Glossary

PREAMBLE
In order to achieve IFAW’s vision of a world where animals are respected and protected, we follow key principles in our hands-on project with animals and in our advocacy work to secure better animal welfare protection in policy, legislation and society:
• It should be recognised that animals have intrinsic value and are sentient beings.
• Policy should be based on sound science within an ethical framework for animals.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Animal
Any member of the kingdom Animalia, comprising multicellular organisms that have a well-defined shape and usually limited growth, can move voluntarily, actively acquire food and digest it internally, and have sensory and nervous systems that allow them to respond rapidly to stimuli.

Animal welfare
The physical and mental well-being of animals.

Biological sustainability
The ability of a population of living organisms to maintain successful reproductive processes, functions, biodiversity and productivity into the future, often measured using indicators for overall biological diversity or ‘carrying capacity’ for certain indicator species, including keystone species.

Euthanasia
The word ‘euthanasia’ means ‘gentle’ or ‘good’ death, and is defined as inducing rapid death, with minimal restraint of the animal, causing as little stress or pain as possible.

Intrinsic value
The inherent value of something independent of its worth (or usefulness) to anyone, or anything else.

Precautionary principle
A principle of science that prescribes caution or conservative action in the face of scientific uncertainty or lack of data in order to reduce or alleviate threats of harm to the wellbeing of humans, animals or the environment pending further scientific investigation.

Sentience
The ability to feel and perceive things.

Sustainable use of nature (including animals)
The use of nature, including animals, by humans, for any purpose in a manner that does not cause or contribute to its depletion or degradation.

Wild and domesticated animals
Domestic animals – Animals that have been selectively bred over many generations by humans for companionship, food, fibre, or work.
Domesticated pet animal – A domesticated animal kept by humans in or near their dwellings for the purpose of companionship, decoration or emotional and/or physical support
Companion animals – are domesticated pet animals that have been socialized and are able to form close bonds with human beings and are therefore not caged or otherwise closely confined (e.g. cats and dogs).
Domestication – Domestication is a process through which animals are changed genetically through selective breeding to serve a particular human purpose.

Feral animals – Domestic animals that live in a wild state and that are often too poorly socialized or fearful of humans to be handled or placed into a typical home environment or boarding facility for the sake of their own wellbeing or the wellbeing of humans.

Exotic animal – An animal which belongs to a species not indigenous to the geographical area where it lives or is kept.

Exotic pet – An animal not yet fully domesticated which belongs to a species not indigenous to that area where it is kept, but which nevertheless is kept in captivity by humans for the purpose of companionship, decoration, emotional and/or physical support.

Farmed animals – Domesticated animals commonly associated with food or fibre production including but not limited to domestic hoofed mammals and domestic fowl.

Invasive animals – Non-native animals that have expanded or shifted their range, escaped or been introduced into an ecosystem.

Performing animals – Animals trained to perform a task, the primary purpose of which is to entertain people or to aid publicity.

Pest – An organism with characteristics that people deem to be damaging or unwanted.

Taming – Taming a wild animal changes its behavioural but not its genetic characteristics. Taming wild animals is a very different process from that of domestication. Wild animals that have been tamed but not domesticated do not lose their wild characteristics. Domestic animals respond very well to taming.

Wild animals – A wild animal is one that is not domesticated and retains its wild characteristics. See definition of domestic animal.

Wild pet – An animal not yet fully domesticated but which nevertheless is kept in captivity by humans for the purpose of companionship, decoration, emotional and/or physical support.

Working animals – Domesticated animals or wild animals that have been tamed and trained to perform a task to assist humans.
1.1 Ecological sustainability
Ecological sustainability is vital for the wellbeing of life on Earth and must be the first and foremost objective in conservation.

1.2 Assessing the welfare of animals under the direct care of humans
Human beings have a duty to provide for the needs of animals under their direct care. Consideration should be given to the many elements that contribute to the animal’s quality of life, including those known as the ‘five freedoms’:
1) Freedom from hunger and thirst
2) Freedom from discomfort
3) Freedom from pain, injury or disease
4) Freedom to express normal behaviour
5) Freedom from fear and distress

1.3 Assessing the welfare of wild animals in the wild
Human beings affect wild animals in many ways. We have a responsibility to ensure the minimization, prevention or elimination of harm that might result from our activities.

In assessing the welfare of wild animals in the wild a variety of measures can be used to evaluate the state of an individual animal or a wild population on a continuum from optimal to poor welfare. In the case of individuals, such measures include:
- life expectancy;
- ability to grow and breed;
- body condition (including the presence/absence of injury, disease);
- physiological status; and behavior.

For a population, typical measures of welfare include:
- current levels of abundance (often in relation to some standard, such as its unexploited population size or ‘carrying capacity’);
- trends in abundance (increasing, decreasing or stable);
- the “condition” of individuals in the population;
- age at maturity or first reproduction;
- reproductive rate (high vs. low); and
- rate of natural mortality or survival.

