

TRAVEL FOUNDATION
GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE IN
ANIMAL INTERACTIONS –
CAPTIVE WILD ANIMAL
ATTRACTIONS

Acknowledgements



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Consultees

Animal welfare organisations, zoo industry representatives, tour operators, suppliers, conservation organisations, government departments, academic institutions, legal bodies/organisations, wildlife consultants and vets were invited to participate as consultees in the development of the Guide to Good Practice and accompanying Checklist. Due to confidentiality reasons, those that provided feedback cannot be individually identified. A full list of those invited to participate is detailed in Appendix 1.

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Accuracy

To the best of our knowledge the information provided in the Guide to Good Practice and Checklist was correct at the time of publication. The Travel Foundation and the author cannot, however, accept any liability for errors or omissions.

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A. Executive Summary

The Aim

The aim of these Good Practice Guidelines is to improve the sustainable practices of organisations involved in operating captive wild animal attractions. The primary outcome sought is to improve the welfare of the animals involved.

Increasing sustainability will not only improve the welfare of the animals involved, but will also benefit suppliers, tour operators, conservation and those employed in the attractions.

The Issues

a. Animal Welfare

Although animals in captivity have the same needs of the same species in the wild, captivity is an artificial environment. An animal in a cage almost certainly lacks the quantity and diversity of space enjoyed by an animal in the wild. Similarly, a captive animal does not have the same degree of freedom to forage, hunt, feed, exercise or interact with other species, or individuals of the same species, and therefore extra management effort is required to ensure these needs are provided for and that the welfare of the animal remains paramount. Similarly, animals can experience feelings similar to those found in humans including fear, pain, boredom and frustration, and every reasonable measure needs to be taken by suppliers to prevent these from occurring.

Whilst there are many examples of good practice, a significant number of captive wild animal attractions have poor animal welfare standards, and as such many animals in captivity suffer for the benefit of the visiting public.

Compounding the issue is that many captive wild animal attractions across the globe are to a great extent unregulated and uncontrolled. Some of these are poorly designed, managed and maintained, unable to provide the barest essentials necessary for the health and psychological well-being of the animals in their care.

b. Customer Safety

The safety of the public whilst visiting animal attractions is paramount. Bad practice in this area has led to the injury and death of visitors, and negative publicity for both tour operators and suppliers. It is important, therefore, to acknowledge the potential risks of customers interacting with animals, whether *directly* or *indirectly*.

Risks include injury or death caused by animal escapes or visitors getting too close to animals through poorly designed and maintained enclosures, inadequate safety barriers, and the growing trend in attractions permitting 'close animal encounters' e.g. 'swim with' dolphin and shark experiences, 'walk through' bird and monkey exhibits, the use of animals for photographic opportunities where the public hold, stroke or sit on an animal, falconry displays, feeding of animals, etc.

There is also a wealth of evidence to suggest that zoos represent a high-risk environment with regard to the transmission of disease from vertebrate animals to humans (zoonoses), resulting in illness and at times death. Again, due to the growing trend in the practice of animal attractions encouraging more 'hands on' encounters with animals, this is a very real threat to public safety. Despite this, many animal attractions fail to publish the risks nor implement preventative measures to minimise disease transmission.

c. Conservation/Education

Research evidence indicates that many captive animal attractions are failing to engender positive attitudes and values towards animal welfare, nature and conservation. Hence, many attractions are failing in their responsibility to utilise their educational potential to inspire in visitors an understanding of the natural world.

Similarly, animal attractions depend on wildlife for their very existence, and hence have a duty to contribute towards the conservation of animals in the wild. Many suppliers take a pro-active approach in this area and acknowledge the role they have as educators and conservationists, whilst others do little, or simply pay lip service to it.

Finally, some animal attractions still take wildlife out of the wild to stock their exhibits, which depletes wild populations and defeats their conservation ethic.

Good Practice Guidelines

Each of the issues affecting the sustainability of captive animal attractions is expanded upon in the document that follows, and examples of good and bad

practice given for each. This is followed by detailed 'Good Practice Guidelines' that suppliers should seek to implement to achieve good practice.

TF Checklist

A checklist has been developed as a tool for suppliers to use to assess their performance against key elements of the Good Practice Guidelines. This can also be used by tour operators to assess their own suppliers. Advice is given on what a supplier should do following completion of the checklist, if it identifies failings.

Customer Feedback

Recommendations are made on how to solicit customer feedback on animal suffering at captive animal attractions, so that tour operators and suppliers can work together to improve the visitor experience and improve animal welfare standards. This should also enable representations to be made in severe animal welfare cases, in an attempt to address the suffering of the animals in question without delay.

Responsible Tour Operators and Visitors

Finally, recommendations are made as to how tour operators can contribute to increasing the sustainability of captive animal attractions, along with a suggested 'Code of Conduct' for visitors to attractions involving captive wild animals.

1. Introduction to Good Practice Guidelines

1.1 The Aim

The aim of these Good Practice Guidelines is to improve the sustainable practices of organisations involved in operating captive wild animal attractions. The primary outcome sought is to improve the welfare of the animals involved.

Captive wild animal attractions, for the purpose of these guidelines, include zoological collections¹, circuses², dolphinariums etc., where animals are held captive and exhibited to the public.

Increasing sustainability will not only improve the welfare of the animals involved, but will also benefit suppliers, tour operators, conservation and those employed in the attractions.

1.2 What is Success?

Success is:

- A demonstrable, measurable improvement in animal welfare²
- A greater respect for animals, and knowledge of animal welfare and conservation issues, by visitors, tour operators and suppliers³
- Greater sustainability, and hence enhanced long-term prospects of the tourism product⁴
- A resultant reduction in the amount of adverse publicity surrounding captive animal attractions⁵

This success will be achieved by tour operators and suppliers understanding the issues, recognising good practice, and most importantly, by changing policy/behaviour to achieve good practice. These Good Practice Guidelines have hence been designed to address the key issues surrounding sustainability, with particular emphasis on animal welfare issues. In this way the standards under which animals are held and used in animal attractions will be improved.

¹ All permanent establishments where live animals of wild species are kept for exhibition to the public for 7 or more days a year [admission paid or unpaid], with the exception of circuses and pet shops. This includes zoos, safari parks, aquaria, butterfly farms, farm parks with wild animals, sanctuaries/orphanages open to the public, amusement parks, captive wild animals in hotels, shopping centers etc., road-side menageries, falconry centers, reptile parks and bird parks.

² A circus is an establishment [either temporary or permanent] where animals are kept or introduced wholly or mainly for the purpose of performing tricks or maneuvers to the public.

² Measured by a reduction in the number of qualified animal welfare complaints (pertaining to captive animal attractions) made by customers to the Travel Foundation and the Born Free Foundation year on year; by improvements year on year in suppliers' performance in this area in annual Good Practice Checklist review (see Section 6).

³ As measured in awareness surveys undertaken with the relevant audiences over time.

⁴ As measured by improvements year on year in suppliers' performance in annual Good Practice Checklist review (see Section 6).

⁵ As measured by Travel Foundation members.

2. Animal Welfare

Animal welfare is a science and is concerned with the health and well-being of animals. All animals have specific inherent needs that ensure their well-being and survival. In the wild, its natural habitat, each species has evolved over time to adapt to the physical environment and is provided with all its needs. In captivity, an artificial and unnatural environment, an animal needs to be provided with a physical and psychologically stimulating environment that replicates the wild. To achieve this complexity in captivity is extremely difficult, but progression in the understanding of the physical, ecological, social, behavioural and psychological needs of animals has made it possible to make captivity more tolerable. Understanding that all animals, regardless of their circumstances can experience pain, suffering and distress, the needs of animals kept by, owned by, managed by or dependent on humans must be provided to ensure good welfare.

Whilst it may not be possible to eliminate poor animal welfare immediately, by encouraging, and ultimately enforcing, good practice concerning the care of all animals used by humans, welfare can be substantially improved over time.

