



**Government of Alberta Standards for Zoos in Alberta**

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Prepared by the  
Alberta Zoo Standards Committee Of

Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and  
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## Table of Contents

I.	Background, Purpose, Jurisdiction and Expectations .....	2
II.	Standards Within the Mandate of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development - the Wildlife Act and Regulations .....	3
A.	Animal Collection Management Standards .....	3
B.	Record Keeping Standards .....	4
C.	Wildlife and Controlled Animal Transportation Standards .....	5
D.	Wildlife and Controlled Animal Containment Standards .....	7
E.	Off-site Display Standards .....	8
F.	Species Conservation Standards .....	8
G.	Conservation Education Standards .....	9
H.	Public and Staff Safety Standards .....	9
I.	Staff Experience and Training Standards .....	10
III.	Standards Related to the Animal Protection Act .....	10
A.	Protocol Development Requirements for Animal Care .....	10
B.	Animal Exhibit Standards .....	11
1.	General Exhibit Standards .....	11
2.	Specific Exhibit Standards .....	13
C.	Animal Health Care Standards .....	14
D.	Animal Behaviour Husbandry Standards .....	15
E.	General Animal Care Standards .....	16
IV.	Appendices .....	18
A.	Appendix 1. Zoo Application Process .....	18
1.	New Permit Applicant Requirements .....	18
2.	Renewal Permit Applicant Requirements .....	19
3.	How the Application Will be Processed: .....	20
B.	Appendix 2. Zoo Permit Cancellation .....	21
C.	Appendix 3. Conservation Education Information .....	21
D.	Appendix 4. Definitions .....	22

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## Alberta Zoo Standards

### I. Background, Purpose, Jurisdiction and Expectations

**Background:** Many other standards from Canada, United States and the United Kingdom were examined during the development of these standards. The Alberta Zoo Standards Committee concluded that no existing standard provided all the standards needed in Alberta. Some of the more common standards are quite general and depend on inspections by the accreditation authority and subsequent membership and professionalism to ensure the standards are met. Others are very detailed and very specific. The Committee's approach has been to create new standards for Alberta that include both new and selected standards and approaches from a variety of sources. These standards are not intended to replace professional zoo accreditation in any way and professional accreditation is encouraged.

These standards were developed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AFRD) and the Department of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD). W. Glasgow and Associates was hired to assist with some aspects of the work. During the early stage of development, three non-government organizations reviewed a draft of these standards. They were the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), the Wildlife Committee of the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) through its accredited institutional member the Calgary Zoo (The Calgary Zoo is also an accredited member of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA)). A later draft was submitted to all 13 of Alberta's licensed zoos, CAZA and AVMA for comment.

**Purpose:** The general purpose is to ensure that facilities requiring an Alberta Zoo Permit meet acceptable standards that provide: a suitable environment for the animal collections and visitors; an environment that emphasizes education; where off-site display occurs, there is minimum risk to surrounding free-ranging wildlife, domestic animals and people, and in some cases provide an opportunity for scientific research and animal propagation to support wildlife conservation programs.

**Jurisdiction:** There are two Alberta Government departments with direct legislative jurisdiction over zoos. The Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AFRD) administers the *Animal Protection Act* and its regulations. The Department of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) administers the *Wildlife Act* and its regulations. Agencies with authority under the *Animal Protection Act* are responsible for enforcement of Animal Care Standards.

Animal care standards may be referenced by regulations made pursuant to the *Animal Protection Act*. If they are, agencies with authority under the *Animal Protection Act* will enforce these animal care standards.

SRD has the lead role and primary responsibility for the remaining standards (which include animal collection management, record keeping, wildlife and controlled animal transportation, wildlife and controlled animal containment, off-site display, species conservation, conservation education, public and staff safety and staff experience and training). These standards are regulated under the authority of the *Wildlife Act* and its regulations. The zoo permit issued by ESRD authorizes the zoo to possess and traffic in wildlife and controlled animals, in accordance with the *Wildlife Act* and its

regulations. Other zoo animals (domestic/marine) are not regulated under the *Wildlife Act* and its regulations, but are subject to the *Animal Protection Act* as it relates to care of animals.

Other Alberta Departments such as the Department of Health and Wellness, and Environment and Sustainable Resource Development can have jurisdiction over various activities in relation to zoos such as human health and water issues. However, these departments were not involved in the development of these standards.

**Expectations:** When the new zoo standards are finalized and legally referenced, new applicants for zoo permits will be expected to comply with these standards immediately. Standards related to the *Wildlife Act* are scheduled to come into force April 1, 2006. In limited circumstances, variances from the standards may be applied to existing zoos in accordance with their Zoo Development Plans that provide that the deficiencies will be corrected within a specified time, if recommended by the Alberta Zoo Advisory Committee.

## **II. Standards within the Mandate of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development - the *Wildlife Act* and Regulations**

### **A. Animal Collection Management Standards**

The purpose of these standards is to ensure that each zoo animal collection is carefully managed and all animals coming into or leaving the collection are documented. The standards for animal collection management that must be met are:

