

Animal Rescue Impact Report

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ifaw

Kiara the leopard cub in care at
Tonga Terre d'Accueil in France.

November 2023

What do we mean by animal rescue?

In today's world the answer is not as simple as finding an animal in need and physically taking it to safety. Animals across the globe are facing a variety of perils. Some of these threats can be solved by immediate action, but many require intricate, long-term solutions.

For IFAW, animal rescue is about combatting illegal poaching and wildlife trade; rehabilitating and releasing wild animals back to safe habitats and tracking them after release; locating and providing care for injured and traumatized animals impacted by disasters; and rescuing, treating, and researching stranded marine mammals. We magnify our impact by maintaining a network of skilled global responders that we have trained in the best practices in rescue and care, while working with partners enables us to provide expertise and funds to established organizations who do great work in the animal rescue field when they need additional resources.

We strive to provide the best care possible to every animal, improving their welfare, while simultaneously utilizing our interventions to drive toward global conservation goals. By rescuing animals from illegal trade we can help prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases. Studying stranded marine mammals reveals threats that are causing mortalities, informing conservation policies to protect species on the brink of extinction. Rehabilitating and releasing animals back into the wild supports biodiversity and ensures that their role in natural habitat management is fulfilled. Our work also extends to policy and governance, to ensure that animals have the protection needed to survive and thrive.



This impact report is designed to share how IFAW is tackling various threats against animals through innovative practices in marine rescue, the creation of new training and rescue facilities, collaborations with those on the frontlines of disasters and wildlife trafficking, and so much more. Every action—a rescue, a release, a passed law or even a new petition signature—adds up, allowing more animals to thrive in their natural habitats, preserving the world's biodiversity, and helping to mitigate the effects of climate change in the world we all share.

Kathleen M.T. Moore

Katie Moore
Deputy Vice President, Animal Rescue

Inside this report

- 3** Extending the standards of care
- 4-5** Disaster Response & Risk Reduction
- 6-7** Special coverage: continued work in Ukraine
- 8** Special coverage: Ukraine big cat rescue
- 9** Special coverage: Turkey and Syria
- 10-13** Wildlife rescue stories
- 14-15** Protecting and supporting animals within wildlife trade
- 16-17** Marine Mammal Rescue & Research
- 18** International Policy
- 19** With thanks
- 20** Upcoming travel opportunities

*Data and stories taken from the period of July 2022 to June 2023 unless otherwise noted

Extending the standards of care

"For me there are three consistent truths in rescue: 1) there will always be animals in need of rescue, 2) we can and must learn from every response that we undertake, and 3) we can accomplish more when we work with partners, colleagues, and other experts to share knowledge and experiences so that we ensure we're gathering all the information we can and learning from each other's successes and failures."

Katie Moore, Deputy Vice President of Animal Rescue

The threats:

- ▶ Increasing severity and frequency of disasters
- ▶ Limited number of trained responders available

Actions taken:

▶ Academy of Rescue and Conservation (ARC)

The ARC, housed within IFAW's International Operations Center in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, was inaugurated in August 2022 with the promise to enhance the standards of animal care worldwide. Offering courses in wildlife rescue, disaster response, and marine mammal rescue, IFAW responders and partner organizations now have readily available access to high-quality animal education and training of best practices in animal rescue. In addition, the ARC will offer courses for the general public on a variety of animal rescue and conservation topics for individuals who wish to further their knowledge.

As an international organization, IFAW must meet both US and global standards. Over the years our dedicated rescue team has worked hard, training with partners and developing preparedness and resilience methods with local communities to ensure that our practices are the "gold standard" of animal care. Through the ARC, we can help other organizations and communities reach these same standards. With the goal of becoming an accredited institution, we hope the name IFAW will become synonymous with animal rescue.



Academy of Rescue and Conservation director Rob Baginski gives a tour of the facility.

By offering a combination of in-person and online learning, the ARC is enabling more responders to access our curriculum and allowing IFAW to reach more people than we have been able to previously with traditional, in-person training alone. Furthermore, we are reducing the carbon footprint of the program by requiring fewer students and trainers to commute or travel long distances to on-site locations.

