

## **Hunting, catching and fishing of animals in captivity, and release of reared animals in to the wild for hunting/angling**

Statement submitted October 2005

### **Summary**

The Council for Animal Ethics has, on request from the Norwegian Food Control Authorities, evaluated whether it is ethically acceptable to 1) arrange angling of reared fish and caught wild fish kept in nets, and hunting of mammals in captivity, and 2) to release reared animals (mammals, birds, and fish) into the wild for the purpose of hunting and catching.

The Council believes that the strain inflicted on an animal must be weighed against that benefit this has to humans. The use animals for recreational purposes or for excitement cannot be considered of vital importance to humans. Therefore, the Council has emphasised the consideration for the animals and animal welfare in this evaluation. The Council believes that animals should be kept in a manner that ensures good animal welfare and that they should be killed in an as humane way as possible.

The Council has evaluated animal welfare in the following situations: 1) catching of wild animals 2) captivity 3) hunting/fishing in closed systems 4) release of reared animals into the wild for the purpose of hunting/fishing. The Council expresses concern for animal welfare standards during catching and restitution of wild animals including fish that are caught in the wild and placed in cages, enclosures or nets. The concern includes conditions for the animals in captivity, especially when it is desirable that the animal maintains its natural fear of humans.

On principal ethical grounds the Council is sceptical to a practice where animals are released into confined areas for the purpose of hunting/fishing. The majority of the Council members believe that such practices can be acceptable if the total strain inflicted on the animals before, during and after the hunting/fishing is less than would be the case in the alternative use of the animal (se separate statement by the minority).

Businesses that offer angling in nets and enclosures do not rely on using fish caught in the wild because they can use farmed fish. The majority of Council members believe that, in general, angling in a closed system is acceptable in certain conditions: the fish must be provided with good living conditions including sufficient space, acceptable water quality, suitable feed and a good environment that is as close as possible the natural biotope. Equipment used for angling must be dimensioned in such a way that the fish may be brought to the surface without delay. Further, the fish must be rendered unconscious/killed immediately by a competent person after it is brought to the surface. In total, the fish must be subjected to less strain that would have been the case in a normal rearing and slaughter situation.

The Council believes that hunting in enclosures is unacceptable, and supports continuation of the present ban.

The Council further believes that from an animal welfare perspective it may be questionable to release reared game and fish into the wild. This also applies to situations where it seems ethically appropriate, such as for conservation of endangered species. Considerations of animal welfare should be thoroughly evaluated and accounted for in advance, and the rearing

environment must ensure good animal welfare and health as well as prepare the animals for a life in the free, including the winter season. This means that certain species must be ruled out and it sets high expectations to the standard of rearing conditions. The Council believes that it is doubtful whether recently released animals may be considered as wild. Hunting should be prohibited in the same period (same year) that the game are being cared for after release.