



# AMMPA ACCREDITATION STANDARDS & GUIDELINES



District of Columbia USA

© 2026 Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks & Aquariums

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums is an international accrediting body for zoos, aquariums and marine parks dedicated to conservation through public display, education, scientific research, and the rescue and rehabilitation of animals in the wild.

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

We, the members of the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums, are collectively committed to providing the highest standard of excellence in the service, environments, husbandry, and applied behavioral training techniques we can offer on behalf of the animals in our care. With a membership comprised of global experts and authorities on marine mammals, our commitment to these standards promotes exceptional welfare. Further, we pursue this optimal state of welfare by establishing animal lifestyles rooted in engagement and discovery which are uniquely and powerfully enriched through fostering the human-animal bond.

Our standards and guidelines inter-relate across disciplines to holistically address the needs and welfare of the animals in our care while maximizing the educational, conservation, and scientific impact of the populations as a whole. Alliance members must meet local, regional, and federal laws and possess the proper permits for the holding and display of any marine mammal. As a community and as individual member organizations, we hold ourselves to these high standards and guidelines designed to exceed the minimum care requirements presented by regulatory bodies. We benefit from the expertise of hundreds of qualified professionals to foster the best humane care of any animal in our collection.

Our animals live in habitats and social structures that promote species appropriate behaviors, social skills, and interactions which promote the animals' abilities to thrive within their provided home. Our daily animal management practices incorporate the animals' physical and mental needs through innovative and current animal behavioral training techniques that foster an appropriate and healthy connection with their specialists, developing trust which facilitates proactive and preventative health care, educational encounters, and presentations. Regularly reviewed and modified species-specific enrichment practices are employed that maximize stimulation, interest and learning. Our people and animals participate in critical and groundbreaking science-based and appropriate research experiences that promote conservation and the preservation of all animals and ecosystems.

Our results-based approach to animal advocacy filters through all elements of our standards and guidelines. Through these best practices, we collectively provide the greatest wealth of understanding and resources related to marine animal management and preservation. Our animals live fruitful lives in our parks; our work informs science, policy, public education, and personal inspiration. We imagine a future where marine biodiversity flourishes and marine mammals continue to fill the world's water ways, our work helps make that future possible.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>MISSION STATEMENT AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ANIMAL HEALTH</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 General Provisions .....	5
1.2 Definitions .....	5
1.3 Standards and Guidelines for Food / Nutrition .....	6
1.4 Standards and Guidelines for Health Care Programs .....	6
1.5 Standards and Guidelines for Biosecurity .....	8
<b>ANIMAL WELFARE</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1 General Provisions .....	10
2.2 Definitions .....	10
2.3 Standards and Guidelines .....	10
<b>APPLIED ANIMAL BEHAVIOR, TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 General Provisions .....	13
3.2 Definitions .....	13
3.3 Standards and Guidelines for Training of Marine Mammals .....	13
<b>HABITAT REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 General Provisions .....	15
4.2 Definitions .....	15
4.3 Standards and Guidelines for Marine Mammal Enclosures .....	16
4.4 Standards and Guidelines for Provisional Enclosures .....	16
<b>WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY</b>	<b>17</b>
5.1 General Provisions .....	17
5.2 Definitions .....	17
5.3 Standards and Guidelines for Water Quality .....	17
5.4 Standards and Guidelines for Environmental Quality .....	18
<b>POPULATION SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<b>19</b>
6.1 General Provisions .....	19
6.2 Definitions .....	19
6.3 Standards and Guidelines for Responsible Acquisition .....	19
6.4 Standards and Guidelines for Responsible Disposition .....	20
6.5 Standards and Guidelines for Reproductive Management .....	20
6.6 Standards and Guidelines for Cetacean Reproductive Management .....	20
6.7 Standards and Guidelines for Pinniped Reproductive Management .....	20
6.8 Standards and Guidelines for Sea Otter Reproductive Management.....	21
6.9 Standards and Guidelines for Polar Bear Reproductive Management.....	21

<b>MARINE MAMMAL TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>22</b>
7.1 General Provisions .....	22
7.2 Definitions .....	22
7.3 Standards and Guidelines for Marine Mammal Transportation .....	22
7.4 Standards and Guidelines for Cetacean Transport .....	22
7.5 Standards and Guidelines for Pinniped Transport .....	23
7.6 Standards and Guidelines for Sirenian Transport .....	23
7.7 Standards and Guidelines for Sea Otter Transport .....	23
7.8 Standards and Guidelines for Polar Bear Transport.....	24
<b>SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION</b>	<b>25</b>
8.1 General Provisions .....	25
8.2 Definitions.....	25
8.3 Standards and Guidelines for Scientific Research and Conservation .....	25
<b>PUBLIC EDUCATION</b>	<b>26</b>
9.1 General Provisions .....	26
9.2 Definitions.....	26
9.3 Standards and Guidelines for Education.....	26
<b>PUBLIC INTERACTION PROGRAMS</b>	<b>27</b>
10.1 General Provisions .....	27
10.2 Definitions.....	27
10.3 Standards and Guidelines for Marine Mammal Interactive Programs .....	27
<b>RECORD KEEPING</b>	<b>29</b>
11.1 General Provisions .....	29
11.2 Definitions.....	29
11.3 Standards and Guidelines for Record Keeping .....	29
11.4 Standards and Guidelines for Safety of Records.....	29
<b>CONTINGENCY PLANS</b>	<b>30</b>
12.1 General Provisions.....	30
12.2 Definitions .....	30
12.3 Standards and Guidelines for Contingency Plans .....	30



## 1. ANIMAL HEALTH

### 1.1 General Provisions

1.1.1 Alliance husbandry standards and guidelines have been developed using the best available research and the cumulative experience of our members. Alliance members are committed to ensuring that the needs, interests, and welfare of all animals under our care are of primary importance.

### 1.2 Definitions

1.2.2 High quality diet refers to diet that is in all aspects healthy, wholesome, palatable, and nutritionally appropriate.

1.2.3 Expert quality control is a system for consistently verifying and maintaining a high level of quality food supplies, encompassing all aspects of storage, handling, preparation, inspection, analysis, testing, and distribution.

1.2.4 Organoleptic refers to any sensory properties of a product, involving taste, color, odor, and feel. Organoleptic examination involves visual assessment, feeling, and smelling of food product.

1.2.5 Qualified attending veterinarian refers to an individual who has graduated from an accredited veterinary school, has a valid license to practice veterinary medicine, who has at least two years' experience with marine mammal care and maintenance (or work under the direction of a recognized marine mammal veterinarian), and with whom the facility has made formal arrangements to provide veterinary care to the facility's animals.

1.2.6 Animal health assessment program is a structured and systematic plan of managing animal health through regular observation and diagnostic monitoring, as well as record keeping and communications protocols.

1.2.7 Complete physical examination refers to a comprehensive, systematic, and thorough inspection of the animal for physical signs of disease or abnormality.

1.2.8 Biosecurity refers to plans and procedures to prevent the introduction of infectious disease to the existing collection of a facilities animals by the arrival of new animals.

1.2.9 New animal arrivals refer to animals recently acquired by an institution through trade, transfer, donation, loan, purchase, collection from the wild, or rescue.

1.2.10 Fomite refers to an inanimate physical object or substance that serves to transmit an infectious agent from one individual to another, such as contaminated footwear, veterinary equipment, needles, clothing, eating or drinking containers, cages, bedding, restraint devices, and transportation vehicles.