Currently, the ARC has*:

- ▶ Created **9** courses across all 3 animal rescue programs
- ▶ Participated in **4** inter- and intra-organizational workshops and trainings
- ▶ Translated educational material into **6** languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, and Somali)
- ▶ Enrolled **44** students

The ARC was made possible with a grant from the Suzanne McGraw Foundation.

*As of August 2023

Disaster Response & Risk Reduction

“Our goal by responding to a crisis has always been to keep families together...with their animals. Because we know that these animals are so precious to their owners and will help them recover. We know that animals play such an important role.”

Céline Sissler-Bienvenu, Program Director for Disaster Response in Europe

The threats:

- ▶ Disasters are increasing worldwide in both frequency and severity
- ▶ Destroyed shelters
- ▶ Lack of community preparedness

Actions taken:

- ▶ **Provided financial support or hands-on assistance to help in the moment and afterwards.**

Kentucky, US: Deployed **6** responders in response to catastrophic flooding. Awarded US **\$40,000** in emergency grants to local rescue organizations and shelters working to transport surrendered pets, distribute supplies, and provide veterinary services for displaced families.

New Zealand: Awarded a NDZ **\$5,000** emergency grant to animal welfare organization Helping You Help Animals in their establishment of two temporary animal shelters after ex-tropical cyclone Gabrielle made landfall. Oceania Animal Rescue Program Officer Robert Leach was deployed to help provide medical care and support the needs of dozens of rescued cats and farm animals.

Western Australia: In response to an oil spill, Robert Leach was deployed to help our partners at WA Wildlife in their efforts to remove oil from pelicans. The team completed more than **60** pelican washes (each taking 1.5 hours, requiring four volunteers) and released the first set of pelicans in the summer of 2023.



Photo: Julia Cumes / @IFAW

IFAW responder Diane Treadwell with a dog at the shelter in the aftermath of the flooding.

- ▶ **Supported smaller shelters and individual rehabilitators that are often missed, as larger organizations tend to receive the first and largest donations when disasters strike.**

Pakistan: Awarded US **\$80,000** in emergency grants to local partners to purchase food and medical supplies, as well as arrange and manage temporary shelters and more, following unprecedented rainfall throughout the country.

Florida, US: Provided support to **2** independent organizations following the devastation of Hurricane Ian to help with their care of local wildlife including cows, horses, donkeys, and possums.

Northern Italy: Following intense flooding, IFAW provided emergency funds to Lega Anti Vivisezione (LAV) and the International Organization for Animal Protection (OIPA) to purchase food, medical supplies, and other essential veterinary items for displaced wildlife and domestic animals. Combined, the two helped provide care for over **1,100** animals in need.



Photo: Manuel Bergmann / @IFAW

Women prepare food at the public kitchen station during a disaster preparedness training event that included animals.

- ▶ **Worked with communities to build local capacity to increase resilience in the face of disasters.**

Puebla, Mexico: When the Popocatepetl volcano began showing signs of explosive activity, causing smoke and ash to cover the area, IFAW held several meetings with local agencies, including the Puebla State Local Emergency Management Agency, regarding the inclusion of animals in emergency and preparedness planning. We awarded the Animal Welfare Institute with an in-kind donation of pet-carriers, slip leads, and other handling supplies to help keep families together.

Indonesia: Disaster Resilience Manager, Jennifer Gardner, alongside our partner Bali Animal Welfare Association, is actively working with communities in Indonesia to prepare for future disasters. In April, **250** members of the Bunga community participated in simulating a volcanic eruption to train and practice evacuation and communication strategies and first-aid measures.

California, US: IFAW and our partner North Valley Animal Disaster Group (NVADG) collaborated in a three-day technical rescue training workshop, for **25** international responders from China, Mexico, Canada,

France, Australia, and the US. Attendees learned about best practices in fire line safety, emergency sheltering, water and rope rescue, and community action plans. At the end of the session, staff from IFAW and NVADG participated in a real-time simulation of a fire rescue.

