

STATEMENTS OF BELIEF

Animal Control -

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that comprehensive, progressive, and effectively administered animal control programs are essential to the protection of animals. Such programs lead to a reduction in animal suffering by helping to reduce pet overpopulation and decrease the incidence of animal injury and abuse. Furthermore, these programs improve public health and safety by reducing the number of animal bites and providing greater control over the spread of rabies and other diseases. Effective animal control also protects wildlife, farm animals, and the environment.

The MSPCA believes that an effective animal control program is established by law and includes provisions for the following:

1. Proper sheltering facilities for stray, abandoned, or unwanted dogs and cats;
2. A licensing program that includes reduced fees for sterilized animals;
3. Leashing and humane confinement of animals;
4. Progressive yet reasonable penalties for ordinance violations;
5. Adoption standards that provide for the placement of shelter animals in responsible permanent homes;
6. Mandatory sterilization of all dogs and cats adopted from animal shelters;
7. Humane euthanasia practices;
8. Rabies control, including but not restricted to quarantines, public education, and immunization requirements for domestic animals;
9. Referral or, where authorized, investigation and prosecution of animal cruelty complaints;
10. Animal waste removal;
11. Humane procedures for addressing nuisance animals;
12. Appropriate restraint or, if necessary, humane euthanasia of animals that pose a threat to other animals or people;
13. Ongoing public education programs to promote responsible pet ownership and to reduce pet overpopulation;

14. Effective and ongoing training programs for animal control personnel that include, but are not limited to:

- a. humane animal care,
- b. humane euthanasia procedures,
- c. humane capture and restraint methods,
- d. periodic review of animal control and animal cruelty statutes,
- e. appropriate law enforcement practices, and
- f. human relations and crisis management; and

15. Sufficient funding and personnel with which to carry out these programs.

The MSPCA further believes that it is the responsibility of state and/or municipal governments to establish and finance animal control programs in the interest of animal welfare, public health, public safety, and the environment.

Therefore, the MSPCA will seek to achieve effective animal control by:

1. Advocating progressive animal control programs;
 2. Working with animal control professionals to develop and sponsor training courses for animal control officers;
 3. Working with municipalities and the veterinary profession to establish sterilization programs to combat pet overpopulation; and
 4. Conducting humane education programs and disseminating information advocating effective animal control, responsible pet ownership, and reduction of pet overpopulation.
- 10/85

(See also MSPCA Statement on Responsible Pet Ownership)

Animal Fighting - 🐾

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is unequivocally opposed to any event that sets one animal against another or sets a person against an animal as combatants.

Contests such as dogfighting, cockfighting, and bull baiting, which are frequently resolved by the death of one or both of the animals, subject the animals to acute suffering and torment. In addition, injured animals that survive may not receive appropriate veterinary care because of potential association with an illegal activity.

The MSPCA also deplores the practices and customs associated with bullfighting. The Society believes that an event in which an animal is systematically tormented, wounded, maimed, or killed for entertainment is cruel and unjustifiable.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Investigate reports of suspected animal fighting for sport or entertainment in Massachusetts;
2. Prosecute organizers of and spectators at such events to the fullest extent of the law;
3. Support and assist local, state and federal law enforcement agencies in an effort to eliminate these events;
4. Educate the public about the cruelty inherent in such events;
5. Advocate strong and effective laws that prohibit animal fighting events and mandate strong penalties for participants; and
6. Encourage veterinarians to report to the appropriate law enforcement agency any animal injury that could be related to illegal animal fighting. 3/89

[Assistance Animals](#) - 

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals recognizes that certain animals can help special-needs individuals lead more independent lives by assisting them in the performance of everyday tasks that would otherwise be difficult or impossible. Animals can assist individuals who have physical, visual or hearing limitations, for example, with such tasks as traveling from one point to another, answering doors and telephones, and retrieving articles. They also can alert owners to such potentially dangerous situations as fire or intruders. The MSPCA believes that when animals are trained and used to assist humans in this way, it is critical that the needs of the animals, as well as the people, are met.

In order for an assistance animal and its owner to have a successful relationship, the MSPCA believes that the following criteria must be met:

1. The animal must be a domestic animal.

2. The owner of the animal or another designated person must accept responsibility for seeing that the animal's medical, physical, behavioral, and psychological needs are met.

Organized programs that provide assistance animals should adhere to the above criteria as well as the following guidelines:

1. Selection of animals to be used as assistance animals should be based on knowledge of their specific physical, behavioral, and psychological characteristics. The animal should be able to carry out desired tasks without invasive physical manipulation such as teeth pulling or debarking. Sterilization of the animal is highly recommended.

2. Programs that provide temporary housing and care for assistance animals should ensure that the needs of the animals are being properly met during this period.

3. Training of animals to perform tasks for their owners should be based on positive reinforcement rather than on physical punishment such as striking, choking, or electric shock.

4. Humane disposition should be assured for animals who fail to qualify for the program or become unable to perform required tasks, animals whose assisted owner dies, or animals who, for some other reason, cannot continue in the program for which they were selected. Acceptable disposition options include placement with another qualified individual, adoption to a responsible home, or humane euthanasia when appropriate.

The MSPCA believes that programs that meet the above criteria can provide some special-needs individuals with a level of independence they would not otherwise be afforded and cause no harm to the animals involved.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Provide information and guidance to organizations that train or place assistance animals;

2. Assist programs that meet the above criteria by providing them with animals from MSPCA shelters when appropriate and when in the best interest of the animals; and

3. Oppose assistance programs that do not meet the criteria listed above. 5/90

(See also MSPCA Statements on: Native and Exotic Wildlife as Pets and Responsible Pet Ownership)

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals recognizes that positive, responsible attitudes towards animals can be developed by caring for and interacting with live animals. However, the MSPCA believes that many animals maintained as pets in elementary and secondary school classrooms are subject to abuse and neglect. The MSPCA believes, therefore, that animals should be kept as classroom pets only if they are acquired for the purpose of educating students about the sentience of animals and the need for responsible, humane care, and if the following criteria can be met:

1. The teacher understands and accepts full responsibility for the acquisition and lifetime care of the pet including:
 - a. making appropriate provisions for the humane care of the animal during times such as evenings, weekends, vacations, and holidays when school is not in session;
 - b. accepting full financial responsibility for food, supplies, and veterinary care required to maintain the animal in a healthy, comfortable environment; and
 - c. providing humane and appropriate alternatives for the pet if the teacher can no longer maintain it. If ownership is to be transferred to a student, it is the teacher's responsibility to assure that the family is willing and able to provide responsible long-term care for the pet; and
2. The teacher prohibits the use of a classroom animal for any stressful or invasive procedures.

