessment of facilities that operate in support of zoos and aquariums, but are typically not open to the public on a regular basis.

**CONSERVATION:** For the purposes of AZA’s accreditation program, conservation is understood to be active stewardship of the natural environment, including wildlife, plants, energy and other natural resources.

**CURRENTLY ACCREDITED APPLICANTS:** Currently accredited applicants are those institutions that are AZA-accredited *at the time the application is submitted and processed.*

**ENGINEERING STANDARDS:** Standards that require exact and precisely measured steps to fulfill an engineering characteristic, with little or no variation in method for meeting the goal.

**ENRICHMENT:** A process to ensure that the behavioral and physical needs of an animal are being met by providing opportunities for species-appropriate behaviors and choices.

**GOVERNING AUTHORITY:** The agency with authority to govern the operations of the institution (such as the city, county/provincial, or federal government body, private corporation, foundation, society, board of directors, or other similar entities).

**INSTITUTIONAL COLLECTION PLAN (ICP):** An ICP is a document designed to thoughtfully assess the reasons for having each taxon in the collection. The ICP should be updated on a regular basis (minimally every 5 years). The ICP should include a statement of justification for all species and individuals in the institution's planned collection. The ICP should consider such criteria as status in the wild, status in zoos and aquariums, existence and priorities of cooperative management programs, ability to maintain the species in a physically, psychologically and socially healthy environment, exhibit value, exhibit suitability, need for husbandry and other research, recommendations stated in AZA TAG's Regional Collection Plans and any other issues specific to the institution's mission and vision.

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:** Institutions located outside the United States may apply for accreditation under the same rules as those located within the United States. In some rare cases, processing of applications for international institutions may not be possible within the standard six-month time frame, and may require a year or more before the Commission hearing can be scheduled. In addition, the amount of the Visiting Committee deposit may be higher due to increased travel costs associated with inspecting institutions located outside of the United States. If possible, AZA will assign an individual who is fluent in the applicant's native language to the inspection team for all international institutions, but the questionnaire and all *primary* materials submitted must be in English. If AZA is unable to assign individuals who speak the native language, the institution is responsible for providing an interpreter. Brochures and other pre-printed materials must be accompanied by a translation. If you have any questions about this please contact AZA.

**MASTER PLAN:** A written long-range plan that provides an organization with direction to develop or improve land, facilities, a building complex, etc.

**MENTOR (PEER CONSULTANT):** An individual deemed qualified by the Accreditation Commission to assist an institution in preparing for the AZA accreditation process. The individual is assigned by the Commission to help the institution identify areas that need to be addressed, to review and help update policies and procedures, internal documents, record keeping, and all areas involved in the accreditation process. The mentor can advise as to the institution's readiness, and can also provide guidance on assembling the application, if desired.

**MODERN ZOOLOGICAL PRACTICES AND PHILOSOPHIES:** Understanding, engaging, and committing to the advancement of standards, practices, related policies and philosophies in all areas assessed by AZA through accreditation constitutes "modern zoological practices and philosophies". These accepted best practices and philosophies define excellence in our profession, and are what distinguish AZA-accredited institutions from other institutions that have animals for guests to see and appreciate. The word "practices" represents the tangible while "philosophies" refers to an overall perspective.

**NEW APPLICANTS:** "New" applicants are those institutions applying for accreditation for the first time, or any institution that is *not currently AZA-accredited*, regardless of whether it has been AZA-accredited in the past.

**OCEANARIUM:** Usually aquatic animals housed in several public buildings contained in a park setting. The exhibit scale is very large with other attractions/services scattered among the exhibits.

**PERFORMANCE STANDARDS:** standards that measure the level of achievement considered acceptable to fulfill a performance characteristic, and choice in method for meeting the goal.

**PERMANENT (cultural institution):** an institution founded by an authority which intends it to continue indefinitely.

**PROFESSIONAL STAFF:** a paid full-time employee who commands an appropriate body of special knowledge and has the professional training, experience and ability to reach zoological park or aquarium management decisions consonant with the experience of peers, and who has access to and knowledge of the literature of the field.

**REGULAR BASIS:** regular hours, so that access is reasonably convenient to the public.

**RELATED FACILITY:** *For the purpose of AZA's accreditation programs, a related facility is defined as:* organizations holding wildlife that are not commercial entities, and are not open to the public on a regularly scheduled, predictable basis. The facility shall be under the direction of a professional staff trained in animal husbandry, and shall be further defined as having conservation and preservation as part of its mission—a mission that shall have a beneficial, tangible, supportive impact on the zoological and aquarium professions. This includes wildlife refuges or rehab centers, non-invasive research facilities, survival centers, breeding farms, and/or similar organizations.” The Accreditation Commission, and its agents, shall determine whether a facility meets the definition of a related facility.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:** A written plan defining an organization's strategy or direction, including making decisions on sources of funding and allocation of resources needed to pursue this strategy.

**WELFARE:** an animal's (or group of animals) collective physical and mental states over a period of time, and measured on a continuum from good to poor.

**WILDLIFE:** non-domesticated animal life.

**WILDLIFE PARK:** Animals maintained in a public park setting, usually in very large exhibits that include animals which are free-ranging within the exhibit.

**ZOOLOGICAL PARK:** A collection of animals which are housed in many public exhibits, both indoors and outdoors. [For full definition see *Basic Definitions, 2019 Guide To Accreditation of Zoological Parks and Aquariums, page 16.*]

### ***ACRONYMS APPEARING IN THESE STANDARDS:***

AAZV- American Association of Zoo Veterinarians  
ACM- Animal Care Manual  
AED- Automated Emergency Defibrillator  
ARKS- Animal Record Keeping System  
AVMA- American Veterinary Medical Association  
CAP- Conservation Action Plan  
CBSG- Conservation Breeding Specialist Group  
CEO- Chief Executive Officer  
CITES- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species  
FDA- Food and Drug Administration  
FEMA- Federal Emergency Management Agency  
GFI- Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter  
ICP- Institutional Collection Plan  
ICS- Incident Command System  
ID- Identification  
NASPHV- National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians  
OSHA- Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
PPEQ- Permanent Post Entry Quarantine  
RPM- Responsible Population Management  
SAG- Scientific Advisory Group  
SCUBA- Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus  
SDS- Safety Data Sheets

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SSC- Species Survival Commission  
SSP- Species Survival Plan  
TAG- Taxon Advisory Group  
TB- Tuberculin/Tuberculosis  
TRACKS® - An electronic animal records-keeping system  
UL- Underwriters Laboratories  
USDA-United States Department of Agriculture  
UV- Ultraviolet  
WAZA- World Association of Zoos and Aquariums  
ZIMS- Zoological Information Management System

# Accreditation Standards

## ***PREAMBLE***

### **AZA Accreditation - PURPOSE**

AZA accredited zoos and aquariums are complicated operations with important goals. The highest goals of AZA accreditation include exemplary animal care and welfare, and inspiring guest engagement through effective education and conservation. AZA accreditation standards and requirements represent decades of modernization utilizing science, experience, and an unrelenting resolve to create a positive and lasting impact on guests, and to conserve our world's wild animals and wild places.

The AZA Accreditation Program provides all zoos and aquariums the opportunity to examine, meet, or exceed the highest standards in the profession. The accreditation process combines internal (stakeholder) and external (peer-review) top to bottom assessment, resulting in the most scrutinized, specialized and dynamic organizations in the world dedicated to animal care, welfare and well-being, public engagement, education, and conservation and science. Institutions successfully accredited by AZA must continuously demonstrate excellence in all areas of operations and regularly adapt to new and evolving standards.

### **AZA Accreditation - PROCESS**

To achieve AZA accreditation, an institution requires extraordinary vision and leadership, and a comprehensive team effort to attain excellence in all areas of operations and management. The accreditation process begins when institutional stakeholders study and commit to the gold-level standards available under the accreditation tab at AZA.org. AZA accreditation requires full adherence to all standards on a daily basis. The core areas of self and peer evaluation include:

**Animal Care, Welfare, & Well-Being** (Excellence in Animal Care and Welfare)

**Veterinary Care** (Excellence in Animal Health Care)

**Education & Interpretation** (Innovation in Science and Conservation Education)

**Conservation & Scientific Advancement** (Measureable Impact in Science)

**Vision, Mission & Master Plan** (Values, Goals, Plans, and Outcomes)

**Governance** (Oversight, Ethics, and Community Leadership)

**Finance** (Business Management and Accountability)

**Staff** (Professional Team Development and Management)

**Guest Services** (Quality Visitor Amenities and Attraction Services)

**Safety & Security** (Public and Animal Safety, Staff Training, and Preparedness)

**Physical Facilities** (Quality Construction, Maintenance, and Design of all Facilities)

**Support Organizations** (Internal Support and Partnerships)

*(continued next page)*

Understanding, engaging, and committing to the advancement of standards, practices, related policies and philosophies in all areas assessed by AZA through accreditation constitutes “modern zoological practices and philosophies”. These accepted best practices and philosophies define excellence in our profession, and are what distinguish AZA-accredited institutions from other institutions that have animals for guests to see and appreciate. The word “practices” represents the tangible while “philosophies” refers to an overall perspective.

Because of the many variations among institutions, the majority of AZA standards are carefully designed to be *performance* standards (i.e., assessing the level of achievement considered acceptable to fulfill a performance characteristic, and choice in method for meeting the goal). This differs from *engineering* standards, where exact and precisely prescribed steps are required to fulfill an engineering characteristic, with little or no variation in method for meeting the goal. AZA institutions may achieve performance standards in a variety of ways, but *all* standards **must** be met.

### **AZA Accreditation - PRODUCT**

AZA accredited institutions are differentiated as exemplary facilities through the vigorous and voluntary commitment to shared high standards, achieving measurable goals, and continually pursuing outcomes that benefit animals, guests and communities. Distinguishing characteristics of an AZA-accredited institution include:

- Extraordinary focus on animal care, welfare, and well-being\*
- Modern facilities and practices for comprehensive veterinary care
- Scientific advancement in animal care and conservation
- Focus and participation to support sustainable animal populations
- Exhibit aesthetics and habitat studies, planning, and design
- Innovative and inspirational educational programs and experiences
- Excellence in guest engagement and effective guest services
- Economic development and community partnerships
- Professional staff development and training
- Comprehensive preparedness in public and animal safety
- Sound business planning and financial management
- Dynamic and mission-driven strategic and master planning
- “Raising the bar” and regularly advancing operational standards

**\*AZA zoo and aquarium standards support the premise of five opportunities to thrive. These tenets propose that animals: (1) receive nutritionally complete diets that bring out the natural feeding response and behavior; (2) are afforded comfortable living experiences with choice and control to promote mentally and physically healthy behaviors; (3) experience good physical health; (4) are provided quality spaces to live in with appropriate social groupings that promote natural, species-appropriate and motivated behavior; and (5) develop natural coping skills and avoid chronic stress.**

IMPORTANT NOTE: All AZA accredited institutions and certified related facilities must follow all local, state, and federal laws and/or regulations. Some AZA standards may be more stringent than existing laws and/or regulations. In such cases, the AZA standard(s) must be met.

## **1. ANIMAL WELFARE, CARE, & MANAGEMENT**

### **General Considerations:**

**Animal welfare, care, and sustainable population management are among the most critical and complex tasks performed by AZA zoos and aquariums. Administration and management must be guided by modern professional principles establishing plans and procedures to execute those functions.**

**Providing excellent animal care and public education about wildlife results in direct and indirect contact between animals and humans, whether staff, volunteers, or visitors. Benefits of such contact are multifold. They include maximizing quality in healthcare, behavior management, and sanitation, along with the educational value of connecting an increasingly urban public to animals and nature. In doing this there are significant risks to consider as well, such as injury to animals and people, psychological stress, and potential transmission of infectious disease. It is important for all zoos and aquariums to strategically assess the benefits and risks of animal contact throughout their institutions, and to implement the best, most productive and safe human-animal interactions possible. (See standard 11.4.1, and pages 80 - 82 of these standards for further information.)**

### **Welfare Considerations:**

**AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums operate based on three core principles: animal welfare, safety, and visitor engagement. Excellence in animal welfare is the underlying foundation on which all standards and practices are premised and developed. All reasonable concerns regarding the welfare of individual animals or groups must be thoroughly assessed and corrected. Institutions are required to incorporate commonly accepted welfare guidelines and follow a documented process for assessing animal welfare and wellness. Failure to comply with all welfare-based standards present in all sections of this document will result in the loss of AZA accreditation.**

#### **1.1. Local, State, Provincial, and Federal Laws**

- 1.1.1. The institution must comply with all relevant local, state/provincial, and federal laws and/or regulations, including those specific to wildlife. It is understood that, in some cases, AZA accreditation standards are more stringent than existing laws and/or regulations. In these cases the AZA standard must be met.

#### **1.2. Animal Care Manuals**

- 1.2.1. As available, the institution must review and provide access for all paid and unpaid animal care staff, to all AZA Animal Care Manuals (ACMs) that have been approved and that apply to species at the institution.

Explanation: A listing of approved ACMs is available on AZA's website at: <http://www.aza.org/animal-care-manuals/>. Institutions should check regularly for updates.

- 1.2.2. Guidelines outlined in the Animal Care Manuals (ACMs) should be followed.

Explanation: Institutions should review the guidelines and suggestions within the ACMs as needed, and tailor their animal care programs, protocols, and exhibits accordingly.

### 1.3. Documents and Policies

- 1.3.1. The institution must follow an Institutional Collection Plan (ICP). The ICP must be re-evaluated and updated at minimum every five years.

Explanation: The purpose of an ICP is to thoughtfully assess, on a regular basis, the reason for having each taxon in the collection. The ICP must include a statement of justification for all species and number of individuals or groups in the institution's planned collection. The ICP must consider some, but not necessarily all, of the following criteria, in addition to others that may be relevant: •special welfare considerations, •status in the wild, •status in zoos and aquariums, •recommendations stated in AZA TAGs' Regional Collection Plans, •existence and priorities of cooperative management programs, •ability to maintain the species in a physically, psychologically, and socially healthy environment, •exhibit value, •exhibit suitability (may include climatic considerations), •need for husbandry and other behavioral research, and •any other issues specific to the institution's mission and vision.

- 1.3.2. The institution must follow a written policy on responsible population management that incorporates all requirements contained in AZA's Policy On Responsible Population Management [AZA's "RPM Policy"]. (See pages 99 – 106 of these standards for further information).

Explanation: Policies on animal acquisition, transfer, euthanasia and reintroduction (including breeding loans) should be continually reviewed to keep them current with all applicable laws and/or regulations. Such policies must also incorporate all policies and/or resolutions adopted by AZA regarding hunting ranches, animal auctions, research, pets, participation in SSPs, and TAGs, and other issues involving the acquisition, transfer, euthanasia or reintroduction of wildlife.

Records must be maintained for all transactions involving acquisition, transfer, euthanasia or reintroduction of animals to and from the institution and must include the terms of the transaction. In making the decision to transfer an animal(s) to a non-AZA accredited facility the AZA institution must document that the receiving institution is willing and able to provide proper care and welfare for the animal(s) and that the transfer is done in accordance with AZA's RPM Policy.

Copies of all relevant permits, importation papers, declaration forms, titles, and other appropriate documents establishing a paper trail of legal acquisition must be maintained (as detailed in AZA's RPM Policy). When such information does not exist (the institution's maintenance of confiscated wildlife) an explanation must be provided regarding such animals.

### 1.4. Records

- 1.4.0. The institution must show evidence of having a zoological records management system for managing animal records, veterinary records, and other relevant information.

- 1.4.1. An animal inventory must be compiled at least once a year and include data regarding acquisitions and dispositions at the institution.

- 1.4.2. All species owned by the institution must be listed on the inventory, including those animals on loan to and from the institution.
- 1.4.3. Animals must be identifiable, whenever practical, and have corresponding ID numbers. For animals maintained in colonies/groups or other animals not considered readily identifiable, the institution must provide a statement explaining how record keeping is maintained.
- 1.4.4. Animal records and veterinary records, whether in electronic or paper form, must be duplicated and stored in a separate location. Animal records are defined as data, regardless of physical form or medium, providing information about individual animals, or samples or parts thereof, or groups of animals. Electronic systems are preferable.

Explanation: The institution must prevent animal and veterinary records from being lost or destroyed in a catastrophe. A complete and up-to-date set of these records must be duplicated and stored in separate locations (e.g., not in the same building, if kept on site). Consideration should be given to physical distance and natural hazards when selecting the separate location.

- 1.4.5. At least one set of the institution's historical animal and veterinary records must be stored and protected. Those records should include permits, titles, declaration forms, and other pertinent information.
- 1.4.6. A paid staff member must be designated as being responsible for the institution's animal record-keeping system. That person must be charged with establishing and maintaining the institution's animal records, as well as with keeping all paid and unpaid animal care staff members apprised of relevant laws and regulations regarding the institution's animals.
- 1.4.7. Animal records must be kept current.

Explanation: For keepers and other paid line staff, event, identification, and husbandry information should be recorded in keeper reports or other written forms on the same day whenever possible, but no later than the day following. Acquisition, transfer, euthanasia, and reintroduction data should be entered into the institutional records database within two weeks and retained for at least five years after the animal's death or transfer. The institution should develop a records retention schedule and policy for its animal records in order to assure they are created, managed, and appropriately preserved or otherwise disposed of according to minimum legal, administrative, and historical values. [See 2.0.4 for veterinary records.]

- 1.4.8. The institution must have a record-keeping system that provides sufficient detail to enhance husbandry, welfare, breeding, conservation, and medical health advancements to move forward the critical knowledge of the species through permanent and retrievable documentation.
- 1.4.9. At least one member of an institution's paid staff responsible for animal record-keeping should have the proper training.

Explanation: AZA's Institutional Records-Keeping course is one option to obtain appropriate training.

## 1.5. Animal Welfare, Care, and Well-Being

- 1.5.0. The institution must have a process for assessing animal welfare and wellness.

Explanation: This process should be both proactive and reactive, transparent to stakeholders, and include staff or consultants knowledgeable in assessing quality of life for animals showing signs of physical or mental distress or decline. The process should also include a mechanism to identify and evaluate the welfare/wellness impacts of significant life events or changes in the animal's environment as identified by the

individual institution. Examples of life events/changes could include construction events, unusual weather events, noise intrusion, change in housing, or changes in animals exhibited with or nearby, etc. Animal welfare/wellness refers to an animal's collective physical and mental states over a period of time, and is measured on a continuum from good to poor.

- 1.5.1. All animals must be well cared for and presented in a manner reflecting modern zoological practices in exhibit design, balancing animals' welfare requirements with aesthetic and educational considerations.
- 1.5.2. All animals must be housed in enclosures which are safe for the animals and meet their physical and psychological needs.
  - 1.5.2.1. All animals must be kept in appropriate groupings which meet their social and welfare needs.
  - 1.5.2.2. All animals should be provided the opportunity to choose among a variety of conditions within their environment.
- 1.5.3. If animal demonstrations are part of the institution's programs, an educational/conservation message must be an integral component.
- 1.5.4. If ambassador animals are used, a written policy on the use of live animals in programs must be followed and incorporate the elements contained in AZA's "Recommendations For Developing an Institutional Ambassador Animal Policy" (see pages 88 - 93). An education, conservation, and welfare message must be an integral component of all programs. Animals in education programs must be maintained and cared for by paid and/or unpaid trained staff, and housing conditions must meet standards required for the remainder of the animals in the institution. While outside their primary enclosure, although the conditions may be different, animal safety and welfare need to be assured at all times.

Explanation: As stated in the AZA Ambassador Animal Policy, the management of ambassador animals requires special consideration. Although the housing conditions for ambassador animals may look different at times to those provided to exhibit animals, institutions must provide similar social, physical, behavioral and nutritional opportunities to ambassador animals. Regular holding enclosures (this does not include short-term holding for programs or transport) for any given ambassador animal species must provide sufficient space for comfort, exercise, shelter, and have sufficient complexity. Ambassador animals should be housed socially when appropriate for the species. Also, providing ambassador animals with choices and control over their environment (e.g., whether they want to participate in a program on any given day) and incorporating time limitations (including animal rotation and rest periods), where and when appropriate, is essential to ensuring effective care and management. Activities associated with programs may provide some of these needs from time to time.

- 1.5.5. For animals used in offsite programs and for educational purposes, the institution must have adequate written protocols in place to protect the rest of the animals at the institution from exposure to infectious agents.

Explanation: To protect the health of the animals at the institution, written protocols required above, and their implementation, must include a veterinary risk assessment and veterinary approval.

- 1.5.6. Institutions that include elephants in their collection must follow the AZA Standards For Elephant Management & Care.
  - 1.5.6.1. Institutions that include cetaceans in their collection must follow the AZA Standards For Cetacean Care & Welfare.

- 1.5.7. The animals must be protected or provided accommodation from weather or other conditions clearly known to be detrimental to their health or welfare.

Explanation: Animals must be provided with an environment in which they can acclimate sufficiently to remain healthy and support their well-being. For example, animals not normally exposed to cold weather in their natural habitats should be provided heated enclosures. Likewise, protection from excessive heat should be provided to animals normally living in cold climates. Protection from predation by wild or feral animals should also be considered as well as other non-environmental factors.

- 1.5.8. The institution must develop and implement a clear and transparent process for identifying, communicating, and addressing animal welfare concerns from paid or unpaid staff within the institution in a timely manner, and without retribution.

Explanation: A committee or some other process must be identified and communicated to all paid and unpaid staff to address any concerns for animal welfare within the institution. This committee or process is intended to supplement the normal chain-of-command to assure that any personal conflicts do not have undue influence over the process or its outcomes, or if the complainant believes that the welfare concern has not been adequately addressed through normal channels.

The committee or process should include the following elements:

- Clear communication of the process to paid and unpaid staff.
- Ready access to the committee or process by all paid and unpaid staff.
- Paid staff with the experience and authority necessary to evaluate submitted observations and implement any necessary changes.
- Timely feedback to the person submitting the observation.

Examples of Institutional Animal Welfare Processes can be obtained at <https://www.aza.org/accred-resource-center> (you will be requested to log in using your individual membership user name and password).

- 1.5.9. The institution must have a regular program of monitoring water quality for fish, marine mammals, and other aquatic animals. A written record must be maintained to document long-term water quality results and chemical additions.

Explanation: Monitoring of selected water quality parameters will provide confirmation of the correct operation of filtration and disinfection of the water supply available for the animals. Additionally, high quality water enhances animal health programs instituted for aquatic animals.

- 1.5.10. Temporary, seasonal and traveling live animal exhibits, programs, or presentations (regardless of ownership or contractual arrangements) must be presented and maintained at the same level of care as the institution's permanent resident animals, with foremost attention to animal welfare considerations, both onsite and at the location where the animals are permanently housed.

Explanation: Institutions must perform due diligence demonstrating that the contracted vendor has the expertise, resources, and facilities to provide for the animals' physical, psychological, and social needs. Contracted vendors should be monitored periodically to assure that proper care of the animals is being maintained.

- 1.5.11. Animal transportation must be conducted in a manner that is safe, well-planned and coordinated, and minimizes risk to the animal(s), employees, and general public. All applicable laws and/or regulations must be adhered to.

Explanation: Planning and coordination for animal transport requires good communication among all involved parties, plans for a variety of emergencies and contingencies that may arise, and timely execution of the transport. Safe animal transport requires the use of appropriate conveyance and equipment that is in good working order. The equipment must provide for the adequate containment, life support, comfort, temperature control, food/water, and safety of the animal(s). Safe transport also requires the assignment of an adequate number of appropriately trained personnel (by institution or contractor) who are equipped and prepared to handle contingencies and/or emergencies that may occur in the course of transport. At no time should the animal(s) or people be subjected to unnecessary risk or danger.

- 1.5.12. Paid and/or unpaid staff assigned to handle animals during demonstrations or educational programs must be trained in accordance with the institution's written animal handling protocols. Such training must take place before handling may occur.
- 1.5.13. When in operation, animal contact areas (petting zoos, touch tanks, etc.) must be supervised by trained, paid and/or unpaid staff.
- 1.5.14. If animals are housed either long-term or permanently in indoor facilities, the appropriate UV spectrum for the species (based on the knowledge available to date) should be provided in these enclosures. [Formerly 10.3.1]

Explanation: Published scientific studies demonstrate that animals housed indoors without directly contacting sunlight, including certain invertebrates, fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals, benefit from access to very specific ultraviolet wavelengths of light to promote mineral and vitamin metabolism, reproduction, natural behaviors and healthy immune systems. Animal care staff and exhibit designers should regularly review published scientific studies and AZA Animal Care Manuals as well as consult with AZA Scientific Advisory Groups when determining light quality needs of animals housed indoors.

- 1.5.15. All animal exhibit and holding area air and water inflows and outflows must be securely protected to prevent animal injury or egress.
  - 1.5.16. When sunlight is likely to cause overheating of or discomfort to the animals, sufficient shade (in addition to shelter structures) must be provided by natural or artificial means to allow all animals kept outdoors to protect themselves from direct sunlight. [Formerly 10.3.4]
- 1.6. Enrichment and Husbandry Training
- 1.6.1. The institution must follow a formal written enrichment program that promotes species-appropriate behavioral opportunities.

Explanation: An enrichment program should be based on current information in biology, and should include the following elements: goal-setting, planning and approval process, implementation, documentation/record-keeping (see standard 1.6.3), evaluation, and reassessment. The enrichment program should also apply to animals in quarantine, as appropriate and possible. In some cases, the features and complexity of the exhibit may provide sufficient enrichment. Further information on the establishment of an enrichment program is available from AZA, and online at <https://www.aza.org/accred-resource-center> (you will be requested to log in using your individual membership user name and password).

- 1.6.2. The institution must have a specific paid staff member(s) or committee assigned for enrichment program oversight, implementation, assessment, and interdepartmental coordination of enrichment efforts.
- 1.6.3. Enrichment activities must be documented and evaluated, and program refinements should be made based on the results, if appropriate. Records must be kept current.

- 1.6.4. The institution should follow a formal written animal training program that facilitates husbandry, science, and veterinary procedures and enhances the overall health and well-being of the animals.

Explanation: An animal training program should be based on current animal training best practices in the zoological field and should include the following elements: •goal-setting (what behaviors to be trained, what species/individuals of priority), •planning (process for developing and approving training plans), and •documentation (record of success).

#### 1.7. Commercial Collectors

- 1.7.1. Institutions that acquire aquatic animals from the wild must make a good faith effort to determine that collecting procedures are done in a sustainable manner.
- 1.7.2. Institutions dealing with commercial collectors must determine that the collectors are properly permitted to conduct legal collections of animals (including aquatic animals) from the wild.

Explanation: The institution must be proactive in ensuring that any commercial collectors utilized are properly permitted to conduct legal collections of animals from the wild.

## 2. **VETERINARY CARE**

### **Welfare Considerations:**

**AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums must assure the health of all animals in their care. In addition to a strong foundation of professional animal care staff, the utilization of a highly qualified veterinarian and veterinary staff, and the access to modern veterinary facilities is required. All concerns regarding the health of animals must be assessed, treated, and corrected as a priority utilizing the expertise and resources of the veterinary team and as also available through AZA and AAZV.**

#### 2.0. Veterinary Care Program

- 2.0.1. The institution should adopt the *Guidelines for Zoo and Aquarium Veterinary Medical Programs and Veterinary Hospitals*, and the policies developed or supported by the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians (AAZV). The most recent edition of the medical programs and hospitals booklet is available at the AAZV website, under “Publications”, at <http://www.aazv.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=839>, and can also be obtained in PDF format by contacting AZA staff.

- 2.0.2. The veterinary care program must emphasize disease prevention. [Formerly 2.4.1]

Explanation: Preventative medicine programs (vaccinations, TB testing, parasite exams, etc.) must be in force for all of the institution’s animals and must be under the direction of a qualified veterinarian.

- 2.0.3. Institutions should be aware of, and prepared for periodic disease outbreaks in wild or other domestic or exotic animal populations that might affect the institution’s animals (ex – Avian Influenza, Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus, etc.). Plans should be developed that outline steps to be taken to protect the institution’s animals in these situations.

- 2.0.4. Complete medical records must be maintained on all animals in the collection that have received veterinary attention. [See 1.4.7 for animal records.]

## 2.1. Staff

- 2.1.1. A full-time staff veterinarian is recommended. In cases where such is not necessary because of the number and/or nature of the animals residing there, a consulting/part-time veterinarian must be under written contract to make at least twice monthly inspections of the animals and to respond as soon as possible to any emergencies.

Explanation: Because of their size or nature, exceptions may be made to the twice monthly inspection requirement for certain institutions (e.g., insects only, etc.).

- 2.1.2. So that indications of disease, injury, or stress may be dealt with promptly, veterinary coverage must be available to the animals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## 2.2. Pharmaceutical

- 2.2.1. Written, formal procedures must be available to paid and unpaid animal care staff for the use of animal drugs for veterinary purposes, and appropriate security of the drugs must be provided.

Explanation: Such procedures should include at minimum the following: those persons authorized to administer animal drugs, situations in which they are to be utilized, location of animal drugs and those persons with access to them, and emergency procedures in the event of accidental human exposure. Outdated drugs must be marked as such and stored separately from all other drugs. All controlled substances must be stored in a securely locked container of substantial construction appropriate for the types of drugs in the inventory. Carfentinel, Etorphine hydrochloride (M99), and Diprenorphine (M50-50) must be stored in a safe or steel cabinet equivalent to a U.S. Government Class V security container. [NOTE: Underwriters Laboratories (UL) listed burglary-resistant safe (UL-TL 15, TL 30, or TL 45 with a Group 1-R lock). The safe or steel cabinet shall have the following specifications or the equivalent: 30 man-minutes against surreptitious entry, 10 man-minutes against forced entry, 20 man-hours against lock manipulation, and 20 man-hours against radiological techniques].

- 2.2.2. The use of drugs in zoos and aquariums must comply with the federal Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act of 1994 (AMDUCA) and associated regulations, as well as all other applicable federal, state, and local laws and/or regulations.

Explanation: AMDUCA provides zoo/aquarium veterinarians with prescribing and dispensing options important for the health and welfare of animals under their care; a critically important resource given the lack of drugs labeled for use in zoo/aquarium animals. Additional information concerning the requirements of extra-label drug use can be found at: <https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/Pages/AMDUCA.aspx>

For the purposes of this standard, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) definition of a drug is applicable:

- A substance recognized by an official pharmacopoeia or formulary.
- A substance intended for use in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease.
- A substance (other than food) intended to affect the structure or any function of the body.
- A substance intended for use as a component of a medicine but not a device or a component, part or accessory of a device.
- Biological products are included within this definition and are generally covered by the same laws and regulations, but differences exist regarding their manufacturing processes (chemical process versus biological process.)

## 2.3. Equipment

- 2.3.1. Capture equipment must be in good working order and available to authorized, trained personnel at all times.
- 2.3.2. Institution facilities must have radiographic equipment or have access to radiographic services.

Explanation: Because of their size and/or nature, exceptions may be made for certain institutions (e.g., insects only, etc.).

#### 2.4. Preventative Medicine

- 2.4.1. [See 2.0.2.]

- 2.4.2. Paid and unpaid animal care staff should be trained to assess welfare and recognize abnormal behavior and clinical signs of illness and have knowledge of the diets, husbandry (including enrichment items and strategies), and restraint procedures required for the animals under their care. However, animal care staff (paid and unpaid) must not diagnose illnesses nor prescribe treatment.

#### 2.5. Necropsy

- 2.5.1. Deceased animals should be necropsied to determine the cause of death for tracking morbidity and mortality trends to strengthen the program of veterinary care and meet SSP-related requests.

Explanation: Necropsies provide information as to the cause of death as well as underlying pathology that may be related to nutritional status, other aspects of husbandry, or preventive medicine. Necropsy data, should be reviewed on a regular basis to identify any group health implications or necessary changes in animal management. Trained staff under the direction of a veterinarian may perform necropsies. All deceased animals (or a sampling from a mass mortality) should be evaluated by gross necropsy supported by histopathology under veterinary discretion. SSP necropsy protocols should be followed.

While a good faith effort should be made to perform a gross necropsy on all deceased animals (or an appropriate sampling from a mass mortality), there are cases, such as advanced decomposition of fish or invertebrates, in which post mortem examination is neither possible nor practical. Resources, either internal or external for histopathology and other ancillary diagnostic testing should be available and utilized at the discretion of the veterinarian.

- 2.5.2. The institution should have an area dedicated to performing necropsies.

Explanation: To minimize transmission of potential contagion, necropsies should be performed in a dedicated room. Alternatives to a necropsy room (such as a lab bench, cart, biosafety cabinet, or outdoor area) should be assessed for health risk posed to other animals, staff, and guests.

