

thriving together: the critical role of animals in achieving the SDGs



Animals are critical to human well-being, from supporting communities through ecotourism, to anchoring key ecosystem services such as pest control and pollination. Yet, the welfare of animals and the conservation of wildlife species often comes as an afterthought to human development efforts. When public policy is designed and enacted, the value of animals is often ignored completely or undervalued. Therefore, it is the responsibility of wildlife conservation organizations to demonstrate to policy makers and their constituencies that animal welfare and wildlife conservation are necessary to people and communities.

Perhaps the most widely accepted framework for community development and human well-being today is the [United Nations' 2030 agenda](#), more commonly known as the [UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). Agreed to by all [193 member states of the UN](#), the goals outline international priorities to achieve

sustainable human development. As the preeminent guidance on human development, these goals inform the policies of governments, non-governmental organizations and the UN system.

While the SDGs are certainly more comprehensive than purely economic measures of progress such as gross domestic product (GDP), they place limited emphasis on the value of the natural world. Despite this, animals and their habitats are interwoven with the fate of humans. All species, big and small, imperiled and ubiquitous, have an important role to play in building a healthy, prosperous and sustainable future for people. There is no better example than the COVID-19 pandemic. Zoonotic disease emergence and spillover to people have become more and more common due the mistreatment of domestic animals and wildlife and their habitat. It is essential to include the natural world not only in recovering from the

COVID-19 pandemic, but in the effort to prevent the next pandemic. This report is the second edition that examines the connections between animal welfare, wildlife conservation and the natural world and their critical role in achieving the SDGs. As shown in this report, effective welfare and conservation can contribute significantly to achieving the SDGs and improving people's lives. IFAW seeks to enhance awareness of these connections and inspire greater collaboration for achieving the shared goal of improving conditions for all species on the planet.

ifaw



International Fund
for Animal Welfare

Thriving Together: The Critical Role of Animals
in Achieving the SDGs - Second Edition

About IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) - IFAW is a global non-profit helping animal and people thrive together. We are experts and everyday people, working across seas, oceans and in more than 40 countries around the world. We rescue, rehabilitate and release animals, and we restore and protect their natural habitats. The problems we're up against are urgent and complicated. To solve them, we match fresh thinking with bold action. We partner with local communities, governments, non-governmental organizations and businesses. Together, we pioneer new and innovative ways to help all species flourish. See how at ifaw.org

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Cover photo: Donal Boyd / © IFAW
In 2016, IFAW lent its support to Wild is Life and the Zimbabwe Elephant Nursery (ZEN) to establish The ZEN Project —a landmark public-private partnership with support from the Forestry Commission of Zimbabwe that secures a vast expanse of former hunting ground in the Panda Masuie Forest Reserve. This groundbreaking partnership will change the face of conservation in Zimbabwe.

Back cover photo: Yi Lin / © IFAW
Beijing Raptor Rescue Center rehabilitator, Lei Zhou, releases the Eurasian eagle-owl, as the bird spreads its wings and begins to fly back into the wild.

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