Therefore, the MSPCA will actively promote responsible care of classroom animals by:

1. Disseminating literature;
2. Providing workshops and humane education programs for teachers and students concerning their obligations to classroom animals;
3. Enforcing regulations that protect these animals;
4. Providing facilities for the appropriate placement or humane euthanasia of unwanted classroom pets; and
5. Arranging for appropriate veterinary care for classroom animals. 11/85

(See also MSPCA Statement on Responsible Pet Ownership)

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals opposes surgery done on animals solely for cosmetic reasons or to disguise an imperfection.

Cosmetic surgery is surgery that is done for the purpose of altering the appearance of the animal. Examples of cosmetic surgery done on animals are tail docking and ear cropping in dogs and tail myotomy in horses. This type of surgery is of no benefit to the animal and puts it through an unnecessary surgical risk and discomfort.

For the same reasons, the MSPCA opposes surgery done only to disguise an imperfection. Examples of such surgery are attempts to move an undescended testicle into the scrotum; removal of haws (third eyelid); and surgery to correct ear or tail carriage.

It is understood and accepted that surgical procedures normally considered cosmetic may be performed for valid medical reasons. Examples would be tail docking and ear cropping because of injury or malignancy; orthodonture because of serious malocclusions; or eyelid surgery because of congenital eyelid abnormalities.

In support of these beliefs, the MSPCA will:

1. Prohibit cosmetic surgery from being performed in its medical facilities;
2. Provide information to the public concerning the reasons cosmetic surgery should not be done in animals; and
3. Encourage organizations that require cosmetic surgery as part of breed or show standards to eliminate these requirements. 3/88

Dangerous Dog Laws - 🐾

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that comprehensive animal control programs are essential to the protection of animals, public health and safety, and the environment. One of the necessary components of a comprehensive animal control program is a provision for responding to situations in which animals have injured or pose a threat to people or other animals.

Highly publicized serious dog bite incidents can focus attention on the inadequacies of existing laws designed to protect people from dangerous dogs. Communities often respond to such situations by enacting new laws that use breed designations alone to characterize certain dogs as vicious or dangerous.

The MSPCA believes that breed-specific laws are not an effective way to control dangerous dogs. This type of ordinance does not impact dogs of other breeds that may be dangerous. Furthermore, such an approach unfairly brands all dogs of a particular breed,

regardless of their behavioral history, as dangerous. Finally, many breed-specific laws have been challenged and overturned based on two constitutional issues: possible violation of the "due process" clause of the 14th Amendment, and vagueness of definition. The term "pit bull terrier" has proven to be particularly difficult to define because it is used to describe many types of dogs, some of which vary widely in appearance and size.

Lack of effective animal control laws and slack enforcement of existing laws have exacerbated problems involving dangerous dogs and have led many communities to concentrate their public protection efforts on banning specific breeds, rather than on dealing with the true cause of these threats to public safety: pet owner irresponsibility. The MSPCA believes that the best approach to handling dangerous dog problems involves addressing human attitudes and behaviors through public education programs and well-designed and operated animal control programs. These animal control programs should provide for an organized collaboration among law enforcement agencies, public health departments, animal protection organizations, and the medical and veterinary communities in order to monitor and enforce licensing laws, vaccination requirements, and stray control regulations, and to provide for the identification of animals that may pose a threat to people or other animals.

The MSPCA believes that laws addressing dangerous animals should establish the following:

1. A clear and applicable definition of a "vicious" or "dangerous" animal;
2. An organized process through which an animal comes to be considered "vicious" or "dangerous"—accurate and timely record keeping is essential to this provision;
3. Procedures that an owner may follow if he or she wishes to contest a designation of "vicious" or "dangerous;"
4. A required course of action for owners of animals that have been designated "vicious" or "dangerous;" and
5. Penalties to be assessed to owners who violate provisions of the law.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Assist local communities in their efforts to design effective animal control and dangerous animal laws;
2. Conduct public education programs to promote responsible pet ownership; and
3. Support existing and proposed laws that effectively address the problem of irresponsible pet ownership. 7/87

(See also MSPCA Statements on: Animal Control and Responsible Pet Ownership)

[Declawing Cats](#) -

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that a responsible pet owner will provide for the physical, behavioral, and psychological needs of a pet for its lifetime. The MSPCA further believes that although there may be some natural characteristics and behaviors of some pet animals that can be disruptive, inconvenient, or even destructive, a responsible pet owner will adjust to these natural characteristics and behaviors and will socialize and train his or her pet so as to maintain a comfortable relationship that is beneficial to the pet and the pet owner.

The claws of a domestic cat serve a very useful purpose for the animal. The MSPCA believes that a declawed cat has been deprived of its normal defense mechanism and is left without protection. Declawing operations for non-medical purposes are performed solely for the convenience of the pet owner.

In addition, the surgical procedure of declawing a cat is not a minor procedure. The cat experiences pain in the recovery and healing period following surgery, and complications related to the surgery are not rare. Consequently, the MSPCA does not condone the declawing of cats for non-medical reasons.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Seek to educate the general public about the issue of declawing;
2. Refuse to adopt a "clawed" cat from its shelters to any person who intends to have the animal declawed;
3. Refuse to perform declawing surgeries in its hospitals for non-medical reasons; and
4. Consult with and offer suggestions to cat owners who are experiencing problems with cats that have become destructive with their claws. 2/86

(See also MSPCA Statement on Responsible Pet Ownership)

[Devocalization of Animals](#) -

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals opposes surgical veterinary procedures that are of no benefit to the animal. Such procedures cause animals unnecessary surgical risk and discomfort and are not a responsible approach to solving

behavior problems. The MSPCA therefore does not condone the devocalization of animals for non-medical purposes.

Surgical devocalization is an invasive procedure and may be followed by complications that necessitate further surgical intervention. Devocalization neither addresses the cause of the problem nor prevents vocalization behavior; the animal is still in a situation to which it responds by vocalizing and it will continue to make noise.

The MSPCA believes that a responsible pet owner chooses a pet carefully, taking into consideration that the natural behaviors of some pets can be disruptive, and being prepared to make personal adjustments if necessary in order to maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with the animal. The responsible owner is willing to socialize and train a pet that is vocalizing excessively, making every effort to determine and address the cause of the behavior.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Seek to educate the public about the issue of devocalization, and about socialization and training techniques that may be used in response to disruptive vocalization; and
2. Not perform devocalization surgery in its hospitals for non-medical purposes. 12/90

(See also MSPCA Statements on: Cosmetic Surgery in Animals and Responsible Pet Ownership)

[Euthanasia of Shelter Animals](#) - 

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes it is wrong to kill animals needlessly. However, because the number of lost or unwanted animals surrendered to animal shelters vastly exceeds the number of responsible people who are available to adopt them, the MSPCA believes that euthanasia is the only humane course of action for some of these animals.

When a pet owner no longer wants or can no longer keep an animal, the MSPCA believes that it is in the animal's best interest that a facility exist to which the owner can take the animal, where it will be cared for and placed in a responsible new home or, if necessary, humanely euthanized. Consequently, the Society believes that shelters should operate with a policy of unrestricted and undelayed admission.

