



Examples of fieldwork/investigations which involves the use of animals

ACTIVITY: FROGSPAWN COLLECTION AND KEEPING IN CLASS

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
Children or their teachers collect a sample of frogspawn and keep it in a tank in school so that pupils can watch the transformation of frogspawn into tadpoles and possibly frogs. (If the tadpoles reach this stage).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where will the animals be released once the activity ends? Things to consider: Disease transmission, unsuitable environment, introduction of parasites/disease/invasive plants, pressure on current amphibian population - if none there already there is likely a reason why area is unsuitable.Can the needs of the animals be met – diet, environment (e.g. water quality, temperature) – these will also change as the animals develop.Handling – amphibians have delicate, permeable skin that can be harmed by handling with bare hands – stress and injury can result from mishandling.Stress of handling and unnatural situation.What will happen to the animals if they are being kept during the Easter holidays, which fall in the midst of tadpole development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The RSPCA does not feel this activity should be done in schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Watch the life cycle in the natural environment, e.g. school grounds or a local park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Frogs and toads, as vertebrates, are covered by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (AWA).Pool frogs and natterjack toads are fully protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, making it an offence to kill, capture, own, injure, disturb or sell them and to damage or destroy their habitats.The RSPCA opposes breeding programmes in schools.Amphibians like frogs and toads have very permeable skin; in laboratories it is normal practice to wear non-powdered latex gloves when handling these animals.

ACTIVITY: POND DIPPING

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
<p>Pupils scoop up water into containers to see if there is any animal life in their pond. Animals are captured and placed into trays where they can be observed by the children. Children sometimes use small nets to collect pond animal life. Organisms can either be observed at the side of the pond/ stream or taken back into the classroom. Sometimes organisms are moved between trays using plastic spoons. Animals are usually poured back into the water.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress and injury can result from mishandling and capture method of the animals. Stress to the animals of being removed from their habitat and placed in an unfamiliar environment. Disruption caused to the habitat and the animals in it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study the animals outside where they are found rather than carrying them into the classroom. Allow only an adult to dip the pond carefully using a soft net. Only look at small areas of the pond. Partially fill a shallow tray with pond water. Carefully transfer animals from net to tray by lowering net into water, turning inside out and shaking gently. Keep the netted animals in the tray out of direct sunlight and return each animal as soon as possible after studying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a cylinder with a see-through bottom so that you can view the animals in their natural habitat without having to remove them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invertebrates are currently not covered by the AWA however the RSPCA believes that they should be treated in such a way as to minimise potential stress, injury and suffering. Any vertebrates picked up (e.g. fish, frogs, toads) are covered by the AWA.

ACTIVITY: MINIBEAST COLLECTING

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
<p>Invertebrates are collected into trays where they can be observed. Sometimes the animals are brought into the classroom for closer inspection and then eventually returned. Pooters are often used to observe the minibeasts in the field (see below).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress and injury can result from mishandling of animals. Stress to the animals of being removed from their habitat and placed in an unfamiliar environment. Disruption caused to the habitat and animals in it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study the animals outside where they are found rather than carrying them into the classroom. Allow only an adult to collect the animals carefully. Keep the animals out of direct sunlight and return each to where they were found as soon as possible after studying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the animals in their natural habitat, e.g. visit a local park or the school grounds. Carefully look under rocks, in rotten wood, under leaf litter, remembering to replace these carefully once finished. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invertebrates are currently not covered by the AWA however the RSPCA believes that they should be treated in such a way as to minimise potential stress, injury and suffering.

ACTIVITY: POOTERS

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
Children place one tube over an invertebrate and suck the other tube – therefore sucking the animal into the plastic container where it can be observed or collected into another container. The animals collected are usually put back eventually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress and injury can result from mishandling of animals (e.g. if student sucks too hard or shakes the container). Stress to the animals of being removed from their habitat and placed in an unfamiliar environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study the animals outside where they are found rather than carrying them into the classroom. Allow only an adult or one sensible member of each group of students to collect the animals carefully. Keep the animals out of direct sunlight, hold containers steady and return each to where they were found as soon as possible after studying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the animals in their natural habitat, e.g. visit a local park or the school grounds. Carefully look under rocks, in rotten wood, under leaf litter, remembering to replace these carefully once finished. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invertebrates are currently not covered by the AWA however the RSPCA believes that they should be treated in such a way as to minimise potential stress, injury and suffering.

