Unit 20: Exotics and the Pet Trade

Unit code: F/503/1722
QCF level: 4
Credit value: 15

• **Aim**

This unit aims to develop learner understanding of the range of exotic species available through the pet trade. Learners will research comparative biology and husbandry of commonly encountered exotic groups and review wider issues of conservation in relation to the exotic pet trade.

• **Unit abstract**

The market for exotic pets has increased in recent years with a greater variety of exotic species seen in the UK. This unit introduces learners to the wide range of available exotic pets. Learners will increase their understanding of the comparative biology of the different groups of exotic species, in relation to vertebrate class, and develop the knowledge and skills needed to manage a wide range of exotic species at a supervisory level.

The unit provides a focus on the global and economic importance of the exotic pet trade and the implications of this for conservation. Learners will explore the ethical sourcing and management of exotic species, the work of international animal welfare organisations and the importance, and impact, of current legislation in relation to exotic animal species.

• **Learning outcomes**

**On successful completion of this unit a learner will:**

1. Understand the comparative biology of a range of captive exotic animals
2. Understand the comparative husbandry of a range of captive exotic animals
3. Understand the economic significance and implications of local and global trade in exotic animals
4. Be able to review wider issues of conservation in relation to the exotic pet trade.
Unit content

1 Understand the comparative biology of a range of captive exotic animals

*Physiology*: comparative physiology of specified exotics from each vertebrate class (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish); representative species
*Nutrition and dietary requirements*: comparative nutritional requirements of specified species from each vertebrate class
*Reproduction*: comparative reproductive biology and strategies of specified exotics from each vertebrate class
*Behaviour*: comparative captive behaviour of specified exotics from each vertebrate class

2 Understand the comparative husbandry of range of captive exotic animals

*Housing design*: comparative housing designs for a range of captive exotics from each vertebrate class (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish); enrichment; duty of care; five needs
*Food and feeding regimes*: comparison of provision, presentation and feeding regimes for a range of captive exotics from each vertebrate class
*Breeding regimes*: comparative breeding regimes for a range of captive exotics from each vertebrate class
*Captive behaviour*: comparable behaviour of exotic species from each vertebrate class; captive and natural behaviour; duty of care

3 Understand the economic significance and implications of local and global trade in exotic animals

*Global trade*: sources of live exotics; significance of the global trade in live exotics
*Supply and demand*: pressure of supply and demand on the distribution chain of live exotic species; import; export; wild populations; captive breeding; retail sector
*Retail outlets*: shift from traditional pet species to exotic species; significance of shift; implications for retail outlets
*Implications for welfare and veterinary care*: implications for welfare organisations and veterinary care in the change of emphasis from traditional pet animals to exotic species
4 Be able to review wider issues of conservation in relation to the exotic pet trade

Conservation and public opinion: conservation movements and strategies for exotic animals; public opinion in relation to the trade in live exotic species

International welfare: legislation specific to exotic species, implications and effectiveness of legislation in controlling the trade in specified exotic groups; role of international welfare organisations

Captive breeding: significance and limitations of captive breeding as a conservation measure

Global and local conservation: global and local conservation strategies, role of the individual within local and global conservation
## Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

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| LO1 Understand the comparative biology of a range of captive exotic animals | 1.1 examine the physiology of specified exotics from each vertebrate class citing representative species  
1.2 compare the nutritional and dietary requirements of specified exotics from each vertebrate class  
1.3 compare the reproduction of specified exotics from each vertebrate class  
1.4 compare aspects of the captive behaviour of specified exotics from each vertebrate class |
| LO2 Understand the comparative husbandry of a range of captive exotic animals | 2.1 evaluate housing design for a range of captive exotics from each vertebrate class  
2.2 compare the provision of food and feeding regimes for a range of captive exotics  
2.3 evaluate breeding regimes for a range of captive exotics |
| LO3 Understand the economic significance and implications of local and global trade in exotic animals | 3.1 examine the sources and significance of the global trade in live exotics  
3.2 discuss the relative pressure of supply and demand on live exotic trade and the distribution chain  
3.3 explain the implications for retail outlets in the change of demand from traditional pet animals to exotics species  
3.4 discuss the implications for welfare organisations and veterinary care of the change of emphasis from traditional pet animals to exotics species |
| LO4 Be able to review wider issues of conservation in relation to the exotic pet trade | 4.1 review the role of the conservation movement and public opinion in relation to international live animal trade  
4.2 review the role of international welfare organisations and legislative controls on the trade in specified exotic groups  
4.3 review the significance and limitations of captive breeding programmes as a conservation measure  
4.4 discuss the role of the individual in global and local conservation of exotic species |
Guidance

Links

This unit is closely linked with Unit 2: Animal Husbandry Management, Unit 16: Management of Animal Collections, Unit 21: Aquatics and Fishkeeping and Unit 24: Natural History of Exotic Mammals.

Essential requirements

It is essential that the theoretical knowledge relating to the management and husbandry of captive exotic species is supported and underpinned with regular access to a wide range of species from each vertebrate class (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish). If this is not possible within the centre, regular visits to establishments housing captive exotics are essential. Whichever option is selected, learners must have regular access to a variety of exotic animal species and associated husbandry equipment to develop their practical confidence and competence.

They will also need access to articles, journals and periodicals to support and develop their research and independent study skills.

Animal welfare requirements must be paramount at all times. Animals must not be subjected to stress or overuse during delivery of this unit. Learners must be equipped with the relevant personal protective equipment (PPE) and trained in the safety and hygiene requirements for working closely with animals.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Employer engagement, and the use of expert speakers, could enhance the delivery of this unit, enabling learners to gain information and experiences from professionals within the field. Guest speakers from conservation and welfare organisations could be approached to give talks about their work and the impact and effectiveness of conservation efforts to preserve wild exotic populations. Veterinary surgeons and exotic experts could enhance the learning experience in relation to the physiology of exotic animals and the associated husbandry.

Learners would benefit from visiting a range of animal collections housing a variety of exotic species, ideally to carry out practical husbandry tasks for species they do not have regular access to. Learners would also benefit from membership to exotic animal welfare, professional and conservation organisations.