

Challenges in fish research: the protectionist's view

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Despite the rapidly increasing use of fish in research, there are still many ethical and practical animal welfare challenges that are not receiving enough attention.

Fish research often involves a large number of individuals, as well as procedures causing a level of suffering to fish that would not be widely accepted in mammals or birds.

The Three R's approach has mainly been applied to terrestrial species in laboratory experiments. The principles of Replace, Reduce and Refine should be more rigorously applied to fish research. In addition the concepts of Rejection and Redirection are discussed.

Other relevant subjects are presented that can contribute to minimizing negative effects of fish research and help in facilitating informed public debate.

All stakeholders (animal protection groups, fish researchers, aquaculture industry and regulatory bodies) have a role to play in ensuring that fish research increasingly meets the growing public concerns for the welfare of fish.