- **Marking/Identification** – All animals at the zoo facility must have an individual identifying tag, marking, microchip, tattoo or unique physical feature (e.g., ear tags, colour pattern), except where this is not feasible (e.g., amphibians) in which case they can be identified by number of animals and exhibit location. Note: Permanent marking to occur as soon as reasonably possible after birth and must occur before one year of age.
- **Acquisition** – Animals must be obtained from a source in legal possession of the animals and the species must either be identified in the approved Zoo Development Plan or be accommodated through an amendment to this plan. All requirements that pertain to importing animals (federal and provincial) must be adhered to and arriving animals must be quarantined according to any applicable federal or provincial health care management protocol or other requirements.
- **Breeding** – Breeding of animals in the zoo facility may take place if it is approved as part of the Zoo Development Plan. If not approved, breeding must be prevented through drug therapy, appropriate management (i.e. opposite sexes kept in separate enclosures) or sterilization.
- **Disposition of Live Animals** – Live animals must only be sold, transferred to, or otherwise disposed of to a person that has the legal authority to possess them.
- **Deaths** – Necropsies must be conducted on the advice of the attending veterinarian or for species as required by ESRD and AFRD. Carcasses must be disposed of in accordance with federal, provincial and municipal regulations.
- **Annual Inventory** – Before March 31 in each year, the zoo operator must submit to the

Regional Head of Wildlife Management a report setting out the total number of live animals (wildlife and controlled animals) processed on February 28 of that year, with their sex and kinds. If requested by Sustainable Resource Development, the zoo operator must submit additional record that are required to be kept by section 149 of the Wildlife Regulation (See section B, below).

## **B. Record Keeping Standards**

The purpose of these standards is to ensure that all wildlife and controlled animals in a zoo facility have permanent histories recorded that can be referenced if animals are sold, exported, involved in a breeding program, if there is a disease and/or parasite outbreak or if there is an escape from the zoo facility. Inventory and records are essential in tracing contact animals following the appearance of disease or the discovery of harmful parasites. The standards for record keeping that must be met are:

- **Sample Records** - The operator must provide a description and a sample of the record keeping system they will use to record information and store records as a part of their licensing application/renewal Zoo Development Plan.
- **Acquisition** – Acquisition records must include the kind, sex, origin and date of acquisition including the import number if applicable and the name and address of the person from whom the animal is acquired as well as its health status and nutritional background (i.e. what they eat).
- **Disposition of Live Animals** – Disposition records must include the kind, sex, destination and date of disposal of each live animal sold, transferred or otherwise disposed of, including the export permit number, if applicable, and the name address and permit number of the person to whom the animal is sold, transferred or otherwise disposed as well as the health status and nutritional background.
- **Births** – As identified in the Zoo Development Plan where breeding is approved, the records for each animal must include the kind, sex, and date of birth of each animal born and permanent identification tag/markings. Note: Permanent identification tag/markings to occur as soon as reasonably possible after birth and must occur before one year of age.
- **Deaths** – The kind of animal, date, enclosure location and circumstances of death for individual animals must be recorded in the permanent record for each animal that dies. Numbers and species dying must be recorded per exhibit for unmarked animals. For deaths where the attending veterinarian determines a potential communicable disease risk exists or for those species identified by SRD and AAFRD at the time of licensing, a description of all other animals sharing the same enclosure must also be included in the death record.
- **Animal Health records** – The veterinarian must document their veterinary treatment activities as per the AVMA health record-keeping protocol. The zoo operator must keep a copy of these records on the premises.
- **Marking Records** – Each animal at the zoo facility that has an identifying tag, marking, microchip, tattoo or unique physical feature must have this identifier noted in its permanent record.
- **Currency of records** - Animal records must be kept current and data logged daily.

## **C. Wildlife and Controlled Animal Transportation Standards**

The purpose of these standards is to ensure that animals transported to and from a licensed zoo facility in Alberta are healthy, pose minimal risk to free-ranging wildlife and are transported in a manner that is safe, prevents escape and does not cause undue stress on the animal.

The standards for transporting wildlife and controlled animals that must be met are:

### **Importing Wildlife and Controlled Animals**

- Live wildlife and controlled animals (as listed in the Wildlife Regulation AR 143/97) coming into the Province of Alberta must have an export permit from the jurisdiction where they originate (if required in that jurisdiction) and an import permit from the Fish and Wildlife Division of SRD.
- Live wildlife and controlled animals imported from outside Canada may require a federal import permit (e.g., CITES) or other authority – operators must check with the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) of Environment Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regarding these requirements.
- The importer of live wildlife and controlled animals into the Province must have a quarantine or isolation facility (i.e. an area where animals can be isolated from the other animals in the collection) at or near the licensed zoo facility that is their final destination.
- For animals being imported into the province, a veterinary inspection is a requirement of the import permit. Upon their arrival the imported animal must forthwith receive treatment as recommended by the zoo veterinarian.

### **Exporting Wildlife and Controlled Animals**

- Live wildlife and controlled animals leaving the Province of Alberta must when required have an export permit from the Fish and Wildlife Division of SRD.

### **Transporting Wildlife and Controlled Animals within the Province**

- The zoo permit holder transporting wildlife and controlled animals within the Province of Alberta must, at least 24 hours prior to transporting the animals, notify (in writing or by direct contact) the Fish and Wildlife Division District Officer in the District where the animals originate and ensure the Fish and Wildlife Division District Officer in the District of the animal's final destination is informed. If the transport is for off-site display, this must have been a previously approved activity in the Zoo Development Plan for that zoo facility. Repetitive activities and activities planned well in advance (e.g., multiple school demonstrations) can be covered in one advance notification. If the transport is to another zoo facility, it must be accompanied by a bill of sale or loan agreement and the destination facility must have an Alberta Zoo Permit.
- The zoo must comply with all federal or provincial legislation concerning transportation of wildlife and controlled animals (e.g. CFIA).
- Transport cages and vehicles must be of a size and construction that ensure the safe

and humane transport and secure containment of the particular animal(s) being transported. Animals shipped by air must meet International Air Transport Association (IATA) standards outlined in their Air Transport Regulations (ATR).

