

Animal Ethics Work in 2020



2020 has been a challenging year. But at Animal Ethics we have continued to increase the pace of our work and we made important progress in three areas:

1. We published groundbreaking educational work about wild animal advocacy
2. We have continued to make progress in promoting the study of wild animal suffering in academia
3. We have continued to expand our educational work about the moral consideration of animals internationally



Educational work about wild animal advocacy

Many people, including many animal advocates, haven't heard about wild animal suffering, or know a little about it but don't know what can be done to help animals in the wild. As a result, very few people have been involved in this work.

To help fill the knowledge gap, in 2020 we published extensive educational materials about this topic in several formats. The materials cover why this is an important field and what can be done about it now, and provide specific ideas and guidelines about how to work in this area.

Online video course about wild animal suffering advocacy

We have published the first online course about wild animal suffering. The course contains 28 videos as well as related materials, organized into three modules. The videos in the course are subtitled in English and in Portuguese, and we are currently completing subtitles in French. In addition, the course has been filmed separately **in Spanish**. This is the list of the course units:

Introduction to wild animal suffering: video course

Introduction	Introduction to wild animal suffering
Module 1	Wild animal suffering and ways to help
Unit 1	What is wild animal suffering?
Unit 2	Harms suffered by animals due to weather conditions and natural disasters
Unit 3	Diseases and parasitism
Unit 4	Hunger and psychological suffering
Unit 5	Conflicts
Unit 6	Injuries due to accidents
Unit 7	Reproductive strategies and wild animal suffering
Unit 8	Rescuing animals
Unit 9	Various ways of helping animals
Unit 10	Vaccinating animals in the wild
Unit 11	What you can do

Module 2	Animal ethics
Unit 12	Speciesism, moral consideration and anthropocentrism
Unit 13	Arguments against speciesism I
Unit 14	Arguments against speciesism II
Unit 15	Ethical theories and nonhuman animals
Unit 16	Animal Ethics and environmentalist ethics
Unit 17	What is sentience?
Unit 18	Invertebrate sentience

Module 3	Promoting academic work to help wild animals
Unit 19	The concepts of welfare, animal welfare, and wild animal welfare
Unit 20	What is welfare biology?
Unit 21	Reasons for promoting academic work in welfare biology
Unit 22	Promising areas for welfare biology research
Unit 23	Welfare biology and other cross-disciplinary fields
Unit 24	Responses to criticisms to the ethics of helping animals
Unit 25	Practical objections against helping wild animals
Unit 26	Wild animal suffering and the importance of the future

A companion ebook about wild animal suffering

We also published a 222 page free ebook that expands on the content of the course and includes a long list of scientific references. Again, this is the first of its kind. You can download it here:



Introduction to wild animal suffering: A guide to the issues

This book aims both to raise awareness about the importance of the situation of wild animals and to help train animal advocates on this topic.

The audio versions of our texts about wild animals

We also published **audio versions of the wild animal suffering materials** on our website. They cover the following topics:

- Introduction to wild animal suffering
- The situation of animals in the wild (9 texts)
- Why wild animal suffering matters (3 texts)
- Helping wild animals (6 texts)

In addition to English, all these audios and texts are also available in Spanish and Portuguese.

These materials, especially the video course and the ebook, have been the most extensive projects we have completed to date. This was our largest project in 2020 and we're very happy that we have been able to provide accessible materials to help people understand that wild animal suffering is an important and tractable area of work, and to encourage them to support it.



Work promoting the study of how to help wild animals in academia

Making a difference in the situation of wild animals is possible, and having a huge impact in the long term is feasible. However, for that we need to get academic work on this topic done and have it established as a serious field of research. With this aim, in 2020 we published the results of several studies about how to promote this work in academia, we have continued to work with researchers at different universities, and we've conducted novel research about issues important to the development of this field.

Two studies on how to establish work on welfare biology in academia

This year we published the results of two research projects on how to promote work on welfare biology in academia.

- A 64 page qualitative study, using interviews, of the attitudes of scientists towards different ways of helping animals in the wild and on opportunities and barriers for research on wild animal welfare:



Scientists' attitudes towards improving the welfare of animals in the wild: a qualitative study

- A 56 page quantitative study, using a survey, of the attitudes of scientists and students, to address the same issue in more depth:

Surveying attitudes towards helping wild animals among scientists and students

Together, these studies identify important obstacles and opportunities. One of the most encouraging findings is that professors and students have similar preferences and perceptions about promising areas of study, which include vaccinations, the effects of weather conditions, and the wellbeing of urban animals. This work can provide a framework for successfully fostering academic work in this field.