- 2.5.3. Cadavers must be kept in a dedicated storage area before and after necropsy. Remains must be disposed of in accordance with local/federal laws.

#### 2.6. Nutrition

- 2.6.1. Animal food preparation and storage must meet all applicable laws and/or regulations.
- 2.6.2. The institution must follow a written nutrition program that meets the behavioral and nutritional needs of all species, individuals, and colonies/groups in the institution. Animal diets must be of a quality and quantity suitable for each animal's nutritional and psychological needs.

Explanation: Nutrition programs should be developed using the recommendations of appropriate AZA TAGs or SAGs, and the AZA Nutrition Advisory Group <http://nagonline.net/guidelines-aza-institutions/feeding-guidelines/>. Diet formulation criteria should include each animal's individual history and natural history, feeding ecology and behavioral needs. Meat processed on site must be processed following all USDA (or federal) standards.

- 2.6.3. If the institution uses browse plants as part of the diet or as enrichment items for its animals, the items must be identified and reviewed for safety prior to use.

Explanation: At minimum, the program should identify what plants are safe to feed and to which species, which parts of the plant are safe, whether the browse plants have been treated with any chemicals or if they are near any point sources of pollution.

- 2.6.3.1. The institution must assign at least one qualified paid or unpaid staff member to oversee appropriate browse material for the animals (including aquatic animals).
- 2.6.3.2. The institution's animal care program must address the potential risks of animals (including aquatic animals) being exposed to toxic plants growing in or near their exhibit space. Exhibits should be checked regularly during the growing season.
- 2.6.4. If not in separate buildings, animal food preparation areas must be physically separated from other functions such as the animal hospital (including animal treatment, isolation, holding, deceased animal storage) and employee lounges and offices. Animal food must not be stored in the same area as animal drugs. Animal food and human food must not be stored in the same location (refrigerators, freezers, etc.).

## 2.7. Quarantine

- 2.7.1. The institution must have holding facilities or procedures for the quarantine of newly arrived animals and isolation facilities or procedures for the treatment of sick/injured animals.
- 2.7.2. Written, formal procedures for quarantine must be available and familiar to all paid and unpaid staff working with quarantined animals.
- 2.7.3. Quarantine, hospital, and isolation areas should be in compliance with standards/guidelines contained within the *Guidelines for Zoo and Aquarium Veterinary Medical Programs and Veterinary Hospitals* developed by the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians (AAZV), which can be obtained at: <http://www.aazv.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=839>

## 2.8. Pest Control

- 2.8.1. Pest control management programs must be administered in such a manner that the animals, paid and unpaid staff, the public, and wildlife are not threatened by the pests, contamination from pests, or the control methods used.

## 2.9. General Policy and Practice

- 2.9.1. The institution must follow a written euthanasia policy which adheres to the current AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals, or the AAZV Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Nondomestic Animals.

Explanation: *The AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management: Acquisition, Transfer, Euthanasia and Reintroduction by Zoos & Aquariums*, references an institutional euthanasia policy. This policy should be tailored to the needs of the institution, outlining appropriate procedures and responsibilities for all taxa within the institution's collection. All paid and unpaid animal care staff should be familiar with this policy.

### 3. CONSERVATION

#### General Considerations:

**Impactful and sustainable conservation initiatives are a priority for AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums. These include contributing to and promoting the long-term survival of species in natural ecosystems, and full support of AZA ex situ programs such as Species Survival Plans (SSPs) and Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE). Green practices and education programs emphasizing the institution's and community's role in ecosystem conservation and stewardship of natural resources should inspire conservation action with measurable outcomes both at the institution and in the community/society-at-large to address the causes of species endangerment.**

#### Welfare Considerations:

**Conservation ethics, practices, messaging, and funding helps improve the welfare of animals in the wild and their counterparts in human care. Animal welfare should be considered as a component of field conservation projects supported by AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums.**

#### 3.1. Mission

3.1.1. Conservation must be a key component of the institution's mission and messaging.

Explanation: For the purposes of AZA accreditation, conservation is understood to be active stewardship of the natural environment, including animals, plants, and other natural resources.

#### 3.2. Conservation Program

3.2.1. The institution must follow a written conservation action plan/strategy with defined outcomes in proportion to the size and scope of the organization with the goal of demonstrating continuous improvement in each area. The plan must include components outlining the institution's commitments to its conservation practices, including each of the following:

- In-Situ conservation efforts (supporting both local and global priorities including paid staff or volunteer involvement of in situ programs, or financial support of impactful in situ programs). Such programs are those that have a direct and measurable impact on animals and habitats in the wild.
- Natural resource conservation and sustainability/green practices such as water conservation initiatives; energy use reduction and alternative sources; waste management for recyclables, compostables, combustibles, and toxic and hazardous materials; sustainable purchasing; green construction, and other green practices.
- Connecting the animal collection with saving species in the wild (e.g., conservation messaging, advocacy, supporting reintroduction programs, donating to and/or engaging in applied research, etc.)
- Conservation education and advocacy programs measured against the written conservation goals of the institution.

Explanation: Each institution must participate in practices that implement its conservation action plan/strategy, which itself should include a variety of measurable and impactful outcomes. Being the lead agency or partnering with other agencies/organizations on in-situ conservation programs is one of the most significant

ways AZA institutions can demonstrate their role in ecosystem conservation and wildlife preservation. AZA institutions have the responsibility to demonstrate responsible resource management, acting as leaders in their communities. Helping guests and paid and unpaid staff engage in the conservation commitments of the institution is core to our missions. Lists of programs and projects submitted to AZA's Annual Report on Conservation and Science (ARCS)-related surveys serves as evidence that the institution is following its conservation action plan/strategy.

- 3.2.2. Each institution must evaluate/measure the impact of its written conservation action plan/strategy.

Explanation: Some form of regular evaluation of conservation efforts should occur. Measurement of impact can include assessment of achievement of programmatic goals, actual measure of impact on species and habitat conservation, and/or some other quantitative measure of success.

3.3. Participation/Support

- 3.3.1. The institution must participate in every SSP that pertains to an animal belonging to the institution. The institution may indicate at what level it desires to participate in each SSP.

- 3.3.2. The institution must actively support and participate in AZA animal programs, and cooperate in providing requested information regarding its animals in a timely fashion to AZA Program Leaders, including Studbook Keepers, SSP Coordinators and Chairs, and follow agreed upon recommendations (e.g., breeding and transfer plans; acquisitions, transfers, and transitions, etc.).

- 3.3.3. [See 3.3.2]

- 3.3.4. The institution must be involved in local, regional, or international wildlife conservation programs through paid and/or unpaid staff or resources.

Explanation: Such programs are those that have a direct impact on animals and habitats in the wild.

#### **4. EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION**

**General Considerations:**

**This section includes all questions related to education and interpretation. Collectively, education and interpretation refer to: programming on-site and off-site for targeted audiences such as school groups, teachers and families, as well as all types of interpretive methods for guests, for example, graphics, exhibits, ambassador animal use, and keeper talks. Institutions may differ organizationally in how they accomplish these tasks (e.g., some institutions may have an Exhibits Department, or graphics may be coordinated by the Art Department). What is key is the role of the paid and unpaid education staff in the accomplishment of these tasks. Institutions are encouraged to share educational and interpretive programming, materials, and evaluation techniques with other AZA institutions.**

**Welfare Considerations:**

**AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums must be innovative and dynamic conveyors of their science-based mission and goals. Knowledge creates awareness that leads to change, and impacts animal welfare in both AZA-accredited institutions and in the wild. Educated populations are overwhelmingly more supportive of actions and practices that promote the care, welfare, and conservation of wildlife.**

**4.1. Mission**

4.1.1. Education must be a key component of the institution's mission.

Explanation: Education is an important component in the conservation mission of each institution. Effective educational programming is a proven method of increasing awareness and participation in stewardship of the natural world.

**4.2. Education Program**

4.2.1. The institution must follow a written education plan that includes goals and objectives.

Explanation: The institution's education plan must include a copy of its education vision/mission, as well as strategic goals and objectives. The plan may include a copy of the organizational chart, and description of how the education department interacts with other departments on issues such as exhibit and graphics' development, keeper presentations, *in situ* conservation programs, etc. The plan should include the institution's conservation messages.

4.2.2. The education department must be under the direction of a paid staff person who is trained or has experience in educational programming. Education personnel should be involved in the development of exhibits, graphics, and interpretation, as well as all structured programs for the visiting public.

4.2.3. Institutions should participate in active, ongoing collaborative partnerships with organizations and individuals that can contribute to the expansion of their educational dimension. Such partnerships may include community groups, other informal education institutions (museums, science centers, nature centers, etc.), school districts, institutes of higher learning, other conservation organizations and government agencies.

4.2.4. Institutions should provide paid and unpaid staff access to informational resources with the goal of supporting excellence in programs, animal management, and exhibits. These resources may include a facility library, access to an offsite library or electronic access to internet resources.

**4.3. Evaluation/Interpretation**

4.3.1. Classes, programs, animal talks, interpretive programs and other education programs should be evaluated on a regular basis for effectiveness and content. Programs should be updated with current scientific information, with an educational/conservation message as an integral component. These evaluations should assess more than participant satisfaction, looking also at program impact (ideally including impact on conservation-related knowledge, attitudes/affect, and behavior). Results from evaluations should be used to improve the existing programs and to create new programs.

4.3.2. The institution should have a thorough understanding of the needs of its audiences and as such provide programs to meet these needs.

Explanation: Zoo and aquarium education can be accomplished by programs offered to a wide variety of audiences and paid/unpaid staff through an assortment of programmatic methods: publications, exhibit interpretation, on-site presentations, tours, summer camps, speaker's bureau, outreach programs, teacher training, etc. The institution need not reach ALL audiences equally, but a thoughtful approach to audience selection should be evident – e.g., a clear understanding of their audience's needs, including the needs of under-represented groups and groups with special abilities. Similarly, not all types of programming must be used equally, but a thoughtful approach to program development must be evident. Programming should include local/global conservation issues and topics, the role of zoos and aquariums in conservation, information on AZA and other conservation-oriented organizations; as well as ways that the institution acts as a resource in its community for wildlife conservation education and related issues. Programming should clearly address cognitive, affective, and behavior outcomes (i.e., options for individual action that encourages stewardship in conserving the environment).

- 4.3.3. The exhibit graphics and other interpretive devices must be in good condition and functioning, and be based upon relevant scientific knowledge and reflect relevant interpretive methods.

Explanation: The interpretive program must be based on the thoughtful development of conservation messages for the institution. Exhibit interpretation may include information regarding the animal's natural history, conservation, care and welfare, ecology, relation to humans, correct taxonomic identification and current status (i.e., endangered or threatened), as well as botanical collections, and specific environmentally responsible behaviors visitors are being encouraged to take. In particular, inclusion of interpretation on AZA's cooperative management programs (e.g., SSPs and TAGs) is encouraged.

## 5. *SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT*

### **General Considerations:**

**Contemporary animal management, welfare, husbandry, veterinary care, and conservation practices should be based in science. A commitment to scientific advancement through research studies, both basic and applied, is a trademark of the modern zoological park and aquarium. Scientific studies should be justified in terms of the contribution to the understanding of biological principles, or to outcomes that are expected to benefit humans, animals, or the ecosystem.**

### **Welfare Considerations:**

**Studies performed or supported by AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums advance knowledge and understanding of animals and the individual needs of each species. Through knowledge gained, AZA-accredited institutions help to improve the welfare of animals both in human care and their counterparts in the wild.**

- 5.0. The institution must have a demonstrated commitment to scientific study that is in proportion to the size and scope of its facilities, staff (paid and unpaid), and animals.
- 5.1. Scientific studies must be under the direction of a paid or unpaid staff member or committee qualified to make informed decisions.

- 5.2. The institution must follow a formal written policy that includes a process for the evaluation and approval of scientific project proposals, and outlines the type of studies it conducts, methods, staff (paid and unpaid) involvement, evaluations, animals that may be involved, and guidelines for publication of findings.
- 5.3. The institution should maximize the generation and dissemination of scientific knowledge gained. This might be achieved by participating in AZA TAG/SSP sponsored studies when applicable, conducting and publishing original research projects, affiliating with local universities, and/or employing staff with scientific credentials.

## 6. GOVERNING AUTHORITY

### General Considerations:

**The governing authority should be fully informed of and willing to support (in theory and finance) the continued advancement of the institution's mission, goals, and objectives (including, but not limited to, animal welfare, conservation projects, education, scientific studies, advancement in exhibit design, and quality visitor experience.)**

### Welfare Considerations:

**It is critical that an AZA-accredited zoo or aquarium's governing authority provide the institution with attentive and consistent support to assure the institution's ability to continuously provide good animal welfare. Consistent and strong leadership and support by a governing authority may help avoid or mitigate shortfalls and other conditions that could potentially affect the quality of animal welfare within the institution.**

- 6.1. The governing authority must be supportive of the institution abiding by the AZA Accreditation Standards, Code of Professional Ethics, and Bylaws.  
  
Explanation: The Commission must be assured that the institution's governing authority understands and is supportive of the institution abiding by the AZA Accreditation Standards, Code of Professional Ethics, and Bylaws.
- 6.2. The governing authority must recognize and support the institution's goals and objectives.
- 6.3. The governing authority has the responsibility for policy matters and oversight of the institution. The CEO/Director must be responsible for the day-to-day management of the institution, including animal acquisition, transfer, welfare, euthanasia, and reintroduction, paid and unpaid staff, and programs.
- 6.4. While the governing authority may have input, the decisions regarding the institution's animals must be made by the professionals who are specifically trained to handle the institution's animals, staff (paid and unpaid), and programs.
- 6.5. The lines of communication between the CEO/Director, the governing authority, and the support organization must be clearly defined. Additionally, the governing authority and support organization

must be structured so that their relationship to the professional staff (paid and unpaid) is clearly understood and followed.

Explanation: If clear lines of communication do not exist, a breakdown in the operation of the institution and care of the animals could occur. It is essential to have a good working relationship between the governing authority, support organization, CEO/Director, and the paid and unpaid staff.

- 6.6. The CEO/Director must have the opportunity to attend meetings that would affect operations of the institution.

## 7. STAFF

### General Considerations:

**In applying for accreditation, AZA-accredited institutions, along with their paid and unpaid staff and their governing authority, agree to abide by AZA's: •accreditation standards and policies, •Code of Professional Ethics, •Bylaws, •Acquisition, Transfer, Euthanasia and Reintroduction Policy, •all duly adopted resolutions and position statements, and •agree to support AZA's objectives. To fulfill this commitment it is expected that an institution's professional staff and, at minimum, its senior executive (i.e., zoo or aquarium CEO/Director) should participate in AZA at the Professional Fellow level.**

### Welfare Considerations:

**AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums must have a sufficient number of properly trained staff to care for the animals and assure good animal welfare, maintain high quality operations, and work to continually evolve (modernize) the institution. Continuing professional development of staff is required to ascertain that staff is up-to-date with the latest information and best practices.**

- 7.1. The institution must be under the direction of a compensated CEO/Director. The CEO/Director or a designee must be available to the institution on a full-time basis.
- 7.2. In the event a CEO/Director has several "jobs" (i.e., also directs other areas of a park system), clear priorities must be established, with each job having separate and distinct descriptions.
- 7.3. There must be an adequate number of trained paid and unpaid staff to care for the animals and to manage the institution's diverse programs.

Explanation: Although there is no set formula for prescribing the size of the staff (paid and unpaid), some of the criteria that may be used to define what is considered "adequate" include the number and type of species within the institution, the general condition of the animals and exhibits, and past staffing practices.

- 7.4. Compensation for paid staff should be competitive with other similar positions in the local/regional/national market, as appropriate.

Explanation: Institutions must be able to recruit and retain qualified paid staff. Competitive compensation is a key component in recruitment and retention of paid staff.

Some positions can be successfully recruited for locally, while others are competitive on a more regional or national basis (e.g., animal care specialists).

- 7.5. Paid full-time staff members should receive opportunities for training and development.

Explanation: All paid full-time staff institution-wide should be provided opportunities for training and professional development. Funding should be provided for travel, meeting/conference participation, tuition, on-line training, and other professional opportunities when possible. Training and development opportunities may also be offered by qualified staff within the institution.

- 7.6. To support the operations of the institution, all paid and unpaid staff must maintain a professional attitude and behavior in all working relationships.

- 7.7. The institution should encourage paid and unpaid staff to actively participate in AZA committees and programs, as well as programs developed by other conservation-oriented organizations, including through virtual means such as email, teleconference, etc.

- 7.8. Paid and unpaid staff must be provided access to the latest edition of the AZA accreditation standards and related policies (available at <http://www.aza.org/accred-materials/>).

Explanation: It is important that paid and unpaid staff understand the significance of accreditation and what to expect during the accreditation process and Visiting Committee inspection.

- 7.8.1. The standards and related policies should be reviewed by institutional leadership annually to maintain continued compliance between accreditation visits.

- 7.9. The institution must have a staff diversity and inclusion statement and should follow a diversity and inclusion program.

Explanation: Programs should reflect recognition of the important connection between mission and diversity, and imply an on-going effort to enhance diversity and inclusion, including audience, paid and unpaid staff, and supplier diversity.

- 7.10. Programs utilizing volunteers (unpaid staff) should also include provisions for recruitment, interviewing, retention, and training, and periodic evaluation. This process must be under the supervision of a paid staff member(s) charged with overseeing volunteer programs.

- 7.11. The institution's CEO/Director must hold individual membership in AZA at the Professional Fellow level.

Explanation: The CEO/Director of an institution that is not AZA-accredited at the time application is made must obtain individual membership as a Professional Fellow at such time as accreditation of the institution is granted.

- 7.12. Institutions should encourage paid staff to assume leadership roles in AZA animal programs. Institutions with paid staff in leadership roles in these programs must provide continuing support to the staff member assigned and take steps to assure that the staff member assigned manages the program efficiently, and communicates with participants in a timely manner.

## 8. SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

### Welfare Considerations:

**It is important for an AZA-accredited zoo or aquarium's support organization to recognize and understand the components of good animal welfare and to support the institution in areas that will enhance its ability to continuously provide good welfare to the animals in its care (for example, funding staff training and development, etc.). Support organizations that are primarily focused on individual institution memberships should support animal welfare through communications with the membership about the care provided daily by the institution to assure good welfare for the animals in its care.**

- 8.1. The support organization must recognize the overall authority of the institution's CEO/Director, and the role of the governing authority, for the management of the institution and its programs.

Explanation: The institution's CEO/Director must have final authority over the support organization regarding the animals, exhibits, paid and unpaid staff, programs, long-range plan, and any matters affecting the institution.

- 8.2. A support organization must share the institution's goals and objectives and provide resources/support for same.

Explanation: A support organization must have a good working relationship with the institution and share its objectives.

- 8.3. A formal agreement must be in place that delineates the roles and responsibilities of the support organization. This agreement must be kept up to date, reflecting the most current relationship, and be adhered to in practice.

## 9. FINANCE

### Welfare Considerations:

**A healthy, stable financial condition is critical to assuring the institution's ability to continuously provide good animal welfare. An inadequate financial position and/or contingency plan have a direct and negative affect on the quality of animal welfare and continued modernization of the institution.**

- 9.1. The institution, regardless of whether operating on a profit or nonprofit basis, must provide sufficient evidence of its financial stability by submitting adequate financial reports, including an operating budget indicating that the financial support from the governing authority and/or support organization meets the needs of the institution.

Explanation: Proof of financial support includes the submission of an operating budget reflecting sources of income, as well as expenses. In the case of financial reports other than audited statements, the Primary Reviewer or the Commission shall determine what constitutes *sufficient evidence*.

- 9.2. The financial information must include a breakdown of salaries or salary ranges for all paid full-time staff.
- 9.3. Insurance coverage, via independent carrier or internal means, must be provided for visitors, paid and unpaid staff, and physical facilities.
- 9.4. The institution must indicate sources of funding for capital improvements and major maintenance, repairs, and replacements.

Explanation: Capital improvements, maintenance, and major repairs include renovations, maintenance of buildings/grounds/exhibits, new construction, and demolition of outdated structures.
- 9.5. The institution, regardless of whether operating on a profit or nonprofit basis, must have a written contingency plan in the event that significant decreases in operating income should occur.
- 9.6. For institutions owned by individuals, a written contingency and/or financial succession plan must be in place in the event of the death or incapacitation of the owner(s).

## 10. PHYSICAL FACILITIES

### General Considerations:

**While the Commission is interested in the institution's future plans, accreditation will be based upon operations and facilities existing at the time of the Visiting Committee inspection.**

**All United States institutions must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

### Welfare Considerations:

**The condition, size, appropriateness, and functionality of animal areas have a direct impact on animal welfare. AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums must consider these factors when assessing welfare for each individual animal or group of animals in their care. Institutions are required to incorporate commonly accepted welfare guidelines and follow a documented process for assessing animal welfare and wellness, especially the spaces in which they live. All facilities within an institution reflect the organization's commitment to quality and modernization.**

#### 10.1. Housekeeping, Improvements, and Maintenance

- 10.1.0. The institution should be in good repair (buildings, exhibits, walkways, railings, structures, signage, etc.).
- 10.1.1. Good housekeeping must be regularly practiced.

Explanation: Pest control, proper drainage, clutter in work areas, excessive use of extension cords, "permanent" extension cords, and other housekeeping activities require continuous attention.

- 10.1.2. The institution should follow a written capital improvements, major repair and replacement program.

Explanation: The capital improvements, major repairs and replacement program should include a description of how facilities are assessed along with a written schedule of current and anticipated renovations, new construction, improvements to existing buildings, grounds, exhibits, and demolition of outdated structures.

- 10.1.3. The institution should follow a written maintenance plan that outlines the institution's strategy for identifying and addressing maintenance and major repairs in a timely manner. The plan should include a schedule of improvements, anticipated cost and timetable for completion, and a plan for funding maintenance needs.

## 10.2. Equipment

- 10.2.0. All mechanical equipment must be kept in working order.

- 10.2.1. Critical life-support systems for the animals, including but not limited to plumbing, heating, cooling, aeration, and filtration, must be equipped with a warning mechanism, and emergency backup systems must be available. Warning mechanisms and emergency backup systems must be tested periodically.

Explanation: Facilities such as aquariums, tropical rainforest buildings, or other exhibits which rely on climate control for life-sustaining conditions must have emergency backup systems and a mechanism for warning if those systems are malfunctioning. The life-support assessment and warning mechanisms may be automated systems or may be monitored by qualified paid or unpaid staff.

- 10.2.2. Systems and methods for fire protection and security must be in place and functional to provide a reasonable level of safety on a 24-hour basis. Routine maintenance records that detail safety checks of the equipment should be kept current.

Explanation: Any appropriate combination of night security, patrols, fire and smoke detection systems and alarms, monitors, or building design features can be used. Compliance with local building codes is required, including fire extinguishers, sprinkler systems, etc.

## 10.3. Animal Enclosures

- 10.3.1. Lighting must be sufficient in all indoor facilities, including night houses, so that maintenance can be accomplished and animals can be observed. A means for emergency lighting must be available.

- 10.3.2. Ventilation must be sufficient in all indoor facilities, including animal holding.

- 10.3.3. All animal enclosures (exhibits, holding areas, hospital, and quarantine/isolation) must be of a size and complexity sufficient to provide for the animal's physical, social, and psychological well-being. AZA housing guidelines outlined in the Animal Care Manuals should be followed.

- 10.3.4. [See 1.5.16]

## 10.4. Public Areas

- 10.4.1. Lighting in public areas must be sufficient for the safe maneuvering of the visiting public.

- 10.4.2. All walkways must be kept in good repair.

## 11. SAFETY/SECURITY

### Welfare Considerations:

**One of the three core principles upon which AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums operate is safety. Facilities must be properly maintained, infrastructure sound, proper practices in place, staff aware and trained, and a culture of safety inherent throughout the institution. All reasonable concerns regarding the welfare of individual animals or groups, visitors, and staff must be thoroughly assessed and corrected.**

#### 11.1. General

11.1.1. The institution must be in compliance with all applicable laws and/or regulations regarding employee and volunteer training for safety in the workplace.

11.1.2. Training and procedures must be in place regarding zoonotic diseases.

Explanation: Diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans (Zoonotic disease, zoonoses) present a potential risk for paid and unpaid staff and the visiting public. The institution should design facilities, develop animal care protocols and present animals for public contact in ways that minimize this risk (e.g., hand-washing or hand sanitizing stations and signage, where applicable, etc.). Institutions must train appropriate paid and unpaid staff in methods to prevent zoonotic disease. The National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV) has prepared a Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings which should be followed by institutions presenting animals for public contact (<http://www.nasphv.org/documentsCompendiumAnimals.html>).

11.1.2.1. The institution must have an occupational health and safety program.

Explanation: An effective occupational health and safety program is based on hazard identification and risk assessment. The nature of the program will depend upon animal species, potential hazards, facility design, and workplace activities. The extent and level of participation (e.g. vaccinations, TB testing, parasite exams, immunizations, personal protective equipment, etc.) will vary depending upon potential hazard exposure and risk management.

11.1.3. A tuberculin (TB) testing/surveillance program must be established for appropriate paid and unpaid staff in order to assure the health of both the paid and unpaid staff and the animals.

11.1.4. Paid and unpaid staff working with toxic/hazardous materials must be trained in the proper handling, labeling, and storage of those materials. The institution must follow a written policy on those procedures and it must be available to handlers.

11.1.5. Whether paper or electronic, Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be located in areas for easy access by paid and unpaid staff.

#### 11.2. Emergency Procedures

11.2.0. A paid staff member or a committee must be designated as responsible for ensuring that all required emergency drills are conducted, recorded, and evaluated in accordance with AZA accreditation standards (*see 11.2.5, 11.5.2, and 11.7.4 for required drills*).

- 11.2.1. The institution should have an automated emergency defibrillator (AED) and must provide training to appropriate paid and unpaid staff.
- 11.2.2. The institution must have appropriate alarms and fire extinguishers readily available and provide training to appropriate paid and unpaid staff.
- 11.2.3. The institution must have a written plan available for first-aid and other various health emergencies and provide training to appropriate paid and unpaid staff.
- 11.2.4. All emergency procedures must be written and provided to appropriate paid and unpaid staff. Appropriate emergency procedures must be readily available for reference in the event of an actual emergency.

Explanation: An integrated emergency management and response system should combine zoo/aquarium personnel and appropriate local agencies in any incident management planning and response. An example is the US-based “Incident Command System” (ICS). ICS is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards incident management system. ICS enables a coordinated response among various jurisdictions and agencies, and provides a clear chain of command and structure; this allows local zoo/aquarium paid and unpaid staff to fully participate with other agencies through a unified command structure. It establishes a shared understanding through common language and processes, and collaborative objectives for planning and managing resources that allow for the integration of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure. Interactive web-based training for ICS-100 is free, and can be found at the US FEMA webpage (<http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.aspx>).

- 11.2.5. Live-action emergency drills (functional exercises) must be conducted at least once annually for each of the four basic types of emergency (fire; weather or other environmental emergency appropriate to the region; injury to visitor or paid/unpaid staff; and animal escape). Four separate drills are required. These drills must be recorded and results evaluated for compliance with emergency procedures, efficacy of paid/unpaid staff training, aspects of the emergency response that are deemed adequate are reinforced, and those requiring improvement are identified and modified. *(See 11.5.2 and 11.7.4 for other required drills).*

<p><b>Drills Required:</b> 4 annually (see 11.5.2 &amp; 11.7.4 for other required drills.</p>
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Explanation: Emergency drills determine if institution paid and unpaid staff are aware of emergency procedures, and understand their respective duties and responsibilities. Emergency drills enable the institution to identify potential areas that could cause problems in the case of an actual emergency. The institution must have in place appropriate emergency procedures to handle the four basic types of emergencies identified above, and procedures for additional types of emergencies to which the institution may be particularly vulnerable. Paid and unpaid staff must be trained in these procedures, and records of such training must be maintained.

For the purposes of AZA accreditation standards, a “drill” is a pre-planned, simulated interactive exercise that tests the capability of an organization to respond to an emergency event. It should be designed to physically re-create an emergency situation and subsequent response outside of an actual emergency or warning, such as a storm warning. Results stemming from an actual emergency are of interest, and must be appropriately analyzed, but cannot be counted as a drill for accreditation purposes. These live-action drills may be supplemented (not replaced) with table-top drills or other emergency preparedness scenarios.

- 11.2.6. The institution must have a communication system that can be quickly accessed in case of an emergency.

Explanation: There should be immediate access to designated persons in case of an emergency via walkie/talkie, pager, mobile telephone, intercom, telephone, alarm, or other electronic devices.

- 11.2.7. A written protocol should be developed involving local police or other emergency agencies and include response times to emergencies.

### 11.3. Facilities/Animal Exhibits

- 11.3.1. All animal exhibits and holding areas must be secured to prevent unintentional animal egress.

Explanation: Particular attention must be given to shift doors, gates, and keeper access doors (as well as double-door safe entry systems), and exhibit barrier dimensions and construction, to provide for staff (paid and unpaid) and public safety. Locking or latching mechanisms are necessary to meet this standard for dangerous animals.

- 11.3.2. All exhibit service areas must be safely lighted, free of debris and other hazards, and provide space to allow for safe servicing. Also, service exit doors must be clearly marked and in good working order. All locks and shift doors must be in good working order.
- 11.3.3. Special attention must be given to free-ranging animals so that no undue threat is posed to either the institution's animals, the free-ranging animals, or the visiting public. Animals maintained where they will be in contact with the visiting public must be carefully monitored, and treated humanely at all times.
- 11.3.4. Electrical service in all wet environments, aquatic exhibits, and associated service areas must be equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFI).
- 11.3.5. All public access areas must be equipped with exit signs. Doors must be unobstructed, open outward, and be equipped with emergency hardware.
- 11.3.6. There must be barriers in place (for example, guardrails, fences, walls, etc.) of sufficient strength and/or design to deter public entry into animal exhibits or holding areas, and to deter public contact with animals in all areas where such contact is not intended.

### 11.4. Risk Management

- 11.4.1. A written risk management plan must be developed and implemented.

Explanation: Risk management is defined as identification and assessment of potential risk for injury/harm to the visiting public and employees, and mitigating or preventing injury or harm via best-practice methods. Examples of risk to employees include potential contact with any of the institution's animals, wet floors and poor lighting and ventilation in work areas, poorly constructed/planned exhibit service areas, cluttered work space, inadequate training, animal shift mechanisms not in proper repair, and potential contact with narcotic drugs and used hypodermic needles.

Examples of risk to the visiting public include human-animal contact, wet floors, poor lighting, insufficient barrier fencing, cracks and/or holes in visitor walkways, condition of handrails, steps and walkways, rotted wood, etc. Such potential hazards must be minimized whenever possible.

While recognizing potential benefits of human-animal contact, the institution's risk management plan should follow best practices to protect humans (paid and unpaid staff, visitors, etc.) from potential injury or disease resulting from physical contact with

animals. The plan should include an assessment, and determination of those species and individual animals with which staff (paid and unpaid) and visitors may, or must not, have direct or indirect contact.

### 11.5. Dangerous Animals

- 11.5.1. Institutions maintaining venomous animals must have appropriate antivenin readily available, and its location must be known by all paid and unpaid staff working in those areas. An individual must be responsible for inventory, disposal/replacement, and storage of antivenin.

Explanation: It is the responsibility of the institution to verify that appropriate antivenins are available locally for all venomous species maintained at their institution, and for which antivenin is produced. Institutions may rely on the antivenin supply of local hospitals and treatment facilities, but it is also the institution's responsibility to guarantee that these inventories are maintained adequately. Such arrangements must be documented.

Antivenin intended for use in humans should be managed and stored in accordance with local, regional and federal regulations. Suitable procedures should be developed and implemented in collaboration with appropriate human health professionals.

- 11.5.2. All areas housing venomous animals must be equipped with appropriate alarm systems, and/or have protocols and procedures in place which will notify paid and unpaid staff in the event of a bite injury, attack, or escape from the enclosure. These systems and/or protocols and procedures must be routinely checked to insure proper functionality, and annual drills must be conducted to insure that appropriate paid and unpaid staff members are notified (*see 11.2.5 and 11.7.4 for other required drills*).

**Drill Required: 1**  
**annually**  
(see 11.2.5 &  
11.7.4 for other  
required drills.)

- 11.5.3. Institutions maintaining potentially dangerous animals must have appropriate safety procedures in place to prevent attacks and injuries by these animals. Appropriate response procedures must also be in place to deal with an attack resulting in an injury. These procedures must be practiced routinely per the emergency drill requirements contained in standards 11.2.5, 11.5.2, and 11.7.4. Whenever injuries result from these incidents, a written account outlining the cause of the incident, how the injury was handled, and a description of any resulting changes to either the safety procedures or the physical facility must be provided to AZA staff, and maintained on file at the institution for five years from the date of the incident.