2.1 What are the Issues?

In any situation where the public interacts with wild animals, either directly or indirectly, high standards of animal welfare should be paramount. Animals have specific inherent needs, regardless of their circumstances, and these need to be understood and respected at all times. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

Whilst there are many examples of good practice, a significant number of captive wild animal attractions have poor animal welfare standards, and as such many animals in captivity suffer for the benefit of the visiting public. Compounding the issue is that many captive wild animal attractions across the globe are to a great extent unregulated and uncontrolled. Some of these are poorly designed, managed and maintained, unable to provide the barest essentials necessary for the health and psychological well-being of the animals in their care. Common to these are:

- undersized, barren cages, enclosures and tanks
- unsuitable floor surfaces that are encrusted with faeces and urine
- poor quality feed and nutrition
- inadequate veterinary care
- animals exhibiting bizarre, often self-destructive, behaviours

Similarly, evidence exists that highlights the plight of large numbers of performing wild animals in circuses and travelling shows, who endure a life characterized by emptiness, deprivation and brutality. In addition to being trivialised through performances and stunts that do not reflect their natural behaviour, they suffer from extreme confinement, inappropriate social groupings, and harsh, sometimes abusive, training methods.

It should be recognised that although animals in captivity have the same needs of the same species in the wild, captivity is an artificial environment. An animal in a cage almost certainly lacks the quantity and diversity of space enjoyed by an animal in the wild. Similarly, a captive animal does not have the same degree of freedom to forage, hunt, feed, exercise or interact with other species, or individuals of the same species, and therefore extra management effort is required to ensure these needs are provided for and that the welfare of the animal remains paramount. Animals can experience feelings similar to those found in humans including fear, pain, boredom and frustration, and every reasonable measure needs to be taken by suppliers to prevent these from occurring.

The Five Freedoms

As a minimum, all animals need food and water, a suitable environment, the opportunity to express most normal behaviours and the ability to escape from situations of fear and distress. These are widely referred to as the “Five Freedoms”, which are widely recognised in national and international legislation and animal welfare guidance. These include the Farm Animal Welfare Council (UK), the World Association for Animal Health (OIE) and the EU Directive 1999/22/EC (relating to the keeping of wild animals in zoos). Any situation where any one of these basic needs is restricted or prevented would seriously impair the welfare of an animal and may also adversely affect the safety of the public.

The Five Freedoms⁶ can be summarised as:

1. **Provision of Food & Water - Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition** by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.

Food and water are the basic needs for survival. In a captive facility it is important to look at food presentation, frequency of feeds and nutritional balance. Remember, captivity is an artificial environment, normally geographically and climatically different to the natural range of an animal, therefore care needs to be taken to ensure food is presented in such a manner and frequency commensurate with the natural behaviour of the species in the wild. This includes its nutritional requirements, which may vary seasonally. Many carnivores (meat-eaters), for example, should have varied feeding times on a daily, weekly or on a seasonal scale with one or more fasting days per week to mimic their feeding patterns in the wild. Equally, many animals in captivity need to receive mineral and vitamins supplements as part of their diet which usually come in the form of nutritionally balanced marketed brands of dried formulations in pellet or powder form. All

⁶ Full wording of the Five Freedoms can be found in the Secretary of State's Standards for Modern Zoo Practice. www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/gwd/zooprac/pdf/zooprac.pdf

feeding should be carefully managed and recorded on a daily basis to ensure all individual animals receive their daily requirements.

Additionally, food should be used as part of an enrichment programme to stimulate captive animals into displaying natural foraging, stalking, hunting and feeding behaviours.

2. **Provision of Suitable Environment - Freedom from discomfort** by providing a suitable environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

An environment consistent with the animals' requirements must be provided. This includes shelter from the rain, heat, the cold and shade as appropriate, as well as furniture within the enclosure that stimulates the animal and encourages it to display natural behaviours. For example, animals that in the wild live in trees in rainforests must be provided with a 3D captive environment of branches, ropes and platforms of varying heights to give the animals a new dimension to the environment. Additionally, animals that dig or burrow must be provided with soft substrate and ground shelters. 'Environmental enrichment' is the coined term when using additional techniques to make a more stimulating environment. There is no justifiable reason for a barren environment, devoid of enrichment, which can have a detrimental affect on an animal's welfare.

3. **Provision of Animal Health Care - Freedom from pain, injury and disease** by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.

Enclosure design is essential to minimising the risk of injury to an animal. The inclusion of landscaping, vegetation and furniture allows individual animals the chance to escape conflict or aggression from other animals within the same enclosure. Additionally, in mixed exhibits, where there are more than one species in the enclosure, care must be take to ensure one species cannot injure the other. A veterinary surgeon, with substantial knowledge of wild animals and diseases, must be on hand to ensure curative and preventative medicine. Every effort must be made to provide a correct diet and a suitably hygienic environment; ensuring enclosures are cleared of excrement daily, drinking bowls/bathing pools cleaned regularly and preventative measures are taken to reduce the risks of zoonoses (the transmission of disease from animals to humans).

An unhealthy animal may show signs of malnutrition, hair/feather loss, open sores/wounds, weeping eyes, lethargic or distressing behaviours – a veterinarian should always be consulted.

4. **Provision of Opportunity to Express Most Normal Behaviour - Freedom to express normal behaviour** by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animals own kind.

Animals should be allowed the opportunity to express most normal behaviour as experienced in a wild scenario. As discussed, captivity is an unnatural environment and therefore every effort must be made to recreate both the wild's physical and psychologically stimulating environment and provide the animal with its needs. This can partially be achieved by providing the animal with a suitable diet and environment as explained above. Not doing so, usually has a detrimental affect; often resulting in a decline in animal health or the development of abnormal behaviours (e.g. pacing, rocking, self-mutilation, swaying, etc.).

5. **Provision of Protection from Fear & Distress - Freedom from fear and distress** by ensuring conditions that avoid mental suffering.

Various factors can cause fear and distress in captive animals. Particular areas include: social grouping, mixed species exhibits, ratio of females to males, the numbers of animals in the enclosure, amount of space and enrichment. Confining animals in overcrowded, small spaces with no chance to escape conflict and aggression must be avoided. Enclosure design should allow for as much normal behaviour as possible, and provide areas of escape from other animals and the public. Additionally, the predator species, like big cats, bears and wild dogs should not be housed next, or in the vision of prey species such as hoofed stock, rodents, primates, etc., which will cause severe stress to both groups. Animal/human contact should also be kept to a minimum.

A Species Grid has been developed (Appendix 2) that gives information by species on how to care for wild animals in captivity, giving examples of diet, environmental needs and enrichment techniques.

b. Animal/human contact

Animal contact in tourist destinations has become a popular marketing tool, and as a result many captive animal attractions now encourage people to touch, stroke, hold, 'swim-with' or have their picture taken with wild animals. Animal welfare organisations are alarmed by the profusion of animal contact opportunities with a diverse array of wild, and in some cases, dangerous animals. Most wild animals are unpredictable and not used to the close proximity of humans, and the potential risks to the public and the animals in such scenarios are often overlooked or ignored. In most cases, animal/human contact should be avoided and where it does occur, must be for limited periods of time, making sure welfare is not jeopardised and that any contact is continuously supervised. An indication of the 'hazard' risk for each animal type is provided in the Species Grid in Appendix 2.

As well as human contact being detrimental to the animal's welfare there are also disease implications, as humans can unwittingly pass diseases to animals (zoonoses).

'Swim-with' captive dolphins and even sea-lions is now a 'must do' activity in many resorts abroad. Again little consideration appears to have been given to the welfare of the animals. Such contact results in heightened aggression by the animals and there have been several cases where people have been injured. Continuous supervision is a must and contact sessions must be kept to a minimum. Many countries like Italy, Spain and Great Britain have banned the touching, public feeding and swimming with dolphins and whales, on welfare grounds. Great Britain does not have any dolphinariums, as it is believed that no captive facility can provide these animals with a suitable environment.

