

**ZAA-AZA Accreditation Standards Comparison  
(Version-: 23 April 2021)**

**Animal Welfare, Care & Management**

| ZAA   | AZA   |
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| 1.1 The institution must comply with all laws and/or regulations, including those specific to wildlife. Where local state and federal standards are less stringent than ZAA standards, ZAA standards must be met.   | 1.1.1. The institution must comply with all relevant local, state/provincial, and federal laws and/or regulations, including those specific to wildlife. It is understood that, in some cases, AZA accreditation standards are more stringent than existing laws and/or regulations. In these cases the AZA standards must be met.  |
| All facilities must provide appropriate staff access to ZAA standards, professional training and development tools.   | 1.2.1. As available, the institution must review and provide access for all paid and unpaid staff, to all AZA Animal Care Manuals (ACMs) that have been approved and that apply to species at the institution.  |
| 2.1 ZAA Accredited institutions must create and follow an Institution Collection Plan (ICP).  | 1.3.1 The institution must follow an Institutional Collection Plan (ICP). The ICP must be re-evaluated and updated at minimum every five years.   |
| 3.1 The institution must show examples of having a zoological management system for managing animal records, veterinary records and other relevant information that is readily accessible.  | 1.4.11 The institution must have a zoological records management system that provides sufficient detail to enhance husbandry, welfare, breeding, conservation, and medical health advancements to move forward the critical knowledge of the species through permanent and retrievable information and analysis.  |
| 3.5 All animal records, to include but not be limited to medical, research, legal, transfer, transport, title and permitting information must be kept in electronic or paper form with appropriate backup records stored in a secure fashion that will assure future access.  | 1.4.5 At least one set of the institution's historical animal and veterinary records must be stored and protected. The institution should be able to demonstrate how it provides security, protection, and long-term access for vital animal and veterinary records that have enduring legal, research, or reference value, including, but not limited to permits, titles, declaration forms, and other pertinent information.  |
| 3.6 A staff member must be designated as being responsible for the institution's zoological records management system. Animal records must be kept current.   | 1.4.8 At least one member of an institution's paid staff responsible for animal record keeping must have the proper training required to properly manage the system.  |
| 3.7 Training must be provided for all staff who record data records system (registrars, animal care specialists, veterinarians, keepers etc.) to ensure consistent data entry, data access and management.  |   |
| 4.2 The institution must have a process for assessing animal welfare and wellness.  | 1.5.0. The institution must have a process for assessing animal welfare and wellness.   |
| 4.10. Critical life-support systems for animals requiring such in the institutions collection must be equipped with a failure warning system and emergency backup systems, all of which are tested periodically.  | 10.2.1. Critical life-support systems for the animals, including but not limited to plumbing, heating, cooling, aeration, and filtration, must be equipped with a warning mechanism, and emergency backup systems must be available. Warning mechanisms and emergency backup systems must be tested periodically.   |
| 5.1. If ambassador animals are used, on or offsite, a written policy on the use of live animals in programs and demonstrations must have a written protocol followed by qualified staff trained to do so. While outside their primary enclosures, although conditions may be different, animal safety and welfare must be assured at all times. | 1.5.4. If ambassador animals are used, a written policy on the use of live animals in programs must be followed and incorporate the elements contained in AZA's "Recommendations For Developing an Institutional Ambassador Animal Policy" (see pages 84-89). An education, conservation, and welfare message must be an integral component of all programs. Animals in education programs must meet standards required for the remainder of the animals in the institution. While outside their primary enclosure, although the conditions |

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|   | may be different, animal safety and welfare need to be assured at all times.   |
| 5.2. All facility programs or demonstrations, on and off site, must deliver an education, conservation and/or welfare message as an integral part of those programs and demonstrations. An education, conservation and/or welfare message must be an integral component of all programs and demonstrations. | 1.5.3. If animal demonstrations are part of the institution's programs, an educational/conservation message must be an integral component.   |
| 5.3 Animals used in offsite educational programs must have a written protocol in place to protect the rest of the animals at the institution from exposure to infectious agents.  | 1.5.5. For animals used in offsite programs and educational purposes, the institution must have adequate written protocols in place to protect the rest of the animals at the institution from exposure to infectious agents.          |
| Institutions housing elephants in their collection must meet ZAA standards for elephant care and management.  | 1.5.6. Institutions that include elephants in their collection must follow the AZA Standards for Elephant Management & Care.   |
| Institutions housing cetaceans in their collection must meet ZAA standards for marine mammal care and management.   | 1.5.6.1. Institutions that include cetaceans in their collection must follow the AZA Standards for Cetacean Care & Welfare.  |
| All animal transports must be conducted in a manner that is safe, well-coordinated and implemented, minimizing risk to the animals, staff and public. All applicable laws and regulations must be followed.   | 1.5.11. Animal transportation must be conducted in a manner that is safe, well-planned and coordinated, and minimizes risk to the animal(s), employees, and general public. All applicable laws and/or regulations must be adhered to. |
| 7.1. The institution must follow a written animal enrichment program.   | 1.6.1. The institution must follow a formal written enrichment program that promotes species-appropriate behavioral opportunities.   |
| The institution must have a staff member or committee assigned to animal enrichment program oversight, implementation and assessment as well as record keeping and modification based on results.   | 1.6.2. The institution must have a specific paid staff member(s) or committee assigned for enrichment program oversight, implementation, assessment, and interdepartmental coordination of enrichment efforts.                         |

