



CHAPTER 8D

SPECIES-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FISH GUIDELINES

- 8-26 American Humane Society's *Guidelines for the Safe Use of Animals in Filmed Media* apply to anyone bringing an animal to the set, including members of the cast or crew. For safety and efficiency, American Humane Society recommends that producers hire animal handlers experienced in motion picture production to supply all fish for production. However, if production chooses to obtain fish from private owners - including cast and crew - all requirements of the *Guidelines* must be implemented.
- a. Upon request, American Humane Society can supply additional information, such as the "Advisory: Care of Fish Goldfish Bowl and Aquarium Set-Up" and "Advisory: Using Fish and Marine Life in your Production". However, American Humane Society prefers that production hire professionals to ensure optimum care and safety.
- 8-26.1 Fish or other aquatic animals may not be harmed for filming purposes. Fish become stressed extremely easily, which can result in physical harm to them.
- 8-26.2 American Humane Society discourages the transport and temporary housing of shark species for filming. It has been our experience that there are too many unpredictable and difficult variables to control, including but not limited to water volume, water quality and acceptable time for acclimation to confidently guarantee their safety.
- 8-26.3 American Humane Society recommends that for filming of shark species, transportation should be limited or eliminated and species of sharks be allowed to remain in their present environment and filmed "documentary" style.
- 8-27 The use of live fish and the handling techniques employed must be approved, in advance, by American Humane Society.

- 8-28 Production shall use an expert knowledgeable in the type of fish being used. In certain situations, American Humane Society may give prior approval for other professionals, or a crew member knowledgeable in this area, to care for fish such as goldfish or simple aquariums. If prior approval is given, American Humane Society can supply producers with the “Care of Fish Goldfish Bowl and Aquarium Set-Up” and “Using Fish and Marine Life in your Production” advisories that can be distributed to appropriate crew members.
- 8-29 The water type and quality used in live wells, bowls and aquariums for filming must be appropriate for the species of fish being used (e.g., temperature, clarity, oxygenation, salinity and pH), and adequate water acclimation time must be provided.
- 8-30 The hooking of a fish is NOT condoned for the purposes of filming. Fishing scenes should be simulated. Call American Humane Society for recommendations and prior approval.
- 8-31 At no time shall any stringer, line or other device be placed through the mouth, gills or any other body part of a fish.
- 8-32 Fishing scenes must be simulated with dead fish, animatronics or methods other than using live fish.
- 8-33 When using dead fish, see *Guidelines* 1-17 through 1-20.
- 8-34 Approval must be obtained from American Humane Society prior to the release of fish. American Humane Society must receive documentation certifying the source of the fish being released, to ensure genetic quality and survivability in the wild. Appropriate habitat and water quality must be specified and documented to American Humane Society (When releasing fish, see the *Wildlife Guidelines* at the end of this Chapter).
- 8-35 Fish and other aquatic animals must be maintained in containers or tanks suitable for their species and must receive adequate and appropriate care, including aeration, temperature regulation and regular feeding. If the tank was set up by a professional, that company/expert should be on call, and the company’s/expert’s name should be provided to American Humane Society. The most popular hardy marine fish are damselfish and clownfish. In freshwater tanks, goldfish, barbs, platys, swordtails, danios and cichlids are recommended.
- 8-36 For the handling of saltwater fish, or the setting up and maintenance of saltwater aquariums, production shall use an expert knowledgeable in the specific types of fish being used.
- 8-37 To ensure the health and safety of fish in containers such as aquariums, a backup plan, including an auxiliary power source, shall be in place in the event of an electrical failure.
- a. Surge protectors shall be used at all times.
 - b. When fish are left alone overnight in aquariums or other containers used as props or set dressing, production must ensure that the water temperature remains within ambient limits for the species of fish being used.
 - c. Fish such as goldfish housed in containers without aeration should not

- be placed near a heat source or in direct sunlight.
- d. Artificial lighting near fish should be turned off between takes and when not filming to ensure that the water temperature of fish containers does not overheat, jeopardizing the health and welfare of the fish.
- 8-38 When fish or other aquatic animals are purchased live for a scene and later returned to the seller, receipts showing both the purchase and the safe return must be provided to American Humane Society.
- 8-39 See Chapter 1 of these *Guidelines* when live fish or other aquatic animals are purchased for a scene and later returned or adopted.
- 8-40 **Fish Out of Water:** Advance approval from American Humane Society is required should a scene call for a fish to be out of water. An expert knowledgeable in the specific type of fish shall be present to assist in determining how to structure the scene without harm to the fish. Consideration must be given to the species that are most tolerant of this activity (e.g., catfish, carp, perch, bowfin, lungfish, mudskipper and tarpon). Other types of fish, such as trout and salmon, are more sensitive, and American Humane Society should be consulted before filming. A fish may not be out of water longer than 30 seconds without prior approval from American Humane Society. Fish must be rotated so that none are used twice in a row, and no fish may be used more than three times in one day.
- 8-41 **Handling Fish:** Advance approval from American Humane Society is required should a scene call for a fish to be handled either by hands or by mechanical means, such as nets. Only fine-mesh nets may be used, to prevent damage to the fish. Possible stress from handling is dependent on numerous environmental factors, as well as the species of fish. Special consideration must be given to the species most tolerant of handling (e.g., bowfin, lungfish, mudskipper, perch). It is recommended that only fish with cycloid scales be handled. The oils, salts and heat in human skin can be toxic to fish; therefore, the hands of the person handling the fish must be clean and free of contaminants prior to filming and must be wet at all times when handling fish. Any use of fishing line, fishing nets and Boga Grips™ shall be approved, in advance, by American Humane Society. An expert knowledgeable in the specific type of fish shall be present to assist in determining how to structure the scene without harm to the fish.