



AC-5

Animal Acquisition Policy

SEA LIFE strives to display a diverse collection of aquatic species. The diversity of the animal collection at each SEALIFE facility helps enhance the overall educational message and experience of the guests visiting the facility. It is the goal of the Animal Acquisition Policy to ensure that the selection of animals for each SEALIFE site and their sources is carried out in support of the organization's educational function and the site Institutional Collection Plan (ICP), while at the same time ensuring the health and welfare of animal(s) selected and the sustainability of the species as a whole.

Selection of New Animals

Proper species selection is a vital step in the animal acquisition process. The selection of animals for displays at a SEALIFE site must be done so in support of the facility's educational function, ICP and the Display Collection Plans (DCP) therein, while following the established Animal Acquisition and Accession Protocol.

It is important to select species that are appropriate and compatible to the displays and the existing animal collection. Improper selection of incompatible species will result in consequences such as aggression and unnatural behaviors that place the general health of a display population at risk. An aquarium display must provide a habitat that will allow the animal(s) selected to behave naturally. This will contribute positively to an animal's overall health and welfare, allow for natural longevity, and encourage reproduction.

Animals will be selected according to compatibility with captive life, and where species do not thrive in captivity further investigation will be undertaken involving the company's senior curatorial staff, veterinarians, and members of other reputable establishments throughout the world (i.e. other public aquariums, museums, and marine science institutions). Until such investigations are completed, or if it proves impossible to keep a species satisfactorily, then it will no longer be kept by SEA LIFE.

Any species not yet displayed by SEA LIFE or infrequently displayed in the industry of public aquariums as a whole, yet deemed appropriate as a potential captive display specimen, must be thoroughly investigated prior to acquisition. Prior to trialing a new species, extensive research and development will be undertaken to gain knowledge of husbandry requirements from other establishments, and to ensure best practice is in place on arrival. In general

large migratory fish species will not be kept in captivity unless there is significant benefit to be gained by highlighting the conservation status of these animals.

Any animals listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act or on the IUCN endangered list will not be collected from the wild. However, where captive bred populations are available and it is felt that participation in displaying and potentially breeding these creatures will further benefit them, they will be kept. Information gathering for this process will be the responsibility of SEA LIFE senior curatorial staff.

Selection of Acquisition Source

Aquatic specimens may be acquired from a variety of possible sources. It is the goal of SEA LIFE to always acquire animals from the most appropriate and sustainable sources keeping the health and welfare of the animal(s) in mind. Selection of a proper animal acquisition source may often depend on availability of animal(s) desired for acquisition. However, sources considered inappropriate for any reason in regards to use, care, handling or collection, should under no circumstances be utilized. Although the majority of aquarium specimens are sourced from the wild, whenever possible, the acquisition of specimens from surplus or captive bred sources should be considered first. Acquisition of animals from any source must be done so in adherence to this policy while following the established Animal Acquisition and Accession Protocol.

Surplus Sources

When considering the acquisition of an animal(s), sources of surplus specimens should be considered as a priority option whenever possible. However, surplus sources considered inappropriate for any reason in regards to the use, care, and/or handling of its animals, should under no circumstances be utilized. Priority of surplus animal sources should be considered first among reputable public aquarium facilities such as aquarium centers within the Merlin Entertainments/SEA LIFE group, AZA or EAZA accredited organizations, credible museums, academic institutions, and marine science research facilities. Animals considered for acquisition from the pet trade and home hobby aquarists require special consideration. Acquisition of animals as surplus from such sources should be considered only on a case by case basis and approved by SEA LIFE senior curatorial personnel. Newly acquired surplus animals will be quarantined for a suitable period of time prior to being displayed (see Quarantine Protocols in the SEALIFE Site Animal Husbandry and Operations Manual).

Captive Bred Sources

Sources of captive bred specimens should be considered as a priority option whenever possible. However, captive bred sources considered inappropriate for any reason in regards to the use, care, and/or handling of its animals, should under no circumstances be utilized. Priority of captive bred animal sources should be considered first among reputable aquaculture facilities and farms such as those subscribed to the National Fish Breeders Registry. Newly acquired captive bred animals will be quarantined for a suitable period of time prior to being displayed (see Quarantine Protocols in the SEALIFE Site Animal Husbandry and Operations Manual).

Wild Caught Sources

Suppliers of animals collected from the wild will be selected for their efforts to reduce the impact on the environment and stress on the animals involved during the collection process, as well as for their efforts to develop alternatives to wild collecting. Priority of wild collected animal sources should be considered first among the most reputable collectors and suppliers. All suppliers and collectors of aquarium specimens must hold all necessary permits and follow all rules and guidelines of local, regional, national and international governing authorities and agencies.

Where SEALIFE sponsored collection of animals from the wild is required or carried out, the collection methods utilized must be selected to have the least amount of impact on the environment and the populations of the wildlife involved. SEALIFE staff involved with collecting wild specimens must be properly permitted to do so by the appropriate government agency associated with the area of collection.

The quality of any wild collected specimens may vary greatly in how carefully they were collected, cared for, and transported. Some sources may consistently provide specimens that have high levels of pre-existing infectious disease and/or trauma. These suppliers should be avoided where possible. Most likely all newly acquired animals are likely to have at least a degree of these factors pre-disposing to disease. For this reason, newly acquired wild collected animals will be quarantined for a suitable period of time prior to being displayed (see Quarantine Protocols in the SEALIFE Site Animal Husbandry and Operations Manual).

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