In addition, in order to prevent the continued suffering of homeless animals, the MSPCA believes that animal shelters should conduct aggressively promoted adoption programs that place animals with adopters who are knowledgeable and capable of providing permanent, responsible and loving homes.

If an animal cannot be placed or must for some other reason be euthanized, the MSPCA believes that the physical and psychological stress experienced by the animal should be minimized. Providing a humane death requires a skilled technician as well as an appropriate technique, utilizing effective humane materials and equipment that are suitable for the species.

The MSPCA uses the reports of the American Veterinary Medical Association Panel on Euthanasia as a basis for decisions and recommendations regarding euthanasia materials and procedures. For euthanasia of shelter animals the MSPCA advocates the use of sodium pentobarbital, administered by trained personnel via intravenous or intraperitoneal injection. Intracardiac injection is acceptable only in cases in which an animal is anesthetized or unconscious. Under controlled circumstances, the use of carbon dioxide as a euthanasia agent is acceptable. The Society condemns the use of the high-altitude decompression chamber, electrocution, injectable paralytic agents, unfiltered and uncooled carbon monoxide, or drowning for euthanasia.

Therefore, in support of these beliefs the MSPCA will:

1. Strive to reduce the surplus of homeless animals by actively promoting responsible pet ownership, by making sterilization surgeries available and affordable to the public, and by working to develop other effective ways to address the overpopulation problem;
2. Conduct public education programs to increase awareness of pet overpopulation;
3. Operate animal shelters with an unrestricted and undelayed admission policy for unwanted animals;
4. Conduct an aggressively promoted adoption program in which potential adopters are screened with the goal of providing permanent, responsible, loving homes for as many adoptable animals as possible;
5. Euthanize animals when necessary using the most humane methods and materials available; and
6. Conduct an ongoing euthanasia training program for MSPCA shelter staff members that includes training in animal handling, euthanasia methods and materials, and in coping with the stress of performing euthanasia. 4/89

(See Also MSPCA Statements on: Pet Overpopulation and Responsible Pet Ownership)

[Factory Farming \(Intensive Husbandry Practices\)](#) - 

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that farm animals are creatures of intrinsic value, complexity and dignity. The MSPCA further

believes that billions of animals raised each year in the United States for food, clothing, and other products are entitled to live their lives free of unnecessary pain, suffering and stress, as well as to a humane death.

While the MSPCA recognizes the need to find economic and efficient means of raising livestock, the Society condemns those practices—many of which are associated with intensive confinement systems—that cause needless pain, suffering and stress to the animals involved.

Included are such practices as the use of crates and cages that either totally isolate individual animals from others of their species or crowd many animals uncomfortably together in order to save space and increase handling efficiency. Also included are the manipulation of diet in ways that interfere with the animal's good health, handling animals in stressful or injurious ways, surgeries performed without the appropriate use of anesthesia, surgeries performed on animals solely to prevent injuries resulting from confinement-induced stress, and selective breeding practices that produce characteristics that increase animal suffering.

The MSPCA believes, instead, that good animal husbandry should be based in humane stewardship of livestock. The Society believes the humane ethic should be applied to all farm animals in the following ways:

A. Housing

The MSPCA believes that animals in any livestock management systems should be kept in a safe and comfortable environment. They should have access to shelter from extremes of weather; protection from predators; adequately controlled indoor temperature, ventilation and light, a clean and sanitary environment; protection from equipment failure and fire; and housing and grouping appropriate to their behavioral and social needs.

The MSPCA believes that animals should have sufficient freedom of movement for major parts of their lives. At these times, they should not be prevented from turning around, grooming themselves, standing up, lying down, or stretching their limbs without difficulty.

The MSPCA believes that all livestock should be provided with a clean and comfortable ground or flooring surface and/or appropriate bedding to avoid stress and injury to their feet and legs.

The Society believes that confinement systems such as “veal crates,” “farrowing crates,” and “battery cages” designed for mass production of meat and eggs are cruel to and inhumane to the animals they house. The MSPCA believes such confinement systems restrict movement to such an extreme as to frustrate many of the most basic physical, behavioral and social needs of these animals.

The Society has no objection to the use of electric fencing to contain livestock. Properly installed and maintained, it is effective and humane.

B. Feeding

The MSPCA believes that diets fed to farm animals should be designed to maintain the animals in good health during all stages of its life. The Society is opposed to the practice of force-feeding healthy animals and believes that all animals should have regular access to appropriate fresh food and water throughout their lives.

In addition, the MSPCA has serious concerns about the large amounts of antibiotics, hormones and other drugs that are used to promote growth and/or inhibit the diseases caused by confinement-induced stress or diet-induced malnutrition.

C. Handling

The MSPCA believes that all farm animals should be treated humanely by workers trained to understand the behavior patterns of the animals in their care. All animals should be inspected frequently to minimize the risk of prolonged unnoticed suffering resulting from disease or injury.

When moving animals from one place to another, care should be taken to prevent stress, suffering and injury through the use of appropriate chutes, ramps and enclosures. When it is necessary to stimulate livestock to move, the Society accepts the use of devices such as flexible noisemakers or of properly constructed and maintained electric prods. Use of these devices should always be tempered by humane concern for the animals involved. Use of inappropriate tools such as pitchforks or misuse of other tools is inhumane.

D. Adaptive Surgery

The MSPCA supports adaptive surgery when it is in the best interest of the animal and when it is done at an appropriate age and through procedures designed to minimize pain and discomfort. Surgery should be performed only by persons with the skills and materials necessary to execute it properly. Anesthesia should be employed whenever appropriate to minimize pain and discomfort.

The MSPCA believes that surgical mutilation of farm animals when used exclusively to prevent injuries resulting from confinement-induced stress is cruel and inhumane.

For purposes of identification, the Society encourages the use of non-invasive, non-permanent means of identification such as neck chains and leg bands. The Society also accepts the use of ear tags, tattoos, and properly-inserted microchips. The MSPCA adamantly opposes hot branding of cattle or any other species for any reason and accepts the use of freeze branding as an alternative.

E. Breeding

The MSPCA recognizes the role of selective breeding in the raising of farm animals. However, the Society strongly opposes selective breeding for characteristics that result in pain or suffering to the animal.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Generate public awareness of current intensive farming practices and the problems caused by them;
2. Enforce existing laws on behalf of farm animals;
3. Inform the public of the need for stronger laws relating to the raising of farm animals;
4. Promote alternatives to intensive confinement systems; and
5. Provide information to consumers concerning sources of non-factory-farmed food.

[Furs](#) -

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes it is wrong to kill animals, whether they are wild-caught or captive-bred, solely for the purpose of producing fur garments and decorations. The Society believes that no valid justification exists for killing animals for their fur, since fur items are generally marketed and purchased solely as symbols of status and wealth and are unnecessary for meeting human needs.

