



# ANIMAL ETHICS 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

## GENERAL OVERVIEW

The capacity of Animal Ethics has increased very significantly in the last year and a half, and we can now pursue more and larger projects.

In previous years, our focus was to educate people in different spheres (chiefly the general public, animal advocates, and academics) about antispeciesism and wild animal suffering. We now are focused on reaching more influential people, especially in scientific fields, to promote and support the creation of a new field of research called welfare biology. Welfare biology is focused on learning more about the harms that animals suffer in the wild and how to act to prevent them.

Another main aim this year is learning about how to best carry out antispeciesist and wild animal suffering-focused work in Asia. We are already researching this in China, and expect to complete a longer research project about this in a few months. We plan to start researching in India as well.

We will continue doing research on other issues related to animals' interests, as well as outreach work. Our website has expanded, and including all languages it has more than a thousand articles. This year we expect to reach 1,200.

We will continue to give seminars and talks (in 2017 and 2018, we gave or organized on average one talk every six days). Our focus is to reach influential people in academia and advocacy. In social media work, we will prioritize improving our education work and communicating better with those who already follow us.

We will continue to supply our printed materials to other animal advocates who use them in their own work. Our own staff will no longer be involved in leafleting activities and focus instead on the areas listed above. The only exception to this will be the distribution of leaflets in Chinese, which we will continue to do. We will also look for ways to collaborate with other animal advocates focused on speciesism and wild animal suffering.

In general, our approach to outreach is focusing not on increasing the number of those we reach, but on having an impact where our influence can make the biggest difference.

## OUR MAIN GOALS FOR 2019

### **1. Promote and support work in the new field of welfare biology**

- Acquire knowledge about impactful lines of research
- Get welfare biology work started by scientists

### **2. Promote wild animal suffering concern and advocacy**

- Influence animal advocates and effective altruists
- Provide supporting information and tools

### **3. Increase the efficiency of our workflows**

- Improve our onboarding processes and training
- Leverage the use of technology wherever we can

### **4. Expand our antispeciesist work internationally, focusing on Asia and Latin America**

### **5. Improve and expand our online education work**

## ACTIVITIES PLAN FOR 2019

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

Last year, Animal Ethics began concentrating on the creation of a new academic field in natural sciences focused on wild animals, called welfare biology. We will continue to make this our primary area of work in 2019. This is chiefly because academics are more likely to be respected and to influence policy makers, and because the amount of research that can be carried out in academia is much greater than what animal advocates could do.

The work will be in four areas:

1. Learn how to establish welfare biology as a new field
2. Provide tools to make working in the field easier
3. Encourage scientists to do work in this field
4. Organize and fund research

The activities in each area are explained below.

#### **Research directed at learning how to best promote welfare biology**

In 2018, we carried out a qualitative research project assessing the attitudes of biologists, animal welfare scientists, and students towards welfare biology and reducing wild animal suffering. Based on the findings, we are now carrying out a quantitative project, asking students and scientists about different forms of intervention to aid wild animals to see which ones they would more readily support and regard as more interesting, and which are more likely to receive funding. The results of these projects will be presented during the first quarter of the year and used to consider what kind of research to promote and fund.

We also started work on a research study about how new academic fields have developed in recent decades, such as animal welfare science and conservation biology. This and the previously mentioned quantitative project are supported by Animal Charity Evaluators. The knowledge we gain from this will help us to better understand how to

promote the creation of welfare biology as a new research area. We expect to complete and write a report on this research in the first quarter as well. We will use this to guide our general strategy in establishing the field of welfare biology, and publish it so other animal organizations can benefit from it as well.

### **Providing tools for those wanting to work in welfare biology**

In 2018, we created welfare biology research project drafts on issues such as wild animal vaccination and urban welfare ecology. We are now preparing longer reports explaining in more detail how such projects could be developed. During 2019, we will publish several of these reports. The aim is to make things as easy as possible for those wanting to work in this field.

We will also provide advice to students in biology, animal welfare science, and related fields concerning what kind of research could be useful for both their careers and the development of welfare biology.

The bibliography section of our website contains several lists of welfare biology related academic publications. We are now compiling more extensive lists of works in ecology, animal welfare science, and other sciences that may be relevant for different forms of intervention aimed at helping animals in the wild.

We have also been preparing syllabi for professors and other people who want to teach about welfare biology. We will publish them this year.

### **Encouraging scientists to do work in this field**

Members of the Animal Ethics welfare biology team will write academic papers proposing the development of welfare biology, for biology and animal welfare journals, as well as ethics and philosophy of science journals.

We will publish new work about what the lives of animals from different phyla are like in the wild.

We will also attend biology conferences and seminars to present the new approach of welfare biology.