ACTIVITY: BEHAVIOUR TESTS (CHOICE CHAMBERS OR MAZES)

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
Woodlice, snails, planarian flatworms and beetles are usually used for behaviour experiments. They can be purchased in some special shops (as food for pets) or they can be obtained from local habitats. The behaviour of woodlice is often studied in schools. Several woodlice are put into a choice chamber with different conditions to see which they prefer. Taxis and Kinesis behaviours are studied.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress and injury can result from mishandling of animals. Stress to the animals of being removed from their habitat and placed in an unfamiliar environment. Disposal of animals that have been purchased for the activity. It is illegal to release non-native species into the wild. If the species is native, a suitable habitat must be found to release the animals into. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not buy animals for the sole purpose of a classroom activity. Allow only an adult to collect woodlice carefully from the wild. Conduct the choice chamber experiment outside where the woodlice were collected and release them as soon as activity has been completed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit school grounds or the local park and study the animals in their natural environment. For example, count the number of woodlice in a certain area that is exposed to sunlight and then do the same for a damp area in the dark (e.g. under a rock or rotting wood). The animals have already made their choice naturally and you are seeing the result. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invertebrates are currently not covered by the AWA however the RSPCA believes that they should be treated in such a way as to minimise potential stress, injury and suffering. It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to release non-native species into the wild.

ACTIVITY: KICK TEST

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
Used to collect a sample of animals in a freshwater ecosystem. A D net is placed on the river bed. Upstream of the net, the stones and sediment on the river bed is kicked repeatedly for a set period of time and all disturbed animals and sediment are captured in the net. The animals are then put into a tray for observation, counting etc. before they are returned to the stream.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Severe disturbance of habitat and animals in it. ● Stress and injury can result from mishandling of animals. ● Stress to the animals of being removed from their habitat and placed in an unfamiliar environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Study the animals outside where they are found rather than carrying them into the classroom. ● Allow only an adult/sensible student to disturb the water/stream bed and collect animals carefully using a soft net. ● Only look at small areas of the stream. ● Gently transfer animals from net to tray by lowering net into the water, turning inside out and shaking gently. ● Partially fill a shallow tray with stream water. Keep the netted animals in the tray out of direct sunlight and return each animal as soon as possible after studying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manually survey invertebrates by searching the stream bed and noting which animals are seen where. ● If flow of water allows, use a cylinder or bucket with a see-through bottom so that you can view the animals in their natural habitat without having to remove them. ● Use hands to gently disturb the water and stream bed, rather than a kicking motion. ● Watch an educational video and/or visit educational websites on stream life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invertebrates are currently not covered by the AWA however the RSPCA believes that they should be treated in such a way as to minimise potential stress, injury and suffering. ● Any vertebrates picked up (e.g. fish, frogs, toads) are covered by the AWA.

ACTIVITY: BEATING TREES

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
<p>A very basic but effective way of surveying invertebrates in trees and bushes is to use a 'beating' method. This involves the shaking or beating of the branches of a tree or shrub to dislodge the insects, which then fall into a collecting tray or specially designed collecting cloth. These cloths are often white to help show up the species collected. Students sometimes trap the invertebrates in a viewing tube to take a closer look, before releasing them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disturbance of habitat and animals in it. ● Stress and injury can result from mishandling and capture method of animals. ● Stress to the animals of being removed from their habitat and placed in an unfamiliar environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Study the animals outside where they are found rather than carrying them into the classroom. ● Allow only an adult or one sensible member of each group of students to collect the animals carefully and place into viewing tubes. ● Keep the animals out of direct sunlight, hold tubes steady and return each animal to where they were found as soon as possible after studying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manually survey invertebrates by searching vegetation and noting which animals are seen where. If animals cannot be seen, sounds can be used to identify them (e.g. crickets). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invertebrates are currently not covered by the AWA however the RSPCA believes that they should be treated in such a way as to minimise potential stress, injury and suffering.

ACTIVITY: SWEEP NETS

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
<p>This technique is used to study habitats such as meadows. Sweep netting requires the surveyor to sweep a large net backwards and forwards across a predetermined area to collect samples of invertebrates such as flies and insects. There are different designs of net available and the gauze size reflects which invertebrates are being surveyed for.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disturbance of habitat and animals in it. ● Stress and injury can result from mishandling and capture method of animals. ● Stress to the animals of being removed from their habitat and placed in an unfamiliar environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Study the animals outside where they are found rather than carrying them into the classroom. ● Allow only an adult to sweep using a soft net. ● If animals are placed in viewing containers, this should be done by the adult. ● Keep animals out of direct sunlight, hold tubes steady. Return each animal to where they were found as soon as possible after studying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manually survey invertebrates by searching vegetation and noting which animals are seen where. If animals cannot be seen, sounds can be used to identify them (e.g. crickets). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invertebrates are currently not covered by the AWA however the RSPCA believes that they should be treated in such a way as to minimise potential stress, injury and suffering. ● Any vertebrates picked up (e.g. small rodents) are covered by the AWA.

