

2022 ANNUAL REPORT


WILD ANIMAL WELFARE SCIENCE



TAKES FLIGHT



Wild
Animal
Initiative



“Wild Animal Initiative is leading the way for wild animals. No one is doing more to build the knowledge that’s required to effect change for these neglected individuals. When there is an active field of research that regularly informs the work of animal advocates, they’ll have Wild Animal Initiative to thank.”

Bob Fischer, Associate Professor
Texas State University

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Q&A WITH THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Cameron Meyer Shorb officially took the helm of Wild Animal Initiative earlier this year, after serving as Interim Executive Director since fall 2021. Since then, he has steered the organization with an inquisitive and thoughtful approach to leadership. Cameron first came to Wild Animal Initiative in 2019, bringing a background in hiring for growth-stage startups, designing processes, and building coalitions — with a little bit of tallgrass prairie ecology sprinkled in. All that has served us well in this year of immense growth. We caught up with him during a break in his busy schedule to talk about his first year as Executive Director.

What initially drew you to Wild Animal Initiative's mission?

I was familiar with the idea that someday we could try to improve the welfare of animals in the wild. It seemed interesting but also dangerous to me, because ecosystems are so complicated and there's such a long history of human actions having unintended consequences. It was hard to see how we could help animals in meaningful ways, such as protecting them from the effects of natural disasters. What changed my mind was Wild Animal Initiative's strategy: taking the complexity of the science seriously and building a scientific community with the resources and longevity necessary to develop responsible interventions over time. Plus, it's always fun to be part of the first wave of people exploring a new set of ideas.

If you only had 30 seconds to convince someone why studying wild animal welfare is important, what would you say?

Over 99.9% of the minds alive today live in the wild, and that drives a lot of questions we ask in wild animal welfare science. Any attempts to understand life better — to make the world a better place — should include

wild animals. There's so much we don't know about this large and diverse group of animals. By trying to adopt their perspectives and meet their needs, we're breaking new scientific ground. It's a complicated, exciting, and neglected topic.

What have you learned in your first year as Executive Director of Wild Animal Initiative?

I've learned that the basic science side of wild animal welfare is even more exciting than I thought. "Basic" in the sense of "driven by curiosity about fundamental mechanisms" — as opposed to "applied science," which is directed at solving problems. As I mentioned, the thing that initially drew me to this area of study was the idea that we might be able to solve problems that animals face in the wild. Of course I've always known that some people would come from a place of knowledge for knowledge's sake, and I've always enjoyed going down the many nerdy tangents that come up in the course of our work. I just wasn't convinced that "wild animal welfare" was a useful conceptual category for someone who's truly interested in concepts alone.

Well, the ED role has given me the opportunity to work more closely with scientists both in and out of Wild

Animal Initiative, and let me tell you — now I'm convinced. "Welfare" isn't just a bundle of similar problems — it's a dimension of idea-space that can be meaningfully applied to many areas of biology. Exploring in that direction means doing stuff like inventing objective ways to measure subjective experiences, or designing models that can predict how ecosystem changes will affect each individual in the system. It's going to be deliciously difficult.

And, because this is Wild Animal Initiative, please share an interesting wild animal fact.

Here's the one I keep trying to shoehorn into any conversation I can: Coyotes weren't found in Delaware till 1993. Historically, their range was confined to the Great Plains. They started moving east in the early 1900s, learning to live in forests no longer patrolled by wolves. Delaware was the last of the continental US states they got to, and even then it was a full 20 years after they had been sighted in the neighboring states. There's a lesson here that I keep re-learning: Animals aren't fixed features of a frozen background. They have their own histories, and their futures are uncertain. Coyotes' idiosyncratic expansion reminds me that it's still possible for the future to be brighter than the past.



LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Last year, I mentioned my excitement for Wild Animal Initiative's momentum toward a bright future of meaningful progress for wild animals. I'm proud to say that the staff continues to impress! Just within the past year, I am amazed at all they've achieved and the thoughtful, intentional way in which they've pursued these accomplishments.

It's been a year of growth and transformation — notice the marvelous new logo! — both in the organization and the broader field of wild animal welfare. Wild Animal Initiative's team has doubled in size while becoming even more recognized and authoritative in the wild animal welfare sphere. Not only that, but the field itself reached a remarkable milestone with the establishment of the New York University Wild Animal Welfare Program.

