



# ANIMAL ETHICS

## 2018 STRATEGIC PLAN

### GENERAL OVERVIEW

There were several motivations behind the creation of Animal Ethics, which included the need to connect academic and scientific work with animal advocacy, providing resources to animal activists, and promoting more speciesism-focused work.

A key reason why Animal Ethics was formed is the need to promote concern about wild animal suffering and helping wild animals. During our first few years, our focus was on spreading these concerns among people involved in animal advocacy. We believe we have been relatively successful in this respect. Just a few years ago, there was only a tiny minority of people who cared or knew about this issue. In the interim, the number of animal activists aware of its importance has grown considerably. While there are other people who have been involved in raising this awareness, Animal Ethics is the only animal organization that during the last three years has been consistently working on this issue (publishing texts about it on our website and in academic journals, speaking about it continually in our social media, giving and organizing dozens of talks about it at universities, conferences, and other places, and distributing leaflets and factsheets about wild animal suffering), which means we're likely to have been responsible for a large part of this change.

By the end of 2017, we shifted our efforts to focus on the second stage of our work, promoting the creation of welfare biology as a relevant field of research in biology. Welfare biology is the science of the negative and positive wellbeing of animals in

relation to their environment, and of what affects it positively or negatively. In 2018 and the following years, we will continue to work in this direction, with the largest part of our resources being used to promote research and interest among researchers about wild animal suffering.

In 2017 we started a qualitative research project aimed at assessing the attitudes of ecologists and animal welfare scientists about wild animal suffering and helping wild animals. We will finish this project during the first quarter of 2018 and then carry out a quantitative study aimed at assessing this. The purpose of this research is identifying promising potential lines of research in welfare biology. We will then fund research on these topics, with the aid of other institutions willing to finance research on wild animal suffering. We will provide different funding opportunities in the academic world, especially for postdocs and graduate students, that is, scientists at the beginning of their careers.

In previous years, an important percentage of our budget was spent organizing and carrying out street outreach in different countries, both as a way of reaching the general public and because of its potential for movement building and getting volunteers involved. This will change from this year on as we enter this new stage in our work. But we will continue doing work aimed at raising awareness about speciesism and especially about wild animal suffering among animal activists and the general public. Even if concern about wild animal suffering among animal activism has increased, there's still much to do in this respect.

In addition, we will continue our work to expand animal activism internationally. Few large organizations spread information in other languages (and the ones that do, usually do it in just a few languages, such as Spanish and Portuguese). We will continue to work in this area. Right now our website is likely to be the main source of information about animals and ethics, animal exploitation, wild animal suffering and related issues available internationally, given the amount of information and the fact that it's available in seven languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Italian and Polish). By the beginning of 2018, our work will expand its reach significantly because we will also publish our website in Chinese. Moreover, in 2018 we will also start distributing

leaflets in Chinese to reach Chinese-speaking communities in Western countries and Chinese students. Our plan is to start working in China by the end of 2019.

To carry out all these activities in 2018, we aim to significantly increase our income through grants and external funding for research on wild animal suffering. Since there's some uncertainty about how successful we will be, we'll be considering different possible budgets.

Our activities plan below explains our aims for this year.

## GOALS FOR 2018

Our general goals for 2018 will be the following:

1. Initiate the development of welfare biology in academia with some biologists and animal welfare scientists starting to work in the area
2. Increase our impact in terms of promotion and production of research on animal issues in general
3. Reach a larger audience online and to refine our ways to direct them to the most relevant content
4. Continue to expand our activism network globally
5. Start working in Chinese
6. Raise more funds for research on wild animal suffering
7. Continue developing our internal organization internationally

