



## Module 20

# The Welfare of Animals Used in Entertainment

## Student Activities

### Questions

**1. Briefly describe some of the potential welfare issues associated with the life of a captive dolphin.**

**(4 marks)**

- Wild capture: the capture of cetacea (along with seals, turtles and sirenia) from the wild has had an impact on wild populations, and the losses (mortality) between capture and placement in the exhibition give additional stress to wild populations. The methods used for wild capture (netting and driving to nets or to shore) are likely to be very stressful to the animals and there is a risk of injury and mortality to animals who escape. The stress would predispose them to disease, whether they escape capture or not.
- Higher mortality, and shortened lifespan of animals after capture: although captive animals are protected from predation and some of the extremes of environment, many would argue that these hazards are 'natural' risks for which the animals have been equipped to cope with through evolution. The removal of natural hazards is unlikely to compensate for the severe behavioural and spatial restrictions placed on free-ranging marine mammals in captivity, such as a lifetime in restricted space with limited scope to perform 'natural' hunting, social and reproductive behaviours. Captive animals may also be at higher risk of disease than they are in the wild.

**2. In bear baiting, both dogs and bears are 'used' – briefly discuss the differences and similarities in the welfare stake held by these two species in such an activity.**

**(6 marks)**

Capture from the wild raises issues such as resulting injury and mortality, and the destruction of family groups of bears to provide individuals suitable for fighting.

Mortality and injury levels are severe to both bears and dogs who are involved in fights. Injury is the spectacle in this event. If the dogs do not attack, and the bear does not defend itself, then there is no spectacle.

There is also a severe restriction of natural behaviours in confinement. The bear will be confined for his/her entire life, and may travel over long distances to repeat the fight in different areas. Viewing only aggressive interactions between dogs and bears, the public's view of wild animals as aggressive dangers will be reinforced, and an understanding of their 'natural history' is lost. In the light of the dramatic improvements in public understanding of wild animal 'lives' provided by biological science and natural history studies in the last decade, the view of wild animals as primitive 'beasts' is seen as a restricted and perhaps outdated view by many.

Dogs have a complex domesticated relationship with humans. One of the first steps in domestication is likely to have been the removal of very aggressive or overtly territorial dogs so that they could co-exist with humans, and with other dogs. To make fighting between dogs a spectator activity means selecting animals who show aggressive traits, which are 'unusual' for domesticated dogs. The occurrence of 'dangerous' breeds in some countries has been the end result of this de-domestication process.

**3. Spectacles such as crocodile fighting may be visually exciting, but to what extent do such spectacles provide accurate portrayals of the animals' natural behaviours? (4 marks)**

Repeated aggressive interactions are promoted to maintain the spectacle. If the animals become too passive, then the 'entertainment' disappears – but the daily repetition of these contrived 'fights' creates animals who need more and more coercion to provide believably 'dangerous' entertainment.

This form of spectacle may reinforce the public's view of these animals as aggressive 'hazards' who must be 'controlled' (by violence), and makes no attempt to place these animals in the context of how they are superbly adapted to their wild environment, and how they rarely have aggressive interactions with humans in the wild.

**4. Discuss the issues involved in using animals in circuses. (5 marks)**

- Animals in circuses may have been wild-caught, with trauma, mortality, selection of young animals, transport, 'breaking in' and reduced longevity as related issues.
- Circus animals are subjected to captive confinement, with restricted space and a reduced ability to show a full range of natural behaviours.
- 'Life on the road' as the circus travels to different places to perform, means repeated transport in confinement for these animals.
- The animals also suffer from reduced freedom to express natural behaviours.
- Various training methods are used to 'break in' or tame animals and make them perform. Some of these methods are brutal. For wild animals, training is always outside their natural expectations. It is possible that some domesticated animals, for example,

horses or dogs, have an 'enriched' life in a circus environment when compared to their home-kept pet relatives, but for wild species, this is not the case. Also, many circus horses and dogs may be cruelly trained, and the other issues, such as lack of space, lack of normal interaction with conspecifics and transport, are still potentially detrimental to horses and dogs.

