

BRANDYWINE ZOO PROGRAM ANIMAL POLICY

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1.0 Program Animal Philosophy

The Brandywine Zoo believes that live animals are essential to our education programs and helps us to meet our education mission to “enhance and enrich peoples' understanding and respect of the complex relationships among all living things and inspire wildlife conservation.” Program animals provide a way to naturally engage audiences, allow for interaction on a more personal level, enhance positive environmental attitudes including conservation issues, and planetary awareness.

In accordance with the CEC and AASAG, the Conservation Education Committee (CEC) of The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) supports the appropriate use of Program Animals **as an important and powerful educational tool that provides a variety of benefits to zoo and aquarium educators seeking to convey cognitive and affective (emotional) messages about conservation, wildlife and animal welfare (2016).**

For the purpose of this policy, a “Program Animal” is defined as “an animal whose role includes handling and/or training by staff or volunteers for interaction with the public and in support of institutional education and conservation goals.”

2.0 Appropriate Setting

There are three main categories of Program Animal interactions:

2.1 ON-SITE PROGRAMMING

ON GROUNDS WITH THE AMBASSADOR ANIMAL INSIDE THE EXHIBIT/ENCLOSURE:

- Public access inside the exhibit/enclosure. Public may interact with animals from inside the exhibit/enclosure
- **Brandywine Zoo currently offers this experience with our African pygmy goats**

ON GROUNDS WITH THE AMBASSADOR ANIMAL OUTSIDE THE EXHIBIT/ENCLOSURE:

- Minimal to significant handling and training techniques are used to present Program Animals to the public. Public may have no opportunity, minimal opportunity, be in close proximity, or have direct contact with Program Animals when they are outside the exhibit/enclosure (e.g., raptors on the glove, reptiles held “presentation style”; media, fund raising, photo, and/or touch opportunities; wildlife education shows).
- **Brandywine Zoo currently offers all of the above experiences**

The following is a listing of all settings on-site, where ambassador animal use is permitted.

INFORMAL AND NON-REGISTRANTS:

1. *On-grounds programming with animals being brought out (demonstrations, lectures, parties, special events, and media):* animals may be used in a “mingle” type setting, where handlers walk around the main thoroughfare, or in a more formal “encounter” type setting, where an exercise yard is used or a demonstration table is set up.
2. *African pygmy goat contact yard:* this area is accessed by a double-gated vestibule, with hand sanitizer located immediately outside the building and bathrooms within 100 feet.
3. *Shows:* Live animal shows, such as the Reptile Show, which are held in the Otter Circle.

FORMAL (registration involved) AND CONTROLLED SETTINGS

1. *School group programs, Family Programs & Workshops, and Summer Camps*: animals are typically presented in the Education Classroom, but occasionally may be presented in an alternative area of the Zoo. Most commonly, this may occur for group programs in the summer being taught in the Education Pavilion. Occasionally, the Birthday Party Tent will be utilized as an outdoor, shaded classroom, or multiple stations may be set up throughout the Zoo for large school group programs.
3. *Birthday Parties*: animals are presented either in the Birthday Party Tent, located just inside of the Zoo, or in the Education Building.
4. *Behind-the-scenes opportunities*: visitation of behind-the-scenes areas for program animals typically only occurs during formal programs, such as camp or select tours.

2.2 OFF-SITE PROGRAMMING:

For full Traveling Zoo guidelines, please see the [Traveling Zoo Manual](#).

- Handling and training techniques are used to present Program Animals to the public outside of the zoo/aquarium grounds. Public may have minimal contact, be in close proximity to, or have direct contact with Program Animals (e.g., animals transported to schools, media, fund raising events).
- **Brandywine Zoo currently offers this experience through its Traveling Zoo.**

The following is a listing of all settings off-site, where ambassador animal use is permitted.