## ACTIVITIES PLAN 2018

### 1. PROMOTING ACADEMIC RESEARCH ON WILD ANIMAL SUFFERING

Creating welfare biology as a respected field for biologists to work in was already considered in our 2017 strategic plan as a priority. This will continue to be a priority going forward. In 2018, we will complete the research we started by the end of last year assessing the attitudes of biology and animal welfare scholars about different interventions to help wild animals, and use it to inform where to focus when it comes to promoting academic research. In addition to promoting the topics we identify as relevant through this study, we will also promote research linking wild animal suffering with practical research on improving the wellbeing of animals living in areas where humans have a significant impact, such as urban, suburban, and industrial zones, since it is more likely to become acceptable. We will also promote research linking knowledge about compassionate conservation and about wild animal suffering. Our assumption is that concern for the wellbeing of liminal animals (wild animals who live close to humans) and concern for animals affected by conservationist efforts in the wild can lead to research about the wellbeing of wild animals in general affected by natural conditions. These seem plausible starting points for research on welfare biology.

In addition to this, a potential course of action consists in promoting research about ways of intervention in nature currently carried out for anthropocentric reasons that can also significantly help wild animals. The clearest example may be vaccination. Wild animal vaccination is a respected area of research. Connecting this research with considerations regarding the wellbeing of animals could be a way to promote research on wild animal wellbeing.

For this new field of work to develop, it seems that it would be necessary for a group of researchers committed to helping wild animals to open new lines of research. These lines of research should concern not just diagnoses of the wellbeing of animals but also ways of improving it. Researchers in these areas needn't be fully committed to the views on wild animal suffering (and their prevalence and importance) that Animal Ethics has

(which are presented on our website). Rather, they just need to be interested in ways to improve the situation of animals. If they do research on issues that can be realistically assessed and that can have some impact, it can encourage other scientists to work on them.

Our promotion of research on these issues will be carried out differently from the ways we have done it before. The first and second Animal Ethics Essay Prize on the suffering of animals in the wild and intervention in nature didn't meet all our expectations in terms of promoting high quality research, although some good essays were received. Due to this, we will no longer be awarding this prize in the same way. Instead, we will invest more money in promoting research by graduate students and postdocs on promising lines of investigation on wild animal suffering. We will seek external funding to supplement the funding we provide directly. Our intention is to do this by looking for partnerships with university departments, as well as with other organizations willing to support this research.

In addition, we will start working on prospective syllabi for an introduction to welfare biology and wild animal welfare. Creating such syllabi isn't easy as work on this field hasn't begun yet. However, the knowledge we currently have in several fields of ecology and animal welfare can give us some hints about the direction work in this field could take, and also of the kind of readings that could be useful to advance research on it.

## **2. PROMOTING RESEARCH IN ANIMAL ISSUES IN GENERAL**

In addition to the promotion of work on wild animal suffering mentioned above, we will be working on producing materials to aid researchers in carrying out their work. We will provide a tool for scholars in different disciplines to work on this by producing syllabi in different disciplines (such as philosophy, law, biology, and politics) that can be useful to professors who may have the opportunity to lecture on these topics, especially those who have only recently started to teach.

We will also include more information for researchers, including a database about works in speciesism, wild animal suffering, veganism, and related issues. We will produce bibliographies using the lists of references we have included in the articles we

have already published, and a guide to resources about animal issues in academic networks such as Academia.edu, Google Scholar, PhilPapers, and ResearchGate.

### 3. CARRYING OUT RESEARCH

In previous years, we published extensive and previously unavailable information on our website about speciesism and its consequences for exploited animals, as well as on wild animal suffering, sentience, and related issues. In 2018, we will publish more texts in these areas, although not at the same pace at which we have published in previous years, given the focus our work will have on promoting academic interest in the factors that affect wild animals. The bulk of our new research will be carried out by our network of volunteer researchers.

In 2018, we will publish more material on wild animal suffering, a topic on which we already have published many texts. We will revise existing content to update it and present it in a way that is easier to understand. We will also publish a general introductory page on wild animal suffering which will summarize the content of the other pages on the subject.

