

UC Davis Office of the Attending Veterinarian Standards of Care

Policy: SC-36-400
Date: 4/1/2022
Enabled by: IACUC/AV/
ILAR
Supersedes: 6/14/2019

Title: Husbandry Care of Turtles

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum standards of care for turtles

II. Policy:

All units providing animal care for turtles must meet or exceed these minimum requirements based on the ILAR Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (*Guide*). Deviations or exceptions must be approved by the Attending Veterinarian and the IACUC.

III. Procedure:

Daily (365 days a year without exception):

- Observe each animal and check for health concerns (*Guide* pg. 112).
- Ensure adequate potable water is available (*Guide* pg. 65-68).
- Ensure adequate feed is available, as applicable by species (*Guide* pg. 65-68).
- Record sick and dead animals, and report them to Campus Veterinary Services (CVS) or designated clinical veterinarian per standard operating procedure for reporting sick or dead animals.
- Record minimum and maximum temperatures and humidity.
 - Temperature range for turtles is species-dependent.
 - Humidity range for turtles is species-dependent.
- Spot clean and change any excessively soiled or flooded cages or tanks (*Guide* pg. 70).
- Clean and organize room, anterooms, and surrounding premises (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Record daily completion of each task, initial each task, and date the log.

As needed:

- Ensure adequate feed is available, as applicable by species (*Guide* pg. 65-68).
- Clean and disinfect primary enclosure (*Guide* pg. 69-71).
 - The use of certain disinfectants may be contraindicated for some aquatic species, as residues may be highly deleterious (*Guide* pg. 71).
- Disinfect the animal room including walls, floors, and ceilings (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Remove and replace worn or damaged equipment from primary enclosures and surrounding facility (*Guide* pg. 72).

UC Davis Office of the Attending Veterinarian Standards of Care

- Clean and sanitize feed storage containers (*Guide* pg. 67).
- For aquatic species, perform partial water changes to remove excess nitrogenous waste and debris (*Guide* pg. 86).
- Each facility will develop their own best practices with sanitization typically occurring every 6 months or whenever there is a change in species but may vary with facility.

Environmental Enrichment:

- Refer to the Environmental Enrichment policy ([SOC-30-102](#)).

Facilities:

- Temperature alarms must be installed in all rooms housing turtles (*Guide* pg. 143).
- Adequate ventilation must be provided for the health and comfort of the animal at all times.
 - A minimum of 10-15 fresh room air exchanges per hour shall be provided in animal housing areas (*Guide* pg. 46).
- Floors shall be moisture-resistant, non-absorbent, impact-resistant, and relatively smooth (*Guide* pg. 137). Refer to Physical Plant SOC 50-102.
- Facilities housing certain turtle species must follow the conditions specified in the University of California, Davis' California Department of Fish and Wildlife Permit (#537) to import, transport, and possess Restricted Species for Research. A copy of this permit must be posted on the animal room door.

Housing:

- Floor space taken up by food bowls, water containers, and enrichment devices should not be considered part of the floor space (*Guide* pg. 56).
- Animals must have enough space to express their natural postures and postural adjustments without touching the enclosure walls or ceiling, be able to turn around, and have ready access to food and water. In addition, there must be sufficient space to comfortably rest away from areas soiled by urine and feces (*Guide* pg. 56).