- ▶ **142,735** animals were rescued (a 28% increase from FY22)
 - **2,699** wildlife
 - **71,844** companion animals
 - **68,192** livestock
- ▶ **98%** of response-related requests filled from 29 countries
- ▶ **786** responders trained in **8** countries (a 26% increase from FY22)
- ▶ Supported **13** grants in **10** countries for equipment, vehicles, supplies, and facility upgrades to high-risk communities to prepare for future disasters
- ▶ Expanded staff in **3** disaster-prone regions (Europe, Oceania, and Latin America)
- ▶ Completed **3** community-wide disaster simulations in high-risk countries (US, India (Assam), and Indonesia)



A horse and her foal in care at Beremyske Biosphere during the war in Ukraine.

Our continued work in Ukraine

"I truly believe that all the work we do is meaningful, when it comes to rescuing, saving, and supporting animals that are forced to live in a country with war...as we are working with disasters, we need to be adaptive."

Kateryna Krysta, Project Manager – Ukraine Rescue

From the start of the invasion in February 2022 until June 2023, IFAW helped well over **100,000** animals, including pets and wildlife such as bears, wolves, big cats, and horses. In total, **27** grants were issued with a total value of US **\$2,571,820**. While IFAW's deployment to Poland near the border with Ukraine ended in May 2022, we have continued our unwavering commitment to the animals and people who call Ukraine their home. The ongoing work with our partners ensures that, when the time comes, we can quickly enact recovery and restoration plans for the region's landscapes and local wildlife.

The threats:

- ▶ Displaced families
- ▶ Insufficient supplies
- ▶ Ongoing shelling of infrastructure
- ▶ Destruction of wildlife habitats
- ▶ Zoonotic diseases
- ▶ Unsustainable population control of stray and wild domestic animals

Actions taken:

- ▶ Partnered with the Ukrainian Small Animals Veterinary Association (USAVA) to provide free vaccination, chipping, and sterilization for pets from displaced and resident families, and for shelter pets in the cities of Kyiv, Lviv, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Odessa, and surrounding areas. USAVA has partnered with **18** veterinary clinics in those cities to provide veterinary care onsite. By the end of June 2023, over **24,646** animals were vaccinated, **23,554** were chipped, and **6,019** were sterilized.
- ▶ Supported Mykolaiv Red Cross in providing the animals of **1,195** families with veterinary care, pet food, and **900** insulated pet beds. Additional veterinary care was provided for pets from displaced and resident families whose housing accommodations were damaged during the war.
- ▶ Our support has enabled Nova Ukraine to help nearly **13,000** animals. In addition to providing food for shelters and animals of families in need, IFAW funds have helped to create mobile accommodations for animals at shelters and rescue centers.
- ▶ Entered a strategic partnership with Kormotech to purchase pet food directly for delivery as in-kind grants. IFAW purchased more than **129,000** kilograms (280,000 pounds) of pet food, which was distributed among shelters and families in need.
- ▶ After Ukraine's largest dam was destroyed in June, we provided additional support to our partners in the neighboring region of Mykolaiv to assist the incoming animals and owners fleeing the destruction. New emergency funding of over US **\$63,000** to established and new partners enabled, among other things, the distribution of an additional **31,500** kilograms (69,445 pounds) of pet food to the region.

Evacuating Ukraine's big cats

"These [lions] are the unexpected victims of this war...while they will sadly never be released into the wild - we are glad they will live the rest of their lives in safety and without being traded as exotic pets."
Natalia Gozak, Wildlife Rescue Field Officer- Ukraine

The threats:

- ▶ Unregulated breeding of lions used for private homes, zoos, and the global exotic pet trade
- ▶ As many as 200 lions still residing within private homes in the country

Actions taken:

- ▶ IFAW has worked with partners Wild Animal Rescue in Ukraine and Poznań Zoo in Poland on a comprehensive rescue plan to evacuate many of these animals out of Ukraine and into accredited sanctuaries and reserves where they can live with the ample space these big cats need.

