



Casela
Nature Parks

Animal welfare pledge



Animals are living, sentient beings and therefore deserve our consideration and respect. As humans, we must understand that we inhabit this planet with other species and other forms of life.

All forms of life co-exist within an interdependent ecosystem.

Since the foundation of Casela, 44 years ago, in 1979, we consider the environment our residents live in, as a critical aspect of their care.

Therefore, we design habitats to suit each species' specific needs, taking into consideration everything we know about that species' biology, behavior, and ecology to create appropriate enrichment opportunities.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO ANIMAL WELFARE

What is animal welfare?

According to World Animal Protection, animal welfare is defined by the quality of life experienced by an animal. It encompasses how the animal is coping with its current situation and surroundings. Animal welfare includes animal health, that is, both the physical and psychological state of the animal.

Good practices in animal welfare can also have major benefits for humans and the environment.

What are the aspects of animal welfare we commit to?

We commit to the Five Freedoms of animal welfare under human control to guide every decision and action we take:

THE FIVE FREEDOMS

01

Freedom from pain, injuries, and disease

Via the prevention or rapid diagnosis of any issues, from an experienced veterinary who provides medical care to the animals.

02

Freedom from discomfort

By providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area

03

Freedom from hunger and thirst

By ensuring ready access to fresh water and a balanced diet to maintain each animal's full health and vigour

04

Freedom to express normal behaviour

By providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind

05

Freedom from fear and distress

By ensuring conditions and treatment that avoid mental suffering

Which international animal welfare guidelines do we adhere to?

In our daily operations and procedures, we establish goals and strategies as recommended by WAZA (World Association of Zoos and Aquariums) and PAAZA (Pan- African Association of Zoos and Aquariums).

PAAZA, the African panel of WAZA, helps African zoos and aquaria to become effective and credible centres of animal welfare, conservation, education and research.

Who is responsible for animal welfare at Casela Nature Park?

Animal welfare is a major concern and core commitment for every Casela team member. However, we also have a team of 34 passionate, skilled and dedicated men and women in our zoology department, established in 2014, who care for our animals on a daily basis.

How does the zoology department deliver on these animal welfare guidelines?

The zoology department ensures animal welfare in a wide variety of ways. These include the regular cleaning of enclosures, checking animal health, food distribution (twice daily) and general enclosure checks and maintenance. We also have enrichment programmes to keep animals entertained and playful such as crafting fruit garlands for the birds to eat, making sherbets for the monkeys from cut up fruit that is placed in cups then frozen, and stacking leaves for nest making.

How do we engage with our visitors and raise awareness?

Every day, our zoology team runs animal-visitor interactions, education activities such as awareness talks, zookeeper programmes for children, guided tours and themed workshops (biodiversity, animal classification) among other engagement activities.

What do the big cat interactions – with lions, cheetahs and caracals – entail?

With the utmost care and respect, our team has crafted meaningful experiences to enable visitors to learn more about the big cats, including their behaviour and habitats, and to connect with these majestic animals . These experiences range from encounters such as walking with lion and interactions with cheetah, caracal, and serval to feeding the lions and a drive-thru to see tigers and lions in their natural habitat. None of the big cats are forced to interact with humans. They only allow visitors to be in proximity to them when accompanied by their animal carers whom they trust and grew up with.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO CONSERVATION

As conservationists, our mission is to accommodate human activity while protecting diversity (individuals, species, populations, ecosystems) and the ecological functions and processes that maintain that diversity.

Our goal is to have a positive impact on the wildlife of Mauritius and other countries.

We believe that thoughtful practices and careful planning, as well as awareness-raising through edutainment (education and entertainment), can help mitigate human influence on species and ecosystems.

Our commitment to conservation is led by clear objectives that are shared throughout the organisation and drive our daily actions:

- Objective 1: To become a reputed “zoo for plants” and arboretum in Mauritius.
- Objective 2: To strengthen collaboration with key stakeholders including National Parks and Conservation Services (NPCS) and Livestock Veterinary Division (LVD) to have positive impact on wildlife in Mauritius and abroad.

Some of our current actions:

- We have introduced nearly 300 individual plants (representing 52 different species) in areas across Casela as part of our conservation efforts.
- We are collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Food and Agricultural Research Extension Institute (FAREI) to set up a herd of Creole cattle for conservation, research and awareness purposes.
- We raise awareness of endangered species by spreading conservation success stories, such as that of the Southern White Rhino, a story we talk about in our guided safari tours and during our rhino interaction activity.
- We are setting up a habitat restoration project for the endemic lizard *phelsuma guimbeau*