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Center for Animal Welfare

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The Center for Animal Welfare provides guidance on animal welfare issues to regulated and nonregulated stakeholders. Our diverse network of partners and experts serve as the national resource for policy analysis, education and outreach, and science and technology in support of the Animal Welfare and Horse Protection Acts. We partner with U.S. and international experts to provide accurate, unbiased, science-based information.

Led by Dr. Martha Keller, DVM, MS, DACAW, the Center features a team of specialists with expertise in a wide range of animal species. We are available to provide advice and best practices not only to APHIS but also other Federal agencies, stakeholders, cooperatives, universities, State and local governments, and other countries. We also provide leadership on the safety and well-being of animals during emergencies. Additionally, we provide leadership and current information on the latest in animal welfare science and technology and help analyze animal care-related policies.

For more information, email us at centerforanimalwelfare@usda.gov.

Animal Welfare Symposia

Expand All

2024 Avian Enrichment Welfare Symposium

The Center for Animal Welfare hosted a 2-day Avian Enrichment Welfare Symposium on November 19–20, 2024. This virtual event focused on enrichment and environmental enhancement for a wide range of avian species in human care. Presentation topics included avian intelligence; types of enrichment for specific groups; how to develop, implement and assess enrichment plans; reviewing the USDA inspection process at avian facilities; and veterinary aspects of avian enrichment. Anyone who attended the event can continue to engage on the event community dashboard.

Day 1 Presentation Recordings

- Avian Intelligence
- Enrichment for Flocks
- Enrichment for Breeding Facilities & Young Birds
- Avian Enrichment in a Rehabilitation/Research Setting
- Veterinary Aspects of Avian Enrichment
- Day 1 Panel Discussion

Day 2 Presentation Recordings

- Overview of the USDA Inspection Process
- Taxa Specific: Psittacines
- Taxa Specific: Ratites
- Taxa Specific: Wading/Swimming/Aquatic Birds
- Looking Out for the Little Guys. Caring for Pigeons, Doves, and Songbirds
- Enriching the Lives of Our Raptor Ambassadors
- Designing Habitat for Avian Enrichment
- Day 2 Panel Discussion

2024 Bat Welfare Symposium

The Center for Animal Welfare hosted a 2-day Bat Welfare Symposium on April 10–12, 2024. This virtual event addressed the proper care and welfare considerations for captive and wild bats. Speakers covered a wide range of topics focusing on general improvements to health and welfare, managing bat populations, bat transportation, ensuring proper nutrition, welfare during rehabilitation, and anthropogenic issues affecting bat welfare. Anyone who attended the event can continue to engage on the event community dashboard.

Day 1 Presentation Recordings

- Bat Nutrition
- Bat Welfare Implications for Conservation, Education, and Awareness
- Bats 101
- Daily Observations: The Key to Bat Enrichment and Welfare
- Dr. Bat: Welfare Concerns Related to Veterinary Care and Handling
- One Health-One Welfare for Bats: Biosafety Principles and Practices in the Field and in Wildlife Rehabilitation
- USDA Bat Inspections
- Day 1 Panel Discussion: Bat Welfare

Day 2 Presentation Recordings

- Understanding Seasonal Changes in Weight in the Malayan Flying Fox Using a Newly Constructed Bat Scale
- Take Me to the Bat Mobile!
- Determining the Efficacy of Utilizing an Arboreal Irrigation System To Mitigate Heat Stress Behavior
- Behavior, Ecology, Diversity, Welfare
- Anthropogenic Issues Affecting Bat Welfare
- Welfare During Bat Rehabilitation
- Day 2 Panel Discussion: Bat Enrichment and Next Steps To Ensuring Bat Welfare

2023 Animal Transportation Welfare Symposium

In 2023, the Center for Animal Welfare organized and hosted a 2-day event, which addressed health and welfare concerns during transportation for animals covered under the Animal Welfare Act. Guest and internal speakers covered a wide range of welfare issues on species ranging from zoo animals to marine mammals, to pets and their welfare during both ground and air transportation. All recorded sessions are listed below and available for viewing on APHIS YouTube.

Day 1 Presentation Recordings

- Marine Mammal Transportation
- Overview of AWA Registration, Regulations, and Standards During Transportation
- The Changing Landscape of Ground Transportation
- Live Dog Importation—Animal Transportation Welfare Symposium 2023
- Preparing and Acclimating Dogs for Transportation
- Contingency Planning
- Day 1 Panel Discussion

Day 2 Presentation Recordings

- Exotic Animal Transportation
- Nonhuman Primate Transportation
- A Wildlife Inspector’s Experience With Animal Transportation

- CDC Perspective on Animal Transportation
- Conservation Logistics—Best Practices in Animal Transportation, What We Have Learned in 60+ Years
- Innovative Transport Monitoring Equipment
- AZA Zoo Registrar's Perspective on Welfare & Transportation
- Day 2 Panel Discussion

2023 Small Pets Welfare Symposium

In 2023, the Center for Animal Welfare organized and hosted a 2-day virtual event, which addressed health and welfare concerns for small pet mammals including rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, chinchillas, ferrets, hedgehogs, and sugar gliders. Guest and internal speakers focused on general improvements to the health and welfare of small pet species and recent concerns in the guinea pig industry regarding *Encephalitozoon cuniculi*. All recorded sessions are listed below and available for viewing on APHIS YouTube.

Day 1 Presentation Recordings

- Overview of Animal Care
- Current Status in the Field
- Conducting Daily Observations
- Pet Store Legislation and Market Trends
- Diagnostic Testing Methods for Small Mammals
- Day 1 Panel Discussion

Day 2 Presentation Recordings

- Enrichment Strategies: Concepts and Ideas From the Lab
- Social Housing: Concepts and Ideas From the Lab
- Zoonoses in Small Companion Mammals
- Emerging Diseases: RHD, ECUN, CDV
- *Encephalitozoon Cuniculi* in Rabbits
- What To Do With Sick Animals
- Day 2 Panel Discussion

2017 Nonhuman Primate Symposium: Practical Solutions to Welfare Challenges

In 2017, the Center for Animal Welfare sponsored a 2-day event focusing on the psychological and physical well-being of nonhuman primates. We provided targeted, practical information for enhancing compliance and animal welfare at regulated facilities.

Presentations

- Behavior-Based Husbandry for Lemurs
- Creating Environments That Support Species-Specific Behaviors for Captive Chimpanzees
- Functionally Appropriate Behaviors of Capuchins, Spider Monkeys, and Squirrel Monkeys
- Managing Abnormal Behaviors
- Just Listen—Giving Animals a Voice To Improve Their Quality of Life
- Nutritional Aspects of Nonhuman Primate Care
- Preventative Health Care of Primates in Captivity
- Geriatric Care of Primates in Captivity
- Developing an Environment Enhancement Plan

2014 Lions, Tigers, and Bears Symposium

In 2014, the Center for Animal Welfare sponsored an educational symposium focusing on welfare, husbandry, and safety. The 2-day event covered a range of topics, including behavior-based husbandry, safety, disaster preparedness, hand rearing, transportation, operant conditioning, enrichment, and diet/nutrition to help lions, tigers, and bears thrive in captivity.

Contact Us

Center for Animal Welfare

Email: centerforanimalwelfare@usda.gov

Related Links

- Animal Welfare Publications, Guidance Documents, and Forms

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