ACTIVITY: PITFALL TRAPS

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
<p>Pitfall trapping is a popular and simple technique to sample invertebrate species in soil and leaf litter. Home-made devices can be used. A pitfall device is set up and left, usually overnight, to be checked the following day. The organisms would normally be studied and returned to the surrounding habitat. See: http://www.animaethics.org.au/policies-and-guidelines/wildlife-research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress and injury can result from mishandling and capture method of animals. Death of caught animals due to predation from other specimens in trap. Death of caught animals if trap is not checked regularly enough (e.g. through starvation, exposure, drowning if rain water is allowed to collect). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult removes animals from trap and places carefully into viewing container. Study animals where they have been collected rather than carrying them back to the classroom. Dry traps should be used, not wet ones (i.e. animals are caught alive). Traps should be small enough that only invertebrates will be caught. Traps should be checked after short intervals to minimise deaths. Traps should be covered so caught animals are protected from weather and predators. Animals should be released where caught as soon as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No alternative method of trapping. Watch an educational video and/or visit educational websites on terrestrial invertebrates. Visit a museum of natural history or similar to view preserved specimens of these animals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invertebrates are currently not covered by the AWA however the RSPCA believes that they should be treated in such a way as to minimise potential stress, injury and suffering. Any vertebrates picked up (e.g. small frogs, toads, lizards) are covered by the AWA.

ACTIVITY: DISSECTION

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
<p>Still carried out in the majority of secondary school Science lessons to teach anatomy.</p> <p>Most common practice is obtaining organs from abattoirs to do heart, eye, lung or kidney dissections. A-level Biology students often do fish dissections e.g. whole dog fish – to learn structure of the gills.</p> <p>Some schools use fish/meat products bought from the supermarket that can be used to fulfil their requirements. Fewer schools carry out whole animal dissection - but it does still occur – normally using whole rats. They are used to study organs and whole systems, e.g. reproductive system, digestive system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the animal been killed in a humane way? Was the animal bred/reared/killed purely to be dissected? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethically sourced by-products, e.g. the organs of Freedom Food-reared farm animals. <p>In relation to where schools are sourcing organs from abattoirs for dissection, source these from a Freedom Food approved abattoir. Before dissection explain to the pupils/students about the life of the animals/where the organs came from and how rearing methods can have an affect on the welfare of the animal/s.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RSPCA recommends ethically sourced by-products, e.g. the organs of Freedom Food-reared farm animals. 	

ACTIVITY: MAMMAL TRAPPING

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
<p>One type of trap used is the Longworth trap, designed for the capture and release of small mammals. The trap is set up with hay for insulation and suitable bait. It is usually placed outside around dusk. The trap locks shut when an animal goes inside.</p> <p>The animal remains there until the trap is emptied, usually in the morning. Sometimes the animal is placed into a plastic bag where it can be observed before release.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress and injury can result from mishandling and capture method of animals. Risk of suffering and death of caught animal as a result of hypothermia and/or starvation if traps are not checked regularly enough. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RSPCA does not feel this activity should be done in schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe stuffed specimens, e.g. in a natural history museum. Visit establishments where these animals are kept in captivity in acceptable conditions by specialist keepers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vertebrates (including small mammals) are covered by the AWA. A licence is required in order to trap certain species of small mammals (eg. shrews). If trapping is being done without a licence, traps must be adapted so as not to catch these species. Longworth traps are expensive.

ACTIVITY: MOTH TRAPS

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
<p>These are used for moth observation and study, not to capture pests. Moths are attracted into a trap (a box with a lid that slopes inwards into a V shape where there is a gap) with a MV bulb where they cannot escape. The trap is placed out at night and is checked the day after.</p> <p>Some people release the moths during the day and others choose to keep them in the trap all day until nightfall when they release the moths then.</p> <p>Sometimes a sugar solution is used to attract moths to an area and they are observed feeding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stress and injury can result from mishandling and capture method of animals. ● Death of caught animals if trap is not checked regularly enough (e.g. through starvation, exposure). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a sugar solution to attract moths to an area where they can be observed while they feed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rather than trapping the animals, use a sugar solution to attract moths to an area where they can be observed while they feed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invertebrates are currently not covered by the AWA however the RSPCA believes that they should be treated in such a way as to minimise potential stress, injury and suffering.