The use of wild animals for photographic props should also be prohibited. These activities are severely detrimental to the welfare of the animal used. In many cases, the animal has been removed from its mother at a very young age and more often than not, the long-term psychological effects are rarely considered. Most animals are used at a young age and once they become difficult to handle, many face an uncertain future in poorly run zoos, circuses, research laboratories or are put to sleep.

c. Performing animals

Many zoological collections, hotels, shopping centres etc. stage performances where wild animals are used to perform to the public. Situations where wild animals are dressed in clothes or are made to perform 'humanised' behaviours such as riding bikes or brushing teeth, should be discouraged as such behaviours are unnatural and involve substantially more training, which can have serious animal welfare implications.

Remembering that all animals must be provided a suitable environment and that captive wild animals should be protected from fear and distress, animal performances should be educational and not involve animals displaying unnatural behaviours.

d. Sanctuaries/Orphanages

An animal sanctuary/orphanage is a facility that rescues and provides shelter and care for animals that have been abused, injured, abandoned or are otherwise in need. The welfare of each individual animal should be the primary consideration in all. A sanctuary is not a zoo and, therefore, should not breed animals or replace animals that have died. Despite this, many captive animal attractions that profess to be sanctuaries allow animals to breed, thus diverting valuable resources away from rescuing animals into caring for these captive born animals.

➤ Of the 2,400 deaths of captive marine mammals in Florida's marine park attractions over the past 30 years, where the cause of death is known, one in five died through human hazards e.g. shock on capture, stress during transit to the attraction, poisoning, undergoing routine medical care and from ingesting foreign objects (plastic balls, coins, etc.).

- In Florida, over the past 30 years fewer than half of the dolphins and sea lions kept in marine park attractions have reached the industry's own projections of life expectancy of 20 and 14 years respectively.
- Manati Park, Dominican Republic (2002) – Dolphins kept in small tanks with algal growth on tank walls, paint chipping and rusting metal. Excessively loud music used during performances. Animals demonstrated skin conditions. Swim with dolphin encounters involved activity that is potentially dangerous to the public – dorsal and pectoral fin rides.
- Dolphin Learning Centre, La Paz, Mexico – 3 dolphins were killed during a hurricane in September 2003 when 7 of them were abandoned in shallow steel sea cages close to the beach. A fourth dolphin died the following month. No emergency protocol procedures were in place.

Examples of Good Practice in Action

Howletts & Port Lympne Wild Animal Parks, UK

The gorilla enclosures at these parks are well designed in that they offer the animals a complex 3D environment through the use of climbing apparatus such as bars, trees, ropes, etc., that replicates the gorillas' natural environment. The gorillas (along with all other animals in the parks) have access at all times to 'off public view' accommodation, thus ensuring that they can escape the viewing public's gaze if they so wish. The floors of the caged enclosures have a thick covering of straw, again replicating the effect of the gorilla's natural forest floor. Food is scattered from the roof of the enclosures, encouraging the animals to forage for much of the day amongst the straw, again replicating their natural behaviour (rather than being fed from dishes etc. when feeding only lasts for a short space of time). Additionally, the gorillas have to climb to the roof of the enclosures to collect food that is left there, hence working their muscles and enriching their lives. Much additional environmental enrichment is provided from special food dispensers (e.g. honey from cylinders that can only be obtained by pushing sticks through holes), toys, slides and sacks that routinely get altered and refreshed. The animals are kept in social groupings that replicate the wild and their diet consists of over 200 varieties of fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds.

Loro Parque, Tenerife

The penguin enclosure at this zoo uses a computer-controlled system that changes the light, temperature etc. according to the time of year in the penguin's wild habitat, hence mimicking the natural environment. This zoo also has an excellent gorilla enclosure that is large, has running water, trees, bushes and much environmental enrichment and privacy from public view. The gorillas appear relaxed and examples of normal behaviour are in evidence e.g. making nests under bushes.

Mundomar Zoo, Benidorm, Spain

The bird enclosures in this mainstream Mediterranean resort zoo are well designed and equipped. They provide space for flight, privacy from public view and enrichment. Additionally, the standard of hygiene in these enclosures is high, with thoughtful feeding receptacle placement reducing the risk of infestation by vermin.

Monkey World, UK

This ape rescue centre assists governments in stopping the smuggling of primates from the wild. Rescued animals are rehabilitated and great efforts are made to integrate individual animals into social groups.

2.2 Good Practice Guidelines

The following Good Practice Guidelines have been adapted from British regulations for zoological collections. However, they apply whenever animals are held captive for human entertainment, including zoological collections, circuses, 'swim-with' exhibits, dolphinariums, open farms and all other types of captive wild animal attractions. They also apply equally to all animals held at attractions, whether they are on public view or 'off-exhibit'.

General:

- The animal attraction should be recognised and regularly inspected by the appropriate body in the country of operation, as this can sometimes guarantee a minimum standard of animal welfare
- In countries where animal attractions are required to have a license to operate, the attraction should have a license that is in date and on public view
- The attraction should keep up-to-date records of all wild animals held including numbers of each species, births, deaths, animal acquisitions and disposals
- The attraction should have insurance that covers the facility and every person under a contract of service, or acting on their behalf, against liability for any damage or injury caused by any of the animals, whether inside or outside the attraction, including transportation to other premises. This should be in addition to public liability insurance and mandatory Health and Safety requirements
- The attraction should provide on-going training for animal keepers and/or require keeping staff to have a recognised animal management qualification
- Animal sanctuaries/orphanages should not allow animals to breed or replace animals that have died

Provision of Food & Water:

- Animals should have access at all times to clean, fresh water and be provided with, or have access to, a wholesome diet that meets the nutritional needs of the individual animal(s) involved
- A daily record of diet should be maintained for all animals
- Supplies of food and drink must be kept and prepared under hygienic conditions and be protected from contamination, mould or deterioration
- Food preparation areas should be free from pests and vermin and a written pest control policy should be in place and implemented
- Staff preparing the animals' food should observe strict standards of personal hygiene, so as not to contaminate it
- Smoking by staff and visitors should be prohibited in the vicinity of animals and in animal food preparation areas
- Uncontrolled feeding of animals by the public should not be permitted. Appropriate signage should be present on all enclosures instructing visitors not to feed animals
- Controlled feeding of animals by the public should be actively discouraged, taking into account the potential for disease transmission between animals and humans, public safety issues, the increased competition (and aggression) caused by this activity between animals, and the health of the animals themselves
- If, despite the safety and animal welfare issues highlighted, a supplier permits controlled feeding of animals, preventative measures should be in place (and well documented) to minimise the potential of disease transmission, to ensure public safety, and to avoid competition between animals. The supplier should provide appropriate food to the public, and carefully supervise its distribution to animals (on a one staff member to one visitor basis), so as to avoid overfeeding of individuals and to prevent injury to the public. Additionally staff should ensure that visitors wash their hands thoroughly with soap and hot water both prior to and after feeding takes place to minimise the risks of disease transmission

Provision of Suitable Environment:

- Enclosures should be of a size and design to provide the animal with its specific physical needs allowing substantial room for movement. Minimum enclosure sizes cannot be given as these vary by species, number of animals held and other factors. Temperature, ventilation, lighting and noise levels within enclosures should be suitable for the comfort and well-being of the particular animal
- Facilities should take into account the growth of animals and facilitate their needs at all stages of their growth and development
- The enclosure should be designed to allow for the animals' normal defence reactions and appropriate flight distance (which varies from species to species), particularly with regards to 'mixed exhibits' i.e.