Goals for 2023 include ensuring every scientist has access to Wild Animal Initiative's internal and funded research, offsetting costs for aligned scientists to network and spread the word at conferences around the world, and creating opportunities for researchers whose first language isn't English.

All along, inclusivity and diversity are top of mind. Goals for 2023 include ensuring every scientist has access to Wild Animal Initiative's internal and funded research, offsetting costs for aligned scientists to network and spread the word at conferences around the world, and creating opportunities for researchers whose first language isn't English.

In the coming year, the Wild Animal Initiative Board will focus on continued and meaningful governance to support the organization's growth and mission. Once again, Wild Animal Initiative has raised the bar, and I look forward to seeing them take wild animal welfare to new heights.

For the animals,

Christine Perry
Wild Animal Initiative Board President



“The work accomplished by Wild Animal Initiative is unmatched by any other organization specializing in wild animal welfare issues. In building our educational website WildAnimalSuffering.org, it was clear to us that Wild Animal Initiative would be an essential and effective partner. They provided clear, insightful feedback throughout various stages of the project’s development and helped us coordinate the launch to ensure its success. We are grateful for the work they do, as well as the extremely capable and thoughtful people who power this organization.”

Malina Tran, Director of Communications
Vegan Hacktivists

OUR MISSION

Through scientific research, we’re seeking answers to critical questions about wild animal welfare.

WHO WE ARE

Wild Animal Initiative exists to advance research that addresses one key question — **what responsible actions can we take to improve life for wild animals?** To answer this question, we need to understand what life is like for animals in the wild. We also need to know how to measure their positive and negative experiences in an objective way. That’s why we’re supporting a scientific community dedicated to studying wild animal welfare.

Through this work, we aim to decrease suffering and increase positive experiences for wild animals of all kinds. We share this planet with at least tens of trillions of sentient wild animals. **If we can make changes that help even a fraction of them, we will have improved the lives of a huge number of individuals.**

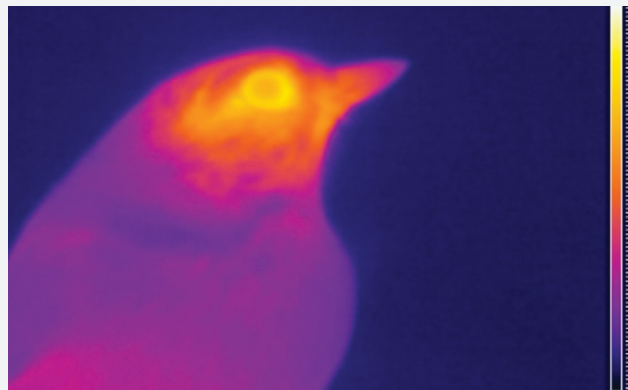
WHAT WE DO

How do we assess the positive and negative experiences of wild animals who experience the world in ways we don’t yet understand? And how do we know which actions will truly result in quality of life improvements for a significant number of individuals? **We can’t make meaningful progress for wild animals until we know more about their lives and how to measure their well-being.** It’s an enormous undertaking, and we can’t do it alone. That’s why we’re investing our energy in rallying a scientific community — an academic stronghold of multidisciplinary researchers working together on wild animal welfare.

Our three programs exist to provide the funding, services, and scientific leadership needed to launch research projects that address our core questions about animals living in the wild. **Together, we can bolster a new line of scientific inquiry and lay the groundwork we need to change wild animal lives for the better.**

YEAR IN REVIEW

After years of building momentum, Wild Animal Initiative achieved a flurry of firsts in 2022. Check out the timeline of our highlights from the year.



March

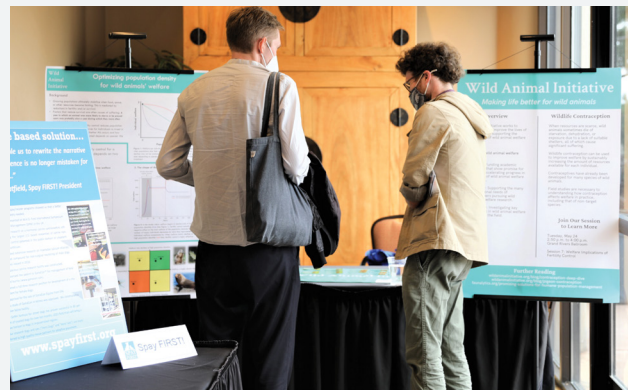
FIRST GRANTEES

Our grants program officially took flight when we announced our first cohort of grantees — 11 research projects exploring important and neglected aspects of juvenile wild animal welfare. **We awarded more than \$600,000 across the 11 projects**, putting funding into the hands of researchers who will help us better understand the positive and negative experiences of wild animals.