ACTIVITY: ROCK POOLING

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
Pupils collect water into a bucket or tray and then search rock pools using nets and their hands to capture a whole range of marine life, e.g. butterflyfish, crabs, starfish, sea snails etc. The animals are usually studied and then get poured back into a rock pool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress and injury can result from mishandling and capture method of animals. Stress to the animals of being removed from their habitat and placed in an unfamiliar environment. Suffering and death may be caused by holding aquatic animals out of water for periods of time. Disruption caused to the habitat and animals in it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study the animals outside where they are found rather than carrying them into the classroom. Allow only an adult to dip the pond carefully using a soft net. Partially fill a shallow tray with sea water. Gently transfer animals from net to tray by lowering net into water, turning inside out and shaking gently. Keep the netted animals in the tray out of direct sunlight and return each animal as soon as possible after studying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a cylinder with a see-through bottom so that you can view the animals in their natural habitat without having to remove them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invertebrates are currently not covered by the AWA however the RSPCA believes that they should be treated in such a way as to minimise potential stress, injury and suffering. Any vertebrates picked up (e.g. fish) are covered by the AWA.

ACTIVITY: ENERGETIC STUDIES (FRESHWATER STREAM AND MARINE)

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
<p>Pupils quantify the energy flowing through different trophic levels in food chains.</p> <p>Freshwater stream (using a kick sample – see above – pupils collect freshwater animals into a tray to count the number of different species and individuals animals in each trophic level.)</p> <p>Marine (pupils scavenge an area of rock pools to collect marine animals into trays to count the number of different species and individual animals in each trophic level.)</p> <p>Sometimes organisms are moved between trays using plastic spoons during counting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As for kick test. ● As for rock pooling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As for kick test. ● As for rock pooling. ● If animals are being transferred between trays, this should be done carefully by an adult or one sensible member of the student group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As for kick test. ● As for rock pooling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As for kick test. ● As for rock pooling.

ACTIVITY: INCUBATION (CHICKS ETC)

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
<p>Private organisations provide schools with everything they need to hatch chicks from eggs. The service varies from company to company. Often embryo eggs are delivered to schools so they only have to wait a few days for them to hatch. However, sometimes the school has the eggs for three weeks before hatching.</p> <p>The schools are also provided with an incubator which has windows so the children can see the eggs hatching. Schools can also have a brooding box if they choose to look after the chicks for a few days, or they can choose to return them straight away.</p> <p>The school is usually provided with the food needed for the chicks if they choose this option. Some companies give the school the choice to either keep the chicks or return them to the company.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Difficult to guarantee the welfare of animals under school conditions. ● Where will the animals come from? Can welfare be assured there? ● Can you meet the needs of the animals – diet, environment (e.g. temperature, enrichment?) These will also change as animals develop. ● Stress of unnatural situation (e.g. classroom noise). ● Stress and injury can result from mishandling of animals. ● Who is ultimately responsible for the animal(s)? Legal responsibility under the AWA. ● Who will ensure the animal's care during out-of-school hours, including nights and holidays? ● What will happen to the animals once they have matured? Can their welfare be assured? ● General knowledge and understanding of how to care for eggs close to hatching and chicks. ● Poor handling could cause injuries and distress to the chicks. It is also important to carefully handle eggs. ● The teacher should monitor children with the eggs and chicks at all times. <p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is important that young chicks are kept warm and are not chilled. The school should keep the chicks at a constant temperature. ● Chicks should be exposed to sufficient periods of dark for resting and light to encourage normal behaviours. The school should also be able to provide this. ● High noise levels can cause distress. Schools are noisy environments and it may be to keep the eggs/chicks within a quiet location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The RSPCA does not feel this activity should be done in schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use toy animals, photos, video, live internet feeds to follow the development of animals without bringing them into the classroom. ● Visit places where these animals are kept in suitable conditions. ● Visit a commercial hatchery (this may be difficult for schools to achieve) or local working farm (ATF) which hatches chicks, etc. ● Schools visit a local working farm – Access to Farms (ATF.) ● Make use of RSPCA education farm animal resources. ● Visit www.rspca.org.uk/education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vertebrates (including birds) are covered by the AWA. ● The RSPCA believes that such programmes of study (see below) do not promote responsible attitudes to animal care and husbandry. <p>RSPCA Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 4.2.1 The RSPCA strongly discourages the keeping of animals in schools. ● 4.2.3 The RSPCA opposes breeding programmes in schools. This concern includes the use of incubators and artificial environments for animals. ● 4.6.1 The RSPCA is opposed to all schemes that introduce animals into educational establishments which are detrimental to the welfare of animals.