## Veterinary Care

| ZAA  | AZA  |
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| 1.3. Institutions must be aware of and prepared for periodic disease outbreaks in wild or other domestic or exotic animal populations that might affect the institutions animals and/or visitors (ex-Avian influenza, Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus, etc.) Plans must be developed to outline steps to be taken to protect the institution and the public in these situations. | 2.0.2. The veterinary care program must emphasize disease prevention.  |
| 1.4. Complete medical records must be maintained on animals in the collection to include all veterinary attention they receive and/or concerns pertaining to them  | 2.0.4. Complete medical records must be maintained on all animals in the collection that have received veterinary attention. (See 1.4.7 for animal records.)   |
| 2.1.1 In cases where such is not necessary because of the number and/or nature of the animals, a consulting/part-time veterinarian must be under written contract to conduct regular on/off-site inspections of the animals.   | 2.1.1. A full-time staff veterinarian is recommended. In cases where such is not necessary because of the number and/or nature of the animals residing there, a consulting/part-time veterinarian must be under written contract to make at least twice monthly inspection of the animals and to respond as soon as possible to any emergencies. |
| To provide an immediate response to any indication of disease, injury or stress to an animal, veterinary coverage and/or communication but be available 24hrs./day, 7 days/week.   | 2.1.2. So that indications of disease, injury, or stress may be dealt with promptly, veterinary coverage must be available to the animals 24 hours, 7 days a week.   |
| 3.1. The institution's contracted veterinarian is responsible for prescribing or coordinating the prescription, storage, distribution and use of all animal prescription drugs in a fashion that complies with all applicable state, federal and local laws and regulations.   | 2.2.2. The use of drugs in zoos and aquariums must comply with federal Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act of 1994 (AMDUCA) and associated regulations, as well as all other applicable federal, state, and local laws and/or regulations.   |
| 6.1 Animal food preparation and storage areas must meet all applicable state, federal and local laws and/or regulations.<br><br>6.3 Animal and human food must not be stored in the same location (refrigerators, freezers, etc.).   | 2.6.4. If not in separate buildings, animal food preparation areas must be physically separated from other functions such as the animal hospital (including animal treatment, isolation, holding, deceased animal storage) and employee lounges and offices.   |

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|   | Animal food must not be stored in the same location (refrigerators, freezers, etc.).   |
| If browse plants are used for diet or enrichment with any animal, the plant must be identified, researched and reviewed for safety prior to use.  | 2.6.3. If the institution uses browse plants as part of the diet or as enrichment items for its animals, the items must be identified and reviewed for safety prior to use.  |
| A written record of all browse plants will be kept by an institution staff member for all browse plants researched and approved for animals in the institution.   | 2.6.3.1. The institution must assign at least one qualified paid or unpaid staff member to oversee appropriate browse material for the animals (including aquatic animals).  |
| Inspection(s) for potential toxic plant risk and exposure near an animal exhibit must be made regularly. Staff will be made aware of all such risks to help monitor the exposure.   | 2.6.3.2. The institution's animal care program must address the potential risks of animals (including aquatic animals) being exposed to toxic plants growing in or near their exhibit space. Exhibits should be checked regularly during the growing season. |
| 7.1 The institution must have holding and/or isolation facilities and/or protocols for newly arrived animals as well as the treatment of sick or injured animals.   | 2.7.1. The institution must have holding facilities or procedures for the quarantine of newly arrived animals and isolation facilities or procedures for the treatment of sick/injured animals.  |
| 8.1 Institutions must have pest control management program to address threats of contamination by and threats of pests to animals, staff and/or visitors. Such methods must comply with all state, federal and local laws and regulations while not threatening the health and wellbeing of the animals, staff and/or visitors. | 2.8.1. Pest control management programs must be administered in such a manner that the animals, paid and unpaid staff, the public, and wildlife are not threatened by the pests, contamination from pests, or the control methods used.                      |
| 9.2. Necropsies must be performed in a manner that minimizes risk of disease exposure to animal collection, staff and/or visitors.  | 2.5.3. Cadavers must be kept in a dedicated storage area before and after necropsy. Remains must be disposed of in accordance with local/federal laws.   |
| 9.3. Animal remains must be stored and disposed of in accordance with all applicable state, federal and local laws and regulations.   |  |
| 10.1. The institution must follow AVMA or AAZV Guidelines for Euthanasia of Animals unless circumstances warrant alternative protocols to prevent suffering and/or inhumane circumstances.  | 2.9.1. The institution must follow a written euthanasia policy which adheres to the current AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals, of the AAZV Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Nondomestic Animals.   |