May

CALL FOR PROPOSALS #2

We issued our second call for proposals, soliciting more ideas for wild animal welfare research projects. **This CFP debuted our Small Grants Program** — by granting smaller amounts of money to a larger number of projects, we aim to grow our community of grantees more quickly.



May

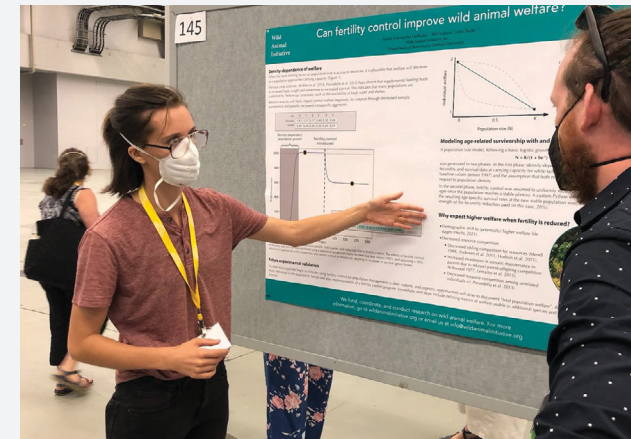
FERTILITY CONTROL CONFERENCE

In May, **we hosted our first session** at the International Conference on Fertility Control in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Facilitated by Science Director Vittoria Elliott, the session brought together our staff researchers and other experts to discuss contraception as a potential tool for the improvement of wild animal welfare.

July

HIRING

Over the course of the year, **we hired 10 new staff members!** This substantial growth significantly expanded the capabilities of our science, operations, development, and communications teams.



August

ESA CONFERENCE

In August, **we hosted a three-hour workshop on wild animal welfare** at the Ecological Society of America Conference in Montreal, teaming up with Miriam Zemanova, advocate for the “3Rs” approach to responsible wildlife research, to also discuss noninvasive and ethical research practices in animal studies.



October

STAFF RETREAT

For the first time in three years, **our staff met for an in-person retreat!** We discussed leadership styles and norms, planned for the new year, and got to know each other better while exploring Washington, DC.



October

AVA CONFERENCE

With Animal Ethics and Rethink Priorities, **we presented the first wild animal welfare session** at the Animal and Vegan Advocacy Summit in Washington, DC, and spoke with animal advocates on topics such as scientific field building.



November

NEW LOGO

We replaced our text-only logo and **debuted a redesigned logo** that features an amiable, forward-looking toad. We're pleased to have a modern, streamlined logo to represent our work and mission.

For insight on our goals for 2023, turn to page 12.

For more about the research we supported in 2022, turn to page 16.

For highlights from the wild animal welfare community, turn to page 20.

For even more of this year's activities, turn to page 24.

OUR THREE PROGRAMS

Wild Animal Initiative's three programs advance awareness and understanding of wild animal welfare research.

