



OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

Biodiversity Conservation Act - Wildlife Licensing Reforms

NATIVE ANIMAL KEEPING AND DEALING STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIVE GROUP

10am–2pm, Friday 14 December 2018

DRAFT RECORD OF OUTCOMES

1. INTRODUCTION

Richard Kingswood welcomed attendees to the meeting with an acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land which the meeting is held on.

Apologies were noted from John Mostyn and Tina Chenery (Central Coast Herps), Brendon Neilly (RSPCA) and Leanne Taylor (WIRES).

Kim Filmer and Matthew Crane represented the Department of Primary Industries and were present intermittently via a phone line throughout the meeting.

2. DRAFT RECORD OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 19 October 2018

Sam Davis requested the notes at point 3 are amended to clarify that the expert panel will be an ongoing and advise on changes to the NSW Native Animal Keepers Species List.

No further changes to the October outcomes.

3. EXPERT SUB GROUP OUTCOMES

Comments were invited on the reports included in the agenda papers setting out proposed changes to the code-regulated species list and draft codes of practice arising from sub-group meetings.

a. Native Reptiles

HCN have submitted risk assessments for new species, new species as a result of nomenclature changes and changes to the class of species currently on the species list.

Changes to the list of proposed species regulated by code of practice were noted due to difficulties splitting *Morelia spilota* and *Emydura macquarii* sub species over code and licensing as they are difficult to accurately differentiate from each other. Either way, these sub-species and hybrids will need to be kept together either under licence or code regulation.

The inclusion of all these additional species raised concerns about the volume of animals that would move to code if all hybrid and sub-species were on code.

HCN requested that the number of risk assessments they submitted for new species is clarified.

b. Native Birds

Comments on proposed changes to the draft code included:

- OEH to ensure that all references to the exempt species has been removed from the code.
- Review the comments on identification rings to mention the appropriateness of using open or closed rings.
- Retain commentary regarding microchipping as this is still the best option for species that have enough body weight to do it safely.

Other issues raised in discussion included:

- As with the case with reptiles, some species are difficult to distinguish from each other and many of these species are split between code of practice regulation and licensing.
- Bird clubs do not have a central keeper register for rings. If rehab groups are handed a bird with rings on it, they are advised to contact CCBFA who will liaise with the local bird clubs and assist with returning the bird to its owner.
- The justification for having birds on the species list that have an endangered and even extinct ranking. Many of these species have adequate captive bred populations that are well established and have been for many years.
- CCBFA are hoping that their citizen science proposal will in future allow participation in research of analogues to threatened species to develop husbandry manuals and keeper guidelines for species now that will carry across to the threatened species and provide input to captive breeding programs. OEH advised that scientific licences are available for this process and that animal research ethics approval is also required.

c. Native Frogs

Issues raised in discussion included:

- The frog species list and updates are more straightforward than reptiles and birds.
- The proposed changes to the code are supported by FATS.

Other general issues raised included:

- When the new species list is published a list of synonyms is included as the common names bird keepers use sometimes different or can have local variations.

- Add in comment in both bird and reptile code of practice about discouraging hybridisation.
- OEH will circulate the HCN species risk assessments to attendees.

d. Expert Advisory Panel

Robert Oliver provided a presentation on the role and membership of the expert advisory panel. The panel will advise OEH on species risk assessments submitted by stakeholders and improvements to the species risk assessment process.

Stakeholders queried the role of nominees that groups submitted will be in the expert panel process. Robert Oliver advised that a meeting is scheduled for Monday 17 December with the expert panel where these issues will be discussed. Advice will be provided in due course. NWC requested involvement in the expert panel.

4. NATIVE ANIMAL KEEPER LICENSING – SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Comments were invited on the reform proposals for keeper licensing, and in particular, on the alternative options for implementing a risk-based approach to keeper licensing.

CCBFA requested amendments to correct their organisation name in the document (“Cage”, not “Caged”).

In response to concerns attendees have sufficient time to consider the proposals, it was noted written comments could be submitted to OEH by COB 18 December 2018. (Note: written comments were received from WIRES, NWC, PIAA and CCBFA).