- ▶ In November 2022, four lion cubs and a black leopard cub were transported out of Ukraine to Poznań Zoo. After several weeks, the four lion cubs—Taras, Stefania, Lesya, and Prada—were safely transported out of Ukraine and arrived at their forever home at The Wildcat Sanctuary in the United States. Kiara, the leopard cub, arrived at a wildlife center in France through Tonga Terre d'Accueil, a charity that provides temporary shelter for seized wild animals.
- ▶ In June 2023, five lions traveled for 20 hours, safely crossing the Ukraine border and arriving at Poznań Zoo. The group consisted of a mother lion, three-year old Asya, and her three cubs, Teddi, Emi, and Santa, alongside an unrelated two-year old male named Akeru. They will remain in the care of the Poznań Zoo until space is found.



From left to right: Taras, Lesya, and Stefania, three lion cub siblings rescued from the exotic pet trade, explore quarantine at The Wildcat Sanctuary.



The House of Cats Ernesto team tends to a cat they rescued from the rubble after the devastating earthquake in Syria.

Funding rescue work in Turkey and Syria

"We, as staff and team of House of Cats Ernesto, are very grateful to IFAW and its supporters [for receiving so much support in order] to respond to the outcome of the earthquake that hit the area...we were able to provide treatment and care for animals, including the medical treatment for injured animals and secure shelter care for those who have lost their owners."
House of Cats Ernesto staff

The threats:

- ▶ Two devastating earthquakes
- ▶ Over 3,800 aftershocks
- ▶ Collapsed buildings, homes, and communities
- ▶ Abandoned, injured, and orphaned domestic and wild animals

Actions taken:

- ▶ IFAW awarded US \$250,000 in emergency grants to local organizations searching and caring for recovered animals.

House of Cats Ernesto, Northern Syria: From the very start the House of Cats Ernesto team raced into the rubble searching for injured animals. As of June, the organization had provided care and treatment for more than **800** animals including cats, dogs, birds, rabbits, donkeys, and various livestock. In August 2023, IFAW concluded our grant with House of Cats Ernesto.

Haytap Animal Rescue Federation, Turkey: Amidst the ruins, veterinarians and volunteer responders set up an animal services tent to treat the rescued animals pulled from the wreckage. When a building collapsed in the wake of an aftershock, destroying their rescue vehicle, IFAW quickly purchased a replacement vehicle to allow teams to resume their work.

Angels Farm Sanctuary, Izmar, Turkey: As their H.A.R.K Rescue Team retrieved several injured, abandoned, and orphaned farm animals, cats, and dogs, IFAW funds covered veterinary care and services.

Watan Foundation, Turkey: Working with the Directorate of Agriculture of Gaziantep, this emergency relief group deployed to the underserved countryside to administer veterinary care and distribute food and vaccines to protect people as well as animals.



Koala joeys Rafa (on top) and Kookie (right) becoming friends while under the expert care of the IFAW vet team at Friends of the Koala.

Rafa and Kookie, the koalas:

Koala habitat in New South Wales has been severely destroyed and fragmented because of extreme weather events, such as bushfires, floods, and human development. This forces many koalas out of trees and onto roads, sadly resulting in an increase in injuries and deaths. But thanks to IFAW partner Friends of the Koala, the Australian landscape has welcomed back two of its furriest residents.

Rafa and Kookie were two orphans who survived car strikes thanks to the safety of their mothers' pouches. Rafa sustained no injuries, but Kookie suffered from internal bleeding. Under the care of the expert IFAW veterinarian team, Kookie fully recovered, and they both spent time in rehabilitation where they learned to climb trees and eat eucalyptus. After some time, the two were deemed ready for release. In February 2023, the pair happily scaled the trees, adding two more healthy koalas back into the population.

Watch the moment of Kookie's release back to the wild:



BRRC Rehabilitator, Lei Zhou, releases the Eurasian eagle-owl, as the bird spreads its wings and begins to fly back into the wild.