These concerns are compounded by the cruel methods currently employed by the trapping and fur farming industries. The trapping of millions of wild animals each year causes immeasurable suffering to individual animals—of both target and non-target species—and contributes to the depletion of many species.

While trapping continues to be a source of furs, fur farming has become increasingly popular and now accounts for a major portion of the fur industry. Animals raised on fur farms are kept in severely restrictive confinement and usually slaughtered by inhumane means. These animals are also genetically manipulated to produce offspring with a desired color and hair length. This genetic manipulation often results in deafness, blindness and physical deformities.

The MSPCA believes that consumers, suppliers and advertisers of fur products share the responsibility for the needless suffering and death caused by the fur industry.

Therefore, the MSPCA will work toward eliminating the demand for and production of fur products by:

1. Attempting to change consumer attitudes through public awareness campaigns aimed at assigning a negative status to furs, and by informing the public of abuses inherent in the fur industry;
2. Actively discouraging the fashion, entertainment and advertising industries from promoting fur products; and
3. Working cooperatively with appropriate agencies to accomplish these goals. 7/87

(See also MSPCA Statement on Trapping)

[Genetic Engineering/Animal Patenting](#) - 🐾

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that all animals have intrinsic value and are capable of suffering, and the Society applies these beliefs when evaluating any industry or science that employs animals. Genetic engineering is a complex science whose benefits, hazards and consequences have not yet been fully explored. The MSPCA believes that while genetic engineering may result in some positive gains, experiments in genetic engineering also have the potential to increase animal suffering, diminish the diversity and perceived value of animal life, and alter the environment.

The MSPCA questions whether any individual, institution or corporation should be entitled to hold a patent on a complex form of animal life. While the MSPCA recognizes that certain individual animals can be legally owned, the Society questions whether any person, group of people, or institution should hold the right to own all members of an animal form or species—whether naturally occurring, created or altered through selective breeding or genetic engineering, or as yet uncreated.

Before the license to patent human-made life forms generates further experimentation, the MSPCA believes that Congress, the public, and industry need to address the following concerns:

1. As scientists work to create new, patentable life forms, the potential for animal suffering will increase. Generations of animals may suffer from deformities and temporary or chronic pain as victims of the trials and errors of genetic manipulation.
2. The license to create and patent new life forms may greatly increase animal experimentation for biomedical, agricultural and other purposes. Because the nature and outcome of such genetic experiments cannot be effectively predicted, regulations may not be able to keep pace.

3. It may be impossible to adequately address animal health-care issues resulting from genetic experimentation. The MSPCA believes that it is unethical to create a being for which adequate care cannot be assured.

4. Just as the introduction of patentable, genetically created plant forms led to a monopolized agriculture and loss of plant diversity, the creation of genetically altered, aggressively marketed animal forms could lead to a limited animal gene pool. No adequate safeguards exist to prevent monopolies in agribusiness or other industries from controlling available gene pools and phasing out competing natural forms of animal life. Such a loss of genetic diversity would have a serious negative impact on agriculture as well as adverse social, economic and ecological consequences.

5. Significant environmental hazards could occur as newly created life forms are introduced, intentionally or unintentionally, into the environment.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Support a moratorium on all patents granted on complex life forms until after the matter has been opened to full Congressional and public debate;
2. Generate public awareness of the serious ethical, social, economic, environmental and scientific implications of genetic engineering and animal patenting; and
3. Urge government study of genetic engineering and subsequent regulation of genetic-engineering practices. 5/89

Guard Dogs - 

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that although dogs have served humans in a variety of roles since their domestication, the role that provides the greatest opportunity for mutual benefit is that of pet or companion animal. The Society recognizes that dogs kept as companion animals often afford their owners a degree of protection that arises out of the animals' natural instinct to protect their territory and the individuals—animal or human—to whom they have bonded.

However, animals whose protective and aggressive behaviors are heightened and encouraged through aggression or attack training may become uncontrollable and dangerous, particularly in the hands of poorly trained or ill-prepared handlers. When guard or attack dogs cause injury due to inappropriate or accidental provocation of the aggressive behaviors that have been taught, both the animals and their victims suffer. Furthermore, the MSPCA believes that some of the methods employed in aggression or attack training are in and of themselves inhumane.

Because of these dangers and humane concerns, the MSPCA opposes the keeping of dogs solely as security animals and the keeping of aggression or attack-trained dogs, except in situations in which training is conducted in a humane fashion and handlers are well trained and maintain a pet-like bond with their dogs.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Seek to educate the public regarding the humane problems associated with the keeping of guard dogs; and
2. Refuse adoption of dogs in its care for use solely as guard dogs or for the purpose of aggression or attack training. 12/88

(See also MSPCA Statement on Responsible Pet Ownership)

Hunting - 

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes it is wrong to kill or to cause suffering to animals needlessly. The MSPCA is opposed to the hunting of any animal for sporting purposes because it subjects animals to stress, suffering, injury, and/or death solely for the entertainment of people. In addition, the MSPCA has serious concerns that cultural approval of sport hunting as an acceptable recreational activity may have the effect of desensitizing people, particularly the young, to the needless suffering and killing of animals.

Because of the suffering caused by hunting, the MSPCA does not condone its use as a wildlife management tool. The MSPCA recognizes that in some documented cases, humane and/or ecological considerations may necessitate the killing of wildlife. In those cases, this killing should be conducted by responsible officials, utilizing methods that will result in a humane death.

The MSPCA also recognizes that in some limited circumstances human subsistence may depend on the killing of wildlife. In such circumstances, the killing should be accomplished in a humane, legal, and non-wasteful manner, and should not involve threatened or endangered species.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Seek to sensitize the public regarding the ecological value of wildlife and the need for conservation and ecological stability of indigenous wild animal species;
2. Encourage and promote responsible wildlife management programs that ensure ethical stewardship of wildlife and the environment; and

3. Offer the assistance of its professional staff in an advisory capacity to governmental agencies and to the general public in matters relating to wildlife. 5/86

(See also MSPCA Statement on Wildlife Management)

Native and Exotic Wildlife as Pets - 

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that, for fundamental humane reasons that consider both the quality of life of individual animals and wildlife as species, native and exotic wild animals should not be kept as pets. The MSPCA is opposed to the capture of animals from the wild for this purpose and to any attempts to domesticate wild species.

Native and exotic wild animals, frequently acquired as novelty pets, are often subject to neglect and abuse. Unknowledgeable or ill-informed owners, animal dealers, and traffickers are frequently unprepared to provide for the animal's physical and behavioral needs, resulting in physiological and psychological trauma to the animal, and potential danger to people and other animals. In attempts to make these animals into pets, owners often deprive them of appropriate social interactions with other members of their species, surgically alter them so as to be more compatible with a human environment, and force them to live in confinement.

Further, the trafficking of native and exotic wildlife for the pet trade has seriously threatened the existence of many species in their natural state and caused immeasurable suffering in the capture, transport, and confinement of these animals.