Academic research on welfare biology funded by Animal Ethics

Animal Ethics has partnered with academics working in several universities to develop research projects to study the welfare of animals in the wild. As a result of one of these partnerships, we funded and published a study about wild animals in forest fires and how to help, which was done by a postdoc researcher at the Autonomous University of Madrid. The study includes a literature review of more than 400 publications about how animals are harmed by forest fires and about how they can be helped.

Challenges posed by fires to wild animals and how to help: a literature review

In addition, this work has been presented in a paper submitted for publication in a biology journal, which is available as a preprint: **“Fires in nature: a review of the challenges for wild animals”**

Other projects resulting from partnerships between Animal Ethics and university departments include a research project on a framework to aid welfare-based decision-making to help stranded whales at the Marine Research Group, based at Massey University, New Zealand, and a study of the causes of harm to wild animals in Canada, at the University of Guelph, Canada.

These projects will provide information about the factors that affect the wellbeing of wild animals. This information can be used to inform policies that could help wild animals, and can foster further academic work on the wellbeing of animals in the wild.

Research on issues in welfare biology

We have also published our own work addressing issues that are relevant to helping wild animals.

- *An article examining wild animal suffering and the response to it during the particularly bad fire season in Australia early this year*
 - *A study about the prospects for wild animal vaccination programs against coronaviruses like SARS-CoV2*
 - *A study about the negative and positive effects of habitat fragmentation on animals*
 - *A short paper examining the legal consideration of wild animals in the United States*
 - We also published an article about the effects of **status quo bias** on the moral consideration of animals, which addressed among other things the way this bias leads to disregard for wild animals.
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Expansion of work internationally

Animal Ethics has always considered it crucial to work internationally, because it's vital to expand concern about sentient beings to as many places as possible. It is important to us that such work is led by local people who know the local situation. We give talks, seminars, and classes for audiences who don't have English as their native language. In addition, our website materials are available in many languages and this year we published new materials in several languages. This is especially important because information about issues like speciesism, animal sentience, and wild animal suffering is still lacking in many languages.

Beginning work in India

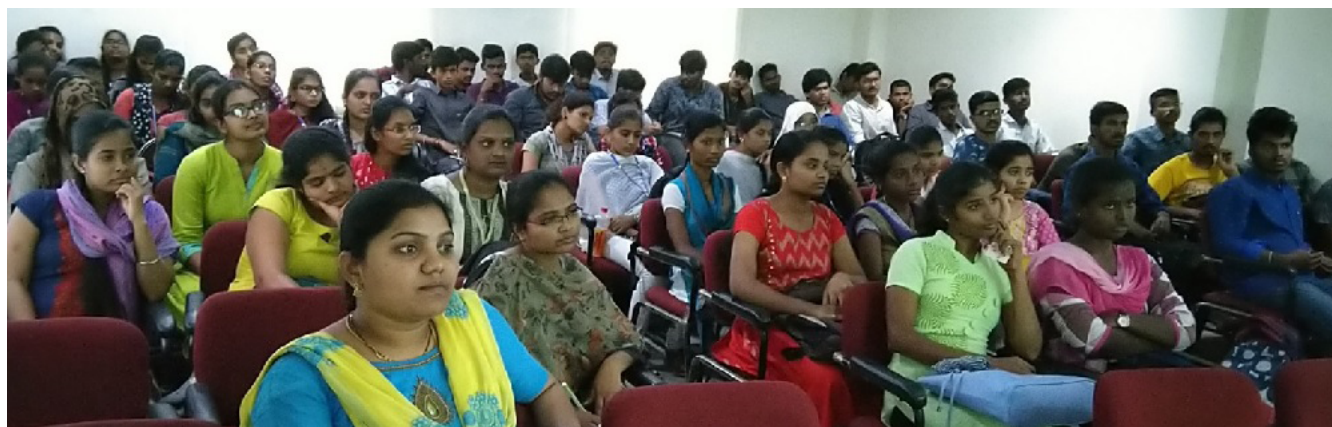
In January 2020 **we announced the beginning of our work in India**. With a population of over 1.4 billion people, India is the second most populated country (and is likely to soon become the first), it's been estimated to be the world's fifth largest economy, and it has a historic tradition of concern for animals. Its population is mostly young, with the average age under 30. At the beginning of this year, we began a series of talks at Indian universities about the moral consideration of animals and wild animal suffering, which we discontinued due to the spread of COVID-19. We gave talks at the following universities:

- Andhra Vidyalaya College of Arts Science and Commerce- Zoology Branch and Biotechnology Branch
- Osmania University
- St. Ann's College
- University of Hyderabad- Animal Biology Branch and Integrated Studies Branch
- Maulana Azad National Urdu University
- Loyola College
- Telengana State Veterinary University

During those initial months of activity we also had meetings with other animal organizations in India to let them know about wild animal suffering and about the **antispeciesist** and **longtermism** approaches to helping animals, and we attended the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisation / South West Animal Rights Conference with this purpose.

