

be gained from the following extracts taken from the section on general considerations. 'Procedures that may cause more than momentary or slight pain or distress to the birds should be performed with appropriate sedation or analgesia except when justified for scientific reasons in writing by the investigator in advance...', and, 'The living conditions of birds held in captivity should be appropriate to satisfy the standards of hygiene, nutrition, group composition and numbers, refuge provision, and protection from environmental stress necessary to maintain that species in a state of health and well-being.'

In the absence of any such guidelines in the USA hitherto, this document is a good step forward and an excellent start. It provides a useful checklist for those responsible for the care of avian research animals in the USA and for institutional ethics committees responsible for overseeing their activities. One hopes that it will be widely used in this context and will form the basis of more detailed, species-specific standards in the future.

Policy Statement for the Humane Care and Use of Birds (1998). Association of Avian Veterinarians: Bedford, Texas. 6pp. Loose-leaf. Available from the producers, PO Box 210732, Bedford, Texas 76095, USA; or from AAVPubs@aol.com. Free, if obtained via e-mail; or US\$1.00 for a hard copy on receipt of a sae.

Guidelines for wildlife rehabilitation units

Recent surveys of wildlife hospitals in the UK have estimated that at least 20 000 sick and injured vertebrate wild animals are taken into temporary captivity for treatment and rehabilitation each year – and that the actual number is probably very much greater. In contrast to the situation in some other countries, there are no specific legal controls dealing with these endeavours in the UK (although constraints are set by a variety of other legislation). No licence is required to run a wildlife hospital, nor is there any requirement for people who wish to try their hand at wildlife treatment and rehabilitation to undergo training beforehand. Recognizing a need for the development of standards and for dissemination of information on the subject, a group of interested people formed the British Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (BWRC) in the late 1980s to address these, and related issues. Since then, the BWRC has organized an annual conference, produced news-letters, served as a forum for information exchange, and done a great deal to promote high standards of animal welfare in wildlife rehabilitation in the UK. The organization has now produced a very useful set of guidelines for the running of wildlife rehabilitation units. These have been designed to help achieve the BWRC's objectives of promoting the welfare of wildlife casualties – both while in captivity and after release to the wild – and of ensuring that casualties are handled within the framework and spirit of the law, by 'outlining the basic facilities a rehabilitation unit might provide and the ethical and legal considerations within which it might work'.

The booklet provides information under the following section headings: 'Capture handling and transportation', 'The treatment phase', 'Convalescence and pre-release assessment', 'Release', 'Permanent captivity', 'Records', and 'Volunteers'. Appendices are provided on: i) relevant legislation (outlining 12 Acts); ii) basic skills in which senior personnel should be competent; iii) basic equipment that should be available including the medical kit, accommodation, and handling equipment; and iv) defining a 'statement of facilities'. In the latter, it is suggested that each unit produces a statement of facilities which outlines working practices and the maximum capacity of the unit.

The guidelines promote a realistic and sensible approach. For example, they state that 'at all stages...the welfare of the individual animal must be the main concern', but then recognize: 'At the same time consideration should be given to the consequences of attempting to return a rehabilitated casualty to its wild habitat and the effect this may have on the stability of the

ecosystem to which it is returned.' It is also stated that '...any casualty retained for treatment...should have a reasonable expectation of successful release and long-term survival in the wild'. Key practical points are outlined and relevant legal aspects described in each section.

There is growing public interest in the rescue and treatment of wildlife casualties. Anyone hoping that this might be a detailed manual on running a wildlife hospital will be disappointed – but that is not the purpose of the booklet. It serves a very useful function in helping to establish a framework of standards. Veterinarians are likely to find it very valuable as initial guidance for the rehabilitators with whom they work and in helping to explain the complexities and difficulties of wildlife rehabilitation to enthusiastic but naive members of the public. Although the legal aspects described relate to UK law, much in these guidelines is relevant to wildlife rehabilitation anywhere in the world.

Guidelines for Wildlife Rehabilitation Units. British Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (1998). British Wildlife Rehabilitation Council: Chester. 24pp. Paperback. Available from the BWRC, c/o RSPCA Wildlife Department, Causeway, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1HG, UK. Free

Introduction to animal welfare issues

Animal Welfare is the third volume in the *Issues* series published by Independence Educational Publishers. The aim of this series is to provide a starting point for obtaining up-to-date information in a readily accessible form for use in a variety of courses including GCSEs and 'A' levels (ie for the 15–18+ age group). This volume looks at three areas: animal research, hunting and animal cruelty. It comprises a selection of articles and essays (24 in total) from a variety of sources including government reports, newspaper reports and features, and literature from lobby groups and charitable organizations. The book presents a fairly well-balanced mix of arguments for and against the issues it addresses. For example, the section on fox hunting includes pieces from the Countryside Alliance, the RSPCA, *The Daily Telegraph*, the Wildlife Network and the League Against Cruel Sports. Contact details, including websites, of various organizations are provided as sources of further information. This book achieves its aim, and will be a useful first stop for school pupils who are looking for an introduction to opinions on some of the causes célèbres in animal welfare.

Animal Welfare. Volume No 3 in the *Issues* series, edited by Craig Donnellan (1998). Independence Educational Publishers: Cambridge. 44pp. Paperback. Available from the publishers, PO Box 295, Cambridge CB1 3XP, UK (ISBN 1861680791). Price £6.45 (plus postage and packing).

Welfare of ungulates used in habitat management

Wild cattle used to be widely distributed through Europe but are now largely missing from its ecosystems. In creating and maintaining clearings in forests and by mowing grassland areas, the wardens of nature reserves have, for many years, played the role that used to be fulfilled by these large herbivores. However, there is now growing interest in putting primitive cattle breeds back to work to help restore habitats to their 'natural' state before extensive human colonization and to maintain them in these states. Debate has followed about how closely such animals should be managed. Should they be treated as domestic cattle and be given supplementary food in winter, parasite control programmes and medical interventions whenever necessary? Should they be incinerated or buried when they die? Or should they become part of the wild, taking their chances with variations in food supply and threats from parasites, competitors and other natural hazards, and lying where they fall to become a food resource for scavengers?