- TYPICAL TRAVELING ZOO PROGRAMS (frequent)
 1. Community Events, Outdoor Festivals and Fairs (please note special circumstances in C.2 for restrictions)
 2. School visits
 3. Library visits
 4. Nursing Home visits (therapy)
 5. Hospital visits: special consideration is given for visits to hospitals, where all animals may visit, contact with animals is limited to mammals only due to increased risk to immunocompromised patients.
 6. Senior Centers, Adult Assisted Living Facilities
 7. Other Field programs involving the public
 8. Churches
 9. Camp grounds
 10. Parks
 11. Civic Group Events
- ATYPICAL OFFSITE PROGRAMS (infrequent)
 1. PR events (TV, radio)
 2. Fundraising events
- RESTRICTED LOCATIONS FOR PROGRAMS
 1. *Private residences*: the Traveling Zoo is not available to provide programs in private residences (typical requests are for Birthday Parties in private homes)
 2. *Fairs/exhibitions where a large number of outside animals will be present that cannot be kept separate from the Zoo's collection*: the Traveling Zoo will decline invitations to events that may feature unregulated contact with outside animals. Additionally, stipulations outlined in the Traveling Zoo manual illustrate the need for separation from other vendors who may exhibit animals at typical events.

3.0 Compliance with Regulations

- 3.1 The Brandywine Zoo is guided by AZA, federal, state, and county regulations, standards, and recommendations. Following is a list of these agencies:
- 3.2 Laws set forth by USDA's Animal Welfare Act for proper housing and handling of all animals, including program animals.
- 3.3 The Zoo also follows regulations as stated in the AZA Code of Professional Ethics and Accreditation Standards, AZA Program Animal Policy, AZA standards for Contact with the General Public, AZA Program Animal Position Statement, and TAG or SSP Program Animal Policies.
- 3.4 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Compendium Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings, regulations regarding bats
- 3.5 Delaware Department of Fish and Wildlife regulations and permits.

3.6 Additional local and state regulations for its animals or public health, as applicable.

4.0 Collection Planning

4.1 Please see **Table A** of this document for listing of approved program animals currently in use at the Zoo.

- All program animal species have been selected based upon temperament, husbandry requirements, expertise of care takers, and long term care that are conducive to program needs and conservation efforts. All TAG and SSP guidelines and policies apply to program animals.

4.2 Please see the **Animal Handling Manual** for guidelines for program animal handling. See **Table A** of this document for presentation locations, and **Table B** for a list of handling levels.

4.3 ANIMAL ACQUISITION PROCESS:

- Acquisition recommendations can be made by the Education Curator as determined by program needs. Final approval of all acquisitions is made by the General Curator. **Please see the Institutional Acquisition and Disposition Policy for details.**
- Selection criteria include the zoo's ability to provide for specific husbandry requirements, necessary support for each species or specimen, and the value of each species or specimen to the collection. The temperament and suitability of each species or specimen is also considered when determining use for programs
- Acquisition and disposition of program animals and contact yard animals shall be in accordance with the AZA and the **Institutional Acquisition and Disposition Policies.**

4.4 **The Program Animal Collection Plan** identifies guidelines as to how each species (and, where necessary, for each individual) will be presented to the public, and in what settings, plus takes into account:

- Temperament and suitability for program use
- Husbandry requirements
- Husbandry expertise
- Veterinary issues and concerns
- Ease and means of acquisition / disposition according to the AZA code of ethics
- Educational value and intended conservation message
- Conservation Status
- Compliance with TAG and SSP guidelines and policies
- References population management policies

5.0 Conservation Messages

5.1 Animal demonstrations are an important part of the Brandywine Zoo's programs, and educational and conservation messages are an integral component of all programming. **Please see Section II of the Education Interpretive Plan for specific education conservation messages.**

5.2 We view each animal as an ambassador for their species and/or habitat. All animals are handled and presented in a safe, dignified, and respectful manner. We represent the Brandywine Zoo, zoos overall, and for many people we are considered the authority on animals. Program animal presentations bring a host of responsibilities, including the safety and welfare of the animals involved, the safety of the animal handler and public, and accountability for the take-home, educational messages received by the audience.

6.0 Human Health and Safety

ZOONOTIC DISEASE PREVENTION

- Animal handlers should make all reasonable attempts to limit the risk of the spread of disease from the animals in their care to themselves, other staff and to the general public. Hand washing is perhaps the single most effective personal hygiene procedure for reducing the risk of infection. Anyone having direct contact with any of our animals should wash their hands immediately after contact, or use hand sanitizer when handwashing is not available.
- Contact animals can provide a valuable educational experience for visitors and participants in public programs. Most zoonotic diseases of concern in public areas can be prevented with reasonable testing and quarantine programs and proper hand-washing techniques.
- Human food consumption should not occur in the immediate area of contact with any program animals.

