



# Consultation Paper: Review of the Code of Practice on the Humane Treatment of Wild and Farmed Australian Crocodiles

## Code of Practice

In 2009, the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council endorsed the [Code of Practice on the Humane Treatment of Wild and Farmed Australian Crocodiles](#) (the Code of Practice). The Code of Practice, based on then best-practice knowledge of humane handling and crocodile welfare, established a series of minimum standards for Australia's commercial crocodile industry. Compliance with the Code of Practice is a requirement of approved Wildlife Trade Management Plans for the commercial use (and export) of crocodiles under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act). The Code of Practice has been in place for 14 years without an update.

The Code of Practice outlines the consistent set of minimum standards across all elements of crocodile farming including:

- egg collection, transport, processing, and incubation
- capture methods for captive and wild crocodiles
- methods for restraining crocodiles
- housing and maintenance standards
- management of sick and injured crocodiles
- humane methods of killing crocodiles
- necessary training and experience for crocodile farm workers.

## The review

### Objective

The Australian Government is committed to undertaking an independent review of the Code of Practice to ensure it is appropriate and represents industry best practice.

With developments in humane handling and knowledge of crocodile welfare, the revised Code of Practice will reflect these developments and changes in industry processes and technology. It will also clarify areas of ambiguity while maintaining alignment with legislation and international obligations.

Consideration will be given to whether the scope of the Code of Practice and the guidance contained is clear, well informed, and appropriate for its users.



### Opportunities

This review will ensure that Australia remains a global leader in the humane treatment and farming of crocodiles. The review provides an opportunity to include First Nations knowledge of non-commercial methods of hunting, keeping and handling of crocodiles and to ensure relevancy and accuracy of content. The review will examine and if needed, consider options for reform based on aspects including but not limited to:

- advances in scientific research
- advances in technology
- defining and addressing gaps within the current guidance.

Aspects that will not be considered include:

- Matters relating to the expansion of the Code of Practice to Australian zoos and recreational and educational facilities.
- Matters relating to human safety beyond the context of the commercial crocodile farming industry.
- Matters relating to population survey methodology and monitoring.

### Expert Advisory Panel

An Expert Advisory Panel (EAP) has been appointed to guide the review and includes subject matter experts from industry, state and territory governments, the Australian Government, CSIRO, veterinary science and animal welfare, the Centre for Crocodile Research, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Crocodile Specialist Working Group. The EAP will provide guidance and expert advice throughout the review and ensure all relevant matters are fully explored.

### Review methodology

The review will be undertaken with the support of independent delivery partner Callida Consulting Pty Ltd and will be informed by independent research and stakeholder consultation including:

- desktop research and review of contemporary publications
- regular consultation with the Expert Advisory Panel
- focus group consultation with key stakeholders including:
  - industry
  - state and territory governments
  - Australian Indigenous groups and organisations
  - non-government organisations.
- a call for public submissions.

Outcomes of these activities will inform the revised Code of Practice. Expert Advisory Panel members, state and territory governments and the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Water will be consulted on the revised Code of Practice before it is finalised and published.

### Timing

The Review commenced in August 2023 with a view to be finalised by the end of June 2024.



## Have your say

The department invites you to share your views and feedback regarding the Code of Practice. Questions for your consideration are included below. Please submit your feedback at [Review of crocodile code of practice survey](#). Submissions will be open until 2 February 2024.

1. What changes to the current Code of Practice would you recommend and why? (*examples may include changes to current practices such as egg management and crocodile restraint procedures*).
2. What should be included in the revised Code of Practice that does not appear in the current Code of Practice and why? (*examples may include Indigenous knowledge and specific advances in science and technology*).
3. What will be required to support implementation of the revised Code of Practice and why? (*examples may include training, education and compliance activities*).
4. What scientific literature needs to be considered by the review?
5. Is there anything additional you would like to add?

## Next Steps

Your submission will inform the revised Code of Practice. All submissions have the option to be made publicly available following the consultation period.