



**HUMANE  
CERTIFIED**

A PROGRAM OF AMERICAN HUMANE ASSOCIATION

## **American Humane Association Humane Conservation™ program**

### **Animal Welfare Certification for Zoos, Aquariums and Conservation Centers**

American Humane Association is the country's first national humane organization and the world's largest certifier of the welfare and humane treatment of animals in working, entertainment and other environments. Founded in 1877, the historic American Humane Association has been at the forefront of virtually every major advance in the protection of animals from abuse and neglect, and today oversees the humane treatment of well over a billion animals.

As the world leader in certification of the humane treatment of animals, American Humane Association's animal welfare certification programs are built on the foundation of science- and evidence-based practices, with independent third-party leading experts, scientists, behaviorists and ethicists determining what practices are indeed humane. The commitment to science in determining the standards remains at the very core of existing certification programs, including the iconic No Animals Were Harmed® animal welfare certification in the American Humane Hollywood program and American Humane Certified™ farm animal certification in the American Humane Heartland program. Since 1940, American Humane Association has overseen the safety and humane treatment of animals in film and television production. Its No Animals Were Harmed certification program monitors some 100,000 animal actors on more than 1,000 sets each year with an extraordinarily high safety rate and, for more than 75 years, has been the gold standard for the proper use of animals in filmed media. The American Humane Certified™ farm animal welfare certification program is the nation's first, largest and fastest-growing independent third-party monitoring and audit program dedicated to the humane treatment of farm animals. Many of the world's largest producers, retailers, food services and major restaurant chains work with our program, including Unilever, Taco Bell, Peet's Coffee, Caribou Coffee, Einstein Bros. Bagels, and Butterball turkey.

### **New Endeavor: American Humane Association's Humane Conservation™ program**

American Humane Association Humane Conservation certification program, launching in June 2016, is the newest effort by American Humane Association to build a better world for the Earth's creatures. As habitats disappear and environments change, leaving animals to face what scientists are calling a "Sixth Mass Extinction," with species disappearing at a rate eight to 100 times higher than expected, zoos, aquariums and conservation centers have become modern arks of hope for many creatures, playing a more vital role than ever before.

## **The Challenge**

As the world's zoos, aquariums and conservation parks go about the invaluable work of preserving the extraordinary species with whom we share the world, increasing numbers of people are also rightly demanding that the welfare and treatment of these animals in human care be ensured and importantly verified. Only 2.3 percent of these institutions worldwide are currently accredited and although the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and others provide programs for such overall, covering facilities, management and the like, there has been no independent third-party certification effort solely devoted to the welfare of animals in their care – until now.

## **The Humane Solution**

To fill this vital need, American Humane Association has developed the first-ever independent, scientific and evidence-based third-party humane certification standards focusing on the animals living in these institutions. Created and backed by the most well-respected, iconic names in science, animal welfare, and the conservation field, these new standards will help ensure the welfare and humane treatment of the animals in human care at the world's zoos, aquariums and conservation centers. Adding another level of rigor, the implementation of these comprehensive standards will be verified by independent auditors.

## **Humane Conservation Certification Audit**

The Humane Conservation certification audit has two overarching components: the Pre-Audit Application and the On-Site Audit of a facility's animal collection.

Both the Pre-Audit and On-Site Audit are designed to apply to zoos, aquaria, nature centers, museums and private collections of any size.

### ***1) Pre-Audit Application***

The Pre-Audit Application is completed by an organization that is requesting consideration of an American Humane Association's on-site Humane Conservation certification audit. The Pre-Audit Application allows the organization to provide detailed information regarding the animal collection, husbandry and animal care teams, environmental quality processes, physical operations and more.

The Pre-Audit Application must be completed prior to any On-Site Audit of the animal collection of an organization.

### ***2) On-Site Audit***

The On-Site Audit is focused on assessing the welfare of individual animals and groups of animals housed together. Extensive examinations based on core principles set the stage for the assessment, followed by a set of detailed questions aimed at confirming that the animals are not only in good condition physically and socially, but have good welfare overall.

