

Animal Ethics:

The Year in review 2021



In 2021 we extended our reach more than ever before, connecting with new audiences online and increasing our outreach on YouTube and social media. We also had a busy publication schedule, including:

- Examining challenges in animal advocacy
- Considering what life is like for urban wild animals
- Expanding our ethics and animals website section

Below you'll find a summary of these and other achievements this year.

The year in numbers

- 29 Videos
- 300+ Pages added to website
- 20 Workshops, meetings, and AMAs
- 21 Talks
- 5 Interviews
- 6 Courses taught by AE representatives
- 3 Reports
- 4 Literature reviews and papers
- 1 Academic paper published

We now have:

- 1,700+ web pages
 - 600,000+ followers on social media
 - 83,000+ views on YouTube
 - Video courses in 3 languages
 - An ebook accompanying the course in 2 languages
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About Animal Ethics

At Animal Ethics we promote respect for nonhuman animals through education and outreach, including a resource website, videos, workshops, university courses, and providing materials for high school classes.

We promote ways of improving the lives of animals in the wild such as vaccinations, helping animals in natural disasters, and providing aid during extreme weather conditions. We educate about safe technologies that can be used to help wild animals on a large scale.

Animal Ethics takes an antispeciesist approach because we believe that discriminatory attitudes toward animals is one of the biggest barriers to helping them. Speciesism is discrimination against those who don't belong to a certain species, with some species being disregarded more than others. Animals living in the wild are a particularly neglected group.

Animal Ethics also has a longtermist approach: we believe we should care about what happens not only to sentient beings living now but also to those who will live in the future, and we work to attain the best possible overall change in the long term.

Our areas of work in 2021 included both research and outreach work. We published work on wild animals, animal sentience, ethics and animals, and perspectives on animal advocacy. We also created website and video resources, engaged in academic and public outreach about speciesism, animal ethics, and topics related to wild animal suffering.



Animal Ethics publications

One of the problems with working in a neglected area like helping wild animals is that there is not yet a familiar context in which to discuss it. In the natural sciences, it requires a new field of study. In animal advocacy, we need new framing of messages. The way ideas are presented also has to fit into the social context, and that can vary by region or country.

This year we continued to research how to gain support for helping wild animals, and we provided more information that focuses on their wellbeing for its own sake.

Animal advocacy studies

In 2021 we published two new reports about animal advocacy on our website. One addresses the [challenges of initiating a new field of study in natural sciences](#). This is important because novel research is necessary so we can learn how to best help wild animals and increase concern for them. Academic work is needed to inform policymakers and convince them that we can help animals in the wild.

The other report we published centers on [perspectives on animal advocacy in China](#), with a focus on wild animals. We conducted and analyzed 18 in-depth interviews with experts on animal issues in China, in order learn their views about challenges and risks for local and foreign animal advocacy groups operating in China. This work is important for several reasons. China covers a very large area where many wild animals live. Its population is also very large, as a result of which many animals are raised, killed, and used there. In addition, China is a major actor in the world today, influencing many other countries. The development of animal advocacy in China has the potential to make a big difference in the world.

Ethics and animals

We revised and expanded our website section on [ethical theories and nonhuman animals](#), which provides a comprehensive introduction to this topic, something that is not easy to find elsewhere. We added two new pages on [prioritarianism](#) and [suffering-focused ethics](#). These views give great weight to alleviating the situation of the worst off. We also expanded the existing pages in this section dealing with different ethical theories, including [egalitarianism](#), [utilitarianism](#), [negative consequentialism](#), [rights theories](#), [contractarianism](#), and [virtue and care ethics](#). These materials will be helpful to anyone interested in animal ethics and especially to animal advocates who want to improve their arguments. In addition, we addressed the issue of [using insects for food](#) and submitted comments to the European Union about why [the use of insects to feed other animals should be stopped](#).

Report about urban animal welfare

We published a report about the [welfare of wild animals in urban environments](#). Little work has been done about how these animals are affected by their environment. Yet there is a lot of information from fields like urban ecology, wild animal welfare, and wild animal rehabilitation that can shed light on the challenges they face. This report looks at population dynamics, behavior, and natural harms in the lives of five urban wild animals. It addresses the need for greater public awareness and education and more collaboration among people in different fields to model the dynamics of multiple species in a range of urban environments. This could inform us about the wellbeing of individual animals in urban environments and their impact on the other animals in the area. Once we know about the wellbeing of the populations in an urban area, policy-makers will be able to craft policy that takes the needs of the animals into account.

Work on invertebrate sentience

We published three articles summarizing the current state of information about invertebrate sentience: a literature review of [behavioral evidence of sentience in invertebrates](#), the [development of sentience in juvenile animals](#), and [indicators of sentience in snails and bivalves](#). In addition, we published an [illustrated physiology of invertebrate nervous systems](#). Together, these articles provide an overview of what is known about invertebrate sentience, how much more is left to learn, the different types of evidence of sentience, and how we can assign weight to various observations.