#### **D. Wildlife and Controlled Animal Containment Standards**

The purpose of these standards is: to prevent direct contact between zoo animals and free-ranging wildlife, domestic animals, and visitors to the zoo facility; to prevent escape from the zoo facility; to prevent the transmission of disease and/or parasites, and; to prevent interbreeding (genetic contamination) between zoo animals and free-ranging wildlife. The standards for containment of wildlife and controlled animals that must be met are:

- When developing exhibit descriptions to meet animal care standards set out in Section III, Subsection A of these Standards, the zoo operator must also ensure the animals will be contained within exhibits in accordance with the standards in this section (Wildlife and Controlled Animal Containment Standards).
- A perimeter fence (equivalent to chain link fence) a minimum of 2.5 meters high around all the animal enclosures will be required, unless the species held in the zoo facility already have a fully contained perimeter (e.g., amphibians and reptiles in cages within a building) or have an alternate system as identified and approved in the Zoo Development Plan.
- Animals that can fly and/or climb must have a roof over their enclosure (i.e., be fully enclosed) or be subject to structures or other means to prevent escape.
- Animals that can dig must have adequate flooring or material buried under the ground at the enclosure perimeter to prevent them from digging out of their enclosure or shelter.
- Individual animal enclosures and the perimeter fencing must be locked when the zoo facility is closed and staff are not present. When the zoo facility is open to the public, the perimeter fence may be unlocked, however, individual animal enclosures must remain locked except when staff are present and working with or displaying the animals.
- There must be a written plan in place outlining containment, recapture and emergency procedures in the event of an escape (i.e. either within or beyond the zoo facility). The District Fish and Wildlife Officer must be notified within 3 hours of discovery of an escape for Carnivores, Primates, Elephants, Cervids, Rhinoceroses, Pigs/Hogs, Bovids and other groups that may be identified in the zoo's permit conditions. For other species that may be identified in the zoo's permit conditions by SRD, notification of discovery of escape must be given within 48 hours.
- The zoo facility must have the necessary equipment, and personnel trained in their use, or have immediate access to such equipment, drugs and personnel for use in the event of an escape. The requirements of all relevant legislation must be met.

#### **E. Off-site Display Standards**

The purpose of these standards is to ensure any animals moved from the zoo facility to an off-site area (i.e. outside the area licensed as a zoo) are transported and held in the off-site location in a secure, safe manner and in compliance with the *Animal Protection Act*, that the animals

pose no disease and/or parasite risk, that the animals pose no public safety hazard and that off-site holding facilities are adequate. The standards for off-site display (including travel, exhibit and containment) that must be met are:

- The zoo operator must give prior notification to SRD for off-site display as required in Section II Subsection C.
- Off site displays must comply with the containment requirements of Section II Subsection D (except for the requirement of a 2.5m high perimeter fence) and the approved Zoo Development Plan and must describe the off-site activities detailed to specific classes of wildlife such as large carnivores, ungulates, small mammals, reptiles.
- The transport to and from the off-site location must comply with the standards required in Section II Subsection C of this Part.
- An educational conservation message as required in Section II Subsection G (see also Appendix C) must be part of the off-site display.
- If the animal(s) are going to remain off-site (i.e. not return to the zoo facility the same day), the off-site animal holding enclosures must be supervised, locked, safe and in compliance with the *Animal Protection Act* for the animals. The enclosures must also provide secure containment in a manner that prevents escape and does not allow contact with other animals or people, and there must be an escape recovery plan in place.
- Direct contact (i.e. touching) between the public and animals is allowed only when this activity is approved in the Zoo Development Plan. Such contact must only occur in a contained area and all applicable Alberta Health regulations must be followed.
- Animals in areas where direct contact is possible must pose no danger to the public, be comfortable with human contact and be under the direct supervision of zoo staff.

## **F. Species Conservation Standards**

If a zoo operator enters into any conservation programs with a wildlife management agency for any purpose including research or propagating endangered species, the following must be met:

- There must be a written agreement between the zoo operator and that wildlife management agency that specifies what is expected of the zoo.

## **G. Conservation Education Standards**

The purpose of these standards is to promote positive attitudes about wildlife by providing information and knowledge to the public. The standards for education programs for wildlife and controlled animals in a zoo facility are:

- The zoo must have an active educational program as outlined in the Zoo Development Plan and all exhibits must have signs that identify the species and provide information about status and range in the wild. Educational programs may also include species not present at the zoo facility (e.g., ESRD has information covering species at risk). See

Appendix C for further information.

## **H. Public and Staff Safety Standards**

The purpose of these standards is to ensure that a zoo facility is operated in a safe manner. All applicable federal, provincial and municipal safety legislation must be followed. In addition, the following minimal standards for public safety must be met:

- There must be warning signs to advise visitors of dangerous animals or dangerous fixtures.
- Zoo facilities maintaining venomous animals must have a written protocol for anyone handling venomous animals and must have appropriate anti-venom available on site or very close by at a local medical facility.
- Zoo facilities with dangerous animals must have practical safety procedures in place to deal with an attack by these animals.
- Effective guardrails or barriers must be constructed to prevent contact between the visiting public and any animals posing a safety hazard.
- Animals must be safely confined. Enclosures with potentially dangerous animals must have double door entry systems or a separate, secure shift area where the animals can be secured during routine maintenance, cleaning or veterinary care.
- Direct contact (i.e., touching) between the public and animals is allowed only when this activity is approved in the Zoo Development Plan. Such contact must occur in a contained area and all applicable Alberta Health regulations must be followed.
- Animals in areas where direct contact with visitors is possible must pose no danger to the public, be comfortable with human contact and be under direct supervision by zoo staff.