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For all animals, the experiences they are exposed to early in life can have a dramatic affect on them later in life, potentially to the detriment of their welfare. With laying hens, the RSPCA welfare standards aim to minimise this risk through ensuring chicks/pullets are reared in similar environments to the laying system they will live in for the majority of their lives. This includes ensuring birds are given access to the same type of drinker as that used in the layer unit and also that pullets destined for a multi-tier unit are reared in a multi-tier system, to ensure that they are familiar with using tiers. Can the school provide facilities for the chicks to express normal behaviours and encourage healthy development both physically and psychologically? <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inexperienced people may not notice injuries or signs of distress in the chicks. Subtle changes in behaviour may indicate pain or distress. Is the school able to get quick treatment for any chicks which are sick or injured? In particular, do they have access to a specialist poultry vet? The RSPCA welfare standards for hatcheries requires that any birds which are deformed, sick or injured, or which have not hatched successfully, must be removed without delay and humanely culled. It is therefore important that those responsible for the welfare of the chicks are able to spot sick/injured/deformed birds and ensure they receive the correct treatment or are humanely euthanised as quickly as possible. Schools should be aware that whenever coming into close contact with farm animals there is a risk of zoonotic diseases. Schools should ensure that they are aware of where the eggs are coming from and the hygiene of the facilities. <p>Supervision/inspection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important that eggs and chicks are regularly inspected to identify any health and welfare issues. Are the eggs/chicks monitored regularly? How long are they left unsupervised for over the evenings? Is it possible for the school to ensure that they can inspect the eggs overnight in case of any difficulties during hatching? 			

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
	<p>Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If schools are transporting eggs or chicks for any reason, they should be aware of the welfare needs of chicks during transportation, e.g. temperature, airflow. <p>Rehoming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is important that the school is comfortable with what happens to the chicks after the project has finished. If schools or individuals decide to keep the chicks, it is important for the welfare of the birds that they can provide: ● Space and facilities for the birds to perform normal behaviours. ● Suitable diet to maintain full health and vigour. ● Suitable facilities/space to allow for rotating the range to ensure the range remains in good condition and reduce the risk of disease. In the case of an outbreak of avian influenza, schools may be required to house the birds inside. Indoor housing must meet the behavioural and physical needs of the birds. ● Some housing which is available may not meet the physical and behavioural needs of birds, providing natural daylight, adequate space or facilities to perform normal behaviours. ● Injurious feather pecking and cannibalism can occur in all flocks, not just commercial flocks, so owners should have the time, resources and facilities to manage any outbreaks that may occur. ● Cockerels may be difficult to rehome, as they can become aggressive towards other cockerels once reaching maturity. If cockerels are not rehomed and are returned to the company, then the school should enquire as to their future. ● In the commercial egg industry male chicks are often killed, as they are not seen to be suitable for the meat chicken industry. Are the cockerels rehomed or humanely killed? Humanely killing the animals is not a welfare concern in itself, but it does raise questions regarding hatching chicks for projects, which do not have a purpose beyond the project. <p>How it portrays animals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are concerns as to how animals are potentially represented as playthings/entertainment through such projects, rather than sentient beings, with physical and behavioural needs. 			

ACTIVITY: OWLS AND OTHER WILD ANIMALS BROUGHT INTO SCHOOLS

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
<p>Owls (captive bred, tame) are brought into schools by their handler who then talks to children about owls whilst showing them a real owl. The owl often flies around indoors. Sometimes owls sit on a perch for a while and are then drawn by the children. Some organisations bring owl prey in as well, e.g. harvest mice. Some organisations specialise in one species of owl, e.g. barn owls.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animals must travel, in some instances for considerable distances, to reach schools. This can cause stress. Stress may be caused by exposing wild (even if tame, an owl is still a wild, not domesticated, animal) animals to the unnatural environment of a classroom, including movement of children, number of people, noise and light. Visits may disrupt the natural activity pattern of the animal and therefore cause stress, e.g. the animal may be nocturnal (only active at night) yet visits must be made during the day. Stress may be caused by keeping prey species within sensing distance of their predators. Using wild animals in this way promotes the idea of keeping them captive rather than appreciating the animals in their natural environment – the wild. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RSPCA does not feel this activity should be done in schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on learning about wild animals in their natural habitats. Use live web feeds to follow wild animals as they go about their lives e.g. Chichester cathedral peregrine falcons, RSPB website. Explore school grounds, local park or nearby fields for evidence of wildlife. If a visit to see live animals is absolutely necessary, visit a reputable establishment that meets high standards of care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vertebrates (including birds and small mammals) are covered by the AWA. The RSPCA is opposed to all schemes that introduce animals into educational establishments which are detrimental to their welfare. The RSPCA is opposed to visitors taking animals into educational establishments where they are used largely for entertainment and are not part of a clearly defined programme of study.