The MSPCA recognizes that there are a number of native and exotic wild species that are bred in captivity and have, to some degree, become adapted to living with humans in a home environment. However, many of these same species continue to be captured from the wild for sale as pets, thereby perpetuating the abuses inherent in the trafficking of wild species. In addition, the MSPCA believes that interest in acquiring and keeping as pets animals that are generally perceived to be wild, exotic, unusual, or even dangerous—regardless of whether or not these animals are captive-bred—has encouraged and continues to provide a market for the trade in native and exotic wildlife.

The MSPCA believes that if a species of animal is to be kept as a pet, all of the following criteria should be met:

1. It should be domesticated, i.e., selectively bred over a long period of time;
2. It should be able to have its physical, behavioral, and social needs met in a home environment;

3. The species' physical and behavioral characteristics pose no serious danger to humans and/or other animals;
4. Its owner should be fully knowledgeable of the care required by the animal; and
5. Its status as a suitable pet does not increase the market for wild-caught members of the species and/or does not encourage attempts at domestication of currently non-domesticated species.

The MSPCA is opposed to the keeping of animals that do not meet the criteria listed above and will discourage the keeping of these animals as pets. The MSPCA further believes that individuals who sell any animals—particularly those not commonly kept as pets—or make these animals available for sale or adoption, have the responsibility to be knowledgeable concerning proper husbandry for the animals and to provide such knowledge and support information to prospective owners.

Therefore, the MSPCA will work towards the protection of native and exotic wildlife in both captive and natural settings by:

1. Advocating stricter controls on the trafficking, sale and ownership of native and exotic wild species;
2. Providing educational programs designed to encourage appreciation of wildlife and promote the preservation of species in the wild;
3. Acquainting owners or potential owners of these animals with the laws and humane considerations involved in keeping them as pets;
4. Providing medical assistance to those animals already owned in an effort to reduce suffering and potential disease transmission; and
5. Providing facilities for the humane disposition of unwanted, injured or orphaned native and exotic wildlife. 2/87

Outdoor Cats -

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that responsible cat owners protect their cats, other animals, the public, and the environment by keeping their cats controlled and properly supervised. Cats that are allowed to be outdoors unconfined and unsupervised are exposed to a variety of hazards that endanger their health and safety. The MSPCA has growing concerns about outdoor cats due to evidence of an increasing incidence of rabies in wild species and the small percentage of cats that are inoculated against rabies. Uncontrolled cats may also contract and spread other diseases and parasites, will breed if unsterilized, and may cause problems for wild

and domestic animals, the environment, and neighbors. In addition, since many animal shelters do not accept stray cats, there are limited opportunities for an owner to retrieve a cat that is lost.

The MSPCA believes that cats can be properly controlled and supervised by:

1. Keeping them indoors;
2. Walking or exercising them on a leash;
3. Keeping them within a secure, covered pen; and/or
4. Providing supervised outdoor activity during which the owner can control and protect the pet.

The MSPCA recognizes that some environments are not as dangerous as others for uncontrolled and unsupervised cats. In all circumstances, the MSPCA believes that responsible cat owners will use good judgement in deciding what level of supervision is necessary in order to protect their pets.

Therefore, the MSPCA will actively promote responsible control on the part of cat owners by:

1. Seeking to educate the public about the benefits of keeping cats properly supervised and about the hazards of allowing cats to be outdoors unsupervised; and
2. Counseling owners of all cats adopted from MSPCA shelters to keep their cats indoors, or properly supervised when outdoors. 12/88

(See also MSPCA Statement on Responsible Pet Ownership)

Pet Overpopulation -

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that it is inhumane to allow domestic animals to be born without consideration of their future well-being. The records of animal shelters operated by the MSPCA and by other animal protection organizations indicate that there is an enormous surplus of dogs and cats. This surplus results in the immeasurable suffering of animals for whom there are no responsible homes, and in the deaths of millions of unwanted dogs and cats in animal shelters every year. Because the pet overpopulation problem has reached crisis proportions, the MSPCA believes that responsible pet owners will take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that their dogs or cats do not add to this surplus.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Require that all pets adopted from MSPCA animal shelters be sterilized;
2. Advocate responsible animal control and sheltering laws that address pet overpopulation;
3. Conduct an ongoing public education campaign that draws attention to pet overpopulation as well as to possible solutions to the problem;
4. Provide low-cost sterilization services at MSPCA hospitals;
5. Encourage other agencies to develop low-cost sterilization programs; and
6. Study the root causes of pet overpopulation, collect animal population data, and monitor and evaluate the above-mentioned programs in order to develop additional ways of addressing the overpopulation problem. 12/88

(See also MSPCA Statements on: Animal Control and Responsible Pet Ownership)

[Pound Seizure](#) -

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that the basic purpose of an animal shelter is to provide a safe haven for stray and unwanted animals until those animals are placed in proper homes or humanely euthanized. The MSPCA further believes that the practice of releasing or selling impounded animals from public or private shelters to biomedical research and testing laboratories, training institutes, or any other facilities that use live animals for experimental teaching or testing serves to undermine that purpose. The MSPCA believes that making live shelter animals available to research facilities can create a climate of mistrust in pet owners who might rather abandon an animal than subject the animal to painful testing and research procedures.

Therefore, the MSPCA will seek to end the practice of mandatory or voluntary sale or release of impounded animals from shelters to biomedical research and testing laboratories, training institutes, or any other facilities that use live animals for experimental teaching or testing by working with other organizations to secure a nationwide prohibition of pound seizure. 11/85

(See also MSPCA Statements on: Animal Control and Animals in Biomedical Research and Testing)

[Proper Outdoor Shelter for Dogs](#) -

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that properly designed and maintained shelter is critical to ensuring the well-being of dogs and should be mandated by law.

While the MSPCA believes it is preferable for dog owners to share their homes with their pets, the Society recognizes that some owners maintain their dogs out of doors for extended periods of time on a regular basis. Among the factors that must be considered when determining what constitutes proper shelter for such animals, within the context of humane considerations and animal protection laws, are:

1. Weather conditions to which the dog may be exposed, such as direct sun, heat, cold, wind, rain, or snow;
2. The recognized ability of the dog's breed to accommodate weather extremes comfortably;
3. The length, density and condition of the dog's hair coat in terms of its ability to protect the animal from the cold during winter weather, and from discomfort during exposure to direct sun or high ambient temperatures;
4. The general health and overall physical condition of the animal—individual representatives of even the hardiest breeds will suffer from weather extremes when in poor health or physical condition;
5. The age of the animal—very young and very old dogs are especially likely to suffer from weather extremes; and
6. Acclimation—gradual acclimation is critical to ensuring that environmental changes are not accompanied by stress and suffering.

