



**HUMANE
CERTIFIED**
A PROGRAM OF AMERICAN HUMANE

American Humane Certified™

Animal Welfare Certification for Zoos, Aquariums and Conservation Centers

For more than 140 years, the historic American Humane, the first national humane organization in the United States, has been at the forefront of virtually every significant animal welfare advance. Today, we are recognized as ***the largest certifier of animal welfare in the world***, verifying the humane treatment of animals on farms and ranches, in filmed media, and in zoos and aquariums, setting the standard for what humane means to approximately one billion animals annually.

At the foundation of each of our animal welfare certification programs is a Scientific Advisory Committee made up of the world's leading animal welfare experts, behaviorists and ethicists. Together, these groups of independent, third-party experts evaluate the latest animal welfare and behavior research to identify and define standards and best practices for the humane treatment of animals.

This commitment to science remains at the very core of existing certification programs, including the iconic ***No Animals Were Harmed***® animal welfare certification in the American Humane Hollywood program and ***American Humane Certified***™ farms certification in the American Humane Heartland program. Since 1940, American Humane has overseen the safety and humane treatment of animals in film and television production, monitoring some 100,000 animal actors on more than 1,000 sets each year with an extraordinarily high safety rate and, for more than 75 years, has been the gold standard for the proper use of animals in filmed media. The American Humane Certified™ farm animal welfare certification program is the nation's first, largest and fastest-growing independent third-party monitoring and audit program dedicated to the humane treatment of farm animals. Many of the world's largest producers, retailers, food services and major restaurant chains work with our program, including Unilever, Taco Bell, Peet's Coffee, Caribou Coffee, Einstein Bros. Bagels and Butterball turkey.

American Humane Certified™ program for zoos, aquariums, and conservation centers

In 2016, American Humane launched the world's first certification program dedicated solely to the welfare of animals in zoological institutions. This initiative verifies the welfare and well-being of animals in the world's zoos, aquariums and conservation centers utilizing the same foundation of science and evidence-based practices for which we are globally recognized. As the only certification program solely focused on animal welfare, American Humane Certified™ sets the global benchmark for verifying the humane treatment of animals in human care.

As the world's zoos, aquariums and conservation parks go about the invaluable work of preserving the extraordinary species with whom we share the world, increasing numbers of people are also rightly demanding that the welfare and treatment of these animals in human care be ensured and verified. Only 2.3 percent of these zoological institutions worldwide are currently accredited, and although industry accreditation programs provide general oversight covering facilities, management and the like, there has been no independent third-party certification effort solely devoted to the welfare of animals in their care – until now.

To fill this vital need, American Humane developed the first-ever independent, scientific and evidence-based third-party humane certification program focusing on the animals living in these institutions. Created and backed by the most well-respected, iconic names in science, animal welfare, and the conservation field, this certification program will help ensure the welfare and humane treatment of the animals in human care at the world's zoos, aquariums and conservation centers. Adding another level of rigor, the implementation of these comprehensive standards will be verified by independent auditors.

In the midst of what scientists have deemed the “Sixth Mass Extinction,” with species disappearing at a rapid rate, American Humane recognizes it is now more important than ever to educate the public that the work being done by today's leading zoological facilities and conservation parks is indeed humane and essential to the survival of these incredible species.

The Certification Process

The *American Humane Certified™* program for zoos and aquariums has two overarching components: the ***Pre-Audit Application*** and the ***On-Site Audit*** of a facility's animal collection.

Both the Pre-Audit and On-Site Audit are designed to apply to zoos, aquaria, nature centers, museums and conservation centers of any size.

1) Pre-Audit Application

The Pre-Audit Application is completed by an institution that is requesting consideration of American Humane Certification. The Pre-Audit Application allows the institution to provide detailed information related to the animal collection size and diversity, training and enrichment practices, record-keeping systems, veterinary care programs, emergency protocols, animal programs and more.

The Pre-Audit Application must be completed prior to any On-Site Audit of the animal collection of an organization.

2) On-Site Audit

Independent auditors evaluate the welfare of both individual and groups of animals. Extensive examinations based on core principles set the stage for the assessment, followed by a set of detailed questions aimed at confirming that the animals are not only in good condition physically and socially, but have good welfare overall. American Humane contracts with auditors who are expert in their field, independent from American Humane, and are not currently employed by a zoo or aquarium – allowing for a truly independent, third-party certification.

The American Humane Certified™ audit is **animal-centric** with the goal of confirming that good welfare and humane treatment is provided consistently to all animals in American Humane Certified™ zoos and aquariums.

Focusing on individual animals and small groups of animals, welfare indicators are designed to be species-specific and include metrics that are directly and indirectly measured. Direct information includes aspects of welfare that are observable or measurable in the animal(s) being assessed while indirect information is obtained from discussions with animal care staff and/or supervisors and from facility protocols and animal welfare records.

The standards and audit tools verify diverse aspects of animal welfare and humane treatment, including many indicators of well-being such as:

- Physical appearance
- Appropriate individual and group behaviors
- Positive Interactions between animals and their conspecifics and caretakers
- Ability to self-separate
- Physiological metrics
- Appropriate activity levels and use of spaces
- Disease & mortality
- Record-keeping practices
- Environmental parameters (lighting, shade, temperature, sound, etc.)
- Environmental, behavioral, and cognitive enrichment
- Staff knowledge & training
- Veterinary procedures
- Husbandry training
- Breeding programs
- Choices for animals to participate or not
- Safety measures for animals and the public
- Nutrition needs
- Food quality & safety protocols
- Consideration of diurnal and seasonal environmental patterns
- Veterinary health plans to recognize and treat adverse medical trends
- Handling of animals in educational and interactive programs
- Emergency protocols
- Training staff on animal interactions
- Use of positive reinforcement in husbandry and training
- Transparency and openness of daily operations & animal care

Core principles

In addition to examining the key indicators of animal welfare, American Humane's program is founded upon three essential, non-negotiable criteria that must be met for the audit to proceed. Significant weight is placed on these essential criteria which underlie the entire audit process. Failure to meet these non-negotiable requirements will result in failure of the audit.

1. No Observations of Animal Abuse

Observations of willful acts or signs of abuse will automatically result in failure of the audit.

2. Appropriate Health Plan and Implementation

A veterinary/health plan (i.e. preventive medical care) must be in effect. If a plan does not exist one should be developed and implemented prior to the On-Site Audit. Failure to provide such documentation and confirmation of a health plan will result in audit failure.

3. Staff Conduct that Promotes Animal Welfare

Staff must be aware of the facility's protocols and procedures and at all times must conduct themselves in a manner that promotes animal welfare.

American Humane Certified™ institutions are expected to maintain high welfare standards throughout the term of their certification. If it is determined after an audit that an American Humane Certified™ institution has fallen out of compliance, that institution will be immediately suspended from the program. Suspended institutions must verify correction of the non-conformances and pass a new audit before being reinstated. American Humane reserves the right to perform spot checks at any time during the certification term.