When our talks program was discontinued, we turned to giving talks and webinars online.

- A talk to Indian Institute of Public Health – Gujarat students on wild animal suffering
- A talk on speciesism with Fridays for Future – Hyderabad
- Two live webinars about the moral consideration of animals broadcasted on social media for an Indian Audience, in June and November
- A talk at the Asia Animal Advocacy Conference for Indian participants



In addition, we translated our materials into Hindi, the most widely spoken language in India (where most people don't speak English). We published the **Hindi version of our website**, making information about wild animal suffering available for the first time in this language.

Increasing our work in Brazil and other countries in Latin America

In 2020 we have continued our outreach work in Brazil, with a focus on reaching university students and researchers. We organized and gave two officially recognized courses about animal ethics and wild animal welfare at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (which this year, due to the pandemic restrictions, were online, and are available on our [YouTube channel in Portuguese](#)). Animal Ethics speakers also gave talks at the following events:

- The Webconf Animal Rights 2020
- A live webinar about speciesism and wild animal suffering broadcasted on social media for a Brazilian Audience
- The Veganário Fest

In addition, Animal Ethics representatives gave talks at several other events organized in Latin America.

In Argentina:

- The 1st International Virtual Animal Law Conference
- The University of Buenos Aires Social Sciences Seminar
- The Animal Law Observatory seminars

In Chile:

- The 3rd Animal Law Conference
- The 5th Meetings on Animal Law

In Mexico: The 4th March Against Speciesism Event

In Uruguay: The online seminar series of the Association for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

In Bolivia: The 1st International Conference on Animal Law at the University of San Andrés UMSA

Online conferences and events

In addition to the talks listed above, Animal Ethics's spokespersons have given talks, seminars, and presentations at different international events, and we have organized some events ourselves as well.

- A series of five talks about the arguments against speciesism in English, Spanish, and Portuguese during the **World Day for the End of Speciesism** event
- A talk at the International Vegan Rights Online Conference
- A talk on challenging speciesism for the Red & Green VegFest online
- A joint presentation at the EAGx Student Summit conference on **the emerging field of wild animal welfare research**

We also ran a series of online live interviews with academics and animal advocates who have made important contributions to the defense of animals, including Steve Sapontzis, Jo-Anne McArthur, Siobhan O'Sullivan, and Mark Bernstein.

In addition, Animal Ethics co-hosted a **virtual summit about how to best help wild animals** together with two other organizations, Wild Animal Initiative and Rethink Priorities, that was attended by people belonging to seven other animal and effective altruist organizations. The participants had a variety of different areas of expertise, in natural science, policy, law, philosophy, and communication, as well as varied experiences in activism.

Making new information available in multiple languages

We regularly upload new content in the different languages on our site. In addition, we work in social media in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Counting our followers in all these languages, we have more than 550,000 followers on **Facebook**, and we are also active on **Twitter**, **Instagram**, and **YouTube** in these three languages. We regularly upload new content in the multiple languages on our site. This year, this includes our updated texts about wild animal suffering in French, Spanish, and Portuguese, and new articles about wild animal suffering in other languages. We don't just translate texts from English; several of our materials are written directly by our local activists in other languages, such as a recent article in Spanish about the legal situation of animals in Latin America. We are not aware of other animal organizations providing the kind of information we have in most of the nine languages in which our site is available.

Animal Ethics is getting more people interested in the cause of wild animal suffering and, more generally, about the moral consideration of animals. We are also enabling the gradual introduction of studies in how to reduce wild animal suffering. And in many places, all around the world, we are initiating the debate about these issues among university students, animal advocates, and other people interested in making the world a better place.

All this has been possible thanks to all those who have supported our work. But we can accomplish more. Animal Ethics's work is severely funding-constrained: there is much more that we could do but cannot afford to because of a lack of resources.

In 2021, we plan to produce research papers about sentience, wild animal suffering in urban areas, wild animal vaccination programs, and animal ethics. In addition, we will continue giving talks and webinars in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. And we'll also expand our work in India.

We make a great effort to make the best use of every dollar we get. There is still little awareness about what the lives of wild animals are actually like and about how we can help them. This makes it challenging to get support for this cause. Your support can make a huge difference.

Will you give us a hand? Please consider [**supporting our work**](#) so we can continue accomplishing the kinds of things we did in 2020!



Animal Ethics