A proper outdoor shelter for a dog provides protection from cold, heat, wind, rain, and snow. Neither the materials nor the construction should pose a risk of injury to the animal. A sheltering structure should allow a dog to make normal postural adjustments—to stand, sit, turn around, and lie down—comfortably, but should be small enough so that the animal's body heat can warm the air space in cold weather. The entrance should be proportionate in size to the dog using it, and in cold weather it should be protected by a door or flap and should face in the opposite direction from the prevailing winds. The floor should be elevated several inches above the ground. Shelter surfaces that contact the animal should be impervious to moisture, and during colder months, adequate and appropriate dry bedding that can be replaced or cleaned should be provided.

During times of the year when the combination of strong sun and high temperatures may cause discomfort or may be dangerous for a dog, the animal's shelter should be located in a shaded area and should provide sufficient ventilation to keep the dog comfortable.

Because they cannot normally provide sufficient protection, the MSPCA considers porches open to the weather, crawlspaces, barrels, and motor vehicles to be inadequate as shelter for dogs.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Disseminate information to the public about the importance of providing pets with proper shelter; and
 2. Advocate and enforce animal protection laws that mandate proper shelter for dogs.
- 2/90

(See also MSPCA Statement on Responsible Pet Ownership)

[Responsible Pet Ownership](#) - 🐾

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that responsible pet owners protect the welfare of animals kept as pets, while at the same time ensuring that their pets do not impact negatively on other animals, the public, or the environment.

The MSPCA defines a responsible pet owner as one who:

1. Provides for the physical, behavioral, and psychological needs of a pet for its lifetime. These needs include, but are not limited to: preventative and curative medical care, adequate and sanitary housing, a nutritionally balanced diet, appropriate grooming, sufficient training to ensure the pet's safety and a comfortable lifestyle, companionship and attention, and adequate exercise;
2. Obeys the laws relating to animal care and control;
3. Is mindful of and does not contribute to the pet overpopulation problem; and
4. Will provide a humane and appropriate alternative for a pet if for any reason he or she can no longer keep the animal.

The MSPCA further believes that responsible pet owners will carry out these activities regardless of whether their pets are solely household companions or are also kept for working purposes.

Therefore, in order to enhance and protect the welfare of pet animals, the MSPCA will actively promote responsible pet ownership by:

1. Disseminating information to its members and the general public concerning the obligations and responsibilities of pet ownership;
 2. Enforcing animal protection laws and encouraging compliance with and enforcement of both animal protection and animal control laws;
 3. Providing facilities for the appropriate placement or humane euthanasia of unwanted pets;
 4. Implementing adoption policies at the Society's shelters that reflect a commitment to responsible pet ownership;
 5. Advocating and providing sterilization programs to control the pet population;
 6. Providing modern veterinary medical services for pet animals; and
 7. Developing and providing formal humane education and training programs concerning responsible pet ownership for children and adults 8/85
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[Retail Sale of Pets](#) -

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that the decision to acquire a pet is one that should be reached only after careful consideration is given to the commitment required to properly care for the animal. Because pet shops encourage impulse purchases of animals, most pets purchased in retail outlets are obtained without adequate thought being given to the costs or time demands of responsible pet ownership.

The MSPCA further believes that the "commercialization" of certain breeds and species by pet shops has caused animal suffering because of the overbreeding and the inhumane methods of raising, capture and transportation necessary to meet the retail outlets' demand for low-cost animals.

Through its investigations and inspections of retail pet shops, the MSPCA has found numerous problems in the housing, sanitation, feeding and care of pet store animals. The lack of training of store employees, lack of bonafide veterinary care programs, overcrowding of animals within cages and display areas, questionable euthanasia practices, and the mixing of healthy animals with sick animals lead to extremely inhumane conditions for the animals in many stores.

Because most retail pet stores foster and/or rely heavily on impulse buying, and are either incapable of or unwilling to undertake programs that screen prospective buyers and adequately meet the needs of animals, the MSPCA opposes the sale of all animals from these outlets except certain species of fish. Since pet shops may be the only accessible

outlets for the sale of captive-bred fish, the MSPCA does not oppose the sale of these fish as long as they are properly housed and cared for by responsible and knowledgeable personnel.

Therefore, as long as the sale of animals in retail pet stores is allowable under the law, the MSPCA will:

1. Continue, as agents of the Department of Food and Agriculture Division of Animal Health, to inspect pet stores and report violations of existing regulations to the Division;
2. Work to improve the regulations governing pet shops and strengthen the enforcement of these regulations by the Division of Animal Health;
3. Seek to educate the public about the problems associated with "pet store" animals and to discourage them from buying animals from these establishments;
4. Advocate restriction of the sale of animals by pet shops to those that were captive-bred and raised under humane conditions; and
5. Promote local animal shelters, humane societies, or reputable breeders as appropriate sources of companion animals for acquisition by responsible individuals. 5/87

(See also MSPCA Statement on Responsible Pet Ownership)

[Rodeos](#) -

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is opposed to rodeos because of the pain, suffering and torment animals often experience in the course of training for, transportation to, and performance in rodeo events. The MSPCA is also concerned that certain rodeo events involve high risk of animal injury.

The MSPCA rejects the contention of rodeo promoters that their events are proud reminders of the heritage of the American "Wild West." Rodeo calf roping, bronc busting, and steer wrestling are gross distortions of actual livestock handling practices. These contrived events elicit extremes of animal behavior with cruel and sometimes harmful harassment.

For example, in calf roping, steer roping, and steer wrestling, animals are often frightened and tormented by the use of electric prods, metal spurs, sharp wires, and other devices. In saddle bronc riding, bareback bronc riding, and bull riding events, contestants induce bucking with painful flank straps or bull straps. The MSPCA believes that such devices and activities cause animal suffering and constitute exploitation.

The MSPCA believes that the popularity of rodeos would be significantly diminished if the public was fully aware of the cruelty of rodeo practices. Much of rodeo's cruelty goes unnoticed by spectators, since the painful procedures by which animals are manipulated to assure their performance often are carried out in stalls away from the viewing public's attention. The public seldom sees rodeo practice and training sessions, where mistreatment of animals may exceed that of publicly viewed rodeos. Further, cruelty that occurs in full view of the public may not be apparent to those unfamiliar with normal livestock behavior.

The MSPCA also has serious concerns about the ways in which animals are transported from one rodeo location to the next. Animals are frequently transported for extended periods of time without being off-loaded. In addition, animals loaded, off-loaded, and moved from place to place under tight travel deadlines often experience additional stress.

The MSPCA believes that the cruel and violent entertainment represented by rodeos is unjustified and unnecessary. Further, the MSPCA believes that rodeos promote animal cruelty and diminish the value of all life.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Seek to increase public awareness of the cruelty of rodeo events and discourage organizations from sponsoring rodeos; and
2. Monitor rodeo events and actively prosecute those who violate anti-cruelty laws. 11/87

Trapping - 

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is opposed to all forms of animal trapping that cause pain or suffering, or are used for commercial or recreational purposes.

Devices such as leghold traps, Conibear traps, and snares inflict significant pain and trauma upon millions of animals annually, and pose a serious danger to non-target wildlife and pets.