1.2.11 Zoonotic diseases are communicable diseases capable of being transmitted from an animal to a human.

1.2.12 Prophylactic measures refer to any actions taken or procedures utilized to prevent disease transmission from one individual to another.

1.2.13 Ectoparasite refers to a parasite that lives on the outside of its host rather than within the host's body. Lice and mites on pinnipeds, cyamids on great whales, and xenobalanus on dolphins are examples.

### 1.3 Standards and Guidelines for Food / Nutrition

1.3.1 Marine mammals must be provided with a high-quality diet consisting of sufficient food types to account for changes in food availability and dietary preference of individual species.

- Nutritional adjustments should be made for:
  - a. growth/age
  - b. maintenance
  - c. gestation/lactation

- d. activity level
- e. air, water temperature, and seasonal metabolic rate variations
- Weight guidelines should be established as optimum ranges for each animal and updated regularly.

1.3.2 Food analyses must be performed and documented on a routine basis and be subjected to expert quality control.

- Minimum analyses should include protein, fat, and caloric values, as well as organoleptic examinations.

1.3.3 Frozen food must not be stored at temperatures higher than 0°F (-17.6°C).

- Food should be stored at temperatures appropriate for each food type to minimize deterioration and maximize shelf life.
- Thawed food should not be stored at temperatures higher than 40°F (4.4°C).
- Storage programs, thawing procedures, and food preparation processes should be designed to prevent loss of nutrients and/or bacterial contamination.
- All thawed foods should have lids or should be covered with a layer of ice and discarded within 24 hours from time of thawing.

1.3.4 Vitamin supplementation must be individualized for each marine mammal.

1.3.5 Routine and appropriate procedures for the cleaning, disinfection, and sanitation of food preparation equipment and facilities must be established. All food equipment and utensils must be cleaned and disinfected daily.

- Procedures should be instituted that prevent the bacterial contamination of food containers and food preparation surfaces.
- Attendants and other personnel should practice appropriate personal hygiene.
- Surfaces should be free from standing water, rust, and organic debris.

1.3.6 Food and nutrition records must include: type, quantity, and species of food consumed; caloric value; analysis; freezer rotation; dates on food packets; refrigerator and freezer temperatures.

## 1.4 Standards and Guidelines for Health Care Programs

1.4.1 Alliance members must have in place a comprehensive Health Care Program that is integrated with husbandry, research, and management functions.

1.4.2 Each facility must have a qualified attending veterinarian who oversees a program of preventive medicine and clinical care, and who supports all other programs to ensure the health of the facility's marine mammals.

1.4.3 Facilities must abide by established laws governing veterinary practice.

1.4.4 Members must have a program of ongoing animal health assessment.

- Animal health assessment program should include:
  - a. regular veterinary rounds
  - b. daily monitoring by husbandry staff of each animal's physical appearance, appetite, activity level, and any changes in behavior
  - c. a procedure for recording and communicating animal health status, and any potential concerns, between husbandry and veterinary staffs

1.4.5 Complete physical examinations must be performed at regular intervals on each marine mammal in the collection.

- Physical examinations should include:
  - a. complete history from husbandry staff on animal's attitude, appetite, and behavior since the last physical exam
  - b. full body inspection

- c. determination of weight change and comparison to food intake
- d. blood sampling for hematology and chemistry
- e. other laboratory and diagnostic tests as needed
- Normal physiological values and serum banks for retrospective studies should be established for each marine mammal in the collection.

1.4.6 Parasite screening and treatment must be conducted as indicated by the attending veterinarian for each marine mammal in the collection.

1.4.7 Health and medical records must include: date of examination, veterinarian's name, reason for examination, examination conditions, action taken, medications (dose, frequency, and duration), supplements, individual nutritional requirement, body measurements, blood test results, necropsy findings (upon death), photographs (when appropriate) and physical characteristics, subjective and objective findings (therapeutic approach and treatment plan), differential diagnosis, frequency of veterinarian visits if part time or consulting, and transportation records.

- Health and medical records should always be filed at the facility where the individual animal resides.
- A duplicate copy of all health and medical records should be stored.

1.4.8 Euthanasia is recognized as an important component of responsible animal care and welfare when recommended by the attending veterinarian in accordance with the member's program of veterinary care to limit animal suffering caused by illness, injury, or other medical conditions.

1.4.9 Members must maintain standard husbandry procedures specific to their animal population and facility, all which must be approved by the attending veterinarian. Protocols must cover all aspects of the health care program, including:

- Communication between husbandry and medical care staff
- Animal food preparation, feeding guidelines, and vitamin supplementation
- Disinfection and maintenance of animal handling equipment and areas
- Safe facility design and maintenance to prevent personnel and animal injury
- Animal weight monitoring
- Medication administration
- Pharmaceutical inventory management
- Controlled substances inventory management as required by regulatory agencies
- Medical equipment maintenance and management
- Medical records maintenance
- Contingency medical procedures
- Necropsy procedures

## 1.5 Standards and Guidelines for Biosecurity

1.5.1 Members must have a biosecurity program to prevent the introduction of infectious disease. The goal of a biosecurity program is to prohibit cross contamination and disease transfer between new animal arrivals and current population animals resulting from physical contact, fomite transmission, aerosol spread, waste drainage or reuse of untreated water, and to allow animals to acclimate to new settings. If a receiving institution does not have appropriate quarantine facilities, they should arrange for quarantine at an alternate site that does have such facilities, or only receive animals that do not require quarantine. Exceptions to these Standards and Guidelines for Biosecurity can only be made with the advice and consent of the attending veterinarian.

1.5.2 Quarantine practices must be instituted based on the prior medical history of the newly arrived animal.

- Those situations where quarantine is recommended include animals: recently collected from the wild (less than 30 days prior to transport); recently exposed to a new arrival (less than 30 days

prior to transport); with poorly documented medical history; that have apparent medical problems at the time of arrival; and/or, at the direction of the attending veterinarian.

- Quarantine may not be necessary if the animal: has a previous history of being housed with the existing population; has been cleared through lab tests of carrying any infectious diseases prior to transfer; has a well-documented medical history; has been cleared by the attending veterinarian to be immediately integrated with the rest of the existing colony; and/or if physical or visual separation from other con-specifics is deemed by the attending veterinarian to be detrimental to the health of the animal.

1.5.3 Members must quarantine animals recovered directly from the wild through marine mammal strandings. These animals have no documented medical history, are usually injured, ill, or otherwise compromised, and often require lengthy periods of rehabilitation prior to wild release or acquisition into a collection.

1.5.4 Quarantine for all species must be under the supervision of a veterinarian and consist of a minimum of 30 days unless otherwise directed by the attending veterinarian. If during the 30-day quarantine period, additional marine mammals are introduced into the quarantine facility, the 30-day period must begin again for all animals already in quarantine and exposed to the new arrivals.

- The quarantine duration may be refined by the attending veterinarian based upon the health status of the animal and known or suspected presence of a communicable disease based upon diagnostic tests and physical examinations. A quarantined animal with a suspected communicable disease that is not already endemic in the institution's animal population may remain quarantined until the animal has cleared infection.

1.5.5 Equipment used to feed and clean animals in quarantine must be used only with these animals, or thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, as designated by the attending veterinarian, before use with non quarantined animals.

