



Oregon State
University

Division of
Research and
Innovation

IACUC

Social Housing of Social
Species Policy

Approved:
September
2024

Social Housing of Social Species - Policy

The OSU IACUC considers group or pair housing of social species as the default method of animal housing. Single housing of social species is an exception and must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC.

The 2011 *Guide* states that, "Social animals should be housed in stable pairs or groups of compatible individuals unless they must be housed alone for experimental reasons or because of social incompatibility." It is understood that research objectives, the health condition of the individual animal, and/or the challenges associated with the social behavior of some species, strains and/or sex of the animals may preclude social housing.

In general, however, pair or group housing is recommended for social species. Social housing is considered by AAALAC International as **the default method** of housing unless otherwise justified based on social incompatibility resulting from inappropriate behavior, veterinary concerns regarding animal well-being, or scientific necessity approved by the IACUC.

When necessary, single housing of social animals should be limited to the minimum period necessary and, where possible, visual, auditory, olfactory and, depending on the species, protected tactile contact with compatible conspecifics should be provided. In the absence of other animals, additional enrichment should be offered, such as safe and positive interaction with the animal care staff, as appropriate to the species of concern; periodic release into larger enclosures; supplemental enrichment items; and/or the addition of a companion animal in the room or housing area.

References

Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (ILAR 2011), p 51,

55. Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals (ASAS 2020),
Chapter 4. Environmental Enrichment (Social Enrichment).

AAALAC Position Statement, Social Housing.

<https://www.aaalac.org/accreditation-program/position-statements/#social>