

Dangerous Wild Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 2004

Guidance on the keeping of Zebra



**Environment &
Heritage Service**
www.ehsni.gov.uk

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| 1. Species Names | Common or Plains Zebra subspecies: | <p><i>Equus burchelli boehmi</i></p> <p>– Grant’s zebra</p> <p><i>Equus burchelli antiquorum</i></p> <p>– Chapman’s zebra</p> |
| | Other species: | <p><i>Equus burchelli borensis</i></p> <p>– Selous’ zebra</p>
<p><i>Equus zebra</i> – Mountain zebra</p> <p><i>Equus grevyi</i> – Grevy’s zebra</p> |
| 2. Additional information | <p>All zebras require licensing under this legislation. Hybrid zebra will also require a licence.</p> | |
| 3. Conservation status | <p>Grevy’s zebra and some subspecies of the Mountain zebra are classified as Annex A species under EC Regulation 338/97 (relating to the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)).</p> <p>Special permits must be obtained to buy, sell, breed or use Annex A species for any commercial purpose.</p> | |
| 4. Housing overview | <p>Zebras are normally kept in a fenced outdoor paddock with some form of shelter, such as a horse loose box.</p> | |
| 5. Keeping experience | <p>In order to protect the welfare of these animals, keepers must be able to demonstrate a good knowledge of husbandry and handling of the species they wish to keep.</p> <p>There should normally be a second named person nominated and <i>included on the licence</i> who is competent to care for the animals should the owner be absent or incapacitated.</p> | |

Housing Recommendations

- 6. Construction** Outdoor enclosures must be strong enough to resist the animals colliding with the fence.

Outdoor floor covering may be grass or sand; however if possible there should be sufficient hard surfaces to wear down hooves. Stable flooring should be roughened concrete or a rubberised surface, to avoid slipping. Protruding obstacles should be avoided.

- 7. Fencing** Fences should be either wire mesh, clearly visible high tensile wire fitted with droppers and tensioners, or post and rails, at least 1.9 metres high (6 ft). If male zebra are to be contained, fence height should be increased to 2.5 metres (8 ft).

If wire mesh is used, the mesh size should be such that it is unlikely to entangle the zebra by the head or legs. Strong, substantial fencing is required for these animals, particularly in catch-up areas where the zebra may impact with the fence.

Zebra may chew wooden fences, so all exposed wood should be protected with sheet metal or wire material.

Fences should be checked regularly to ensure that they have not become damaged.

High stone walls may also be used to contain these species. Electric wire or wet or dry moats have also been used as containment for zebra.

The use of barbed wire is not appropriate for these animals.

8. Size

It is recommended that zebra be kept outside at grass.

The size of enclosure necessary depends on various factors, including the pasture type whether supplementary feed is to be provided. Zebra are social animals and are generally kept in groups.

Factors requiring extra space include: keeping large groups of animals, not providing supplementary feed, and using land with difficult or unusable terrain.

Enclosures must be large enough to:

Allow the animals to graze and exercise freely

Allow animals held in groups to avoid each other

Not be overburdened by waste products or a build up of parasites

Include some form of shelter from the elements

Individual zebra must have a minimum area of 5 x 10 m (15 x 30 ft). A group of three zebra can be housed in an area of at least 10 x 20 m (30 x 60 ft). For each additional animal, a further 70 m² (650 ft²) should be provided.

- 9. Temperature and Shelter** Normal outdoor temperatures in Northern Ireland should be tolerable for zebra, however it is recommended that some form of shelter is made available to these animals to protect them from extreme weather conditions. If a constructed shelter is provided, it is recommended that it be built to allow the animals to be locked inside if necessary. Standard horse loose-boxes are adequate.

If temperatures drop below 10°C (50°F), some form of heating may be required in the shelter.
- 10. Lighting** Zebra should have access to natural light.
- 11. Ventilation** If the animals are to be housed temporarily, fresh air ventilation should be provided.
- 12. Drainage** The drainage of the enclosure must be capable of rapidly removing all excess water. Drains should be designed to avoid injury to the animals. Any open drains, other than those carrying surface water, should be outside the enclosure. Any faecal material must be disposed of in an environmentally sound manner.
- 13. Cleanliness** Outdoor enclosures should be maintained in a clean state, with faeces, food debris and litter being removed on a daily basis. Hard surfaces should be hosed down or pressure washed regularly. Indoor housing should ideally be built with materials that can be easily cleaned and disinfected.