## Conservation

| ZAA  | AZA  |
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| 1.1.1. Institutions must have and follow a written conservation action plan/strategy that includes components outlining the institutions conservation practices such as in-situ conservation efforts, natural resource conservation and sustainability/green practices, and conservation education and advocacy programs. Such programs should be in coordination with ZAA's special committees to assist in demonstrating and furthering conservation partnerships, impacts both locally and globally as well as new conservation efforts initiated by guests inspired by the institutions efforts. This must be part of the Institution Collection Plan (ICP). | 3.2.1. The institution must follow a written conservation action plan/strategy with defined outcomes in proportion to the size and scope of the organization with the goal of demonstrating continuous improvement in each area. The plan must include components outlining the institution's commitments to its conservation practices, including each of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-situ conservation efforts (supporting both local and global priorities including paid staff or volunteer involvement of in situ programs, or financial support or impactful in situ programs). Such programs are those that have a direct and measurable impact on animals and habitats in the wild.</li> <li>• Natural resource conservation and sustainability/green practices such as water conservation initiatives; energy use reduction and alternative sources; waste management for recyclables, compostable, combustibles, and toxic and hazardous materials; sustainable purchasing; green construction, and other green practices.</li> <li>• Connecting the animal collection with saving species in the wild (e.g., conservation messaging, advocacy, supporting reintroduction programs, donating to and/or engaging in applied research, etc.)</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservation education and advocacy programs measured against the written conservation goals of the institution.</li> </ul>  |
| Institutions must make an effort to participate in and contribute to a local, regional or international wildlife conservation program as well as monitor the impact of the effort on that program. | <p>3.2.2. Each institution must evaluate/measure the impact of its written conservation action plan/strategy.</p> <p>3.3.4. The institution must be involved in local, regional, or international wildlife conservation programs through paid and/or unpaid staff or resources.</p> |

## Education and Interpretation

| ZAA   | AZA   |
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| Education and Conservation must be a key component of the institutions mission and goals.   | <p>3.1.1. Conservation must be a key component of the institution's mission and messaging.</p> <p>4.1.1. Education must be a key component of the institution's mission.</p>  |
| 1.2. Institutions must have a written education plan that includes goals and objectives. This plan should be supported by graphics, signage and av technology where possible to support the educational mission of the facility.  | <p>4.2.1. The institution must follow a written education plan that includes goals and objectives.</p> <p>4.3.3. The exhibit graphics and other interpretive devices must be in good condition and functioning, and be based upon relevant scientific knowledge and reflect relevant interpretive methods.</p>  |
| The institution must make efforts to research, evaluate and implement scientific studies that pertain to the animals in their collection as well as the education and conservation work they are providing. Such efforts will be monitored and evaluated to determine a need for modifications that could better serve the institutions animals, conservation and/or education messaging. | <p>5.0. The institution must have a demonstrated commitment to scientific study that is in proportion to the size and scope of its facilities, staff (paid and unpaid), and animals.</p> <p>5.1. Scientific studies must be under the direction of a paid or unpaid staff member or committee qualified to make informed decisions.</p> <p>5.2. The institution must follow a formal written policy that includes a process for the evaluation and approval of scientific project proposals, and outlines the type of studies it conducts, methods, staff (paid and unpaid) involvement, evaluations, animals that may be involved, and guidelines for publication of findings.</p> |