**5. Name the two 'main' ways in which legislation aimed at protecting animals in entertainment can work, and give two examples.**

**(4 marks)**

- The licensing of premises or individuals, e.g.. Zoo Licensing Act (1981), UK
  - Licensing of premises where wild animals may be kept (public and animal protection)
- Direct prohibition of acts or activities, e.g.. Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1890), Pakistan
  - In principle, this prohibits bear baiting.

**6. Describe some of the main welfare issues faced by dancing bears.**

**(4 marks)**

Sloth bear cubs are taken from the wild and their mothers are usually killed. This has implications for wild populations of sloth bears, which are threatened, in some regions of India.

The muzzle is pierced (without anaesthetic) and a tether inserted to allow the bear to be controlled. The acute pain and distress of this process becomes the chronic, lifelong discomfort of a non-healing wound in the mouth, which the animal must endure for the whole of its life.

**7. Describe some of the issues facing animals used in tourist rides.**

**(4 marks)**

Animals such as donkeys may have to carry much more weight than they can manage. When not in use, for example, outside the tourist season, the animals may be neglected.

These animals may be perceived as evidence of exotic 'fun', but any understanding of the adaptations of the animals (camels, elephants) for their environment is lost if they are seen simply as tourist amusement and not as well-adapted animals suited to life in their natural environment.

## In-class activity

### Discussion

**Note:** There are unlikely to be ‘definitive’ answers to these points for areas where no defined legislation already exists – the questions are provided to raise awareness and promote debate on the problems associated with any legislation that is aimed to protect ‘animals in entertainment’. Each of the discussions is appropriate for small-group and then wider class work and should take approximately 30–40 minutes to complete.

**1. Inspectors are appointed by the local authority and government to inspect zoo premises. Discuss how the sections of law above could be put into practice in your area, given the local conditions there. Use the questions below to guide the discussion.**

Suggested reading: a copy of the Zoo Licensing Act (1981), UK. More information on this and related documents can be found at [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2002/3080/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2002/3080/contents/made) and [www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/zoos/standards-zoo-practice](http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/zoos/standards-zoo-practice). With particular reference to section 4 of the Zoo Licensing Act:

*“4 (2): The local authority shall refuse to grant a licence for a zoo if they are satisfied that the establishment or continuance of the zoo would injuriously affect the health and safety of persons living in the neighbourhood of the zoo, or seriously affect the preservation of law and order.*

*4 (3): The local authority may refuse to grant a licence for a zoo if they are not satisfied that the standards of accommodation, staffing or management are adequate for the proper care and wellbeing of the animals or any of them or otherwise for the proper conduct of the zoo.”*

- a) If inspectors for zoos (or circuses, racing tracks, dolphinariums, inspection of fighting animals, etc.) are required:
- Who will appoint them?
  - How will they be trained to recognise the features required by law (adequate for proper care and wellbeing)?
  - Is it possible to readily determine ‘wellbeing’ for diverse species such as snakes, rhinos, dancing bears and photographed chimpanzees?
  - How often will premises need to be revisited?
  - How will they be funded (by levy on the zoo, circus, etc. or from public funds)?
  - How will their decisions be monitored – who inspects the inspectors?