GRANTS

Provides financial support to wild animal welfare researchers

Increases global knowledge of wild animal welfare

Increases number of researchers answering questions about wild animal welfare

SERVICES

Advises early-career researchers on career development

Offers networking and training

Organizes online and in-person events to share research



RESEARCH

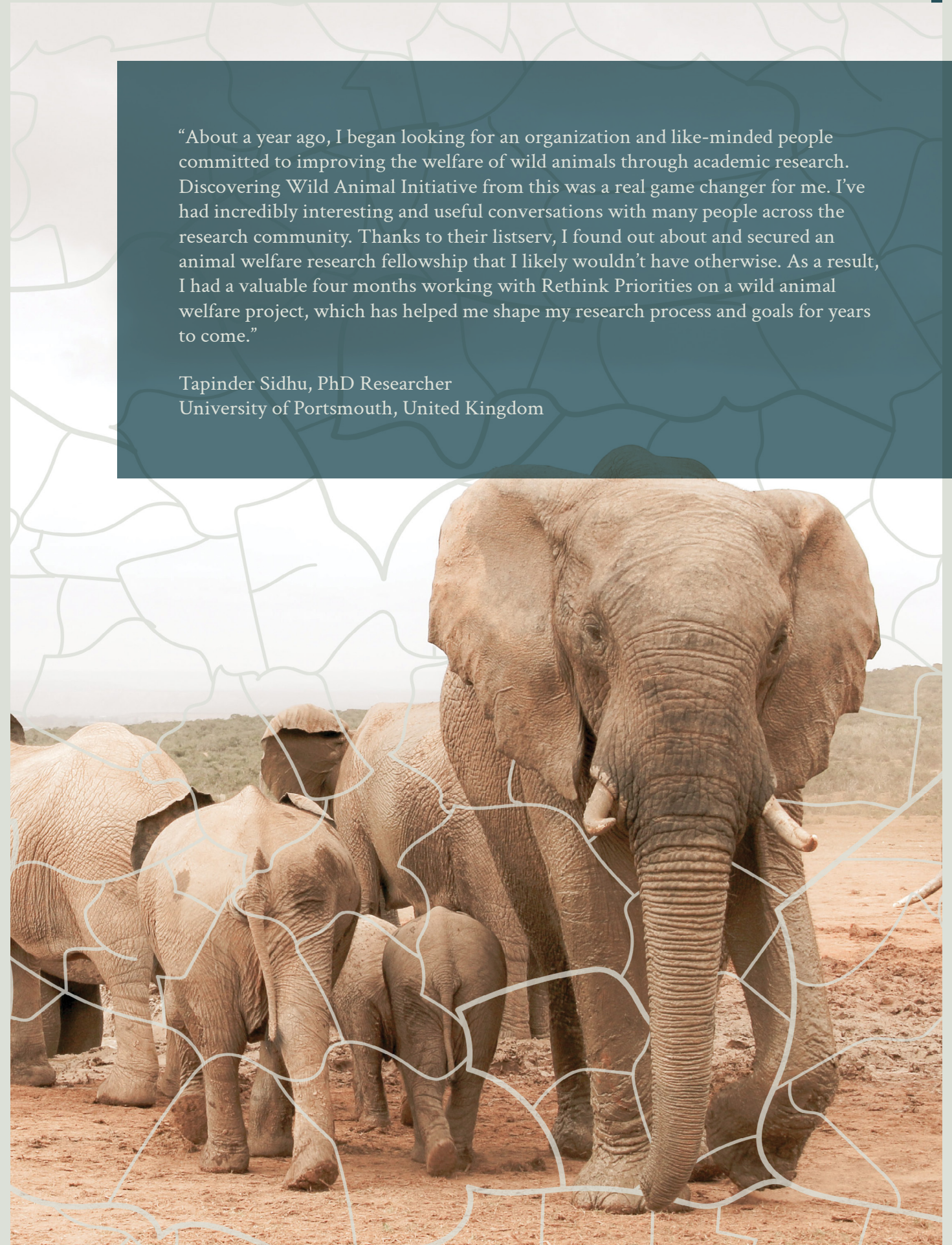
Establishes research priorities and focus areas

Contributes rigorous scientific output to increase knowledge

Serves as a model for the global research community

HOW OUR PROGRAMS WORK TOGETHER

-  Build connections
-  Reach scientists
-  Increase knowledge
-  Advance the field



“About a year ago, I began looking for an organization and like-minded people committed to improving the welfare of wild animals through academic research. Discovering Wild Animal Initiative from this was a real game changer for me. I’ve had incredibly interesting and useful conversations with many people across the research community. Thanks to their listserv, I found out about and secured an animal welfare research fellowship that I likely wouldn’t have otherwise. As a result, I had a valuable four months working with Rethink Priorities on a wild animal welfare project, which has helped me shape my research process and goals for years to come.”

Tapinder Sidhu, PhD Researcher
University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Wild Animal Initiative's staff share the goals that inspire them most

In early 2022, Wild Animal Initiative's staff spent a week refining our most effective strategies to help improve the lives of wild animals. Out of this process, we developed dozens of specific goals that paint a picture of a growing scientific community dedicated to advancing our understanding of wild animal welfare. Rather than list all our goals for the future here, we asked staff members to pick a team or personal goal that they find particularly inspirational and explain why it resonates with them. We hope their reflections inspire you to imagine a future where we better understand the struggles animals face in the wild and are equipped with the knowledge we need to help them.