- Attendants should be designated to care only for quarantined animals or to attend to quarantined animals only after fulfilling their responsibilities for the resident species.
- Attendants provided with separate quarantine clothing, footwear, and washing facilities, designed to prevent fomite transmission, may be allowed to attend to non quarantine animals after working with quarantine individuals, if approved by the attending veterinarian.

1.5.6 Institutions must take precautions to minimize the risk of exposure of animal personnel to zoonotic diseases that may be present in newly acquired animals if the attending veterinarian deems that zoonotic risk exists.

- These precautions should include the use of disinfectant footbaths, wearing of appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing, and minimizing physical contact.
- Personnel should be educated about the potential risks of zoonotic disease transmission from newly acquired animals, including any known zoonotic diseases that the animal may have.

1.5.7 A complete physical examination as defined by the attending veterinarian must be performed during the entrance into, and prior to exit from, quarantine.

- During this period, certain prophylactic measures should be instituted. Individual fecal samples should be collected and examined for gastrointestinal parasites. If appropriate, treatment should be prescribed by the attending veterinarian. Successful parasiticide therapy may or may not be necessary prior to removal of the animal from quarantine. This determination should be made by the attending veterinarian based on the potential for contagion. Where indicated, the animals should also be evaluated and treated for ectoparasites.
- In those species for which vaccines are available and recommended, vaccinations should be considered by the attending veterinarian as appropriate for each species. If the animal arrives without a vaccination history, it should be treated as an immunologically naive animal.
- Whenever possible, blood should be collected and serum banked in either a  $-70^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-94^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) or a  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-4^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) manual defrost freezer. Such sera can provide an important resource for retrospective disease evaluation.

1.5.8 Ocean enclosures, used for quarantine purposes, must be located in a way that prevents the spread of any disease, from animal to animal, through natural water movement, and at a distance from other enclosures deemed adequate by the attending veterinarian.

- Animals should be considered in quarantine conditions when they are confined within enclosures that are physically separated from all others housing conspecifics by a distance of 50 ft. (15 m) or more. Procedures for quarantine, as noted above, apply.

1.5.9 Complete medical records must be kept of all quarantined animals.



## 2. ANIMAL WELFARE

### 2.1 General Provisions

2.1.1 Alliance standards and guidelines for assessing animal welfare have been developed using peer-reviewed literature and the cumulative experience of our members. Alliance members are committed to ensuring that the welfare of all animals under our care is of primary importance.

### 2.2 Definitions

2.2.1 Animal Welfare refers to an animal's collective physical, mental, and emotional states over a period of time, and is measured on a continuum from good to poor.

2.2.2 An animal welfare committee is a group of individuals experienced and knowledgeable about the science of animal welfare with the goal of serving as a resource for the organization.

2.2.3 An animal welfare assessment process refers to a program where all individual animals or groups of animals are evaluated for current state of welfare, health, behavior, and environmental factors.

2.2.4 Proactive welfare assessments refer to ongoing monitoring of both positive and negative indicators of animal welfare to detect changes in welfare state.

2.2.5 Responsive welfare assessments refer to evaluation of both positive and negative indicators of animal welfare during significant life events or changes in the animal's environment.

2.2.6 Veterinary perspectives refer to the professional opinion of a qualified veterinarian familiar with the health of the subject animal(s).

2.2.7 Significant life events can include construction events, unusual weather events, noise intrusions, changes of habitats/conspecifics/social structure, and changes within daily operational programming/needs.

2.2.8 A clear process refers to a plan that is transparent and understood throughout the entire organization.

### 2.3 Standards and Guidelines

2.3.1 Members must establish an animal welfare committee to assist and address any concerns for animal welfare within the organization and have a written and transparent process for identifying, communicating, and addressing welfare concerns.

- The committee should consist of individuals with a variety of backgrounds and represent diverse roles within the organization.
- The committee should include members with a high level of experience and knowledge within the field of animal care and training.
- The committee should include professional representatives from outside of the organization if deemed appropriate.
- There should be a clear process/avenue for all staff (paid or unpaid) to voice animal welfare concerns to the animal welfare committee without fear of retaliation.
- The welfare concern reporting process should include provisions for anonymity (where possible), timely evaluation and reporting back to the individual/team members regarding the outcome of the investigation.

2.3.2 Members must have a written process for assessing animal welfare. The assessments must be both proactive and responsive and include knowledgeable staff input on animal behavior (husbandry) and animal health (veterinarian).

- Assessments should consider multifactorial positive and negative indicators of animal welfare.

- Assessments should be based upon the Five Domains of Animal Welfare and/or Five Opportunities to Thrive, and/or another scientifically based animal welfare model.

Five Domains of Animal Welfare	Five Opportunities to Thrive
<p>1. Nutrition Access to appropriate food and water.</p>	<p>1. Opportunity for a Thoughtfully Presented, Well-Balanced Diet A suitable, species-specific diet will be provided in a way that ensures full health and vigor, both behaviorally and physically.</p>
<p>2. Environment Quality of surroundings including shelter, space, and climate.</p>	<p>2. Opportunity to Self-Maintain An appropriate environment including shelter and species-specific substrates that encourage opportunities to self-maintain.</p>
<p>3. Health Physical health, disease prevention, and veterinary care.</p>	<p>3. Opportunity for Optimal Health Rapid diagnosis and treatment of injury or disease while providing supportive environments that increase the likelihood of healthy individuals.</p>
<p>4. Behavior Expression of natural behaviors through enrichment and social interaction.</p>	<p>4. Opportunity to Express Species-Specific Behavior Quality spaces and appropriate social groupings will be provided that encourage species-specific behaviors at natural frequencies and of appropriate diversity while meeting social and developmental needs of each species in the collection.</p>
<p>5. Mental State Emotional well-being influenced by the other domains.</p>	<p>5. Opportunity for Choice and Control Providing conditions in which animals can exercise control and make choices to avoid suffering and distress, and make behavior meaningful.</p>
(Mellor 2013)	(Miller et al., 2020)

2.3.3 Proactive assessments must include design guidelines that provide a clear written process for staff to evaluate individual animals' current state of health, behavior, and environmental factors.

- Proactive (routine) assessments should occur twice per year for each marine mammal.
- Proactive (routine) assessments should encompass different times of day as well as hours after normal operations.

2.3.4 Responsive assessments must include design guidelines that provide a clear written process for staff to evaluate the individual's welfare impacts of significant life events or changes in the animal's environment.

- Assessments should include all life events such as changes in social structure, changes to habitat, medical management, construction, weather, public events, or any change in routine daily operations.

2.3.5 Members must establish a clear written process for assessment results that indicate undesired welfare for an animal. Each case must include a written action plan of resolution for the identified undesired welfare condition.



### 3. APPLIED ANIMAL BEHAVIORAL, TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT

#### 3.1 General Provisions

3.1.1 Alliance members recognize animal training as an application of behavioral science that: provides a means to observe, assess, and enrich an animal's mental, physical, and behavioral health and welfare; assists the animal care staff in providing safe and expedient methods for preventive and clinical medical procedures; integrates public display within husbandry regimes; and facilitates education, research, and conservation objectives. The appropriate use of behavioral training is a foundation of modern professional marine mammal care and welfare.

#### 3.2 Definitions

3.2.1 Animal Training is the deliberate application of learning principles, including operant and classical conditioning, to modify an animal's behavior to facilitate husbandry, enrichment, public display, safety, and research.

3.2.2 Experienced Qualified Trainer is defined as an individual that has actively participated in the training and husbandry of marine mammals for at least three years accumulated over a period of no longer than five years prior to current employment.