Eurasian eagle-owl:

In March 2022, an injured Eurasian eagle-owl was found by a local kindergarten class in Beijing. After being taken to IFAW's Beijing Raptor Rescue Center (BRRC), rehabilitators performed a full physical examination, finding open fractures on its right wing, and proceeded to perform surgery. For two months the eagle-owl refused to eat, possibly due to the stress of surgery. On the 66th day of handfeeding, the staff members were pleasantly surprised to find that the eagle-owl had finally started to eat on its own. The BRRC developed a rehabilitation plan which included flight training to help the raptor regain muscle strength. After 11 months, in February 2023, the Eurasian eagle-owl was fitted with a solar-powered GPS transmitter and released at sunset back into the wild.

Watch the story unfold:



Bobby the dog in her new wheelchair at House of Cats Ernesto.

Bobby the dog:

During one of their field visits in northern Syria, the rescue team from House of Cats Ernesto came across a mud-covered dog. They discovered that, despite being paralyzed due to a compressed spine, she was in otherwise good health. The team made the decision to bring the dog, now named Bobby (a local nickname given to dogs), to their sanctuary clinic for additional care. After being bathed, fed, and given a loving, brushed out blow-dry, Bobby quickly settled into life at the clinic. But the team wanted to do more. After a bit of research, and the realization that it would be nearly impossible to find a wheelchair for dogs in their part of the country, they found their own equipment and a local designer to build their own wheelchair for Bobby. She is now happily spending her days running and playing with the other rescued dogs at the sanctuary.



Ikoto the bonobo sleeping at Lola ya Bonobo sanctuary.

Ikoto the baby bonobo:

As a baby, Ikoto was destined for the illegal pet trade. Authorities from the Democratic Republic of Congo were able to confiscate him and send him to a local caregiver. IFAW was contacted and covered the costs of Ikoto's initial care and his transportation to the Lola ya Bonobo sanctuary in the DRC. Ikoto is the youngest bonobo to ever arrive at the sanctuary where he is now growing stronger in rehabilitation on his journey to return back to the wild.

- ▶ **2,523** animals rescued
- ▶ **368** animals progressing toward release
- ▶ **75%** effective release rate
- ▶ **58** captive wild animals with improved welfare
- ▶ **12** wildlife groups supported globally, including **7** partners
- ▶ **10,000** downloads of IFAW's Wildlife Rescue App



At rehabilitation at WTI's CBRC.

Den and Itan, the Asiatic black bears:

Den and Itan were week-old orphans when they were admitted to the Center for Bear Rehabilitation and Conservation (CBRC) in December 2022. The pair were hand-raised by a team of keepers, veterinarians, and a biologist until they had demonstrated that they were ready to go back to the wild. In February 2023, Den was given a GPS/VHF collar as he and Itan were released. The CBRC was established in 2003 by IFAW, the Arunachal Forest Department and Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change, Government of India, and partner Wildlife Trust of India to help give orphaned cubs a second chance for life in the wild.



Fern, the critically endangered swift parrot, was cared for by the IFAW vet team at Bonorong Wildlife Hospital.



Joaquim the giant anteater sticks his snout in a mound of dirt.

Joaquim the giant anteater:

In 2020 wildfires caused mass devastation to Brazil's Pantanal region. IFAW supported the establishment of Tamandua Institute's Orphans of Fire—a project dedicated to rescuing and rehabilitating giant anteaters. Six orphaned anteaters were rescued and placed under an ambitious rehabilitation plan to get them back into the wild. In November 2022, Joaquim (equipped with his very own satellite harness) was released back into the wild. In May, the last of the initial six rescued anteater pups was released.

Watch Joaquim's journey back to the wild:



Fern the critically endangered swift parrot:

Fern was found by a member of the public after she flew into a window. She was taken to Bonorong Wildlife Hospital in Tasmania and assessed by the IFAW veterinarian team. After a thorough assessment including a flight test, physical exam, x-rays, and a blood test, the hospital team concluded she had suffered from bruising and a concussion. Fern was kept at the hospital, where she received medication, nutrition, and a safe and quiet place to recover. She was released back into the wild in October 2022.