## **I. Staff Experience and Training Standards**

The purpose of these standards is to ensure that the keepers at the zoo, whether the owner, the operator or the staff (including volunteers), have the necessary experience and training to ensure the zoo facility is operated according to the standards in this document and good zoo practice. The standards for staff experience or training that must be met are:

- There must be a list in the Zoo Development Plan of all staff who will be involved in operations and animal care at the zoo facility, with a list of their qualifications, training and experience, including any certifications they have (e.g., first aid, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, hazardous chemical handling, zoo related training and other relevant training).
- The Zoo Development Plan must also outline a plan for ongoing training needs, training of volunteers and provision of staff with emergency training such as first aid.
- The zoo operator shall ensure staff have knowledge and experience in animal care

for the species assigned to them commensurate with their responsibilities.

### III. Standards Related to the *Animal Protection Act*

The standards under the regulatory authority of the *Animal Protection Act* involve animal care in the zoo. The purpose of these standards is to ensure the needs of all the animals in the zoo facility are being met with regard to food, water, shelter, space and health care.

All animals held on the zoo premises, including wildlife and controlled animals, as defined under the *Wildlife Act*, as well as all other animals, will be considered as zoo animal under the *Animal Protection Act*. As such, all standards relating to the *Animal Protection Act* will apply.

Domestic livestock that have been allowed to co-mingle with wildlife or controlled animals, if they are no longer wanted, must be slaughtered or be humanely euthanized. They must not be allowed to enter an auction market nor may they be transferred live to a farm or ranch.

#### A. Protocol Development Requirements for Animal Care

If a zoo is not an accredited zoo, then the zoo operator must submit the following Animal Care Protocol, including exhibit descriptions, at the time of application or renewal of the permit. These will be forwarded to the Alberta Zoo Advisory Committee appointed under the *Wildlife Act*. (Note: Once accepted, Animal Care Protocols would be expected to remain in place for a relatively long period of time or until the exhibit was changed).

**Animal Care Protocol:** The zoo operator must provide an animal care protocol for each species or species group for each separate exhibit. For multi-species groupings at the exhibit level, the protocols may apply to more than one species and this must be noted. This husbandry protocol will describe in detail the provision of adequate food, water, the health care program, adequate shelter if required by the species, and the provision of any shelter, building or structure within the enclosure. In addition, a description of a cleaning and waste removal program that clearly defines when and what will be cleaned must be provided.

The zoo operator must provide a description with scale drawings of each separate exhibit including enclosures, shelters, housing and other structures as appropriate – exhibits may be for one individual, several individuals of the same species or multi-species groupings with many individuals. The species (one or more) and number of individuals of each species planned for the exhibit must be noted along with the description.

**The following standards for animal care must be met and used in development of the Animal Care Protocols and accompanying exhibit descriptions.**

The standards are grouped under four headings:

- B. Animal Exhibit Standards;
- C. Animal Health Care Standards;
- D. Animal Behavioural Husbandry Standards and
- E. General Animal Care Standards.

As noted above, the following are not required for accredited zoos.

## **B. Animal Exhibit Standards**

**Definitions:** The term "exhibit" in this document includes all the enclosures, shelters, buildings and any other structures that constitute the 'home in the zoo' for a particular species or multi-species assemblage. It does not refer to 'public exhibit' as the term is used in some zoo literature. The term "enclosure" in this document refers any area of the exhibit (e.g. the fenced area, the cage, or a room in a building or some combination of these), which contain the animals in the zoo facility and prevent the animals from escaping.

**Purpose of Standards:** The purpose of these standards is to ensure the exhibits meet the needs of the animals that will occupy them and facilitate future operation of the zoo facility. Section 1 deals with general standards while Section 2 deals with specific dimensional and material standards. The standards for exhibits are:

### **1. General Exhibit Standards**

- All animals must be maintained in numbers sufficient to meet their social and behavioural needs (unless a single specimen is biologically correct for that animal). Exhibit enclosures must be of sufficient size to provide for the physical well being of the animal. All animal exhibits must be of a size and complexity sufficient to provide for the animal's physical and social needs and species typical behaviours and movements. Exhibit enclosures must include provisions (e.g., permanent and/or non-permanent features and structures) that encourage species typical movements and behaviours.
- Enclosures for digging or burrowing animals must comply with the provisions set out in the **Wildlife and Controlled Animal Containment Standards** in Section II Subsection D of these Standards.
- Enclosures must be of sufficient size and design to allow individual animals the opportunity to avoid or withdraw from contact with other animals in the enclosure or remove themselves from the view of visitors, using topography (e.g., large earth mounds, large rocks), fixed features (e.g., fences, walls, screening, shelter boxes), moveable fixtures (e.g., brush piles, root balls) or other design methods.
- Animals must be protected from injurious heat and cold associated with ambient outdoor conditions or any other weather conditions that are detrimental to their health. Only animals that can acclimate and tolerate ambient outdoor conditions can be kept in outdoor enclosures, and they should have access to sheltered areas to protect them from sun, wind, precipitation and temperature extremes. Some species can be outdoors during some seasons but need access to indoor facilities during colder weather
- If a species is not native to the area or able to acclimate, that species must have enclosures where the temperature, humidity, ventilation and lighting levels can be regulated to simulate their natural environment.
- All equipment, fixtures and vegetation must be installed in such a way that they do not present a hazard to the animals and must be maintained in good working