14. Social dynamics and behavioural considerations

Common and mountain zebra often live in stable family groups with one breeding male, or in all-male bachelor groups; however adults may fight when housed together. Breeding males may become aggressive if too many females are kept with him in an enclosure.

Grevy's zebra do not make the same permanent group bonds as the other species, and live in varied groups depending on the animals' individual tolerances.

Zebra stallions (breeding males) have very variable behaviour – some may be very aggressive towards females and foals while others are extremely tolerant. Female zebras form hierarchies and once a herd is established, it is very difficult to introduce additional females. It is therefore recommended that only established groups are kept. Any introductions must be carried out under expert supervision.

Some provision should be made to separate animals if necessary, if a group of zebra is kept together. Some form of quarantine may be required if an animal requires veterinary treatment. If the animals are to be kept indoors at any time, males will need to be housed individually.

In breeding groups, there must be a means of physically separating the male from the females during the final stages of pregnancy and while the foal is suckling. If the male is to be reintroduced, it is important that he can still see and smell the group while he is separated from them.

15. Prevention of escape

In addition to the fencing requirements, gates to enclosures should be securely locked at all times.

If the enclosure is accessible by the public, for example, adjoining a public highway, steps should be taken to prevent the possibility of the public gaining access to, or being injured by, the animals. This may require the erection of a secondary fence (a stand-off barrier), or a solid wall on the accessible sides of the enclosure. Warning signs may also be required.

16. Food, drink and bedding

Grass and hay are the main diet of these animals, usually supplemented with a commercial concentrated horse feed. Unlimited hay should be provided. Any supplementary feed should be provided in a way that allows all animals to feed at the same time. Salt licks may also be provided, and supplementary vitamin E is recommended if fresh grass is not available.

Sufficient fresh drinking water must be provided at all times.

The animals must not be tethered in their enclosure to allow them to graze freely.

Straw may be provided as bedding in constructed shelters.

17. Visiting interval

The animals must be monitored at appropriate intervals, normally at least once every 24 hours.

- 18. Exercise and enrichment** The enclosure should be large enough for the animals to graze and take exercise.
- 19. Provision for capture and transportation** It is useful to have a small holding yard in which animals can be separated into for darting or veterinary treatment, although a loose box can be used.
- Veterinary care should be provided on site.
- A licence, issued by the Department of the Environment, for the keeping of these animals may specify restrictions on the movement of these animals and procedures to be followed.
- These animals can be transported in a normal horsebox. Straw bedding should be provided, and the trailer used should be large enough for the animal(s) to stand and sit comfortably. The trailer must be well ventilated. Hay and water should be provided for long journeys. Male zebra should be transported separately (alone, or separated by a solid partition from other animals).
- 20. Emergency planning** There should be a written contingency plan in place to be used in the event of an emergency, for example fire, flood, animal escape or injury to the keeper.

21. Notification Requirements

A licence, issued by the Department of the Environment, for the keeping of these animals may specify procedures to be followed in the event of an escape and on the provision of information to the Emergency Services (e.g. the Fire Service) on the dangerous wild animals being kept.

You are required to notify the Department of the Environment of any intentions to breed the animals.

22. Prevention and control of spread of infectious disease

Provision should be made to allow separation of sick or injured animals from the group. This may be achieved by isolating the animal in the shelter, or by fencing off an area of the paddock.

The keeper should provide details of their veterinary arrangements with a practice prepared to treat these animals. A schedule of veterinary care, including vaccination, routine parasite control and feet and teeth checks, is necessary, and the keeping of records of veterinary attention is essential.

There are no transmissible diseases carried by these animals that pose a risk to the general public as long as there is no direct contact, and visitors are not allowed to handle the animals or their by-products.

Explanatory Notes

These notes have been produced to provide people wishing to keep dangerous wild animals with guidance on the requirements they may have to meet. In determining whether or not a licence should be issued, the Department of the Environment will consider the information provided by the applicant when applying for a licence. The Department will also arrange for a suitably qualified person to carry out an inspection of the premises at which the animal or animals will be kept and the inspector's report will also be taken into consideration. It is at the Department's discretion to waive certain recommendations, or add additional ones, to the guidance provided in this document. There is a right to appeal within 21 days if a licence is refused or if the applicant contests conditions applied to a licence.

Contact Information

For further information on the Dangerous Wild Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 2004, contact the Department of the Environment, Environment & Heritage Service, Biodiversity Unit on 028 9056 9605

For CITES enquiries:

Wildlife Licensing and Registration
Service
Global Wildlife Division
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For rabies quarantine enquiries:

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