3.2.3 Animal Training Program is a defined and managed functional activity that is comprised of animals, equipment, and personnel who are responsible for developing and administering animal training plans to meet the goals and objectives of the organization, while making a positive contribution to the continuous enhancement of animal welfare.

3.2.4 Professional organizations are formal membership associations established to promote the exchange of information among professionals in the field of animal behavioral science, management, training, husbandry, enrichment, or other related disciplines.

3.2.5 Professional journals refer to periodicals, magazines, or other publications which contain material relevant to animal behavioral science, management, training, husbandry, enrichment, or other related disciplines.

3.2.6 Preceptorship/Internship refers to a period of practical experience and training for a student that is supervised by an expert or specialist in a particular field.

#### 3.3 Standards and Guidelines for Training of Marine Mammals

3.3.1 Members must have a written manual describing the member's policies on animal training.

- The animal training policy should describe the organization's view of the animal training program, its role in animal welfare and in the organization, and how management interfaces with it, typically including:
  - a. focus of the animal training program
  - b. philosophy of animal training
  - c. application of animal training
  - d. statements of animal care and treatment principles
  - e. management review and accountability

3.3.2 Members must have a Behavior Development and Management Plan.

- The Behavior Development and Management Plan should describe the animal training program and its objectives, methods of accomplishment, and success criteria. It should address training oversight, standard and contingency procedures, and record keeping, typically including:
  - a. animal training decision authority
  - b. categorized list of behavior goals and objectives

- c. animal training plan for individual behaviors
- d. criteria for measuring success of animal training plans
- e. schedule of frequency to maintain criteria
- f. contingency plans

3.3.3 Members must provide for an animal training staff that is appropriately sized and qualified to meet program requirements.

- The on site animal training staff should be under the direction of an experienced, qualified trainer. Animal training responsibilities should be clearly defined and positions should include:
  - a. an organizational flow chart
  - b. animal training position(s) responsibilities
  - c. requirements of animal training positions
  - d. animal training position descriptions
  - e. qualifications of animal training personnel

3.3.4 Members must have and support a program for animal trainer development that meets the guidelines of the International Marine Animal Trainers' Association to include:

- a written staff training manual
- a process for teaching learning and conditioning theory
- educational materials to supplement the staff training manual
- a process for testing trainers' knowledge of learning and conditioning theory and the facility's training policies
- opportunities to gain hands-on experience
- a mechanism for evaluating trainers' skill levels on a regular basis
- criteria for advancement

3.3.5 Members must participate in animal training information exchange activities.

- Suggested activities include:
  - a. membership in professional organizations
  - b. attendance and participation at seminars and conference meetings
  - c. animal trainer exchange programs
  - d. internships and preceptorships
  - e. subscriptions to professional journals

3.3.6 Members who utilize training paradigms for conducting animal operations outside of facility perimeter boundaries must have a plan for management of marine mammals in the open environment under trainer stimulus control, including recovery of the animals following the contingency event.

3.3.7 Daily records must include: behavioral observations, environmental conditions, type of interaction, and any atypical event or occurrence.

3.3.8 Members must provide an environment that is stimulating and enriching to the marine mammal collection. Methods may include, but are not limited to: environmental enrichment devices, variable feeding schedules, variety of food types, diverse social interactions with con-specifics, multi-species habitat, guest interaction, enclosure design, natural environment, tidal change, live fish, taction, and learning new behaviors.



## 4. HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

### 4.1 General Provisions

4.1.1 The Alliance is committed to ensuring that appropriate housing is provided for all marine mammals maintained at member facilities. It recognizes that these animals live in a three-dimensional environment that can vary immensely to meet and exceed the needs of each species housed. Differing in body length, body form, swimming behavior and greater environmental and social needs, these animals are highly adaptable to a variety of physical environments, both in the wild and in zoological settings. The following standards are meant to establish housing requirements for marine mammal enclosures not limited by standardized quantitative terms and which promote a high level of animal health and welfare.

Space is one aspect of successfully managing an animal collection. It has historically been used as the surrogate measure of the quality of an animal enclosure. However, quantitative spatial dimensions alone do not adequately describe overall quality of an enclosure nor always directly correlate with animal welfare. Variations in enclosure depth can be an important aspect of enclosure quality for some species while surface area may be for another. Environmental design is multifaceted, incorporating, but not limited to, depth, shape, sightlines, substrate, interconnectivity, water quality parameters and more.

Given that few, if any, studies exist on the minimum amount of space necessary to ensure the health and welfare of marine mammals, the overall quality of a habitat will be better determined by the overt behavioral observations and health parameters of the animals themselves as assessed through regular interactions with marine mammal experts and the veterinarian.

Alliance member facilities are required to meet or exceed the relevant minimum space standards set by their national and/or local governing bodies. If a member facility's national and/or local government has not set minimum space standards for marine mammal enclosures, the facility must meet the minimum space standards set by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in the Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations.

4.1.2 As leaders in marine mammal husbandry and care, Alliance members are committed to promoting guidelines that continually improve animal management practices.

### 4.2 Definitions

4.2.1 Average Adult Length (AAL): is a measurement typically used to calculate minimum space requirements for marine mammals.

4.2.2 Minimum depth: The smallest acceptable water depth for an enclosure housing marine mammals. This minimum depth does not refer to the minimum depth of a particular enclosure, but rather the deepest part of the enclosure must meet or exceed this minimum depth.

4.2.3 Minimum volume: The smallest acceptable volume (liters or gallons) for enclosures housing marine mammals.

4.2.4 Minimum Surface area: The smallest acceptable surface area (in square feet or meters) for an enclosure housing marine mammals.

4.2.5 Minimum Horizontal Dimension (MHD): The shortest acceptable distance between opposite sides of an enclosure.

4.2.6 Dry resting and social activity area (DRA): refers to a dry surface area that is close enough to the surface of the water to allow pinnipeds, sea otters, and polar bears easy access for entering and leaving the water.

4.2.7 Animal Enrichment: Simplistically, enrichment is a process which allows animals variety and choices in their environment. Training is considered a form of enrichment.

### 4.3 Standards and Guidelines for Marine Mammal Enclosures

4.3.1 Enclosures must meet or exceed minimum spatial requirements of relevant government regulations (e.g., the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 9CFR Ch. 1 Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA 3.104). If a member facility is located in a country without such regulations, they are required to meet or exceed the U.S. standards.

4.3.2 All enclosures holding marine mammals shall be constructed to be structurally sound, durable, and nontoxic, providing safe and secure habitats protected from the elements, intruders, unwanted pests and disease.

4.3.3 Physical descriptions reported for accreditation must include: enclosure dimensions (depth profile, MHD, volume, surface area); connectivity to other enclosures; water system type; total Dry Resting Area; and pre, during and post-emergency protocols.

4.3.4 Habitats should include introduced or ever-present species-appropriate stimuli that will challenge and enrich the animals' lives to encourage behavioral species-appropriate responses.

4.3.5 An overall assessment of the suitability of an enclosure must include incorporation of the relevant information reported in the following sections: Animal Health and Wellness (Section 1), Health Care Programs (Section 1.4), Applied Animal Behavioral Training (Section 3), and Water and Environmental Quality (Section 5).

4.3.6 Facility descriptions must include: enclosure dimensions and location, water system type, and contingency protocols. There should be a clear chain of command for staff with specific tasks assigned.