Commercial and recreational trapping are conducted primarily to support the fur industry. The MSPCA believes that fur products are unnecessary for meeting human needs and that there is therefore no justification for the trapping and killing of animals for their fur. Further, the MSPCA opposes wildlife management programs that maintain populations of "harvestable" species for trapping.

The MSPCA recognizes that under certain circumstances it may be necessary to capture wild animals to remove them from danger, conduct a study that will benefit the animals, or remove the animals from a situation in which they pose a significant threat to humans,

other animals, or the environment. In these circumstances, animals should be captured using methods that have been proven both effective and humane.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Provide information to the public about the animal suffering caused by trapping;
2. Conduct public awareness campaigns aimed at eliminating the demand for fur products;
3. Work with the appropriate agencies to encourage strict enforcement of existing trapping laws; and
4. Advocate a ban on all types of pain-inflicting traps. 12/88

(See also MSPCA Statements on: Furs and Wildlife Management)

Use of Animals in Elementary and Secondary School

[Science Studies](#) - 🐾

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals recognizes that the study of the biological sciences is important to a comprehensive elementary and secondary science curriculum. Although these studies have traditionally included invasive, stressful, or consumptive procedures performed on animals to demonstrate various biological concepts, the MSPCA believes that it is unnecessary to use animals in this manner. The MSPCA believes that experiments of this kind are detrimental to the development of positive, responsible attitudes towards animal life. Therefore, the MSPCA is opposed to the use of any animal in a school-sponsored activity in a manner that would cause pain, stress, or suffering, or would in any way interfere with the normal health, behavior, development, or environment of that animal.

The MSPCA advocates the following:

1. Teachers should limit their use of live animals in the classroom or sanctioned extra-curricular activities to the observation of normal living patterns, behavior, development, and relation to the environment;
2. Teachers should utilize films, computer simulations, artificial models, etc., to teach those subjects that have traditionally involved dissection or other invasive or stressful procedures; and
3. Teachers should be aware of and sensitive to the ethical concerns surrounding animal experimentation and include this information in their curricula.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Advocate the prohibition of the use of animals in pre-university demonstration or experimentation;
2. Enforce existing laws that regulate the use of animals in elementary and secondary schools; and
3. Provide humane education programs and materials that promote ethical considerations and alternatives to the invasive use of animals in pre-university science studies. 11/86

(See also MSPCA Statements on: Classroom Animals and Animals in Biomedical Research and Testing)

[Use of Animals in Therapeutic Settings](#) - 

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals recognizes that animals have been introduced into a variety of settings in which the human/companion animal bond is utilized as part of therapeutic programs. The resulting programs have integrated pets and other animals into the care and treatment of many diverse populations. Unfortunately, the animals involved in some therapy programs are subjected to neglect, stress and/or abuse. While the MSPCA recognizes the existence and potential of the human/companion animal bond, the Society believes that animals used in therapeutic settings should not be adversely affected by the experience. The MSPCA also questions the utilitarian emphasis of some pet-facilitated therapy programs.

The MSPCA believes that if an animal is to be part of any type of therapeutic program, the following criteria must be met:

1. The animal involved should be a domestic pet animal (including horses) and should be suited—behaviorally, medically and temperamentally—for participation in the program;
2. Any dog or cat used in a therapeutic program should have a permanent owner who is responsible for meeting its needs, is familiar and comfortable with its temperament, and who monitors its behavior and treatment in the therapeutic setting. The MSPCA does not support the use of temporary shelter residents in pet-facilitated therapy programs, nor the maintenance of companion animals by institutions exclusively for visitation or in-house therapy programs. If horses, caged birds or fish are owned and kept by an institution, the standards of care outlined in the MSPCA's Statement of Belief on Responsible Pet Ownership should be applied to the care of these animals;
3. The therapeutic program must be well planned and professionally supervised. All staff should cooperate and support the animal's presence, and there should be a receptive and supportive client population;

4. The program should comply with any state or federal regulations that apply to an animal's presence within an institution, and due regard should be given to the health of all participants; and

5. The welfare of the animal involved should be of equal concern and considered as important as the welfare of the clients involved in the program.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Restrict the use of animals in MSPCA-sponsored visitation programs to those that are maintained by their permanent owners in responsible home environments, have been pre-screened for behavioral, temperamental and medical suitability for the programs, and are accompanied and monitored by their owners or a responsible handler in the therapeutic setting; and

2. Offer information and guidance to institutions and organizations that are involved with or that are planning to incorporate animals in a therapeutic program. 8/86

Wildlife—Human Conflicts - 🐾

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that all animals exist in a dynamic state of interdependence with their environment, and that no animal is inherently a "nuisance" or "pest" animal. However, because their habitats are increasingly altered or managed by humans, certain wild species—or individual animals—may, because of their number, natural behavior, or presence in an inappropriate location, pose a significant problem for or threat to humans, other animals, or the environment.

The MSPCA believes that before any measures are taken to control, translocate or destroy wild animals, a careful analysis of the animals' behavior, environment, and the specific problem or threat posed must be conducted. Humane wildlife control measures should be implemented only when it is found that:

1. The presence of the animal unavoidably endangers human life or unnaturally threatens other animal life, either by acting as a vector for disease or by directly causing serious injury or death; or

2. The presence of the animal—because of its behavior and/or number—causes an unnatural and harmful impact on the environment; or

3. The presence of the animal—because of its behavior and/or number—causes serious and unavoidable problems for humans.

If control measures are implemented, the effects of these actions on the environment and other animals should also be evaluated in order to ensure the appropriateness, humaneness and long-term effectiveness of the program.

The MSPCA believes that wildlife control programs should employ the most humane and least intrusive means for addressing wildlife problems. Programs employing preventative steps are most desirable. In most instances, the most effective approach to wildlife control is manipulation of the environment—by such means as removal of food sources or prohibiting access—rather than moving or destroying animals.

Therefore, in order to encourage an understanding and appreciation of wildlife, and to promote humane and effective responses to conflicts with wildlife, the MSPCA will:

1. Generate public awareness of wildlife behavior and of preventative measures that may be undertaken to avoid conflicts with wildlife;
2. Act as an educational and advisory resource to individuals and communities with wildlife questions or problems; and
3. Encourage federal and state wildlife agencies to develop comprehensive wildlife programs that specifically address prevention of and humane solutions to wildlife problems. 7/87

(See also MSPCA Statement on Wildlife Management)

Wildlife Management -

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that all animals exist in a dynamic state of interdependence with their environment. Because human beings have radically altered the environment, we have an ethical responsibility to restore and maintain equilibria in ecosystems. Wildlife management programs are a part of that responsibility, and should therefore be collaborative efforts involving the management of land, air, and water resources, human behavior and activity, and scientifically sound and humane animal husbandry.