LUKE HECHT
Grants Manager

Goal: We demonstrate the viability of wild animal welfare science as a field by supporting projects that answer high-priority research questions and funding novel research methods that otherwise would not be explored.

People may feel a sense of futility about helping wild animals, given the scale and complexity of the challenges wild animals face. I am excited to see how this changes over the coming years as the projects we fund demonstrate that wild animal welfare can be studied and that it can be improved. In my experience, scientists are drawn to study what they feel they *can* study, so hopefully this will attract more talented researchers to the field.



GREY FERNANDEZ
Services Coordinator

Goal: We offer career advice for prospective and current graduate students and postdocs.

I am especially excited about this goal because wild animal welfare is an emerging field, so many of those entering this area are paving the way. Career advising provides students and postdocs with support and resources that up until now have been rare, if not nonexistent, within this specific area. Additionally, these resources and services can be especially valuable for first-generation students, who may not have family or personal contacts to offer them similar guidance and information.



VITTORIA ELLIOTT
Science Director

Goal: We consistently produce research outputs that demonstrate wild animal welfare science, advance the understanding of wild animal welfare, and help set priority areas for wild animal welfare research.

I picked this goal because it describes much of what we want to accomplish with our research program. In 2022, we published our research priorities. With those now clearly defined, I'm excited that our research program is now leading the way in addressing key research gaps that will guide the field as a whole.



CAT KERR
Communications Director

Goal: We expand our brand guidelines so that they: (1) Thoroughly describe Wild Animal Initiative's verbal and visual brand; and (2) Instruct staff on how to apply those brand guidelines in their work.

When new stakeholders encounter Wild Animal Initiative for the first time, they are typically interacting with our communications channels. It's important that the content they engage with adheres to clear and cohesive brand guidelines so those new audience members can immediately understand who we are and what we do. That is their first step to getting involved in our mission.



JASON ORLANDO
Operations Director

Goal: We provide each employee with time, tools, coaching, and education to increase their ability to help wild animals with their work.

This goal is important to me because all employees at Wild Animal Initiative should be encouraged to grow and hone their skills. By supporting our staff, we empower them to excel in their role and in their ability to further our mission.



RYAN TORRES
Development Coordinator

Goal: We fund our programs and build reserves for planned growth by better understanding and engaging with the many diverse communities interested in wild animal welfare.

This goal is important to me because Wild Animal Initiative's plans for the future are ambitious and exciting. To make them a reality, we need to increase and diversify our funding through community building and engagement. Wild Animal Initiative has achieved a significant milestone in its goal for sustainable and diverse funding by investing in a new and growing development team.

“I personally was made aware of the scale and severity of wild animal suffering because of the work of Wild Animal Initiative. When I co-founded the Animal and Vegan Advocacy (AVA) Summit, I immediately knew that Wild Animal Initiative’s timely message and deft balance of scientific data with humane messaging would be vital for our audience. We are thrilled to work with Wild Animal Initiative to bring this awareness to the larger animal protection community!”

Michael Webermann, Co-Founder
AVA Summit



OUR VALUES IN ACTION

How we made progress on our core values in 2022

RIGOR

Academic researchers from our [advisory panel](#) and elsewhere lent their expertise in evaluating and selecting our first round of grantees. Each selected research project went through an extensive evaluation to determine whether it met our standards for scientific research and animal welfare practices. Reviewers provided feedback on project methodology and novelty, as well as suggested improvements. Currently, 35 scientists have participated in our review process.

We also published an extensive list of our [research priorities](#), which provide rigorous and detailed descriptions of critical research questions that the field as a whole needs to address to determine the biology and ecology of welfare in the wild. We plan to update and add to the list as the field grows.

TRANSPARENCY

We continue to share board meeting notes on our website, as well as detailed financial information and [audited financial statements](#). All our employee salaries are set through our [salary algorithm](#), which is designed to offer a consistent living wage to each employee based on their location. We also published our full [strategic plan](#) online, describing three- and ten-year goals for Wild Animal Initiative.

JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (JEDI)

JEDI COMMITTEE ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

We celebrated a full year since our JEDI Committee first convened. The committee addressed a variety of topics over the course of the year, but highlights include: how working with a JEDI consultant could improve diversity in our grant applicants; what the racial composition of our job applicant pools means and how we can improve efforts for future hiring rounds; how we can eliminate bias from our hiring process; and how to improve equity when hiring for contractor positions.

STAFF DIVERSITY SURVEY

We published the results of our first [staff diversity survey](#), which measured dimensions of diversity such as race, gender, sexuality, age, and disability status. The survey is the first step in our plan to continually assess whether Wild Animal Initiative is an inclusive and equitable place to work. We plan to repeat the survey annually and use it to measure whether we successfully recruit people from different backgrounds.

HIRING AND GRANTMAKING

We surveyed and analyzed the demographics of our job candidates to evaluate how effectively we’re reaching people underrepresented in the sciences and see where we’re falling short. We connected with groups representing minorities in the sciences to help advertise our job postings. We also evaluated diversity within our grant applicants to measure our outreach to scientists.

2022 GRANTEES

The Wild Animal Initiative Grants Program spread its wings in 2022, awarding more than \$600,000 in funding across 14 research projects focused on wild animal welfare.

Though three projects are still being finalized, we're pleased to share details about the other 11 projects. This year's grantees come from the US, the UK, Brazil, and Australia. Each project represents an exciting step forward in our understanding of wild animals' lives and our ability to measure their well-being. We're thrilled to help these projects take flight and nurture a community of researchers dedicated to understanding wild animal welfare.

PROJECT TITLE

"Tracking how environment affects the welfare of young aquatic salamanders across their lifetimes"

GRANTEES

Thomas M. Luhring (Wichita State University), Caitlin Gabor (Texas State University), Christopher Schalk (Stephen F. Austin State University); United States

GRANT
\$162,604



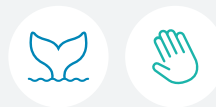
PROJECT TITLE

"The impact of road noise on the welfare of free-living juvenile white-footed mice (*Peromyscus leucopus*)"

GRANTEE

Michael Sheriff, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, United States

GRANT
\$60,000



PROJECT TITLE

"Developing a method to measure wild insect health and frailty"

GRANTEES

Jelle Boonekamp (University of Glasgow), Tom Tregenza (University of Exeter); United Kingdom

GRANT
\$63,536



PROJECT TITLE

"Determining the practical and statistical methods necessary for employing field-based metrics of welfare on wild juvenile birds"

GRANTEE

Daniel Hanley, George Mason University, United States

GRANT
\$60,000



PROJECT TITLE

"Development of novel measures of welfare in juvenile European starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) exposed to nutritional stress"

GRANTEES

Melissa Bateson, Newcastle University, United Kingdom

GRANT
\$59,965



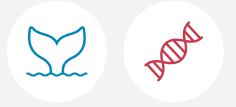
PROJECT TITLE

"Investigating sentience and emotional states in wild octopuses"

GRANTEES

Michaela Pereira Andrade, Charles Morphy D. Santos (Federal University of ABC), Tatiana Leite (Federal University of Santa Catarina); Brazil

GRANT
\$37,959



PROJECT TITLE

"It takes guts to grow in the city: the role of the gut microbiome in the welfare of juvenile urban birds"

GRANTEE

Pablo Capilla-Lasheras, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom

GRANT
\$59,052



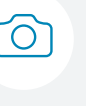
PROJECT TITLE

"Using thermal imaging to study early life stress in birds"

GRANTEE

Paul Jerem, Tufts University, United States

GRANT
\$37,780



PROJECT TITLE

"Estimating the impacts of farmland management on invertebrate welfare"

GRANTEES

Ruth Feber, Paul Johnson, and Sandra Baker, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

GRANT
\$58,448



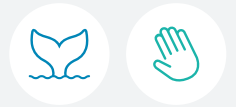
PROJECT TITLE

"Understanding the links between welfare and wild fish survival to adulthood"

GRANTEE

Raf Freire, Institute for Land, Water and Society, Charles Sturt University, Australia

GRANT
\$21,500



Behavioral indicators of welfare



Condition-based assessment of welfare



Evolution



Human-animal interactions



Monitoring systems



Temporal assessment of welfare



Physiological indicators of welfare



Population ecology

PROJECT TITLE

“Evaluating how injury and illness impact individual welfare and survival in wild birds”

GRANTEE

Katie LaBarbera, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, United States

GRANT

\$20,000



Grantee spotlight

KATIE LABARBERA

In their role as a science director at the [San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory \(SFBBO\)](#), Katie LaBarbera spends quality time with a wide range of feathery faces at the observatory's bird banding station in North San Jose, California.



