

ABSTRACT

Live food items are often fed to exotic pet species whether they be birds, amphibians, reptiles, or mammals. This raises issues of welfare, both of the animals fed live prey items and the prey itself. Concerns over live food welfare are particularly marked in the feeding of vertebrate prey items and evidence presented here shows the prolonged time taken for rodents to die. However, the welfare of all exotic pets relies both on providing optimal nutrition to the predator and ensuring, as much as possible, that their natural behaviours can be expressed. Does that mean that predatory species must be fed live prey? This paper discusses this problem and seeks potential solutions.