The MSPCA believes that, historically, governmental wildlife agencies have served a narrow constituency made up of consumptive users of wildlife, and have therefore taken a very narrow view of wildlife management. Since the funding structure of wildlife management programs is generally based upon hunting licenses and other "user fees," the majority of the population, who are not consumptive users, have been effectively disenfranchised from participating in wildlife regulatory agencies. This system also has served to perpetuate questionable wildlife management programs which, under the pretense of conservation and ecological stability, often have as a primary goal the maintenance of a suitable population of "harvestable" game species.

The MSPCA believes that many consumptive uses of wildlife, such as trapping and sport hunting, cause suffering to animals, and therefore condemns their use as wildlife management tools. In addition, the MSPCA believes that wildlife management agencies have, to a large extent, ignored non-game species as well as habitat preservation issues.

Therefore, the MSPCA believes that a new wildlife management ethic should be established, funded, and practiced. The interdisciplinary facets of wildlife management programs should include:

1. Habitat protection and preservation;
2. The re-establishment of healthy, self-regulating ecosystems that do not require regular and constant killing of animals; and
3. Controls over human activities that adversely affect wild animals and the environment.

The MSPCA recognizes that, on occasion, an emergency situation arises in which human intervention is contemplated and/or necessary to protect wildlife, people or the environment. In those cases, responses from wildlife managers should focus on ensuring the humane handling and disposition of individual animals as well as on finding a long-term solution that is in the best interest of all affected people and ecological systems. If circumstances such as animal suffering necessitate the killing of wildlife, this killing should be conducted by responsible officials utilizing methods that will result in a humane death.

Therefore, the MSPCA will:

1. Seek to educate the general public regarding human responsibility for ethical stewardship of wildlife and the environment;
2. Work with governmental agencies to establish and maintain ethical wildlife management programs; and
3. Seek to broaden representation of non-consumptive users of wildlife in state and federal wildlife regulatory agencies. 12/86

[Wildlife Rehabilitation](#) -

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals makes no distinction between domestic and wild species in its concern for the relief of suffering and the prevention of cruelty to animals. When wild animals are orphaned or injured, the MSPCA believes that they should be afforded respect as individual creatures and that every effort should be made to minimize the stress and suffering these individuals experience during and as a result of captivity. The MSPCA further believes that both the

quality of life of the individual wild animals and the viability of their species are best served when these animals are permitted to live in their native environments. Consequently, the goal of wildlife rehabilitation programs should be successful reintroduction of affected animals to their natural habitats.

Rehabilitation attempts by personnel who are not comprehensively trained or are working with inappropriate equipment and/or in unsuitable facilities often result in unnecessary stress and suffering by wild animals and may create risks to the handlers. Furthermore, release of inappropriately conditioned or tame animals or release in unsuitable habitats may lead to further suffering and/or death for these animals. Finally, the rehabilitation or long-term maintenance of animals that are poor candidates for release often exposes the individual animals to unnecessary suffering and/or life-long captivity. Therefore, the MSPCA believes that handling and treatment of wild animals should only be attempted in rehabilitation facilities that provide the following:

1. Appropriately licensed staff who are knowledgeable in veterinary medicine, animal husbandry, zoonotic diseases, wildlife biology, animal handling, and wildlife behavior;
2. Equipment and housing suitable to the requirements of the species involved;
3. A humane and ecologically sound plan for release/reintroduction of rehabilitated animals;
4. A screening program for selecting candidates for rehabilitation based on the individual's ultimate potential for release;
5. Humane euthanasia for animals that are not good candidates for rehabilitation as well as those that, after physical rehabilitation, prove to be unreleaseable (except in those instances where an appropriate facility is available for humane, long-term care); and
6. Adherence to all state and federal laws concerning the handling and disposition of wild animals.

Generally speaking, the MSPCA believes that most animal shelters are ill-equipped—in terms of both staffing and facilities—to accommodate the complex needs and long-term rehabilitation of orphaned or injured wildlife. If these needs cannot be met, either through direct service or placement in the custody of those equipped to provide such services, humane considerations dictate that the animals be euthanized.

Therefore the MSPCA will:

1. Seek to educate the public about the needs of injured and orphaned wildlife in cooperation with wildlife organizations;
2. Develop and maintain a list of qualified wildlife rehabilitation specialists to whom injured or orphaned wildlife can be referred; and

3. Train MSPCA shelter personnel—through workshops, seminars, and in-house programs—in identification and emergency and/or short-term care of orphaned or injured wildlife, as well as in evaluation of individual animals’ potential for rehabilitation and release. 4/86

(See also MSPCA Statement on Zoological Parks and Aquaria)

Zoological Parks and Aquaria - 

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that, for fundamental humane reasons which consider both the quality of life of individual animals and wildlife as species, wild animals should be permitted to exist undisturbed in their native environments.

The MSPCA has serious concerns whenever wildlife is removed from native environments or bred in captivity for display in zoological parks or aquaria. These concerns include the possible effect on wild populations, the treatment of individual animals during capture and while in captivity, and the impact of the display on public attitudes toward animals.

Exhibitors generally acquire wildlife for commercial rather than conservation purposes. In such circumstances wild populations are reduced and healthy animals are confined for the sake of little more than theatrical enterprises. Furthermore, captive wildlife, by virtue of its confinement, generally suffers varying degrees of physiological and/or psychological deprivation, which can impact upon the animals’ general well-being. Finally, the learning experiences derived from viewing animals exhibited in environments that fail to preserve their natural behaviors and instincts may ultimately thwart achievement of wildlife protection on the broadest scale. The MSPCA finds such situations ethically objectionable.

The MSPCA believes that the only valid goal of zoological institutions is to promote and effect the preservation and welfare of wild animals in their natural habitat. In order to meet this goal, zoological institutions should follow rigid criteria, without which there is insufficient justification for their existence. Each institution should demonstrate that:

1. It actively advocates the preservation of habitats;
2. No animals are removed from wild habitats except for purposes necessary for species preservation;
3. It can ensure the health, safety, and well-being of the animals in its collection and preserve the animals’ instincts and behaviors by simulating their natural environments, including the maintenance of animals in appropriate social groups;

4. Animals are properly and humanely maintained by qualified personnel who have a knowledge of the animals' nutritional, environmental, medical and behavioral needs and who are dedicated to conservation and education goals;

5. Constructive education programs are conducted to stimulate a concern for the well-being of animals, sensitivity toward their needs, and an understanding of the role of wildlife in ecosystems;

6. Adequate financing is available to undertake its endeavors; and

7. The health and safety of the public and zoo personnel, as well as the animals, is protected.

Therefore, the MSPCA affirms its commitment to enhance the quality of life of captive wild animals by:

1. Providing medical and educational guidance to institutions where wild animals are confined;

2. Monitoring and addressing government regulatory activities that relate to the capture, confinement, and care of wild animals and the preservation of wild habitats;

3. Seeking the abolition of roadside menageries and sub-standard wildlife operations; and

4. Educating the public regarding issues relating to captive wildlife and the necessity of habitat preservation. 5/86