Jojo, Jory, and Danny, the endangered Indian Ocean humpback dolphins:

In late 2022, the Bahraini Supreme Council for Environment (SCE) contacted IFAW to assist in the rescue and release of three dolphins who had been illegally captured and housed in a tourist resort that specialized in performing dolphins. Members from our Marine Mammal Rescue & Research team prepared for months with key agencies including the SCE, Public Prosecution, Coast Guard Department, General Administration of Civil Defense, and Tails Veterinary Clinic to conduct necessary health tests and identify release sites. In January 2023, members from the team flew to Bahrain to assist in the preparation and release of the dolphins back to the sea. Temporary satellite tags were attached which allowed our team to monitor the dolphins as they easily adjusted back to life in their natural environment.



Preparing to release a humpback dolphin back into the sea.

Watch their story and release:



Gonzo the seal:

In December of 2022, IFAW's Marine Mammal Rescue & Research team on Cape Cod rescued an injured, male juvenile harbor seal. In addition to a severe injury to one of his front flippers, he also had a fever and was suspected of having pneumonia. After stabilization overnight by the IFAW team he was transferred to our long-time partners at the National Marine Life Center (NMLC) for longer-term care. After three months, the seal, named Gonzo, was fitted with a temporary satellite tag and released back into his ocean home. During post-release monitoring, our team discovered that within a week Gonzo had already traveled over 186 miles to Maine.



After three months of care, Gonzo the harbor seal, is released back into the wild.

Protecting and supporting animals within wildlife trade

“In order to really get tough on wildlife crime, national and international policies must be strengthened, law enforcement needs more resources, and judicial systems need to hand down effective but appropriate sentences.”
Matthew Morley, Deputy Vice President of Conservation

The threats:

- ▶ Online marketplaces and social media
- ▶ Illegal trade
- ▶ Legal loopholes
- ▶ Limited public awareness

Actions taken:

▶ Continuing the fight against online wildlife trafficking.

Since its launch in 2018, the Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online (co-founded by IFAW) has worked with e-commerce, technology, and social media companies to shut down online marketplaces for wildlife traffickers. **2,344** staff from Chinese companies were trained by the Coalition’s NGO partners, enhancing their ability to detect and combat wildlife crime, and more than **12 million** illegal listings have been removed/ blocked.

In October 2022, more than **40** delegates representing **16** domestic and international organizations from Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and China attended a workshop developing improved tactics to combat wildlife cybercrime.

▶ Strengthening law enforcement capacity.

Through our two projects—CARE (Confiscated Animals – Rescue & Enforcement) and TRIPOD (Targeting Regional Investigations for Policing Opportunities & Development)—IFAW is strengthening law enforcement officers across Southeast Asia and in parts of South America and Africa. Increased training and more access to tools leads to higher conviction rates and a greater percentage of live animal confiscations and placement into quality care facilities. Between April and July 2023, **13** trainings were held across Indonesia, Congo, and



Photo: Samuel Mutua / @IFAW

Frontline law enforcement officers working at the border between Uganda-DRC and Uganda-South Sudan participate in a rapid DISRUPT workshop.

Guyana, allowing more than **200** frontline officers to acquire new skills on how to handle live animals seized from the illegal wildlife trade. Confiscator kits containing protective gear and useful items, such as snake hooks, honey, and blankets, were donated to officers to aid in the handling of live animals.

97 frontline officers across **46** agencies within the Sulu-Celebes Seas region (Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines) received training to combat the concerning volume of trafficked wildlife throughout the area. IFAW also provided **150** confiscator kits.

211 law enforcement officers and government officials from East Africa attended IFAW’s specialized capacity building workshop, Detecting Illegal Species through Prevention Training (DISRUPT).

200+ law enforcement officers from Europe and Latin America have been trained on tackling wildlife cybercrime by improving their investigative skills via open-source intelligence techniques and specific tasks such as identifying ivory online.

▶ Supporting international and national policy and legislative reforms.

EU action plan against wildlife trafficking: In late 2022, the EU revised their action plan against wildlife trafficking. Key aspects include additional efforts to monitor and fight wildlife cybercrime and implementing activities to reduce consumer demand.

