

World Society for the Protection of Animals

Policy



WSPA

WSPA is recognised by the United Nations (UN) and works to raise the standards of animal welfare throughout the world.

As the world's leading international alliance of animal welfare organisations, WSPA develops campaigns and projects in partnership with more than 850 member societies in over 150 countries.

Through its campaigns, education, training and animal rescue initiatives, WSPA seeks to ensure that the principles of animal welfare are universally understood and respected, and protected by effectively enforced legislation.

WSPA is the only animal welfare organisation to be a member of the International Council of Voluntary Organisations Agencies (ICVA), a body linked directly to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). OCHA coordinates the concerted effort of the international community in situations of war and disasters. WSPA also has consultative status at the Economic and Social Council of the UN.

For information on how WSPA is governed see WSPA's Articles of Association 2008

The aims of WSPA

WSPA aims to promote the protection of animals, to prevent cruelty to animals, and to relieve animal suffering in every part of the world.

WSPA aims to promote humane education programmes to encourage respect for animals and responsible stewardship, and laws and enforcement structures to provide legal protection for animals.

General principles

The ethical basis for WSPA's policies is that it looks beyond the conservation of a species to the welfare of individual non-human animals (hereafter animals). It is WSPA's belief that each individual animal has an intrinsic value, and should be respected and protected.

Animals have biologically determined instincts, interests and natures, and many can experience pain. Thus WSPA believes that animals have the right to live their lives free from avoidable suffering at the hands of humans, rather than be used simply as 'raw materials' for the benefit of humankind. Indeed, WSPA believes that it is the duty of humans to provide for the welfare of other species.

WSPA believes that all animals kept by, or under the control of, humans must be kept in circumstances appropriate to their species. Also, where the physiological and behavioural needs of a species cannot be met, the species must not be kept by humans.

WSPA believes that where the welfare of an animal under human control is in question, then the animal must be given the benefit of any doubt. Furthermore, the different purposes for which animals are used must be regularly re-evaluated.

Subject specific policies

1 Farm animals

- a** WSPA advocates that methods used at all stages of farm animal husbandry must be developed to preclude avoidable suffering.
- b** Farmed animals must be provided with shelter, exercise, food, water and care in a manner appropriate to their physiological and behavioural needs. WSPA is opposed to any methods of husbandry which do not fulfil these criteria.
- c** WSPA is also opposed to farming practices, such as the plucking of down from live ducks and geese and the force feeding of ducks and geese for 'foie gras', which by their nature cause suffering.
- d** WSPA is in principle opposed to mutilations which are carried out for nontherapeutic reasons, especially those carried out in an attempt to 'adapt' animals to an inappropriate husbandry system; in such cases it is the system which should be modified, not the animal.
- e** WSPA advocates that food animals should be slaughtered as close to the point of production as possible.
- f** Transport by sea for food animals destined for slaughter should be forbidden except where it is necessary to reach the nearest slaughterhouse.
- g** No animal which is ill or unfit should be allowed to travel. In addition, proper selection of stock must take place to remove ill or unfit animals. Selected stock should be prepared to help withstand the rigors of transport, and the vehicle or vessel should be specifically designed for carriage of the particular species involved.
- h** All drivers of livestock vehicles should be trained both in necessary driving techniques and the general care of the animals in their charge. They should have their licences endorsed with the species of animals they have been trained to transport.
- i** All vehicles used to transport animals long distance should have the following facilities:
 - forced/mechanical ventilation
 - continuous monitoring of temperature and humidity in livestock compartments and results displayed in the driver's cabin
 - adequate partitioning of stock by age, sex and species
 - ready access to all animals
 - protection from the elements.
- j** Animals must be provided with sufficient food, water and rest before, during and after the journey, according to their biological needs.
- k** Detailed specifications and regulations for livestock vessels/vehicles transporting animals by rail, road and sea, should be laid down, and rigorously enforced by the competent authority.
- l** All air transport of animals should follow the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) regulations.
- m** Notwithstanding the above points, all long distance transportation of animals for slaughter should be replaced by carcass only trade.
- n** WSPA advocates that every animal for slaughter must be instantaneously killed, or be rendered instantaneously unconscious and insensible to pain until death supervenes. WSPA opposes the shackling and hoisting of conscious animals.
- o** WSPA believes that the welfare of individual fish must be provided for in fish farming, with particular attention paid to factors such as stocking density, water quality

and direction of flow. WSPA opposes the commercial practice of allowing anglers into fish farms to play the fish and then to throw them back. The handling, transport and slaughter of fish must comply with general humane principles.

2 Working animals

a WSPA believes that working animals must be treated with consideration and must be given adequate shelter, care, food and water. Any condition which may impair their welfare must be treated promptly and, if necessary, they must not be worked again until they are fit. They must not be overworked or overloaded, nor must they be forced to work through ill-treatment.

3 Companion animals

a WSPA approves of the keeping of companion animals only when there is full personal commitment to the welfare of the animals. The animals must always be provided with shelter, exercise, care, food and water appropriate to their physiological and behavioural needs.

b The regulations governing companion animals must include the licensing and control of breeders to ensure humane breeding and rearing conditions. There must also be compulsory registration and identification of dogs (and any other animals needing similar control) according to local conditions.

c WSPA is opposed in principle to all mutilations on companion animals carried out for non-therapeutic reasons. It also condemns selective breeding, in a search for certain external features, which affects the health and welfare of the animals.

d However, WSPA believes that the desexing of cats and dogs by a veterinarian represents a vital component of population control measures and advocates the

desexing of domestic cats and dogs as early as possible, unless there are veterinary or other valid reasons to the contrary.

e WSPA reluctantly accepts that the humane destruction of healthy animals may sometimes be unavoidable. WSPA therefore advocates that these animals be killed by a method which has been determined to be both painless and effective and which is administered by responsible and properly trained individuals.