### 11.6. Security/Firearms

- 11.6.1. Adequate security systems must be provided on a 24-hour, year-round basis.

Explanation: The Commission recognizes that all institutions may not be able to provide security personnel on a 24-hour basis; however, every attempt should be made to provide security when the institution is closed to the visiting public. Security responsibilities should include regular rounds of the entire institution to detect problems. If it is impractical to provide security personnel, the Commission may approve the use of electronic systems or other security measures.

- 11.6.2. Security personnel, whether employed by the institution, or a provided and/or contracted service, must be trained to handle all emergencies in full accordance with the policies and procedures of the institution. In some cases, it is recognized that Security personnel may be in charge of the respective emergency (i.e. shooting teams).
- 11.6.3. Stored firearms must be in a locked cabinet of sufficient construction and design to impede unauthorized entry, and located in a secure area and accessible only to authorized personnel trained in their use. Personnel authorized to utilize firearms must have training and regular practice.

## 11.7. Diving

### General Considerations:

**For the purposes of accreditation, the term “underwater diving” includes the diving mode in which the diver uses self-contained (SCUBA) or surface supplied compressed air and/or “breath-hold diving” in which the diver uses no self-contained or surface-supplied compressed air (ie, snorkeling or skin diving).**

- 11.7.1. Institutions which utilize underwater diving as a part of regular operations and/or maintenance shall meet minimal operational safety standards for such diving. Such institutions must comply with applicable laws and regulations for their location and follow standards mandated by the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) if located in the U.S. If the institution is located outside of the U.S. it must comply with that country’s equivalent body.

Explanation: Underwater diving programs range in complexity from intermittent exhibit maintenance to bona fide in situ scientific diving. Additionally, recreational diving in the form of “pay to dive with...” programs may be offered to zoo and aquarium visitors. Institutions located in the U.S. must make an assessment of their individual underwater diving components in order to determine which OSHA standard (commercial diving, scientific diving, recreational diving) is most appropriate for that aspect of the institution’s underwater diving program. Since federal OSHA regulations do not specifically address breath-hold diving, attention should be given to how the activity conforms to the OSHA general duty clause (employers are required to provide their employees with a place of employment that "is free from recognizable hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious harm to employees.") A risk assessment should be done that includes consideration of shallow water blackout (<http://www.shallowwaterblackoutprevention.org/>). A protocol that is designed to minimize these risks, provide training, and outlines an emergency plan should be in place, implemented, and documented. If the institution is located outside of the U.S., it must comply with that country’s equivalent, and should also do a risk assessment that includes consideration of shallow water blackout (<http://www.shallowwaterblackoutprevention.org/>). A protocol that is designed to minimize these risks, provide training, and outlines an emergency plan should be in place, documented, and implemented.

- 11.7.2. Institutions which utilize underwater diving as a part of regular operations and/or maintenance must appoint a dive safety officer with the credentials, responsibilities, and authority to fulfill that role. At minimum, a dive safety officer should be a certified recreational dive instructor, or an equivalent, to meet the credentialing requirement.

Explanation: Underwater diving programs vary in their complexity, work load, size, and function from institution to institution. While the qualifications of the dive safety officer must be commensurate with the nature of the institution’s dive program, the individual in this role must be trained to evaluate and remediate dive skills in an underwater setting. The dive safety officer’s responsibilities must be structured such that she/he is familiar with and capable of assessing dive safety.

- 11.7.3. Institutions which utilize underwater diving as a part of regular operations and/or maintenance must follow a dive manual which has, as one of its components, a section on diving safety.

- 11.7.4. Institutions which utilize underwater diving as a part of regular operations and/or maintenance must conduct at least one live-action emergency dive safety drill annually. These drills must be recorded and evaluated to assure that procedures are being followed, that training for paid and unpaid staff is effective, and that what is learned is used to correct and/or improve the emergency procedures. Records of these drills must be maintained and improvements in the procedures duly noted whenever such are identified. *(See 11.2.5 and 11.5.2 for other required drills.)*

**Drill required: 1 annually**  
(see 11.2.5 & 11.5.2 for other required drills.)

Explanation: at least one live-action drill is required annually. Additional practice exercises may consist of a variety of activities, including discussions, tabletop simulations, or actual drills. A drill is defined as a training exercise that physically re-creates an emergency situation and response outside the circumstances of an actual emergency. Results stemming from an actual emergency are of interest, but may not be counted as a drill for accreditation purposes.

- 11.7.5. Institutions which utilize underwater diving as a part of regular operations and/or maintenance must develop and implement a dive emergency plan for each tank into which divers enter. All divers must be trained in the procedures associated with emergency plans associated with tanks in which they dive.

#### 11.8. Perimeter Fence

- 11.8.1. Perimeter fencing must be separate from all exhibit fencing or other enclosures, and be of good quality and construction. All facilities must be enclosed by a perimeter fence which is at least 8' in height or by a viable barrier. The fence must be constructed so that it protects the animals in the facility by restricting animals outside the facility and unauthorized persons from going through it or under it and having contact with the animals in the facility, and so that it can function as a secondary containment system for the animals in the facility.

Explanation: There are rare instances where the terrain surrounding the facility provides a viable barrier. The Accreditation Commission will determine what constitutes a "viable barrier" and must approve a waiver. However, most facilities must be enclosed by a perimeter fence. Facilities located in rural areas and which are PPEQ-approved must meet special USDA standards for fencing. Institutions which are entirely enclosed within a building may be exempt from this requirement.

## 12. GUEST SERVICES

### General Considerations:

**All United States institutions must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

### Welfare Considerations:

**Visitor perception drives success. AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums must continually strive to provide diverse, high quality experiences for all guests. Leadership in animal care and welfare requires building and maintaining living environments that present well to the visitor and support healthy animals engaged in natural behaviors. This is among the top things guests cite as leading to a positive impression of the institution and an overall inspiring experience.**

- 12.1. The institution must provide accessibility and public amenities for all visitors, and should address the needs of both children and adults.  
  
Explanation: Each institution must consider accessibility for all visitors as improvements are made.
- 12.2. The institution must have certain basic facilities to accommodate guests, including restrooms, food and beverage services, and rest areas.
- 12.3. The institution should have common conveniences for guests, including gift facilities, institution trail maps (paper or electronic), unobstructed and visible directional signage, etc.
- 12.4. The institution must present to the visiting public a positive, professional, clean, and aesthetically pleasing environment.
- 12.5. The institution should have a guest services training program, especially for front-line paid and unpaid staff that have a potential for regular engagement with guests. A guest services training program should, among other options, include training in staff courtesy, how to handle guest complaints, knowledge about wayfinding and daily activities, the importance of communicating to guests about the meaning of AZA accreditation, and mission-based messaging.
- 12.6. The institution should have a process for acquiring and evaluating guest feedback regarding their experiences. This information provides the institution with a better perspective on areas of strengths, and opportunities for improvement. Common methods for acquiring guest feedback include in-person and/or self-guided kiosk surveys, comment cards, online feedback (e-mails), and “secret shopper” programs.
- 12.7. The institution’s website should be professional in appearance and content and should provide up-to-date information such as hours of operation, admission information, location, programs, and AZA affiliation.

### ***13. MASTER & STRATEGIC PLANNING***

#### **Welfare Considerations:**

**As a science-based institution focused on animal care and welfare, conservation, and the continued advancement of visitor and community engagement, a strong commitment to master and strategic planning for continuous change and evaluation is the foundation of adhering to “modern zoological practices and philosophies”. Strategically assessing all aspects of operations and routinely renovating and/or replacing old exhibits with new modern habitats that are designed with animal welfare in mind, is something that is expected of all AZA-accredited institutions. In addition, continuous and careful planning for new and innovative education programs and guest experiences reflects commitment to professionally recognized best practices and modern philosophies.**

- 13.1. The institution should follow a written master plan and strategic plan to engage and align stakeholders (staff, governance, donors, members and/or visitors) regarding facility innovation, planning, growth and community development. *(See pages 5 – 6 for definitions of master plan and strategic plan.)*
- 13.2. Maintaining and advancing “modern zoological practices and philosophies” should be incorporated into the institution’s master plan and strategic plan. *(See page 5 for definition of modern zoological practices and philosophies”, and see the Preamble for further clarification.)*
- 13.3. The institution’s master plan and strategic plan should incorporate its mission, and the organizational values, goals, and objectives used in the design and development of animal exhibits and visitor experiences.
- 13.4. Animal welfare (including requirements under standard 1.5.0) must be applied or considered during the design and development of all new and/or renovated animal facilities (including exhibit space *and* holding areas).
- 13.5. The institution must review or update its master plan and strategic plan every five years.

Rev: 10/18

***Additional Standards Follow:***

***Standards For Elephant Management & Care .....Pages 38 – 65***

***Standards For Cetacean Care & Welfare .....Pages 71 – 79***

***See Also:***

***General Related Policies .....Pages 80 – 111***

***General Administrative Policies .....Pages 112 – 118***

## **AZA Standards For Elephant Management & Care**

Approved March 2011, Revised April 2012

**This revision of the Standards includes new information from AZA's policy on Maximizing Occupational Safety of Elephant Care Professionals at AZA-accredited and AZA-certified Facilities which was distributed on August 15, 2011. At the time of this revision, there are several pending objectives on which the AZA Elephant TAG/SSP Steering Committee and the AZA Professional Development Committee are currently working. Over the next four years as these objectives are completed, the Standards will be reviewed annually and, if necessary, revised to include new information and new standardized protocols and forms.**

**The Standards below are written to focus on a results-based assessment. They will serve as a guide for institutions to measure their success in managing and caring for their elephants and for AZA accreditation inspectors to measure the success of the programs. Thus, in addition to each Standard, there is a Measurement and an Explanation to assist with understanding and meeting each Standard.**

**The ultimate goals of these Standards are to provide the safest work environment for elephant care professionals and to provide the highest quality of elephant management and care which will result in excellent overall elephant well-being in our institutions. Ultimately, the success of AZA's elephant care programs will allow AZA institutions to contribute to elephant conservation and ensure that elephants are in our future for generations to come.**

### **1. Abiotic Environmental Variables (address both exhibit and off-exhibit holding)**

#### **1.1 Temperature**

**Standard – Outdoor – Daytime:** All elephants must have access to shade when they are exposed to direct sunlight. Water suitable for drinking or bathing must be available daily or at greater frequency as needed to meet the elephant's cooling needs in the ambient environment.

**Measurement:** No instances of frostbite, heatstroke, sunburn, illnesses or elephant deaths related to environmental temperature/weather exposure.

**Explanation:** Water, mud, dust, soil or sand must be available for elephants to dust themselves to assist with thermoregulation. Sufficient sheltered areas must be provided to protect elephants from adverse weather. When sunlight is likely to cause overheating or discomfort of elephants, sufficient shade by natural or artificial means shall be provided to allow all elephants protection from direct sunlight. Shade areas must be provided to assure that all individuals can have access to shade when desired and that subordinate elephants are not excluded from the shade. Elephants exposed to temperatures below 40°F (5°C) for longer than 60 minutes, must be monitored hourly to assess the potential for hypothermia. If needed to prevent hypothermia, supplemental heat, an area of direct sunlight protected from wind/precipitation, access to indoor barn stalls or other options for thermal management must be provided for the elephants.

**Standard – Outdoor – Nighttime:** Elephants kept outdoors when temperatures are under 40°F (5°C) overnight, must be provided with supplementary heat and adequate shelter from adverse weather.

**Measurement:** No instances of frostbite, illnesses or elephant deaths related to environmental temperature/weather exposure.

**Explanation:** Institutions should consider designing exhibits that allow elephants outdoor access as much as possible – weather, health, and safety permitting. Elephants kept outdoors can tolerate moderate temperature extremes if they have been acclimatized to the ambient conditions. Multiple

sheltered areas must be provided to ensure that all elephants have sufficient access to shelter and protection from the elements. Facilities may install outdoor heat sources to extend the amount of time the elephants are able to remain outside. Radiant or forced air heating are examples of acceptable heat. There may be a need to provide supplemental heat for young or compromised elephants at temperatures above 40°F (5°C).

**Standard** – Indoor: Indoor holding areas must be able to be heated to a minimum temperature of at least 55°F (13°C) at all times of the year. One room must be capable of maintaining a temperature of at least 70°F (21°C) and be free of drafts for accommodating sick or debilitated elephants. Care should be taken to control excessive heat indoors. At elevated indoor temperatures, the use of fans, cross-ventilation, access to water, cool substrate, allowing elephants access to an outside area or other cooling measures must be employed as needed.

**Measurement:** No instances of illnesses or elephant deaths related to environmental temperature/weather exposure.

**Explanation:** Elephants should be provided with the opportunity to thermoregulate themselves as much as possible.

## 1.2 Humidity and Ventilation

**Standard:** There are no standards for humidity or ventilation at this time.

**Measurement:** Not applicable

**Explanation:** There are no standards for humidity or ventilation at this time.

## 1.3 Illumination - Light intensity, spectral, and duration requirements

**Standard:** Ample lighting must be provided for staff to work safely around the elephants day or night.

**Measurement:** When staff are working around or interacting with the elephants, the elephants should be able to be clearly seen and their movements/behavior observed at all times within their indoor enclosures. Adequate light must be provided to monitor the safe use of all equipment (ERD) and the movement of all doors and gates.

**Explanation:** Natural daylight cycles are adequate for elephants, even in temperate regions. When kept indoors for extended periods, fluorescent, or incandescent lights provide a sufficient spectrum of illumination. Skylights, in addition to interior lighting, are effective and recommended.

## 1.4 Facilities

### 1.4.1. Space requirements, behavioral repertoire, and complexity

#### 1.4.1.1. Indoor space

**Standard:** Indoor facilities must provide adequate room for elephants to move about and lie down without restriction. Appropriate space should be available to allow elephants to be separated either through individual stalling or through the use of restraints (See 3.3.2.7). Indoor housing for both males and females must be designed to accommodate an elephant that can reach up to 24 ft (7.3 m) vertically. All ceilings, wire, pipes, etc. must be out of reach or adequately protected.

**Measurement:** If there are elephant behavioral, social, or medical issues shown to be caused by insufficient space, there must be a program in place (from a programmatic and/or facility perspective) to address the issue.

**Explanation:** For facilities in climates that require elephants to be indoors for significant amounts of time, it is highly recommended that larger interior common spaces be developed to enhance social interactions and allow for greater movement and diversity of space during inclement weather conditions as well as overnight. Minimum recommended stall space (i.e. temporary holding, overnight, etc) is not less than 600 sq ft (56 sq m) for males or females with calves, and not less than 400 sq ft (37 sq m) for females.

#### 1.4.1.2. Outdoor space

**Standard:** Outdoor habitats must provide sufficient space and environmental complexity to both allow for and stimulate natural behavioral activities and social interactions resulting in healthy and well-adapted elephants.

**Measurement:** If there are elephant behavioral, social, or medical issues shown to be caused by insufficient space, there must be a program in place (from a programmatic and/or facility perspective) to address the issue.

**Explanation:** Space is one of the most difficult measures to standardize. There is no scientific data which clearly indicates the amount of space needed for an elephant to be healthy and well adjusted. It is the quality of the overall programmatic approach to good elephant management and the quality of the space from an elephant perspective that determines adequacy of the facility, not simply the square footage of the environment. Thus, if the elephants are healthy and socially adapted, then whatever is being provided meets the standard. It is inaccurate to say that because a facility has a certain amount of space, then it has good elephant management. Recommended minimum size for outdoor habitats is not less than 5400 sq ft (500 sq m) per elephant using the habitat.

#### 1.4.1.3. Behavior

**Standard:** The facility and program provides a complex physical and social environment which stimulates natural behaviors, social interactions and activity levels resulting in healthy, well-adapted elephants.

**Measurement:** The elephants are physically healthy and socially well-adapted without aberrant behavior or excessive aggression within the social group.

**Explanation:** There is no current data to indicate what amount of activity, or what daily walking distance is most appropriate for optimal elephant welfare. The basic needs may be different for each elephant. Since the goal is healthy, socially well-adapted elephants, how it is achieved is less important than that it is achieved.

#### 1.4.1.4. New exhibits and renovations

**Standard:** All institutions planning new construction for elephants or modifying existing elephant facilities must include holding space for adult males in their construction/renovation plans. All new construction and major renovations must be designed in a manner that minimizes the regular need for tethering.

**Measurement:** Review the facilities submitted commitment to be either a holding, holding/breeding or breeding facility and review their plans to ensure compliance with the AZA Elephant Vision and Commitment statements.

**Explanation:** AZA's commitment to elephants will only be successful if all facilities live up to their commitment in the ability to hold males and comply with TAG breeding recommendations.

#### **1.4.2. Minimum inter-individual distances that will influence size of space**

**Standard:** There are no standards for minimum inter-individual distances that will influence size of space at this time.

**Measurement:** Not applicable.

**Explanation:** See 2.2.2.2. Facility must have sufficient structures for all elephants to participate in all ranges of natural behaviors. Elephants are a social species and herds often perform activities together, such as feeding, drinking, walking, resting, and wallowing.

#### **1.4.3. Furnishings to accommodate an array of locomotive and foraging behaviors as well as resting and sleeping**

**Standard:** See 1.4.1

**Measurement:** See 1.4.1

**Explanation:** A key consideration in the design of elephant habitats is the promotion of species-appropriate behaviors. Enrichment opportunities should be integral parts of both indoor and outdoor enclosures. Outdoor areas should encourage locomotion for exercise and natural footwear. Rocks, tree stumps, or large sturdy objects must be provided in the exhibit so that the elephants may use them for rubbing and scratching. The use of both wet and dry wallows is encouraged to assist with skin care and protection against the sun and biting insects. The AZA Elephant Exhibit Design Resource has extensive information on facility design and enrichment activities.

#### **1.4.4. Visual, acoustic, and olfactory barriers within the space**

**Standard:** The design of indoor and outdoor enclosures must contain areas where elephants can exercise and socialize together, and avoid socializing if/when desired.

**Measurement:** Determine the level of choice the elephants have to join or separate themselves from other elephants.

**Explanation:** Barriers within and between exhibits should allow some degree of auditory, olfactory, and tactile contact between separated herd members as appropriate at their choice.

#### **1.4.5. Substrates and nesting/bedding materials**

##### **1.4.5.1. Outdoor**

**Standard:** Outdoor habitat surfaces must consist primarily of natural substrates (e.g., soil, sand, grass) that provide good drainage. Enclosures must be made up of a variety of substrates.

**Measurement:** Elephant feet are in good condition and need only periodic pad and nail trimming. Excessive buildup of dead skin is not apparent and dusting materials are available for the elephants.

**Explanation:** Providing a variety of soft substrates will promote behaviors, such as foraging, wallowing, bathing, digging, and resting. The use of both wet and dry wallows is encouraged to assist with skin care and protection against the sun and biting insects. Elephants can lie on mounds of earth. Providing a combination of hard substrates to promote normal wear of footpads and soft substrates, such as earth and sand, to promote dust bathing is preferred.

##### **1.4.5.2 Indoor**

**Standard:** Substrate must be able to be cleaned daily and must be quick to dry. Hard floor surfaces must be relatively smooth to prevent excessive pad wear, but not so smooth that they become slippery when wet.

**Measurement:** Interior floors are cleaned daily and dry within two hours of cleaning. No excessive pad wear due to floor roughness and no elephant injuries due to slipping on the floors.

**Explanation:** Many institutions are experimenting with the use of sand in place of some cement stall floor surfaces. Some institutions use barn stall mats, straw, or shavings for insulation and/or to provide a softer surface for elephants to stand or lie on. In new construction and renovations, consideration should be made for incorporation of natural, changeable substrates indoors.

#### **1.4.6. Provision of change and variation in the environment**

**Standard:** All holding institutions must have a written environmental enrichment plan for their elephants and show evidence of implementation (See 4.3). An effective enrichment program includes the rotation of exhibit furniture and enrichment initiatives on a regular schedule, and based on the elephants' behavior, maximizes the stimulation offered by these exhibit features (See 1.4.5.1).

**Measurement:** Enrichment plan and records of daily enrichment activities should be reviewed (See 1.4.5.1 and 4.3).

**Explanation:** A varied terrain provides more complexity in the environment as well as exercise opportunities, such as walking, turning, reaching, stretching, climbing, bending, digging, pushing, pulling, and lifting. Providing a variety of soft substrates will promote behaviors such as foraging, wallowing, bathing, digging, and resting.

#### **1.4.7. Cleaning related to issues like scent-marking, that may influence how and how often space is cleaned.**

**Standard:** There are currently no scent-marking issues identified for elephants that influence cleaning.

**Measurement:** Not applicable.

**Explanation:** Enclosures, both indoor and outdoor, must be cleaned of excrement daily. Frequent daily manure removal is recommended and may be necessary for both sanitary and aesthetic reasons.

#### **1.4.8. Air or water changes/hour required**

**Standard:** See 1.2 and 1.5.2

**Measurement:** See 1.2 and 1.5.2

**Explanation:** Indoor ventilation systems for elephants should provide enough fresh air to meet the respiration needs of the elephants, control moisture build-up within the structure, and move enough air to dilute airborne disease organisms. The recommended ventilation for indoor housing for elephants is 4-6 air changes per hour.

#### **1.4.9. Identify necessary measures for safety and containment**

##### **1.4.9.1 Containment**

**Standard:** Elephant containment barriers must be sufficient to prevent elephant escapes.

**Measurement:** There should be no failure of barriers.

**Explanation:** A recommended minimum height of walls, cables and horizontal railings for adult elephants is 8 ft (2.4 m). The use of electric fences is not sufficient as a primary containment barrier. A wide variety of building materials can be used for elephant containment barriers. The barriers must be safe for the elephants, must be able to withstand an elephant's strength, must contain the elephant in a specific space, and must prohibit direct contact between elephants and the visitors. Recommended materials for barriers include solid concrete, rock walls or horizontal steel rails, pipe or cable.

#### 1.4.9.2 Barriers

**Standard:** All institutions must have in place and be implementing adequate infrastructure to manage and care for elephants with barriers and/or restraints in place to increase employee safety. If a facility cannot meet this standard, it must apply for a variance after describing its plan to meet the standard to the Accreditation Commission. No variances shall be granted after June 1, 2017.

**Measurement:** Adequate infrastructure exists and is used by elephant care providers to care for their elephants without sharing the same unrestricted space with the elephants, except in certain, well-defined circumstances.

**Explanation:** AZA is committed to maximizing the safety of elephant care staff.

#### 1.4.9.3 Dry moats

**Standard:** The use of dry moats with steep sides and hard bottoms as primary containment should be limited.

**Measurement:** A written elephant extraction protocol must be in place for facilities employing moats out of which an elephant cannot easily climb.

**Explanation:** Dry moats can pose a substantial threat to elephants, especially those out of which an elephant cannot easily climb. Where present, moats should be wide enough for an elephant to turn around, have a soft, dry bottom, and should include a gradually sloped ramp so that the elephant can easily climb out of the moat or ditch.

#### 1.4.9.4 Doors and gates

**Standard:** Doors and gates must be in good condition and must be engineered to withstand an elephant's strength.

**Measurement:** All doors and gates must operate properly and contain elephants. No elephant injuries or keeper injuries because of hydraulic or electrically-powered door operation.

**Explanation:** Door and gate design is extremely important to ensure the safety of both elephants and keeper staff. If hydraulic or electrically powered drives are used to operate doors or gates, there must be a manual back-up system or a back-up generator in place in case of failure. Door operation must be continually monitored with a direct line of sight or with video the entire time the door is in motion in order to prevent elephant or keeper injury.

#### 1.4.9.5 General exhibit considerations

**Standard:** Ceiling and fixture heights (e.g., lights, heating units, plumbing, etc.) must be built so that elephants do not harm themselves or damage the facility.

**Measurement:** There should be no elephant injuries due to poor design or insufficient heights of ceilings and fixtures.

**Explanation:** Mature elephants can reach a vertical height of 24 ft (7.3 m).

#### 1.4.9.6 Safety assessment program

**Standard:** Each elephant-holding institution must have an established method of regularly evaluating its elephant facility and program safety. The institution must document and be able to demonstrate how this established program assesses safety on a regular and consistent basis and how safety issues are resolved. Facilities shall conduct safety evaluations at least semi-annually.

**Measurement:** Program and facility safety evaluations and safety issue resolutions are documented. All identified safety issues are resolved or are in the process of resolution.

**Explanation:** Each facility should establish and maintain a Safety Assessment Program based on its own needs and resources. A Safety Assessment Program may include a safety assessment team, including elephant staff, management staff, animal health care staff and experts in the area of risk management and safety.

#### **1.4.10. Transport (in accordance with IATA)**

**Standard:** All applicable Federal regulations and/or IATA requirements must be met.

**Measurement:** Elephant transports have been accomplished safely and in an appropriate manner.

**Explanation:** The method of transport, as well as preshipment health screening protocols, should follow TAG/SSP guidelines. Other resources for the transport of elephants include the Elephant Husbandry Resource Guide and Fowler (1995).

##### **1.4.10.1. Type of transport container**

**Standard:** See 1.4.10

**Measurement:** See 1.4.10

**Explanation:** Elephants are typically transported in custom semi trailers, specifically designed for moving elephants. On occasion, elephants are moved in crates, most commonly for overseas shipments.

##### **1.4.10.2. Appropriate size of transport container**

**Standard:** See 1.4.10

**Measurement:** See 1.4.10

**Explanation:** The crate or trailer compartment used for shipping should be sized so that the elephant can stand up comfortably, but not turn around. The elephant should not be compressed by the containment front or back. The crate should be equipped with tethering options as needed.

##### **1.4.10.3. Provision of food and water during transport**

**Standard:** See 1.4.10

**Measurement:** See 1.4.10

**Explanation:** Elephants should be provided with food (e.g., hay) and water at regular intervals during the transport.

##### **1.4.10.4. Provision of bedding or substrate in transport container**

See 1.4.10

##### **1.4.10.5. Mechanism(s) for separating animal from urine and feces during transport**

See 1.4.10

##### **1.4.10.6. Temperature range during transport**

See 1.4.10

**1.4.10.7. Light levels and how to minimize noise during transport**

See 1.4.10

**1.4.10.8 Group size or need for separation of individuals during transport**

See 1.4.10

**1.4.10.9 Handler/veterinarian access to animal during transport**

See 1.4.10

**1.4.10.10 Duration of transport allowable before temporary transfer to “normal housing” is required**

See 1.4.10

**1.4.10.11 Timing of release, size and type of enclosure at transport destination**

See 1.4.10

**1.5 Water****1.5.1 Acceptable water quality parameters**

**Standard:** Water suitable for drinking must be made available daily. Frequent drinking opportunities throughout the day may be necessary to meet the elephant's needs in the ambient environment.

**Measurement:** Water sources for exhibit and barn are identified and method of delivery determined to meet the standard.

**Explanation:** Most facilities provide either continually running or automatic watering devices in outdoor enclosures and barns. If these are not present, the method of providing water must be identified and written protocols in place to ensure appropriate water availability to the elephants.

**1.5.2 Presentation of water, and water sources**

**Standard:** While outdoors and weather permitting, elephants must have regular access to water sources, such as a pools, waterfalls, misters/sprinklers, or wallows that provide enrichment and allow the elephants to cool and/or bathe themselves.

**Measurement:** Outdoor water sources are present in sufficient quantity to accommodate all elephants at one time.

**Explanation:** It is recommended that pools be constructed with rounded edges, and without corners. Artificial pools should have either multiple or lengthy gently sloping exit and entrance areas, with non-slip surfaces, and at an angle no greater than 30°. Vertical sides on pools should be avoided in areas where elephants have direct access to the pool side. Steps should be wide enough for elephants to place more than one foot on at a time and small enough for baby elephants to step up or down. There should be more than one entry/exit point to the pool in order to prevent one elephant from inhibiting the exit or entrance of other elephants into or out of the pool.

**1.5.3 Pool depth and need for variation in depth**

**Standard:** There are no standards for pool depth and variation in depth at this time.

**Measurement:** Not applicable

**Explanation:** It is recommended that one body of water or pool be deep enough to allow for buoyancy, as this can allow for non weight-bearing exercise and that it be deep enough to allow an adult to be fully immersed when laying on its side, or at least six feet deep. However, shallow wading and splashing pools are also excellent activity areas for elephants and are to be encouraged. Recycled water over a waterfall or spraying out over the pool is an excellent activity stimulant.

## **2. Biotic Variables**

### **2.1 Food and Water.**

#### **2.1.1. Containers and protocols for the provision of food and water**

##### **2.1.1.1 Water**

**Standard:** See 1.5.1. When water containers are used, drinking water must be cleaned and refreshed daily. Containers must also be cleaned daily.

**Measurement:** Water sources are clean and water is fresh.

**Explanation:** The ability to monitor water consumption by the elephants may be important in sick or compromised elephants.

##### **2.1.1.2 Food**

See 3.1. Other resources include the Elephant Husbandry and Resource Guide, Appendix 1, Nutrition Advisory Group Handbook, “Elephants: Nutrition and Dietary Husbandry” (Ullrey et al. 1997).

##### **2.1.1.3 Food items - Variability in food type**

**Standard:** Elephants must be offered a balanced diet composed of an appropriate variety of food items provided in quantities that are sufficient for each elephant to maintain appropriate body condition. Diets must be developed under the direction of the institution’s nutritionist or veterinary staff. Consideration must be given to recommendations provided by the Elephant TAG/SSP Nutrition Advisor, as they become available.

**Measurement:** Diet sheets and written feeding protocols must be maintained and meet the Elephant TAG/SSP Nutrition Advisor recommendations. For the purpose of this section, elephant weights and/or body condition scores should be recorded three times a year.

**Explanation:** Nutritional content is a critical tool for assessing overall nutritional well-being. Daily intake records may also be valuable to maintain. Elephants have evolved to be generalist feeders. Recommended food items include hay (e.g., meadow or timothy), supplemented with fruits, vegetables, a pelleted supplement or grain. Fresh browse should be made available daily, if possible. Overall energy content of the diet must be assessed in relation to the body condition scores for each elephant and diet composition adapted as needed.

##### **2.1.1.4 Feeding schedules - Variability food presentation (e.g. spatial and temporal dispersal of food resources)**

**Standard:** Varied feeding schedules dispersed both spatially and temporally throughout the day and night are required.

**Measurement:** Written feeding protocols and schedules must be maintained.

**Explanation:** Mechanisms to deliver food to elephants during the day and night should be implemented (e.g., changing animal care staff schedules, automated feeders, hanging feeder nets, etc.). Feeders should be located in multiple locations to discourage undue competition or aggression over feed items.

### **2.1.1.5 Provision of opportunities for elephants to process food in ways similar to their wild counterparts and mechanisms that enable animals to work for food**

**Standard:** Opportunities must be provided for elephants to acquire food using multiple foraging behaviors. Food must be provided in areas where it is less likely to be soiled. Excess or waste food must be removed daily.

**Measurement:** Written feeding and enrichment protocols must be maintained.

**Explanation:** Opportunities for searching, browsing, grazing, reaching, opening, etc. can be provided by scatter-feeding, hiding foods in crevices and substrates around the exhibit, or by using elevated feeders such as hanging hay nets that encourage an elephant to reach for and manipulate its trunk to gain access to the food. Mechanisms that promote physically active feeding behaviors can be incorporated into a comprehensive enrichment plan for the elephants.

## **2.2 Social Considerations**

### **2.2.1 Group Composition**

#### **2.2.1.1 Suggested age and sex structure of social group**

**Standard:** Each zoo holding elephants must hold a minimum of three females (or the space to hold three females), two males or three elephants of mixed gender. If a zoo cannot meet this standard, they must apply for a variance. Before the variance can be issued by the Accreditation Commission the zoo (a) must describe their plan to obtain additional elephants or describe their plan for transferring their elephants and (b) must describe what will occur if they experience the loss of one elephant. In most cases where an institution has one remaining elephant, the remaining elephant will receive a recommendation for relocation at another AZA institution from the Elephant TAG/SSP.

**By 1 September 2016,** no further variances will be issued.

Adult males (6 years and older) may be housed alone, but not in complete isolation. Opportunities for tactile, olfactory, visual, and/or auditory interaction with other elephants must be provided (Rasmussen et al. 1982).

**Measurement:** The institutional commitment to elephants must be reviewed if the institution is not in compliance with the Standard. Plans for meeting the Standard and a timeline must be submitted to the Elephant TAG/SSP and to the Accreditation Commission. The Elephant TAG/SSP will determine acceptable animal welfare and plans.

