



World Association of
Zoos and Aquariums
WAZA | *United for
Conservation*[®]

CARING FOR WILDLIFE

THE WORLD ZOO AND AQUARIUM ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGY

Executive Summary

We believe that zoos and aquariums have a responsibility to achieve high standards of animal welfare in support of their goals as modern conservation organisations.

In recent years, there have been significant advances in knowledge about animals and animal welfare science. This has resulted in big changes in modern zoos and aquariums. Whereas zoos and aquariums of the past were places where animals were ‘displayed’ for the pleasure of visitors, today’s zoos and aquariums must be centres for animal welfare. They must ensure that the conditions for animals in their care are the best that can be delivered. As scientific knowledge about animals grows, this must be consistently applied.

While there continue to be challenges in the global implementation of animal welfare standards; with different attitudes, societal expectations and varied jurisdictional frameworks and legislation; all zoos and aquariums can take a significant stance to improve the lives of animals in their care. The *World Zoo and Aquarium Animal Welfare Strategy* recommends that zoos and aquariums should apply a simple welfare model – the ‘Five Domains’ – and make an ongoing commitment to animal welfare in all operations and to all animals in their care. The Strategy recommends continued education and training of staff in animal welfare, and a commitment to animal welfare research, to applying animal welfare knowledge to exhibit design and to being leading centres for animal welfare.

While the goal of WAZA is collective conservation action, the Strategy affirms WAZA’s commitment to leading its members and colleague zoos and aquariums to build expertise, leadership and capacity in animal welfare.

The *World Zoo and Aquarium Animal Welfare Strategy* provides guidance on how to establish and maintain acceptable animal welfare standards and related best practice. It outlines the animal welfare measures and conduct expected from WAZA members and it supports the ongoing evolution of positive animal welfare conduct within the wider zoo and aquarium community.

In doing this, WAZA calls on its members and all zoos and aquariums to:

- strive to achieve high welfare standards for the animals in their care;
- be animal welfare leaders, advocates and authoritative advisers; and
- provide environments that focus on the animals’ physical and behavioural needs.

