

## REPORTS AND COMMENTS

### **Guidelines on the care and use of captive and free-living wild animals in research, teaching and testing**

The title of a new set of guidelines published by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC), 'Guidelines on the care and use of wildlife', could mislead those who reserve the term 'wildlife' for free-living animals only. These guidelines cover both free-ranging and captive wild vertebrates, excluding fish.

There is increasing research on wild animals. Although much of this is aimed at improved understanding of biology and ecology that is likely to be of benefit for wildlife management and conservation in the future, some involves interventions that are not in the best welfare interests of the animals involved. The CCAC's guidelines provide a useful review of the issues that should be considered before any use of wild animals in research, teaching and testing. They also have a great deal of relevance to the planning of interventions for wildlife management.

There are chapters on ethical issues, field studies, collecting of vertebrates, physical and chemical restraint, marking, medical and surgical procedures, moving and holding of wildlife, euthanasia, and human safety considerations. The key issues are distilled into 52 guidelines which are extracted and listed in the summary. The first of these, Guideline 1, reads: "The use of wildlife for research, management, teaching and testing is acceptable only if it contributes to the understanding of biological principles or to outcomes that can be expected to benefit humans, animals or ecosystems. Expert evaluation of proposals must attest to the potential value of studies involving wildlife." The second guideline requires that each project involving the use of animals for these purposes is described in a protocol and that these protocols are all approved formally by animal care committees before the work can begin. It is interesting to note that this system is strikingly different from that in the UK in which, less satisfactorily, responsibilities for various aspects of wildlife management and research are spread among a number of agencies.

These guidelines have been aimed in particular at researchers at universities, colleges and zoological parks and in government and non-government organisations, and at individuals involved in wildlife management. They will be of interest and value to those planning wildlife interventions for research or management reasons anywhere in the world.

The CCAC is preparing two other documents in this series: one on the care and use of fish in research, teaching and testing, and the other on the care and use of farm animals for these purposes.

---

**Guidelines On: The Care and Use of Wildlife** (May 2003) Published by the Canadian Council on Animal Care. 67 pp A4 (ISBN 0 919087 39 6). Available from the Canadian Council on Animal Care, 315–350 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1R 1B1, Canada (for ordering information, see <http://www.ccac.ca/english/publicat.htm>) and also at <http://www.ccac.ca/english/Gdlines/Wildlife/Wildlife.pdf>.

### **Code of Recommendations for the welfare of cattle in England**

In April 2003, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) of the Westminster Government published a new code of recommendations for the welfare of cattle. This replaces the previous 'Cattle Welfare Code', published in 1983, and takes account of developments in research, good husbandry and relevant legislation (notably the Welfare of Farmed Animals [England] Regulations 2000) since that time. The new code applies only in England (similar codes are being produced by the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland).

The code includes sections on stockmanship, health, feed and water, accommodation, equipment, management, fire and other emergency precautions, pregnancy and calving, calf-rearing, breeding animals, and dairy cows. There are appendices listing DEFRA publications that provide further information relating to cattle welfare and relevant legislation (incidentally, these total 18 acts, regulations and orders, half of which have been produced in the last eight years) as well as DEFRA information on cattle identification and movements. In each section, relevant legal provisions are presented alongside the paragraphs of advice and recommendations. The document is well-drafted and clearly laid out to provide a user-friendly and, as far as possible, single source of key information for stockpersons.

One of the new recommendations since the earlier edition is that the stock keeper should draw up, with the herd's veterinary surgeon and, where necessary, other technical advisors, a written health and welfare plan and that this should be reviewed and updated each year to include strategies to deal with disease problems. It is specified that this plan should "look at" a number of issues in particular, and that these are to include biosecurity arrangements on farm and in transport, purchased stock procedures, various disease control protocols, and isolation procedures.

By law, all cattle stockmen in England are required to be familiar with and have access to this code, but it will be of interest and relevance also to many others associated with the cattle farming industry.

---

*Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Cattle* (April 2003) Published by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. 39 pp A4. Available, free of charge, from DEFRA Publications, Admail 6000, London SW1A 2XX, UK and via the DEFRA website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk>.

### **Development of policy on dealing with invasive non-native species in the UK**

"When non-native species become invasive they can transform ecosystems and threaten native and endangered species ... Invasive non-native species also damage economic interests such as agriculture, forestry and infrastructure, and can threaten public health. Thus the problems caused by invasive non-native species are serious: so serious that the introduction of non-native species is identified as one of the main causes of biodiversity loss worldwide ... With increasing global trade and world travel these problems are likely to continue to grow." (Excerpts from the introduction to the Executive Summary of the review of policy on non-native species — see details below).

In response to growing concern that current arrangements for addressing these threats were not sufficient and that further action was needed, a review of policy on non-native species relevant to terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments in Great Britain was commissioned by Ministers in March 2001. The Review Group set up by DEFRA has now published its extensive report. This covers many aspects of the issues concerning both non-native plants and animals, including prevention measures, public awareness and education, monitoring and surveillance, and legislation. The range of problems caused by non-native invasive species in Great Britain is illustrated throughout the report by case studies about, for example, grey squirrels (major damage to forestry and displacement of red squirrels), mink (serious impact on water vole populations), hedgehogs on the Uists (serious impact on wader productivity), Chinese mitten crabs (serious impact on native white-clawed crayfish through spread of disease) and Zebra mussels (smother native bivalves).