**Explanation:** Due to multiple species differences and possible disease transmission issues, when forming new herds, Asian and African elephants should not be placed together in the same enclosure.

#### **2.2.1.2 Temporary individual care of parturient females and young or of males, and corresponding adequate and appropriate space for animals when removed**

**Standard:** All facilities must include the ability to flexibly manage the elephant herd, allowing the separation of groups or individuals as required.

**Measurement:** Each institution must be able to demonstrate and/or describe how they would successfully isolate individuals or groups as needed for elephant management or care.

**Explanation:** The ability to adapt to changing conditions and situations is critical to the success of any elephant program.

### 2.2.1.3 Male elephant socialization

**Standard:** If males are housed, separate facilities for isolation must be available, and a program of social contact in place.

**Measurement:** Each institution must be able to demonstrate and/or describe how they would successfully isolate and socialize males.

**Explanation:** Males (six years and older) may be housed alone, but not in complete isolation; opportunities for tactile, olfactory, visual, and/or auditory interaction with other elephants must be provided (Rasmussen et al. 1982). In the wild adult males are primarily solitary. However, they do have regular contact with other elephants.

### 2.2.1.4 Nursery groups (groups of mothers with most recent young)

**Standard:** Isolation facilities for birth and postpartum management must be available.

**Measurement:** Each institution must be able to demonstrate and/or describe how they would successfully isolate mothers and calves during birth and postpartum period. Written protocols must be in place for births and reintroductions of mothers/calves to herd.

**Explanation:** First time mothers in particular may require significant management. Initial protection of the calf and control of the mother are critical to a successful birth. Introduction of the new calves and mothers to the herd must be accomplished both cautiously and expeditiously. Reintroduction of the calves and mothers to the natal group or herd should be accomplished as quickly as possible.

### 2.2.1.5 “Emigration” of adolescents

**Standard:** Offspring should remain with their mothers until they are weaned and mother and calf are acclimated to separation.

**Measurement:** Offspring must remain with their mothers until they are at least three years old.

**Explanation:** Some flexibility is necessary in cases of health challenges, maternal rejection and/or when infants cannot be re-established in their social group. In cases of maternal rejection, calves should be introduced to other conspecifics as soon as possible. Males are generally separated from the herd during adolescence due to natural age-related behavioral changes. There is no specific age when this may occur. Indicators that males may need to be separated include aggression, play-fighting or reproductive behavior that causes disruption within the herd or risk of injury to individuals in the herd.

### 2.2.1.6 Multigenerational groups

**Standard:** When possible, multigenerational groups should be maintained.

**Measurement:** Multigenerational groups are maintained when possible.

**Explanation:** Multigenerational groups are a goal of the TAG/SSP breeding program. Much of the behavioral repertoire of elephants is learned, rather than innate. A multi-generational group allows the transfer of species-appropriate behaviors within a herd through experience and observational learning.

### 2.2.1.7 Groups deriving from cohorts

See 2.2.1.8

### 2.2.1.8 All male groups

**Standard:** There are no standards for all male groups at this time.

**Measurement:** Not applicable

**Explanation:** Guidelines for the creation and long-term management of all-male elephant groups will need to be developed as this may become increasingly more important with increased breeding success and the production of more male calves.

### **2.2.1.9 Daily and life stage variation in patterns of social affiliation**

**Standard:** A behavioral profile must be maintained for each individual elephant and updated annually.

**Measurement:** Protocols and profiles in place and up-to-date.

**Explanation:** Staff must be aware of each elephant's social compatibility and the dominance hierarchies of the herd. Institutions must have the ability to manage social compatibility as well as dominance and aggression among an elephant group. Institutions must have the ability to manage introductions and separations of elephants, including; a new female to an existing herd, females to males for breeding, calves to their mothers, and calves and mothers to the herd. Elephant enclosures must be designed to allow for separate and group housing during periods of social incompatibilities, without interfering with the normal movement of elephants in and out of enclosures.

### **2.2.2. Group Size**

#### **2.2.2.1 Minimum and optimum group sizes**

See 2.2.1.1

#### **2.2.2.2 Inter-individual distances required**

**Standard:** Facility must be designed, and resources provided, to allow for ample feeding, shade, water, and wallowing locations.

**Measurement:** Facility must have sufficient structures for all elephants to participate in all ranges of natural behaviors.

**Explanation:** Elephants are a social species and herds often perform activities together, such as feeding, drinking, walking, resting, and wallowing.

#### **2.2.3. Conspecific groups, the need for/influence of adjacent groups, similar taxa, or territorial species**

More research is needed to develop guidelines for this section.

##### **2.2.3.1 Key environmental elements for each species**

More research is needed to develop guidelines for this section.

##### **2.2.3.2 Identify inter-specific inter-animal distances require**

More research is needed to develop guidelines for this section.

##### **2.2.3.3 Address appropriateness of single-sexed groups**

More research is needed to develop guidelines for this section.

### **2.2.4 Introductions**

**Standard:** Institutions must have the ability to manage elephant introductions and separations.

**Measurement:** There must be appropriate facilities and protocols in place for all phases of elephant introductions.

**Explanation:** All institutions must have the staff and the appropriate facilities to be able to manage both elephant introductions and separations, including introductions/separations of a new female to a herd and, if the institution is a breeding facility, females to males for breeding, newborn calf to its mother, and calf and mother to the herd.

### **3. Health and Nutrition**

#### **3.1 Diet - Standards for nutrient requirements for all life stages**

See 2.1.1.3, 2.1.1.4 and 2.1.1.5. Other resources include Food, the Elephant Husbandry and Resource Guide, Appendix 1, Nutrition Advisory Group Handbook, “Elephants: Nutrition and Dietary Husbandry” (Ullrey et al. 1997).

**Standard:** Elephant weights and/or body condition scores should be recorded three times a year. For Asian elephants, the Wemmer body condition index (BCI) can be used (see Appendix 2) and body condition index scores in the 6 to 10 range should be maintained. (See Appendix 2). Diet and/or exercise programs must be in place for elephants.

**Measurement:** Weight records and/or body condition scores should be reviewed. Diet and exercise programs modified as needed to maintain elephant physical well-being.

**Explanation:** Elephants may be outside the normal body condition score range and still be healthy. These individuals may not need to have specialized diet or exercise plans in place.

#### **3.2 Influence of the following variables on dietary requirements**

##### **3.2.1 Age (infant, juvenile, reproductive adult, senescent adult, etc.)**

See Appendix 1

**Explanation:** Obesity is a health concern for all animals, including elephants, and excessive weight gain should be avoided through proper diet and exercise. For infants, a normal growth rate should be 1 to 2 lbs per day over the first three years. Excess weight early and too rapid growth may cause long-term harm to the elephant’s physical well-being. Significant exercise and limiting the high-energy supplements will help control weight gain in calves and elephants of all ages.

##### **3.2.2 Body size**

See 3.1

##### **3.2.3 Reproductive status**

**Standard:** Elephants’ diets should be carefully monitored during pregnancy, and elephants should engage in a prenatal exercise program to control excessive weight gain during pregnancy.

**Measurement:** Weight records and/or body condition scores should be reviewed.

**Explanation:** Elephants should be prevented from significant weight gain during pregnancy.

##### **3.2.4 Seasonal changes in ambient temperature**

Not a significant factor for elephants.

##### **3.2.5 Seasonal changes in body condition**

Generally, not an issue with our elephant population.

### 3.2.6 Seasonal changes in nutritional requirements

**Standard:** Elephants should be fed in accordance to the recommendations of the Elephant TAG/SSP Nutrition Advisor.

**Measurement:** Diet sheets and nutritional/intake records should be reviewed.

**Explanation:** If changes are made to diets as a result of seasonal availability of items, then care should be taken to implement changes gradually (over 1-2 weeks) to avoid digestive upsets (Ullrey et al. 1997).

### 3.2.7 Activity levels

**Standard:** Activity levels should be sufficient to maintain the physical and psychological well-being of the elephant.

**Measurement:** Diet sheets, weight records, body condition scores, exercise protocols and nutritional/intake records should be reviewed.

**Explanation:** In the absence of scientific data to indicate the precise amount of activity needed to maintain good physical and psychological well-being of an elephant, activity levels, weight, BCI and diet composition should be frequently reviewed to maintain appropriate overall health parameters.

### 3.2.8 Health status

**Standard:** Diets should be flexible and should be adaptable to a wide range of individual elephant needs and various health issues, while adhering to the recommendations of the Elephant TAG/SSP Nutrition Advisor.

**Measurement:** Diet sheets, weight records, health records and nutritional/intake records are reviewed.

**Explanation:** The elephant team must work closely with the veterinary and nutrition teams to balance medical and nutritional requirements with behavioral components and activity levels for each elephant.

### 3.2.9 Palatability, texture, processing, etc. that will encourage species-appropriate appetitive behaviors

**Standard:** Every institution must have a browse program/protocol as a part of their elephant management program.

**Measurement:** Browse protocol and elephant health/dental records should be reviewed.

**Explanation:** Elephants must be provided with browse material large enough to avoid molar impaction and rotation. Since elephant teeth migrate forward (not vertically), it is important that the right type of food is offered to promote dental health and allow for the natural progression of each molar.

## 3.3 Medical management

**Standard:** A veterinarian with experience in large mammal medicine must be on call at all times to deal with routine elephant health evaluation and treatment and medical emergencies.

**Measurement:** Records of annual medical exams and other treatments must be on file. Copies of AZA Elephant TAG/SSP medical protocols should be on file and utilized at the institution.

**Explanation:** Guidelines for routine exams, quarantine, preshipment testing and necropsy are available from the AZA Elephant TAG/SSP Veterinary Advisor.

### 3.3.1 Quarantine and hospitalization

**Standard:** Quarantine protocols, periods and parameters for elephants must be in place.

**Measurement:** AZA Elephant TAG/SSP protocols available along with institutional written protocols.

**Explanation:** Due to the size, strength, and social nature of elephants, it may be logistically difficult to maintain isolation from other animals during arrival and quarantine. The Recommended Preshipment Protocol for Elephants lists a comprehensive battery of tests to detect disease prior to shipment. It is important that the receiving institution work closely with the sending institution to ensure that all (or as many as possible) of the listed tests are conducted and results reviewed. Following the preshipment protocol may help compensate for some of the quarantine compromises that may be required. Regardless of preshipment test results, every attempt should be made to maintain some degree of physical separation from the resident elephants after arrival.

Current quarantine practices recommend a minimum 30-90 day quarantine period for most species found in zoos and aquaria. Social concerns, physical facility design, and availability of trained elephant staff may dictate a modified quarantine protocol. The final decision for specific quarantine protocols at each institution should be made by the veterinary staff in consultation with the elephant management staff. For additional information, refer to the Elephant Husbandry Resource Guide, AZA Quarantine Guidelines, and the AAZV Preventive Medicine Recommendations.

#### 3.3.1.1 Problems arising from isolation of social taxa

**Standard:** Every institution should have the ability to introduce, manage and maintain social groupings of elephants.

**Measurement:** Daily records of social groupings should be reviewed. Introduction protocols/records should be reviewed.

**Explanation:** As a highly social species, female elephants must be returned to their social group as soon as possible. Although interaction between elephant care staff and elephants can be beneficial, they are not a sufficient substitute for species-appropriate elephant-to-elephant interactions.

### 3.3.2 Preventive medicine (testing, vaccinations, parasite control, etc.)

**Standard:** Each elephant must be given a thorough annual physical examination (Mikota et al. 1994). Elephant weights and/or body condition scores should be recorded three times a year.

**Measurement:** Written documentation of the exams and their results, the weights and/or the body condition scores taken at the time of each weight must be reviewed. Written protocols are in place for all preventative elephant medicine and AZA Elephant TAG/SSP guidelines available.

**Explanation:** Institutions must adhere to USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) requirements for testing and treatment of tuberculosis. A veterinarian or trained veterinary technician must perform fecal examinations to look for parasites and other problems on a regular basis (Samuel et al., 2001). Results must be recorded. Body weights and/or body condition must be assessed and recorded at least three times a year, through actual weighing or through the use of standardized body measurement tables, photographs, or similar, previously validated techniques (e.g., Sreekumar and Nirmalan, 1990). These results must be reviewed after each measurement is taken. Regular vaccinations, as determined by the veterinary staff in concert with the Elephant TAG/SSP Veterinary Advisor, must be given. Annual vaccinations may include rabies and tetanus.

#### 3.3.2.1 Daily care

**Standard:** All elephants must be visually inspected and behaviorally assessed on a daily basis

**Measurement:** Daily records and reports must be reviewed.

**Explanation:** An assessment must be made and any unusual behavior (including instances of aggression), physical characteristics or activities should be immediately reported to the supervisor, and recorded in a daily log. Specifically, reports should include observations such as condition of urine and feces, eating and drinking patterns, administration of medications (if any), and general condition and behavior.

### 3.3.2.2 Foot care

**Standard:** The elephants should be free of foot injuries or foot disease. Staff must be trained to provide foot care and the elephants must be trained to accept that care. Each elephant facility must have a written protocol for foot care. If foot injuries or foot disease are present, a current treatment regimen must be in place.

**Measurement:** Elephant feet are in good condition and need only periodic pad and nail trimming. Records and protocols on file and foot care and/or treatment protocols in place. Implementation of the protocols/treatment is evident in condition of the elephant's feet.

**Explanation:** An institution's foot care protocol should include daily cleaning and inspection of all elephants' feet. If foot injury or disease is present, evidence should be documented of the institution's review of the potential cause or causes of the foot injury or foot disease. Where causes are identified, changes made to address these causes must be documented. Taking baseline foot radiographs or thermographs of all adult elephants and keeping them on file is suggested. In some cases, it may be appropriate to annually monitor selected elephants (i.e., those that have a history of chronic foot problems).

### 3.3.2.3 Skin care

**Standard:** Elephants must be trained to accept regular skin care and staff must be trained to provide that care.

**Measurement:** Each elephant facility must have a written protocol for routine skin care and show evidence of its implementation. These records and protocols should be reviewed.

**Explanation:** An elephant's skin must be thoroughly inspected on a daily basis and cared for as needed through bathing, removal of dead skin, and treatment of dry skin or other skin problems. The elephant's skin should be supple, free of dead skin buildup, not cracked or dry and free of folliculitis.

### 3.3.2.4 Daily exercise

**Standard:** An exercise program must be in place for the herd as a whole or for each individual elephant.

**Measurement:** Each elephant facility must have a written protocol for routine exercise and show evidence of its implementation. These records and protocols should be reviewed.

**Explanation:** Elephant weights and/or body condition scores should be recorded three times a year. For Asian elephants, the Wemmer body condition index (BCI) can be used (see Appendix 2) and body condition index scores in the 6 to 10 range should be maintained. Exercise protocols should be in place for maintaining good body condition and exercise should be increased for elephants over the optimal body condition score. True exercise levels required for elephants, measured in distances walked per day, are not known. Recent data collected from radio collared wild elephants indicates much shorter daily travel distances than previously reported. Current studies are in progress on distances traveled daily by elephants by several research groups and in several AZA institutions. The weight and/or the body condition score, combined with the absence of disease, foot and leg problems are the indicators that the amount of exercise is sufficient for the elephant on their specific diet in their specific situation. As with humans or any other species, overall health is a combination of factors, including exercise, diet and psychological factors.

### 3.3.2.5 Husbandry training

**Standard:** All elephants must be trained to reliably present the behaviors listed on the AZA Standard Elephant Program Behavioral Components checklist. All elephants must be trained to permit a complete body exam daily and to allow successful completion of all necessary care and husbandry procedures.

**Measurement:** The AZA Standard Elephant Program Behavioral Components checklist should be completed by the institution annually, and maintained for review at accreditation.

**Explanation:** The key to keeping elephants healthy and treating them when they are sick relies on the ability to monitor, test and administer health care and treatment. Proactive training makes monitoring elephant health possible and makes diagnostic testing and therapeutic treatment in times of compromised health less stressful for the elephant and the elephant care team.

#### Checklist of AZA Standard Elephant Program Behavioral Components

If individual elephants vary, please note the number of elephants that fall into each category.

BEHAVIOR	NOT TRAINED	IN TRAINING	COMPLETE & RELIABLE
Bathe / scrub skin			
Treat skin			
Trim all feet			
Eye exam			
Ear exam			
Mouth exam			
Tooth exam			
Tusk exam			
Tusk trim			
Blood collection (note frequency of collections)			
Urine collection			
Vaginal exam			
Rectal palpation			
Enema			
Transrectal ultrasound			
Accepts injections			
Accepts oral medications			
Enters chute (remains inside with doors closed)			
Allows chute walls to move			
Allows husbandry procedures to be performed by staff			
Allows veterinary procedures to be performed by vet			
Trunk wash for TB testing			
Foot x-ray			
Separation			
Leg restraint			
Reproductive assessment completed			

### 3.3.2.6 Elephant Restraint Devices (ERD)

**Standard:** All elephant facilities should have an ERD. If a facility does not have an ERD, staff must demonstrate a method of restraint that allows necessary husbandry, veterinary, and reproductive procedures to occur in a safe and efficient manner for all elephants in their collection. Use of the ERD must not be weather dependent.

**Measurement:** ERD in place and functional. All elephants trained to use the ERD, or the institution demonstrates its protocols and ability to do ERD functions without the ERD.

**Explanation:** ERDs must effectively restrict the movement of an elephant while simultaneously allowing elephant care staff access to the elephant for veterinary procedures. ERDs must be able to comfortably contain an elephant for prolonged veterinary or husbandry procedures

### 3.3.2.7 Restraint

**Standard:** All elephants must be trained to allow restraint using ERDs, rope, chain, or other materials of sufficient strength. Elephants must not be subjected to unnecessary prolonged restraint. Any planned restraint over two hours must be approved by the institution's administration, elephant management committee, and veterinarian. The institution's safety committee and/or the institutional animal welfare committee should be included in the decision making process. All new construction and major renovations must be designed in a manner that minimizes the regular need for tethering.

**Measurement:** Protocols in place for tethering guidelines are reviewed.

**Explanation:** Tethering is an acceptable method of temporary restraint for elephants. Prolonged tethering may be necessary for transport and for veterinary treatment. Elephants can be easily trained to accept tethering.

### 3.3.2.8 Immobilization

**Standard:** Veterinary protocols must be established for potential immobilization of an elephant, either for standing or full sedation.

**Measurement:** Veterinary immobilization protocols are reviewed.

**Explanation:** The Elephant TAG/SSP Veterinary Advisor can be consulted for the most current and effective sedation and immobilization techniques.

### 3.3.2.9 Management of neonates and geriatric animals

**Standard:** Neonatal exam and hand-rearing protocols must be part of the written birth protocols. Management and treatment plans for each geriatric elephant should be developed by the elephant management team and veterinarian and revised regularly as the elephant ages.

Institutions must use the standardized annual reporting process to report all elephant births and mortalities and provide a description of the specific practices and protocols used during each event (See 5.4).

**Measurement:** Birth protocol is reviewed, including plans for neonatal exam and hand-rearing. Geriatric management and treatment plan is reviewed. Annual reports of births and mortalities are submitted for review as part of the institutional annual elephant report.

**Explanation:** Specific treatment for geriatric elephants will be developed with coordination of the veterinary and management teams. There are no current specific standards. The Elephant Husbandry Resource Guide includes a chapter on hand-rearing and can be a useful resource in the development of a facilities hand-rearing protocol.

### 3.3.2.10 Management during pregnancy

**Standard:** Pregnant elephants must have a written diet and exercise program to prevent excessive weight gain during pregnancy.

**Measurement:** Birth protocol is reviewed, including plan for exercise and diet management during pregnancy.

**Explanation:** An elephant that is overweight at time of parturition significantly increases the risk of dystocia and other parturition complications. Elephants in good body condition should gain no more than 5% of their body weight during pregnancy.

Nulliparous females over age 24 years have had limited success delivering calves and have experienced dystocias and retained fetuses. Institutions should take all factors into account and research the potential challenges and options available when considering breeding elephants in this reproductive class.

## 3.4 Reproduction

### 3.4.1 Seasonal changes in physiology and behavior associated with reproduction and management implications of such changes.

**Standard:** Each male and female elephant of potential reproductive age must have an initial reproductive assessment and follow-up assessments on a regular basis by transrectal ultrasound, and all female elephants of potential reproductive age must have their progesterone cycle monitored to verify current reproductive status and assess overall reproductive health.

**Measurement:** Samples for reproductive assessment for females taken and analyzed at least annually. Semen samples collected from bulls regularly (annually where practical) document current viability. AZA Elephant TAG/SSP recommendations followed.

**Explanation:** Exceptions for reproductive assessment include elephants with known reproductive problems, actively breeding elephants, or those with documented medical/behavioral conditions that preclude them from breeding.

### 3.4.2 Facilities for parturition and management of females during parturition and calf introductions

**Standard:** Breeding facilities must have a birth protocol in place, which provides for care of the mother during pregnancy and parturition and safety of the calf immediately after birth.

**Measurement:** Birth protocol is reviewed.

**Explanation:** In order to avoid incidents of calf injury or unsuccessful births due to lack of a plan or lack of preparedness, a detailed birth protocol must be written for all pregnant elephants. For first time mothers, this protocol must include the ability to restrain the mother and retrieve the calf at parturition if necessary. The protocol must include methods of care of the mother in case of birth complications requiring veterinary intervention. There are several excellent birth protocols available from successful breeding institutions. The Elephant Husbandry Resource Guide can be a useful resource for developing the institutional birth protocol.

### 3.4.3 Hand-rearing and reintroduction protocols

**Standard:** Written hand-rearing and reintroduction management plans should be included as a part of the birth protocol.

**Measurement:** Birth protocol is reviewed, including plans for hand-rearing and reintroduction management.

**Explanation:** Protocols must be in place and supplies on hand well in advance (at least 30 days) of earliest expected parturition date in case hand-rearing is necessary. Every attempt should be made to reunite an elephant calf with its mother as soon as possible following birth.

#### **3.4.4 Recommended means and duration of contraception**

**Standard:** There are no standards for contraception with elephants at this time.

**Measurement:** Not applicable.

**Explanation:** Currently, there is not a need for contraception with either African or Asian elephants in human care. Contraception information is available on-line at the AZA Wildlife Contraception Center's web site at [www.stlzoo.org/contraception](http://www.stlzoo.org/contraception).

### **4. Behavior management**

**Standard:** All institutions must have an elephant training program in place which allows elephant care providers and veterinarians the ability to accomplish all necessary elephant care and management procedures. A training program must be consistent with the industry standard to assure inter-institutional consistency.

**Measurement:** Review training and health records and observe elephant/staff interactions to determine if elephant training program is successful and that elephant care needs are being successfully met.

**Explanation:** Elephant training terminology and descriptions of specific behaviors are outlined in the PEM course curriculum. The PEM-recommended list of commands and their corresponding behaviors are ones that every elephant and elephant keeper must know so that basic husbandry and veterinary practices can be accomplished.

#### **4.1 Daily behavioral assessment**

**Standard:** A daily behavioral assessment will be conducted for each elephant and all unusual behavior or any instances of aggression should be documented in the daily report and/or in an incident report form, if appropriate.

**Measurement:** Daily records and reports are reviewed.

**Explanation:** A daily assessment should be made and any unusual behavior (including instances of aggression) should be immediately reported to the supervisor, and recorded in a daily log.

#### **4.2 Successful methodologies for managing elephants**

##### **4.2.1 Training methods**

**Standard:** All institutions must have an elephant training program in place which allows elephant care providers and veterinarians the ability to accomplish all necessary elephant care and management procedures. Each institution will adopt and implement an institutional training methodology that promotes the safest environment for elephant care professionals and visitors and ensures high quality care and management of the elephants for routine husbandry, medical management, physical well-being and overall elephant welfare. Institutions must train their elephant care professionals to manage and care for elephants with barriers and/or restraints in place that provide employee safety.

**Measurement:** Institutions must be able to demonstrate that all AZA Standards for Elephant Management & Care are met.

**Explanation:** Appropriate elephant training may employ several training aids or tools. If properly executed training procedures are ineffective in eliminating aggressive or inappropriate behavior in a given elephant, institutions should consider other alternatives, including bringing in a consultant and/or transferring to a facility with more experienced staff or a different management system.

#### 4.2.2 Elephant management policy

**Standard:** Each AZA member institution and related facility that holds elephants must have a written elephant management policy. This policy must be consistent with AZA standards for elephant management & care, and must support the Board mandate that elephant care providers at AZA facilities with elephants shall not share the same unrestricted space with elephants, except in certain, well-defined circumstances (outlined in d. below).

An institution's elephant management policy must, at minimum, include a description of the following key components.

- a) Elephant management program's missions and goals.
- b) Elephant management policies, including guidelines for handling, training, and transport.
- c) Plan to separate elephants from each other, safely manage elephants that are aggressive towards other elephants, safely move elephants from one location to another, and safely manage elephants that are aggressive toward humans.
- d) Clear protocols for frequency and duration when elephant care professionals and elephants may share the same unrestricted space for the specific purposes of required\* health and welfare procedures, transport, research, active breeding and calf management programs, and medical treatments and testing. \*The word "required" is intended, first, to allow for a degree of flexibility, recognizing the wide array of conditions that occur in managing animals and, second, to indicate that a decision to engage in any specific exceptions should involve more than a single individual and must be approved by the facility director.
- e) Staff management policies, including guidelines for keeper safety.
- f) Individual elephant profiles and incident reports for all cases in which elephants show aggression toward keepers or the public, regardless if any injury actually resulted.
- g) Emergency response protocols. Institutions must be able to demonstrate readiness to respond to an emergency situation, such as a keeper injury, an elephant escape, or to natural disasters.
- h) Written protocol for routine foot care and evidence of its implementation
- i) Written environmental enrichment plan and evidence of its implementation
- j) Written exercise plan and evidence of its implementation

**Measurement:** An updated institutional Elephant Management Policy exists and all records and annual reports pertaining to elephant care and or management are reviewed.

**Explanation:** This policy should be developed with input from many parties, including elephant keepers, managers, curators, veterinarians, safety experts and directors. It should follow a thoughtful process taking into account the animals, staff and facility.

#### 4.3 Procedures successful in facilitating introductions, including separation of individuals from group, stationing, tolerance while feeding, cooperative feeding, "howdy" units, visitation gates, etc.

**Standard:** Protocols must be in place for safe and effective introductions and control of potential social issues.

**Measurement:** Institution must be able to demonstrate their ability to introduce and separate elephants.

**Explanation:** Gradual introductions generally follow a pattern of increasing familiarity as follows: olfactory and auditory contact, visual contact at a distance, close proximity visual contact, tactile contact over or through a barrier that allows for either individual or group to move at choice out of tactile contact

range, and finally full unfettered introduction. Each phase should be observed and evaluated before moving to the next introductory phase. When doing full introductions, it is important to maintain the ability to intervene in any aggressive escalation and be able to either provide sufficient open or barrier enhanced space for one elephant to avoid another, or multiple gates to facilitate safe separation of the elephants. It should be cautioned that some elephants are able to very rapidly move through the introductory stages and may become frustrated or increasingly aggressive if the introduction moves too slowly. Hence, continual behavioral assessment of the introduction is important.

#### 4.4 Enrichment programs

**Standard:** All institutions must have a written environmental enrichment plan for their elephants and show evidence of implementation (See 1.4.6).

**Measurement:** Enrichment plan and records of daily enrichment activities should be reviewed.

**Explanation:** An effective enrichment program should promote species-appropriate behaviors. Two useful resources on enrichment programs for elephants include the Elephant Husbandry Resource Guide and [www.animalenrichment.org](http://www.animalenrichment.org).

### 5. Management Structure, Safety and Program Assessment

#### 5.1 Management structure, technical skills and competencies

**Standard:** Each institution must demonstrate a management structure which provides (1) staff training; (2) program development and maintenance; and (3) communication with others about the elephant program. The elephant program's manager(s) and keepers must demonstrate knowledge about all emergency protocols and continually improve elephant management techniques as the industry standards evolve. Overall responsibility for the program must be clearly defined.

All elephant care professionals, managers and directors must complete AZA's Principles of Elephant Management I course within three (3) calendar years from the date they begin working in that capacity. *E.g. If someone begins work in April of 2018, they are required to complete the course by December 31, 2021.*

All elephant managers must complete AZA's Principles of Elephant Management II course within three (3) calendar years from the date they begin working in that capacity. *E.g. If someone is assigned the role of elephant manager in April of 2018, they are required to complete the course by December 31, 2021.*

**Measurement:** Institutional elephant management responsibility is clearly defined and understood by elephant manager(s) and keepers. All elephant care professionals, managers and directors have attended PEM I within three (3) calendar years from the date they begin working in that capacity and are knowledgeable in institutional safety and elephant care protocols. All elephant manager(s) have attended PEM II within three calendar years from the date they begin working in that capacity.

**Explanation:** Most institutions typically assign one person to be the Elephant Manager, however, some institutions have more than one person sharing the duties described above.

##### 5.1.1 Keeper safety proficiency

**Standard:** Each institution must implement the standardized methods and protocols to evaluate and maintain records of each elephant care professional's safety-proficiency, in a manner that integrates his/her experience level with the specific behavior profiles of the elephants in his/her care.

**Measurement:** Written evaluations of each elephant care professional's safety-proficiency exist and are up to date.

**Explanation:** An elephant keeper training and safety proficiency program should include regular check-ins with the elephant manager(s) and should assess the progress of all employees in safely handling the elephants at his or her facility.

## 5.2 Animal and keeper safety

**Standard:** A minimum of two qualified elephant keepers must be present within visual and auditory contact at all times during any contact with elephants (any time a keeper is within trunk's reach of an elephant).

**Measurement:** Related keeper injuries should be reported annually (See 5.4).

**Explanation:** A qualified elephant keeper is a person the institution acknowledges as a trained, responsible individual, capable of and specifically experienced in the training and care of elephants. The two qualified elephant keepers should be in close enough proximity to one another to allow the second person to intervene if required.

### 5.2.1 Elephant aggression

**Standard:** Any elephant that displays aggression towards an elephant care provider(s) must be immediately documented and evaluated by the elephant management team and, as soon as possible, should be managed with barriers or restraints in place between the elephant and that care provider(s).

**Measurement:** Daily behavioral assessment reports and incident reports should be available and should be reviewed.

**Explanation:** AZA is committed to maximizing the safety of elephant care staff while continuing to advance the care and welfare of the elephants. Individual elephants occasionally display aggression toward a particular keeper which may warrant managing with barriers or restraints in place when that particular keeper is present. If properly executed training procedures are ineffective in eliminating aggressive or inappropriate behavior in a given elephant, institutions should consider other alternatives, including bringing in a consultant and/or transferring to a facility with more experienced staff or a different management system.

## 5.3 Visitor safety and acceptable forms of human/animal interaction

**Standard:** Elephant enclosures must be designed to ensure that no physical contact is possible between the visitors and the elephants that is not directly supervised and under the control of trained elephant staff.

**Measurement:** No incidents of visitor injury or inappropriate contact with elephants.

**Explanation:** All elephant/human interaction must be supervised by institutionally qualified elephant staff. Where elephant rides are done, or elephants are walked in public areas or outside their normal exhibit containment, protocols, assessments and reviews must be documented to ensure staff and public safety.

## 5.4 Program assessment

**Standard:** Each institution must perform an annual review of its overall elephant management program including:

- The circumstances under which elephant care professionals share unrestricted space with elephants versus when barriers and/or restraints are in place.
- The number of workplace injuries or fatalities, if any, that occurred in the care and management of elephants and the specific conditions under which each occurred.
- The number of elephant births and mortalities and a description of the specific practices and protocols used during each event.

- Elephant management policies, procedures and protocols
- Elephant containment parameters and structures
- Staff performance and program goals

**Measurement:** Written report of the annual program assessment with recommendations for actions to be taken where appropriate. This report shall be submitted to the Accreditation Commission.

**Explanation:** Elephant management continues to evolve as new information, knowledge and technologies become available. An annual review of the entire program will assist in identifying areas of unwanted change, assessing programs strengths and needs, and developing action plans to meet the goals of the program.

## 6. Conservation, Education, and Research

### 6.1 Conservation and research activities

**Standard:** AZA Zoos should contribute to in situ and ex situ conservation and research efforts.

**Measurement:** Records of participation in situ and ex situ conservation and research efforts should be reviewed.

**Explanation:** AZA zoos that currently exhibit or desire to exhibit elephants should make every effort to maintain elephants in their collections so that they can contribute to conservation through public education, scientific research, and the support of field conservation. Elephants are an important flagship species and the cornerstone of many members' African and Asian exhibit areas. (Board of Directors 3/21/00). Every institution should contribute in some way to in situ conservation of elephants and their habitats (EMA 1999, Hutchins and Smith, 2000). AZA members are strongly encouraged to provide financial, personnel, logistical, and other support for priority research and conservation initiatives listed in the AZA Elephant TAG/SSP Strategic Plan. Every institution should contribute in some way to elephant research activities (Keele and Dimeo-Ediger 1997, EMA 1999, Hutchins and Smith, 2000). Involvement in one or more of the following disciplines is strongly recommended: behavior, cognition, reproduction, communication, enrichment, health (disease/pathology, nutrition), and education.