- animals sharing an enclosure should be able to move out of view of each other if aggression occurs
- Animals should not be housed in the vicinity of mechanical amusement rides, noisy food outlets, entertainment events or loudspeaker systems
 - Enclosures and safety barriers should be well maintained to minimise the likelihood of harm to occupants or opportunities to escape. Any design defect or any infrastructure in need of repair should be rectified at once. Any vegetation or apparatus capable of causing harm to the animal or aiding escape should be removed or kept out of reach
 - Proper standards of hygiene, including personal hygiene of staff, in enclosures and treatment rooms, should be maintained. In particular, special attention should be given to the management and appropriate cleaning of enclosures and equipment within them, to reduce the risk of disease. Veterinary advice should be obtained and followed regarding the sanitation of enclosures, etc. In the case of aquatic animals, there should be regular monitoring of water quality
 - Visitors should be provided with litterbins so they can dispose of their rubbish responsibly. In this way litter should not find its way into enclosures
 - Animals should be protected against extremes of sunlight, heat, draught and cold
 - Animals should be able to escape the permanent gaze of the public at any time i.e. this could be either a private indoor enclosure with no access to view by the public, or an area of the outdoor enclosure that is out of view. Animals should not be 'locked out' of this private indoor enclosure during attraction opening hours. For cetaceans, so that animals can achieve privacy from public view, dolphins etc. should have access at all times to a private pool (with no public access) or alternatively the main pool should be closed to the public when performances are not taking place
 - There should be emergency procedures in place (and well documented) for moving animals in the event of fires and storms (in the case of dolphins in sea pens), etc. This should include provision for alternative housing
 - If wild animals are kept in semi-natural conditions (e.g. not in enclosures) domestic animals should not be allowed to interact with them. Domestic dogs in many countries, for example, carry rabies, which can be passed on to wild animals
 - Cetaceans are particularly stressed by sounds of a mechanical origin because of their regular repetitive nature. Sounds in the frequency range between 0 and 60 kHz should be kept as low as possible. Loud music should not be used during performances

- For bottlenose dolphins the aquatic environment⁷ is crucially important and temperature, water quality (Ph, salinity) must be monitored, recorded and controlled daily and bacterial content monthly:
 - Pool must never be allowed to freeze or exceed 28 degrees centigrade
 - Coliform bacterial content should be monitored to be at a consistently low level and must not exceed 500 per litre
 - pH must be maintained between 7.2 and 8.5
 - Salinity must be maintained at between 15 and 36 grams of salt (NaCl) per litre
- For aquatic animals: all water systems should have a filtration system and water quality should be regularly checked throughout the day to assess temperature, salinity, pH, ozone/redox, bacteria and halogen ions. All data should be recorded and be available for inspection
- All aquarium facilities should have back-up systems in case the heating, filtration and water quality systems fail
- Adequate provision should be made for the servicing, maintenance and uninterrupted operation of life-support systems e.g. aquarium water quality, humidity and temperature controls

Provision of Animal Health Care:

- A daily record should be kept on each animal, indicating any changes to its prescribed diet, health checks, any unusual behaviour or activity, and any interventions or remedial actions taken
- Enclosures should be of a size and design, and animals must be managed, so as to:
 - avoid animals within herds or groups being unduly dominated by specific individuals
 - avoid the risk of persistent and unresolved conflict between herd or group members, or between different species in mixed exhibits
 - ensure that the physical carrying capacity of the enclosure is not overburdened
 - prevent an uncontrolled build-up or spread of parasites and other pathogens
- Distances between animal enclosures and between enclosures and safety barriers for visitors should be at least two metres to minimise the transmission of disease and potential pathogens
- Regular, routine inspections must be undertaken by a qualified veterinary surgeon, who is familiar with the care and welfare needs of wild and exotic animals. Activities to include:

⁷ Detailed information on the housing of aquatic mammals can be found on the European Association for Aquatic Mammals' website (www.eaam.org)

- screening of all animals (particularly new arrivals) for diseases
 - regular screening of animals for zoonotic diseases
 - carrying out treatment of sick animals
 - administration of vaccines
 - deworming and other aspects of preventative medicine
 - health monitoring of animals including submission of blood and other samples for laboratory examination
 - training of zoo personnel in health and hygiene
 - nutrition and design of diets
 - exhibit design (including environmental enrichment)
 - supervision of quarantine facilities
 - establishment of written procedures that should be followed in the event of the accidental use of dangerous drugs
- All mortalities should be reported and a post-mortem carried out in accordance with veterinary advice. Adequate facilities should be available either at the animal attraction or within a reasonable distance for post-mortem examination of all species held at the attraction. Dead animals should be handled in a way which minimises the risk of transmission of infection
 - Dedicated accommodation, behind the scenes where necessary, should be available for the isolation and examination of newly arrived animals, and for the quarantine and care of unduly distressed, sick or injured animals
 - Newly arrived animals should be kept in quarantine before introduction to other animals in the collection and screened for pathogens and disease. Conditions should equal those of other similar resident animals in terms of welfare
 - Quarantine areas should not permit public access and personnel should wear protective clothing. Footwear and utensils used should be regularly cleaned to prevent disease transfer
 - Animal enclosures should be cleaned regularly to remove waste, foreign objects and unwanted food, which may attract vermin
 - Direct contact between animals and the public should be actively discouraged. If it is permitted, it should be under the supervision of a qualified person and preventative measures should be taken (and documented) to prevent disease transfer (zoonosis) between the public and the animals. People should be made aware of these risks and encouraged to use hand-washing facilities both before and after touching the animals

Provision of Opportunity to Express Most Normal Behaviour:

- Accommodation should take into account the natural habitat of the species and seek to meet the physiological and psychological needs of the animal
- Attractions should consult fully with relevant experts or a veterinary surgeon with knowledge of wild animals, and keep up-to-date with information on biology and husbandry, especially when considering enclosure design and mixed exhibits
- Enclosures should be furnished in accordance with the needs of the animal and include, as appropriate, bedding material, branchwork, burrows, suitable substrate, nest-boxes, pools, wallows, vegetation and other enrichment materials designed to aid and encourage normal behaviour patterns and minimise abnormal behaviour. A tree-dweller, therefore, requires a 3-dimensional enclosure with climbing apparatus and off the ground shelters, a burrowing animal requires a soft substrate floor, and a bird requires perches and substantial space for flight
- The attraction's management should carry out a variety of enrichment programmes, which should be alternated in order to stimulate and encourage a range of normal behaviour patterns. This should not, include encouraging activities that require the training of an animal to perform tricks or manoeuvres which are not part of its normal behaviour. If abnormal behaviours are detected (e.g. pacing, head-rolling, rocking, etc.), then the attraction should seek expert advice and carry out enrichment programmes to try and reverse the behaviour
- Animals of social species should be maintained in compatible social groups. Isolation should only occur on welfare grounds i.e. the animal is a cause of danger to others in the social group or is sick
- Solitary animals should not be kept in groups
- Animals of different species should not be allowed to inter-breed. All hybrid animals should be permanently sterilised

Provision of Protection from Fear & Distress:

- Animals should be allowed to carry out normal behaviour patterns and not be tethered, chained or otherwise restricted by physical means or by using drugs, unless this is for specific animal welfare reasons N.B. Birds of Prey (with the exception of owls and vultures) are sometimes tethered if used in flying demonstrations
- Animals that hunt in the wild (cats, hunting dogs, etc.) should not be housed in sight of prey species (antelope, buffalo, zebra, etc.)
- Animal handling should be actively discouraged. If handling does occur, it should be carried out under the strict supervision of a qualified, experienced staff member (i.e. an experienced keeper who has worked with such animals for a minimum of one year). Handling time should be limited to no more than 3 sessions of a maximum 1 hour duration per 24 hour period, with a minimum of 2 hours rest-time between sessions.