## Physical Facilities

| ZAA  | AZA  |
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| 2.1. All required mechanical equipment must be kept in working order or be on a scheduled maintenance and/or repair schedule.  | 10.2.0. All mechanical equipment must be kept in working order.  |
| 3.1 Adequate lighting must be sufficient in all indoors night houses and exhibits with means of emergency lighting where needed. Lighting systems must be tested periodically. | 10.3.1. Lighting must be sufficient in all indoor facilities, including night houses, so that maintenance can be accomplished and animals can be observed. A means for emergency lighting must be available. |
| 4.1 Adequate lighting must be provided in public areas.  | 10.4.1. Lighting in public areas must be sufficient for the safe maneuvering of the visiting public.   |

## Safety & Security for Staff

| ZAA  | AZA   |
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| A tuberculin (TB) testing/surveillance program must be established in accordance with state, federal and/or local laws | 11.1.3. A tuberculin (TB) testing/surveillance program must be established for the appropriate paid and unpaid staff in order to assure the health of both the paid and unpaid staff and the animals. |

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| and regulations for the appropriate staff and animals at the institution.   |  |
| 1.3 Staff working with toxic/hazardous materials must be trained in the proper handling, labeling and storage of those materials per the institutions state, federal and local laws and regulations.  | 11.1.4. Paid and unpaid staff working with toxic/hazardous materials must be trained in the proper handling, labeling, and storage of those materials. The institution must follow a written policy on those procedures and it must be available to handlers.  |
| 1.5 Safety Data Sheets must be accessible to all staff, on paper or electronically per the institutions state, federal and local laws and restrictions.   |  |
| 3.2 Habitat service areas must be safely lighted, free of debris and other hazards, and provide space to allow for safe servicing. Service doors, locks, latching mechanisms and shift doors must be in good operating order.   | 11.3.2. All exhibit service areas must be safely lighted, free of debris and other hazards, and provide space to allow for safe servicing. Also, service exit doors must be clearly marked and in good working order. All locks and shift doors must be in good working order.   |
| 5.1. Institutions maintaining venomous animals must have an appropriate anti-venom plan that includes availability, location and administration information.<br><br>5.2 Antivenin's location must be known by all staff members working in those areas. An individual must be responsible for inventory, disposal/replacement, and storage of antivenin.<br><br>5.2.1 It is the responsibility of the institution to ensure that appropriate antivenins are available locally for all venomous species maintained at the institution, and for which antivenin is produced. Institutions may rely on the antivenin supply of local hospitals and treatment facilities, but it is also the institution's responsibility to guarantee that these inventories are maintained adequately. Such arrangements must be formally documented. | 11.5.1. Institutions maintaining venomous animals must have appropriate antivenin readily available, and its location must be known by all paid and unpaid staff working in those areas. An individual must be responsible for inventory, disposal/replacement, and storage of antivenin.  |
| The institution must have a security protocol applicable for the size and nature of the zoo to possibly include monitored camera surveillance, live-on property management, security personnel (staff or contracted) all of who are trained to respond to respective zoological emergencies.  | 11.6.2. Security personnel, whether employed by the institution, or a provided and/or contracted service, must be trained to handle all emergencies in full accordance with the policies and procedures of the institution. In some cases, it is recognized that Security personnel may be in charge of the respective emergency (i.e. shooting teams).  |
| 6.2 Stored firearms must be in a locked cabinet of sufficient construction and design to impede unauthorized entry and located in a secure area.<br><br>6.3 Personnel authorized to utilize firearms must have documented training.<br><br>6.3.1 Personnel authorized to utilize firearms must practice on a regular basis.   | 11.6.3. Stored firearms must be in a locked cabinet of sufficient construction and design to impede unauthorized entry, and located in a secure area and accessible only to authorized personnel trained in their use. Personnel authorized to utilize firearms must have training and regular practice.   |
| 7.2 Institutions which utilize underwater diving as part of regular operations and/or maintenance must appoint a dive safety officer with the credentials, responsibilities and authority to fulfill that role.   | 11.7.2. Institutions which utilize underwater diving as a part of regular operations and/or maintenance must appoint a dive safety officer with the credentials, responsibilities, and authority to fulfill that role. At minimum, a dive safety officer should be a certified recreational dive instruction, or an equivalent, to meet the credentialing requirement.   |
| 7.3 Institutions which utilize underwater diving as a part of a regular operations and/or maintenance must follow a dive manual which has, as one of its components, a section on dive safety. The section must have a dive emergency extraction plan for each habitat into which divers enter. All divers must be trained in the procedures associated with emergency plans associated with tanks in which they dive.  | 11.7.3. Institutions which utilize underwater diving as a part of regular operations and/or maintenance must follow a dive manual which has, as one of its components, a section on diving safety.<br><br>11.7.5. Institutions which utilize underwater diving as a part of regular operations and/or maintenance must develop and implement a dive emergency plan for each tank into which divers enter. All divers must be trained in the procedures associated with emergency plans associated with tanks in which they dive. |

