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19 December 2012

Update for AEC members from the Chair of NAEAC

Dear AEC members

NAEAC has had a busy year including seven code reviews at our October meeting and culminating in a very successful AEC Workshop on 16 November.

Issues of interest that have arisen since my last newsletter in July include:

1. Capture and release of exotic birds

Resolution of a longstanding search for answers about the capture and release of exotic birds (See newsletters 1 and 2). The following is the opinion received from DOC:

In response to your enquiry...

- *Authorisation is required to capture, possess, and liberate species, including unprotected species on Schedule 5. NOTE - I have assumed they are on schedule 5 but they may not be - some exotic birds are on other schedules (e.g. some game birds such as mallards). They should check, as there may be different requirements.*
- *There is no "prohibition on release of exotic birds" - there is a requirement to be authorised.*
- *The key objective of the Wildlife Act is to protect wildlife - controlling the capture and movement of wildlife (including unprotected exotic species) is presumably one of the methods used to achieve that objective. For example, there may be issues of spread of an exotic species that is a pest, or could harbour/spread disease, or just its spread into new environments.*
- *NAEAC is wrong in assuming that "the prohibition on release of exotic birds applies to new introductions rather than to those that are already here". New introductions may present higher risk profiles and therefore require tighter oversight/control than existing populations but the s 56 requirement for authorisation is the same for both new introductions and existing populations.*
- *However this requirement doesn't have to be a massive bureaucratic hurdle - in the research situation that you are outlining, if technical advice is that there is little risk to the purposes of the Wildlife Act being fulfilled by this activity being authorised they may be able to get authorisation simply through an email or letter.*
- *The importance of regulating liberation to control the release of exotic species into new environments is reflected by the difference in delegations required to authorise such activity.*

Delegations required to authorise capture or liberating:

General Manager Operations; Conservator, Technical Support Manager.

* TSM may not authorise if the species is listed in the NZ Threat Classification System

* GMO would need to authorise if the species was to be liberated in a location where it does not already exist.

The logo for NZAVS (New Zealand Association of Veterinarians) is located in the bottom right corner. It features the letters 'NZAVS' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'Z' is stylized with a large, upward-pointing arrow integrated into its right side. The text is colored in a reddish-pink hue.

As noted on the letter you sent over, they will need to get authorisation to both capture and release from DOC. AEC research authorisation does not give this, so researchers should in the first instance contact the DOC conservancy office where they want to capture and release the birds.

2. How decisions are made

AECs choose the way they make decisions, but NAEAC has become aware that there is some confusion around the terminology used. NAEAC takes the term "consensus" to imply a shared view where no voting takes place, while decisions by majority or unanimity are reached through a vote.

3. Animal Welfare Act review

NAEAC has been closely involved with the Act review, both within and outside the submission process. We are satisfied that our concerns have been listened to and understood, although what the final outcome will be is unknown. We understand that the Minister will be discussing the paper with Cabinet shortly, but that no announcements will be made until the New Year.

4. Lord Dowding Fund

A reminder that applications for a grant of \$20,000 (plus GST if any) from the New Zealand Fund for Humane Research (Lord Dowding Fund) need to be made by 30 April, 2013. Details of this were sent to you on the 5th November by NAEAC Secretary, Paula Lemow. In brief, the grant will be for research that will contribute to the replacement or reduction of the use of animals in research, testing or teaching, but will not itself involve the use of any animals or animal tissue.

5. AEC Workshop

NAEAC is very pleased with the feedback received following the workshop for AEC members held in Wellington on 16 November. While numbers were down a little (a sign of the economic situation?), two thirds of AECs were represented. Some of the comments from attendees demonstrate the value of these events:

- *"It is useful to step out of the busy workplace and consider the ethical responsibilities in isolation"*.
- *"Excellent blend of review and extension of ideas"*.
- *"Good to step back and consider some of the bigger issues"*.
- *"Beneficial to learn how other AECs work with their scientists and problems"*.
- *"I had a wonderful time, met some great people and it has helped me with my understanding of AECs, and how and why they are run"*.

6. Sharing of information

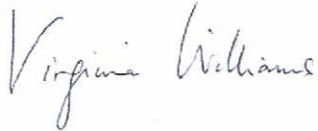
One of the sessions held at the AEC Workshop was on the benefits of sharing of information between AECs, particularly in relation to codes of ethical conduct (CECs) and standard operating procedures (SOPs). NAEAC is very supportive of this kind of activity and is happy to host a depository for such documents on its website within the Ministry for Primary Industries website. If you have CECs or SOPs that you think might prove useful to others and are happy to share them, please could you send them to NAEAC Secretary, Paula Lemow (Paula.Lemow@mpi.govt.nz). They can be specified as coming from a particular institution, or placed anonymously.

7. Wikipedia

One of NAEAC's objectives is to increase awareness of how the use of animals in research, testing and teaching is regulated in New Zealand. To this end, and being mindful of the overriding importance of digital as opposed to paper communication, NAEAC set up a page explaining our legislation on Wikipedia. You can find this at:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regulation of Animal Research in New Zealand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regulation_of_Animal_Research_in_New_Zealand)

Kind Regards



V Williams
NAEAC Chair

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