4.3.7 Member facilities with breeding programs must have adequate provisions for separating pregnant females/post parturient females with calves from incompatible conspecifics as well as an appropriate reintroduction plan to the social group.

4.3.8 Enclosures housing two or more sexually mature pinniped males should have a DRA that is divided into two or more separate areas with sufficient visual barriers to provide relief from aggressive animals especially during breeding season.

### 4.4 Standards and Guidelines for Provisional Enclosures

4.4.1 An animal may be maintained for up to 14 days in an enclosure which does not meet the Alliance requirements for a primary pool for non-medical training, breeding, holding or transfer purposes. If an animal is maintained in such an enclosure for more than 14 days, such extension must be justified by written notation in the animal's record by the attending veterinarian on a weekly basis.

4.4.2 Members housing animals in non-conforming facilities for research purposes should include such information in the research protocol and acquire approval from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee or its institutional equivalent.

4.4.3 The requirements outlined above do not apply to critical care facilities housing beach-stranded marine mammals undergoing rehabilitation and/or veterinary treatment.



## 5. WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

### 5.1 General Provisions

5.1.1 Wild marine mammals live in a medium in which organic and inorganic waste is quickly diluted or readily dissipates. In most zoological settings, pool water is recycled through filtration and water treatment systems, with only a small percentage replenished daily. To ensure optimum quality, marine mammal pool water is usually subjected to biological disinfection, mechanical filtration, and chemical treatment of both dissolved and particulate organic matter. The design of water treatment systems varies considerably between member institutions. In all operations, however, the establishment of optimum water parameters must be based on the physiological needs of the animals.

5.1.2 The qualitative features of an animal's environment can have significant effect on its physical and behavioral health. Sensory input from sources such as temperature variation and changing photoperiod can serve to synchronize seasonal breeding or growth cycles, as well as influence diurnal hormonal rhythms, immunity status, and basic metabolic state.

5.1.3 The following guidelines refer only to the most commonly held species of marine mammals. These are not meant to supersede veterinary judgment in establishing environmental conditions appropriate to individual animals.

### 5.2 Definitions

5.2.1 Marine mammal pool refers to any structure or enclosure containing water designed to house marine mammals, including natural lagoon, bays and tidal basins, as well as man-made structures.

5.2.2 Standard Methods refers to laboratory techniques and methodology used to analyze for microbiological samples as listed in Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater, American Public Health Association.

5.2.3 Adequate ventilation refers to an ample flow of fresh air necessary to minimize the accumulation of chlorine fumes, other gases, and noxious odors.

5.2.4 Vertical air space refers to the space between the surface of a marine mammal pool and the overhead ceiling or canopy, usually pertaining to an indoor facility.

5.2.5 Acoustic monitoring refers to a system for detecting sounds and noise audible to marine mammals.

### 5.3 Standards and Guidelines for Water Quality

5.3.1 Marine mammal pool water must be monitored and documented daily for basic chemical parameters as appropriate for closed or open circulation systems.

- Marine mammal pool water should be tested twice daily and should be treated as necessary to maintain pH values not less than 7.4 or more than 8.4.
- Marine mammal pool water should be tested twice daily for concentration of chlorine and/or other oxidizing agents. Total free and combined chlorine should not exceed 1.0 mg/l.
- Marine mammal pool water should be free of residual dissolved ozone.
- Marine mammals maintained in closed water systems should have the water treated with sodium chloride or a combination of sodium chloride and other naturally occurring sea salts so as to maintain a salinity of not less than 22 PPT.

5.3.2 Members must limit microbial growth in marine mammal pool water through a program of disinfection, bacterial monitoring, and general exhibit maintenance.

- Members should test the concentration of bacteria in marine mammal pool water weekly. Total coliform counts should not exceed 500 colonies/100 ml.
- Members should implement a program of daily exhibit cleaning and maintenance that minimizes the risk of animal exposure to pathogenic microorganisms.

5.3.3 Members with facilities incorporating water that is open to the ambient sea environment must monitor their water source to be sure that conditions remain compatible with sound animal management.

- For keeping cetaceans, salinity should not fall below 2.2% salt (22 ppt) for a period of longer than one contiguous week. Salinity should be monitored daily.
- If salinity falls below 22 ppt for a period of time longer than one week, animals should be maintained under enhanced veterinary supervision and an expanded schedule of water quality monitoring should be in place.
- Bacteria should be monitored and documented at least weekly for total coliform.
- Water temperature should be monitored and documented at least daily.
- Members should be aware of, and be prepared to test for, potential sources of water borne toxins that could adversely impact animal health.

5.3.4 Water quality records must include: test parameters for water quality, tests for added chemicals, bacterial culture test results, amount of added chemicals, facility maintenance log, and filtration operation log.

- All water quality records should be maintained by the facility for three years.

## 5.4 Standards and Guidelines for Environmental Quality

5.4.1 Members must provide adequate heating or chilling for marine mammal pool systems to maintain water temperatures within the thermal tolerances of the species and individuals maintained therein.

- Bottlenose dolphins should not be maintained in water temperatures less than 50°F (10°C) or more than 90°F (32°C).
- Killer and beluga whales should not be maintained in water temperatures more than 65°F (18°C).
- Walrus should not be maintained in water temperatures more than 60°F (15°C). Other pinnipeds should not be maintained in water temperatures more than 75°F (24°C).
- Sirenians should not be maintained in water temperatures less than 68°F (20°C) or more than 90°F (32°C).
- Sea otters should be maintained in water temperatures between 45°F (7°C) to 60°F (15.5°C).
- Polar bears should not be maintained long term in water temperatures more than 65°F (18°C).
- All marine mammal pool waters should be free of ice.

5.4.2 All marine mammal enclosures must be provided with adequate ventilation.

- Indoor housing facilities should be ventilated by natural or artificial means to provide a flow of fresh air that minimizes the accumulation of chlorine or other fumes and noxious odors.
- A vertical air space averaging at least six feet (1.8 meters) should be maintained in all primary enclosures, including pools of water.

5.4.3 Members must minimize exposure of marine mammals to noises of sufficient intensity or type to cause auditory discomfort or distress.

- A plan of acoustic monitoring for marine mammal enclosures should be in place.
- Efforts should be made to acoustically isolate sound generating mechanical equipment located in close proximity to marine mammal enclosures.

5.4.4 All indoor marine mammal facilities must provide ample lighting by either natural or artificial means or both.



## 6. POPULATION SUSTAINABILITY

### 6.1 General Provisions

6.1.1 Acquisition and disposition of marine mammals by member institutions reflect policies that maximize the educational, research, and conservation potential of the populations and the welfare of each individual animal. It is essential that facilities maintain healthy, genetically diverse, socially compatible populations that ensure their long-term sustainability.

Alliance members are committed to the goal of creating and maintaining sustainable and genetically diverse populations of marine mammals at all institutions. The continued development and improvement of healthy reproductive management practices and techniques by Alliance members not only promotes sustainability of current populations and reduces or eliminates any need to collect cetaceans from wild populations, they also benefit rare and endangered species.

### 6.2 Definitions

6.2.1 Acquisition: a zoological term that indicates the addition of an animal(s) to a facility's population through transfer, trade, donation, loan, purchase, collection from the wild, rescue, or birth.

6.2.2 Disposition: a zoological term that indicates the removal of an animal(s) from a facility's population through transfer, trade, donation, loan, sale, death, or reintroduction.

6.2.3 Lawful purposes refers to purposes which are in accord with all applicable local, state/provincial, regional, national, and international laws and regulations.