- b) If licences are granted, and then have to be withdrawn:
- Who will enforce this?
  - What will be the penalties for failure to comply?
  - What will happen to the animals if the owner is no longer able to make money from them?
- c) For travelling animals:
- Can local authorities realistically control conditions for animals who move across regions of jurisdiction?
  - If the animals move internationally, are the 'lowest' denominator standards, for example, for cage space allowance, likely to be permitted, or should the highest standard be demanded?
- 2. Ask the class to come up with some local examples from your own country of animals used in entertainment, such as cock-fighting, dog-fighting, tourist rides, photographic models, racing animals. Split the class into small groups, each representing the different human and non-human/animal stakeholders in each of your scenarios, e.g. in the example of horse racing, choose a jockey, trainer, racehorse, spectator, veterinarian, etc. After a 15-minute discussion, elect a spokesperson from each group to describe his/her stake, and how it affects the life of his/her stakeholder.**
- 3. Discuss the idea that society decides what is acceptable as entertainment and has, in some countries, decided to make some forms of entertainment, such as dolphinaria and fighting animals, unlawful. Who makes up what we call 'society', and should it allow a minority who wish to pursue a particular entertainment to be permitted to do so, even if the majority are not in agreement?**

## Project

**Using a local example (or an example from elsewhere, if necessary), find out the activities required to enforce a piece of legislation that directly or indirectly can act to protect animals used in entertainment.**

Key points:

- Is the legislation worded in such a way as to specifically prohibit an activity, or to regulate or licence an activity?
- The chain of enforcement - who is given power to enforce the legislation? How is it policed? How are those with responsibility trained? Are resources available to ensure the legislation can be enforced?

## Research report

**Conduct research into two international campaigns against the use of animals in entertainment with particular reference to the veterinary aspects of the campaigns. What role would you, as a veterinarian, play in such a campaign?**

*Notes for lecturer:*

Students will need access to the internet to do this research.

Key points:

- Many international animal welfare and conservation organisations conduct campaigns on this issue.
- Examine the welfare (behaviour, physiology, etc.) and conservation implications of this use of animals.
- Veterinary roles can include treatment, enforcement of legislation, being a spokesperson for the campaign, etc.

This report can be completed using the following (optional) format:

1. Relevant background
2. Welfare science
  - What are the welfare infringements?
  - How severe are they?
  - How long do they last (or how long does the animal suffer)?
  - How many animals are affected?
3. Ethics
  - Theories, principles and frameworks that are relevant to your argument
  - Related ethical concerns and dilemmas
  - Consideration of professional ethics and issues
4. Law and/or welfare codes/minimum standards/other policy documentations as appropriate
  - Is there any legislation nationally or internationally?
  - If so, how is enforcement implemented? (What is the chain of enforcement?)
5. Summary/Conclusion
6. References list

## Applied Learning Opportunities

### Welfare Assessment

Small groups of students should visit a legal form of animal entertainment (e.g. zoo) and use the Five Freedoms to assess the welfare of some or, if possible, all the animals they see. Other modules (8, 7, 11, and 18) contain assessment protocol data sheets for animals in production or other scenarios. This is repeated below and may provide a useful start point for students as they design their own checklist to assess welfare.

Welfare Principle	Welfare Criteria
Good feeding	Absence of prolonged hunger
	Absence of prolonged thirst
Good housing	Cleanliness
	Behaviours around resting
	Ease of movement
Good health	Absence of injuries
	Absence of disease
	Absence of pain induced by management procedures
Appropriate behaviour	Expression of social behaviour
	Expression of other behaviours
	Good human–animal relationship
	Positive emotional state

(from the **Welfare Quality® Assessment Protocol for cattle**, available free online as a **PDF from the Welfare Quality® website**: [www.welfarequality.net/everyone/43148/9/0/22](http://www.welfarequality.net/everyone/43148/9/0/22))

After assessing welfare in-situ, students should then create a ‘stakeholder’ table for all the people and animals they see involved in the activity. The purpose of this is not just to identify all the involved parties, but also to begin to investigate what kind of stake they have in the activity.

Using all this information and the information from the lecture, the students should draft a position statement on animals in entertainment for their national veterinary association. The statement should be factual, not rhetorical, and highlight all the issues of animal welfare concern. The students should present their findings and the statement to the class.

After getting the comments and advice of the class, they should write a letter to the association and send them the statement, asking the association to consider adopting it.