AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR WILDLIFE IN HUMAN CARE (AAWHC)

Animal Welfare Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

1.1. The main purpose of the Animal Welfare Committee is to regulate the management of welfare of all animals and specimens in the care of Animal Association for Wildlife in Human Care (AAWHC) members.

2. Terms of Reference

2.1. The terms of reference of the AAWHC Animal Welfare Committee are to:

2.1.1. Keep up to date on global trends and advances in animal welfare with regards to animals kept in human care.

2.1.2. To develop and regularly review the AAWHC animal welfare policies and any related standard operating procedures, and protocols for AAWHC which relate directly to the care and treatment of animals and specimens

2.1.3. Identify gaps and draw up an annual workplan based on topics that require guidance for members.

2.1.4. Review the Animal Welfare Assessment documents and procedures annually.

2.1.5. Participate in the audit of new applicants for voting membership.

2.1.6. Participate in the audit of members on the Animal Welfare Assessment on a 5-year cycle unless concerns have been registered that warrants a re-audit in a shorter time frame.

2.1.7. Investigate any welfare concerns and complaints formally registered with AAWHC by applying the Code of Ethics if appointed as investigators by the Board.

2.1.8. Provide (internal or external) training and refresher courses for auditors in terms of animal welfare.

2.1.9. Compile position statements with regards to animal welfare concerns as and when required.

2.1.10. Contribute to other AAWHC practices and policies on request.

2.1.11. Evaluate animal welfare-related submissions during member accreditation audit processes.

2.1.12. Formulate and disseminate inspirational and informative guidelines and/or presentations on animal welfare issues.

2.1.13. Report to the AAWHC Board by submitting approved minutes of all meetings.

2.1.14. Report to the members by submitting a report for the Annual General Meeting.

3. Membership

3.1. The committee will be chaired by a board member of AAWHC in good standing.

3.2. The chairperson can elect additional members from AAWHC members to serve on the committee.

3.3. It shall comprise of at least five (5) persons qualified in animal welfare, animal management, animal behavioural sciences, zoology, conservation or veterinary science.

3.4. The Animal Welfare Committee is empowered to co-opt additional professional advisors onto the committee. Such co-options are to be approved by the Board of AAWHC.

4. Confidentiality

4.1. Before appointment, all members of the Committee shall acknowledge in writing their acceptance of the terms of reference of the committee and any requirements for confidentiality required by AAWHC. The committee should reach agreement on how advice may be sought without breaching confidentiality.

5. Conflicts of interest

5.1. No member of the Animal Welfare Committee may participate in an audit or review or approval of an audit of their own facility or any other facility, in which that member has a conflicting interest, other than to provide information. Members with conflicting interests should declare these and may not count towards a quorum or vote in such circumstances.

6. AAWHC Animal Welfare Committee operating procedures

6.1. Duration of membership

6.1.1. The period of membership of individuals will be 3 years and may be renewed. It should be appreciated that members need time to absorb the ethos and develop the skills of review.

6.2. Chairperson of Committee and quorum

6.3. The Committee will be chaired by a board member in good standing of AAWHC.

6.4. The Deputy Chairperson will be elected from among its members of welfare assessed facilities.

6.5. The committee should have a quorum of not less than three (3) members.

6.6. Administrative support

6.6.1. The Animal Welfare Committee shall be supported by a Secretariat based within the office of the Board of the association to perform its administrative duties, provide secretarial assistance, and maintain records of all Animal Welfare committee documents and correspondence.

6.7. Meetings

6.7.1. The full Committee should meet a minimum of twice per annum to conduct business which falls within its terms of reference.

6.7.2. The dates of meetings shall be set at the first Committee meeting of each financial year.

6.7.3. Notice of meetings and the agenda and working papers shall be sent to Committee members to arrive at least 7 working days before the next meeting.

6.7.4. In cases where the committee has been appointed in conjunction with the Ethics committee, by the Board, to investigate a transgression, meetings may be on an ad hoc basis.

6.8. Reporting to the Board

6.8.1. Annual Plans to be approved by the board.

6.8.2. Reports on the progress towards the annual plan must be submitted to the Board on a quarterly basis.

6.9. Recording of proceedings

6.9.1. Minutes shall be kept which record decisions and all other aspects of the Committee's deliberations and business and reported to the Board quarterly.