### 6.2 Education programs

**Standard:** Every institution should institute a program to educate zoo visitors about elephant and elephant conservation issues (EMA 1999, Hutchins and Smith, 2000).

**Measurement:** Records of elephant education program should be reviewed.

**Explanation:** Assistance is available from the Elephant TAG/SSP Education Advisor. Every institution should have up-to-date educational graphics and/or information about elephants on display to the public.

## 7. Cooperative management

**Standard:** All acquisition, transfer, reintroduction, or breeding of elephants in AZA institutions is subject to approval of the AZA Elephant TAG/SSP. All breeding, management and transfer recommendations of the AZA Elephant TAG/SSP should be followed. The success of cooperative breeding programs depends on all institutions supporting TAG/SSP recommendations.

If differences regarding TAG/SSP recommendations occur between the TAG/SSP Steering Committee and a member institution, the AZA SSP Handbook clearly articulates the process that both parties must utilize to resolve these differences prior to engaging in the Animal Management Reconciliation Policy.

**Measurement:** Records of participation and cooperation with the Elephant TAG/SSP should be reviewed.

**Explanation:** The goals and mission of the Elephant TAG/SSP will only be met if each AZA institution managing elephants honors its commitment as either a holding or breeding facility. Each institution must make every effort to abide by Elephant TAG/SSP breeding and transfer recommendations.

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## Appendix 1 - Nutrition

Table 1 - from Nutrition Advisory Group Handbook, “Elephants: Nutrition and Dietary Husbandry” (Ullrey et al. 1997).

Nutrient	Maintenance, Breeding	Late pregnancy	Lactation	Juvenile growth
Crude Protein, %	8-10 <sup>a</sup>	12	12-14 <sup>b</sup>	12-14 <sup>c</sup>
Lysine, %	0.3	0.4	0.4-0.5	0.5-0.6
Calcium, %	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5-0.7
Phosphorus, %	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3-0.4
Magnesium, %	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Potassium, %	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4
Sodium, %	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Sulphur, %	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15
Iron, ppm	50	50	50	50
Copper, ppm	10	10	10	10
Manganese, ppm	40	40	40	40
Zinc, ppm	40	40	40	40
Cobalt, ppm	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Iodine, ppm	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Selenium, ppm	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Vitamin A, IU/kg	3000	3000	3000	3000
Vitamin D, IU/kg	800	800	800	800
Vitamin E, IU/kg	100	100	100	100
Thiamine, ppm	3	3	3	3
Riboflavin, ppm	3	3	3	3

<sup>a</sup>Adult maintenance, 8% CP, breeding bull, pregnant cow (1st two-thirds of pregnancy), 10% CP.

<sup>b</sup>First year of lactation, 14% CP, 2nd year of lactation, 12% CP

<sup>c</sup>Weanling, 14% CP; 3-year old, 13% CP, 4-year old to year old, 12% CP.

Deficiencies in vitamin E in elephants in human care has lead to a range of symptoms, including necrotizing myopathies, anemia, reproductive failure (Kenny 2001), capture myopathy (Dierenfeld and Dolensek 1988; Barnett 1990), and white muscle disease (Dierenfeld and Dolensek 1988). Levels of circulating  $\alpha$ -tocopherol in wild elephants have been recorded at 0.77  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ ; circulating levels in elephants in human care showing no clinical signs of vitamin E deficiency had an average level of only

0.43 µg/ml (Dierenfeld 1989). In order to increase circulating levels of α-tocopherol, supplementation of elephant diets with natural and artificial sources of vitamin E is recommended.

Grass hay with an ADF of > 30% should be provided to elephants (Ullrey et al., 1997), and can be mixed with legume hays. All hay fed should be of high quality, properly dried and cured, and regularly assessed for nutritional content (Oftedahl and Allen, 1996). To provide a more nutritionally complete diet, concentrated pellets can be offered in addition to hay. These pellets should be high-fiber and low in starch. Providing browse for elephants increases foraging time, can add important nutritional benefits, and can promote dental health. As with other food items offered to elephants, it is important to have browse nutritionally analyzed.

## Appendix 2 – Body Condition Index

Criteria and point scores used to assess body condition in Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*). When a particular body region is intermediate between two criteria, an intermediate point score (i.e. 0.5, 1.5 points) should be assigned.

### A. Head - temporal depression (view from several angles)

- 2 points: full and convex in outline when viewed from behind (at the level of the neck or shoulder); frontal ridge vaguely outlined at best.
- 1 point: slightly to moderately concave; frontal ridge defined.
- 0 points: deeply concave; frontal ridge forms a crater-like rim around the temporal depression.

### B. Scapula (shoulder blade) (view from side)

- 2 points: spinous process of the shoulder blade not visible, or slightly visible when the foreleg is in certain positions.
- 1 point: spinous process visible as a vertical ridge with a concavity between the ridge and the posterior edge of the scapula.
- 0 points: spinous process pronounced and bladelike with the acromial process pronounced as a knot.

### C. Thoracic region (view from side)

- 2 points: ribs not visible, barrel smooth.
- 1 point: some ribs visible, but the extent and demarcation not pronounced.
- 0 points: many ribs strongly demarcated (even behind the scapula) with pronounced intercostal depressions.

### D. Flank area - immediately in front of pelvic girdle (view from side and behind)

- 1 point: no depression visible; flank bulges outwards in front of the pelvis.
- 0 points: depression visible as a sunken area immediately in front of pelvis.

### E. Lumbar vertebrae - behind ribs and in front of pelvis (view from behind, an elevated vantage point may be necessary)

- 2 points: not visible, lower back smooth and rounded.
- 1 point: visible as a ridge; skin slopes away from the top of the ridge; height of the vertebrae does not exceed width.
- 0 points: visible as a knife-like blade; sides of spinal ridge almost parallel, and the height equal to or exceeds the width.

### F. Pelvic bone - external angle of the ilium (view from several angles)

- 2 points: not visible (or slightly visible); rump region between the ilium and caudal vertebrae filled with tissue (and not forming a depressed zone).
- 1 point: visible but not pronounced; the rump is a slightly depressed zone between the ilium and the caudal vertebrae.
- 0 points: visible as a jutting bone; rump is a pronounced sunken zone between ilium and the caudal vertebrae.

Acknowledgment to Directors:

“The AZA Board of Directors recognizes all the incredible work that has taken place in order to comply with this policy since it was originally adopted in 2011. In particular, the Board recognizes the work of the Elephant TAG in developing and carrying out this policy, the PDC for creating and implementing the associated training programs, and the Accreditation Commission for ensuring compliance. The Board also recognizes and appreciates the work of the elephant holding institutions that have made physical changes to their facilities and protocol changes to their elephant care program, as well as the open and honest dialogue that has taken place to help make certain that elephant care professionals have the safest working conditions possible.”

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### **Maximizing Occupational Safety of Elephant Care Professionals At AZA-accredited and AZA-certified Facilities**

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) continually strives to advance the occupational safety of elephant care professionals<sup>1</sup> as well as the care and welfare of elephants. Through a series of AZA actions over the past two decades, AZA has attempted to promote significant improvements in safety, care and welfare. Among other things, AZA has developed a Principles of Elephant Management training course and has adopted minimum Standards for Elephant Management & Care, which were made mandatory in 2001. These Principles and Standards have assisted AZA entities and organizations in developing sound practices regarding elephant care professionals.

In January 2011, the AZA Board of Directors initiated another review of the occupational safety of elephant care professionals. As part of this review, in May 2011 the AZA convened a special meeting of all directors of AZA facilities<sup>2</sup> with elephants and their elephant managers to discuss occupational safety in elephant care and management. While every facility is as different as are their elephants, a number of factors emerged from this discussion that have and will continue to increase workplace safety and reduce occupational risk, including adherence to high standards, increased staff training, well-developed management communications and protocols, and frequent program evaluation.

Concurrent with this review, in March 2011, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums Board of Directors adopted revised Accreditation Standards for Elephant Management & Care.<sup>3</sup> These are comprehensive, performance-based standards that were developed over several years.

In March 2014, the Board of Directors convened a task force to review the 2011 policy and proposed language that would better reflect the original intent to maximize the safety of elephant care professionals.

The above-listed safety measures notwithstanding, preliminary information suggests that the amount of time (both frequency and duration) an elephant care professional spends with an elephant in the same unrestricted space increases occupational risk.<sup>4</sup> Therefore the Board of Directors is taking the following measures to maximize the safety of elephant care staff by limiting the sharing of space with elephants, while continuing to advance the care and welfare of elephants.

As soon as possible and no later than September 1, 2014, elephant care providers at AZA facilities with elephants shall not share the same unrestricted space with elephants, except for certain, limited exceptions outlined in II.d below. Within six (6) months of reissuance of this Policy, the Director may request a variance in writing to the Accreditation Commission to allow time for the Institution to meet the criteria of II.d below. Variances will expire June 1, 2017.

Restricted contact is defined as managing elephants with a primary containment barrier between human and elephant.<sup>5</sup> Tethers may be used and if used must be placed on at least two (2) legs of the elephant (one front and one back). Tethers must be placed on the elephant from outside the primary containment barrier prior to entry into the shared space.<sup>6</sup> Routine husbandry should not be performed exclusively while elephants are on tethers.

In order to maximize safety while working in restricted contact, keepers must always monitor the position of themselves and their elephant(s) in relation to the barrier/restraints, the reach of the elephant(s) especially the reach of the trunk and the behavior of the elephant(s). The head and/or torso of a person must never cross the plane of the primary containment barrier unless the elephant is on restraints as this is no longer restricted contact.

The Board recognizes that, in order to achieve the above-stated goal, a transition period will be necessary. This transition period is sequenced to encompass:

- Additional work from the AZA Elephant Taxonomic Advisory Group (TAG) to support AZA facilities in safely managing elephants and providing advanced care and welfare;
- Program safety assessments;
- Immediate steps regarding the management of aggressive elephants;
- Program planning and documentation;
- Staff training; and
- Facilities/infrastructure changes.

The Board:

- I. Tasks the AZA Elephant Taxonomic Advisory Group (TAG) with the following:
  - a. By September 1, 2012, to develop standardized methods and protocols for AZA facilities to maintain daily behavioral profiles/ethograms for each elephant and document all instances of aggression<sup>7</sup> to be applied in item II.e. below;
  - b. By September 1, 2012, to develop an appendix to this document that provides guidance and examples to AZA facilities making modification to their infrastructure to accommodate this change in policy (see item II.i. below).
  - c. By September 1, 2012, to develop standardized methods and protocols for AZA facilities to report annually on:
    1. The exceptions in which elephant care professionals share unrestricted space with elephants versus when barriers and/or restraints are present (see item II.d).

2. The number of workplace injuries or fatalities, if any, that occurred in the care and management of elephants and the specific conditions under which each occurred.
3. The number of elephant births and mortalities and a description of the specific practices and protocols used during each event.
- d. By January 1, 2013, to develop standardized methods and protocols for AZA facilities to evaluate and maintain records of each elephant care professional's safety-proficiency, in a manner that integrates their experience level with the specific behavioral profiles of the elephants in his/her care (to be applied in II.g. below).
- e. Convene a task force to research means of successful breeding, health care and welfare that will be increasingly effective with barriers in place between elephant care professionals and elephants.

II. Directs all AZA facilities with elephants in their care to:

- a. As soon as possible, move any elephant that displays aggression towards an elephant care provider(s) into management and care with barriers or restraints in place between that elephant and that care provider(s).
- b. By January 1, 2012, perform at least one of the semi-annual program safety assessments, as outlined in AZA Elephant Standard 1.4.9.5.
- c. By January 1, 2012, specifically address the facility's elephant program in the risk management policy required in AZA Accreditation Standard 11.4.1.
- d. By September 1, 2012, amend their existing elephant management plans to include clear exception protocols (including frequency and duration) when elephant care professionals and elephants may share the same unrestricted space.<sup>8</sup>

When there are crises or medical emergencies or for birth management, written protocols used with dangerous animals apply. Examples include critically ill elephants, elephant down, hand rearing of elephant calves (up to 24 months of age) and in rare cases geriatric cows that require special care as prescribed by the staff veterinarian.

The following are not considered to be crisis or medical emergencies and therefore are not exceptions.

- Trunk washes
  - Foot care
  - Blood draw
  - Research
  - Exercise
  - Bathing
  - Donor/guest interaction
  - Routine husbandry
  - Calf training (after 24 months of age)
  - Transportation
  - Routine care and facilities maintenance (e.g. feeding and cleaning of the barn and/or exhibit)
- e. By January 1, 2013, maintain daily behavioral profiles/ethograms for each elephant and document all instances of aggression.

- f. By January 1, 2013 provide a report (required annually) to the Accreditation Commission, the Elephant TAG, and the AZA staff that, for the previous year, defines:
1. The exceptions under which elephant care professionals share unrestricted space with elephants versus when barriers and/or restraints are in place.
  2. The number of workplace injuries or fatalities, if any, that occurred in the care and management of elephants and the specific conditions under which each occurred.
  3. The number of elephant births and mortalities and a description of the specific practices and protocols used during each event.
- The Accreditation Commission and/or AZA staff will follow up where institutional reports indicate challenges in meeting the elephant safety standards.
- g. By June 1, 2013, evaluate and maintain records of each elephant care professional's safety-proficiency, in a manner that integrates their experience level with the specific behavioral profiles of the elephants in his/her care.
- h. By September 1, 2013, train their elephant care professionals to manage and care for elephants with barriers and/or restraints in place that provide employee safety.
- i. By September 1, 2014, have put in place and implemented use of adequate infrastructure to manage and care for elephants with barriers and/or restraints in place that provide employee safety.
- j. By January 1, 2015, if a facility cannot meet the infrastructure standard (see item II.i. above), it must apply for a variance. Before the variance can be issued by the Accreditation Commission the facility must describe to the Commission its plan to meet the standard. Variances will expire June 1, 2017.

### III. Tasks the Professional Development Committee to:

- a. By September 1, 2012, update the Principles of Elephant Management-I course curriculum, which shall include mechanisms to:
1. Manage and care for elephants with barriers and/or restraints in place.
  2. Minimize the frequency and duration elephant care professionals share unrestricted space with elephants subject to the exceptions outlined in item II.d. above.
  3. Develop and maintain detailed elephant behavioral profiles/ethograms.

All elephant care professionals<sup>9</sup>, managers and directors of AZA facilities with elephants will complete within three (3) calendar years from the date they begin working in that capacity. *E.g. If someone begins work in April of 2018, they are required to complete the course by December 31, 2021.*

- b. By September 1, 2016, create and deliver a series of online elephant training modules on subjects including: safety, elephant record keeping, behavioral profiling and developing and maintaining elephant ethograms, positive operant conditioning, assessment of elephant aggression, and assessment of personal safety-proficiency.

All elephant care professionals will complete by June 2017.

- c. By September 2013, create a facilities-based Principles of Elephant Management-II course curriculum, which includes experience with managing live elephants with the use of barriers and restraints and the application of advanced principles of elephant management, care, welfare, and occupational safety.

All elephant managers will complete within three (3) calendar years from the date they

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begin working in that capacity. *E.g. If someone is assigned the role of elephant manager in April of 2018, they are required to complete the course by December 31, 2018.*

- 1 The term “elephant care professionals” includes all who provide for the care and welfare of elephants including veterinary care and other health care providers.
- 2 In this document the term “AZA facilities” refers to all AZA-accredited and AZA-certified Related Facilities.
- 3 References to “elephant standards” refer to “AZA Standards for Elephant Management & Care” as approved by the AZA Board of Directors in March 2011.
- 4 The Board understands that non-AZA entities and organizations may assess and address these risks in a different manner, and the policies adopted herein are only intended to be applied to AZA facilities.
- 5 See standard 1.4.9.1 for a definition of elephant containment barriers.
- 6 See Standard 3.3.2.7 for an explanation of tethering requirements.
- 7 This is an expansion of Elephant Standards: 2.2.1.9 (Daily and life stage variation in patterns of social affiliation, which requires that a behavioral profile must be maintained for each individual elephant and updated annually); 3.3.2.1 (Daily Care, which requires that all elephants must be visually inspected on a daily basis); and, 5.2 (Animal and Keeper Safety, which encourages that a record of all elephant-related keeper injuries or aggression directed at keepers should be kept, and related keeper injuries or aggression directed at keepers, and elephant behavioral profiles should be reviewed annually.).
- 8 This is an expansion of Elephant Standard 4.1.1 Training Methods.
- 9 Veterinary staff are encouraged but not required to complete this course. Elephant managers who have already completed PEM-I will not be required to re-take the course but will be required to complete the online elephant training modules outlined in III.b.

## **AZA Standards For Cetacean Care & Welfare**

Approved July 2017

### ***INTRODUCTION***

**These standards are in addition to AZA general Accreditation Standards and Related Policies, all of which remain applicable. Institutions that include cetaceans in their care (whales, dolphins, porpoises) must follow these AZA Standards for Cetacean Care & Welfare. For reference, general standards that relate to individual cetacean standards are included in brackets at the end of the cetacean standard. There may be other general standards that apply in addition to those that are bracketed. All general standards can be found on pages 7 – 37 of this booklet.**

## **1. Responsible Population Management**

### **General Considerations:**

**In addition to this section, the institution must meet, at minimum, all requirements contained in AZA's Policy on Responsible Population Management (RPM Policy) [pages 99 – 106].**

### **1.1. Acquisition**

- 1.1.1. The institution must provide for each animal's proper care and welfare in accordance with AZA standards.
- 1.1.2. Any cetacean may only be added to an AZA-accredited institution's care by means of current best practices. Institutions should not acquire animals collected from any drive fishery post 2004. However, AZA-accredited institutions must consider providing housing and care to cetaceans in critical need regardless of collection origin. [See also General Standard 1.3.2]
- 1.1.3. The institution's responsible population management plan must prohibit the collection of cetaceans from the wild except on a case by case basis where it is essential to maintain healthy and diverse managed cetacean populations, or for rescues, or as part of a threatened or endangered species conservation program. [See also General Standard 1.3.2]

Explanation: AZA-accredited institutions must comply with applicable laws, and should also consider introducing and caring for non-releasable cetaceans from rescue programs.

- 1.1.4. Institutions acquiring cetaceans from the wild must prove that the population in the wild remains sustainable. [See also General Standards 1.3.2, 1.7.1]

Explanation: AZA supports environmentally sustainable and beneficial acquisition from the wild when conservation is a positive outcome.

- 1.1.5. The institution must maintain detailed and complete acquisition and chain of custody records through disposition, consistent with the AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management ("RPM Policy"). [See also General Standards 1.3.2, 1.4.5, 1.4.7]

## **1.2. Transfer**

- 1.2.1. Cetaceans must only be transferred or loaned pursuant to compliance with the AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management (“RPM Policy”). [See also General Standard 1.3.2]
- 1.2.2. In making the decision to transfer any cetacean to a non-AZA accredited facility, the institution must comply strictly with the specific procedures and requirements of the AZA RPM Policy, including documentation that the receiving non-AZA institution can provide proper care and has a record of good animal welfare. [See also General Standard 1.3.2]
- 1.2.3. Unless a cetacean is rescued, rehabilitated, and then released back into its natural habitat under the direction of the national or local authority, cetaceans cannot be released to the wild. This does not apply to cetaceans that are part of a permitted and scientifically-based reintroduction program with the ultimate goal of sustaining a threatened or endangered population. [See also General Standard 1.3.2]

Explanation: All relevant local, state/provincial, and federal laws and/or regulations for release into the wild must be followed. In cases where an AZA standard is more stringent than existing law, the AZA standard must be met.

## **2. Conservation, Research, and Education**

### **General Considerations:**

**Conservation efforts are a priority for AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums. AZA institutions that house cetaceans have a unique opportunity to educate and connect guests with these animals and their ecosystems. Cetacean holding members also have the professional skills and resources to facilitate both *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation research and initiatives that support marine mammals in their ecosystems. Participation in these types of activities should be demonstrated and should be in proportion to the size and scope of the institution. [See also General Standards 3.1.1, 3.2.1, 3.3.4]**

### **2.1. Conservation and Research**

- 2.1.1. AZA-accredited institutions should participate in or support *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and research efforts for cetaceans. [See also General Standards 3.2.1, 3.3.4]

Explanation: AZA institutions are strongly encouraged to provide financial, personnel, logistical, and other support for priority research and conservation initiatives.

### **2.2. Education**

- 2.2.1. The institution must have education programs about cetaceans to improve public understanding and appreciation for these animals and their ecosystems. [See also General Standards 4.2.1, 4.3.1]
- 2.2.2. Education programs about cetaceans must be based on current scientific knowledge. [See also General Standard 4.3.1]
- 2.2.3. Education programs about cetaceans must be under the direction of a paid staff person who is knowledgeable about cetaceans and has a working rapport with the facility’s zoological

experts in cetacean care and welfare. [See also General Standard 4.2.2]

### 3. Care for Cetaceans

#### General Considerations:

**Care, welfare and sustainable population management are among the most critical and complex tasks performed by AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums. Administration and management of husbandry programs must be guided by modern professional principles establishing plans and procedures to execute those functions. Cetaceans have both general care requirements similar to all other mammals and some that are specific to their species. All AZA-accredited institutions must uphold a commitment to provide for the health and wellbeing of the animals, and must invest in the resources necessary to properly care for the species they foster.**

#### 3.1. Food/Nutrition

- 3.1.1. Cetaceans must be provided with appropriate nutrition. A consistent review of food intake vs. body weight (body condition/score) is recommended. [See also General Standard 2.6.2]

#### 3.2. Veterinary Program

- 3.2.1. A veterinarian with experience in cetacean medicine must be on call at all times. Physical examinations must be performed regularly, as prescribed by the veterinarian (at least annually) on each cetacean residing at the institution, and regular visual examinations (at least quarterly) must be performed by the veterinarian. Medical imaging equipment in the form of ultrasound and radiography should be readily available. [See also General Standards 2.0.2, 2.1.2, 2.3.2]

Explanation: As with all other preventative care programs, at minimum, exams must include food intake vs. body weight and general body condition, blood sampling for hematology and chemistry, and all other lab tests deemed appropriate by the attending veterinarian in collaboration with curatorial staff.

- 3.2.2. Physiological values and serum banks should be established for each cetacean residing at the institution. [See also General Standard 1.4.8]
- 3.2.3. Health, medical and husbandry records are covered under the general AZA accreditation standards, section 1.4 [see pages 11-12].
- 3.2.4. AZA-accredited institutions must disinfect and maintain cetacean handling equipment and all related areas. [See also General Standards 10.1.0, 10.1.1, 10.2.0]
- 3.2.5. The institution must comply with the applicable sections on quarantine of the most recent edition of the *Guidelines for Zoo and Aquarium Veterinary Medical Programs and Veterinary Hospitals*, published by the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians (AAZV) <http://www.aazv.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=839>. [See also General Standard 2.0.1]

## 4. Cetacean and Guest Interactive Programs

### General Considerations:

**The AZA recognizes the value and positive impact of interactive and ambassador animal programs. Cetacean interactive programs provide a unique opportunity for guests to engage and connect with whales and dolphins, and to appreciate the behaviors and characteristics of these animals. Program development and management must be conducted in a way that prioritizes animal and guest safety, as well as maximizes opportunities for guest education and experience. The following standards apply to an in-water interactive program where one or more guests are entering the water with the animals.**

- 4.1. Interactive programs must be managed in areas that include open spaces where the animals can swim away from program participants if they choose. [See also General Standards 1.5.2.2, 1.5.4]
- 4.2. The amount of time each cetacean participates in interactive program activities must be determined by the managing curator or paid supervisory staff member based on a number of factors, including the behavioral observation of the animal. Cetaceans undergoing medical treatment may only participate in interactive programs with the approval of the attending veterinarian. [See also General Standard 1.5.4]
- 4.3. Proper training of cetaceans that participate in guest interactive programs must take place at all AZA-accredited institutions and be under the supervision of qualified paid staff with appropriate training and experience. Paid staff must manage the interaction between animals and guests, and must be prepared to stop the interaction should the situation warrant. [See also General Standards 1.5.4, 1.5.12, 1.6.4]
- 4.4. The ratio of guests to animals should be determined by the type of interactive program being offered, and must be approved by the managing curator or paid supervisory staff. [See also General Standard 1.5.4]
- 4.5. The ratio of paid staff to cetaceans during interactive programs should be 1:1. [See also General Standards 1.5.4, 1.5.13, 11.4.1, 11.5.3]

Explanation: The behavior of each individual animal and guest may vary at any given time, requiring supervisory staff to focus on many different factors simultaneously.

- 4.6. In addition to a 1:1 ratio of paid staff to cetaceans (see 4.5. above) there should be at least one additional paid staff member assigned to provide safety oversight of all interactions during each session. The number of safety observers should be based on the number of guests and animals participating. Safety observers, dedicated solely to the task, must have an unobstructed view of the interactions at all times. [See also General Standards 1.5.4, 1.5.13, 11.4.1, 11.5.3]

Explanation: The safety observer(s) must provide oversight throughout the interaction to assure that encounters are conducted in a safe manner for all involved.

- 4.7. Interactive programming must include an educational component. Visitors should also receive instructions about appropriate behavior, and broader warnings that feeding, approaching, or swimming with cetaceans in the wild can harm both the cetaceans and humans, and is illegal in waters of some countries including the United States. [See also General Standards 1.5.3]

## 5. Reproduction and Perinatal Care

### General Considerations:

**The success of cooperative breeding programs is a fundamental AZA priority. Genetic diversity and demographic stability are vital to the population sustainability of species under human care. In many instances, they are also vital to the survival of a species worldwide. To focus on these twin goals, AZA has long required members to participate fully and cooperatively in the scientifically managed breeding of hundreds of species. These basic principles apply to cetacean-holding institutions.**

**A small number of jurisdictions prohibit breeding of certain cetaceans. AZA opposes government breeding bans on AZA-accredited institutions. Government bans are contrary to modern science, hinder vital reproductive, behavioral, and other scientific research that can be essential to the survival of a species, and are inconsistent with the long range welfare of the animals in human care and in the wild. Members in these jurisdictions cannot legally comply with the standards in this section 5 but must comply with all other AZA standards.**

- 5.1 The institution must follow a written breeding plan to optimize the population sustainability of the species in collaboration with other cetacean-holding institutions. [See also General Standard 3.3.2]
- 5.2 Institutions engaged in cetacean reproduction should have paid staff with expertise in cetacean breeding.
- 5.3 Institutions engaged in cetacean reproduction must have facilities appropriately sized and designed to facilitate nursing, calf rearing, and separation from other animals if necessary. [See also General Standards 1.5.2, 10.3.3]

Explanation: Habitats housing females with calves must have sufficient straight-line glide paths for nursing, based on the professional judgment of the managing curator or paid supervisory staff and the attending veterinarian.

- 5.4 The institution must follow a detailed birth protocol and contingency plan which provides for the care of the mother during pregnancy and parturition and safety and care for the calf.

## 6. Behavioral Management and Training

### General Considerations:

**AZA considers behavioral management and applied animal training through the use of positive reinforcement to be critical and integral to maximizing the health and wellbeing of cetaceans.**

- 6.1. The institution must engage all cetaceans in a behavior management program that enhances their care and welfare. [See also General Standard 1.6.4]

Explanation: Proper management programs should be individually as well as group based. Animal training techniques must be accomplished through positive reinforcement and operant conditioning that are designed to improve the animal's psychological and physical well-being.

## 7. Environment

### General Considerations:

**The management of water and environmental quality in cetacean habitats should meet the basic physiological needs of the species. Consideration should be given to contemporary and emerging scientific understanding of best practices in cetacean husbandry.**

**While zoos and aquariums may be required to meet minimum space government standards such as those of the U.S. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), AZA seeks to strengthen cetacean animal welfare by focusing on output based welfare standards. AZA strongly supports scientifically based research that aims to optimize animal health and welfare.**

**There is considerable variation in the design of water treatment systems, and the establishment of optimum water parameters should be based on the physiological needs of the animals and the effectiveness of the water processing techniques involved.**

**Water systems of cetacean habitats can be open (flow-through), closed or semi-closed.**

**In open systems, water enters from a natural source or municipal line, passes through the habitat and exits as waste water into a natural source or municipal sewage system. Open systems typically do not require mechanical filtration, but filters or screens may be added to improve water clarity and reduce intake of fouling organisms or organic material.**

**Semi-closed systems rely on a lower replacement of habitat water which necessitates both filtration and water treatment to maintain a healthy environment for the animals.**

**Closed systems require the most intensive water treatment since virtually all of the water is reused or recirculated. Processes may include disinfection, temperature control, removal of solids, and color reduction.**

### 7.1. Space

- 7.1.1. Habitats must provide consideration of the 3-dimensional space use, and provide sufficient space and environmental complexity to stimulate and promote natural behavioral activities and social interactions, resulting in healthy and socially-adapted cetaceans. [See also General Standards 1.5.1, 1.5.2, 10.3.3]

Explanation: Habitats must provide sufficient space so that the animal can make normal postural and social adjustments with adequate freedom of movement to be able to demonstrate species appropriate behaviors that promote positive welfare.

Space is one of the most difficult measures to standardize. There are no definitive scientific data which clearly define the amount of space needed for a cetacean to be healthy. Species-specific needs should dictate the size and architecture of the habitat required to enhance the animal's physical, psychological, and behavioral well-being. In-house experience and the experiences of other institutions, field biologists, or other experts should be considered in determining the best designs to meet these needs.

It is the quality of both the space and overall programmatic approach to good cetacean management that determines adequacy of the facility, not simply the square footage/volume of the habitat. Thus, if the cetaceans are healthy and socially adapted, then what is being provided meets the standard. It is inaccurate to say that because a facility has a certain amount of space it has good cetacean management.

- 7.1.2. Cetacean habitats must be designed to maintain cetaceans in appropriate social groups based on current scientific knowledge. [See also General Standards 1.5.2.1, 1.5.2.2]

Explanation: Each cetacean requires an environment that allows for social contacts and positive interactions with other cetaceans. The institution must be able to mitigate situations involving incompatible animals. This may be accomplished through a number of methodologies including training, transferring animals from one habitat into another, allowing animals to separate themselves from each other, or by other means.

## **7.2. Environmental Quality**

- 7.2.1. Environmental conditions for animals must be designed, constructed, and managed to promote positive health and welfare; animals must be protected from environmental conditions which could be detrimental to their health and welfare. [See also General Standards 1.5.7, 1.5.9, 1.5.14, 1.5.15, 1.5.16]

Explanation: Environmental conditions to be considered include, but are not limited to, sunlight/UV exposure, temperature, air quality, water quality, and sound. Natural or anthropogenic environmental factors must be mitigated or eliminated when there is the possibility and/or evidence of potential negative impacts on the animals.

