

Zealand and on the legal powers of Inspectors under the Act, there are sections on nutrition, water, housing, exercise, health and disease, transport, training, breeding, mutilations, and euthanasia.

This is a useful review and short summary of welfare standards for dogs. However, it is very brief and the attention given to various aspects of husbandry and welfare appears to be somewhat uneven. The sections on nutrition and housing are, for example, rather limited. Relatively more attention is given to aspects of training, from emphasizing the need for careful choice of an appropriate dog as a pet, to obedience classes, discipline and training aids – including the use of electric collars designed to give small shocks. The section on genetics recognizes that selective breeding has resulted in increased risks of a variety of disorders, some of which are very likely to cause discomfort or pain. However, it is only a recommendation, rather than a minimum standard or requirement, that breeders should not perpetuate disorders that adversely affect welfare. Surely a stronger line should be taken on this point (and not just in New Zealand). The code states that, as a minimum standard, all reasonable steps must be taken to safeguard dogs involved in sporting activities from injury or distress, and so it seems inconsistent that the same level of care should not have to be exercised in selective breeding.

Such overviews of welfare measures and minimum standards, for species other than farm and laboratory animals, are rather scarce. This is a pity, because establishing minimum standards is an important exercise. Apart from the immediate value of clarifying what is and is not legal or acceptable, the process of drawing up standards reveals any gaps in knowledge and inconsistencies in approach. Furthermore, a clearly drawn baseline provides a platform for raising minimum standards in the future. For all these reasons, this is a useful booklet and there is a good case for the production of similar texts covering other species kept as pets. Dog owners and handlers in New Zealand will need to be familiar with these standards, but they are also likely to be useful in promoting dog welfare in many other countries.

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*Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Dogs.* New Zealand Code of Animal Welfare No 20. Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (1998). 33pp. Paperback. Obtainable from Animal Welfare and Environment Section, MAF Regulatory Authority, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, PO Box 2526, Wellington, New Zealand (ISBN 047807459X, ISSN 1171-090X). Free.

### Changes to legislation affecting wild birds

*Birdcrime '97* is a summary of offences reported to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Investigations Section during 1997. It lists and describes cases of illegal poisonings, shootings, egg collection, and taking of live birds from the wild. The report also draws attention to changes in legislation affecting wild birds.

Under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, issues general licences allowing authorized persons to kill or take 13 species of wild birds for the purpose of protecting agriculture (eg preventing the spread of disease, damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, timber, or fisheries), providing there is no other satisfactory alternative. The species that may be killed or taken are: carrion crow (*Corvus corone*), rook (*C. frugilegus*), jackdaw (*C. monedula*), jay (*Garrulus glandarius*), magpie (*Pica pica*), feral pigeon (*Columba* spp), woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*), collared dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), great and lesser black-backed gulls (*Larus marinus* and *L. fuscus*), herring gull (*L. argentatus*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*).

From 1 January 1998, these licences have had new conditions. Cage traps must be checked daily when in use. At each inspection birds caught in the trap must be removed, and when traps

are not in use they must be rendered incapable of catching birds. This is an important strengthening of welfare provisions, since prior to this traps could be left unvisited for long periods.

Under the new *Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997* (replacing the 1985 regulations) Exemption Certificates which allowed the sale of many captive-bred birds of prey are being phased out. In future, individual sales certificates will be needed for all birds listed under the *Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Annex A*. These will be valid for a named person and cover one sale only. The certificates will be obtainable from the appropriate EU authorities (the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions in the UK). This will, effectively, require that any traded Annex A species is individually marked and has its own 'passport'. Certificates will be needed also for the sale of eggs, feathers, blood and semen. These measures are aimed at reducing illegal sales in endangered species.

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*Birdcrime '97. Offences Against Wild Bird Legislation 1997*. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Investigations Section (1998). 38pp. Paperback. Available from The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, UK.