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Hong Kong Wetlands Conservation Association's recommendations on
Proposals to Enhance Animal Welfare in Hong Kong

Hong Kong Wetlands Conservation Association fully supports introducing 'Duty of Care' and specifying that the release of an animal into an unsuitable environment, which causes suffering, is an act of cruelty to animals. Such act will not only cause suffering to the released animals, but also would potentially affect the native wildlife through competition, predation, disease transmission and in turn cause suffering to them.



The release of market animals into the wild is considered to be one of the major pathways of invasive alien species introduction in Hong Kong (Dudgeon and Corlett, 2004). It has been estimated that 680,000 to 1,050,000 birds are released in Hong Kong every year (Chan, 2006).

For the Codes of Practice promulgated to complement the duty of Care, these should also include wild species commonly used in mercy release because the welfare of the animals concerned often is not a key consideration by the involved parties. Tightening this aspect can help reduce the release of market animals, the associated suffering and the impacts. This can also help to draw attention on the many negative impacts associated with mercy release.

References

- Chan, S.W. (2006) Religious release of birds in Hong Kong. M.Phil. thesis. Department of Ecology and Biodiversity, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.
- Dudgeon, D. and R.T. Corlett (2004) The Ecology and Biodiversity of Hong Kong. Friends of the Country Parks & Joint Publishing (HK) Company Ltd., Hong Kong.