- Program animals, due to the very nature of their exposure to many different environments, should be assumed carriers of zoonotic diseases. When treated as such, the strict protocols including handwashing, sanitizing, and maintaining separation from collection animals will help to minimize the spread of disease.
 - 1st All reptiles and amphibians should be treated as salmonella carriers. Risks of transmission can be reduced by handwashing and sanitizing surfaces herptiles come into contact with.
 - 2nd As in reptiles, salmonellosis can be present and difficult to diagnose and so, birds should be treated as suspects.
 - 3rd All mammals are considered at risk for infection with rabies. When using rodents and lagomorphs in contact areas, consideration should be given to the risk of bites, past history, and exposure to hantavirus, salmonella, and tularemia.

PUBLIC/ANIMAL CONTACT POLICY

- Please see **Table B: Program Animal Handling Level Chart** for a full list of which animals are available for public contact.
- Please see the **Program Animal Handling Manual** for the current animal touch policy.

Note: Only domestic species are available for contact when programs are being conducted in the state of New Jersey.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR GOAT CONTACT YARD

- The goats contact area is open generally to the public from 10 am to 3:50 pm.
- When large crowds are present, the number of visitors allowed into the yard is limited to no more than ten guests at a time while an attendant supervises.
- Goat yard volunteers are instructed to help guests interact with the goats in a safe manner, including appropriate brushing and petting, as well as staying out of the 'goats only' area.
- Hand sanitizer is available just outside the goat yard for guests to clean up. Bathrooms are adjacent to the goat yard as well.

SPECIAL NOTE ON CONTACT WITH NON-BRANDYWINE ZOO ANIMALS

If you come into contact with an outside collection animals on a regular basis (i.e. household pets, work at a rehab center, vet clinic, etc.) you must adhere to the following guidelines for the protection of the Program Animals and other animals you come into contact with.

- Wear a clean set of clothes and shoes when working with each set of animals.
- Wash your hands thoroughly. Ideally, you should shower between contacts with each set of animals.

7.0 Animal Health and Welfare

- 7.1 Education animals must be held separately [contained in their own building] from exhibit animals. To reduce the chance of zoonotic disease spread, any animal that is used for both exhibit and education must never be used for off-grounds/travel programs.
- 7.2 Where ever possible, all program animals are provided a choice for participation. Contact yard animals have a retreat area. Handlers are trained to know signs of stress for all program animals and may decide to withdraw an animal from a program if deemed necessary for that animal's health and welfare.
- 7.3 All animal handlers are empowered to make the best decisions related to animal health and welfare. If safety or health is in danger of being compromised, handlers may remove the animal from the situation.
- 7.4 All contact areas are supervised by trained staff or volunteers to ensure the health and welfare of the animals and guests.
- 7.5 To assess safety, health and welfare frequent evaluation is made of the human/animal interactions.
- 7.6 The conditions and treatment of animals in education program settings meet or exceed the standards set for the remainder of the animal collection. This includes species-appropriate shelter, exercise, appropriate environmental enrichment, access to veterinary care, nutrition, and other related standards.
- 7.7 All program animals in the care of the Brandywine Zoo are provided with proper care when no longer used as a program animal. Limits and restrictions of programs animals due to illness or age are determined by the veterinarian, Education Curator and General Curator. Animal health and welfare policies still apply to animals no longer used for programming.
 - As such, all animals are ensured the same level of contact and care during times of limited or reduced program use. Staff and volunteers are available to properly attend to the psychological and physical wellbeing of all program animals despite level of program use.

