

National Aquaculture Association Policy on Aquatic Animal Welfare

Background

Successful aquaculture demands that animal husbandry is optimized. Aquaculture husbandry practices demand that animals are held in healthy environments, fed a balanced and complete diet, protected from predators, and monitored throughout their life to insure their general quality and health.

Aquaculture helps provide an increasing human population with a supply of wholesome, nutritious, consistent quality food, sport fish, and ornamental species. To achieve this quality, farm raised aquatic animals are raised under optimal conditions using humane practices. Aquatic animals for food are slaughtered quickly and humanely for rapid processing, which enhances the quality of farm-raised aquatic animals. Aquatic animals reared for stocking in public waters, or ornamental uses, must be transported under optimal environmental conditions if the fish are to survive, and maintain their quality. Successful producers routinely follow good production practices.

Animal welfare issues are legitimate concerns for a society, and therefore aquaculture. However, use of anthropomorphic standards should be avoided when addressing aquatic animal welfare, especially in the fields of emotional response, including pain, and cognitive ability.

Animal rights or welfare organizations form a diverse group. Some organizations use legitimate legal and political practices to sway public opinion, and have assisted in developing husbandry practices which have led to improvements in animal health and quality.

Animal "liberationists" believe that any form of "captivity" or use of animals by humans is wrong, and have been known to disseminate false information, violate state or federal law, destroy personal or public property, and cause immediate harm to animals or the environment in an effort to promote their beliefs.

Policy

The NAA:

1. Believes that successful aquaculture demands that husbandry is optimized, that legitimate welfare issues are addressed by demands of the industry, and supports the rights of aquaculture in the propagation and marketing of aquatic animals.

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2. Supports continued improvements in animal husbandry when appropriate, but opposes the use of anthropomorphic values to determine stocking densities, husbandry practices, or slaughter techniques.
3. Supports the right of all people to use legitimate, legal means to voice their opinions or determine public policy.
4. Opposes individuals and organizations who are opposed to any form of animal captivity, or who illegally destroy public or private property.
5. Supports legislation prohibiting dissemination of false information concerning animal welfare that adversely affects aquaculture product marketability or public opinion about aquacultured products.