condition

- Fencing must be of a design and strength suitable for the particular species and must be attached to posts firmly fixed into the ground in a manner that prevents animals from detaching the material or dislodging the posts.
- Perimeter fencing – must comply with the provisions set out in the **Wildlife and Controlled Animal Containment Standards** in Section II Subsection D of these Standards.
- Dangerous animals that can climb or jump must be kept in completely fenced or walled enclosures with roofs, or in enclosures with fences or walls of a type and construction which prevents animals from jumping over or climbing up and over the top of the fences or walls, or in enclosures surrounded by suitable dry moats or wet moats of adequate depth having sufficiently high outer-edge walls or fences above the water surfaces. These moats must be surrounded by fences, walls, hedges or other shrubbery sufficient to prevent visitors approaching too close to the edges of the moats.
- Venomous animals must be kept either in solid roofed and walled enclosures with suitable means of ventilation or in enclosures where the walls are of adequate height and design to prevent them from escaping and these enclosures must be kept within a secondary barrier, secured within the facility.
- Gates must be as strong and effective at containing the animals as the rest of the enclosure barriers, should normally open inward unless there is a safety hazard for the keepers, and must not be hazardous to visitors.
- All gates and enclosures that access animal exhibits must be kept locked at all times except when staff are carrying out animal husbandry activities or displaying the animals.
- Effective guardrails or barriers must be constructed to prevent contact between the visiting public and any animals posing a safety hazard.
- A zoo facility must have holding facilities for the quarantine of newly arrived animals and isolation facilities for the treatment of sick/injured animals.
- To ensure successful parturition and newborn rearing for some species a zoo facility must provide separate accommodation for expectant mothers and newborns, until it is suitable to reintroduce them to the herd in the species regular enclosure.
- Since water is a significant element in the life cycle of many diseases and parasites, enclosures must be landscaped in a fashion that prevents accumulation of standing water within the enclosures.

## 2. Specific Exhibit Standards

- The American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) **Minimum Husbandry Guidelines for Mammals** identifies minimum standards (at the species or species group level) for lighting, temperature, humidity, food and water, social groupings, exhibit size and sanitation and veterinary care. The Alberta Zoo Advisory Committee will use the AZA **Minimum Husbandry Guidelines for Mammals** to

evaluate applications for an Alberta Zoo Permit. Therefore, applicants for an Alberta Zoo Permit are advised to use these guidelines as a reference during the development of their Animal Care Protocols and exhibit descriptions for mammals.

- The AZA is currently drafting **Minimum Husbandry Guidelines for Birds, Amphibians and Reptiles**. When they are available, the Alberta Zoo Advisory Committee will use them to evaluate applications for an Alberta Zoo Permit. In the interim, it will be the responsibility of the applicant to access other sources for minimum husbandry guidelines for birds, amphibians and reptiles (e.g., CAZA and AZA accredited institutions).

### **C. Animal Health Care Standards**

The purpose of these standards is to ensure the provision of ongoing health care for the animals in the zoo facility, public safety and the protection of the health of endemic species and domestic animals outside the zoo facility. The standards for achieving this are:

- There must be a written agreement demonstrating evidence of a veterinary-client relationship between a licensed Alberta veterinarian (known as the zoo veterinarian) and the zoo operator.
- A health management plan is to be developed by the zoo veterinarian in conjunction with the zoo operator. A minimum of one annual inspection is suggested but the zoo veterinarian in consultation with the owner may schedule more frequent inspections. A protocol for euthanasia should be agreed between the veterinarian and the zoo operator.
- The zoo veterinarian must also provide (either through their clinic and/or alternates) for 24 hour, seven days per week coverage for emergency care to treat sick or injured animals, and suggest quarantine and/or other procedures to contain disease outbreaks as necessary.
- If the zoo operator is not aware of potential problems and risks of disease and/or parasite outbreaks within the zoo facility (e.g., have not had training in this area), the veterinarian should provide enough basic training to the zoo operator and staff so they can recognize the onset of disease and parasite problems within the zoo.
- The zoo operator must consult with the zoo veterinarian to ensure that animal diets are of a quality and quantity suitable for each animal's nutritional and psychological needs.
- The zoo veterinarian must record veterinary activities as per the AVMA health record keeping protocol.
- When infectious diseases are diagnosed, the zoo veterinarian must advise on and the zoo operator must comply with any special isolation and cleaning procedures that are necessary prior to reusing the enclosures.
- If zoo staff will administer prescription drugs for veterinary purposes, the veterinarian must provide a prescription and written procedures for this activity and authorize the staff to carry out these activities.
- The zoo must have the necessary facilities and equipment or have access to such equipment as defined by the zoo veterinarian to capture and restrain animals for veterinary purposes.

- All deaths from the zoo collection must be reported to the zoo veterinarian who will determine if any follow up action is required.
- Necropsies and testing will be mandatory for species identified by ESRD and AFRD disease specialists when the zoo permit is issued and may require animal parts to be submitted to ESRD/AFRD.
- The necropsies must be performed immediately after death or arrangements made to keep the dead animal(s) in cold storage or freezer facilities until the necropsy can be performed. Dead animals awaiting necropsy must be stored in a dedicated storage area.
- All animal carcasses must be disposed of in accordance with federal, provincial and municipal regulation, unless arrangements have been made to donate the carcasses to institutions such as universities and museums. Donated carcasses must have a veterinary certificate indicating there is no risk of transmitting a communicable disease.
- The zoo must adhere to all provincial and federal regulations for animal health testing. (e.g., all Cervids over 12 months of age that die must be submitted for chronic wasting disease – CWD – testing as per provincial regulations). The zoo operator must contact the CFIA regarding testing Cervids and Bovids.

