Protecting and Saving Animals

Around the World

Elephants at risk from poachers, whales and seals threatened by cruel hunts, wildlife and pets stranded after disasters – animals need our help.
Making a Difference for Animals

At IFAW, we rush to the rescue of individual animals suffering from natural disasters, cruelty, neglect or other causes.

We also pursue long-term initiatives to educate and advocate for changes in society, policy and legislation that will protect both populations and individual animals.

Thanks to our local leadership, IFAW develops practical, sustainable solutions that benefit both animals and people.

We welcome you to join us in building a world in which animals are respected and protected.

Azzedine T. Downes
President and Chief Executive Officer

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Rescuing Animals in Disasters
Since 2000, IFAW emergency response teams have deployed around the world to help animals in danger from the effects of disasters such as earthquakes, tornados and floods as well as from armed conflicts and animal cruelty situations such as dog fighting and hoarding.

IFAW brings expertise in disaster response assessment and operations to its collaborations with local rescue groups in providing food, equipment, medical supplies, care and sheltering for animals in the wake of disasters until they can be safely returned home.

Caring for Wildlife in India
IFAW partners with the Wildlife Trust of India to manage the Wildlife Rescue Centre in Kaziranga, where we care for injured and orphaned wildlife. The calf pictured was born to a rehabilitated rhino, a positive step to reincorporate the species into Manas National Park.

From Stranded to Saved
IFAW’s Marine Mammal Rescue and Research (MMRR) team works primarily on Cape Cod, in the United States, one of only a few places in the world with frequent mass strandings of multiple whales and dolphins. As we care for each stranded animal, we’re also improving scientific protocols for marine mammal rescue. In fact, the successful release rate of more than 70 percent is a result of our hard work and adherence to such protocols.

Saving Wild and Captive Tigers
IFAW has supported the rescue and release of Amur tiger cubs in Russia, where poaching and shrinking of habitat are real threats to a wild tiger population numbering less than 400. Since 2003, IFAW has come to the rescue of more than 150 big cats, including many tigers, in the United States and have helped place them in reputable sanctuaries.

Setting the Bears Free
IFAW’s Bear Rescue Centre in Russia has successfully returned more than 196 brown bears to the wild. This groundbreaking project has become a world leader in bear rehabilitation, and IFAW has shared its successful techniques with bear rehabilitators around the world.
Protecting Elephant Habitat

Today, only a fraction of elephants' historic ranges remain. IFAW's habitat protection projects in Manas National Park, India, Amboseli National Park, Kenya and Liwonde National Park, Malawi save elephants and demonstrate a holistic approach to conservation, including enhancing park operations and law enforcement, easing human-wildlife conflict and engaging local communities in developing strategies for peaceful coexistence with animals.

Moving Elephants to Safety

IFAW led two ground-breaking elephant moves in Africa. In 2014, IFAW moved four forest elephants from Daloa in Cote d'Ivoire where they had come into repeated conflict with villagers to Azagny National Park. In 2009, we moved 83 elephants in Malawi from Phirilongwe to the protected Majete Wildlife Reserve. Using helicopters and people on foot, the elephants were tranquilised with darts, then transported on modified game trucks. Such moves are very risky, but the outcome of elephants living in safety and peace is worth such risk.

Saving Elephant Orphans in Zambia and India

In collaboration with Game Rangers International, the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation and the Zambia Wildlife Authority, IFAW contributes funds and expertise to the Elephant Orphanage Project (EOP), which has the first rehabilitation centre of its kind in the Southern African region. As soon as the calves are weaned from milk, they are moved to the EOP's Kafue Release Facility, which backs onto the ancient Ngoma Teak Forest, allowing them to reintegrate into the wild. With the Wildlife Trust of India, we also care for orphaned animals, including elephants, at our IFAW Wildlife Rescue Centre near Kaziranga.

Protecting Elephants

Elephants face threats from habitat loss, increasing conflict with human communities and poaching for ivory. IFAW is striving to reverse these alarming trends and ensure that there is always a place for elephants in our future.
Campaigning for Legal Protections

IFAW campaigns for legal protection for animals nationally and in international conventions such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Enforcement Assistance and Training

IFAW has trained and equipped thousands of frontline rangers, game scouts and customs officers to prevent poaching and smuggling of live animals and their parts and derivatives. IFAW partners with international authority INTERPOL’s Environmental Security Sub-directorate to seize ivory, rhino horns, weapons and other animal derivatives and to train wildlife law enforcement officers. IFAW has a Memorandum of Understanding with INTERPOL, the first-ever with a non-governmental organisation, to fight wildlife crime.

Awareness and Demand Reduction

In order to stop illegal wildlife trade, IFAW educates consumers and travellers about the impact their wildlife purchases have on animal populations. IFAW advertisements urging consumers to reject wildlife products are displayed in airports, subway stations and on billboards, and published in traditional and social media, reaching tens of millions of consumers every year. We also support nations’ destruction of their ivory stockpiles.
Defending Whales

From pollution to ship strikes to deadly entanglements in fishing gear, whales face more threats today than in any other time in history. The worst, and most avoidable, threat comes from Japan, Norway, and Iceland, who continue to hunt whales.

IFAW is committed to ensuring that whales can live free from human threats through hands-on care of individual animals, practical solutions for making oceans safer for whales and international policy work that protects whale populations and species.