Workshops, talks, and conferences

When a cause area is new or neglected, it's important to spread awareness both within academia and among advocates. After hearing about it, many people agree with helping wild animals, but there aren't many peer gatherings in which to discuss and collaborate on the work. These two groups will have a disproportionate impact on which ideas gain traction in society so it's crucial to engage with them continually.

In 2021 we gave talks, attended conferences, and participated in workshops and small group meetups with members of both groups, both online and in person.

Talks and workshops

Animal Ethics hosted a [three part workshop for animal advocates](#) in both English and [Spanish](#). The material for the workshops was drawn from our wild animal suffering video course. Participants from around the world joined us to discuss wild animal suffering issues and activism. The three sessions covered ways of helping wild animals, ethics and animals, and how to contribute through academic work.

Our spokespersons gave talks about speciesism, wild animal suffering, and other topics in animal ethics at different universities in the US, the UK, Germany, India, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina. We also gave talks at advocacy events organized in the UK, Denmark, Colombia, and Mexico.

Representatives around the world gave talks [questioning speciesism](#) for the World Day for the End of Speciesism on August 28, 2021. The talks were streamed live in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Portuguese](#). On International Animal Rights Day on December 10, we released “Ask Me Anything” (AMA) videos in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Portuguese](#), where we responded to questions from people from around the world.



Partnerships with other organizations

In academia, our partnerships allow us to leverage the expertise, resources, and connections of university researchers. In animal advocacy, we benefit from the knowledge and experience of other groups, and we're sometimes able to provide funding to enable work they would not have been able to do otherwise.

In 2021, the results of some of these collaborations were published. We've also started to work with Aula Animal, an organization of high school teachers to produce creative classroom materials for high school students.

Academic paper and literature review

Two studies were published as a result of partnerships with other organizations. One is an article entitled “[Fires in nature: a review of the challenges for wild animals](#),” by Animal Ethics postdoctoral researcher at the Autonomous University of Madrid, Jara Gutiérrez and her academic supervisor, Javier de Miguel. The paper was published in an academic journal, the European Journal of Ecology. It was based on Jara’s work with Animal Ethics. The paper explains the challenges met by animals in wildfires and the ways we could help them.

The second paper is a [review of the literature about animal advocacy in China](#), which was produced by a team of researchers in partnership with Animal Ethics. This team also worked on our report about perspectives on animal advocacy in China. Among other things, the literature review discusses current attitudes toward nonhuman animals in China, the growing debate about speciesist ideas among academics, and arguments taken from Eastern philosophical traditions.



International advocacy

Most of the people in the world don't speak English, and from the very beginning Animal Ethics has been translating our materials into as many languages as we can. The website has information in 9 languages, and we share outreach materials with people around the world. Animal Ethics representatives are active in many regions, and our work in Latin America and India have been expanding rapidly in the past few years. In both places our activities are varied but we are especially active in working with students and animal advocates.

Activities in Latin America and India

In addition to the talks we gave in several Latin American countries in Spanish, Animal Ethics representative in Brazil Luciano Cunha taught a [free 13-part online course in Portuguese](#) about the moral consideration of animals. The course was made possible by a partnership between the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina in Brazil and Animal Ethics. The course was open to the general public and the videos can be found on the [Portuguese YouTube channel](#).

The first [Animal Ethics Meeting](#) in Paraná, Brazil was launched through a partnership between the Regional Council of Veterinary Medicine of Paraná (CRMV-PR) and Animal Ethics. There were lectures on topics such as speciesism and the reasons to reject it, welfare biology, ways to use scientific knowledge to help animals, and the need for interaction between ethics and science professionals.

Another place where we have been very active is India. Our representative there, Aditya SK, gave various talks there as well as a presentation at the [Animal Advocacy Conference Asia](#), and our materials are being translated into different Indian languages.

Video course web pages and ebook in Spanish

In 2020, we published a 28-part video course called [Introduction to wild animal suffering](#) in English, [Spanish](#), and [Portuguese](#). We also published an accompanying [ebook](#) and [web pages with embedded audio](#) in English. In 2021, the 270 page [ebook](#) and [web pages](#) were completed in Spanish. The ebook describes the major factors that cause the suffering of animals in the wild, why this is important, what is currently being done to help these animals, and what more can be done.

It has been a busy and exciting year for Animal Ethics. We connected with new audiences online, and we've seen acceptance grow for university level courses about the moral consideration of animals. Animal Ethics is partnering with high school teachers to produce high school classroom materials, including short videos about speciesism. We have more reports underway about animal advocacy and another about the complicated issues surrounding vaccinating wild animals.

In 2022 you will see more information about helping animals in natural disasters and extreme weather conditions, as well as information about new safe and non-invasive methods of learning about and helping wild animals. We'll also publish more content about longtermism and considering the importance of the future in prioritizing the work we do. This is just some of the output you can expect from us next year, in addition to continued academic outreach and engagement with animal advocates.

The last two years have been particularly challenging and we couldn't have done everything we did without your financial and moral support and your efforts to spread the word! Please continue supporting our work so we can continue to increase our impact.



Animal Ethics

