Animal Welfare Considerations

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Topics to be covered

- Obligations under legislation
- Licensing
- Animal welfare risks and mitigation
Obligations under WCA 1950

- DPaW administer Wildlife Conservation Act (WCA) 1950
- All **fauna** is wholly **protected** throughout the State
  - Exceptions only if declared notice by Minister
- Definition of fauna:
  - any animal indigenous to Commonwealth
  - eggs, larvae, carcass, skin, fur, plumage and semen
- **Taking** of protected fauna is an offence, unless licenced
- Definition of ‘to take’ (fauna):
  - kill, capture, disturb, molest any fauna by any means
  - hunt or kill, regardless of result
Licences under WCA Regs 1970

Many licences but those of relevance include:

- Licence to take fauna for education or public purpose (Reg 15)
  - Used for diverse purposes
  - Includes fauna relocation (salvage)

- Licence to take fauna for scientific purposes (Reg 17)

*NOTE: only need one licence per activity, most relevant*
Reg 17 processing

- All Reg 17 license application processed by Wildlife Licensing Section
- Are assessed by a Zoologist
- Generally assessed for:
  - Conservation impact on the species
  - Potential value to science/conservation
  - **Welfare** impact on the animal
  - Applicants competency
- Consider if AEC approval received but does not guarantee will not be rejected based on welfare concerns.
Obligations under Animal Welfare Act 2002

- Animal Welfare Act (AWA) 2002 also relevant
- Provides for the welfare, safety and health of animals, and to regulate their use for scientific purposes
- AWA is administered by DAFWA (for further interpretation)
- DAFWA issue a licence to use animals for scientific purposes under the Animal Welfare Act.
- Note the distinction between use and take
- Unlicensed use of animals for scientific purposes is prohibited under AWA
- A person must not use animals for scientific purposes unless:
  - they or their establishment holds a license authorising use, and
  - an AEC has given approval
- Definition of ‘scientific purpose’: acquiring, developing or demonstrating knowledge or techniques
What is an AEC

- Animal Ethics Committee
- Operate according to the ‘code of practice’
- Code dictates governing principles, roles and responsibilities, reviews and reporting
- Must have at least one person from each category:
  - Category A: qualified veterinarian.
  - Category B: scientist working with animals.
  - Category C: animal welfare representative.
  - Category D: independent with no animal experience.

- DPaW has a Licence to Use Animals for Scientific Purposes and has an AEC.

- All DPaW staff undertaking fauna research must have projects approved by the AEC
Welfare Impacts to Consider

The Code promotes the three R’s in all activities involving animals:
- **Reduce** the number of animals used in experiments
- **Refine** the experiment techniques (reduce risks)
- **Replace** the need for animals in experiments where possible

The welfare of animals must be supported and safeguarded by:
- Using appropriate methods, techniques, equipment (type and number)
- Monitor and minimise time animals spend in traps
- Avoid/minimise harm to target, non-targets species, dependent young
- Using a sufficient number of competent people
- Handle and restrain animals for minimum time
- Making provisions to care or treat injuries
- Minimise the transition of disease
- Methods of euthanasia are humane and species appropriate

**Every handler has a personal responsibility for the welfare of animals**
### Standard Operating Procedures

- SOP 5.2 Remote operation of cameras
- SOP 7.2 Observing animals from secondary signs
- SOP 8.1 Vouchering vertebrate fauna specimens
- SOP 8.2 Use and disposal of sharps
- SOP 8.4 Tissue sample collection and storage for mammals
- SOP 9.1 Elliott traps for live capture of terrestrial vertebrates
- SOP 9.2 Cage traps for live capture of terrestrial vertebrates
- SOP 9.3 Dry pitfall trapping for vertebrates and invertebrates
- SOP 9.4 Nest boxes for monitoring arboreal mammals
- SOP 9.5 Soft cage traps for capture of macropods
- SOP 9.6 Hand capture of wildlife
- SOP 9.10 Mist net trapping for birds
- SOP 9.17 Funnel trapping for terrestrial fauna
- SOP10.1 Animal handling/restraint using soft containment
- SOP 10.2 Hand restraint of wildlife
- SOP 11.1 Transport and temporary holding of wildlife
- SOP 12.1 Permanent marking of vertebrates using microchips
- SOP 12.2 Permanent marking of mammals using ear notching
- SOP 12.3 Semi-permanent marking of mammals using ear tags
- SOP 12.5 Marking of marine turtles using flipper and PIT tags
- SOP 12.9 Temporary marking of mammals, reptiles and birds
- SOP 13.4 Ground-based radio-tracking
- SOP 14.1 Care of evicted pouch young
- SOP 14.2 First aid for animals
- SOP 15.1 Humane Killing of Animals Under Field Conditions in Wildlife Management
- SOP 15.5 Euthanasia of small stranded cetaceans using firearms
- SOP 16.2 Managing Disease Risk in Wildlife Management

- Developed a range of SOPs for frequently used techniques
- Available on website
- Reviewed /endorsed by DPaW AEC
- Outline accepted techniques and highlight welfare issues
Identifying Risks and Mitigation

- To determine level of risk, consider both the consequences and the likelihood of occurrence
- Can use the matrix below to determine the risk category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of consequence</th>
<th>Consequence Level</th>
<th>Likelihood of occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fatality (or result in euthanasia), or serious injury, or majority of animals under stress</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>very high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury (requires off-site treat), or multiple animals under stress</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor injury (requires on-site treatment), or some animal under stress</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very minor injury (no treatment required), or occasional animals under minimal stress</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Fatality: very high risk
- Injury: high risk
- Minor injury: medium risk
- Very minor injury: low risk
Final Messages

- All (native) fauna are protected on all land tenure
- All animals are subject to welfare considerations
- Take includes disturbance and non-living animal parts
- If in doubt ask: wildlifelicensing@dpaw.wa.gov.au
- Refer to DPaW SOPs as a guide
- DPaW license does not cover or replace licenses or permits required under other legislation

THANK YOU

QUESTIONS?