### **Promoting welfare biology**

We will look for research groups and scientists who may be interested in doing research in welfare biology topics. We will also look for researchers and students who may be interested in promoting welfare biology. We will start building a network of academics, students, and volunteers supporting this aim, though this will be a long process. We'll evaluate platforms that may help facilitate this.

We will start funding work carried out in welfare biology. There are several programs whose implementation we are considering, including the following:

- (i) Funding promising welfare biology projects carried out by research teams or centers, especially by teams that already have a strong background of work in ecology.
- (ii) Funding the work of master's students to do research in this area. We may consider funding remote (online) internships of master's students with us, in which we will focus on helping them with their research and provide them with partial funding.
- (iii) Providing funding to postdocs willing to do research on welfare biology that will be highly visible and potentially influential.

We will also be in contact with people from other organizations to assess their interest in collaborating on the different initiatives to promote welfare biology.

## **2. CAPACITY BUILDING IN WILD ANIMAL SUFFERING ADVOCACY**

Since we started our work, one of our main aims has been to spread information about wild animal suffering and how to work to prevent it, directed to the general public, academics, and animal advocates. While there has been progress in this field in terms of awareness, this has not yet been reflected much in the activism that most other people do. Most animal advocates, and in particular the majority of animal organizations, do not work on wild animal suffering. Some of them don't know how to do it, or think it's an intractable issue, while many others don't even see it as a problem at all, which we believe is mostly from a lack of information.

This is a problem that can be addressed by providing more information about wild animal suffering to animal advocates and by providing them tools they can use in wild animal suffering advocacy. We expect this to increase interest in the area as well as encourage work in it.

To achieve this aim we will:

(1) improve and expand our online materials about wild animal suffering, helping wild animals, and welfare biology, including new materials about what the lives of animals in the wild are like and what can be done to improve them;

(2) translate these materials into at least three other languages (Spanish, French, and Portuguese); and

(3) work on audio and video materials (including lectures) about wild animal suffering, helping wild animals, and welfare biology. The extent to which we will be able to work on this will depend on the funding we get.

### **3. RESEARCH ON HOW TO BEST CARRY OUT ACTIVISM IN ASIA**

The Chinese version of our website has been available for a year, and for several months we have been distributing leaflets in Chinese too. During the last few months of 2018, we started to do research about the best ways to carry out activism against speciesism and for wild animals in China. We have already gained some important knowledge, and will deepen our research. We need to be cautious about how we work in China. China is an extremely promising country for animal advocacy, not only because of its huge population, but also given the influence China is expected to have on other countries in the future. Due to cultural differences and political circumstances, it is possible to make big mistakes when carrying out advocacy work in China.

We aim at researching this during the first two thirds of the year, and on the basis of the results, deciding how to proceed in our work there in the last third of 2019. We will do this not just from abroad but by having someone working in mainland China during this year. We will look for synergies with other animal advocates also carrying out or intending to carry out animal advocacy in China.

In addition to this, in 2019 we will start investigating the prospects for advocacy focused on antispeciesism and wild animal suffering in India. There are several reasons for this. India also has a huge population (at some point during next decade it will surpass China as the most populous country), and its economy is becoming quite large. Moreover, there are several factors that make work in India potentially more efficient than in other Asian countries. India has a tradition of concern for some animals, ingrained in its main religious traditions. In addition, it is a country where activism can be carried out in English.

#### **4. INCREASE OUR ACTIVISM IN BRAZIL AND OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES**

In 2019, we plan to increase our work to spread concern about speciesism, veganism, and wild animals in Brazil. We have been active there for the past three years and have regularly carried out activities in 4 different states. We plan to expand our activism there with a focus on reaching university students. Its extent will depend on the funding we secure.

In addition, we want to increase our activity in the rest of Latin America. We have collaborated previously with different organizations, particularly in Mexico and Argentina. In 2019, we plan to increase this collaboration, aiming especially at working with small animal organizations and people constrained by funding limitations in countries where there are few economic resources available but a big potential for change.

#### **5. RESEARCH ON OTHER TOPICS**

In addition to our research in welfare biology and advocacy in Asia, we will continue our other research on topics such as animal sentience, politics, the legal status of animals, and effective animal activism. The results of this research will be published on our website.

## 6. WEBSITE WORK

Our website is available in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, German, Italian, Polish, and Chinese – eight languages. During 2019, we expect to make important progress with the translation of our website into Russian and Romanian. We have been considering the possibility of having it published in traditional Chinese in addition to the current simplified Chinese, but given that the vast majority of Chinese speakers use simplified Chinese today, we decided against making this a priority. It will be dependent on whether we get volunteers who can do this. We are also considering having the website translated into other languages, but, again, it will depend on whether we have volunteer translators and editors willing to help.

Including all languages, our website has more than a thousand pages and blog posts about animal ethics, animal exploitation, wild animal suffering, the defense of animals, and other related issues. There is no comparable website with as much content on these topics. Our aim for 2019 is to surpass 1,200 pages.