#### **D. Animal Behaviour Husbandry Standards**

The purpose of these standards is to facilitate development of animal enrichment that improves the psychological well-being of the animals. Enrichment consists of a range of measures, including fixed exhibit features, non-fixed features and novel objects that attempt to provide a more stimulating environment for the animals. Training involves positive reinforcement of behaviours that facilitate animal husbandry activities while reducing stress on the animals. The standards for enrichment and training are:

- There must be a written document outlining an enrichment program for each species, species group or species assemblage (if appropriate) at the exhibit level that may include fixed features, non-fixed features and how food is made available.
- Fixed features might include contoured surface topography, giant rocks, mature trees, streams, pools, walls and screens.
- Non-fixed features and novel objects might include small trees, branches, logs, log piles, small rock piles, brush mounds, root balls, moveable sand/bark/mulch pits, sod, other novel substrates, burrows, nesting boxes, pipes, tubes, visual baffles, shade structures, moveable climbing apparatus, platforms, hammocks, bungee cords, rope ladders, hanging rings, scratching posts, sprinklers, water jets, rafts, brushes, puzzle feeders, boomer balls, nylabones, traffic cones, wooden rings, and cardboard boxes. Vertical structure is important and a useful stimulant even for normally terrestrial animals.
- Food enrichments might include hiding food or leaving carcasses whole or parts intact to make food acquisition more challenging.
- The zoo operator must ensure that any new materials introduced in an enclosure are not toxic to the enclosed species.
- Any enrichment structures or procedures must not pose a safety hazard for the animals, staff or the public.

- Zoo operators should reference the many books published (e.g., Organizations such as the Association of British Wild Animal Keepers) and monthly magazines (e.g., The Shape of Enrichment) outlining enrichment items and strategies for a range of animal species.
- The focus of training will be to develop behaviours that facilitate husbandry or veterinary care in a manner that reduces stress and gives animals choices to participate in the activity.
- There should also be a training focus on increasing positive responses of species appropriate behaviour for operational purposes.

## **E. General Animal Care Standards**

This heading sets out some general standards for animal care that have not been covered under animal care headings B, C and D. The general animal care standards are:

- Animals should be displayed, when feasible and possible, in exhibits replicating their wild habitat and in numbers sufficient to meet their social and behavioural needs.
- Food must be stored in a manner which preserves the nutritional integrity of the material until fed, prevents contamination by organic, inorganic or chemical contaminants and prevents access by pest species.
- Animals must be provided with nutritious food as set out in the veterinary written agreement and a potable water source must be available to all animals at all times.
- Food and water must be offered in such a way that it is available to all animals. Therefore, competition among animals must be monitored.
- Feeding of animals by visitors must not be allowed except in specific circumstances where food prepared by the zoo is provided to the public and amounts are carefully controlled.
- Feeding and watering containers must be kept clean and self-feeders and watering devices must be checked daily.
- Animal food must not be stored in the same area as animal drugs, or with food for humans. Food preparation areas must be separate from all other areas.
- If the collection includes fish, pinnipeds, cetaceans or other aquatic animals, there must be a written protocol and associated equipment for monitoring water quality.
- Buildings and substrates to which animals have access must be kept clean as follows:
  - Washable surfaces must be washed clean and disinfected regularly to prevent potentially dangerous accumulations of organic and inorganic materials and organisms.
  - Substrates which cannot be washed must be cleaned of gross waste (e.g., perishable food and animal waste) on a daily basis for enclosures smaller than 0.5 acres) and less frequently for larger enclosures. The animal care protocol may indicate longer cleaning intervals for some species to reduce psychological stress. To facilitate cleaning all areas of the enclosures must be accessible to

keepers.

- Substrates such as loose bedding material must be changed if soiled with feces and urine and any bedding provided must be kept dry and changed on a regular basis.
- Animal waste must be disposed of in an approved manner according to provincial and municipal regulation.
- Where animals are dependent upon heating, cooling, aeration, filtration or other systems for their survival, these must be equipped with warning devices and have emergency backup systems available.
- There must be a contingency plan for the animals in the zoo in the case of an emergency such as fire, flood or power outage.

## **IV. Appendices**

### **A. Appendix 1. Zoo Application Process**

The purpose of these standards is to establish criteria that operators of zoos must meet in order to obtain or renew a zoo permit that authorizes them to possess and traffic in specified wildlife and controlled animals.

#### **1. New Permit Applicant Requirements**

- The applicant must:
  - a) own the land or have a legal entitlement to operate a zoo on the land on which the zoo facilities will be located
  - b) be a resident of Alberta or a body incorporated, registered or continued under the *Business Corporations Act* or a body incorporated under the *Societies Act* in Alberta
  - c) provide a municipal development permit or a letter of approval if required from the municipality where the facilities will exist
  - d) obtain and maintain Comprehensive or Commercial General Liability Insurance in an amount not less than 2 million dollars inclusive per occurrence in accordance with the Alberta Insurance Act against bodily injury, personal injury and property damage, including loss thereof, and be endorsed to provide ESRD with 30 days notice of cancellation or material changes.
  - e) file a decommission plan that describes the basic steps that will be taken in closing down the zoo facility and disposing of its animals in the event that the zoo ceases to operate for any reason whatsoever
  - f) submit a written agreement between a zoo operator and a licensed Alberta veterinarian who will provide care for wildlife and controlled animals
  - g) Submit Zoo Permit fee of \$100.00

- The applicant must submit a Zoo Development Plan that addresses the requirements precedent to obtaining a Zoo Permit under the *Wildlife Act* and that is compliant with the *Animal Protection Act*. The plan shall include:
  - a) a description of the purpose of the zoo (which must include public viewing and education)
  - b) a list of animals that will be kept on the zoo premises, including (i) species of wildlife and controlled animals, and the numbers of animals and their ages and sexes that may be acquired (noting the species for which age and sex determination is not feasible); (ii) non license wildlife and domestic animals, including numbers, ages and sexes that may be acquired (noting the species for which age and sex are not feasible)
  - c) a plan view diagram to scale of the exhibit layout of the zoo facility
  - d) a description of how standards identified in Section II Subsections A through I of these Standards will be met. The description should address each standard under the headings set out in Section II Subsections A to I
- The applicant must submit an Animal Care Protocol as outlined in Section III of these standards (not required for zoos with professional accreditation).