UK Ivory Act extended to additional species: In Spring 2023, the UK announced that five additional species—hippopotamus, narwhal, killer whale, sperm whale, and walrus—will receive protections covered under the Ivory Act: banning the dealing of items made of or containing their ivory in the UK.

▶ Reducing consumer demand.

Guard our shared home: To raise public awareness of conservation and reduce consumer demand for wildlife, IFAW produced a series of advertisements placed in subway stations, magazines, and newspapers across China.

#notapet: Together with the Association of Zoos & Aquariums and the Wildlife Trafficking Alliance, IFAW has created the “Not a Pet” campaign—an initiative designed to educate the public about the illegal trade of live wildlife sold as pets.

- ▶ **3,046,867** online listings of live animals and wildlife products were blocked by coalition members between July 2022 to June 2023.
 - **7,231** listings were identified by NGO Coalition partners in this period on Coalition platforms
 - **5,976** listings were removed/blocked by platforms in response to data shared with them by NGO Coalition partners
- ▶ **100** staff members from Coalition companies were trained online or in-person
- ▶ **9** critically endangered live animals were confiscated
 - **4** wildlife (cyber) criminals arrested and convicted
- ▶ **770** law enforcement, prosecution, and judicial officers trained or mentored from over **40** countries,
- ▶ **66%** fewer online ivory adverts since implementation of UK Ivory Act in 2022
- ▶ **206** front line responders trained by IFAW and partners on handling and care of confiscated animals from illegal trade
- ▶ **215** confiscator kits delivered to front line responders by IFAW and partners
- ▶ **5** countries with increased capacity to deal with live animal seizures



“Guard our shared home” PSA featuring a raptor, Chinese/English version.



A common dolphin is carefully carted towards the ocean for release into deeper waters.

Marine Mammal Rescue & Research (MMRR)

“Our team is constantly trying to push the envelope on marine mammal rescue—what is possible, and how do we ensure that we are doing our very best for these animals? We want to take the data that we collect and then put that into policies and programs that can make a big difference to protect living marine mammals.”

Dr. Sarah Sharp, Animal Rescue Veterinarian

The threats:

- ▶ Cape Cod shores along the US are a global hotspot for marine mammal strandings.

Actions taken:

▶ Dolphin Rescue Center (DRC)

Cape Cod, MA in the United States has the highest frequency of live cetacean mass strandings in the world. Every year the MMRR team responds to dozens of reports of strandings with the hope that each mammal will have the health and strength to be returned to the sea. While many of the stranded dolphins and porpoises are deemed healthy enough by our team to be immediately released back into the ocean, a subset of these mammals present more significant conditions such as shock, dehydration, and injuries.

In early 2023 we began the process of building our Dolphin Rescue Center. Located fewer than four miles from the ocean, the DRC will allow the MMRR team to care for dolphins, porpoises, and other cetaceans in need of additional time, treatment, and recovery within 15 minutes of a stranding event. Providing the marine mammals with around-the-clock extended care can increase their chance at survival when released. We respond, on average, to 70 strandings a year, and we anticipate that about 30% of these cases will benefit from this first-of-its-kind facility for short-term rehabilitation. The DRC received federal approval to begin taking patients in September 2023.

▶ Strengthening international efforts.

IFAW staff travel across the globe to attend workshops and conferences to share their knowledge and build response capacity. This year various staff members attended the European Association for Aquatic Mammals Conference, Marine Mammal Commission Workshop on Marine Mammal Health Monitoring, and the International Association for Aquatic Animal Medicine Annual Conference.

Over the summer two Kenyan marine mammal rescuers trained with IFAW experts at our International Operations Center in Cape Cod. US Training included cetacean stranding response, in-lab necropsies, and whale disentanglement. It is our hope that these trainings will allow participants to create opportunities for future collaborations with government agencies, non-state agencies, and community-based organizations working to save species within the marine environment.