We will also publish more work based on new research on wild animal suffering. This work will be focused on the conditions that can increase or decrease wild animal suffering. Our intention is to publish more on this topic in the following years too, though our focus won't be on doing research ourselves, but on promoting research by scholars. The material we will publish in 2018 will examine the different estimates of the proportion between suffering and wellbeing for different types of animals depending on their life history traits.

In addition to this, we will publish a series of articles about effective animal activism from a viewpoint concerned with wild animal suffering and the importance of not just existing animals but also future sentient beings. We will include several papers about how cognitive biases impede the proper consideration of the interests of all sentient beings and impede the effectiveness of our work for them.

We will also do more research about animals and politics and the legal status of animals in different countries, a topic on which we have already published some papers. We will continue doing research on other topics too, in particular on animal sentience, which we will publish over the next several years.

Finally, by the end of 2018 we will design a research study aimed at examining the impact of our materials in attitudinal and behavioral changes towards speciesism, consuming animals, and wild animal suffering. We will do this for our website texts and our printed materials.

#### **4. WEBSITE WORK**

Our work on website translations during previous years has been very productive. At the beginning of January, we will launch the Chinese version of our website, which will be our first step in our plan to do outreach to reach Chinese speakers. It will be in standard simplified Mandarin Chinese. This will be the eighth language our website is available in. In 2018 we'll also be working on the Russian and Romanian versions of the website. Work on the translation of the website into traditional Chinese (which is prevalent in areas such as Taiwan and Singapore) will begin as well. Doing this will be easier once the website is in simplified Chinese. We expect to have them ready before the end of the year, or by the first quarter of 2019.

In addition, we will be looking for volunteers to translate our website into other languages. We will explore, in particular, how feasible it may be to have it translated into Japanese and the most widely spoken languages in India besides English. Other options may be open depending on volunteer work availability.

Right now our website has about 150 articles in English about speciesism, animals and ethics, animal sentience, wild animal suffering, animal exploitation, and veganism. In 2018, our website will be expanded with the two additional sections mentioned above, addressing animals, politics, and the law and on effective animal activism, in addition to a new subsection about what conditions increase wild animal suffering.

In 2018, we will also publish a microsite in several languages, explaining the basics of speciesism for the general public. It will contain information about veganism and encouraging behavioral changes, but the focus will be in achieving attitudinal changes. It

will, due to this, be focused on speciesism more than on veganism. It will also include information about wild animal suffering, presented in a way that is simple and appealing. This microsite will serve as a landing page for some of our Facebook ads and for our leaflets.

We will also be improving our website in terms of usability, adding new ways of finding content and emphasizing its function for capacity building.

A significant part of all this work will be volunteer work, so our expenses will be low.

## **5. SEMINARS AND TALKS**

2016 and 2017 were very active years for Animal Ethics in terms of talks. Our representatives gave seminars and talks in many countries, including the US, the UK, Canada, Germany, Spain, Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. In 2017, we gave or organized close to 60 talks. In 2018, our representatives will give at least 30 talks and seminars. In 2017, we organized two series of talks in Spain and in Brazil aimed at reaching people with an interest in animal activism. In 2018, we will carry out a similar initiative in the US and will also give a large number of talks in other countries in areas where we expect to have the greatest impact. We will also try to attend conferences where we can reach influential people and animal advocates, such as the Minding Animals Conference and effective altruism events.

## **6. SOCIAL NETWORKING**

By the end of 2017, our Facebook page in English has over 175K followers, our page in Spanish over 165K, and our page in Portuguese over 95K, making a total of over 435K. Our aim for 2018 is for this figure to reach 600K, with our English and Spanish pages each reaching over 240K.

We've been publishing content usually once a day. In 2018, we may reduce the number of publications per week in order to improve their average quality.

We will also keep increasing our Facebook ads to direct potentially interested people to the issues we think are most important to spread concern about. Once we have the new introductory page about wild animal suffering, we will run Facebook ads leading to it. We will also run ads leading to our microsites to (i) spread concern about speciesism, (ii) introduce the question of wild animal suffering in relation to speciesism and (iii) spread veganism in a way that connects it with concern about speciesism. We will be measuring our results in order to assess to what extent this is an effective way of spreading concern for these topics.