Note: During preparation and review of the Zoo Development Plan, considerable interaction between the Zoo and the Alberta Zoo Advisory Committee is anticipated. This interaction will include activities such as on site visits and other communication to ensure that decisions are based on all relevant information.

## **2. Renewal Permit Applicant Requirements**

The applicant must:

- a) submit the annual zoo permit fee of \$100.00 and their application for renewal to the District Fish and Wildlife office by March 1 of each year
- b) submit a Zoo Development Plan or a revised Zoo Development Plan showing all changes from the previous development plan and to ensure the plan is updated on all requirements of the Zoo Standards. Note: Once a Zoo Development Plan is approved, this approval would be expected to remain in place for a relatively long period, or until the plan is amended
- c) provide an animal inventory as per Section II Subsection A. Animal Collection Management Standards
- d) submit an existing written agreement between the zoo operator and a licensed Alberta veterinarian demonstrating that a veterinary client relationship exists
- e) obtain and maintain Comprehensive or Commercial General Liability Insurance in an amount not less than 2 million dollars inclusive per occurrence in accordance with the Alberta Insurance Act against bodily injury, personal injury and property damage, including loss thereof, and be endorsed to provide SRD with 30 days notice of cancellation or material changes

- f) provide proof that the municipality continues to approve operation of the zoo facility at that location if approval is required by the municipality
  - g) provide a decommission plan that will be followed in the event that the zoo facility ceases to operate for any reason whatsoever
  - h) submit Animal Care Protocols in accordance with the requirements set out in Section III of (not required for zoos with professional accreditation)
- If the zoo permit for the previous year was issued with conditions, the applicant must provide proof (e.g., pictures, receipts, letters, new written procedures implemented) that they have complied with those conditions.

### **3. How the Application will be Processed:**

- The Executive Director of Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch will appoint an Alberta Zoo Advisory Committee (Committee) that may include members from ESRD or Solicitor General, ARD, the AVMA or a wildlife health specialist, the zoo industry, and others as deemed advisable.
- ESRD staff will perform an initial review of each application for administrative completeness. If a new permit application or renewal permit application does not meet the requirements set out in section 1 or 2, respectively, of “1. Zoo Application Process,” the application will be rejected and must be resubmitted.

#### **New Permit Applications**

- A New Permit Applicant must submit either one electronic copy or 3 hard copies of its Zoo Development Plan and Animal Care Protocols as part of the application.
- Once an application is deemed to be administratively complete, ESRD will send it to the Committee for review. If the Committee identifies deficiencies in the Zoo Development Plan or Animal Care Protocols, ESRD will return these documents to the Applicant for revision and resubmission.
- Once ESRD determines that the Zoo Development Plan and Animal Care Protocols submitted by the Applicant comply with the Zoo Standards, ESRD may advise the Applicant that it can proceed with construction of the fencing, enclosures, housing and any other structures identified in the application.
- When the Applicant advises ESRD that all fencing, enclosures, housing and other structures are completed, the Committee and ESRD will inspect the facility.
- If the Committee or ESRD identify deficiencies in the facility, ESRD will notify the Applicant. Once all facility deficiencies are rectified, the Committee will provide its recommendation to the Minister.
- Upon approval of the Zoo Development Plan by ESRD and review of the application by the Executive Director of Fish and Wildlife Policy, the Minister may issue a Zoo Permit to a New Permit Applicant.

#### **Renewal Permit Applications**

- Renewal Permit Applicants must submit their applications by **January 1** of each application year.
- Renewal Permit Applicants who are unable to submit their application by January 1 of each year must contact the Executive Director of Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch before January 1 to request an alternate date for the submission of the Renewal Permit Application.
- Once an application is deemed to be administratively complete, ESRD will send it to the Alberta Zoo Advisory Committee for review.
  - If there are no changes to either the Zoo Development Plan or the Animal Care Protocol(s) submitted in the previous application year, the Applicant may omit these documents from its application.
  - If there are any changes to the Applicant's Zoo Development Plan or Animal Care Protocol(s) from the previous year, including changes requested by ESRD as a result of an inspection report, the application must include either one electronic copy or 3 hard copies of the revised document(s).
- The Alberta Zoo Advisory Committee will review
  - the revised Zoo Development Plan, if applicable;
  - the revised Animal Care Protocol(s), if applicable; and
  - any evidence submitted by the Applicant that they have complied with the conditions of the zoo permit issued the previous application year.
- If the Committee identifies deficiencies in the Zoo Development Plan or Animal Care Protocols, ESRD will return these documents to the Applicant for revision and resubmission.
- Once ESRD determines that the application complies with the Zoo Standards, and the Committee is satisfied that the Applicant has complied with the conditions of its zoo permit, the Committee will provide its recommendation to the Minister.
- Upon approval of the Zoo Development Plan by ESRD and review of the application by the Executive Director of Fish and Wildlife Policy, the Minister may issue a Zoo Permit to a Renewal Permit Applicant.