4 Laboratory animals

a WSPA is opposed to all experiments or procedures which cause unnecessary suffering to animals. It is important that, as long as animals continue to be used, every possible effort is made to prevent suffering. In this regard, consideration should extend beyond the use of anaesthesia, or other forms of analgesia, to aspects such as fear, stress, hunger and other avoidable suffering.

b WSPA is opposed to all experiments on animals which involve unnecessary repetition, which involve techniques for which satisfactory and humane alternatives have already been developed, which are for scientifically trivial ends or which are for testing substances not essential to the health or welfare of animals or humans (such as cosmetics).

c WSPA supports the development and adoption of techniques and procedures that will result in the replacement, reduction or refinement of animal experimentation. WSPA regards as an advance any technique which will reduce suffering, reduce the numbers of animals used or, preferably, replace the use of live animals completely.

d WSPA is opposed to the taking of animals from the wild for use in research. WSPA considers that where animals are still used in research, they must be obtained only from specialist breeding establishments.

- e** WSPA considers that laboratory animals, including those in breeding establishments, must be housed and provided with shelter, care, food and water in a manner appropriate to their physiological and behavioural needs. A nominated member of the laboratory staff, preferably a veterinarian, must have full responsibility for their welfare at all times.
- f** WSPA advocates that all persons employed to care for or use laboratory animals must be apprised of the ethical considerations relating to the use of animals and be fully trained in the necessary skills appropriate to the needs of the animals.
- g** WSPA advocates that all institutions using animals for research have an Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee to scrutinise and either approve or reject project applications. The members of this committee must include animal welfare representatives.

5 Genetic manipulation and genetic engineering

- a** WSPA opposes all forms of genetic manipulation, whether by breeding or genetic engineering, that result in abnormalities, excessive developments of certain bodily features, a reduction in animal health or welfare, or are for trivial or cosmetic purposes.
- b** Never the less, animals resulting from such manipulative practices should not be released onto farms or in to the environment until several generations have been evaluated to ensure that no harmful side effects arise.
- c** WSPA is opposed to the patenting of animals.

6 Wild animals

- a** WSPA is in principle opposed to the taking or killing of wild animals or the infliction of suffering upon them. This includes taking and killing of wild animals for the purpose of sport.
- b** WSPA is absolutely opposed to taking and killing wild animals for purposes not essential to humans or the welfare of the animals, particularly when they do not pose a threat to the safety and security of humans.
- c** In circumstances where it is deemed necessary to control wild or stray animal populations, or animals considered to be pests, then WSPA urges that this be achieved without the infliction of avoidable suffering. WSPA considers that an effective method should be employed to avoid the need continually to remove or kill animals. Fertility control or other non-lethal methods should be used whenever possible, rather than 'catch and kill' systems.
- d** WSPA is opposed to the use, confinement, exhibition or performance of animals for commercial gain and/or human entertainment.
- e** WSPA has serious reservations about the educational value of many existing zoological collections, including dolphinariums, and therefore does not consider that claims for the 'educational value' of many animal exhibits can be justified.
- f** WSPA believes that animals should not be kept in zoological collections unless they form part of a valid conservation programme, the objective of which is the eventual rehabilitation and release into the wild, and the animals can be kept in a 'semi-natural' environment which meets their physiological and behavioural needs.

g Where the taking and/or keeping of wild animals is still permitted, WSPA believes that this should be strictly limited under licence, and the most humane methods possible required.

7 Animals used in sport or entertainment

a WSPA opposes the use of animals in sport or for entertainment when such use is contrary to the animals' nature, or may involve suffering or adversely affect the animals' welfare.

b WSPA opposes any 'sports' that involve pitting animals or humans against animals.

c WSPA is totally opposed to exhibitions or presentations of wild animals in circuses and travelling menageries.

d WSPA believes that wherever they are used in the making of films or television programmes or in the theatre, animals must not be caused any suffering, nor be portrayed in a manner demeaning to their species.

e WSPA is opposed to the giving of live animals as prizes.

8 Marine animals

a WSPA opposes, on both ethical and humane grounds, the harassment, capture or killing of marine mammals for commercial and sporting purposes.

9 Fur and trapping

a WSPA is opposed to the taking of animals from the wild for their fur or skins, and to the farming of animals for the same purpose. It considers it morally indefensible to subject animals to suffering and death for fur or skin products, which are non-essential luxury goods.

b WSPA is opposed to the manufacture, sale, possession and use of any snares and traps which cause suffering or death.

10 Conservation

a WSPA is concerned about the balance of nature and deplores environmental changes which are directly or indirectly attributable to human activities and are likely to disturb this balance without compensatory safeguards. WSPA therefore seeks to ensure that the welfare of all living things is actively considered in connection with such activities.

b WSPA recognises that the dealing in, and smuggling of, animals or animal products causes both individual suffering and a direct pressure on species survival and is therefore opposed to any such practices which could pose a threat to the welfare of any animal or the survival of any species.

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The logo for WSPA, featuring the letters 'WSPA' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letters are set against a dark background and have a slight shadow effect, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The 'W' and 'S' are particularly prominent.