



AnimalsAsia
Kindness in action

CAPTIVE ANIMAL WELFARE

The issue

Wild animals in captivity across Asia face a range of challenges.

Elephants are forced to carry tourists in the searing heat. Terrified chickens are fed to lions and tigers as live prey for entertainment. Bears are forced to perform demeaning tricks for jeering circus crowds. Frightened baby orangutans are stolen from their mothers and used as props for social media. And tens of thousands of songbirds are caught and trafficked for the lucrative pet trade.

Many caged animals pace and sway due to neglect and poor management. Some suffer from injuries and diseases that are left untreated.

Focus areas

Animals Asia works in China, Vietnam and Indonesia to improve the welfare of wild animals in captivity. We focus on five key areas:

1. Investigations

We visit animal facilities to identify animal welfare concerns and report these to the management of the facilities and government authorities. We use the findings collected during our visits to influence positive regulatory change.

We work with both the facilities directly and the authorities to advise on animal welfare improvements.

In 2010, following our investigative study into animal performances, a directive was issued banning the use of wild animals in such performances – while this has seen many positive changes, the practice continues due to the lack of enforcement. In 2021, the Hanoi Central Circus, after working with us for many years, committed to ending wild animal performances and agreed to let us take their remaining bears to our sanctuary.

2. Training vets and animal carers

We provide educational workshops for vets and animal management staff at animal facilities on meeting the health and welfare needs of captive animals.

We work in partnership with captive facilities to train and support their animal managers to implement management practices that promote positive animal welfare.





We provide advice and support to staff on all aspects of animal management, including enclosure design, enrichment, husbandry, behavioural observations, disease prevention and screening, record keeping, veterinary and behavioural management, nutrition, and strategic development plans.

3. Public awareness

We give presentations and workshops on animal welfare and the emotional and cognitive capacities of animals to children and university students.

Our animal welfare officers deliver the message that all animals have physical needs and feelings just like us.

We use social media, billboards, videos, cartoons and media interviews to get our message across to the general community.

4. Government and policy

We engage with government authorities, public representatives and policy-makers to encourage them to protect captive animals from neglect and abuse.

We work in partnership with government authorities, like the China Association of Zoological Gardens and Vietnamese government rescue centres on animal welfare regulations. We also train animal managers and vets in animal welfare concepts. This means vastly improved conditions for tens of thousands of animals.





5. Working with other welfare groups

We support a number of animal welfare groups that share our cooperative approach. These include Dog Meat Free Indonesia and FLIGHT, also in Indonesia, which has rescued and released tens of thousands of trafficked songbirds back into Indonesia's forests.

We oversee the care of 11 elephants removed from elephant riding tourism and carrying heavy loads, as well as numerous rescued macaques at our partner government rescue centres.

And at Yok Don National Park, we run Vietnam's first ethical elephant tourism project, where visitors observe the elephants from a respectful distance. These former working elephants spend their days roaming in the forest, taking mud baths, munching on tree leaves and swimming in the lake.

In Indonesia, we advise and support Scorpion Foundation's work with macaques, including designing their first macaque rescue centre, which opened in 2022.

Animals Asia is a proud founding member of the Asia for Animals Coalition.

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