6.2.4 Current reproductive management techniques refers to up-to-date methods and strategies utilized to optimize managed breeding efforts.

6.2.5 Comprehensive reproductive management plan is a thorough, written plan covering all aspects of reproductive management which is designed to maximize the potential for successful breeding efforts and rearing of offspring.

### 6.3 Standards and Guidelines for Responsible Acquisition

6.3.1 The animal population management plan of individual members must clearly reflect the goal of minimizing the need for collecting marine mammals from the wild.

- The plan should prioritize the addition of marine mammals through managed breeding programs; loans, exchanges or purchases from other zoological institutions; or placement of orphaned or injured and rehabilitated individuals from wild populations that have been deemed to be non-releasable.
- The plan should include a commitment to partnerships for future maintenance and, wherever possible, reproductive management of the population.

6.3.2 Members must only acquire or accept a marine mammal for lawful purposes. Members must be capable of providing for the animal's proper care and management according to Alliance standards.

6.3.3 Members must notify the Alliance before any collection permit application is submitted for acquiring marine mammals from the wild.

6.3.4 Members acquiring marine mammals from the wild must demonstrate that such removal will not compromise the sustainability of the stock or population from which the animals were taken.

6.3.5 Acquisitions from the wild must be authorized by the governmental regulatory agency managing the source population.

6.3.6 All animals must be acquired using humane methods consistent with accepted professional practices.

6.3.7 Acquisition records must include: date; method of acquisition; actual or estimated age; gender, genus and species; lineage if known; identification; and name of sender and owner.

## 6.4 Standards and Guidelines for Responsible Disposition

6.4.1 Members must only remove living animals from their facilities by exchange, loan, sale, or gift to a qualified zoological park, aquarium, marine life park, or comparable institution.

- Animals should only be placed in another facility whose standards are consistent with those of the Alliance.

6.4.2 Marine mammals must only be loaned to other marine mammal facilities for purposes of display, reproductive management, or research.

- Such loans should be documented by written agreement declaring the nature of the loan and its terms.

6.4.3 Marine mammals maintained as part of a facility's population must only be released to the wild if part of an authorized, scientifically based, reintroduction program.

6.4.5 In all cases, members must ensure that the manner of disposition considers the best interests of the animal and its species.

6.4.6 A post mortem examination must be performed on deceased marine mammals, directed by the attending veterinarian, with a permanent record generated indicating the disposition and/or results of the necropsy.

6.4.7 Disposition records must include: date, type of disposition, age, gender, genus, species, and identification.

## 6.5 Standards and Guidelines for Reproductive Management

6.5.1 Members must prioritize, through strategic planning, the selection of species for reproductive management based upon biological, genetic, demographic, and conservation needs of the species.

6.5.2 Members must optimize the genetic diversity within their managed populations of marine mammals.

6.5.3 Members must work to maintain managed populations of sufficient size to serve present and future needs for conservation, education, and potential reintroduction of genetic material into natural populations.

- Free-breeding should be prevented in species known to be in surplus in member institutions or when offspring, kept with their sires and dams, attain reproduction age.

6.5.4 Cooperative reproductive management records must include: breeding loan agreements, and genetic and demographic records.

## 6.6 Standards and Guidelines for Cetacean Reproductive Management and Neonatal Care

6.6.1 Members must develop a comprehensive plan maximizing the potential for success before actively pursuing cetacean reproductive management.

- Members should provide maternity pools that are of a size and configuration to facilitate nursing, calf rearing, and separation from other animals if necessary.
- A plan to monitor pregnancy, calf delivery, and rearing should be in place.
- Contingency plans should be developed, protocols recorded, and resources for implementation should be in place for: contingency intervention before, during, and after delivery; weaning; illness; pathological examination of mortalities.

## 6.7 Standards and Guidelines for Pinniped Reproductive Management and Neonatal Care

6.7.1 Members must develop a comprehensive plan maximizing the potential for success before actively pursuing pinniped reproductive management.

- Members should provide maternity enclosures that are of a size and configuration to facilitate nursing, pup rearing, and separation from other animals if necessary.

- Breeding, pre-parturient and lactating animals should be maintained in social environments encouraging successful rearing of offspring.
- Contingency plans should be developed, protocols recorded, and resources for implementation should be in place.

## **6.8 Standards and Guidelines for Sea Otter Reproductive Management and Neonatal Care**

6.8.1 Members must develop a comprehensive plan maximizing the potential for success before actively pursuing sea otter reproductive management.

- Sea otter reproductive management should only be planned if space is available for an additional animal of either sex at the housing facility or another accredited facility if breeding is permitted.
- Following mating the female should be monitored closely to determine pregnancy. Provision should be made for separating pregnant females from other animals.
- Contingency plans should be developed, protocols recorded, and resources for implementation should be in place.

## **6.9 Standards and Guidelines for Polar Bear Reproductive Management and Neonatal Care**

6.9.1 Members must develop a comprehensive plan maximizing the potential for success before actively pursuing polar bear reproductive management. Placement of additional bears needs to be viewed closely.

- Prior to time of delivery, the pregnant female should be separated from any males or females that she is housed with.
- Once separated, bedding should be put in place to allow the female bear a chance to den up successfully without interruptions.
- Contingency plans should be developed, protocols recorded, and resources for implementation should be in place.



## 7. MARINE MAMMAL TRANSPORTATION

### 7.1 General Provisions

7.1.1 Alliance members must ensure that marine mammals under their care are transported between facilities in a manner that is safe and humane. Given that only very limited volumes of water can be efficiently transported with the animals, the pre-planning and preparation of all elements of a transport require a detailed plan that meticulously covers every aspect of the transport.

### 7.2 Definitions

7.2.1 Marine mammal transportation refers to the relocation or movement of marine mammals by any method or mode of transport that requires more than two hours from the time of removal from current housing until arrival at destination housing.

7.2.2 Health assessment refers to a preliminary physical exam including a review of the animal records conducted by the attending veterinarian or other qualified veterinarian in order to determine that the animal is of sufficient health and physical condition necessary to be safely transported.

7.2.3 Transport plan refers to a thorough, written plan of action designed to ensure a safe, humane, and efficient move of a marine mammal from one location to another.

### 7.3 Standards and Guidelines for Marine Mammal Transportation

7.3.1 A final visual health assessment must be conducted by the attending veterinarian or another experienced marine mammal veterinarian on each animal between three and seven days preceding the transport.

- An initial health assessment should be conducted between 15 and 30 days preceding transport. The health assessment will include the evaluation of behavioral, feeding, and medical records.

7.3.2 A transport plan must be written and in place prior to the transport. At a minimum this plan should address: mode of transport, time line, equipment list, contingency plan, contingency contacts, and fasting of marine mammals 18-36 hours prior to transport or as directed by the attending veterinarian.

7.3.3 Marine mammals must be monitored throughout transport and the number of accompanying staff must be sufficient to ensure proper care and safety of the animals being transported.

7.3.4 All required permits must be filed and all applicable laws and regulations complied with prior to and during transport.

### 7.4 Standards and Guidelines for Cetacean Transport

7.4.1 Cetaceans must be transported and positioned so as to avoid contact with hard or abrasive surfaces, to prevent harmful restrictions in blood flow, and with sufficient attendants to provide for physical and medical needs.

