

In order for animals to thrive within captive scenarios, their lifetime experiences must be considered. The 24/7 framework proposes a tool for care staff to determine how well they are providing habitats that meet their animals' needs. This framework is based on the 12-point welfare assessment criteria framework by Welfare Quality®.

SUMMARY

This involved four key principles: good feeding, good housing, good health and appropriate behaviour. We have adapted these 12 welfare assessment criteria to be more relevant to zoo animal welfare and propose two additional criteria to determine whether welfare needs are met.

Paper Highlights:

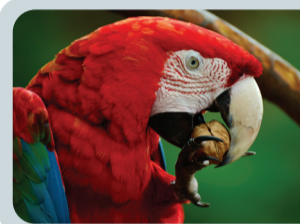
The animal welfare 24/7 across the lifespan concept provides a holistic framework to map features of the animal's life cycle, taking into account their natural history, in relation to variations in the captive environment, across day and night, week-days, weekends, and seasons.

The framework (Fig. 1) requires consideration and integration of life stages, in relation to species and individual differences, and the roles animals play, variations, and other factors affecting animal welfare.

Understanding how to assess and promote captive wild animal welfare from a 24/7 approach is one of major challenges and responsibilities of modern zoos and sanctuaries today.

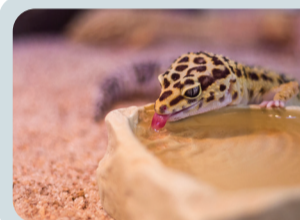
Those caring for zoo animals should therefore aspire to promote optimal animal welfare, 24/7 across their entire lifespan using the criteria proposed.

14 Welfare Assessment Criteria:



2. Access to appropriate food and species-typical foraging opportunities

Wild parrots eat a variety of fruits, seeds, and nuts, so zoo parrots should receive similar diets.



3. Absence of prolonged thirst

Sufficient and accessible water supply.



11. Treated well in all situations

Good human/animal relationships, focusing on the animal's perspective.



12. Ability to express normal, non-harmful social behaviours

Elephant welfare is promoted through meaningful social groups.



13. Ability to express other normal behaviours

Otter enclosures including areas to swim and play.

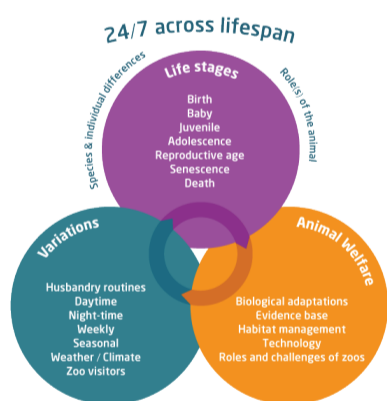


Fig. 1

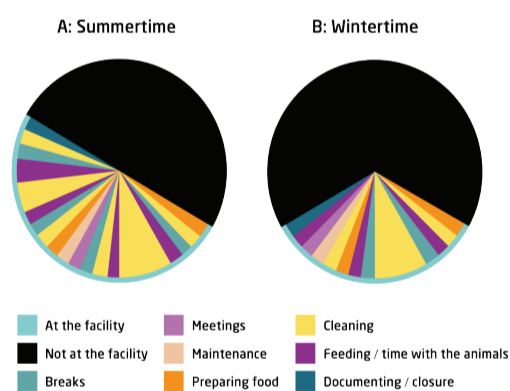


Fig. 2

Why is this relevant to animal welfare?

Care activities within zoos and other captive scenarios are scheduled for the convenience of staff rather than considering the biological and psychological requirements of the animals themselves.

It is necessary to integrate a fully-functional approach for assessing and evaluating whether the animals we are working with are actually experiencing a positive animal welfare situation, 24/7, including the hours staff is absent (Fig. 2).

Why is this relevant to the practical care for animals?

As animal care providers, there is an ethical responsibility to provide animals with an environment that is tailored to its needs and requirements.

Making animal welfare assessment part of the routine will not only make the experience better for the staff but also for the animal which will lead to a higher possibility of good mental and physical health.

ORIGINAL SOURCE

The 24/7 approach to promoting optimal welfare for captive wild animals. Behavioural Processes, Volume 156, November 2018, Pages 83-95.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.beproc.2017.09.010>