Handling should be carried out with care, under conditions consistent with the animal's welfare, and avoiding unnecessary discomfort, stress or physical harm. Preventative measures should be in place to cover potential disease risk between the public and animals handled

- Animals should not have teeth, claws, venom etc. removed in order to make them safer for public handling
- Animals should not be used as photographic objects
- Animals should not be provoked for the benefit of the viewing public
- Animals should not be kept in the close vicinity of loud noise e.g. amusement rides, noisy food outlets, loud music or megaphones
- Steps should be in place to prevent the public from provoking, teasing or alarming animals
- Animals should be provided with alternative accommodation to escape conflict with other animals and minimise stress, particularly if that animal is pregnant, raising young or injured
- The use of animals in performances should generally be discouraged as this can have severe animal welfare implications. For those animals used in performances, training methods should be based on positive reinforcement and not physical or mental abuse. Animal training protocols should be produced and made available to be inspected. Animals should not be trained to undertake tasks that have no basis in their natural behavioural repertoire e.g. humanised behaviours such as riding bikes or brushing teeth are unnatural and involve substantially more training, which can have serious animal welfare implications
- An experienced member of staff should accompany performing animals during performances (i.e. an experienced keeper/trainer who has worked with such animals for a minimum of one year). Public involvement should be limited and every precaution taken to ensure both public safety and animal welfare remains at a high standard
- Performances by individual animals should not exceed 2 sessions per day and there should be a rest period between performances of at least 2 hours. During rest periods, the animals should have sufficient space to exercise and privacy to relax. Performing animals should not be tethered or chained during the performance or during rest periods (but see note re Birds of Prey below)
- Birds of Prey kept as demonstration birds are sometimes tethered so they can be free-flown for the public. Such tethered birds should be flown at least 4 times a week and should not be tethered permanently. All birds should be given the opportunity to fly or move around freely during part of the year. Tethered birds are very vulnerable to attack by other wild animals, so they should be well protected at night. Owls and vultures, particularly the New World vultures should never be tethered. These can easily be trained to fly from pens and this is the preferred way to house them

- Due to the continuous travelling and the extreme nature of many circus training regimes, animal welfare in circuses is generally below the standard of most zoological collections. Additionally, unlike zoos, many countries do not inspect circuses when granting them a license to operate. Until these issues are remedied circuses involving wild animals should not, therefore, be supported or promoted by tour operators.

2.3 Sources of Further Information

- DEFRA, UK. Wildlife and Countryside. www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside
- Secretary of State's Standards for Modern Zoo Practice. DETR. www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/gwd/zooprac/pdf/zooprac.pdf
- UK ZOO Licensing Act. www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/gwd/zoo.htm
- The Zoos Forum, UK. www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/gwd/zoosforum
- The Federation of Zoos. www.zoofederation.org.uk
- World Organisation for Animal Health. www.oie.int
- European Association for Aquatic Mammals. www.eaam.org

3. Customer Safety

The safety of the public whilst visiting animal attractions is paramount. Bad practice in this area has led to injury and death of visitors, and negative publicity for both tour operators and suppliers. It is important, therefore, to acknowledge the potential risks of customers interacting with animals, whether directly or indirectly.

It is vital that suppliers and their employees are aware of these risks and that appropriate steps have been taken to ensure public safety. Emergency and security procedures should be in place, and regularly tested, to ensure their efficiency in every eventuality.

Finally, the visiting public should be properly informed of the risks of contact with animals and how these can be minimised.

3.1 What are the Risks?

Enclosures

Poorly designed and maintained enclosures that could allow an animal to escape, or visitors to get too close to animals, can lead to public injury/death.

Enclosures need to be suited to the strength of the animals they hold, and of sufficient height, depth etc. to safely contain the animals. On-going, routine maintenance of all enclosures is vital, to prevent their deterioration and weakening.

Safety barriers need to be present around all enclosures to protect the viewing public from any contact with animals.

- A gorilla escaped from its enclosure at Dallas Zoo (March 2004). Four visitors were attacked including a mother and her 3 year old son. The child suffered multiple bites to his head and chest and the mother to her legs. The zoo had been in financial straits and maintenance had been postponed because of a shortage of funds
- In 1998 a jaguar escaped from its enclosure at a zoo in Doue-la-Fontaine, Western France, and killed a child
- A child was badly bitten by a bear cub at Natural Bridge Zoo, USA (2000) by reaching into its enclosure. There was no safety barrier in place to prevent this
- 7 gorillas escaped from their enclosure at Columbus Zoo, Ohio (2004) when a door to the enclosure was accidentally left open by staff. Luckily no injuries were sustained

Zoonosis

Zoonosis is the transmission of disease from vertebrate animals to humans resulting in illness and possibly death. Particularly at risk are children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those people with compromised immunity.

There is a wealth of evidence to suggest that zoos represent a high-risk environment with regard to the transmission of zoonoses. Birds can carry

psittacosis, *salmonella* and *TB*, primates can carry *HIV*, *Ebola* and *Herpes B*, mammals can carry *rabies*, and farm animals can carry *E.coli 0157*, all of which can be lethal to humans. Other common diseases carried by animals include *influenza*, *Ovine Chlamydiosi*, *ringworm*, *shingles* and *toxoplasmosis*.

In 2000 all the Rhesus macaques at Woburn Safari Park, UK and the West Midlands Safari Park, UK (315 monkeys in total) were culled because they were believed to be carrying the Herpes B virus, which can be fatal in humans and can be spread by airborne transmission.

Disease can be spread from animals to humans by direct contact (bites, scratches, saliva), through contact with faeces, faecal dust and urine, or by the airborne route (coughing, sneezing etc.). When a reptile is held, for example, or a sheep petted, salmonella transferred from the animal's faeces onto the animal's own body, can enter the blood stream of humans through broken skin on the hand and cause infection. Likewise, unwashed hands can contaminate food that, once ingested, can lead to salmonellosis. In the case of reptiles salmonella is carried under the scales.

Every time a person has any kind of interaction with an animal, or the enclosure where it is kept, he or she is therefore at risk of zoonoses. Due to the growing trend in the practice of animal attractions encouraging more 'hands on' encounters with animals (e.g. petting, feeding, 'walk through' exhibits), this is a very real threat to public safety. Despite this, many animal attractions fail to publish the risks nor implement preventative measures to minimise disease transmission. Visitors to animal attractions should be informed of the risk of zoonoses and how to prevent or minimise it.

- Montgomery County Petting Zoo, Pennsylvania (2000) – 55 people were infected with *E. coli 0157*, with 16 (mainly children) hospitalised. One 4 year old needed a kidney transplant as a result
- Auckland Zoo (2000) – shingles outbreak amongst visitors contracted from pig-tailed macaques in a 'walk-through' exhibit

Animal Contact

It is important to acknowledge that wild animals are unpredictable, even if they have been bred in captivity. Some countries therefore, such as in the UK, list certain species as "Dangerous Wild Animals".

The visiting public is, therefore, at risk from injury/death from animal attacks in situations where the supplier allows contact to occur between humans and animals. Examples include 'swim with' dolphin and shark experiences, 'walk through' bird and monkey exhibits, photographic opportunities where the public hold, stroke or sit on an animal, falconry displays, feeding of animals, etc.

An example of how unpredictable wild animals can be is highlighted by a tiger attack at the Siegfried and Roy Magic Show in Las Vegas (Oct 2003). Here one of the tigers mauled its lifetime owner and trainer. Similarly, it is not uncommon for people to become injured from swimming with captive dolphins

or even interacting with them at the poolside during petting/feeding opportunities.

The majority of situations where there is free contact between people and wild/exotic animals should, therefore, be discouraged.

- A woman was mauled by a Bengal tiger at Marine World, California, whilst having her photo taken with it (1998). Earlier a small boy had his face badly clawed (needing plastic surgery) in a similar incident at the same animal theme park
- A young girl was badly injured whilst posing for photos with a tiger cub at Shanghai Safari Park, China (1999)
- A woman swimming with dolphins in an aquarium in Cancun, Mexico (2003) was pushed up against the wall of the enclosure by a dolphin and suffered a lacerated foot and bruising throughout her body. There are many other examples of dolphins head-butting, biting and displaying aggressive behaviour towards humans in 'swim with' experiences

3.2 Good Practice Guidelines

In order to reduce risks to the public, animal attractions should:

- Have a license to operate, issued by the appropriate body in each country. This can sometimes guarantee minimum standards of public safety
- Have adequate insurance covering public liability in case of injury or death caused by an animal
- Ensure all enclosures are properly designed so as to prevent escape of animals e.g. fences/walls of sufficient height to prevent escape by scaling; structure of sufficient depth to prevent escape by digging/burrowing animals (i.e. foundation on such enclosures should go down at least 4 feet); enclosure of sufficient strength to prevent escape; no trees too close to enclosures to prevent escape if trees fall onto enclosures during storms, etc.
- Ensure gates and doors to enclosures are securely locked at all times so as to prevent unauthorised opening
- Ensure staff are properly trained so that all safety procedures are carried out when entering and exiting enclosures
- Ensure all enclosures are well-maintained i.e. supporting posts firmly fixed into ground, fence material securely fitted to posts so weight of animals cannot displace it, hinges on gates/doors secure, no damage to enclosure or its fittings that could harm animals (e.g. jagged edges etc.)
- Ensure there are well documented, clear, tested emergency procedures for when there is a fire, flood or an animal escapes