ACTIVITY: BUTTERFLIES

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
Companies produce kits for schools to raise caterpillars and view them and keep them until they eventually turn into butterflies or moths and are released. The caterpillars are posted out to the schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the needs of the animals be met – diet, environment (e.g. food source?) These will change as animals develop. Stress and injury can result from mishandling and unnatural situation (e.g. classroom noise). What will happen to the animals if they are being kept during school holidays? Stress to animals of being removed from their habitat and placed in an unfamiliar environment. Where will the animals be released once the activity ends? Different species of butterfly feed on different plants. Must ensure animals are released in an area of suitable habitat or they may starve. It is illegal to release non-native species into the wild. If species is native, a suitable habitat must be found to release the animals into. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RSPCA does not feel this activity should be done in schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch the life cycle in the natural environment, e.g. in school grounds, nearby fields or local park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invertebrates are currently not covered by the AWA however the RSPCA believes that they should be treated in such a way as to minimise potential stress, injury and suffering. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is an offence to release non-native animals into the wild.

ACTIVITY: STUFFED OR 'PICKLED' ANIMALS

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
Some schools still have jars of very old, pickled specimens (formalin or ethanol) of invertebrates, small vertebrates, foetal pigs, sheep brains, cow eyes etc. They can be used to teach classification etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the specimen is old, no welfare concerns as it has been dead for a long period of time. Animals should not be killed for this purpose. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vertebrates (including birds and small mammals) are covered by the AWA.

ACTIVITY: FARM ANIMALS BROUGHT INTO SCHOOLS

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
Mobile farms can come into schools, and sometimes bring in other animals too. Private companies offer this service and the animals that they choose to bring varies. Popular choices include goats/kids, lambs/sheep, pigs/piglets, hens/chicks, calves, ducks/ducklings. The activities which the children take part in include observations, brushing/grooming, stroking/handling, bottle feeding and milking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inappropriate handling causing animals to become frightened stressed or injured. Also, if animals become restless, frightened or protective of their young, they can cause injuries to people and themselves. ● High noise levels can cause distress. Some species are particularly sensitive to noise levels, e.g. sheep, and should wherever possible not be subjected to loud noises. ● Disease risks - direct physical access to farm animals should be limited and preferably avoided for a number of reasons, including passing on disease and infection to animals, risk of zoonotic disease. In 2009/ 2010 there was a case of children contracting E.Coli after having contact with animals at a petting farm. ● Isolation of animals from social group can be stressful. Certain species, such as cattle and sheep, like to be around animals of their own kind that they are familiar with. Such species should not be isolated unnecessarily for long periods of time. ● Suitable facilities for animals at school - animals may need to be provided with shade if outdoors or, if indoors, it may be necessary to consider if there is suitable ventilation/temperature control to prevent heat stress. ● Animals performing whilst at schools - concerns regarding the training methods employed and the message that this sends to the children in viewing animals as entertainment. ● Animals with young may become distressed and/or protective of their young. ● Transportation can cause mental distress, due to unusual and potentially frightening sights, movements, noises, smells, unfamiliar animals and people. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schools visit a local working farm – Access to Farms (ATF). ● Make use of RSPCA education farm animal resources. (See www.rspca.org.uk/education) 	<p>RSPCA Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 4.6.1 The RSPCA is opposed to all schemes that introduce animals into educational establishments which are detrimental to the welfare of animals. ● 4.6.2 The RSPCA is opposed to visitors taking animals into educational establishments where they are used largely for entertainment and are not part of a clearly defined programme of study.

ACTIVITY: VISITING FARM PARKS AND PETTING ZOOS

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
<p>Allows pupils to see/experience pets and animals if they are not present in school or at home. Educational benefit varies depending on the nature of the visit. Some wildlife centres have education centres that are also hands-on.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using wild animals in this way promotes the idea of keeping them captive rather than appreciating the animals in their natural environment – the wild. Inappropriate handling – causing animals to become frightened stressed or injured. For example, sheep can be easily frightened, stressed or injured by inappropriate handling. High noise levels can cause distress. Some species are particularly sensitive to noise levels, e.g., sheep, and should wherever possible not be subjected to loud noises. Disease risks – Direct physical access to farm animals should be limited and preferably avoided, for a number of reasons including passing on disease and infection to animals, risk of zoonotic disease. In 2009/2010 there was a case of children contracting E.Coli after having contact with animals at a petting farm. Isolation of animals from social group can be stressful. Certain species such as cattle and sheep like to be around animals of their own kind and that they are familiar with. Such species should not be isolated unnecessarily for long periods of time. Injurious pecking – Stress can lead to increased risk of injurious pecking (and even possibly cannibalism) in laying hens and turkeys. This can be due to a single event, like a loud noise, or as a result of a longer term situation like lack of appropriate facilities or space. Once started, injurious pecking can be very difficult to stop and can be very painful and distressing. It can occur in small, large, commercial and backyard flocks. Smothering and death of hens can also occur if they are suddenly frightened by something. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a visit to see live animals is absolutely necessary, visit a reputable establishment that meets high standards of care and avoid hands-on experiences with wild animals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on learning about wild animals in their natural habitats. Use live web feeds to follow wild animals as they go about their lives e.g. Chichester cathedral peregrine falcons, RSPB website. Explore school grounds, local park or nearby fields for evidence of wildlife. Visit should be a part of a structured animal welfare curriculum. Schools visit a local working farm – Access to Farms (ATF) Make use of RSPCA education resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vertebrates (any animal with a backbone including snakes, hedgehogs, meerkats, frogs, tortoises, birds, etc) are covered by the AWA. Health considerations from handling exotic animals – injury and disease, e.g. reptiles, birds and amphibians can carry salmonella. <p>RSPCA Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.5.1 The RSPCA does not support visits to animal-related venues which increase stress levels or cause unnecessary disturbance to animals. The animals' welfare must remain paramount. 4.5.2 The RSPCA believes that all educational visits should be part of a structured animal welfare curriculum.