- 7.2.2. Water temperatures must be maintained within appropriate thermal tolerances for the species. [See also General Standard 1.5.2]
- 7.2.3. Indoor facilities should provide sufficient air exchanges with filtration technology appropriate to the location's outside air quality to effectively minimize exposure to particulates, chemical compounds, contaminants or pathogens that could be detrimental to the health and welfare of the animal. Institutions must implement an airborne environmental monitoring plan and mitigate concerns as deemed necessary by appropriate experts/professionals/scientific standards. [See also General Standards 1.5.2, 10.3.2]
- 7.2.4. The institution must minimize exposure of cetaceans to noises that have the potential to cause auditory discomfort or distress due to high amplitude or other characteristics. Both in-air and underwater noise must be considered in facility design for cetaceans, including the type and location of mechanical equipment, choice of habitat materials, and the sound profile of in-water equipment and activities. Noise exposure should be monitored with a system that is sensitive to the full frequency range of the species' hearing range and with systematic behavioral observations that would detect startle or

avoidance behavior. [See also General Standard 1.5.2]

### 7.3. Water Quality

- 7.3.1. Cetacean habitats must be designed and constructed to minimize the unsanitary accumulation of materials that may be detrimental to the health and well-being of the animals. This should include management to reduce and eliminate debris, and the growth of opportunistic or fouling organisms that could present a physical hazard to the animals (such as mussels, barnacles, etc.). [See also General Standards 1.5.1, 1.5.2, 1.5.9]
- 7.3.2. Baseline water quality parameters for cetacean habitats with acceptable range variances appropriate to the facility and species must be established by qualified senior curatorial and veterinary staff. These parameters must meet all regulatory requirements and be sufficient to maintain the health of the animals. Routine surveillance should monitor baseline parameters and track variances and trends in deviation from baseline parameters. In addition, known and predictable habitat extremes which may be beyond established variances should be monitored (such as seasonal high and low water temperature in outdoor habitats). [See also General Standard 1.5.9]
- 7.3.3. Source water for cetacean habitats should be adjusted as needed to meet the physiological needs specific to the species, and to optimize animal health and welfare. [See also General Standards 1.5.2, 1.5.9]
- 7.3.4. Water filtration, disinfection, turnover of replacement water, and water chemistry management must be monitored and sufficient to meet the needs of the species, and must comply with acceptable parameters and ranges established by qualified senior curatorial and veterinary staff. [See also General Standard 1.5.9]

## 8. Transportation

### **General Considerations:**

**The transport of cetaceans is executed through a detailed planning process managed by curatorial staff experienced in cetacean transport and approved by a qualified veterinarian. Careful attention is placed on assuring cetacean transports are executed safely and efficiently, and consider the animals' unique physiologies and their environmental requirements. In addition to adhering to AZA's general standard on transport (see general standard 1.5.11, pages 14 – 15), AZA-accredited institutions must also follow the cetacean-specific standards listed below. These standards apply to movement of cetaceans requiring more than two hours for transport from the time of removal from the habitat to the destination habitat.**

**AZA strongly supports the continued evolution of science to ensure continual improvement of animal welfare.**

- 8.1 A pre-transport examination must be conducted by a qualified veterinarian to determine if the cetacean is fit for transport. [See also General Standards 1.5.11, 2.4.2]
- 8.2 A thorough written transport plan is required prior to transport and should include, at a minimum, mode of transport, roster of transport personnel and designated responsibilities, time line, equipment list, contingency plan, and emergency contact

information. [See also General Standards 1.5.11, 11.2.4]

- 8.3 Cetaceans should be monitored continuously during transport. One attending qualified paid or unpaid staff member per cetacean should be used on transports of four or less animals, with a minimum of two attending paid staff per transport, one of which includes a veterinarian. If more than four cetaceans are transported, additional qualified paid and/or unpaid staff should be added (the number to be determined by the managing curator or paid supervisory staff and the attending veterinarian). [See also General Standard 1.5.11]
- 8.4 Cetaceans should be properly secured, in open-top containers with the appropriate amount of water for proper welfare. In the event of emergency and/or rescue situations alternate methods may be considered as approved by the attending veterinarian. [See also General Standards 1.5.11, 10.3.3]
- 8.5 Water parameters, air temperature, and cabin pressure should be dictated by the approving veterinarian and managed appropriately by the transport supervisor. [See also General Standard 1.5.11]

**END**

## ANIMAL CONTACT WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Nearly every contact with other living organisms, whether it be with humans or other animals, carries some risk of disease transmission. Diseases that are spread from animals to humans are called zoonoses (adj. = zoonotic diseases). Responsible zoos should and do make reasonable attempts to limit the risk of the spread of disease from the animals in their care to their employees and to the general public.<sup>4,9</sup> For the general public, the risk of contracting disease from most zoo animals is minimal to nonexistent due to their distance and isolation from the animals. However, contact areas for the general public can present increased risks that can be controlled with reasonable precautions. For this paper, contact areas refers to those areas in which there is direct physical contact between animals and people. These precautions are most effective when they are part of an overall preventative medicine program for the zoological park.<sup>5,8</sup>

Risks of zoonotic disease can be markedly reduced by avoiding direct animal contact. However, this forgoes many valuable educational experiences and the establishment of a direct relationship between animals and the public. A reasonable alternative is adequate hand washing for those in direct contact with the animals. Hand washing is perhaps the single most effective personal hygiene procedure for reducing the risk of infection.<sup>4</sup> Given that fact, all areas in which the public has direct contact with animals should have access to hand washing facilities that are in the immediate vicinity of the contact (or an equivalent; e.g., bacteriocidal hand-wipes).

As outlined by the AZA and the USDA's Animal Welfare Act, animal contact areas should always be supervised by a trained zoo representative. Obviously, animals that are ill, should not be used. Human food consumption should not occur in the immediate area of contact. Additionally, zoological institutions should be aware that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) standards advise additional precautions may be necessary for humans that they classify as at increased risk of disease, including those that are immunocompromised. When a reportable disease is identified, all appropriate local, state, and federal regulatory officials should be contacted.

More detailed information on zoonotic diseases may be obtained from a variety of veterinary and medical textbooks and journals,<sup>1,6</sup> and from public health officials. Additionally, the AZA's Quarantine Protocol provides further testing recommendations.<sup>7</sup> Also referenced at the end of this report is a review of some of the risks associated with animals and immunocompromised humans.<sup>3</sup> Following is a list of disease considerations and control programs recommended for animals commonly used in contact programs. Depending on the disease and history of the animals, testing protocols may vary from an initial or incoming quarantine test, to yearly repetitions. This protocol should be at the discretion of the institutional veterinarian.

### *Reptiles and Amphibians*

Most notable among the disease risks presented by reptiles is the transmission of *Salmonella* sp. Salmonellosis is a common and often nonpathogenic infection of reptiles (in one survey, according to species, the infection rate ranged from 3 to 55 percent).<sup>2</sup> Diagnosis may be difficult. A cloacal swab or other sample positive on culture for *Salmonella* sp. is diagnostic for infection. However, due to intermittent fecal shedding of these organisms, false negative cultures frequently occur. So it is difficult, if not impossible to ascertain with certainty that an animal is *Salmonella* "negative". Therefore, all reptiles should be treated as *salmonella* carriers. Attempts to eliminate *Salmonella* carriers with antibiotic therapy have been unsuccessful and may be contraindicated as they can lead to chronic carrier states and increased resistance of these bacteria to antibiotics. Risks of transmission can be reduced in two ways: 1) avoid all direct contact with reptiles or surfaces with which they have come in contact, or, 2) allow only supervised contact followed by hand washing as previously described.

Reptiles can also transmit a variety of other organisms, mostly gastrointestinal in origin, and the same procedures described above should be effective in reducing the risks of transmission to those in contact. These other risks include other gram negative bacterial infections. Reptiles used in contact areas should be free of snake mites and pentastomids (e.g., *Armillifer* sp.).

Amphibians may present several of the same zoonotic risks as reptiles, so again, contact should be followed by hand washing.

### *Birds*

Birds used in contact areas should be free of chlamydiosis and zoonotic parasites (e.g., giardia). Chlamydiosis testing is appropriate for members of the orders *Psittaciformes*, *Galliformes*, and *Columbiformes*. As in reptiles, salmonellosis can be present and difficult to diagnose and so, birds should be treated as suspects. In the general human population, avian tuberculosis is generally considered to have very low zoonotic potential, however, it can present significant risks for immunocompromised individuals. Care should be taken to avoid public contact with known infected flocks.

### *Mammals—General*

All mammals are considered at risk for infection with rabies. Current rabies vaccines are licensed for use in only six domestic species: dogs, cats, ferrets, sheep, horses, and cows. For wild-caught individuals of most species, a prolonged (three-six month) quarantine is necessary to reduce the risk that they are infected with the virus. Even then, some species such as skunks, foxes, raccoons, and bats may still represent a greater risk.

Any skin lesions compatible with dermatomycosis (“ringworm”) should be carefully evaluated in order to prevent transmission to those in direct contact with them.

### *Mammals—Primates*

Unless extensive testing has been performed for a variety of viral, parasitic, and bacterial diseases, all direct public contact with primates should be avoided. Public contact also places the primates at considerable risk of contracting diseases from humans.

### *Mammals—Small Ruminants/Neonatal Ruminants*

All small ruminants; e.g., pygmy goats, sheep, dwarf cattle, llamas, etc., that are greater than six months of age and used in contact areas should be tested for tuberculosis, brucellosis, and leptospirosis. Obviously, any animals with lesions compatible with sarcoptic mange (mange mite = *Sarcoptes scabiei*) should be removed from contact. Any animals with lesions compatible with contagious ecthema (“orf” in man) should be tested and removed from contact until proven negative. Calves should be checked and found free of *Cryptosporidium* sp. and other infections with protozoa. Other diseases of a potential zoonotic nature include infection with *Coxiella burnetii* (Q-fever) in endemic areas. Additionally, recent reports indicate that infection with Johnes disease (*Mycobacterium paratuberculosis*) may present zoonotic concerns, primarily in goats.

### *Mammals—Swine*

These animals should be checked for gastrointestinal infection with *Balantidium* sp. efforts made to control this infection. Additionally, consideration should be given to regular vaccination for the bacterial disease, *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathae* (“diamond skin disease”).

### *Mammals—Small Carnivores*

In general, due to the potential for bites, small carnivores should be used in contact areas only with extreme caution. Due to the risk of bites, small felids are generally not used in direct contact. If they are, care must be taken that such animals are negative for infection with *Toxoplasma gondii*. All carnivores should be tested for and be free of zoonotic species of roundworms such as *Baylascaris* sp. Small

carnivores (e.g., raccoons and skunks) obtained from the wild may present a greater risk of rabies and their use should be avoided in contact areas.

### *Mammals—Rodents and Lagomorphs*

When using rodents and lagomorphs in contact areas, consideration should be given to the risk of bites, past history, and exposure to hantavirus, salmonella, and tularemia.

### *Mammals—Chiroptera*

At the present time, CDC regulations effectively prohibit the use of bats in direct contact areas.

### *Fish/Aquatic Tanks*

Due to the potential for infection with atypical mycobacteria, *Vibrio* sp., *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathae*, and a variety of gram negative bacteria, contact with fish or touch tanks should also be followed by hand washing.

### *Summary*

It is important to evaluate the risks of zoonotic diseases in a rational context. Contact animals can provide a valuable educational experience for visitors and participants in public programs to zoological parks and aquariums. Most zoonotic diseases of concern in public areas can be prevented with reasonable testing and quarantine programs and proper hand-washing techniques.

These are intended to be general guidelines and the risk of diseases can vary by area, so each zoological institution should develop its own zoonoses control program. Two excellent resources for reviewing testing and preventative procedures for many of these diseases are the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians= *Infectious Disease Notebook*,<sup>1</sup> and the American Veterinary Medical Association's *Zoonoses Updates*.<sup>6</sup> In summary, the most effective method for disease prevention is a complete and thorough veterinary program and common sense sanitary measures.

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# Ambassador Animal Policy

Originally approved by the AZA Board of Directors – 2003

Updated and approved by the Board – July 2008 & June 2011

Modified from "Program Animal" to "Ambassador Animal" to avoid confusion with "Animal Programs"; approved by the CEC; no change to meaning of these terms - January 2015

The Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) recognizes many benefits for public education and, ultimately, for conservation in ambassador animal presentations. AZA's Conservation Education Committee's Ambassador Animal Position Statement summarizes the value of ambassador animal presentations (see pages 85 - 87).

For the purpose of this policy, an Ambassador Animal is defined as "an animal whose role includes handling and/or training by staff or volunteers for interaction with the public and in support of institutional education and conservation goals". Some animals are designated as Ambassador Animals on a full-time basis, while others are designated as such only occasionally. Ambassador Animal-related Accreditation Standards are applicable to all animals during the times that they are designated as Ambassador Animals.

There are three main categories of Ambassador Animal interactions:

1. On Grounds with the Ambassador Animal Inside the Exhibit/Enclosure:
  - i. Public access outside the exhibit/enclosure. Public may interact with animals from outside the exhibit/enclosure (e.g., giraffe feeding, touch tanks).
  - ii. Public access inside the exhibit/enclosure. Public may interact with animals from inside the exhibit/enclosure (e.g., lorikeet feedings, 'swim with' programs, camel/pony rides).
2. On Grounds with the Ambassador Animal Outside the Exhibit/Enclosure:
  - i. Minimal handling and training techniques are used to present Ambassador Animals to the public. Public has minimal or no opportunity to directly interact with Ambassador Animals when they are outside the exhibit/enclosure (e.g., raptors on the glove, reptiles held "presentation style").
  - ii. Moderate handling and training techniques are used to present Ambassador Animals to the public. Public may be in close proximity to, or have direct contact with, Ambassador Animals when they're outside the exhibit/enclosure (e.g., media, fund raising, photo, and/or touch opportunities).
  - iii. Significant handling and training techniques are used to present Ambassador Animals to the public. Public may have direct contact with Ambassador Animals or simply observe the in-depth presentations when they're outside the exhibit/enclosure (e.g., wildlife education shows).
3. Off Grounds:
  - i. Handling and training techniques are used to present Ambassador Animals to the public outside of the zoo/aquarium grounds. Public may have minimal contact or be in close proximity to and have direct contact with Ambassador Animals (e.g., animals transported to schools, media, fund raising events).

These categories assist staff and accreditation inspectors in determining when animals are designated as Ambassador Animals and the periods during which the Ambassador Animal-related Accreditation Standards are applicable. In addition, these Ambassador Animal categories establish a framework for understanding increasing degrees of an animal's involvement in Ambassador Animal activities.

Ambassador animal presentations bring a host of responsibilities, including the safety and welfare of the animals involved, the safety of the animal handler and public, and accountability for the take-home, educational messages received by the audience. Therefore, AZA requires all accredited institutions that make ambassador animal presentations to develop an institutional ambassador animal policy that clearly identifies and justifies those species and individuals approved as ambassador animals and details their long-term management plan and educational program objectives.

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AZA's accreditation standards require that education and conservation messages must be an integral component of all ambassador animal presentations. In addition, the accreditation standards require that the conditions and treatment of animals in education programs must meet standards set for the remainder of the animal collection, including species-appropriate shelter, exercise, appropriate environmental enrichment, access to veterinary care, nutrition, and other related standards. In addition, providing ambassador animals with options to choose among a variety of conditions within their environment is essential to ensuring effective care, welfare, and management. Some of these requirements can be met outside of the primary exhibit enclosure while the animal is involved in a program or is being transported. For example, free-flight birds may receive appropriate exercise during regular programs, reducing the need for additional exercise. However, the institution must ensure that in such cases, the animals participate in programs on a basis sufficient to meet these needs or provide for their needs in their home enclosures; upon return to the facility the animal should be returned to its species-appropriate housing as described above.

# Ambassador Animal Position Statement

LAST REVISION 1/28/03

Re-authorized by the Board June 2011

Updated 1/28/15 to change "program animal" to "ambassador animal"

**THE CONSERVATION EDUCATION COMMITTEE (CEC) OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS SUPPORTS THE APPROPRIATE USE OF AMBASSADOR ANIMALS AS AN IMPORTANT AND POWERFUL EDUCATIONAL TOOL THAT PROVIDES A VARIETY OF BENEFITS TO ZOO AND AQUARIUM EDUCATORS SEEKING TO CONVEY COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE (EMOTIONAL) MESSAGES ABOUT CONSERVATION, WILDLIFE AND ANIMAL WELFARE.**

Utilizing these animals allows educators to strongly engage audiences. As discussed below, the use of ambassador animals has been demonstrated to result in lengthened learning periods, increased knowledge acquisition and retention, enhanced environmental attitudes, and the creation of positive perceptions concerning zoo and aquarium animals.

## Audience Engagement

Zoos and aquariums are ideal venues for developing emotional ties to wildlife and fostering an appreciation for the natural world. However, developing and delivering effective educational messages in the free-choice learning environments of zoos and aquariums is a difficult task.

Zoo and aquarium educators are constantly challenged to develop methods for engaging and teaching visitors who often view a trip to the zoo as a social or recreational experience (Morgan and Hodgkinson, 1999). The use of ambassador animals can provide the compelling experience necessary to attract and maintain personal connections with visitors of all motivations, thus preparing them for learning and reflection on their own relationships with nature.

Ambassador animals are powerful catalysts for learning for a variety of reasons. They are generally active, easily viewed, and usually presented in close proximity to the public. These factors have proven to contribute to increasing the length of time that people spend watching animals in zoo exhibits (Bitgood, Patterson and Benefield, 1986, 1988; Wolf and Tymitz, 1981).

In addition, the provocative nature of a handled animal likely plays an important role in captivating a visitor. In two studies (Povey, 2002; Povey and Rios, 2001), visitors viewed animals three and four times longer while they were being presented in demonstrations outside of their enclosure with an educator than while they were on exhibit. Clearly, the use of ambassador animals in shows or informal presentations can be effective in lengthening the potential time period for learning and overall impact.

Ambassador animals also provide the opportunity to personalize the learning experience, tailoring the teaching session to what interests the visitors. Traditional graphics offer little opportunity for this level of personalization of information delivery and are frequently not read by visitors (Churchman, 1985; Johnston, 1998). For example, Povey (2001) found that only 25% of visitors to an animal exhibit read the accompanying graphic; whereas, 45% of visitors watching the same animal handled in an educational presentation asked at least one question and some asked as many as seven questions. Having an animal accompany the educator allowed the visitors to make specific inquiries about topics in which they were interested.

## Knowledge Acquisition

Improving our visitors' knowledge and understanding regarding wildlife and wildlife conservation is a fundamental goal for many zoo educators using ambassador animals. A growing body of evidence supports the validity of using ambassador animals to enhance delivery of these cognitive messages as well.

- MacMillen (1994) found that the use of live animals in a zoomobile outreach program significantly enhanced cognitive learning in a vertebrate classification unit for sixth grade students.
- Sherwood and his colleagues (1989) compared the use of live horseshoe crabs and sea stars to the use of dried specimens in an aquarium education program and demonstrated that students made the greatest cognitive gains when exposed to programs utilizing the live animals.
- Povey and Rios (2002) noted that in response to an open-ended survey question (“Before I saw this animal, I never realized that . . .”), visitors watching a presentation utilizing an ambassador animal provided 69% cognitive responses (i.e., something they learned) versus 9% made by visitors viewing the same animal in its exhibit (who primarily responded with observations).
- Povey (2002) recorded a marked difference in learning between visitors observing animals on exhibit versus being handled during informal presentations. Visitors to demonstrations utilizing a raven and radiated tortoises were able to answer questions correctly at a rate as much as eleven times higher than visitors to the exhibits.

## Enhanced Environmental Attitudes

Ambassador animals have been clearly demonstrated to increase affective learning and attitudinal change.

- Studies by Yerke and Burns (1991) and Davison and her colleagues (1993) evaluated the effect live animal shows had on visitor attitudes. Both found their shows successfully influenced attitudes about conservation and stewardship.
- Yerke and Burns (1993) also evaluated a live bird outreach program presented to Oregon fifth-graders and recorded a significant increase in students' environmental attitudes after the presentations.
- Sherwood and his colleagues (1989) found that students who handled live invertebrates in an education program demonstrated both short and long-term attitudinal changes as compared to those who only had exposure to dried specimens.
- Povey and Rios (2002) examined the role ambassador animals play in helping visitors develop positive feelings about the care and well-being of zoo animals.
- As observed by Wolf and Tymitz (1981), zoo visitors are deeply concerned with the welfare of zoo animals and desire evidence that they receive personalized care.

## Conclusion

Creating positive impressions of aquarium and zoo animals, and wildlife in general, is crucial to the fundamental mission of zoological institutions. Although additional research will help us delve further into this area, the existing research supports the conclusion that ambassador animals are an important tool for conveying both cognitive and affective messages regarding animals and the need to conserve wildlife and wild places.

## Acknowledgements

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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING AN INSTITUTIONAL AMBASSADOR ANIMAL POLICY

LAST REVISION 2003

Re-authorized by the Board June 2011

Updated 1/28/15 to change "program animal" to "ambassador animal"

### Rationale

Membership in AZA requires that an institution meet the AZA Accreditation Standards collectively developed by our professional colleagues. Standards guide all aspects of an institution's operations; however, the accreditation commission has asserted that ensuring that member institutions demonstrate the highest standards of animal care is a top priority. Another fundamental AZA criterion for membership is that education be affirmed as core to an institution's mission. All accredited public institutions are expected to develop a written education plan and to regularly evaluate program effectiveness.

The inclusion of animals (native, exotic and domestic) in educational presentations, when done correctly, is a powerful tool. CEC's **Ambassador Animal Position Statement** describes the research underpinning the appropriate use of ambassador animals as an important and powerful educational tool that provides a variety of benefits to zoo and aquarium educators seeking to convey cognitive and affective messages about conservation and wildlife.

Ongoing research, such as AZA's Multi-Institutional Research Project (MIRP) and research conducted by individual AZA institutions will help zoo educators to determine whether the use of ambassador animals conveys intended and/or conflicting messages and to modify and improve programs accordingly and to ensure that all ambassador animals have the best possible welfare.

When utilizing ambassador animals our responsibility is to meet both our high standards of animal care and our educational goals. Additionally, as animal management professionals, we must critically address both the species' conservation needs and the welfare of the individual animal. Because "wild creatures differ endlessly," in their forms, needs, behavior, limitations and abilities (Conway, 1995), AZA, through its Animal Welfare Committee, has recently given the responsibility to develop taxon- and species-specific animal welfare standards and guidelines to the Taxon Advisory Groups (TAG) and Species Survival Plan® Program (SSP). Experts within each TAG or SSP, along with their education advisors, are charged with assessing all aspects of the taxons' and/or species' biological and social needs and developing Animal Care Manuals (ACMs) that include specifications concerning their use as ambassador animals.

However, even the most exacting standards cannot address the individual choices faced by each AZA institution. Therefore, each institution is required to develop an ambassador animal policy that articulates and evaluates program benefits. The following recommendations are offered to assist each institution in formulating its own Institutional Ambassador Animal Policy, which incorporates the AZA Ambassador Animal Policy and addresses the following matters.

### The Policy Development Process

Within each institution, key stakeholders should be included in the development of that institution's policy, including, but not limited to representatives from:

- the Education Department
- the Animal Husbandry Department

- the Veterinary and Animal Health Department
- the Conservation & Science Department
- the Behavioral Husbandry Department
- any animal show staff (if in a separate department)
- departments that frequently request special ambassador animal situations (e.g., special events, development, marketing, zoo or aquarium society, administration)

Additionally, staff from all levels of the organization should be involved in this development (e.g., curators, keepers, education managers, interpreters, volunteer coordinators).

To develop a comprehensive Ambassador Animal Policy, we recommend that the following components be included:

## I. Philosophy

In general, the position of the AZA is that the use of animals in up close and personal settings, including animal contact, can be extremely positive and powerful, as long as:

1. The use and setting is appropriate.
2. Animal and human welfare is considered at all times.
3. The animal is used in a respectful, safe manner and in a manner that does not misrepresent or degrade the animal.
4. A meaningful conservation message is an integral component. Read the AZA Board-approved Conservation Messages.
5. Suitable species and individual specimens are used.

Institutional ambassador animal policies should include a philosophical statement addressing the above, and should relate the use of ambassador animals to the institution's overall mission statement.

## II. Appropriate Settings

The Ambassador Animal Policy should include a listing of all settings both on and off site, where ambassador animal use is permitted. This will clearly vary among institutions. Each institution's policy should include a comprehensive list of settings specific to that institution. Some institutions may have separate policies for each setting; others may address the various settings within the same policy. Examples of settings include:

- I. On-site programming
  - A. Informal and non-registrants:
    1. On-grounds programming with animals being brought out (demonstrations, lectures, parties, special events, and media)
    2. Children's zoos and contact yards
    3. Behind-the-scenes open houses
    4. Shows
    5. Touch pools
  - B. Formal (registration involved) and controlled settings
    1. School group programs
    2. Summer Camps
    3. Overnights
    4. Birthday Parties
    5. Animal rides
    6. Public animal feeding programs
- II. Offsite and Outreach
  1. PR events (TV, radio)

2. Fundraising events
3. Field programs involving the public
4. School visits
5. Library visits
6. Nursing Home visits (therapy)
7. Hospital visits
8. Senior Centers
9. Civic Group events

In some cases, policies will differ from setting to setting (e.g., on-site and off-site use with media). These settings should be addressed separately, and should reflect specific animal health issues, assessment of distress in these situations, limitations, and restrictions.

### **III. Compliance with Regulations**

All AZA institutions housing mammals are regulated by the USDA's Animal Welfare Act. Other federal regulations, such as the Marine Mammal Protection Act, may apply. Additionally, many states, and some cities, have regulations that apply to animal contact situations. Similarly, all accredited institutions are bound by the AZA Code of Professional Ethics. It is expected that the Institution Ambassador Animal Policy address compliance with appropriate regulations and AZA Accreditation Standards.

### **IV. Collection Planning**

All AZA accredited institutions should have a collection planning process in place. Ambassador animals are part of an institution's overall collection and must be included in the overall collection planning process. The AZA Guide to Accreditation contains specific requirements for the institution collection plan. For more information about collection planning in general, please see the Collection Management pages in the Members Only section.

The following recommendations apply to ambassador animals:

1. Listing of approved ambassador animals (to be periodically amended as collection changes). Justification of each species should be based upon criteria such as:
  - o Temperament and suitability for program use
  - o Husbandry requirements
  - o Husbandry expertise
  - o Veterinary issues and concerns
  - o Ease and means of acquisition / disposition according to the AZA code of ethics
  - o Educational value and intended conservation message
  - o Conservation Status
  - o Compliance with TAG and SSP guidelines and policies
2. General guidelines as to how each species (and, where necessary, for each individual) will be presented to the public, and in what settings
3. The collection planning section should reference the institution's population management policies.

### **V. Conservation Education Message**

As noted in the AZA Accreditation Standards, if animal demonstrations are part of an institution's programs, an educational and conservation message must be an integral component. The Ambassador Animal Policy should address the specific messages related to the use of ambassador animals, as well as the need to be cautious about hidden or conflicting messages (e.g., "petting" an animal while stating verbally that it makes a poor pet). This section may include or reference the AZA Conservation Messages.

Although education value and messages should be part of the general collection planning process, this aspect is so critical to the use of ambassador animals that it deserves additional attention. In addition, it is highly recommended to encourage the use of biofacts in addition to or in place of the live animals. Whenever possible, evaluation of the effectiveness of presenting ambassador animals should be built into education programs.

## **VI. Human Health and Safety**

The safety of our staff and the public is one of the greatest concerns in working with ambassador animals. Although extremely valuable as educational and affective experiences, contact with animals poses certain risks to the handler and the public. Therefore, the human health and safety section of the policy should address:

1. Minimization of the possibility of disease transfer from non-human animals to humans, and vice-versa (e.g., handwashing stations, no touch policies, use of hand sanitizer)
2. Safety issues related to handlers' personal attire and behavior (e.g., discourage or prohibit use of long earrings, perfume and cologne, not eating or drinking around animals, smoking etc.)

AZA's Animal Contact Policy provides guidelines in this area; these guidelines were incorporated into accreditation standards in 1998.

## **VII. Animal Health and Welfare**

Animal health and welfare are the highest priority of AZA accredited institutions. As a result, the Institutional Ambassador Animal Policy should make a strong statement on the importance of animal welfare. The policy should address:

1. General housing, husbandry, and animal health concerns (e.g. that the housing and husbandry for ambassador animals meets or exceeds general AZA standards and that the physical, social and psychological needs of the individual animal, such as adequate rest periods, provision of enrichment, visual cover, contact with conspecifics as appropriate, etc., are accommodated).
2. Where ever possible provide a choice for animal program participation, e.g., retreat areas for touch tanks or contact yards, evaluation of willingness/readiness to participate by handler, etc.)
3. The empowerment of handlers to make decisions related to animal health and welfare; such as withdrawing animals from a situation if safety or health is in danger of being compromised.
4. Requirements for supervision of contact areas and touch tanks by trained staff and volunteers.
5. Frequent evaluation of human / animal interactions to assess safety, health, welfare, etc.
6. Ensure that the level of health care for the ambassador animals is consistent with that of other animals in the collection.
7. Whenever possible have a "cradle to grave" plan for each ambassador animal to ensure that the animal can be taken care of properly when not used as an ambassador animal anymore.
8. If lengthy "down" times in ambassador animal use occur, staff should ensure that animals accustomed to regular human interactions can still maintain such contact and receive the same level of care when not used in programs.

## **VIII. Taxon Specific Protocols**

We encourage institutions to provide taxonomically specific protocols, either at the genus or species level, or the specimen, or individual, level. Some taxon-specific guidelines may affect the use of ambassador animals. To develop these, institutions refer to the Conservation Programs Database.

Taxon and species -specific protocols should address:

1. How to remove the individual animal from and return it to its permanent enclosure, including suggestions for operant conditioning training.
2. How to crate and transport animals.
3. Signs of stress, stress factors, distress and discomfort behaviors.

Situation specific handling protocols (e.g., whether or not animal is allowed to be touched by the public, and how to handle in such situations)

1. Guidelines for disinfecting surfaces, transport carriers, enclosures, etc. using environmentally safe chemicals and cleaners where possible.
2. Animal facts and conservation information.
3. Limitations and restrictions regarding ambient temperatures and or weather conditions.
4. Time limitations (including animal rotation and rest periods, as appropriate, duration of time each animal can participate, and restrictions on travel distances).
5. The numbers of trained personnel required to ensure the health and welfare of the animals, handlers and public.
6. The level of training and experience required for handling this species
7. Taxon/species-specific guidelines on animal health.
8. The use of hand lotions by program participants that might touch the animals

## **IX. Logistics: Managing the Program**

The Institutional Policy should address a number of logistical issues related to ambassador animals, including:

1. Where and how the ambassador animal collection will be housed, including any quarantine and separation for animals used off-site.
2. Procedures for requesting animals, including the approval process and decision making process.
3. Accurate documentation and availability of records, including procedures for documenting animal usage, animal behavior, and any other concerns that arise.

## **X. Staff Training**

Thorough training for all handling staff (keepers, educators, and volunteers) is clearly critical. Staff training is such a large issue that many institutions may have separate training protocols and procedures. Specific training protocols can be included in the Institutional Ambassador Animal Policy or reference can be made that a separate training protocol exists.

It is recommended that the training section of the policy address:

1. Personnel authorized to handle and present animals.
2. Handling protocol during quarantine.
3. The process for training, qualifying and assessing handlers including who is authorized to train handlers.
4. The frequency of required re-training sessions for handlers.
5. Personnel authorized to train animals and training protocols.
6. The process for addressing substandard performance and noncompliance with established procedures.
7. Medical testing and vaccinations required for handlers (e.g., TB testing, tetanus shots, rabies vaccinations, routine fecal cultures, physical exams, etc.).
8. Training content (e.g., taxonomically specific protocols, natural history, relevant conservation education messages, presentation techniques, interpretive techniques, etc.).
9. Protocols to reduce disease transmission (e.g., zoonotic disease transmission, proper hygiene and hand washing requirements, as noted in AZA's Animal Contact Policy).

10. Procedures for reporting injuries to the animals, handling personnel or public.
11. Visitor management (e.g., ensuring visitors interact appropriately with animals, do not eat or drink around the animal, etc.).

## **XI. Review of Institutional Policies**

All policies should be reviewed regularly. Accountability and ramifications of policy violations should be addressed as well (e.g., retraining, revocation of handling privileges, etc.). Institutional policies should address how frequently the Ambassador Animal Policy will be reviewed and revised, and how accountability will be maintained.

## **XII. TAG and SSP Recommendations**

Following development of taxon-specific recommendations from each TAG and SSP, the institution policy should include a statement regarding compliance with these recommendations. If the institution chooses not to follow these specific recommendations, a brief statement providing rationale is recommended.

## **Policy on the Presentation of Animals**

Approved by the Board of Directors – July 2008

The Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) is dedicated to excellence in animal care and welfare, conservation, education, research, and the presentation of animals in ways that inspire respect for wildlife and nature. AZA's position is that animals should always be presented in adherence to the following core principles:

1. Animal and human health, safety, and welfare are never compromised.
2. Education and a meaningful conservation message are integral components of the presentation.
3. The individual animals involved are consistently maintained in a manner that meets their social, physical, behavioral, and nutritional needs.

### **Apes in Media and Commercial Performances**

Apes, including chimpanzees, gorillas, bonobos, orangutans, and gibbons, are intelligent, sensitive, long-lived and highly social animals. As humans' closest living relatives, they are fascinating, and ape infants are magnetically appealing. These attributes have made apes popular as performers in commercial entertainment and advertising programs. But this popularity and attractiveness masks the often cruel and dangerous practices commonly required to make apes compliant in such appearances.

This White Paper presents a brief summary of the justification for:

- Eliminating the use of apes as performers in commercial entertainment.
- Establishing standards to ensure that public presentations and interpretive programs portray apes respectfully and accurately represent the biology and conservation status of apes.