A house wren (top) and Oregon junco (bottom) get banded and checked for injury or illness.

“Holding a wild bird is a very specific joy,” says LaBarbera, an ornithologist with a PhD in integrative biology. “They’re fragile, but they’re also really fierce.”

For decades, SFBBO’s bird banding station has operated in a small patch of riparian forest across the street from fast food chains and office buildings in the middle of Silicon Valley. SFBBO staff carefully catch birds in fine mesh netting, jot down a detailed list of data points on them, and set them free again. Through the years, SFBBO has accumulated a gold mine of information on wild birds, and now, LaBarbera will study it with a wild animal welfare perspective.

LaBarbera’s project is one of seven studies that Wild Animal Initiative [selected to fund in spring 2022](#). Armed with more than 30 years of capture and recapture data about more than 100,000 individuals, LaBarbera plans to investigate how juvenile and adult birds fare after visiting the bird banding station with an injury or illness. The results of this study, LaBarbera says, could inform how other bird banding stations or wildlife rehabilitation centers decide what to do with hurt or sick birds after intake. In addition, the study will contribute to a better understanding of the harms animals suffer in the wild.



“Holding a wild bird is a very specific joy. They’re fragile, but they’re also really fierce.”

Katie LaBarbera holds a juvenile sharp-shinned hawk for banding and data collection.

Researchers and volunteers at [SFBBO’s bird banding station](#) undergo training to learn how to handle birds safely. They hold the wild birds in their hands when banding them, getting a brief but detailed look at their colorful feathers, sharp beaks, and gleaming eyes. These encounters afford bird banders like LaBarbera the chance to observe avian characteristics that might be missed from afar.

LaBarbera says SFBBO catches the same birds over and over again. Repeated observations are incredibly valuable as a tool for wild animal welfare science.

“It’s unusual to have such a long-term banding dataset,” LaBarbera says. “There are banding stations all over the world, but typically, they don’t go back decades, and they usually don’t catch the same birds repeatedly.”

Because of California’s mild climate, the banding station sees many birds that live in the area year-round. Over the years, LaBarbera says they’ve heard anecdotes about birds who suffered dramatic injuries but recovered by the time of their next sighting. One example, they say, involved a sparrow who had lost the top half of their bill. Each time they saw the bird afterwards, they observed that the bill was starting to grow back, and the bird’s body condition slowly improved over two years.

Stories like this provide snapshots of birds’ lives, but in order to understand what really happens, “you need to dig into the data,” LaBarbera says.

With Wild Animal Initiative’s funding, LaBarbera plans to review the dataset and categorize the type and severity of observed injuries and illnesses. They will construct a model that relates welfare indicators to injury type, bird age, species, and time of year. After analyzing injury outcomes, LaBarbera will write a report for bird banding stations and wildlife rescues with recommendations for handling injured wild birds.

LaBarbera has volunteered in wildlife rehabilitation hospitals, and they have seen firsthand the difficult life-or-death decisions that staff have to make. Some hospitals might, for example, have established policies to euthanize one-legged birds, and LaBarbera’s study could provide evidence to determine whether these policies are truly the best choice for the bird’s welfare.

“We’ve seen one-legged songbirds do well and seem healthy in the wild, so with the results of this study, we might be able to provide better, data-backed guidelines for rehabilitation or release,” they say.

DEVELOPMENTS IN WILD ANIMAL WELFARE

Highlights from the wild animal welfare community

NYU WILD ANIMAL WELFARE PROGRAM

The launch of New York University's Wild Animal Welfare Program represents an exciting milestone for the field. Led by NYU professors Becca Franks and Jeff Sebo, the program will "conduct research and host events that examine the impact of human activity and environmental change on the well-being of wild animals," according to NYU's website. The program's team plans to pursue research that will span multiple disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

UK SENTIENCE ACT

The passage of the Animal Sentience Bill in the UK included landmark recognition of sentience in cephalopods and decapod crustaceans. Now that the bill has passed, it will inform regulations related to wild animal welfare, including commercial practices that cause suffering. Notably, invertebrates were included in the bill thanks to a [2021 literature review](#), in which researchers examined more than 300 scientific studies on invertebrate sentience.