- Ensure specific members of staff have undergone training and are licensed to use a fire-arm. One such staff member to be on duty at all times in case of an escape
- Ensure firearms and darting equipment are available for immediate use and are regularly maintained
- Ensure safety barriers between all enclosures and visitors (unless enclosures made of toughened glass and then not necessary) are designed so as to prevent contact of visitors with enclosures and that measures are in place to minimise any contact with enclosures, for example, through appropriate signage
- Discourage the feeding of animals by the public through signage etc.
- Discourage direct contact between an animal and a human, as this may present dangers to the public and cause stress or injury to the animal
- Carry out a risk assessment ensuring that *direct* contact between animals and humans, if permitted, is controlled and safe e.g. handling, feeding, walk-through exhibits, etc.
- Ensure the public is made aware of the risks that exist whilst at the attraction, including the potential transmission of disease from animals to humans, and visa versa
- Ensure preventative measures are in place to minimise zoonoses. For example, through appropriate signage, the provision, supervision of, and general encouragement of people to use provided washbasins to wash hands with soap and hot water (for minimum of 20 seconds) before and after contact with an animal or its enclosure (and in the case of 'swim-with' exhibits, shower facilities provided). Children should not be permitted to put their faces against animals, nor to put their hands in their mouths before washing their hands after contact with an animal/enclosure
- Ensure all animals are screened regularly and thoroughly for any zoonotic disease
- Exercise caution at all times if contact is permitted, since the behaviour of all animals is less predictable when away from their usual environment. The public should be made fully aware of the risks before any such contact takes place. Potentially dangerous practices such as dolphin dorsal and pectoral fin rides should be prohibited.
- Contact between the public and dangerous wild animals should not be permitted under any circumstances
- If feeding is permitted in certain circumstances, it should be tightly controlled to minimise the potential risks e.g. food receptacles disinfected prior to and after use; people to wash hands prior to and after feeding takes place. The entire process should be managed by suitably, qualified staff on a one staff member to one visitor basis. An interpretative programme should also be delivered during such feeding sessions, including the risks to the public of feeding animals

3.3 Sources of Further Information

- Secretary of State's Standards for Modern Zoo Practice. DETR.
www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/gwd/zooprac/pdf/zooprac.pdf
- Born Free Foundation. www.bornfree.org.uk (search on 'zoonoses')
- Captive Wild Animal Protection Coalition. News/Incidents.
www.cwapc.org/news/newIndex2.asp

4. Education

In accordance with the World Zoo Conservation Strategy (WZCS) and the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), zoos have a responsibility to operate in an environmentally sustainable way. This includes raising awareness of conservation, biodiversity and sustainable use issues. All zoos should therefore have an active education strategy, aimed at informing visitors about the natural world, biodiversity and the importance of conserving it. They should actively encourage conservation through learning and engender positive attitudes and values towards animal welfare, nature and its conservation, whilst at the same time entertaining visitors.

4.1 What are the Issues?

Research evidence indicates that many zoos and other captive animal attractions are failing to engender positive attitudes and values towards animal welfare, nature and conservation (Denver Zoological Foundation, 2004). Hence, many animal attractions are failing in their responsibility to utilise their educational potential to inspire in visitors an understanding of the natural world.

An important first indicator of whether suppliers take this responsibility seriously is the information provided on each enclosure. Additionally, captive animal attractions should provide both formal and informal education to their visitors which is informative, accurate, and which encourages people to learn. The education programme should also address the risks involved in inappropriate human/animal interactions, discouraging them where possible.

4.2 Good Practice Guidelines

- Suppliers should actively promote public education and awareness in relation to animal welfare and the conservation of biodiversity
- Suppliers should have a written education strategy and an active education programme
- Suppliers should have at least one trained member of staff dedicated to delivering their education programme
- Suitable facilities/services should be available for educational purposes at all attractions e.g. guided tours and/or classrooms and/or talks, etc.
- Accurate information about the species exhibited should be displayed on all enclosures. As a minimum this should include:
 - the species name (both common and scientific)
 - some of its biological characteristics
 - a description of its natural habitat
 - details of its conservation status
 - threats to it in the wild

- For animals used in performances, the performance must be able to demonstrate adequate educational contribution to justify it e.g. the performance can educate people by animals displaying aspects of their natural behaviour and this being interpreted to visitors through a commentary that explains how this behaviour manifests itself in the wild and why it is important to the animal
- Educate visitors about the damage caused by both the souvenir trade in wildlife products and the illegal pet trade in wild animals, so as to discourage visitors from partaking in either

Examples of Good Practice in Action

Bristol Zoo, UK

Has an extensive range of courses available for children of all ages, adults, teacher's courses, an interactive education centre, online resources/information sheets on a range of subjects from conservation and endangered species through to African culture and polar experiences. It has a team of dedicated education officers and volunteers that deliver community education outreach services and interactive group workshop sessions

Munda Wanga Wildlife Park, Zambia

All visitors to the park are accompanied by a guide who provides interpretation on the animals held, their conservation status in the wild, why they are in the sanctuary (e.g. threats in the wild), and general conservation issues.

4.3 Sources of Further Information

- Secretary of State's Standards for Modern Zoo Practice. DETR.
www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/gwd/zooprac/pdf/zooprac.pdf

5. Conservation

In accordance with the World Zoo Conservation Strategy (WZCS) and the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), zoos should make a significant contribution to conservation, biodiversity and sustainable use issues. All zoos should therefore participate in internationally coordinated captive breeding programmes of endangered species and, furthermore, contribute directly to conservation activities in the wild.

All animal attractions should demonstrate measurable performance in providing a service to conservation, if they are to operate responsibly.

5.1 What are the Issues?

Animal attractions depend on wildlife for their very existence, and hence have a duty to contribute towards the conservation of animals in the wild. Many suppliers take a pro-active approach in this area and acknowledge the role they have as educators and conservationists, whilst others do little, or simply pay lip service to it.

Captive animal attractions that exhibit wild and exotic species can contribute to conservation in several ways. This could be by providing training courses in relevant conservation skills, by the exchange of information relating to species conservation or where appropriate, captive breeding, repopulation or reintroduction of species into the wild. Others may study animals in captivity, support research in the field and help protect animals in their natural habitats. Primarily, this work is paid for through providing a leisure facility open to the public.

Finally, animal attractions should not take wildlife out of the wild to stock their exhibits, as this defeats their conservation ethic.

- San Diego Zoo and Lowrey Park Zoo in Florida purchased elephants taken from the wild in Swaziland in 2003 for exhibition in their animal attractions

5.2 Good Practice Guidelines

A responsible animal attraction should:

- Be an active participant in, and/or demonstrate evidence of their commitment to, *in-situ*⁸ international endangered species conservation programmes
- Contribute to conserving wildlife in the wild (*in-situ* conservation) and/or participate in field conservation projects
- Encourage/carry out research that benefits conservation e.g. own research or by forging links with Higher Education establishments

⁸ *In-situ* conservation – conservation that takes place in the wild.

- Have an overall conservation policy. In the case of zoological collections, suppliers should show how this relates to the World Zoo Conservation Strategy
- Not place additional pressure on wild species by removing animals from the wild
- Not sell curios using wildlife products and other threatened natural materials, and actively discourage visitors from purchasing them elsewhere through education. This includes:
 - coral - soft and hard
 - shells - of any kind, marine or land
 - any kind of reef animal - particularly popular are starfish and seahorses
 - ivory
 - skins - anything made out of animal skin (unless sure it is legal), belts, handbags, drums, etc.
 - hard woods - although it may not be illegal to export certain kinds of hard woods, the craft 'tourist' industry is destroying forests
 - bushmeat - fresh or dried
 - anything made with a part of an animal - such as quills, bones, teeth, feathers
 - tortoiseshell (either a whole shell or made into other items)
 - traditional medicines with animal products
 - good luck charms made out of animal parts
 - live animals for pets (e.g. tortoises)
 - plant parts - seeds, flower heads, roots, etc.