▶ An award-winning team

In March 2023, IFAW was named in Fast Company’s prestigious annual list of the World’s Most Innovative Companies for 2023. Our MMRR team was recognized for our life-saving innovations for cetacean strandings, such as satellite tagging and advancements in treating stranded dolphins. IFAW’s marine rescue techniques are considered “gold standard” and have pioneered advanced thinking against automatic euthanasia on stranded animals. Over the last 10 years our MMRR team has averaged a 70% release rate for stranded cetaceans (up from 14% from when the program first began in 1998.)

- ▶ **48** stranded animals released back into the water
 - **45** dolphins
 - **3** seals
- ▶ **26** animals released with satellite tags
- ▶ **13** scientific presentations conducted
- ▶ **2** manuscripts involving MMRR work published



Gray reef shark swimming underwater on Father's Reef, Papua New Guinea.

International Policy

“Over a million species are at risk of extinction if we do not change the way we treat wildlife...overexploitation of species, including through international trade, is a key contributing factor to the decline of many species.”
Matthew Collis, Deputy Vice President, Policy

The threats:

- ▶ Limited legal protection for animals and their habitats

Advocacy wins:

- ▶ **Sharks get new protections under CITES:** At last November’s Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CoP19), nearly 100 species of sharks and rays were awarded increased protections and introduced new sustainability requirements for international trade. Granting these additional species Appendix II listings will help ensure that only legal and sustainable trade is taking place. With 37% of sharks being threatened by extinction, these new restrictions will allow international governments to control the growing shark trade market.
- ▶ **Big Cat Public Safety Act:** In December 2022 the Big Cat Public Safety Act (BCPSA) became a US law. The BCPSA prohibits keeping tigers, lions, cougars, and other big cats as “pets,” and prohibits dangerous public contact with these species.

- ▶ **PAW Act:** In October 2022, President Biden signed into law the Planning for Animal Wellness (PAW) Act, which directs FEMA to form a working group of experts to evaluate the Agency’s existing guidance on animal planning and update accordingly. The new law will help to ensure that families and pets affected by disasters can remain safe through effective planning.
- ▶ **High Seas Marine Protected Areas:** In June 2023, United Nations Member States agreed to adopt the High Seas Treaty which will enable the establishment of marine protected areas. The high seas represent the largest habitat on Earth, home to millions of species, and our greatest ally against climate change. The adoption of this framework is a significant step towards the UN’s goal to protect 30% of the ocean by 2030. IFAW is part of the High Seas Alliance, which has been working for more than a decade to achieve this outcome.
- ▶ **47** IFAW recommendations adopted fully or in part out of 50 recommendations made
- ▶ **334** CITES CoP19 media pieces quoted IFAW
- ▶ **8** side events hosted, chaired, or presented by IFAW at CITES CoP19
- ▶ IFAW hosted or co-hosted **3** regional pre-CoP workshops for CITES and participated in an additional **2**, informing government positions

With thanks

We extend our deepest appreciation to those who contribute to fund all of IFAW’s rescue programs and initiatives, including disaster response, emergency response, wildlife and marine rescue, and whale protection and advocacy.

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To contribute or for more information, please contact Meghan Canty in IFAW’s Development Department, at mcanty@ifaw.org or call +1 (508) 744- 2067. We have made every effort to ensure inclusion and accuracy in this listing; if you would like to correct or update your information, please let us know.

Upcoming travel opportunities

Photo: Naudé Heunis / © IFAW



Zimbabwe Safari

August 3-14, 2024

Don't miss behind-the-scenes access and unforgettable wildlife encounters during this 12-day tour of our southern Africa projects, including visits to IFAW-supported elephant rescue centers and safari in Hwange National Park.

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Baja Whale Watch

February 22-26, 2024

Join us on the Pacific coast of Baja Mexico for a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Laguna San Ignacio, one of the last pristine gray whale breeding grounds and nurseries in the world. Departing from San Diego, CA, you'll explore various lagoon ecosystems and experience close encounters with these magnificent animals.

Contact events@ifaw.org for more information about one or both travel opportunities.

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International Fund for Animal Welfare
Animal Rescue Impact Report