## Governing Authority

| ZAA  | AZA  |
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| The governing body of the institution must be supportive and in abeyance with ZAA goals and objectives.  | 6.2. The governing authority must recognize and support the institution's goals and objectives.  |
| The governing body of the institution must be supportive and in compliance with ZAA Accreditation Standards and professional ethics and bylaws.  | 6.1. The governing authority must be supportive of the institution abiding by the AZA Accreditation Standards, Code of Professional Ethics, and Bylaws.  |
| The institution's governing authority must consist of a professional(s) who are trained and dedicated to manage the institutions animals, staff, programs and day to day operations on full time basis. Institutions managed by groups of individuals (Boards of Directors) calling upon a paid CEO/Director to accomplish these tasks for them must include that individual in their governing decisions that pertain to day to day operations with clear protocols regarding who will make decisions and be responsible for animal welfare, animal acquisition and euthanasia, staffing and programs. Each institution must define and make available their governing authority's chain of command and responsibilities. | 6.4. While the governing authority may have input, the decisions regarding the institution's animals must be made by the professionals who are specifically trained to handle the institution's animals, staff (paid and unpaid), and programs.<br><br>6.5. The lines of communication between the CEO/Director, the governing authority, and the support organization must be clearly defined. Additionally, the governing authority and support organization must be structured so that their relationship to the professional staff (paid and unpaid) is clearly understood and followed. |
| 1.1 Privately-owned institutions must have a written contingency and/or succession plan, for both management and financing, that is shared with its leadership team in the event of death or incapacitation of the owner(s)  | 9.6. Institutions owned by individuals must have a written contingency and/or financial succession plan in place in the event of the death or incapacitation of the owner(s).  |

## Finance

| ZAA   | AZA  |
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| The institution must provide a financial support plan that defines a current and future operating ability that supports the existing and proposed animal collection and facility. | 9.1. The institution, regardless of whether operating on a profit or nonprofit basis, must provide sufficient evidence of its financial stability by submitting adequate financial reports, including operating and capital budgets. |
| The institution must comply with all state and federal wage laws while striving to compensate staff within the relative zoological trade norms in their geographic areas.         | 9.2 The institution must be able to provide compensation sufficient competitive to recruit and retain professional, qualified staff.   |
| The institution must have in place a financial plan for ongoing capital improvements and maintenance.   | 9.4. The institution must indicate sources and amounts of funding for capital improvements and major maintenance, repairs, and replacements.   |

## Staff

| ZAA   | AZA   |
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| All staff must have and maintain professional attitudes and behaviors when representing a ZAA accredited institution.   | 7.6. To support the operations of the institution, all paid and unpaid staff must maintain a professional attitude and behavior in all working relationships.   |
| All staff must have access to current ZAA accreditation standards and polices.  | 7.8. Paid and unpaid staff must be provided access to the latest edition of the AZA accreditation standards and related policies.   |
| Institutions must adhere to all state, federal and local equal opportunity laws, regulations and guidelines for any and all staff. Protocols must be in place for staff to bring concerns regarding equalities of any kind to the attention of management in a confidential manner. | 7.9. The institution must follow a written diversity, equity, access, and inclusion program. Programs must be proactive and transparent, with measurable goals for assessing progress, and must have a paid staff member(s) or committee responsible for oversight. |

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| <p>Institutions must encourage staff members to participate in ZAA committees, programs and/or projects that further the goals and efforts of the organization. All should be afforded avenues to participate in zoological webinars/conferences/etc. and share statistics, information and concerns on different platforms to advance animal enrichment, and welfare as well as education and conservation efforts.</p> | <p>7.12. Institutions should encourage paid staff to assume leadership roles in AZA animal programs. Institutions with paid staff in leadership roles in these programs must provide continuing support to the staff member assigned and take steps to assure that the staff member assigned manages the program efficiently, and communicates with participants in a timely manner.</p> |
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**Guest Services**

| ZAA  | AZA   |
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| <p>1.4 The institution must present to the visiting public a professional, clean and aesthetically pleasing environment.</p> | <p>12.4. The institution must present to the visiting public a positive, professional, clean, and aesthetically pleasing environment.</p> |