## **7. STREET ACTIVISM**

Our leaflets are currently being distributed in several different countries, including the USA, Spain, Brazil, and Canada, and we have sent leaflets to other countries such as the UK, Australia, South Africa, Finland, and Argentina. During 2017, we distributed around 280,000 leaflets all around the world. Animal Ethics volunteers carry out dozens of tabling events every year.

Our leaflet design decisions take into account the knowledge gained by studies carried out by other organizations regarding approaches to make their content easier to accept. However, the aims of our leaflets differ from those of the materials of other groups. We stress changes of attitudes toward speciesism more than changes of behavior (though our leaflets advocate clearly for veganism) and address wild animal suffering. These two features make Animal Ethics leaflets more efficient in terms of long term impact, in a way that makes a difference for many more animals than only the ones living today. We're the only animal organization we know of that is doing this. Our leaflets raise concern about these under-addressed issues among the general public. They also contribute to creating an antispeciesist and pro-concern for wild animal suffering culture within animal advocacy. In addition to this, street outreach has been a useful way for us to get activists involved, activists who help with other work as well.

In 2018, our aims include distributing our materials in several other countries, including Germany, Switzerland, Mexico, and Colombia, and increasing the total number of leaflets distributed to at least 300,000. In addition, we will start leafleting with Chinese materials in Europe and North America.

Street outreach was an important part of our budget in previous years. However, despite our aim to expand our work in this area, we expect to be able to decrease our budget for street outreach, for several reasons: First, part of our previous expenses on this had to do with the time spent by paid staff creating an activist network and coordinating leafleting and tabling events. Now that we already have this network with a large number of volunteers, the number of hours our activists spend organizing and carrying out these tasks will be significantly reduced this year. Second, another part of our previous budget was spent preparing our materials, which are now ready or almost ready (we're about to finish a leaflet about veganism and our materials in Chinese). Finally, we'll be reducing printing costs by producing our materials in higher numbers.

## **8. PARTNERSHIP WITH SMALL ANIMAL ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS**

Part of the street activism and events organization that we will carry out will be done in collaboration with small local organizations located in different places. We will engage in different partnership relationships with them, co-financing their activities and helping them to organize both events and the production of the materials they need. This way, the work of small local groups won't be constrained by lack of resources.

# **FUNDRAISING, INTERNAL ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION WORK**

## **1. FUNDRAISING**

In 2018, we plan to increase our fundraising efforts in order to get financial support for our projects aimed at promoting work in welfare biology. In addition to reaching individuals who might want to support our work, we intend to get financial support from funds aimed at promoting high impact causes. Part of this work will also involve trying to create partnerships with other groups concerned about wild animal suffering to increase both our impact and our capacity to raise funds.

## **2. INTERNAL ORGANIZATION**

Our investment in outreach work in previous years, especially in 2017, led us to grow significantly in terms of volunteers, and to hire four people (two of them part time). This also led us to invest time in 2017 working on our internal organization, designing working and coordination protocols. In 2018, we plan to continue this work to maximize our efficiency in using volunteer work in all fields. We aim at having a paid staff of 5-6 people with at least three of them working full time, who together with the board will be in charge of the main tasks of the organization. Our paid staff will include (i) three general coordinators, who will be in charge of making sure our activities are carried out and of recruiting and coordinating volunteer work, respectively, in the English, the Spanish, and the Portuguese speaking world (in 2019 our aim is to hire a general coordinator in China), (ii) one person in charge of graphic design and social media, and (iii) one person or two (depending on our resources) focused on developing our effort to promote work about wild animal suffering in academia and on assessing attitudes towards wild animal suffering.

## **3. ADMINISTRATION WORK**

Our administrative duties have to do mainly with our finances and legal requirements. They will be carried out by our board and general coordinators.