

Welfare Audits Working Group Update

2008 CBSG Annual Meeting, Adelaide, Australia

The workshop examined methods of measuring welfare based on:

Aspects to do with the animal's environment

Aspects to do with the animal itself

The workshop progressed by identifying the most important environmental influences that could affect welfare and be assessed. It also identified elements of the animal's behaviour that could be assessed for welfare measurement:

Behaviour: time budgets, breeding, stereotypy, control of breeding

Animal health: coat condition, longevity, parasite burden, disease

Animal physiology: corticosteroids

And there was discussion and suggestion on how these could be further refined.

The workshop consensus was to come up with an audit system that could be relatively simply completed.

The process would be two tier, the quick process would be designed to identify potential problem areas and then collect more detailed data on species/animals that were found to have significant welfare issues.

Progress since the workshop until now

Initial progression was via the Conservation and Animal Management Committee of BIAZA. Two members are assisting with the trial audits, ZSL and Chester Zoo.

Chester now have a process where they proactively implement measures to improve welfare. The process is carried out by staff and consists of:

Daily observations

Weekly reviews of mortality and morbidity

Monthly team leader meetings

Quarterly audits

And for specific cases: husbandry and welfare meetings.

Stephanie Sanderson gave a presentation of this process at the BIAZA annual meeting in May 2009.

Next stages

BIAZA staff will visit Chester as external reviewers and try out the processes.

More collections will be asked to be involved in the process

A workshop will be held at the CBGG meeting in Europe in 2010 to share results and experiences with others

BIAZA will publish the processes as guidelines, probably by the end of 2010

Miranda Stevenson & Olivia Walter – BIAZA

Now Miranda Stevenson & Georgina Groves - BIAZA