Ending Commercial Whaling

A global ban on commercial whaling came into effect in 1986, but more than 1,000 whales are still killed cruelly and unnecessarily every year. Japanese, Norwegian and Icelandic whaling fleets continue to harpoon these intelligent, sentient creatures.

IFAW convened four panels of world-class legal experts, which concluded that Japan’s Southern Ocean whaling was unlawful. In the spring of 2014, the World Court agreed, ruling that Japan’s Antarctic whaling was “not for purposes of scientific research,” and should be halted with “immediate effect.” IFAW is leading international efforts to ensure this victory for whales is secured.

Reducing Injuries

We commission studies and submit expert papers on the problems of ship noise, one of which eventually led to the International Maritime Organisation’s (IMO) development of guidelines to reduce noise levels. We lobby government and industry to reduce the impact of oil and gas development.

We advocate for legislation to slow down ship traffic, develop programmes to increase awareness of the problem and create technology to help mariners navigate waters with whale populations. IFAW also conducts expert interventions to free entangled whales and has supported fishing gear innovations to reduce and prevent entanglement.

Research and Sanctuary Protection

IFAW is working with governments around the world to provide safe haven for whales, from sanctuaries in the Pacific and Indian Oceans to the waters around North and South America, Europe, Australia and beyond. IFAW funds and participates in research on a wide range of different whale species around the world, from beluga to blue whales.

From Whaling to Watching

IFAW is calling on whaling nations to abandon commercial whaling and support the responsible development of the whale watching industry as a long-term investment in their coastal communities. In 2010, IFAW organised the largest whale watching conference ever hosted in Japan.

According to a global economic study released by IFAW, 13 million people take whale watching tours each year, in 119 countries worldwide, generating a whopping $2.1 billion USD in total expenditures.
Saving Seals

When IFAW was founded in 1969, we began mobilising people worldwide to end the cruel and unnecessary Canadian commercial seal hunt. No one needs products made from seal fur and there is almost no commercial market for seal meat. With markets for seal fur disappearing and little demand for seal meat, the hunt is in decline.

No Economic Value

The Canadian commercial seal industry is only worth about $1 million USD, and yet the Canadian government spends millions of dollars each year trying to keep this hunt alive. The Canadian government should invest those funds in sustainable livelihoods for coastal communities instead.

A Case of Cruelty

In 2011, IFAW documented several examples of seals being hooked in the face or sliced open while alive in direct violation of Canada’s killing regulations. The seal hunt takes place in unpredictable conditions, on shifting ice floes, making it difficult to ensure a quick and painless death for seals, and there is little or no oversight from Canadian officials during the hunt.

On Thin Ice

Over the past decade, the amount of sea ice has been severely reduced in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and 2010 and 2011 are noted as having the worst ice coverage ever recorded in Atlantic Canada. Scientists estimated as many as 90 percent of the seal pups may have died due to lack of ice, and yet the commercial hunt continued.

Closing the Markets for Pelts

IFAW and our supporters worldwide were instrumental in securing the ban on seal products in the European Union in 2009. We have defended the ban from challenges by the Canadian government through the World Trade Organisation, and we are working to stop the expansion of the seal trade into China and other markets.

Seal Pups Saved in Russia

In March 2009, thanks to more than 15 years of campaigning by IFAW, Russia banned hunters from killing baby seals, saving more than 35,000 harp seals in the White Sea each year.

Main image © E.J. Peiker
Helping Dogs and Cats

Attitudes towards dogs and cats vary from community to community but no animal should ever have to suffer from cruelty or neglect. IFAW helps communities take responsibility for the basic needs of their dogs and cats. By helping communities find humane solutions, providing veterinary services and educating people about compassion and good animal care, we can make a better world for dogs and cats.

CLAW (Community Led Animal Welfare) provides basic veterinary healthcare and humane education to impoverished communities in more than 30 townships and informal settlements in South Africa. We estimate that 500,000 animals have been helped through the programme since it started.

Germany’s Tiertafel

IFAW supports animal health checkpoints at Tiertafel’s animal ‘soup kitchens’ in Germany, where pet owners who are struggling financially can get food for their animals.

IFAW in Mexico

With IFAW’s support, animal welfare organisations in Mexico have expanded their spay/neuter programmes, rescued sick and injured animals, developed education programmes and campaigned for more humane animal control.

Canada’s Northern Dogs

Each year, IFAW takes a team of vets and humane educators to provide services to remote communities in far Northern Canada.

Humane Community Development (HCD)

IFAW knows that communities benefit from healthy and happy dogs and cats. Our unique approach recognises that every community needs its own plan to address companion animal and human welfare, and that community participation is the key to effective solutions.

We bring community members together in participatory workshops to help them understand the root causes of their concerns, and how to create management plans that address the specific needs of dogs, cats and people in their community.

In 2013, IFAW launched this new approach and set of tools through a partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This partnership was announced at the Clinton Global Initiative annual meeting, and IFAW has committed to annual reports on the progress of the partnership.
For more than two decades, the International Fund for Animal Welfare has brought our free Animal Action Education programme to classrooms, youth groups and families worldwide. Through teaching resources and activities that complement existing core curricula, we educate and inspire more than five million educators and young people in dozens of countries each year to respect and protect animals and our shared environment. These initiatives benefit human communities, too. Numerous studies have found that humane education reduces school violence and that environmental literacy improves critical thinking skills, motivates students to become more engaged and promotes academic achievement.