If livelihoods are affected by such a policy, attractions should understand who is affected by the discouragement of such trade, and encourage NGOs/governments etc. to work with them or local organisations on alternative livelihood sources. Attractions should support such initiatives by promoting, as appropriate, products produced by these alternative livelihood strategies e.g. encouraging the purchase of products made from vegetable ivory etc. Suppliers could also work with local people directly to support them in securing new livelihood strategies

Examples of Good Practice in Action

Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Jersey Zoo, UK

Durrell Wildlife runs unique courses in good conservation practice at its International Training Centre in Jersey and in locations around the world. Its students are scientists from developing countries who are in a prime position to save animals from extinction. To date they have trained over 1,200 students from 105 countries. The zoo also carries out extensive *in-situ* conservation in many countries around the world, using its scientific expertise

to determine how to save animals and then using its resources to initiate programmes in the relevant countries.

Munda Wanga Wildlife Park, Zambia

Munda Wanga is a wildlife sanctuary for rescued wildlife that generates income through tourism. It operates a very successful baboon rehabilitation programme, whereby baboons rescued from the illegal pet trade are re-introduced into the wild. Munda Wanga operates anti-poaching patrols in the release site area, which along with protecting the released baboons has made the area safer for all wildlife, thus meeting a wider conservation objective. Researchers are also employed to document and follow the release process, so others can use this knowledge.

5.3 Sources of Further Information

- Secretary of State's Standards for Modern Zoo Practice. DETR. www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/gwd/zooprac/pdf/zooprac.pdf
- World Zoo Conservation Strategy (Executive Summary). <http://www.brookfieldzoo.org/pagegen/inc/WCZS.pdf>

6. TF Checklist

A checklist has been prepared to enable captive animal attractions to assess their performance against key elements of the Good Practice Guidelines (see Appendix 3). This will allow suppliers to establish whether they are achieving good practice in relation to animal welfare, conservation, education and customer safety in relation to wildlife.

The checklist is designed to provide a 'top line' assessment and as such is quite general, covering in one checklist all types of captive animal attractions. However, it aims to identify where good practice is taking place and where improvements are needed, along with identifying serious cases of animal suffering.

Sharing the findings of the checklist with tour operators will enhance a supplier's reputation with these organisations, as it demonstrates a commitment to improving standards and an intention to meet good practice guidelines.

6.1 Process

Suppliers can use suitably experienced employees, who have knowledge of the issues covered, to conduct the checklist e.g. vet or curator. Alternatively a specialist wildlife consultant, qualified vet with experience and knowledge of wild animals or an animal welfare NGO could be employed to conduct the checklist on the supplier's behalf. Tour operators promoting the supplier could also be invited to participate in completing the checklist, again demonstrating the supplier's commitment to the good practice agenda, and cementing the on-going relationship between supplier and tour operator. Those items in the checklist that are not relevant to a specific type of captive animal attraction should be marked as so.

Suppliers should review their performance against the checklist on a regular, preferably annual, basis. In this way, suppliers (and the tour operators that promote them) can be assured that good practice is being achieved, or worked towards, and will hence enhance their reputations with clients and minimise the risk of any potential negative publicity.

Those items in the checklist that are not relevant to a specific type of captive animal attraction should be marked as so.

The Good Practice Guidelines should be referred to and read before conducting checklists. Additionally, the Species Grid in Appendix 2 is provided as a tool to be used in conjunction with the checklist.

Where the checklist identifies issues that need addressing, it is advised that the supplier takes pro-active steps to rectify these within the timescales indicated on the checklist against each issue. The different timescales employed reflect the degree of priority that needs to be given to the various

issues raised in the checklist, enabling suppliers to improve their standards over time, but with critical issues being addressed first.

Issues that are central to customer safety and in guaranteeing a minimum level of animal welfare are given greatest priority and should be addressed immediately. For such issues where they relate to potential animal suffering it is advised that a specialist⁹ (wildlife consultant or a qualified vet with experience and knowledge of wild animals and animal welfare issues or an animal welfare NGO) be called in immediately to undertake a detailed assessment and provide recommendations, so as to quickly relieve the suffering of the animals involved. All other issues identified should be addressed within the timescales indicated (range from 1 month to 1 year).

Suppliers that carry out the checklist and address the issues raised within the given timescales, can confidently claim that they are committed to achieving good practice in relation to animal welfare, education, conservation and customer safety, and as such will be rewarded with enhanced reputation with both tour operators and customers.

Finally, suppliers should detail/attach evidence of their good practice against the various items covered in the checklist to the completed checklist itself. In this way, suppliers can use this self-assessed checklist as proof of their performance with external bodies, customers and tour operators.

If tour operators wish to use these checklists as a way of auditing their suppliers, it is recommended, however, that either:

- Tour operators conduct the checklists jointly with their suppliers

or

- Tour operators validate a supplier's own self-assessed checklist by randomly auditing 10 items on the checklist to ensure that the supplier's assessment of its own performance is accurate

⁹ If a vet is used, it is essential that they have experience and knowledge of both wild animals and of animal welfare. Ditto wildlife consultant and animal welfare NGO. If such a specialist cannot be sourced in the country of operation, one should be sourced in the UK.

7. Customer Feedback

Effective systems should be in place that encourage visitors to feedback their views and thoughts on their visit to an animal attraction, along with any complaints they may have, to both suppliers and tour operators. In this way, tour operators and suppliers can work together to improve the visitor experience. Animal welfare issues can also be highlighted quickly, and intervention strategies employed to address these.

Tour operators and suppliers should encourage visitors to feedback to them directly via establishing, and actively promoting in their literature/websites/briefings etc., customer feedback mechanisms. A concerted effort by tour operators and suppliers to raise the profile of animal welfare issues will help identify hotspots and assist in promoting high industry-wide standards. Feedback mechanisms include the provision of visitor comments book at attractions plus access to staff, end of visit surveys in destination plus email and postal surveys post holiday by tour operators, together with the promotion of email, web form and telephone customer initiated feedback routes (both suppliers and tour operators). Tour operator representatives could also hand out feedback forms with attraction tickets.

Additionally, The Travel Foundation has a customer feedback form on its website (www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk) along with information on animal welfare issues and advice for customers in this area. If the customer gives the name of the tour operator that promoted the animal attraction to him/her, the Travel Foundation will field such complaints/feedback to the tour operator in question for its attention and action. This information will also be used to keep the industry abreast of animal welfare issues pertaining to tourism. Animal welfare issues identified in this way will also be notified to the Born Free Foundation¹⁰ so that representations can be made in severe animal welfare cases, in an attempt to address the suffering of the animals in question without delay.

Tour operators' representatives should promote this website to all customers buying tickets for excursions to captive animal attractions.

In order to improve animal welfare and achieve greater sustainability, tour operators and suppliers will need to act on all customer feedback.

¹⁰ Born Free Foundation – an international animal welfare and wildlife conservation charity, based in the UK.

8. Responsible Tourists

Tour operators may wish to adopt the following 'Responsible Tourist Code of Conduct', or an adapted version, to give to tourists who book excursions to captive animal attractions. Similarly, suppliers may wish to adapt this to provide to visitors on arrival.