- Kirsty Harris noted WIRES have been consistent in their messaging of disagreement to any species being regulated by a code of practice. She noted that bearded dragons which are proposed to be code-regulated have a high occurrence in welfare and rescue groups with metabolic bone disease.
- Audrey Koosmen advised she would consult NWC members to ensure she provides an accurate representation of NWC views.
- Anthony Stimson noted HCN are supportive of the risk-based approach as it removes the emotion from decision making and looks at the facts. The introduction of code-based regulation will significantly remove pressure from the licensing system and allow OEH to focus on higher risk activities. HCN consider the community education component of the reforms will greatly assist with improving awareness of welfare standards in the codes of practice.
- Elizabeth Mahon advised AWL are concerned over the loss of tracking of ownership of animals if codes are adopted. It will be very difficult for OEH to enforce compliance with the code of practice when there are no recorded locations of where the pets are being kept. Further to this, OEH will have difficulties in proving anything from an animal welfare enforcement perspective.
- Craig Jeffrey noted ABA support the development of education and community engagement as this is highly important in the success of any changes. He noted that Kim Filmer’s presentation at the October 2018 Stakeholder Consultative

Group Meeting highlighted the need for education to improve animal welfare. He acknowledged implementation of codes will address problems with the licensing system and allow redirection of resources to higher risks.

- Arthur White noted FATS aside from rescue operations has a conservation focus rather than promoting frog keeping. FATS believe people should be able to enjoy animals, doing so properly with sufficient education tools. Licensing system is in place to support more vulnerable species. Education materials need to be available on these vulnerable species and how to appropriately care for any native animal pet.

5. NATIVE ANIMAL DEALER LICENSING – SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Comments were invited on the reform proposals for dealer licensing:

- Kim Garcia (Extreme Pets) believes licensing should stay but the licensing system needs to be reviewed to provide some form of documentation as evidence of a keeper licence rather than customers only being provided with a tax invoice.
- CCBFA proposed a dealer licence shouldn't be required to sell code-regulated species.
- John Grima noted the PIAA support pet shops being licensed as it creates a level of trust with the public. Class 1 species should be available to sell in pet shops to create a level playing field as licensed keepers may trade in these species.

HCN and CCBFA representatives discussed animal exhibitions and fairs and OEH's current inconsistent approach to bird and reptile events. Codes of practice were provided in submissions by both groups for the running of these events.

OEH will further consult with these groups to clarify requirements for licensing these events.

6. IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

a. Wildlife Management System demonstration

Robert Oliver introduced Doreen Hamilton and Javier Garcia to the consultative group to provide a demonstration of the new online licensing system currently being developed.

It was noted that it was intended to involve some customers in the user acceptance testing processes for the new system.

b. Community Education Program

Robert Oliver advised OEH had sought proposals from experienced contractors to design a community education program in consultation with stakeholders.

c. Review of Licence Fees

Robert Oliver noted OEH had also sought proposals from consultants for a review of licence fees.

7. REHOMING NATIVE ANIMAL PETS

It was noted OEH would provide a detailed proposal to simplify procedures for rehoming native animal pets at the next consultative groups meeting

8. NEXT STEPS

It was noted the consultative groups would re-convene in early 2019 to review keeper and dealer licence conditions and policies.

APPENDIX 1 - Attendees

Anthony Stimson – Herpetocultural Cooperative NSW (HCN)
Arthur White – Frog and Tadpole Study (FATS)
Audrey Koosmen – NSW Wildlife Council (NWC)
Brian Read – The Finch Society of Australia
Cindy Jackson – Jetty Pets
Craig Jeffery – Associated Birdkeepers of Australia (ABA)
Elizabeth Mahon – Animal Welfare League (AWL)
Errol Wilson – Associated Birdkeepers of Australia (ABA)
John Grima – Pet Industry Association Australia (PIAA)
Ken Francis – Animal Welfare League (AWL)
Kim Garcia – Extreme Pets
Kim Filmer – Department of Primary Industries
Kirsty Harris – WIRES
Sarah Bezerdi – WIRES
Marie Callins – Frog and Tadpole Study (FATS)
Matthew Crane – Department of Primary Industries
Michael Donnelly – Herpetocultural Cooperative NSW (HCN)
Mitchell Hodgson – Native Mammal Keepers NSW
Nancy Agius – Extreme Pets
Rhonda and Dennis Glover – Macarthur Herpetological Society
Sam Davis – Canary and Cage Bird Federation Australia (CCBFA)
Shona Lorrigan – NSW Wildlife Council (NWC)

Office of Environment and Heritage

Richard Kingswood, Director, Conservation
Peter Stathis, Manager, Biodiversity and Wildlife
Robert Oliver, Manager, Wildlife Biodiversity Reforms
Hannah Lewis, Project Officer, Wildlife Biodiversity Reforms (Secretariat)
Luke Francis, Project Officer, Wildlife Biodiversity Reforms
Amanda Hughes, Project Officer, Wildlife Biodiversity Reforms