- Cetaceans should be transported, whenever possible, within properly secured, open top containers with sufficient fresh water to provide partial body support and to facilitate thermoregulation.
- Dry transports should be three hours or less depending on the size of the cetacean.
- When transporting cetaceans in aircraft, cabin pressure should be maintained at less than 6,000 feet (1,800 meters) ASL, with 4,800 feet (1,463 meters) ASL or less being optimal for most individuals.

7.4.2 The attending veterinarian or another licensed veterinarian experienced in marine mammal transport must accompany all cetacean transports from one facility to another.

7.4.3 Water temperature must be routinely monitored.

7.4.4 Hand sprayers or other equipment to keep the animal's skin moist must accompany all cetacean transports.

7.4.5 Respiration rates must be monitored throughout the transport.

### 7.5 Standards and Guidelines for Pinniped Transport

7.5.1 Pinnipeds must be transported in properly secured, non-abrasive, enclosed containers made of materials that provide for durability and for proper ventilation to assure adequate air circulation and temperature mediation.

7.5.2 Pinnipeds are routinely transported dry, however water sprayers or other appropriate equipment must be available in case of delays, high temperature, etc.

- Temperatures during transport should be monitored to prevent either hypothermia or hyperthermia.
- When transporting pinnipeds in aircraft, cabin pressure should be maintained at less than 6,000 feet (1,800 meters) ASL.

7.5.3 The container must be of sufficient internal size to allow the pinniped room to make positional changes.

7.5.4 There must be easy visual access to the inside of the container and to the animal from at least two sides.

7.5.5 Ventilation at all levels must be provided on all sides of the container.

7.5.6 When transporting by enclosed vehicle, ambient temperature must be routinely monitored. There must be adequate ventilation and air circulation inside the vehicle. The number of accompanying staff must be at least one person for every four animals and a minimum of two staff per transport.

### 7.6 Standards and Guidelines for Sirenian Transport

7.6.1 Sirenians must be transported and positioned so as to avoid contact with hard or abrasive surfaces and with sufficient attendants to provide for physical and medical needs. The container must be wide enough to allow the animal to change position on its own.

- Sirenians are routinely transported dry within properly secured, open top containers, but with sufficient cushioning to provide body support.
- Air temperatures for sirenian in transport should be maintained at 72°F (22°C) to 76°F (24°C).

7.6.2 A sirenian transport must be accompanied by the number of attendants necessary to reposition the largest animal being transported. One attendant per sirenian on transports of four or less animals is recommended, with a minimum of two attendants per transport.

### 7.7 Standards and Guidelines for Sea Otter Transport

7.7.1 Sea otters must be transported within properly secured containers or cages with open mesh sides to promote ventilation and unobstructed viewing. The cage should be of a size to allow the sea otter to effectively groom, turn around, and lie outstretched.

7.7.2 The cage must be constructed of materials that are durable and tamper proof.

7.7.3 The cage floor must be perforated and raised above the cage bottom.

7.7.4 Attention must be paid to the sea otters' dietary requirements due to their high metabolic rate.

7.7.5 Fresh water ice must be provided for both cooling and consumption throughout the transport.

7.7.6 Great care must be taken to allow sea otters to thermoregulate effectively during transport. Air temperature ideally should not exceed 60°F (15°C). The number of accompanying staff must be at least one person for every two animals.

7.7.7 Shade must be provided throughout the transport without impeding good ventilation.

## **7.8 Standards and Guidelines for Polar Bear Transport**

7.8.1 Polar bears must be transported within properly secured, non-abrasive, enclosed containers made of materials that provide for containment.

7.8.2 The container must be of sufficient size to allow the polar bear sufficient space to turn about freely.

7.8.3 The environmental temperature around the polar bear must not exceed 85°F (29.5°C) at any time. The air temperature around the polar bear should not exceed 75°F (23.9°C) for more than four hours.



## 8. SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION

### 8.1 General Provisions

8.1.1 Alliance members must conduct and/or support scientific research and/or conservation projects related to marine mammals. Such projects provide information important to the conservation of species, habitats, and biodiversity in the wild, as well as improve husbandry for animals in zoological parks and aquariums. Alliance standards emphasize the need to facilitate responsible research and conservation projects and to communicate findings.

8.1.2 Collectively members of the Alliance care for a unique collection of marine mammals unlike that found anywhere else in the world, providing opportunities to study various aspects of marine mammal biology that cannot be conducted in the wild.

### 8.2 Definitions

8.2.1 Scientific Research policies refer to written protocols, procedures, and guidelines governing the various aspects of a facility's scientific research program.

8.2.2 Scientific Research / Animal Use Committee refers to a committee established by a facility for the purpose of evaluating scientific research proposals and the participation of collection animals in research.

8.2.3 Bona fide scientific research is that which is conducted with earnest intent to advance knowledge through application of the scientific method.

8.2.4 Conservation projects refer to formal, organized projects with goals and objectives designed to support, directly or indirectly, the conservation of marine mammals in the wild.

### 8.3 Standards and Guidelines for Scientific Research and Conservation

8.3.1 Members must develop a scientific research and conservation policy for the institution that prioritizes the well-being of the animals and takes into account at a minimum the availability of resources, including animals, staff, equipment, and funding.

8.3.2 Members must establish a Scientific Research / Animal Use Committee. At a minimum, the composition of the committee should include the facility's veterinarian and animal care staff.

8.3.3 If required by government regulations, requirements, or laws, a member must have a formal Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

8.3.4 Members may participate in bona fide scientific research and conservation projects by providing biological samples and/or access to records, animals, equipment, or staff time.

8.3.5 Members, when possible, should contribute to the body of marine mammal scientific literature by sharing findings from their research and conservation projects through publication in peer-reviewed journals and presentations at professional meetings.

8.3.6 Financial contributions to bona fide scientific research and conservation projects must be guided by a policy, including a mission statement, which describes the facility's goals in supporting, evaluating, and collaborating with outside, marine mammal related studies.

8.3.7 Each member must provide the Alliance a written update annually of the completed and ongoing scientific research and conservation projects in which it is participating and/or supporting financially.



## 9. PUBLIC EDUCATION

### 9.1 General Provisions

9.1.1 Alliance public display facilities are an important source for education about marine mammals and significant contributors to public information about the marine ecosystem. Alliance members recognize the importance of this opportunity and responsibility. The many differences among Alliance facilities necessitate creative individual strategies and varied approaches to education. Research confirms that these strategies and programs have been successful in fulfilling educational goals through increasing conservation-related knowledge, influencing individual behavior, and inspiring personal responsibility for environmental stewardship.

9.1.2 Education is the dynamic process of becoming aware, gaining knowledge, expanding understanding, constructing meaning, and developing the skills to actively use that which has been learned.

9.1.3 The overall goal of Alliance education programs is to enhance understanding of, and appreciation for, marine mammals and their ecosystems.

### 9.2 Definitions

9.2.1 Multiple levels of learning opportunities refers to providing educational information and experiences for visitors who have, or are interested in, different levels of knowledge about the animals.

9.2.2 The best current scientific knowledge refers to information from peer-reviewed research on education, marine mammal anatomy, behavioral science, biology, cognition, physiology, and/or veterinary medicine.

9.2.3 A qualified individual is an individual possessing the knowledge, training, and technical skill necessary to perform a job.

9.2.4 Marine mammal experts refer to professionals who are skilled and current in their specific field of expertise.

### 9.3 Standards and Guidelines for Education

9.3.1 Education programs about marine mammals must promote interest in, an improved understanding of, and an appreciation for these animals and their ecosystems.