The focus of this program is on the welfare of the animals. To assess this as rigorously as possible, the audit consists of two elements:

1) **Direct observation of the individual animals**, in both the institution's public exhibits and behind the scenes, examining key welfare indicators, including, among other issues, such factors as:

- Good health
- Good housing
- Good feeding
- Good management
- Appropriate behaviors, including:
  - Ø The display of natural behaviors at the individual and group levels
  - Ø The lack of abnormal behaviors at the individual and group levels
  - Ø Social interactions between animals and the ability to self-separate
  - Ø Positive, healthy and humane interactions between animals and handlers
- Physiology/biological samples
- Activity levels
- Use of space
- Appetite/food motivation/body score
- Disease
- Mortality
- Meeting of federal and state regulations
- Thermoregulation
- Lighting/shading needs

2) **Indirect indicators** to include vital, in-depth background information on the animals, their health, habitat, environmental quality issues, staff knowledge and training, veterinary, operational procedures and other factors:

- Animal husbandry procedures
- Environmental enrichments/choices/multiple options for animals
- Safety measures
- Nutritional needs
- Food quality
- Food safety
- Air quality
- Water quality
- Appropriate sound levels for animal life
- Consideration of diurnal/seasonal patterns
- Medical records
- Appropriate veterinary/health plan

- Plan to recognize adverse medical trends
- Treatment protocols/management plan for emergency medical situations (injuries, escapes, etc.)
- Animal husbandry protocols
- Training of staff interacting with animals
- Use of positive reinforcement in any animal husbandry/training programs
- Transparency and openness of daily operations and animal care

The On-Site Audit is designed to be species-specific. The overarching summary provides a guiding process for all animals in a collection to be assessed during an audit.

### ***Audit: Mandatory Pass Checklist***

In addition to examining the key indicators of animal welfare, the program includes three essential, non-negotiable criteria that must be met in order to pass the audit. The essential criteria are scored higher than other questions, and underlie the entire audit process.

Failure to meet these non-negotiable requirements will result in failure of the audit.

#### **1) No Animal Abuse**

Willful acts or signs of abuse by any person at the facility (staff or visitor) are unacceptable. Observation of such acts will automatically result in failure of the audit.

Animal Abuse

- PASS  
 FAIL

If failure occurs, auditor will note observations on audit form.

#### **2) Appropriate Health Plan (i.e., care of sick, injured animals) and Implementation**

The Pre-Audit application packet will identify whether an organization/facility has an appropriate veterinary/health plan (i.e., treatment and preventive medicine plan) in effect. If one does not exist, whether with an on-staff veterinarian or an on-call veterinarian (or similarly trained individuals), one should be developed and implemented prior to an On-Site Audit.

Health Plan

- PASS  
 FAIL

Review of the plan and discussion with the staff that such a plan exists is required once an auditor is on-site. Failure to provide such documentation and confirmation of a health plan will result in failure of the audit.

No observations of unattended/untreated, obviously sick or injured individuals due to abuse or neglect are acceptable. Observation of such conditions will automatically result in failure of the audit. If failure occurs, auditor will note observations on the On-Site Audit form (Section II).

### 3) Staff Conduct that Promotes Animal Welfare

Staff should be aware of the facility's protocols and procedures as well as conduct themselves in a manner that promotes animal welfare. Failure to do so, or observations of blatant abuse (see #1 above) will result in failure of the audit.

Staff Conduct

PASS

FAIL

If failure occurs, auditor will note specific observations on the audit form.

Organizations certified as humane with good animal welfare in the American Humane Association Humane Conservation certification program are expected to maintain high welfare standards throughout the term of their certification. If it is determined after an audit that an organization in the Humane Conservation program has fallen out of compliance, that organization will be immediately suspended from the program. Suspended organizations must verify correction of the non-conformances and pass a new audit before being reinstated. ***American Humane Association reserves the right to perform spot checks at any time during the certification period.***

American Humane Association's Humane Conservation standards are written to cover facilities in varying geographic and temperature regions. These facilities can be zoos and/or aquaria or private collections for performance/display and may have terrestrial, aquatic, avian or a combination of these habitat types for the species in their care. Therefore, not all questions/sections in these standards apply to every facility. Each organization must also comply with any local, state or federal mandates for handling and maintenance of animals (non-endangered, endangered and threatened species included) that might affect the environment or safety of their animals.

All animal exhibits and all animal care staff areas must be accessible to the auditor(s) during an assessment visit. If there are quarantine areas, care must be taken to adhere to the established protocols and policy for such a space (e.g. if re-admittance to animal habitats/exhibits is not allowed, then scheduling for access should be considered).