

Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission Report  
New

October 2007

**INTRODUCTION TO OIE GUIDELINES  
FOR THE WELFARE OF LIVE AQUATIC ANIMALS**

Article X.X.X.1.

**Guiding principles for aquatic animal welfare**

1. That there is a critical relationship between *aquatic animal* health and *aquatic animal* welfare.
2. That the use of *aquatic animals* in aquaculture, harvest or capture fisheries, research and for recreation (eg ornamentals and aquaria), makes a major contribution to the wellbeing of people.
3. That the use of *aquatic animals* carries with it an ethical responsibility to ensure the welfare of such animals to the greatest extent practicable.
4. That improvements in *aquatic animal* welfare can often improve productivity and hence lead to economic benefits.
5. That the internationally recognised ‘five freedoms’ (freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition; freedom from fear and distress; freedom from physical and thermal discomfort; freedom from pain, injury and disease; and freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour) provide valuable guidance in *aquatic animal* welfare.
6. That the scientific assessment of *aquatic animal* welfare involves both scientifically derived data and value-based assumptions which need to be considered together, and the process of making these assessments should be made as explicit as possible.
7. That equivalent outcomes based on performance criteria, rather than identical systems based on design criteria, be the basis for comparison of *aquatic animal* welfare standards and guidelines.

Article X.X.X.2.

**Scientific basis for guidelines**

The scientific assessment of *aquatic animal* welfare has progressed rapidly in recent years and forms the basis of these guidelines. Many areas of *aquatic animal* welfare require further research to understand in full the ability of *aquatic animals* to feel pain and to be sentient. [To be developed]

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