



SPCA GUIDE - The Fishing Industry

Issued by the

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SPCAS

PO Box 1320, ALBERTON 1450

Telephone: (011) 907-3590 - Fax: (011) 907-4013

E-mail: nspca@nspca.co.za – Web:
www.nspca.co.za



THE FIVE FREEDOMS

- Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition
- Freedom from discomfort
- Freedom from pain, injury and disease
- Freedom to express normal behaviour
- Freedom from fear and distress

DO FISH FEEL PAIN?

All animals possessing a nervous system and pain receptors are capable of suffering the effects of pain.

Research found that fish hooked by anglers could experience pain – Carp hooked on a tight line were prepared to starve themselves of food for quite some time afterwards to avoid the painful experience.

Fish and mammals share important brain functions, including responses to pain killers.

Prolonged periods of stress can cause negative changes in the immune system, making fish vulnerable to disease.

In Human Terms: Can humans breathe underwater naturally? No, one will drown, consciously aware of what is happening, fear, distress will set in and pain in your chest will occur – this is the same for fish.

FISH ON FARMS – Cruel and unhealthy

Farms are overcrowded and the unnatural environment greatly increases stress levels. Around 50 000 Salmon are found in cages in Fish Farms and Trout are found to be in even more crowded conditions.

Such unnaturally high stocking densities also render the fish highly susceptible to disease – Sea lice, furunculosis and pancreas disease, Lice infestation is a devastating condition that flourishes in farm cages, literally eating the fish alive.

Humane Alternative: Consumer demand for fish obtained from certified healthy farms with low stocking densities.

FARMED FISH ARE ARTIFICIALLY BRED

Before female fish are anaesthetised for egg extraction, their abdomen is palpitated to see if the egg mass is free. This is done with physical handling

and is therefore highly stressful and can occur several times before extraction.

In Human Terms: Think of a pregnant women suddenly being poked and pressed without being prepared for the examination.

Eggs are stripped either by hand or compressed air is introduced into the body cavity with a needle. Sometimes the ovaries are removed surgically.

Most females are killed after their eggs have been stripped. The breeding females are treated as production machines. Male fish are also “milked” several times for their semen before slaughter.

Humane Alternative: Healthy breeding stock with natural conception and egg laying process to be implemented – Consumer demand.

FISH ARE GENETICALLY MODIFIED

Researchers are developing genetic engineering techniques in an attempt to produce fish that can grow larger and faster and to make farming systems more effective despite the abnormal environment. These techniques are highly experimental and will result in lots of failures, pain and suffering for the fish involved.

Sex reversal – Used to produce batches of all female fish that will mature later than males. Sexually mature fish undergo changes that can reduce flesh quality.

Triploid – Often used in conjunction with sex reversal to produce sterile all female fish that show increased feed efficiency.

These genetic manipulation techniques have an effect on the health and welfare of the fish e.g. Spinal deformities, fish are less able to absorb oxygen, less able to cope with stressful situations and have lower survival rates.

Humane alternatives: No invasive genetic modification should be necessary;

FISH ARE TRANSPORTED LIVE

Fish are transported live via methods such as a designed tank slung below a helicopter, by road and by sea with well-boats before transport. Fish are deprived of food for 48 hours or more to reduce faecal contamination and slows down their metabolism to reduce oxygen consumption. Movement and transfer can be frightening and causes considerable stress and major losses occur in farmed trout as a result of accidental oxygen deprivation.

Juveniles, salmon and trout are transported live from hatcheries to a rearing farm or for slaughter. They are transferred to and from transport containers by vacuum pumps or by hand with nets. This results in stress and injuries.

Humane transfer in the form of natural flow of water to and from the holding facility to the vehicle and vice versa is an alternative option.

FARMED FISH ARE KILLED WITHOUT



PRIOR STUNNING

Fish are sometimes killed by first being hit on the head with a club and then having their gill arches torn or cut so that they bleed to death.

They are also sometimes placed in a carbon dioxide tank and then clubbed or bled to death.



recover consciousness before evisceration (removal of internal organs)

Some fish farms put the fish in an ice-slurry immediately after having been removed from the water tank. This has been proven to cause pain to the fish as their organs start to freeze before they



lose consciousness, whilst not killing the fish soon enough.

Humane Alternative: The NSPCA advocates that fish should be placed in a mixture of clove oil and ethanol till death and then left for an extra ten minute after death before being placed in the ice slurry.

Exsanguinations (bleeding out) without prior stunning) can result in convulsions and muscular spasms. Salmon may be clubbed but fish like trout are too small and are left to die of asphyxiation. Some

WILD CAUGHT FISH ALSO SUFFER

Vast drift nets – Fish can be caught and dragged along the ocean bed for hours, trapped alongside rocks, debris and other sea life that has fallen in the net's path.

When hauled up, fish undergo excruciating decompression (called barotrauma). Intense internal pressure ruptures the swim bladder, pops eyes out and pushes the oesophagus and stomach out through the mouth. This is the same fish presented at supermarkets.

Caught fish are sorted using small, spiked rods, whilst they are still alive. Factory ships slaughter and process the fish at sea. Most are gutted whilst still alive or are left to suffocate.

A more humane awareness campaign by way of public demand should be focussed on to force fishing companies to deploy more humane methods.

LIVE BAIT

Small fish and frogs (platannas) are caught by anglers and left lying on the ground whilst still alive only to be re-hooked and thrown back for use as live bait in the attempted capture of bigger fish.

Innocent animals like earthworms are farmed for this purpose as well. They are hooked through their bodies while still alive and used as live bait as well.

Both the above two points on live bait are illegal under the Animals Protection Act No 71 of 1962 and many anglers are not aware or simply keep doing it as the chances of being caught doing this is fairly slim.

Humane Alternative: Fishing for food source (not recreational) should be done with dead-bait or artificial bait.

ALL CREATURES MATTER