7.8 Animals that are ill should not be used for program.

Signs of Illness or Stress			
Reptiles/Frogs	Mammals	Birds	Invertebrates
Applicable to all groups: Open-mouth breathing; panting; highly active/escape behavior; lethargy; attempts to bite; lack of appetite; swollen eyes/eye cloudiness; nervousness; shaking/shivering; passing irregular feces; gradual or sudden weight loss			gradual or sudden weight loss
Cool to the touch	Wide spread body	Holding wings away from body, mantling	Highly active/escape behavior
Tries to bite [Snakes] Hissing, tail rattling, striking (open or closed mouth)	Other natural, species specific defense behaviors	Other natural, species specific defense behaviors	[Roaches] Hissing, flipping body
Gaping mouth// Alternatively inability to close mouth	Regurgitation	Regurgitation (species specific)	[Millipedes] Tightly curled up
Excessive Soaking		Not flying	[Tarantula] Flicking/kicking abdominal hair with legs
Bubbles or discharge from mouth [Turtles] inability to submerge		Swollen hocks or legs	lack of appetite
Regurgitation			

8.0 Taxon Specific Protocols

Please see the [Program Animal Handling Manual](#) for specific handling protocols.

9.0 Logistics: Managing the Program

- 9.1 The Brandywine Zoo has three program animal collections: an on-grounds collection housed within two locations (the Program Mammal Building and the Enrichment Room/Herp Room) in the Zoo proper. There is also an additional collection housed in the Education Building, located outside (across the street) the main Zoo. They are for use in programs off-grounds or within the education building and adjacent area. Program Animal Collection, with the exception of the goat contact yard, is under the supervision and care of the Curator of Education.
- 9.2 The African pygmy goat contact yard is supervised by the General Curator, and this program animal collection is restricted to the zoo grounds, within their exhibit only.
- 9.3 Acquisition recommendations can be made by the Education Curator, General Curator or Assistant Animal Curator as determined by program need. Final approval of all acquisitions is made by the General Curator. [Please see the Institutional Acquisition and Disposition Policy for details.](#)
- 9.4 Records of animal usage, behavior, diet, enrichment and concerns are maintained daily. Permanent paper husbandry records are stored in the Education Department, and digital records are always available via ZIMS. Animal usage records are kept digitally in the [Program Animal Calendar](#). [Please see Animal Record Binders and Animal Enrichment binders located in each office.](#)

10.0 Staff Training

- 10.1 To handle and present animals, all individuals must complete the training program outlined in the [Program Animal Handling Manual](#).
- 10.2 Handling protocols for animals held in quarantine may be provided by the Education Curator or the General Curator. If handling protocols are issued, they are to be followed by all individuals interacting with quarantined program animals.
- 10.3 All training and assessment is conducted by the Program Animal Coordinator, with assistance from other expert and highly trained staff as well as approval from the Curator of Education. Training is conducted on an as-needed basis.
- 10.4 All part time handlers must *demonstrate handling competency and species knowledge* consistently to remain an animal handler. Additionally, part time handlers must demonstrate competency during an annually held animal handling refresher classes, or as necessary after an absence from handling for more than 30 days.
- 10.5 All handler trainings are conducted by the Program Animal Coordinator or Program Animal Keeper, with assistance from other highly trained staff, as necessary. Individuals may be authorized for handler training by the Education Curator, Assistant Education Curator, or Program Animal Coordinator. Staff members are qualified for

handler training after completion of training requirements for advancement ([Appendix C of Program Animal Manual](#)).

- 10.6 For individuals whom are not meeting the animal handling policies and procedures, a verbal warning will be issued. If non-compliance continues, a formal write up will follow. Dismissal from using program animals will follow afterwards if corrections are not made. If the severity of non-compliance with procedures and policies is high, dismissal will be immediate. The Program Animal Coordinator or Education Curator will make these determinations.
- 10.7 All animal handlers will be required to provide an updated negative TB test (annually).
- 10.8 Please see the [Program Animal Handling Manual](#) and [Interpretive Manual](#) for training content.
- 10.9 The Brandywine Zoo abides by the protocols to reduce disease transmission as noted in AZA's Animal Contact Policy. Please also see *Section VI: Human Health and Safety* and *Section VII: Animal Health and Welfare* of this document.
- 10.10 All injuries that occur to animal handlers or the public will result in an incident report to be filled out and given to the zoo's administrative assistant for keeping. Animal records regarding injuries or behavioral issues are recorded in ZIMS.
- The Program Animal Coordinator will be made aware of the injury and it will be documented in the animal handler's file and in the animal's records.
- 10.11 Please see the [Interpretive Manual](#) for visitor management.

11.0 Review of Institutional Policies

- 11.1 All institutional policies are reviewed and revised (if found necessary) annually by the Curator of Education. These policies include the [Education Interpretive Plan](#), the [Interpretive Manual](#), the [Program Animal Policy](#), the [Animal Handler Guidelines](#), and [Program Animal Handling Manual](#).

