

Animal Welfare



Exotics Totem Pole of Priorities

1. Vendor
2. Consumer
3. Animals



1. Animals
2. Consumer
3. Vendor

Animal welfare and human health and safety are NOT stated to be primary concerns of exotic animal vendors.

What is Animal Welfare?

- Different people give different answers – it's evolving.
 - New ideas and new definitions emerge with regularity.
 - The welfare of an individual is their state as they attempt to cope with their environment - (Donald Broom).
 - ...neither health, nor lack of stress or fitness is necessary or sufficient to conclude that an animal has good welfare. Welfare is dependent on what animals feel - (Ian Duncan)
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Animal Welfare

- ❑ Good welfare is when an animal feels happy or content - (Jake Veasey)
 - ❑ The natural biology, behaviour and lifestyle of the animal in the “wild” state is the benchmark (Hediger, Durrell).
 - ❑ An understanding of a species’ behavioural ecology and natural history is fundamental to identifying those factors likely to be linked with the individual’s well-being (Kagan, Veasey).
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A modern approach

- There are three interrelated components of animal welfare:
 1. Basic health and functioning,
 2. Affective states,
 3. Natural living (ability to live in a way that suits the animal's natural adaptations)

-(David Fraser)

To varying degrees, there has been a historical focus on just component number 1. This is the case for a good portion of the exotic pet industry today.

What we do know

- ❑ All three components of welfare are critical.
 - ❑ Welfare exists on a continuum of poor to excellent.
 - ❑ Welfare involves the absence of negative emotional states (suffering) and the presence of positive emotional states (pleasure) are determinants of welfare.
 - ❑ At a point, welfare decreases when the effort an animal puts into coping begins to make the animal feel worse.
 - ❑ Welfare is important to animals.
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Exotic wildlife needs that are often ignored

- ❑ **Space, including vertical space**
 - ❑ **Freedom of choice (control)**
 - ❑ **Social context**
 - ❑ **Activity/Stimulation**
 - ❑ **Proper environmental conditions**
 - ❑ **Species-appropriate substrates**
 - ❑ **Shelter and privacy**
 - ❑ **Species appropriate food and water**
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The Precautionary Principle

If an action or policy might cause severe or irreversible harm, in the absence of a scientific consensus, the burden of proof that harm will not result falls on those who would advocate taking the action.