9.3.2 Education programs about marine mammals must make available multiple levels of learning opportunities for a diversified public interested in expanding its knowledge about these animals.

9.3.3 Education programs must present information on the marine mammals exhibited at the facility, their ecosystem, and wildlife conservation that is based upon the best current scientific knowledge. Education departments must maintain a collection of current reference materials documenting the accuracy of any information disseminated to the public.

9.3.4 A qualified individual must be designated and responsible for the development and administration of the facility's education programs about marine mammals.

9.3.5 Educators must participate in professional development programs that enhance both the facility's Education Department and the educator's professional growth. These may include: membership in a professional education organization, attendance at a professional educational conference, and attendance at the Alliance's annual professional development workshop.

9.3.6 There must be a written education plan including a mission statement, goals, and a strategy to evaluate the programs and the impact on participants/audiences.



## 10. PUBLIC INTERACTION PROGRAMS

### 10.1 General Provisions

10.1.1 An interactive program must comply with all requirements for the care and maintenance of marine mammals as defined by relevant laws and regulations. Human and animal safety are the top priority of all interaction programs.

### 10.2 Definitions

10.2.1 Interactive Program refers to a program in which members of the public enter a marine mammal habitat with the intention of participating in an activity that includes physical contact with a marine mammal under behavioral control.

10.2.2 Controlled Interaction refers to an interactive program in which the movements and interactions of both marine mammals and public participants are maintained under stimulus control.

### 10.3 Standards and Guidelines for Marine Mammal Interactive Programs

10.3.1 Primary enclosures used for interactive programs must meet applicable government regulations, must have an area of the enclosure established for animals participating in interactive activities that the public may not enter, and have the restricted area not configured in any way that is uninviting to the animals.

10.3.2 Members must include educational information about the appropriate marine mammal species and promote an improved understanding of, and an appreciation for, the conservation of the animals and their ecosystems.

- All programs should include information that feeding wild marine mammals is detrimental to the animals and that swimming with wild marine mammals can be harmful to both the animals and the individuals involved.

10.3.3 Marine mammals participating in interactive programs must be properly trained and conditioned. Prior to inclusion of a marine mammal in any member's interactive program, each marine mammal must be evaluated as being fit for interaction. This initial determination should be made by the facility's attending veterinarian and supervisory staff.

10.3.4 Each animal must have one period of 10 continuous hours without public interaction within a 24-hour period.

10.3.5 A facility must have a behavior development and management plan specific to each type of interactive activity offered to the public.

- The amount of time each marine mammal is asked to participate in interactive activities should be specific to the individual animal and based on behavioral criteria compiled for that animal. Total interactive time should be recorded and tracked for each animal.
- Ratios of public participants to animals and to attendants should be appropriate to the type of interactive activity offered. Approval of the ratio by both the attending veterinarian and the supervising trainer is required.
- Marine mammals undergoing medical treatment may participate in interactive programs with the approval of the facility's attending veterinarian.

10.3.6 Supervisory staff overseeing interactive programs must have actively participated in the training and husbandry of marine mammals in interactive programs for at least three years accumulated over a period of no longer than five years prior to current employment.

10.3.7 All facilities participating in interactive programming must have written safety protocols.

10.3.8 Prior to any interactive session, guests must be educated about how to properly and safely interact with the animals. Staff should immediately remove any member of the public that refuses to participate responsibly in an interactive session.

10.3.9 All incidents resulting in injury to either marine mammals or the public as a result of an interaction that require veterinary or medical care must be recorded and kept at the facility for at least three years.



## **11. RECORD KEEPING**

### **11.1 General Provisions**

11.1.1 The Alliance recognizes the need to maintain standardized, comprehensive and accurate records concerning the humane and healthful care of the marine mammals in our populations. Up to date records will: assist all members in providing the latest in appropriate care for the animals; enable all members to share their collective knowledge about health and behavior concerns; and, facilitate reproduction programs through accurate recording of activities and with appropriate management of related animals through studbooks.

### **11.2 Definitions**

11.2.1 Document retention program refers to a system of storing and maintaining historical animal-related records for a minimum specific time period to ensure against loss or damage and to comply with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

11.2.2 Studbook refers to a genealogical register established to track lineage of marine mammal offspring.

### **11.3 Standards and Guidelines for Record Keeping**

11.3.1 Members should participate in regional, national and/or international studbooks and breeding management programs.

### **11.4 Standards and Guidelines for the Safety of Records**

11.4.1 Records must be protected from fire, flooding and other natural or human created hazards.

11.4.2 Duplicate records, as appropriate, must be kept in either a separate location or a fire proof case.

11.4.3 A document retention program must be implemented detailing documents that are required and how long each document must be kept.

11.4.4 The following documents must be kept permanently and be made accessible to inspectors: necropsy reports; acquisition and disposition records; wild collection permits and records; and any CITES or import/export records.



## 12. CONTINGENCY PLANS

### 12.1 General Provisions

12.1.1 Accredited members must develop and maintain detailed, written contingency plans to demonstrate that the member facility has considered and prepared for unforeseen events, and to provide for the humane handling, treatment, transportation, housing and care of their animals in the event of an emergency or disaster.

### 12.2 Definitions

12.2.1 Contingency plan refers to written strategies, tactics, preparations, protocols and procedures to deal appropriately with both predictable and unforeseen challenges, including emergencies such as facility malfunctions and failures, extreme weather events, and other natural disasters, in order to secure the safety of the facility's animal collection and/or staff and guests.

### 12.3 Standards and Guidelines for Contingency Plans

12.3.1 Members must develop written contingency plans which address the following:

- pre-, during and post-emergency protocols in the case of failure of the enclosure or facility (e.g., loss of enclosure integrity, power failure, faulty HVAC systems, fires, mechanical breakdowns, etc.) for each species of marine mammal displayed;
- identify potential natural disasters most likely to be experienced in their geographical region, such as wildfires, earthquakes, hurricanes, and other severe weather events;
- identify potential unusual situations, both in general as well as those unique to the individual facility, including protocols for inadvertent animal release;
- outline specific tasks required to be carried out in response to the identified emergencies or disasters including, but not limited to, detailed animal evacuation or shelter-in-place instructions, and provisions for providing backup sources of food and water as well as sanitation, ventilation, bedding, veterinary care, etc.

Development of protocols should include local contingency planners and responders, and identify materials and resources for use during contingency actions. There should be a clear chain of command for staff with specific tasks assigned, and the facility should be able to demonstrate that all necessary employees are trained on the content of the plan. These plans should be reviewed annually by management and staff.

12.3.2 Members who utilize training paradigms for conducting animal operations outside of facility perimeter boundaries must have a plan for management of marine mammals in the open environment under trainer stimulus control, including recovery of the animals following the contingency event.

12.3.3 Members must develop written contingency plans for successful reproductive management and neonatal care of each species of marine mammal displayed. Contingency plans should be developed, protocols recorded, and resources for implementation should be in place for: emergency intervention before, during, and after delivery; weaning; illness; and pathological examination of mortalities.

12.3.4 Members must develop written contingency plans and a list of contingency contacts prior to any transport of marine mammals. The contingency plan should be outlined and approved at the final transport planning meeting not more than 24 hours prior to transport.

12.3.5 Members participating in public interactive programming must develop written contingency plans in the event of an incident resulting from animal interaction with a guest or animal, including the training of staff in appropriate response protocols and use of safety equipment.

REV 2026