12.0 TAG and SSP Recommendations

- 12.1 The Brandywine Zoo follows the recommendations from each TAG and SSP for all program animals.

Table A: Listing of Program Animals, Housing and Usage Locations

Species	Sex	Housing/Zoo Location	Usage Location
Mammals			
Chinchilla	2.1	Program Mammal Building	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Degu	1.0	Program Mammal Building	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Domestic Ferret	1.1	Program Mammal Building	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Domestic Rabbit (Flemmish Giants)	1.1	Program Mammal Outdoor Holding	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Domestic Rats	2.0	Program Mammal Building	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Goats	2.2	Contact Yard	Contact Yard
Lesser Madagascar Tenrec	1.1	Program Mammal Building	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Nine-Banded Armadillo	0.1	Program Mammal Building	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
North American Porcupine	0.1	Program Mammal Outdoor Holding	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Birds			
American Kestrel	0.1	Kestrel Exhibit	On-Grounds
Great Horned Owl	1.0	Great Horned Owl Exhibit	On-Grounds
Reptiles			
Bearded Dragon	0.1	Education Atrium	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Blood Python	1.0	Education Reptile Room	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Blue-tongued Skink	0.1	Education Reptile Room	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Box Turtle	0.0.2	Education Reptile Room	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Frilled Dragon	0.0.1	Hospital	QT
Honduran Milk Snake	1.1	Education Reptile Room	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Mandarin Rat Snake	1.0	Education Reptile Room	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Mossy Prehensile-tailed Gecko	1.0	Education Reptile Room	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Rainbow Boa	0.1	Education Reptile Room	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Solomon Island Skink	1.0	Education Atrium	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Southern Pine Snake	0.0.1	Hospital	QT
Stinkpot Turtle	0.1	Herp Room	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Uromastyx	0.1	Education Atrium	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Amphibians			
Cane Toad	0.0.2	Herp Room	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Pacman Frog	0.0.2	Herp Room	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Arthropods			
African Giant Millipedes	0.0.8	Education Reptile Room	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Rose Hair Tarantula	0.1	Education Reptile Room	On-Grounds Off-Grounds
Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches	0.0.100	Education Atrium	On-Grounds Off-Grounds

Table B: Program Animal Handling Level Chart

Animal	Touchable	Presentation Notes	Green	Yellow	Red	Blue
Mammals						
African Pygmy Goats	Yes	Guests can interact with goats in their exhibit yard			Handling levels not applicable	
Chinchilla	Yes	Green level may present in carrier Packing and in hand presentation at Red	Carrier		Packing In hand	
Degu	No	Green level may present in carrier Packing and in hand presentation at Yellow	Carrier	Packing		
Domestic Ferret	Yes		x			
Domestic Rabbit (Flemmish Giants)	Yes				x	
Domestic Rats	Yes			In training		
Lesser Tenrec	Limited	Gloves			x	
9-Banded Armadillo	Yes				x	
North American Porcupine	No	Presented on table with target station(s)				x
Birds						
American Kestrel	No	Falconry equipment				x
Great Horned Owl	No	Falconry equipment				x
Reptiles						
Bearded Dragon	Yes		x			
Blood python	Yes				x	
Blue Tongued Skink	Yes		x			
Box Turtle	Yes		x			
Frilled Dragon		In QT: protocols in development				
Honduran milk snake	Yes			x		
Mandarin rat snake	Yes			x		
Mossy Prehensile-tailed Gecko	Yes		Carrier		Packing/ In hand	
Rainbow Boa	Yes		x			
Solomon Island Skink	Yes	Present on branch or with gloves				
Southern Pine Snake		In QT: protocols in development				
Stinkpot Turtle	Yes		x			
Uromastyx	Yes		x			
Amphibians						
Cane Toad	No	Can be presented in hand with vinyl gloves		x		
Pacman Frog	No			x		
Arthropods						
Madagascar Hissing cockroaches	Yes		x			
African Giant Millipede	Yes		x			
Rosy Tarantula	No	Green level may present in carrier Packing and in hand presentation at Red	Carrier		Packing/ In hand	