ACTIVITY: OTHER ANIMALS BROUGHT INTO SCHOOL, E.G. HEDGEHOGS AND RABBITS

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
<p>A whole range of organisations specialise in bringing animals into schools for visits. There is a wide range of animals which are popular with schools. For example, snakes and lizards, hedgehogs, chinchillas, meerkats, scorpions, spiders, stick insects, salamanders, frogs, tortoises, owls, parrots, ferrets, rabbits, guinea pigs, Shetland ponies, mice, owls – the list goes on.</p> <p>They often market themselves as a 'close encounter' so pupils get to approach and often stroke or handle the animals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animals must travel, in some instances, for considerable distances, to reach schools. This can cause stress. Stress may be caused by exposing animals – particularly wild and therefore undomesticated – animals to the unnatural environment of a classroom, including movement of children, number of people, noise and light. Visits may disrupt the natural activity pattern of the animal and therefore cause stress, e.g. the animal may be nocturnal (only active at night) yet visits must be made during day. Stress and injury can result from mishandling by excited children. In addition, amphibians have delicate, permeable skin that can be harmed by handling with bare hands. Stress may be caused by keeping prey species within sensing distance of potential predators (e.g. rabbits and owls, frogs and snakes). Schools are likely to be noisy and potentially frightening places for some animals and it is likely to be very difficult to provide for any animal's needs properly in a school environment. Predictability of routine – many animals value highly a predictable routine and can find changes in their routine stressful. Any new environment is likely to be stressful and potentially very frightening for the animals. Inappropriate and/or excessive handling could cause animals to become frightened, stressed or injured. If panicked, the animals could cause injuries to themselves or the children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RSPCA does not feel this activity should be done in schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on learning about wild animals in their natural habitats. Use live web feeds to follow wild animals as they go about their lives e.g. Chichester cathedral peregrine falcons, RSPB website. Explore school grounds, local park or nearby fields for evidence of wildlife. If a visit to see live animals is absolutely necessary, visit a reputable establishment that meets high standards of care and avoid hands-on experiences with wild animals. Use of RSPCA education resources. If available, other web-based resources that can be utilised to help children learn about different species of companion animals and providing for their needs. <p>Some alternatives to using real animals include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> soft toys and props role play and drama activities books, videos, DVDs and CD-ROMs A photographic pet show where pupils can bring in pictures of their pets or favourite animals. The class can then discuss what that animal needs and how they can provide it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vertebrates (any animal with a backbone including snakes, hedgehogs, meerkats, frogs, tortoises, birds etc) are covered by the AWA. Health considerations from handling exotic animals – injury and disease, e.g. reptiles, birds and amphibians can carry salmonella. <p>RSPCA policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1.1 The RSPCA is opposed to the use of animals for education where distress or suffering is likely to be caused. 4.6.1 The RSPCA is opposed to all schemes that introduce animals into educational establishments which are detrimental to the welfare of animals. 4.6.2 The RSPCA is opposed to visitors taking animals into educational establishments where they are used largely for entertainment and are not part of a clearly defined programme of study.