#### Rationale

1. An ape infant normally remains with its mother for several years in a group environment, learning social skills essential for development of normal adult behaviors. But apes destined to be performers or photographic props are typically removed from their mother shortly after birth and, thus, are denied opportunities for normal social and psychological development. This has several commercial advantages to an owner. Infants removed in this manner will be appealing and remain submissive for handling by humans for several years. Mothers whose infants are removed will resume sexual cycling and produce another profitable infant quickly.

But apes raised by humans in the absence of other members of their species will not normally acquire the skills to be socially and sexually competent as juveniles and adults. They may never readjust to life in a normal social group, and thus they are usually relegated to social and sexual isolation, which often leads to abnormal behaviors such as self-mutilation. For these reasons, it typically is not feasible to involve these individuals in conservation-based breeding programs.

2. Although endearing as infants, apes generally become physically powerful and unpredictable as they near adulthood. Their continued use as performers or props is potentially very dangerous to their handlers and audiences. Thus, handlers of ape performers often must use food deprivation, physical abuse, continuous tranquilization, or even electric shock to maintain control. Additionally, the animals may be modified to reduce their ability to cause harm, for example by removing their teeth. It should be noted that the apparent "smile" of a performing chimpanzee is actually a well-documented expression of fear. Such physical and psychological effects are difficult to alleviate even if the ape is rescued and placed in a caring environment. More often however, when ape performers become too difficult to handle, they lose their commercial value and are sold to roadside menageries with inexperienced

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handlers and often inhumane conditions.

3. Dressing apes in human clothing, or training them to engage in unnatural (usually human) behaviors, while entertaining to some, inaccurately portrays their biology and conservation status. Since conservation efforts rely on informed public opinion, these practices serve to undermine communications vital to achieving conservation. The use of apes in advertisements and other commercial performances can lead people to conclude falsely that apes make good pets.
4. Because apes and humans are genetically so similar, both are susceptible to many of the same communicable diseases. Close and unprotected contact between performing apes, their handlers, and audiences can threaten all with viral, bacterial, and parasite infection.

In summary, the use of apes in media and commercial performances should be eliminated.

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**Policy for Full Participation  
in the Species Survival Plan® Program  
Adopted by the AZA Board of Directors  
March 26, 2009**

Cooperative animal management and conservation are among the primary goals of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA). These goals are best exemplified by the Association's shared commitment to its cornerstone animal management and conservation program: the Species Survival Plan® (SSP). The AZA Board of Directors recognizes that: 1. Cooperative animal management is vital to the long-term survival of professionally managed zoological parks and aquariums and their valuable and often irreplaceable live animal collections; and 2. All AZA-accredited institutions and Certified Related Facilities should be fully committed to the animal management, conservation, and public education goals as well as the collaborative spirit of the SSP partnership. Therefore, in 2000, the Board adopted the first policy of Full Participation in the SSP program by all AZA member institutions.

An SSP Master Plan articulates long- and short-term goals for a population. It plans the "family tree" of each managed population to minimize the rate of loss of genetic diversity and maintain the long-term demographic stability of the population. Breeding and other population management recommendations are made for each animal with consideration of logistical feasibility, animal welfare, and other factors that can improve SSP outcomes. In addition to breeding recommendations, Master Plans also include a recommendation not to breed certain animals for sound husbandry reasons and the betterment of the population. The Board recognizes that, in the collaborative process of managing the SSPs, the responsibility of each SSP Management Group is to make sound Master Plan recommendations, and also recognizes that, at times, these may conflict with a member institution's plans.

The Board emphasizes the responsibility of all institutions to cooperate in SSP Master Planning. If differences occur between an SSP's recommendations and a participating institution, the SSP Coordinator and the IR have a joint responsibility to work collaboratively to resolve it. When an SSP recommendation is fundamental to the collaborative management of the *ex situ* population, then the SSP recommendation should take precedence. In this process, all institutions' clearly stated and reasonable needs will be considered. If an SSP recommendation is not fundamental to the collaborative management of the *ex situ* population, then the SSP Management Group may elect to change it before the Master Plan is finalized. Thus, when an SSP Master Plan is approved its animal management recommendations will accurately reflect the vital needs of both the SSP and the participating institutions.

The Policy for Full Participation in the SSP Program ensures that AZA Accredited Institutions and Certified Related Facilities have input into the SSP Master Planning process and that they fully comprehend, agree to, and follow the final SSP recommendations. The Board now further defines Full Participation in the SSP program, and the processes used to achieve Full Participation, as follows:

- The Institutional Liaison (IL) at AZA Accredited Institutions or Certified Related Facilities will ensure that an Institutional Representative (IR) is appointed for each SSP species the institution/facility owns or holds, or for which the institution selects to support as defined by the SSP Management Group.
- Each IR must serve as the primary point of contact for all matters relating to their assigned SSP and will ensure that their institution responds to SSP needs for information during Master Planning.
- Periodically and regularly, the SSP Coordinator will ask each participating institution's IR how their institution will participate in the SSP: breeding, non-breeding (where an institution cannot breed due to space, or other factors), or support.
- Prior to the Master Plan development, at the request of the SSP Coordinator, each IR will provide all relevant data regarding individual SSP animals to the corresponding SSP Coordinator and Studbook Keeper in a timely manner. Further, IRs *must* ensure that all proposed acquisitions, transfers, or reintroductions of the SSP species are included in the SSP Master Plan or, if the Master Plan is

already published, are approved in advance by the SSP Coordinator or, preferably the SSP Management Group. SSP Coordinators and IRs must work collaboratively to develop an SSP Master Plan that strives to meet the needs of the SSP program and the needs of participating institutions.

- A draft of the SSP Master Plan, which must include a written record of all animal management recommendations, will be published on the AZA web site for a 30-day comment period and the SSP Coordinator will notify all IRs as soon as the Plan is available for comment. IRs at all participating institutions must inform the SSP Coordinator during the comment period that they will adhere to the Master Plan recommendations, or why they cannot, which will initiate the resolution discussions described below. If all participants agree with the recommendations, the final Master Plan will be published and implemented.
- Each IR must ensure that their institution's Director and IL are aware of the Master Plan and its recommendations and must initiate a collaborative discussion with the SSP Coordinator to resolve differences regarding Master Plan recommendations during the comment period. All involved should maintain accurate records of all related communications and discussions.
- If a resolution with no change to the SSP recommendations is found, then the final Master Plan will be published and implemented.
- If a resolution that causes changes in the SSP recommendations is reached, the edited Master Plan will be re-posted for a final 30-day comment period. IRs at institutions affected by the edited recommendation(s) must respond to the SSP Coordinator during the final comment period regarding their agreement to adhere to the recommendations; institutions not affected by the changes will not need to respond again. At this stage, the finalized Master Plan will be published and all institutions agreeing to adhere to the Master Plan's recommendations will commence implementing the Plan.
- If no resolution is found through direct discussion between the SSP Coordinator and the IR(s), they must work cooperatively with the IL, institutional Director, and corresponding TAG Chair to find one. If necessary, the discussion can extend for an additional 30 days, during which time the institution disputing a recommendation must not engage in any breeding or acquisitions and / or dispositions of species that run counter to the SSP recommendations.

If differences are not resolved by the steps outlined above, then the SSP Coordinator and / or any other involved parties must request that AZA's Wildlife Conservation Management Committee (WCMC) mediate the situation as defined in the AZA Animal Management Reconciliation Policy and, again, the institution disputing the recommendation must not engage in any population management practices that run counter to the SSP recommendations until the mediation and, if necessary, the reconciliation process is complete. Emergencies or other extraordinary circumstances will be considered for the health and welfare of the animals. Institutions not affected by the disagreement will continue carrying out their recommendations. (See: <http://www.aza.org/board-policies/>).

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**Species Survival Plan® –  
Animal Management Reconciliation Policy  
Adopted by the AZA Board of Directors  
March 26, 2009**

The success of cooperative breeding programs depends on all institutions supporting Species Survival Plan® (SSP) recommendations. Therefore, the Board emphasizes the crucial nature of the cooperative process in the development of SSP Master Plans to ensure that animal management recommendations accurately reflect the vital needs of both the SSPs and participating Accredited Institutions and Certified Related Facilities.

If differences regarding SSP recommendations occur between the SSP Management Group and a member Institution, AZA's Full Participation Policy clearly articulates the process that both parties must utilize to resolve them prior to engaging in the Animal Management Reconciliation process. However, if such differences cannot be resolved, then the parties involved must request that AZA's Wildlife Conservation Management Committee (WCMC) mediate the situation.

- WCMC will (1) determine if all efforts to resolve differences have been exhausted and, (2) determine if the recommendations in question are fundamental to the cooperative management of the *ex situ* population. If both situations are true, then WCMC will notify all parties and appoint a Mediation Task Force which includes the WCMC Chair / designee, one member of WCMC selected by each party to represent them, the SSP Coordinator, the institution's Director and two other institutional representatives, and AZA's VP of Animal Conservation.
- The Mediation Task Force will conduct a confidential review of the situation in less than 30 days. Within 2 weeks of the completed review, the WCMC Chair / designee will draft a mediation report describing a consensus decision, which will be reviewed by the participating parties. Comments on the draft report must be returned within a week of distribution. The WCMC Chair / designee will consider all comments and produce a final mediation report. Assuming a resolution is reached, the report will be submitted to all participants involved in the process and the matter will be closed.
- If the mediation process yields no resolution, WCMC must notify all parties and initiate the reconciliation process, during which the institution in question must not engage in any population management practices that run counter to the SSP until a resolution is found. The Reconciliation Committee, over which the WCMC Chair / designee presides, will include the institution's Director or designee, the WCMC Board Liaison, and AZA's Sr. VP of Conservation, VP of Animal Conservation, and Executive Director. The Reconciliation Committee will consider the Mediation Task Force report and determine if additional information is required.
- In its call for greater accountability, the AZA Board holds that action by the Accreditation Commission and / or the Ethics Board can be taken against a member institution that: (1) demonstrates a pattern of a failure to participate and / or (2) demonstrates an action contrary to an SSP program recommendation which threatens the short- or long-term management of the *ex situ* population. Therefore, the Reconciliation Committee will specifically consider if either of these instances is found to be valid.
- If it is determined that the member institution's action is not detrimental to the cooperative management of the *ex situ* population, then the Master Plan will be changed accordingly and the results of these findings will be incorporated into a reconciliation final report submitted to the AZA Conservation Office.
- If it is determined that the member institution's action is detrimental to the cooperative management of the *ex situ* population, and / or is part of a pattern of a failure to participate, then the Master Plan will stand as is and the Reconciliation Committee will notify the institution that they must comply with it. If the institution refuses this directive, the Reconciliation Committee will note this in the reconciliation final report filed with AZA's Conservation Office and provide the report to the Accreditation Commission and the Ethics Board for consideration.

## AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management

Approved by the AZA Board of Directors January 12, 2016

### PREAMBLE

The stringent requirements for AZA accreditation, and high ethical standards of professional conduct, are unmatched by similar organizations and far surpass the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's requirements for licensed animal exhibitors. Every AZA member must abide by a Code of Professional Ethics (<https://www.aza.org/code-of-ethics>). In order to continue these high standards, AZA-accredited institutions and certified related facilities should make it a priority, when possible, to acquire animals from and transfer them to other AZA member institutions, or members of other regional zoo associations that have professionally recognized accreditation programs.

AZA-accredited institutions and certified related facilities cannot fulfill their important missions of conservation, education, and science without live animals. Responsible management and the long-term sustainability of living animal populations necessitates that some individuals be acquired and transferred, reintroduced or even humanely euthanized at certain times. The acquisition and transfer of animals should be prioritized by the long-term sustainability needs of the species and AZA-managed populations among AZA-accredited and certified related facilities, and between AZA member institutions and non-AZA entities with animal care and welfare standards aligned with AZA. AZA member institutions that acquire animals from the wild, directly or through commercial vendors, should perform due diligence to ensure that such activities do not have a negative impact on species in the wild. Animals should only be acquired from non-AZA entities that are known to operate legally and conduct their business in a manner that reflects and/or supports the spirit and intent of the AZA Code of Professional Ethics as well as this Policy.

### I. INTRODUCTION

This AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management provides guidance to AZA members to:

1. Assure that animals from AZA member institutions and certified related facilities are not transferred to individuals or organizations that lack the appropriate expertise or facilities to care for them [*see taxa specific appendices (in development)*],
2. Assure that the health and conservation of wild populations and ecosystems are carefully considered as appropriate,
3. Maintain a proper standard of conduct for AZA members during acquisition and transfer/reintroduction activities, including adherence to all applicable laws and regulations,
4. Assure that the health and welfare of individual animals is a priority during acquisition and transfer/reintroduction activities, and
5. Support the goals of AZA's cooperatively managed populations and associated Animal Programs [Species Survival Plans® (SSPs), Studbooks, and Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs)].

This AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management will serve as the default policy for AZA member institutions. Institutions should develop their own AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management in order to address specific local concerns. Any institutional policy must incorporate and not conflict with the AZA acquisition and transfer/transition standards.

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## II. LAWS, AUTHORITY, RECORD-KEEPING, IDENTIFICATION AND DOCUMENTATION

The following must be considered with regard to the acquisition or transfer/management of all living animals and specimens (their living and non-living parts, materials, and/or products):

1. Any acquisitions, transfers, euthanasia and reintroductions must meet the requirements of all applicable local, state, federal and international laws and regulations. Humane euthanasia must be performed in accordance with the established euthanasia policy of the institution and follow the recommendations of current AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals (2013 Edition <https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Documents/euthanasia.pdf>) or the AAZV's Guidelines on the Euthanasia of Non-Domestic Animals. Ownership and any applicable chain-of-custody must be documented. If such information does not exist, an explanation must be provided regarding such animals and specimens. Any acquisition of free-ranging animals must be done in accordance with all local, state, federal, and international laws and regulations and must not be detrimental to the long-term viability of the species in the wild.
2. The Director/Chief Executive Officer of the institution must have final authority for all acquisitions, transfers, and euthanasia.
3. Acquisitions or transfers/euthanasia/reintroductions must be documented through institutional record keeping systems. The ability to identify which animal is being transferred is very important and the method of identifying each individual animal should be documented. Any existing documentation must accompany all transfers. Institutional animal records data, records guidelines have been developed for certain species to standardize the process (<https://www.aza.org/idmag-documents-and-guidelines>).
4. For some colonial, group-living, or prolific species, it may be impossible or highly impractical to identify individual animals when these individuals are maintained in a group. These species can be maintained, acquisitioned, transferred, and managed as a group or colony, or as part of a group or colony.
5. If the intended use of specimens from animals either living or non-living is to create live animal(s), their acquisition and transfer should follow the same guidelines. If germplasm is acquired or transferred with the intention of creating live animal(s), ownership of the offspring must be clearly defined in transaction documents (e.g., breeding loan agreements).

Institutions acquiring, transferring or otherwise managing specimens should consider current and possible future uses as new technologies become available. All specimens from which nuclear DNA could be recovered should be carefully considered for preservation as these basic DNA extraction technologies already exist.

6. AZA member institutions must maintain transaction documents (e.g., confirmation forms, breeding agreements) which provide the terms and conditions of animal acquisitions, transfers and loans, including documentation for animal parts, products and materials. These documents should require the potential recipient or provider to adhere to the AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management, and the AZA Code of Professional Ethics, and must require compliance with the applicable laws and regulations of local, state, federal, and international authorities.
7. In the case of animals (living or non-living) and their parts, materials, or products (living or non-living) held on loan, the owner's written permission should be obtained prior to any transfer and documented in the institutional records.
8. AZA SSP and TAG necropsy and sampling protocols should be accommodated.
9. Some governments maintain ownership of the species naturally found within their borders. It is therefore incumbent on institutions to determine whether animals they are acquiring or transferring

are owned by a government entity, foreign or domestic, and act accordingly by reviewing the government ownership policies available on the AZA website. In the case of government owned animals, proposals for and/or notifications of transfers must be sent to the species manager for the government owned species.

### III. ACQUISITION REQUIREMENTS

#### A. General Acquisitions

1. Acquisitions must be consistent with the mission of the institution, as reflected in its Institutional Collection Plan, by addressing its exhibition/education, conservation, and/or scientific goals regarding the individual or species.
2. Animals (wild, feral, and domestic) may be held temporarily for reasons such as assisting governmental agencies or other institutions, rescue and/or rehabilitation, research, propagation or headstarting for reintroduction, or special exhibits.
3. Any receiving institution must have the necessary expertise and resources to support and provide for the professional care and management of the species, so that the physical, psychological, and social needs of individual animals and species are met.
4. If the acquisition involves a species managed by an AZA Animal Program, the institution should communicate with the Animal Program Leader and, in the case of Green SSP Programs, must adhere to the AZA Full Participation Policy ([http://www.aza.org/assets/2332/board\\_approved\\_full\\_participation\\_26\\_mar\\_097.pdf](http://www.aza.org/assets/2332/board_approved_full_participation_26_mar_097.pdf)).
5. AZA member institutions should consult AZA Wildlife Conservation and Management Committee (WCMC)-approved TAG Regional Collection Plans (RCPs), Animal Program Leaders, and AZA Animal Care Manuals (ACMs) when making acquisition decisions.
6. AZA member institutions that work with commercial vendors that acquire animals from the wild, must perform due diligence to assure the vendors' collection of animals is legal and using ethical practices. Commercial vendors should have conservation and animal welfare goals similar to those of AZA institutions.
7. AZA member institutions may acquire animals through public donations and other non-AZA entities when it is in the best interest of the animal and/or species.

#### B. Acquisitions from the Wild

Maintaining wild animal populations for exhibition, education and wildlife conservation purposes is a core function of AZA-member institutions. AZA zoos and aquariums have saving species and conservation of wildlife and wildlands as a basic part of their public mission. As such, the AZA recognizes that there are circumstances where acquisitions from the wild are needed in order to maintain healthy, diverse animal populations. Healthy, sustainable populations support the objectives of managed species programs and the core mission of AZA members. In some cases, acquiring individuals from the wild may be a viable option in addition to, or instead of, relying on breeding programs with animals already in human care.

Acquiring animals from the wild can result in socioeconomic benefit and environmental protection and therefore the AZA supports environmentally sustainable/beneficial acquisition from the wild when conservation is a positive outcome.

1. Before acquiring animals from the wild, institutions are encouraged to examine alternative sources including other AZA institutions and other regional zoological associations or other non-AZA entities.
2. When acquiring animals from the wild, both the long-term health and welfare impacts on the wild population as well as on individual animals must be considered. In crisis situations, when the

survival of a population is at risk, rescue decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis by the appropriate agency and institution.

3. AZA zoos and aquariums may assist wildlife agencies by providing homes for animals born in nature if they are incapable of surviving on their own (e.g., in case of orphaned or injured animals) or by euthanizing the animals because they pose a risk to humans or for humane reasons.
4. Institutions should only accept animals from the wild after a risk assessment determines the zoo/aquarium can mitigate any potential adverse impacts on the health, care and maintenance of the existing animals already being housed at the zoo or aquarium, and the new animals being acquired.

## IV. TRANSFER, EUTHANASIA AND REINTRODUCTION REQUIREMENTS

### A. Living Animals

Successful conservation and animal management relies on the cooperation of many entities, both AZA and non-AZA. While preference is given to placing animals with AZA-accredited institutions or certified related facilities, it is important to foster a cooperative culture among those who share AZA's mission of saving species and excellence in animal care.

1. AZA members should assure that all animals in their care are transferred, humanely euthanized and/or reintroduced in a manner that meets the standards of AZA, and that animals are not transferred to those not qualified to care for them properly. Refer to IV.12, below, for further requirements regarding euthanasia.
2. If the transfer of animals or their specimens (parts, materials, and products) involves a species managed by an AZA Animal Program, the institution should communicate with that Animal Program Leader and, in the case of Green SSP Programs must adhere to the AZA Full Participation Policy ([http://www.aza.org/assets/2332/board\\_approved\\_full\\_participation\\_26\\_mar\\_097.pdf](http://www.aza.org/assets/2332/board_approved_full_participation_26_mar_097.pdf)).
3. AZA member institutions should consult WCMC-approved TAG Regional Collection Plans, Animal Program Leaders, and Animal Care Manuals when making transfer decisions.
4. Animals acquired solely as a food source for animals in the institution's care are not typically accessioned. There may be occasions, however, when it is appropriate to use accessioned animals that exceed population carrying capacity as feeder animals to support other animals. In some cases, accessioned animals may have their status changed to "feeder animal" status by the institution as part of their program for long-term sustained population management of the species.
5. In transfers to non-AZA entities, AZA members must perform due diligence and should have documented validation, including one or more letters of reference, for example from an appropriate AZA Professional Fellow or other trusted source with expertise in animal care and welfare, who is familiar with the proposed recipient and their current practices, and that the recipient has the expertise and resources required to properly care for and maintain the animals. Any recipient must have the necessary expertise and resources to support and provide for the professional care and management of the species, so that the physical, psychological, and social needs of individual animals and species are met within the parameters of modern zoological philosophy and practice. Supporting documentation must be kept at the AZA member institution (see #IV.9 below).
6. Domestic animals should be transferred in accordance with locally acceptable humane farming practices, including auctions, and must be subject to all relevant laws and regulations.
7. AZA members must not send any non-domestic animal to auction or to any organization or individual that may display or sell the animal at an animal auction. *See certain taxa-specific appendices to this Policy (in development) for information regarding exceptions.*

8. Animals must not be sent to organizations or individuals that allow the hunting of these individual animals; that is, no individual animal transferred from an AZA institution may be hunted. For purposes of maintaining genetically healthy, sustainable zoo and aquarium populations, AZA-accredited institutions and certified related facilities may send animals to non-AZA organizations or individuals (refer to #IV.5 above). These non-AZA entities (for instance, ranching operations) should follow appropriate ranch management practices and other conservation minded practices to support population sustainability.
9. Every loaning institution must annually monitor and document the conditions of any loaned specimen(s) and the ability of the recipient(s) to provide proper care (refer to #IV.5 above). If the conditions and care of animals are in violation of the loan agreement, the loaning institution must recall the animal or assure prompt correction of the situation. Furthermore, an institution's loaning policy must not be in conflict with this AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management.
10. If living animals are sent to a non-AZA entity for research purposes, it must be a registered research facility by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and accredited by the Association for the Assessment & Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care, International (AAALAC), if eligible. For international transactions, the receiving facility must be registered by that country's equivalent body having enforcement over animal welfare. In cases where research is conducted, but governmental oversight is not required, institutions should do due diligence to assure the welfare of the animals during the research.
11. Reintroductions and release of animals into the wild must meet all applicable local, state, and international laws and regulations. Any reintroduction requires adherence to best health and veterinary practices to ensure that non-native pathogens are not released into the environment exposing naive wild animals to danger. Reintroductions may be a part of a recovery program and must be compatible with the IUCN Reintroduction Specialist Group's Reintroduction Guidelines ([http://www.iucnsscrsg.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=197&Itemid=59](http://www.iucnsscrsg.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=197&Itemid=59)).
12. Humane euthanasia may be employed for medical reasons to address quality of life issues for animals or to prevent the transmission of disease. AZA also recognizes that humane euthanasia may be employed for managing the demographics, genetics, and diversity of animal populations. Humane euthanasia must be performed in accordance with the established euthanasia policy of the institution and follow the recommendations of current AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals (2013 Edition <https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Documents/euthanasia.pdf>) or the AAZV's Guidelines on the Euthanasia of Non-Domestic Animals.

## **B. Non-Living Animals and Specimens**

AZA members should optimize the use and recovery of animal remains. All transfers must meet the requirements of all applicable laws and regulations.

1. Optimal recovery of animal remains may include performing a complete necropsy including, if possible, histologic evaluation of tissues which should take priority over specimens' use in education/exhibits. AZA SSP and TAG necropsy and sampling protocols should be accommodated. This information should be available to SSP Programs for population management.
2. The educational use of non-living animals, parts, materials, and products should be maximized, and their use in Animal Program sponsored projects and other scientific projects that provide data for species management and/or conservation must be considered.
3. Non-living animals, if handled properly to protect the health of the recipient animals, may be utilized as feeder animals to support other animals as deemed appropriate by the institution.
4. AZA members should consult with AZA Animal Program Leaders prior to transferring or disposing of remains/samples to determine if existing projects or protocols are in place to optimize use.

5. AZA member institutions should develop agreements for the transfer or donation of non-living animals, parts, materials, products, and specimens and associated documentation, to non-AZA entities such as universities and museums. These agreements should be made with entities that have appropriate long term curation/collections capacity and research protocols, or needs for educational programs and/or exhibits.

## **Appendix I: DEFINITIONS**

**Acquisition:** Acquisition of animals can occur through breeding (births, hatchings, cloning, and division of marine invertebrates = “fragging”), trade, donation, lease, loan, transfer (inter- and intra-institution), purchase, collection, confiscation, appearing on zoo property, or rescue and/or rehabilitation for release.

**Annual monitoring and Due diligence:** Due diligence for the health of animals on loan is important. Examples of annual monitoring and documentation include and are not limited to inventory records, health records, photos of the recipient’s facilities, and direct inspections by AZA professionals with knowledge of animal care. The level of due diligence will depend on professional relationships.

**AZA member institution:** In this Policy “AZA member institutions” refers to AZA-accredited institutions and certified related facilities (zoological parks and aquariums). “AZA members” may refer to either institutions or individuals.

**Data sharing:** When specimens are transferred, the transferring and receiving institutions should agree on data that must be transferred with the specimen(s). Examples of associated documentation include provenance of the animal, original permits, tags and other metadata, life history data for the animal, how and when specimens were collected and conserved, etc.

**Dispose:** “Dispose/Disposing of” in this document is limited to complete and permanent removal of an individual via incineration, burying or other means of permanent destruction

**Documentation:** Examples of documentation include ZIMS records, “Breeding Loan” agreements, chain-of-custody logs, letters of reference, transfer agreements, and transaction documents. This is documentation that maximizes data sharing.

**Domestic animal:** Examples of domestic animals may include certain camelids, cattle, cats, dogs, ferrets, goats, pigs, reindeer, rodents, sheep, budgerigars, chickens, doves, ducks, geese, pheasants, turkeys, and goldfish or koi.

**Ethics of Acquisition/Transfer/Euthanasia:** Attempts by members to circumvent AZA Animal Programs in the acquisition of animals can be detrimental to the Association and its Animal Programs. Such action may also be detrimental to the species involved and may be a violation of the Association’s Code of Professional Ethics. Attempts by members to circumvent AZA Animal Programs in the transfer, euthanasia or reintroduction of animals may be detrimental to the Association and its Animal Programs (unless the animal or animals are deemed extra in the Animal Program population by the Animal Program Coordinator). Such action may be detrimental to the species involved and may be a violation of the Association’s Code of Professional Ethics.

**“Extra” or Surplus:** AZA’s scientifically-managed Animal Programs, including SSPs, have successfully bred and reintroduced critically endangered species for the benefit of humankind. To accomplish these critical conservation goals, populations must be managed within “carrying capacity” limits. At times, the number of individual animals in a population exceeds carrying capacity, and while meaning no disrespect for these individual animals, we refer to these individual animals as “extra” within the managed population.

**Euthanasia:** Humane death. This act removes an animal from the managed population. Specimens can be maintained in museums or cryopreserved collections. Humane euthanasia must be performed in accordance with the established euthanasia policy of the institution and follow the recommendations of current AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals (2013 Edition <https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Documents/euthanasia.pdf>) or the AAZV’s Guidelines on the Euthanasia of Non-Domestic Animals.

**Feral:** Feral animals are animals that have escaped from domestication or have been abandoned to the wild and have become wild, and the offspring of such animals. Feral animals may be acquired for temporary or permanent reasons.

Group: Examples of colonial, group-living, or prolific species include and are not limited to certain terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates, fish, sharks/rays, amphibians, reptiles, birds, rodents, bats, big herds, and other mammals,

Lacey act: The Lacey Act prohibits the importation, exportation, transportation, sale, receipt, acquisition or purchase of wildlife taken or possessed in violation of any law, treaty or regulation of the United States or any Indian tribal law of wildlife law. In cases when there is no documentation accompanying an acquisition, the animal(s) may not be transferred across state lines. If the animal was illegally acquired at any time then any movement across state or international borders would be a violation of the Lacey Act.

Museum: It is best practice for modern zoos and aquariums to establish relationships with nearby museums or other biorepositories, so that they can maximize the value of animals when they die (e.g., knowing who to call when they have an animal in necropsy, or specimens for cryopreservation). Natural history museums that are members of the Natural Science Collections Alliance (NSCA) and frozen biorepositories that are members of the International Society of Biological and Environmental Repositories (ISBER) are potential collaborators that could help zoos find appropriate repositories for biological specimens.

Non-AZA entity: Non – AZA entities includes facilities not accredited or certified by the AZA, facilities in other zoological regions, academic institutions, museums, research facilities, private individuals, etc.

Reintroduction: Examples of transfers outside of a living zoological population include movements of animals from zoo/aquarium populations to the wild through reintroductions or other legal means.

Specimen: Examples of specimens include animal parts, materials and products including bodily fluids, cell lines, clones, digestive content, DNA, feces, marine invertebrate (coral) fragments (“frags”), germplasm, and tissues.

Transaction documents: Transaction documents must be signed by the authorized representatives of both parties, and copies must be retained by both parties\*. In the case of loans, the owner’s permission for appropriate activities should be documented in the institutional records. This document(s) should be completed prior to any transfer. In the case of rescue, confiscation, and evacuation due to natural disasters, it is understood that documents may not be available until after acceptance or shipping. In this case documentation (e.g., a log) must be kept to reconcile the inventory and chain of custody after the event occurs. (\*In the case of government owned animals, notification of transfers must be sent to species manager for the government owned species).

Transfer: Transfer occurs when an animal leaves the institution for any reason. Reasons for transfer or euthanasia may include cooperative population management (genetic, demographic or behavioral management), animal welfare or behavior management reasons (including sexual maturation and individual management needs). Types of transfer include withdrawal through donation, trade, lease, loan, inter- and intra-institution transfers, sale, escape, theft. Reintroduction to the wild, humane euthanasia or natural death are other possible individual animal changes in a population.

## **Appendix 2: RECIPIENT PROFILE EXAMPLE**

Example questions for transfers to non-AZA entities (from AZA-member Recipient Profile documents):

**Has your organization, or any of its officers, been indicted, convicted, or fined by a State or Federal agency for any statute or regulation involving the care or welfare of animals housed at your facility? (If yes, please explain on a separate sheet).**

**Recipients agree that the specimen(s) or their offspring will not be utilized, sold or traded for any purpose contrary to the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Code of Ethics (enclosed)**

<b>References, other than (LOCAL ZOO/AQUARIUM) employees, 2 minimum (please provide additional references on separate sheet):</b>			
Reference Name		Phone	
Facility		Fax	
Address		E-mail	
City	State	Zip	
Country		AZA Member?	
Reference Name		Phone	
Facility		Fax	

Address		E-mail	
City	State		Zip
Country		AZA Member?	
<b>Veterinary Information:</b>			
Veterinarian		Phone	
Clinic/Practice		Fax	
Address		E-mail	
City	State		Zip
Country			

**How are animals identified at your facility? If animals are not identified at your facility, please provide an explanation about why they are not here:**

<b>Where do you acquire and send animals? (Select all that apply)</b>			
AZA Institutions	Non-AZA Institutions	Exotic Animal Auctions	Pet Stores
Hunting Ranches	Dealers	Private Breeders	Non-hunting Game Ranches
Entertainment Industry	Hobbyists	Research Labs	Wild
Other			

**What specific criteria are used to evaluate if a facility is appropriate to receive animals from you?**

**Please provide all of the documents listed below:**

**Required:**

1. Please provide a brief statement of intent for the specimens requested.
2. Resumes of primary caretakers and those who will be responsible for the husbandry and management of animals.
3. Description (including photographs) of facilities and exhibits where animals will be housed.
4. Copy of your current animal inventory.

**Only if Applicable:**

5. Copies of your last two USDA inspection reports (if applicable).
6. Copies of current federal and state permits.
7. Copy of your institutional acquisition/disposition policy.

**(in-house use only) In-Person Inspection of this facility (Staff member/Date, attach notes):**

(Local institution: provide Legal language certifying that the information contained herein is true and correct)

**(Validity of this: This document and all materials associated will be valid for a period of 2 years from date of signature.)**

**Example agreement for Receiving institution (agrees to following condition upon signing):**

Recipient agrees that the animal(s) and its (their) offspring will not be utilized, sold or traded for the purpose of commerce or sport hunting, or for use in any stressful or terminal research or sent to any animal auction. Recipient further agrees that in the event the recipient intends to dispose of an animal donated by (INSTITUTION), recipient will first notify (INSTITUTION) of the identity of the proposed transferee and the terms and conditions of such disposition and will provide (INSTITUTION) the opportunity to acquire the animal(s) without charge. If (INSTITUTION) elects not to reclaim the animal within ten (10) business days following such notification, then, in such event, (INSTITUTION) waives any right it may have to the animal and recipient may dispose of the animal as proposed.

