



A Team Approach To Aquatic Animal Health In A Large Retail Environment

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Abstract

Professional health care for fishes, amphibians, and reptiles on public display has been considered the norm for the zoo and aquarium industry since the 1990's (Hartman et al., 2005; Livengood and Chapman, 2007; Backues et al., 2011; Hadfield and Clayton, 2011). Many smaller facilities that display animals (businesses, small aquariums, science museums) lack the resources or need to justify a full time professional staff to care for these animals. Bass Pro Shops is an example of a company that displays fishes and, in some locations, game birds, snakes, turtles, alligators, and swine for the public. There have been many changes since a 2007 presentation on this TOPIC (Francis-Floyd et al., 2007). In 2017 Bass Pro Shops acquired Cabela's increasing the total number of stores with life support systems to 145. Despite the company's strong wildlife conservation ethic, exhibits at many sites are limited to one large aquarium (average size 75,000 L), and therefore not extensive enough to justify hiring a full-time aquarist or a staff veterinarian. There are currently 86 stores in the Bass Pro Shops system and of these only three have sufficient live exhibits to justify full-time staff on site. This presentation describes a well-organized animal management strategy that is working well to deliver state-of-the-science health care to thousands of animals in a geographically dispersed retail environment.

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