

Copyright (2019) by BIAZA Office (London). All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in hard copy, machine – readable or other forms without advance written permission from the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA). Members of the Association may copy this information for their own use as needed.



British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Published January 2026

BIAZA Euthanasia Policy

Definitions

For the purposes of this document BIAZA defines **medical euthanasia** as the humane killing of an animal by appropriately qualified and experienced staff for medical or quality of life reasons.

BIAZA defines **management euthanasia** as the humane killing of animals from a population in human care, for non-medical reasons.

BIAZA defines **humane killing** as the absolute minimisation of suffering of the animal during the process of ending its life within the limits of the technology and the scientific evidence available.

Euthanasia Policy

BIAZA members **MUST** have a written euthanasia policy or protocol that sets out their organisation's position on euthanasia and the processes to be followed when making euthanasia decisions. This may be a standalone policy or clearly incorporated into another relevant policy (e.g. animal welfare).

BIAZA members **MUST** have a documented ethical review process that is utilised to review euthanasia decisions. In the case of management euthanasia, this review should take place prior to implementation of the decision. In the case of medical euthanasia review may sometimes need to take place after implementation to avoid any prolonging of suffering.

When making decisions about euthanasia BIAZA members **MUST**:

- Make such decisions on a case-by-case basis
- Undertake careful discussion with those directly involved (e.g. keepers, curators, vets, welfare staff)

If it is deemed necessary to euthanise an animal, BIAZA members **MUST**:

- Use a species appropriate euthanasia technique that ensures a quick death without suffering (best practice guidance should be followed where available)
- Keep clear records of all instances of euthanasia, including recording the reasons for euthanasia

- Conform to the national legislation of the country in which they are located
- Inform BIAZA if likely to be of media interest