Institutional note: The text above is similar to the language most dog breeders use in their contracts when they sell a puppy. If people can provide that protection to the puppies they place, zoos/aquariums can provide it for animals that we place too! Some entities have been reluctant to sign it, and in that case we revert to a loan and our institution retains ownership of the animal. Either way, we are advised of the animal's eventual placement and location.

## **CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

### **PREAMBLE**

The continued existence of zoological parks and aquariums depends upon recognition that our profession is based on the respect for the dignity of the animals in our care, the people we serve, and most importantly, for each other. Members of the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (known as American Zoo and Aquarium Association or "AZA") have an important role in the preservation of our heritage. To fulfill this role, we must understand the relationships we share with the public, the animals under our care, and with each other. A consequent obligation of membership is to maintain high standards of ethical conduct. Members must have the courage and foresight to live up to their responsibilities within principles of professionalism.

A code of ethics provides standards by which we can judge our professional conduct. We must find in our consciences the point against which to test our actions. It is our desire to maintain the respect and confidence of fellow members and the public that ought to provide us with incentive for the highest degree of ethical conduct. The possible loss of that respect and confidence numbers among the severest sanctions possible.

So long as our profession is guided by these principles, ours will continue to be a respected profession.

### **CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

The following Code of Professional Ethics of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) shall form the basis for all disciplinary actions of the Association.

Deviation by a member from the AZA Code of Professional Ethics or from any of the rules officially adopted by the Board of Directors supplemental thereto, or any action by a member that is detrimental to the best interest of the zoo and aquarium profession and the AZA, shall be considered unethical conduct. The member shall be subject to investigation by the AZA Ethics Board and, if warranted, to disciplinary action by the Ethics Board and/or the AZA Board of Directors. The Code is intended as an inspirational guide for members and as a basis for disciplinary action.

This Code cannot apply to nonmembers, except as they have agreed to follow the Code in a signed agreement to participate in an AZA program. This Code defines the type of ethical conduct the public has a right to expect, not only of staff members of an institution but also of their nonprofessional employees and associates in all matters pertaining to professional zoological park and aquarium employment. The director and/or governing authority of a member institution should ultimately be responsible for the conduct of their employees and others affiliated with the member institution.

The Obligations of Professional Ethics set forth are aspirational in character and represent the objectives towards which every member should strive.

The Code's Mandatory Standards, unlike the Obligations of Professional Ethics, are mandatory in character and, if violated, may result in disciplinary action. The Mandatory Standards, to be uniformly applied to all members, establish a level of conduct below which no member may fall without being subject to disciplinary action. The Code makes no attempt to prescribe either disciplinary procedures or penalties for violation of Mandatory Standards. The severity of judgment against a member found to be in violation of a Mandatory Standard shall be determined by the character of the offense and the attendant circumstances. The Ethics Board, in applying the Mandatory Standards, may find interpretive guidance in the basic principles embodied in the standards and objectives reflected in the Obligations of Professional Ethics.

The Board of Directors and Ethics Board shall be responsible for interpreting the Code of Professional Ethics, subject to all provisions of the Charter and Bylaws. The Ethics Board shall investigate allegations, render decisions, and prescribe subsequent actions and/or penalties. An appeal may be made to the AZA Executive Committee within thirty (30) days of the date of mailing the Ethics Board decision to the complainant and defendant. Appeals may be granted if the Executive Committee concludes that the complainant or defendant appealing the Ethics Board decision has demonstrated that (1) there are new facts, not known at the time of the Ethics Board investigation, which the Executive Committee believes may have changed the outcome; or (2) the Ethics Board did not follow relevant AZA procedures; or (3) the penalty recommended by the Ethics Board was excessive under the circumstances. An appeal shall be granted upon a majority vote of the AZA Executive Committee. If the request for an appeal is granted, the Board of Directors shall hear the appeal at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The appellate decision of the Board of Directors shall be final and cannot be appealed.

## **I. OBLIGATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

In order to promote high standards of conduct in our profession, the AZA has formulated the following basic principles for the guidance of its members:

AS A MEMBER OF THE AZA, I PLEDGE TO:

- A. Realize that I have moral responsibilities not only to my professional associates, my fellow employees, and the public, but also to the animals under my care.
- B. Display the highest integrity, the best judgment or ethics possible, and use my professional skills to the best interests of all.
- C. Deal fairly with members in the dissemination of professional information and advice.
- D. Use only legal and ethical means when seeking to influence governmental legislation or regulations.
- E. Promote the interests of wildlife conservation, biodiversity, and animal welfare to the public and to colleagues.
- F. Maintain high standards of personal, professional, and business conduct and behavior.
- G. Promote the interests of AZA and do my full share of work in support of the concepts and ideals of AZA.
- H. Cooperate with qualified zoos/aquariums and other qualified persons/organizations in breeding programs of endangered and other species.
- I. Aid the professional development of those who enter the zoological park and aquarium profession by assisting them to understand the functions, duties, and responsibilities of the profession.
- J. Seek opportunities to be of constructive service in civic affairs and, to the best of my ability, advance the understanding of all nature to the community in which I live.
- K. Encourage publication of significant achievements in breeding husbandry, medical technology, architecture, etc., in the appropriate publications generally familiar to members.
- L. Endeavor at all times to improve zoos and aquariums.

## **II. MANDATORY STANDARDS**

1. **MAINTAINING INTEGRITY AND COMPETENCE OF THE ZOOLOGICAL PARK AND AQUARIUM PROFESSION**
  - a. A member shall make no materially false statement or deliberately fail to disclose a material fact in connection with an application for membership or accreditation in AZA.
  - b. A member shall not endorse the application for membership in AZA of a person known by that member to be unqualified in respect to character, education, length of service, or some other relevant factor.
2. **MISCONDUCT**
  - a. A member shall not violate a Mandatory Standard.

- b. A member shall not solicit the aid of another individual to circumvent, or assist another to violate, a Mandatory Standard.
  - c. A member shall not knowingly engage in activities contrary to local, state, federal, or international laws as such laws relate to our profession; and a member will, to the best of his or her ability, cooperate with governmental agencies regulating animal welfare and animal transactions.
  - d. A member shall not engage in conduct that adversely affects, or is prejudicial to, the concepts and ideals of the AZA.
  - e. A member shall make every effort to assure that all animals in his/her collection and under his/her care are disposed of in a manner which meets the current disposition standards of the Association and do not find their way into the hands of those not qualified to care for them properly.
3. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION
- a. A member shall not knowingly misinform others regarding animal records or specimen disposition, professional information, and advice.
  - b. A member shall not alter animal records or alter the facts concerning age, condition, or other material information about any animal in order to affect the sale, trade, loan, or other transaction with respect to such animal.
  - c. A member shall immediately bring to the attention of the Ethics Board of the AZA any information concerning a clear violation of a Mandatory Standard.
  - d. A member shall issue no statement to the public which he/she knows (or should know) to be false or misleading.

## GENERAL ADVISORIES

The policies outlined below have been previously adopted by the AZA Board of Directors and are considered to expand the interpretation of the AZA Code of Professional Ethics that was developed to guide ethical conduct of all members. Amendments can be proposed by the AZA Board of Directors, the Ethics Board, and/or AZA members. Any proposed changes shall be reviewed by the Ethics Board and, as appropriate, by legal counsel. Proposed changes shall be submitted to the AZA Board of Directors for action.

### Animal Auctions (1981)

AZA members offering wildlife for sale at auctions attended by the general public are in violation of the AZA Code of Professional Ethics, specifically Mandatory Standards, 2-e, which states, "As a member of AZA, I pledge to...make every effort to assure that all animals...do not find their way into the hands of those not qualified to care for them properly."

### Use of Animal Exchange (1984)

Individuals may utilize Animal Exchange to purchase specimens if the following criteria are followed: the individual should, during the initial contact, identify his or her intentions and make the seller aware if the specimen(s) will go to the purchaser's private collection and not the zoo in question (adopted by the Ethics Board at the direction of the AZA Board).

### Notification of Ethics Code Violations (1986-revised 1993)

Copies of all final actions (the denial of an appeal to the Executive Committee or notification to the complainant and defendant of the appellate decision) regarding violations of the Code of Professional Ethics shall be sent to the Director, Chief Executive Officer, or Governing Authority of the institution of the defendant(s) involved. Such final actions shall be published in Communiqué, including a brief and factual statement of the action, including the name(s) of the defendant(s) involved in the violation and a listing of the sections of the Code which were violated to provide guidance for AZA members.

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**Procurement of SSP Animals (1986-modified 1990-revised 1993)**

Attempts by members to circumvent AZA conservation programs in the procurement and/or disposition of specimens of SSP animals are detrimental to the Association and its conservation programs. Such action may be detrimental to the species involved and could be construed as a violation of the Association's Code of Professional Ethics. All Association members should work through SSP species coordinators and appropriate propagation groups in efforts to procure or dispose of specimens of SSP species.

**ETHICS BOARD**

The Ethics Board, elected by the membership, has separate duties from the AZA Board of Directors. The Ethics Board shall consist of nine (9) members. The Ethics Board proposed guidelines on the function of the Ethics Board for consideration during the San Diego Annual Conference in 1977. The AZA Board of Directors unanimously adopted these guidelines and revised them in 1993:

All Ethics Board matters shall be handled in accordance with the objectives and standards of the Association's Code of Professional Ethics.

Matters called to the attention of the Ethics Board must be in writing and addressed to the Chairman or any member of the Ethics Board. The ethics charge must be signed by the complainant and must contain a full statement of the matter to be reviewed by the Ethics Board.

An individual filing an ethics complaint shall be advised that full disclosure of the complaint shall be made available to all parties concerned. At this time, the complainant has the right to withdraw the complaint; and thus, the matter will be closed.

The Ethics Board, the complainant, and the defendant shall at all times during the investigation maintain strict confidentiality regarding the case.

The initial responsibility of the Ethics Board is to determine the validity of the charge(s). If the charge(s) appears to be valid, the Ethics Board shall initiate a full investigation. Once a full investigation is initiated, the Ethics Board must determine if an Ethics Code violation has occurred and what action and/or penalty is necessary. In making its determination, the Ethics Board shall consult, where necessary or appropriate, with AZA legal counsel. The Ethics Board has the responsibility and authority to issue a judgment and determine disciplinary actions. The AZA Board of Directors serves as an appellate board.

The AZA Board of Directors may also direct the Ethics Board to perform additional duties as needed.

The following procedures are hereby established:

The Chairman of the Ethics Board will distribute copies of all duly received ethics complaints to members of the Ethics Board, the AZA President, Executive Director, Deputy Director, and the AZA Board Liaison to the Ethics Board. All correspondence pertaining to the case shall be marked "Confidential." The Chairman shall request each Ethics Board member to render an opinion as to the validity of the complaint and make a recommendation on how to proceed and action to be taken.

The Chairman shall review all recommendations, suggest an Ethics Board action and, if necessary, arrange an appearance before the Ethics Board and/or a site visitation.

The Ethics Board may dismiss any charge for which there is insufficient evidence to pursue the investigation or for which there is no apparent violation of the Ethics Code. The complainant, defendant, and the Board of Directors shall be notified by the Ethics Board of the decision, for which there is no appeal.

The Ethics Board may determine that there is no clear violation or proof of a violation but that there is concern about the conduct of a member. The Ethics Board may issue a letter of concern.

If the Ethics Board determines that a violation of the Code has occurred, the following options shall be considered: (A) Letter of Reprimand from the Ethics Board. (B) Letter of Reprimand from the Ethics Board and the AZA Board of Directors. (C) Censorship and suspension of certain membership privileges (up to 2 years), to be determined on a case-by-case basis. (D) Expulsion from AZA membership for a minimum of two years. The Ethics Board may function as an investigative body as it determines whether or not a violation has occurred. The Ethics Board shall make its determination based upon the greater weight of the evidence presented to it. Ethics matters often do not involve legal matters but are founded on moral values and industry standards and practices. Where necessary or appropriate, the Ethics Board shall consult with AZA legal counsel.

The Ethics Board shall deliberate, during a meeting or conference call, on the final determination and action to be taken. Actions by the Ethics Board shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of its members. When a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of guilty is not received the issue shall be dropped.

The Chairman of the Ethics Board shall submit a report to the President, Executive Director, Deputy Director, AZA Board Liaison Representative, and legal counsel, if necessary, with the Ethics Board's findings and course of disciplinary action to be taken prior to advising the complainant and defendant.

The Chairman of the Ethics Board shall advise the complainant and the defendant of the findings and action taken by the Ethics Board.

An appeal may be made to the AZA Executive Committee within thirty (30) days of the date of mailing the Ethics Board decision to the complainant and defendant. Appeals may be granted if the Executive Committee concludes that the complainant or defendant appealing the Ethics Board decision has demonstrated that (1) there are new facts, not known at the time of the Ethics Board investigation, which the Executive Committee believes may have changed the outcome; or (2) the Ethics Board did not follow relevant AZA procedures; or (3) the penalty recommended by the Ethics Board was excessive under the circumstances. Appeals shall be granted upon a majority vote of the AZA Executive Committee. The AZA Board of Directors shall hear the appeal at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The appellate decision of the Board of Directors shall be final and cannot be appealed.

At least one member of the Ethics Board shall be present during the appeal.

The Ethics Board shall notify the complainant and the defendant of the final action of the AZA Board of Directors once the appellate decision has been rendered.

## GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES OF THE ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

**Accidents Involving Injury or Welfare.** Should an accident occur at an accredited institution or certified related facility involving serious staff injuries, serious public injuries, animal incidents/escapes, or significant barrier breaches, a written report must be submitted to the Accreditation Commission within thirty (30) days explaining what happened and noting what actions are being taken by the institution as a result. The Commission will determine if a special inspection or other action is necessary and will notify the institution in writing once a decision has been made.

Considerations for submitting such reports include:

**Staff Injuries** – site and/or animal-related injury to staff, causing death or significant trauma resulting in an emergency care visit and/or sustained disability.

**Public Injuries** – site and/or animal-related injury to people other than staff, causing death or significant trauma resulting in an emergency care visit and/or sustained disability.

**Animal Incidents/Escapes** – these include unusual circumstances involving a single animal or group of animals, and/or multiple similar individual cases or incidents of mass mortality; escape of a dangerous animal or mass escapes of any species within the zoo or during transport; or death/grievous trauma to individuals or group of individuals within the zoo or during transport.

**Barrier Breaches** – these include incidents in which a visitor crosses a barrier or guardrail, putting themselves, others, or the animal in jeopardy of serious injury, significant trauma, or death.

**Accidents Resulting In Human Fatality:** An on-site inspection shall be automatic after any accident *involving an animal* that results in a human fatality. The inspection shall focus on the incident and shall be scheduled to take place as soon after the incident as can be reasonably scheduled. Site related human fatalities not involving an animal shall be immediately assessed by AZA relative to the AZA Accreditation Standards. The Commission shall determine if a special inspection is necessary in those cases and will notify the institution in writing once a decision has been made. Institutions are responsible for submitting a written report to the Accreditation Commission as noted under “*Accidents Involving Injury or Welfare*”, above.

**Accreditation Cycle:** The cycle of accreditation shall be five years, after which an institution must undergo the full accreditation process again. **Exceptions:** •In cases where an applicant processes and is granted accreditation on a cycle in conflict with the geographic rule, its *initial* accreditation cycle will be shortened to four and a half years to place it on the proper seasonal cycle for future inspections (see *Geographic Location*, pages 115 – 116). •If an extension is granted, the year of extension shall be deducted from the institution’s subsequent five-year accreditation cycle if the institution receives accreditation at the end of the year of extension (see *Extensions of Accreditation*, page 115). •If an institution is tabled, the year of tabling shall be deducted from the institution’s subsequent five-year accreditation cycle if the institution receives accreditation at the end of the tabled year (see *Table Accreditation*, page 31 – 32 of the 2019 *Guide to the Accreditation of Zoological Parks and Aquariums*).

**Achieving Accreditation:** Accreditation can only be achieved by a judgment from the AZA Accreditation Commission that the applicant institution meets or exceeds all AZA standards,

and supports and employs AZA practices and philosophies. This decision is preceded by a lengthy application and full evaluation process, involving information from a number of sources, including a thorough on-site inspection.

**Addition of an Elephant Inspector.** For institutions with elephants, an inspector who specializes in elephants will be added to the regular team and will focus on the institution's elephant program.

**Addition of a Specialist Inspector.** It is occasionally necessary for a specialist inspector to be added to an inspection team. The Commission will determine, on a case by case basis, when this is justified and will notify the institution. Examples would be zoological parks with aquarium facilities of a sufficient size and nature to require an inspection team member specializing in aquatics. The same would be true of aquariums with exhibits containing land-based animals, etc.

**Attendance At The Hearing (Who Should Be There).** The institution's CEO/Director must attend the hearing to answer questions, authorize action, and to make any statements desired. The CEO/Director may bring to the hearing any individual(s) he or she would like to have present. This may include members of the institution's staff, governing authority, support organization, or local government officials. If the CEO/Director cannot attend, a written notification must be provided to AZA as soon as possible. The notification must include an explanation, and give full authority to an individual selected by the CEO/Director to represent the institution in place of the CEO/Director.

**CEO/Director Requirement For Applicants Not Currently AZA-Accredited.** Any institution not currently accredited may not apply for accreditation if it is without a *permanent*, full-time CEO/Director. Materials may not be submitted under the leadership of an *Interim* or *Acting* Director.

**CEO/Director Vacancy.** When a vacancy occurs in the position of CEO/Director the AZA-accredited institution must notify the Accreditation Commission in writing, and a follow-up letter must be submitted to the Commission every six months thereafter reporting the status of the search until such time as the position is filled. The status update must include details as to what has occurred, how the institution is being managed in the interim, and an estimate as to when it is expected the position may be filled. An AZA-accredited institution that is without the services of a permanent, full-time, compensated CEO/Director for longer than one year may be subject to loss of accreditation and membership. An AZA-accredited institution that is temporarily without a permanent fulltime CEO/Director must process for accreditation on its regular 5-year cycle. Extensions may not be granted. Institutions that are not accredited by AZA may not apply without a permanent fulltime CEO/Director in place.

**CEO/Director Vacancy Occurring Immediately After Receiving AZA Accreditation.** If a CEO/Director vacates his or her position at the institution within ninety days of receiving accreditation, the Commission may, in its discretion, require written biannual progress reports, or may require that the institution reprocess again at the earliest opportunity to do so once a new CEO/Director is in place.

**Change of Governance.** A change in governance refers to a change of the governing authority, such as from a governmental agency to society or vice versa. If a change in governance occurs, a letter or affidavit from the CEO or chairperson of the new governing authority is required pledging to uphold and abide by accreditation standards, including the AZA Charter & Bylaws, Code of Ethics, Policy on Responsible Population Management, and

other related policies. The letter must be sent to the Commission within 30 days of the governance change.

**Change of Location.** In the event of a relocation of an accredited institution, the institution must reprocess for accreditation as soon as the new location is officially open. An application must be received by the submission deadline that falls immediately prior to, or following, the opening.

**Change of Ownership.** A change in ownership refers to the sale or formal transfer of ownership of an institution. In the event of a change in ownership of an accredited institution, the institution must reprocess for accreditation within 12 months, regardless of when its accreditation is scheduled to expire. A letter or affidavit from the CEO or chairperson of the purchasing or receiving organization is also required pledging to uphold and abide by accreditation standards, including the AZA Charter & Bylaws, Code of Ethics, Policy on Responsible Population Management, and other related policies. The letter must also indicate the new owner's intent to submit materials applying for accreditation within the required time period. The letter must be sent to the Commission within 30 days of final sale or transfer.

**Change of Scope.** Accredited institutions must notify the Commission in writing in the event that a change in the scope of its facility occurs (for example, the opening of a new exhibit of significant proportions, or an exhibit that changes the overall scope of the institution, such as an aquarium in a zoo, or land-based animals in an aquarium, etc.). The Commission may assign a team, or individual, to conduct an inspection. Cost of such inspection shall be borne by the accredited institution concerned. (See *Interim and Follow-up Inspections*, page 116.)

**Complaints.** If a documented, written complaint is received from a member of the general public, the institution's staff, or a professional colleague regarding an AZA-accredited institution, the Commission will take steps to determine the situation and, based upon its findings, will make recommendations to the institution, or take appropriate action. In some cases the Commission may assign a team to conduct an inspection. (See *Interim and Follow-up Inspections*, page 116.)

**Determining Compliance:** The AZA Accreditation Commission, based on the collective professional training and experience of its 15 member panel, is the body officially tasked with determining whether a standard is being met or not. The Commission's decision is absolute. In cases of denial of accreditation, an appeal of that denial may be made to the AZA Executive Committee [see page 32 of the 2019 *Guide to the Accreditation of Zoological Parks & Aquariums*].

**Elephant Management and Care – Requesting A Temporary Variance Under the AZA Standards.** Institutions requesting a temporary variance under the AZA Standards For Elephant Management & Care should submit that request to the Accreditation Commission at the time it becomes apparent that a temporary variance may be needed. The request should be in the form of a letter detailing the temporary variance being requested, and should include all necessary documentation. The Commission will consider the requested temporary variance and will thereafter notify the institution of its decision. Temporary variances must be re-applied for prior to the expiration date contained in the variance, or documentation must be provided that the reason for the temporary variance has been addressed. **NOTE:** institutions not currently AZA-accredited must be in full compliance with AZA standards at the time application is made.

**Elephant Management and Care – Special Welfare Variance.** In cases where an elephant's physical and/or psychological welfare is believed to be at risk by implementation of a

standard, an institution may request a special welfare variance under the AZA Standards For Elephant Management & Care. To qualify for a special welfare variance, the elephant(s) in question must be considered geriatric, and the institution must provide evidence that the elephant's welfare will be at risk without the variance, or that moving the elephant could result in serious injury or death. Evidence must be in the form of documentation from the institution's veterinary and animal management professional staff. The request for a special welfare variance must be in the form of a letter detailing the variance being requested, and containing all necessary documentation. The AZA Accreditation Commission will consider the request and will thereafter notify the institution of its decision. If granted, the variance will be for three (3) years and must be re-applied for prior to the expiration date contained in the variance. If granted, institutions must submit an annual report documenting the status and health of the elephant(s), including veterinary records, assessments, behavioral profiles, and the written recommendations of the institution's veterinary and animal management professional staff. **NOTE:** for the purpose of this variance, welfare is defined as physical health and function, and psychological well-being.

**Elephant Management and Care – Substantial Compliance Extension.** In cases where a deadline is set in a standard, and an institution has an existing variance until that deadline but has not yet achieved full compliance by the deadline, a Substantial Compliance Extension of the existing variance may be approved by the Accreditation Commission. Approval may be granted only if the institution can demonstrate clear and steady progress toward compliance with the standard, is actively engaged and working towards full compliance, and has identified a realistic completion date. Regular updates will be required until compliance is achieved, and the Commission may require an inspection of the elephant program, at its discretion, as a condition of maintaining accreditation.

**Enforcement of Standards:** Institutions holding accreditation from AZA must maintain all AZA standards, and support AZA practices and philosophies during the period that accreditation is held. If AZA has evidence that this is not taking place, it will work with the institution to see that standards are met, or will take whatever action is appropriate to ensure the integrity of its process, including removal of AZA-accreditation when deemed necessary. (See *Interim and Follow-up Inspections*, page 116, and *Rescinding Accreditation*, page 118.)

**Extensions of Accreditation.** Under extenuating or special circumstances extensions of accreditation may be granted to extend current accreditation by one year. An institution desiring an extension must submit a request in writing to the Accreditation Commission, including a full explanation as to why the extension is being requested, as soon as possible to avoid a potential lapse in accreditation and AZA membership. Before considering the request, the Commission may require a site visit to assess the institution's ability to maintain accreditation standards during the period of extension. If a site visit is deemed necessary, it must take place prior to any decision being made by the Commission. The Commission will thereafter make a determination, and the institution will be notified. A second extension will be considered only in extreme cases, and will require a site visit. If an extension is granted, the year of extension shall be deducted from the institution's subsequent five-year accreditation cycle should the institution receive accreditation at the end of the year of extension. [NOTE: *Missing a deadline will not be considered an acceptable reason for extension of accreditation. Extenuating or special circumstances shall not include a vacancy in the position of CEO/Director.*]

**Geographic Location and Accreditation Cycle.** To optimize weather conditions for inspectors and to create a more even distribution of the case load for the Commission, institutions located in geographic areas that typically experience a mild winter season will be

placed on a five-year accreditation cycle that affords a fall-winter inspection (i.e., will have their accreditation expire in March). Institutions located in geographic areas that typically experience a harsh winter season will be placed on a five-year accreditation cycle that affords a spring-summer inspection (i.e., will have their accreditation expire in September). In cases where an applicant processes and is granted accreditation on a cycle in conflict with the geographic rule, its *initial* accreditation cycle will be shortened to four and a half years to place it on the proper seasonal cycle for future inspections. **NOTE:** Because aquariums, by their nature, are primarily indoor facilities, they will be placed on a five-year accreditation cycle that affords a fall-winter inspection (i.e., will have their accreditation expire in March).

**Institution's Membership In AZA:** An institution's membership and participation in AZA must be maintained as a condition of accreditation.

**Institutions Under Construction.** Institutions currently being constructed may apply for accreditation prior to the opening date; however, the on-site inspection will not take place until the institution is officially open to the general public and a permanent, full-time CEO/Director has been on board for at least six months. (See *Deadlines* and *Early Submittals* page 20 of the 2019 *Guide to the Accreditation of Zoological Parks and Aquariums*).

**Institutions Within Institutions.** In order to be accredited, a zoological park or aquarium which is a part of a larger institution (such as a university, museum, or botanical garden) must be distinct enough to be separately identified and must adequately fulfill the definition of a zoological park or aquarium as earlier defined. When accreditation is granted in such cases, it will apply only to the zoological park or aquarium concerned and not to the non-zoological activities of the larger organization in fields in which AZA has no expertise.

**Interim and Follow-up Inspections.** The Accreditation Commission or AZA Board of Directors may, at its discretion, assign a team to conduct an interim or follow-up inspection of any AZA-accredited institution at any time during the five-year accreditation period. A follow-up inspection shall be conducted for all tabled institutions at the end of the tabled period, as a condition of proceeding forward in the process. While on site, the individual or team may, at their discretion, inspect all or portions of the institution. Cost of such inspection shall be borne by the institution as a requirement of maintaining and/or achieving accreditation. (See *Mid-Cycle Inspections*, page 117).

**"Last Minute" Inspector Replacements.** Although it is highly unusual, a "last minute" change in inspectors may become necessary in a sudden emergency. In this case, there may not be sufficient time for AZA to follow its standard procedure and provide the institution with a list of potential replacements. Every effort will be made to alert the institution in advance, but in extreme circumstances, AZA will assign a replacement inspector and notify the institution thereafter.

**Mentoring Program.** The Commission, itself, does not conduct "pre-accreditation" inspections. However, the Commission strongly encourages institutions that are not AZA-accredited to have their operations evaluated by an official mentor approved and assigned by the Accreditation Commission prior to submitting an application. The Commission recommends that currently-accredited institutions consider doing the same prior to undergoing the process again when accreditation expires at the end of five-years (see *Long Term Expectations* page 33 of the 2019 *Guide to the Accreditation of Zoological Parks and Aquariums*). [Note: Institutions currently accredited by AZA: all institutions accredited by AZA are expected to maintain AZA standards as a condition of accreditation. A mentor can aid an institution in identifying areas that need to be strengthened or addressed during the period between AZA

inspections. Should a mentor discover that serious concerns exist or standards are not being consistently met at an accredited institution, tabling of accreditation may occur.]

To request assignment of a Commission-approved mentor, the institution should contact AZA accreditation staff. A Commission-approved mentor is a professional from an accredited institution who serves regularly as an inspector, is a past or present member of the Accreditation Commission, or an Accreditation Commission Advisor. The Commission-approved mentor is considered by the Accreditation Commission as being particularly well versed in current accreditation standards, expectations, and fundamental AZA philosophies and best practices, and can be consulted throughout the preparation phase. The mentor will be available to the institution by phone throughout the preparation process to provide guidance regarding policies, procedures, agreements, situations, philosophies, and the assembly of the application materials as needed. In addition, it is considered important that the mentor visit the applicant institution for an unofficial inspection at least once, and thereafter as desired by the institution. Following the inspection, the mentor will provide a list identifying all things (including physical facilities and related issues, as well as practices and/or documents) that need work prior to making application, or before the official inspection, as the case may be. Additionally, in the case of *first-time* applicants, the mentor will provide a professional opinion as to whether the institution is best advised to make application later rather than sooner and, if later, may continue to work with the institution long-term in guiding it to full readiness. Any costs incurred by the mentor (including related travel, accommodations, and meals) are to be reimbursed directly to the mentor by the applicant institution.

Mentors should be requested *at least one year prior to submitting an application*, and no earlier than five years prior to submitting an application. Mentors cannot be provided at the time of application or after an application is submitted. *Having a mentor does not guarantee that an institution will be granted accreditation.* Accreditation can only be achieved by a judgment from the AZA Accreditation Commission that the applicant institution meets or exceeds all AZA standards, and supports and employs AZA practices and philosophies.

**Mid-Cycle Inspections.** The Accreditation Commission may, at its discretion, require a mid-cycle inspection as a condition of maintaining accreditation. When such an inspection is required, the visiting team will focus on key areas identified when accreditation was issued, and will also review the institution as a whole. Cost of such inspection shall be borne by the institution as a condition of maintaining accreditation. An application and application fees are not required.

Mid-cycle inspections may apply to the following:

- Institutions that are tabled and receive accreditation one year later.
- Institutions that meet minimum standards when accreditation is granted but that the Commission believes may be challenged in successfully maintaining AZA standards throughout the full five-year cycle of accreditation.
- Institutions with a large number of identified concerns; institutions with significant safety and/or animal welfare concerns; institutions that are not well prepared for the inspection.

**Multiple Facilities Under One Authority.** If two or more institutions are under the same ownership and governing authority, administration, or control, are located adjacent to each other, and public admittance for all institutions is covered by a single entrance fee, they will be

considered as a single institution. In such cases, the institution(s) should first submit a request in writing for the consideration of the Commission. All facilities are subject to inspection. Should the Commission determine that the institutions do not meet the above criteria, processing as separate facilities will be necessary.

**Offsite Facilities.** The inspection will include an institution's offsite facilities. An offsite facility is one that is owned and operated by the institution, is not open to the public, and operates in support of the institution. Institutions must list all offsite facilities. Examples of offsite facilities include, but are not limited to: food storage areas, maintenance, quarantine, and animal holding areas. The Primary Reviewer, in consultation with the inspection team chair, will determine which of these areas need to be inspected.

**Rescinding Accreditation.** The Commission may rescind accreditation at any time if it concludes that accreditation standards are not being consistently met and maintained.

**Seasonal Closings.** Institutions that are closed for winter months must be on a summer inspection schedule. No regular accreditation inspections will be done when institutions are closed for the winter.

**Special Welfare Variance.** In cases where it is believed that an animal's physical and/or psychological welfare would be at risk by the implementation of a standard, an institution may request a special welfare variance. To qualify for a special welfare variance, the animal(s) in question must be considered geriatric or handicapped, and the institution must provide evidence that the animal's welfare will be at risk if the standard as written is imposed, or that moving the animal isn't possible and/or could result in serious injury or death. The request for a special welfare variance must be in the form of a letter detailing the variance being requested, and containing all necessary documentation from the institution's veterinary and animal management professional staff, and any other experts involved. The AZA Accreditation Commission will consider the request and will thereafter notify the institution of its decision. If granted, the variance will be for three (3) years and must be re-applied for prior to the expiration date contained in the variance. **NOTE:** for the purpose of this variance, welfare is defined as physical health and function, and psychological well-being. For elephants, see "Elephant Management and Care—Special Welfare Variance (page 114).

**Temporary Closings.** Institutions temporarily closed to the public will retain their accreditation and their AZA membership. Should an institution's cycle of accreditation review fall within the period of temporary closure, an extension must be requested in writing prior to the institution's regular deadline for submission of accreditation materials. During the period of closure, a written Progress Report must be submitted every six months until such time as the institution has re-opened. Upon re-opening, the institution must submit materials for full accreditation review by the first deadline that falls after re-opening. In the case of institutions closed for less than six (6) months, a waiver may be requested in writing.