1.4 Sustainable use
IFAW supports sustainable use, in principle, as long as it is truly ecologically and biologically sustainable, as well as equitable and humane and complies with the Precautionary Principle.

1.5 Biological sustainability
Populations of living organisms should not be so heavily exploited that they decline to levels or conditions from which they cannot recover.

1.6 Intrinsic Value
Intrinsic value is defined as the inherent worth of something, independent of its worth (or usefulness) to anyone or anything else. Things that have intrinsic value are good for their own sake (intrinsically valuable) and they are not exchangeable for something else. An individual animal has intrinsic value because it is (genetically) unique and cannot be exchanged for another individual. A species has intrinsic value for the same reason; it cannot be exchanged for another species, and extinction is forever.

1.7 Sentience
The quality of life animals’ experience, and their suffering, is of moral concern. Animals are sentient beings and, as such, full regard should be paid to their welfare in formulating and implementing policy.

1.8 Pest control
The cruel and inhumane treatment of animals under the guise of pest control is not acceptable. Just because an animal is deemed to be a pest does not justify callous treatment.

Companion animals
1.9 Keeping companion animals
Companion animals should be provided with the resources, environmental conditions and social interactions necessary to meet their physical and emotional needs.

2.2 Responsible breeding
People who allow domestic animals to breed have a responsibility to ensure the well-being of the breeding animals and their offspring. The breeding of wild-domestic crosses such as wolf dogs should be prohibited.

2.3 Mutilations
The cropping of ears, the docking of tails, de-vocalization, de-clawing cats and de-fanging should not be imposed on animals when done solely for cosmetic, behavioural or other non-veterinary reasons.

2.4 Euthanasia
When it is apparent that the quality of life of the individual is, or will likely be, unacceptably compromised, and this cannot be remedied or prevented, euthanasia may be in the best interests of the animal.

2.5 Culling
The killing of cats and dogs is not an acceptable method of population control of companion animals and should not be pursued as a solution.

Wild animals
3.1 Wild animals in captivity (general)
Wild animals should not be kept in captivity unless the welfare requirements of those animals can be met and there is an ethical justification based on research, conservation and/or animal welfare. There are some species whose needs cannot be adequately met in captivity because of their complex social or environmental requirements.

3.2 Wild animals as pets
Wild animals belong in the wild and should not be kept as pets.

3.3 Hunting of wild animals
The ethical justification for hunting wild animals must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3.4 Trophy hunting
Animals should not be hunted for trophies, even if the animals killed are subsequently consumed.

3.5 Commercial hunting
Unethical and inhumane hunting of wild animals for commercial purposes, including for food, fur, medicine, ornamentation, or oil, should be prohibited.

3.6 Hunting imperiled species
Imperiled species should not be hunted.

3.7 Subsistence hunting
Where wild animals are hunted for subsistence purposes, such hunting should be conducted on an ecologically sustainable basis and all precautions taken to minimize the infliction of pain and suffering on the animals affected.

3.8 Commercial whaling and sealing
Commercial whaling (including so-called “scientific whaling”) and commercial sealing should be prohibited as they are inherently cruel, unnecessary and can pose a serious threat to the survival of these animals.

3.9 Culling of animals
In cases where population reduction of animals is proposed and justified on scientific and ethical basis, alternatives that do not involve killing animals or taking them into captivity are preferable on economic, ethical, scientific, educational, and other grounds. In circumstances where lethal control is deemed absolutely necessary and all other solutions have been exhausted, animals must be killed in a manner that minimizes pain and suffering, and all efforts made to avoid repeated lethal efforts.

In such cases, there should be a proven need for intervention and assurance that the intervention strategy will have the desired outcome.

Food animals
4.1 Industrial farming
Industrial farming – large scale industrialized facilities utilizing confinement systems with high stocking densities – deeply compromise the welfare of animals and pollute the environment. Buying local humanely raised food from sustainable sources and reducing meat consumption lessens the harmful impact on animals and the environment.

4.2 Treatment of farmed animals
Farmed animals, including fish, raised and slaughtered for food are entitled to protection from distress and suffering during their lives by maximizing fulfillment of the animals’ physical and emotional needs according to the five freedoms.

4.3 Wild animals as food
The hunting of wild animals for food should be conducted in a manner that is humane and ecologically sustainable.

Wild animals are an important source of protein for many indigenous people. However the development of new markets for, and growing trade in, wildlife for human consumption is resulting in practices that are neither humane nor ecologically sustainable.

Animals and science
5.1 Animal experimentation
The use of animals in scientific research should be minimized and alternatives should be pursued based on the principles of the 3 Rs – Replacement of procedures to eliminate suffering, Reduction in the numbers of animals used and Replacement of animals with alternatives wherever these exist. Animals should not be used for cosmetics testing or the continuing development of household or garden products.

5.2 Wild animals in medicinal preparations
Wild animals and their parts and derivatives should not be used in medicinal preparations. Instead effective, abundant and non-endangered herbal and synthetic alternatives should be used.