In 2019, we will start to create audio versions of our webpages in at least some languages. We will continue improving website usability.

We have been publishing blog posts regularly in six of the eight languages in which our website is available, and will continue to do so in 2019. We expect to post at least twice a month in English. Our new publications about wild animal suffering and welfare biology will amount to at least 40% of the content we post, and probably more than half.

## 7. SEMINARS AND TALKS

In terms of seminars and talks, our activity has been increasing every year. Between 2017 and 2018, our representatives have given close to 120 talks and seminars in many countries in North America, South America, Europe, and Oceania. In 2018, we carried out a tour of talks in the US and Mexico, and had spokespersons featured as keynote speakers at several global conferences. We believe that it is now time to focus more on reaching key agents with these events. This includes people working in academia, as well as people who could play an important role in making a change for sentient animals, including effective altruists and animal organizations' staff members.



Due to this, in 2019 we expect to focus less on giving a large number of talks and more on increasing the impact we can achieve with each talk. Although our total number of talks may be reduced, we will increase the number of talks we give at conferences and at academic seminars targeting professors, researchers, and graduate students. We will do this particularly in the UK and other European countries where we would like to increase our presence.

Finally, we will organize short courses and reading groups to spread concern about wild animals and boost the training of people interested in animal ethics and animal advocacy.

## **8. SOCIAL MEDIA**

By the end of 2018, all of our Facebook pages together have reached more than half a million followers (around 580,000). This includes our pages in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Our aim for 2019 will not be to significantly increase our number of followers, but to increase our impact among those who are already following us. We will also follow this policy on Twitter and Instagram.

In 2019, our work in social media will be more focused on sending traffic to our website. In previous years, we have often opted for simplicity over nuanced messages in order to reach more people. Our aim now is to move towards a more developed message, to have the highest average quality possible without losing our capacity to communicate successfully. We will increase the depth and coverage of our main concepts, and align them as much as possible with visitor intent. We will also try to determine how to best communicate with our English-speaking followers in Asia.

## **9. CIRCULATION OF OUR MATERIALS**

With translations into new languages, we have increased our global reach while reducing the total amount of resources we have invested in materials.

When we started our work, leafleting and tabling events were an important part of our activism. This was not only to reach the general public, but also a way to encourage a more speciesism-focused and wild animal suffering-concerned culture among animal advocates. We think we have contributed to this happening, given that (i) in those initial years of activism over half a million of our leaflets were distributed (mainly in North America and Europe, but also in South America and Oceania); (ii) most of these materials have been distributed not by us, but by other animal organizations and grassroots animal activists; and (iii) our leaflets and fact sheets focus on changes of attitudes towards speciesism and helping animals in the wild. We're the only animal organization we know of that is widely distributing materials with this approach. In addition, by doing this we provide a service to other organizations and advocates who need printed materials for the events they carry out.

In mid-2018, we changed our policy concerning leafleting. In order to focus on other courses of action, we reduced our own leafleting and tabling activities, although we kept having our materials distributed by other people. This decision was made after reflecting on our priorities, listening to the views and experiences of other people involved in animal advocacy, and reading reports on the effectiveness of different interventions to aid animals. The only exception to this has been leafleting efforts for Chinese speakers (especially university students) in Western countries.

We reduced the amount of materials we had initially planned to distribute. While in 2017 around 280,000 of our leaflets were distributed, in 2018 we estimate that figure to be closer to 200,000. Animal Ethics's activists distributed fewer leaflets, though the number of our leaflets distributed by others has increased. In 2019, we expect this figure to be under 200,000, considering that while there will be more Animal Ethics leaflets distributed by other people, there will also be significantly fewer distributed by us.

## FUNDRAISING AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

Despite not having a very large budget, our team keeps growing and our capacity to work has increased a lot. In order to maintain this in the coming years, we will have to be able to increase our funding. Our efforts carried out in previous years have made it possible for us to be able to complete our aims for 2018, in particular our welfare biology work. We think we have good chances of getting funding to successfully develop our research about activism in China and India this year. But we will need to secure more funding in 2019 in order to maintain the same level of other work going forward.

We have become more efficient in managing volunteers. Last year, we introduced volunteer internships as a way of channeling the efforts of those willing to contribute to our work. From now on, we will generally manage the work of our volunteers this way, as our previous management of volunteer work outside these programs has been very time consuming and significantly less efficient.

Finally, in order to increase our effectiveness, we intend to improve our internal organization and introduce processes that reduce the amount of time spent on coordination efforts, get our team better integrated and motivated, and increase everyone's awareness of the rest of the team's goals and work. We will work to prevent bottlenecks in the development of our projects as we continue to grow, and increase the overall adaptability of our organization. We will also invest in efficiency and communication enhancing technology.