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High noise levels can cause distress. Some species are particularly sensitive to noise levels and should not be subjected to loud noises. ● Disease risks – to humans and animals. Certain animals may be more prone to disease than others e.g. the very old or very young and excessive stress could make them susceptible to illness. There is also a risk of zoonotic disease to the children and adults. ● Isolation of animals from their social group can be stressful. Separating animals from their companions should be avoided. ● Providing a suitable environment at schools – animals need to be provided with an environment that is suitable with respect to temperature, ventilation, etc. They may need to be provided with shade if outdoors or if indoors it may be necessary to consider if there is suitable ventilation/ temperature control to prevent heat stress. Provision of adequate space for the animals during visits could be difficult. Somewhere to hide is important to provide but may be neglected as could mean less viewing time or interaction for the children. ● Animals with young may become distressed and/or protective of their young. For all animals, the experiences they are exposed to early in life can have a dramatic affect on their development, potentially to the detriment of their welfare. ● Transportation can cause stress due to unusual and potentially frightening sights, movements, noises, smells. <p>How it portrays animals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are concerns as to how animals are potentially represented as playthings/entertainment through such projects, rather than sentient beings, with physical and behavioural needs. 		(See www.rspca.org.uk/education/animalfriendlyschools)	<p>Considerations if to be done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where have the animals been sourced from? ● The person bringing the animals in is responsible for meeting their needs- can he/she describe how those needs will be met during the visit? ● The school must have guidelines for teachers and students, with the owner of the animal providing further information specific to the needs of that species and individual. ● Any encounters with children must be supervised by a competent and responsible adult ● The animals must be given frequent and adequate opportunities away from the classroom environment to rest and recover. ● The animal should not be allowed to become stressed. ● Ensuring that the needs of the animal are provided for i.e. suitable environment, diet, allowed to express normal behaviour, appropriate company, health and welfare.

ACTIVITY: SCHOOL FARMS/FARM ANIMALS KEPT IN SCHOOL

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
Some schools have their own farms. They range in size of farm, species kept and how many school children are involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inappropriate handling causing animals to become frightened, stressed or injured. For example sheep can be easily frightened, stressed or injured by inappropriate handling. Also if animals become restless, frightened or protective of their young, they can cause injuries to people and themselves. ● High noise levels can cause distress. Some species are particularly sensitive to noise levels, e.g. sheep, and should wherever possible not be subjected to loud noises. ● Disease risks - direct physical access to farm animals should be limited and preferably avoided for a number of reasons, including passing on disease and infection to animals, risk of zoonotic disease. In 2009/2010 there was a case of children contracting E.Coli after having contact with animals at a petting farm. ● Isolation of animals from social group can be stressful. Certain species, such as cattle and sheep, like to be around animals of their own kind and that they are familiar with. Such species should not be isolated unnecessarily for long periods of time. ● Inexperienced people may not notice subtle changes in behaviour that may indicate pain or distress. This is particularly appropriate to sheep and cattle which have evolved to not show easily recognisable signs of suffering, as a protection method against predators. There should be an experienced and dedicated stock-person to look after the animals every day. ● Feed: with pigs the law is strict on what they can and can't be fed - there could potentially be issues regarding what the pigs are fed (e.g. pigs fed pork/ham/bacon by accident/on-purpose, if left unsupervised around children/inexperienced people). Common practice on commercial units is not to allow any pork products on the unit to prevent pigs eating any by accident. There are serious disease risks associated with pigs being fed pork products. ● The environment in which farm animals are kept must be able to meet their behavioural and physiological needs. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schools visit a local working farm – Access to Farms (ATF) ● Make use of RSPCA education farm animal resources. 	<p>RSPCA Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 4.2.1 The RSPCA strongly discourages the keeping of animals in schools. ● 4.2.3 The RSPCA opposes breeding programmes in schools. This concern includes the use of incubators and artificial environments for animals. <p>See the RSPCA's Education and animals: Guidance for educational establishments in England and Wales</p>

Description of activity	Animal welfare issues	RSPCA advice if activity still done	Alternatives	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stress can lead to increased risk of injurious pecking (and even possibly cannibalism) in laying hens and turkeys. This can be due to a single event, like a loud noise, or as a result of a longer term situation like lack of appropriate facilities or space. Once started, injurious pecking can be very difficult to stop and can be very painful and distressing. It can occur in small, large, commercial and backyard flocks. Smothering and death of hens can also occur if they are suddenly frightened by something. ● Sufficient and suitable land - to prevent pouching and the build up of parasites it is often necessary to rotate pasture/ranging areas. The school would need to have a sufficient amount of land to be able to practice this for all species it rears. Also, on occasions it may be necessary to isolate sick/injured animals from others. In the event of an outbreak of avian influenza, the school would need to house all its poultry indoors, therefore the school would need to have an indoor unit which has sufficient space and facilities to meet the birds' physical and behavioural needs, in the event of being housed permanently indoors for a time. ● The above is not a comprehensive list. Please refer to the RSPCA's Education and animals: Guidance for educational establishments in England and Wales for further details on the welfare needs of farm animals and alternatives to educational establishments keeping animals. These have not all been listed above. 			