Animal Welfare: Best Practices in Accepting Non-Releasable Wildlife for Ambassador Programs

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Partners for Wildlife
My Background

Wildlife Rehabilitation
And
Environmental Education
Animal Welfare Framework

Best Practices definition

Guidelines when considering an Ambassador Animal
Animal welfare is an everyday concept that people use to express their concerns about the quality of life of animals, especially as it is affected by human actions. (Fraser, 1997)
The Five Domains  (Mellor, 1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical/Functional Domains</th>
<th>Survival-Related Factors</th>
<th>Situation-Related Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Nutrition</td>
<td>2: Environment</td>
<td>3: Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative</strong> Restricted water &amp; food; poor food quality</td>
<td><strong>Positive</strong> Enough water &amp; food; balanced and varied diet</td>
<td><strong>Negative</strong> Uncomfortable or unpleasant physical features of environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative</strong> Disease, injury and/or functional impairment</td>
<td><strong>Positive</strong> Healthy, fit and/or uninjured</td>
<td><strong>Negative</strong> Behavioural expression restricted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Affective Experience Domains

5: Mental State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Experiences</th>
<th>Positive Experiences</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thirst</td>
<td>Drinking pleasures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>Taste pleasures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malnutrition malaise</td>
<td>Chewing pleasures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilling/overheating</td>
<td>Satiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing discomfort</td>
<td>Physical comforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breathlessness</td>
<td>Vigour of good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>health &amp; fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debility, weakness</td>
<td>Reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausea, sickness</td>
<td>Goal-directed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dizziness</td>
<td>Physical comforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calmness, in control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affectionate sociability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maternally rewarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excited playfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexually gratified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Incorporating **positive experiences** in 5 major domains:

Nutrition
Environment
Health
Behavior
Mental states
Three Circles Framework (Fraser, 1997)

1. Basic Health and Functioning
2. Natural Living
3. Affective States
Best Practices

A method or technique that has been generally accepted as superior to any alternatives because it produces results that are superior to those achieved by other means or because it has become a standard way of doing things, e.g., a standard way of complying with legal or ethical requirements.

Basically:
When we know better, we should do better
Prior Preparation is key

* allows for quicker decision making
* less emotional decision making for an individual animal

Do this planning in unpressured times
Collection Planning

Programming

* Goals of your programming—what are you trying to teach your audience?

* Who are you trying to teach?

* How will you accomplish all or part of the programming?

* How does an Ambassador(s) fit into this?
Facilities and Ambassadors

- How many animals and what species can be currently housed?

- If expansion is necessary what does this look like and how will this be accomplished on what time frame?

- What species are desired and why? How does it fulfill the programming mission?

- Will the animals be on display? Handled in hand? Both?
Collection Planning

**Budget**
- How much does each animal cost to feed, house, manage day to day, regular health care and emergency health care?

**Staffing**
- Who will be the animal care staff?
- What skills do they have to have? What training do they need?
- Who will be the training and/or handling staff?
- What skills do they have to have?
- How will they keep up with the most currently best practices for training and handling?

**Permits**
- Make sure you know all the permits you may need and have them in place.
Placement

Medical
- Excellent long-term prognosis
  - vs. chronic pain
  - vs. deterioration of condition
- Minimal non-invasive treatment required
- Evenly weight bearing
- Able to move around enclosure
- Natural behaviors

Signalment
- Species/natural biology
- Age (HY vs adult)
- Sex (male vs. female)

Behavior
- Stress
- Training
Non-releasable Raptor Placement Evaluation Form
Institution Placing Bird

Institution Contact:
Institution Name: _____________________________________________________________
Primary Contact: _____________________________________________________________
Phone Number: ________________________________________________________________________
Email: _______________________________________________________________________________
Address: _ ___________________________________________________________________________
City: _________________________________________________________________________________
State: ________________________________________________________________________________
Zip: _________________________________________________________________________________

Signalment:
Species: ______________________________________________________________________________
Current Age: _________________________________________________________
Weight: ______________________________________________________________________________
BCS - scale=0-5 (Please attach a picture of the keel): __________________________________________
Sex (if known): _____________________________________
___________________________________

Circumstances Leading to Captivity: (Attach a separate sheet if necessary)
Nature of injuries (Please elaborate):_______________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
Treatment for injuries (Please elaborate):___________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
Have all medical issues been resolved (Please elaborate):_______________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
Why is the bird non-releasable (Please attach copy of 'Veterinary Statement' to USFWS):

Non-releasable Raptor Placement Evaluation Form
Institution Acquiring Bird

Institution acquiring the bird:
Institution Name: _____________________________________________________________
Primary Contact: _____________________________________________________________
Phone Number: ________________________________________________________________________
Email: _______________________________________________________________________________
Address: _ ___________________________________________________________________________
City: _________________________________________________________________________________
State: ________________________________________________________________________________
Zip: _________________________________________________________________________________

Proposed Management:
What will you use the bird for (i.e., programs, on-the-fist, display bird, etc.):
___________________________________________
___________________________________________

Proposed Housing:
How will the bird be housed (cage, flight pen, free-lofted, tethered, etc.):
___________________________________________
Will the bird be housed indoors, outdoors, or both:
___________________________________________
Do you have other birds at your facility (please attach a list):
___________________________________________
Will the bird be housed with other birds (Please elaborate):
___________________________________________

Medical:
Is your facility capable of any ongoing medical care (i.e., medications, procedures, etc.) required by this
bird (Please elaborate):
___________________________________________
Does your facility have access to a veterinarian (if yes, please list name and contact information):
___________________________________________
How to Choose the Best Individual
How to Choose the Best Individual

An Animal Should NOT Have an Injury...

That is not 100% healed
An Animal Should NOT Have an Injury...

That greatly compromises balance

Long term problems:
• Foot issues-“bumblefoot”
• Further injury to other limbs when they “catch” themselves
• Limited access to bathing water
An Animal should NOT have an injury...

That has resulted in complete blindness in both eyes
An Animal should NOT have an injury...

That will be known to result in chronic pain

- arthritis from joint injuries/dislocations,
- fractures that result in a non-union of the bone ends, or
- osteomyelitis of the bone ends
An Animal should NOT have an injury...

That permanently alters behavior
head trauma resulting in uncontrolled head movements,
periodic seizures
Other Considerations:

- Age
- Sex
- Imprint Status
- Length of time already in captivity at a rehab center
- Housing history
- Overall physical condition
- Overall behavior
- Tolerance for captivity
• Either assess the bird yourself before acquiring it or request photos and a complete medical history – including results of any diagnostics
Be Choosey as a Wildlife Educator

 ✓ Set yourself up for success by pre-planning with a Collection Plan. When you are ready for an Ambassador you will know exactly what you are looking for and you can make quicker decisions.

 ✓ You will be responsible for the mental and physical health of your Ambassador for many years to come – don’t start your relationship treating problems.

 ✓ Choose an animal whose handicap will not lead to further injury or management headaches; these situations are not fair to either of you.
“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”

Maya Angelou


Resources


  https://www.aza.org/animal-care-manuals

  https://www.avma.org/public/AnimalWelfare/Pages/default.aspx


  https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Pages/Model-Veterinary-Practice-Act.aspx