### **All Applications**

- In deciding whether to issue a Zoo Permit, the Minister may consider:
  - recommendations by the Alberta Zoo Advisory Committee;
  - outstanding obligations arising from a zoo facility inspection report issued by ESRD;
  - convictions relating to operation of the zoo facility and any outstanding obligations of the Zoo Permit holder arising from such a conviction; and
  - any other matters that in the opinion of the Minister are relevant.
- A Zoo Permit issued by the Minister to an Applicant will incorporate the approved Zoo Development Plan submitted by that Applicant as a condition of the permit.
- An approved Zoo Development Plan that is incorporated as part of a Zoo Permit may be subject to publication at the discretion of ESRD.

- A Zoo Permit holder must operate its zoo facility in accordance with the conditions of the Zoo Permit and Zoo Development Plan.
- The Zoo Permit Holder must comply with any approved Animal Care Protocols set out in the Zoo Standards.
- The Zoo Permit will be valid to the end of the fiscal year in which it is approved and animal acquisition, if any, can proceed once the permit is issued.
- The Zoo Permit must be provided to an enforcement officer with jurisdiction under the *Wildlife Act* or *Animal Protection Act* upon request.

## **B. Appendix 2. Zoo Permit Cancellation**

In addition to charges being laid under the governing legislation, there may be circumstances where the Zoo Permit will be cancelled and the zoo collection ordered removed. These circumstances could include non-compliance with these Standards, including but not limited to: Animal Care Protocols, public and zoo staff safety standards; and containment of animals. These circumstances would be treated as follows:

- Complaints or problems discovered during routine inspections will be investigated. An SRD official (e.g., the District Fish and Wildlife Officer) will be responsible to investigate those complaints falling under the standards within SRD's mandate.
- An enforcement officer with authority under the *Animal Protection Act* will be the authority to investigate complaints related to animal care.
- Enforcement actions under the *Wildlife Act* or *Animal Protection Act* may consist of warnings, prosecutions and court orders. Appropriate enforcement actions will depend on the specific facts of each case and will include but not be limited to the severity of the alleged contraventions, the resulting harm, the repetitive nature of contraventions, the actions of the operator and zoo staff before, during, and after the alleged contraventions.
- If a written warning is issued to the operator, it will detail the problem(s), the actions necessary to correct the problems and a timeline to complete the corrections.
- If the operator does not comply with the written warning and the problems have not been corrected within the prescribed timeline, charges may be laid and SRD may cancel the Zoo Permit and order that the zoo facility decommission plan be implemented.
- If charges are laid and the permit is cancelled, the decommission plan to remove and disperse the animals from the zoo facility must be implemented.
- Zoo Permits may be cancelled if the conditions of the Permit are breached and the mandated standards are not adhered to.

## **C. Appendix 3. Conservation Education Information**

- Educational messages may be delivered by signage, pamphlets, audio-visual presentations, live encounters and live interpretation and must be based upon current scientific knowledge

- The following list provides a guide to the types of information that should be presented to the public in an educational program that addresses an individual species:
  - Geographic distribution
  - Current numbers and status (i.e., trend)
  - Biology (e.g., breeding season dates, gestation length, birth dates, litter sizes, social groupings, home range size, life expectancy, predators, diseases, parasites, food preferences, water needs)
  - Adaptations to their environment (e.g., foot type, leg length and shape, body size, teeth/beak type, fur/feather functions, digestive system, behaviour in response to weather/predators/food/water)
  - Habitat distribution and status (i.e., trend)
  - Relationship with human activities on the landscape
  - Interactions with human individuals (i.e., coexistence with humans)
  - Biodiversity and sustainable use
- The zoo should have access to a reference library and electronic databases as sources of biological information for educational programs.

#### **D. Appendix 4. Definitions**

“Accredited Zoo”. A zoo with professional accreditation provided by Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums or the American Zoo and Aquarium Association.

“Animal”. Any vertebrate other than a human being or a fish.

“Controlled Animal”. Any animal prescribed as such in the *Alberta Wildlife Regulation* as amended from time to time.

“Enclosure”. Any area of the exhibit (e.g. the fenced area, the cage or a room in a building or some combination of these, which contain the animals in the zoo facility and prevent the animals from escaping.

“Exhibit”. All the enclosures, shelters, buildings and any other structures that constitute the “home in the zoo” for a particular species or group of species.

“Off-site”. Outside the area licensed as a zoo facility.

“Wildlife”. Any animal prescribed as such in the *Alberta Wildlife Act* and its *Regulations*, as amended from time to time.

“Zoo Development Plan”. The plan that must be submitted by zoo operators in accordance with the requirements of these standards. The plan includes but is not limited to the following matters:

- requirement of the *Alberta Wildlife Regulation*
- must be approved by Ministers or delegate

- includes outline of physical layout of the zoo facility including drawings of all exhibits including dimensions and a listing of species to be held and numbers
- outlines how zoo standards related to the *Wildlife Act* will be met including Animal Collection Management Standards, Record Keeping Standards, Transportation Standards, Animal Containment Standards, Off-site Display Standards, Public and Staff Safety Standards, Conservation Standards, Staff Standards
- some requirements to be highlighted include plans for breeding, plans for recapture in the event of an escape, plans for any off-site display, plans and protocol for public contact with zoo animals, the zoo education program, plans for training staff and volunteers, a decommission plan in the event of facility closure
- a written agreement indicating evidence of a veterinary care for the wildlife and controlled animals

Note: Many of the plans and other requirements may be in point form if the operator chooses to minimize wordiness. Also, if this information already exists, it may not have to be recreated but fit into the context and outline of a development plan.

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“Zoo facility”. A facility primarily for public viewing of wildlife and controlled animals at a specified premises, which is authorized to possess and traffic in wildlife and controlled species. A Zoo Permit is required.