Responsible Tourist Code of Conduct for Visits to Captive Animal Attractions

The guidelines below are for responsible tourists visiting captive animal attractions. By following these guidelines you can help to:

- Ensure your own personal safety
 - Maximise the welfare of the wildlife you are visiting
-

- Do not feed wild animals as this can have severe consequences for an animal's welfare and also place yourself at risk
- Do not touch wild animals as you can unwittingly pass on diseases to wildlife, as well as placing yourself at risk
- Do not cross safety barriers or touch animal enclosures
- Do not smoke when close to animals
- Do not tease or provoke animals
- Do not shout or make loud noises when close to animals
- Do not drop litter - dispose of it responsibly
- Do not support the use of animals as photographic props i.e. do not have your photograph taken with an animal used specifically for this purpose
- If the attraction allows controlled feeding/handling of animals ensure that the your tour operator and the attraction makes you aware of the risks. These include:
 - Potential disease transmission between animals and humans (and vice versa) – you should ensure you wash your hands with hot water and soap both before and after any contact to minimise this
 - Risk of injury (scratching, biting etc.)
 - Potential stress to animals
- Do not interact in any way with dangerous wild animals (e.g. lions, tigers, etc.) as wild animals are unpredictable and you will place yourself at great risk
- If engaging in swim with dolphin encounters, do not ride on the animal's dorsal or pectoral fins as this can be very dangerous
- Do not support animal performances where animals are trained to perform tasks that that have no basis in their natural behaviour e.g. humanised behaviours (riding bikes, cleaning teeth, etc.), as these are

unnatural and involve substantially more training, which can have serious animal welfare implications. Do not purchase souvenirs that are made out of wildlife products or other threatened natural materials e.g. coral, shells (marine or land), starfish, seahorses, wild animal skin (handbags, belts, drums, etc.), ivory, hard wood, bushmeat, parts of wild animals (bone, feathers, quills, teeth, etc. used in traditional medicines, good luck charms, etc.), tortoise shell, plant parts (seeds, roots, flower heads), etc.

- Ask your tour operator/the attraction if any animals kept have been taken from the wild, as this places additional pressure on wild species
 - Ask your tour operator/the attraction if any animals kept have been taken from the wild, as this places additional pressure on wild species
 - Ask your tour operator/the attraction if there is an active education programme at the attraction, as responsible attractions provide this
 - Ask your tour operator/the attraction if the attraction contributes to the conservation of animals in the wild, as responsible attractions take this seriously
 - Report all incidents of poor animal welfare at an attraction to your tour operator, the attraction, the Travel Foundation in the UK (www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk) and an appropriate animal welfare organisation¹¹
-

¹¹ E.g. The Born Free Foundation (www.bornfree.org.uk)

9. Responsible Tour Operators

Responsible tour operators should only use captive animal attractions that are committed to achieving good practice. It is recommended that they should:

- Follow those elements of the Good Practice Guidelines that are relevant to their own business, hence demonstrating their commitment to sustainability
- Encourage their suppliers to achieve good practice by following the guidelines and using the checklist as a tool to raise standards
- Use animal attractions that have conducted a 'Good Practice Checklist' and have demonstrated they are achieving good practice
- Participate with suppliers in conducting 'Good Practice Checklists' at animal attractions
- Maintain an up-to-date list of suppliers indicating those who have carried out a 'Good Practice Checklist', noting the issues that need to be addressed and the timescales for improvements to be made
- Put on hold pending improvements being made, and ultimately de-list if improvements are not made, those animal attractions that show poor performance in animal welfare standards as evidenced by the 'Good Practice Checklist'
- Provide customers with information on animal welfare issues and employ effective customer feedback mechanisms
- Provide customers with a 'Responsible Tourist Code of Conduct for Visits to Captive Animal Attractions' prior to excursions
- Promote the Travel Foundation website to customers (re customer feedback and information on animal welfare issues)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

List of Consultees

Below is a list of organisations, NGOs, individuals, institutions and authorities that were invited to participate as consultees in the development of one or both of the Good Practice Guidelines and Checklists for Animal Interactions - Captive Animal Attractions and Wildlife Tourism. Due to confidentiality reasons, those that provided feedback cannot be individually identified.

■ Members of the TFIU

■ Animal Welfare Organisations

- Born Free Foundation
- WSPA
- Captive Wild Animals Protection Coalition (CWAPC - US)
- International League for the Protection of Horses (ILPH)
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
- League Against Cruel Sports
- Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDOS)

■ Legal Bodies/Organisations

- CITES Secretariat
- CIEL (Centre for International Environmental Law)

■ Governmental Organisations

- DEFRA Zoo Forum (UK)
- DEFRA Animal Health & Welfare Strategy Team
- DFID
- Kenya Wildlife Service
- Kenya Tourist Board
- Zambia Wildlife Authority

■ Conservation and/or Development NGOs

- Care for the Wild
- Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDOS)
- Marine Conservation Society
- RSPB
- Birdlife International
- Species Survival Network
- Friends of Conservation
- WWF
- Born Free Foundation
- British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR)
- Colobus Trust
- Wildlife Protection Society of India
- Tourism Concern UK

- Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
- ACT (Action for Conservation through Tourism)
- Centre for Environmentally Responsible Tourism (CERT)
- Gambia Tourism Concern
- NACOBTA (Namibian Community Based Tourism Association)
- UCOTA (Uganda Community Tourism Association)
- Tambopata Reserve Society, Peru
- The Institute of Social & Ethical Accountability
- Ethical Trading Initiative
- International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)
- Project African Wilderness
- Survival International

■ **Academic Institutions**

- DICE, University of Kent at Canterbury
- Oxford University
- University Federation for Animal Welfare
- Indian Institute of Wildlife
- WildCru (Oxford University)
- British Veterinary Association

■ **Animal Attractions & Wildlife Tourism Providers/Organisations**

- Federation of Zoological Collections of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (BIAZA)
- EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria)
- Zippos Circus
- National Bird of Prey Centre
- Robin Pope Safaris, Zambia
- Norman Carr Safaris, Zambia
- Luangwa Safari Operators Association, Zambia
- Malawi Tourism Association
- Safari Club International
- Holland & Holland
- American Sport Fishing Association
- BTCV
- Earthwatch
- Wildlife Worldwide
- Sunvil Africa
- Discovery Initiatives

■ **Other Interested Parties**

- Paul Sponge (expert on wild cetacea)
- John Gripper (vet & former Zoo Inspector)
- Greg Rasmussen (wildlife consultant, Zimbabwe)
- Johan Joubert (vet – Shamwari Game Reserve, South Africa)
- PADI International
- Health and Safety Executive
- CIEH (Chartered Institute for Environmental Health)

Appendix 2

Species Grid

Supporting Information Sheet - Basic Information about Animals Commonly kept in Zoos

The Species Grid in Appendix 2 provides the reader with some basic information on common zoo animals. It must be noted that this information should only be treated as a **guide** and not as mandatory – as certain species within the specified 'Animal' kinds have more specific needs, which may not be addressed in the grid.

a. Key to Understanding the Species Grid

Hazard:

Provides a categorisation of animal kinds, according to their ferocity and ability to cause harm to people - shown according to risk levels.

Category 1 – Greatest Risk

Hazardous. No contact with visitors. Separated from the public by a barrier of suitable design in order to prevent physical contact between animal and visiting public.

Category 2 – Less Risk

Less hazardous. Separated from the public by a barrier but need not prevent all physical contact. Caution should be taken however. Animals must be given adequate space and refuge.

Category 3 – Least Risk

Non-hazardous. Those animals that are not naturally ferocious or are not able to inflict appreciable injury to humans.

Env.:

Indicates whether an animal lives on land (**Ter** – terrestrial), in trees (**Ar** – arboreal) or in water (**Aq** – aquatic)

Time:

Indicates when an animal is active (this is important to ensure the animal has the correct lighting): during the day (**D** – diurnal) or during the night (**N** – nocturnal)

Status:

Indicates whether an animal usually lives **solitary** (only coming together to mate) or whether an animal naturally lives in a **social** group

Type:

Indicates what an animal eats: meat-eater (**C** – carnivore), meat & vegetables eater (**O** – omnivore) or purely vegetables (**H** – herbivore)

H2O:

Describes the animal's water requirements: **D** – only drinking water, **P** – small pool, **B** – large pool for swimming/bathing (+ purely aquatic animals)

Food:

Provides a brief description of food requirements. A further information sheet provides information on how the food can be used to provide added enrichment for the captive animals