NAT GEO GRANTS

The National Geographic Society announced three [\\$800,000 grants](#) available to scientists studying animal cognition and behavior, topics closely related to wild animal welfare.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO WILD ANIMAL WELFARE

"The rodent birth control landscape"

Holly Elmore of Rethink Priorities reviews current practices in rodent birth control as an alternative to methods that cause significant suffering.

"Do bumble bees play?"

Dona et al. provide evidence for the existence of positive affective states in *Bombus terrestris*.

"Saving animals, saving ourselves"

NYU Professor Jeff Sebo's book explores where animals fit into our moral obligations as humans, touching on aspects of wild animal welfare.

"The search for invertebrate consciousness"

Jonathan Birch discusses methodologies and considerations to move the debate on invertebrate consciousness forward.

"Reduction in growth rates of wild horse populations treated with the controlled release immunocontraceptive PZP-22 in the western United States"

Grams et al. share the results of a study on wild horse populations demonstrating how contraceptives led to reduced rates of population growth in wild horse herds.

"Wild Animal Initiative's grant has allowed my team to purchase the necessary equipment and collect data on the expression of emotional states and personalities in juvenile wild octopuses in Brazil. My team plans to triple the number of octopuses studied in 2023 and begin researching the evolution of sentience in the cephalopod group. We have also achieved a new research partnership to compare different *Octopus insularis* populations beyond the Brazilian population. The grant will greatly aid wild animal welfare science of juvenile octopuses."

Michaella Pereira Andrade, PhD Student
Federal University of ABC, Brazil



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

In 2022, Wild Animal Initiative's expenses more than doubled as we stretched our wings to grow.

We distributed more than **\$600,000 of the \$3.5 million grant** we received in 2021 from Open Philanthropy, which was restricted specifically for wild animal welfare research grantmaking. **Eleven grantees** received funds for wild animal welfare research projects, and we'll continue to select new grantees throughout 2023. In another financial departure from 2021, we increased our rate of hiring, **adding 10 employees** to our payroll. We also expanded our operations team by hiring Operations Director Jason Orlando to administer our finances.

CURRENT ASSETS

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Cash and cash equivalents | \$5,177,896.44 |
| Grants receivable | \$0.00 |
| Total current assets | \$5,177,896.44 |

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Total Assets | \$5,177,896.44 |
|---------------------|-----------------------|

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Accounts payable | \$222,458.99 |
| Accrued wages and vacations | \$0.00 |
| Other accrued liabilities | \$939.51 |
| Total Current Liabilities | \$223,398.50 |

NET ASSETS

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Without donor restrictions | \$2,518,523.00 |
| With donor restrictions | \$2,659,373.44 |
| Total Net Assets | \$5,177,896.44 |

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Total Liabilities and Net Assets | \$5,401,294.94 |
|---|-----------------------|

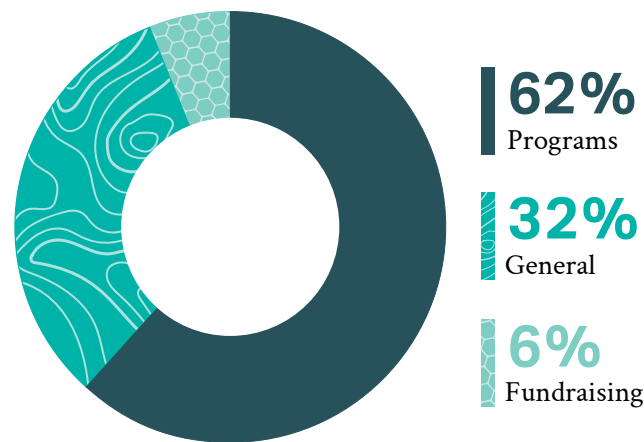
FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES*

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Program expenses | \$1,124,611.34 |
| General and administrative expenses | \$584,771.12 |
| Fundraising expenses | \$107,717.38 |

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Total Expenses | \$1,817,099.84 |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES*

\$1,817,099.84



*Please note that these figures are in draft form and will be updated once audited figures are available.

FUNDRAISING SUMMARY

As a nonprofit, we rely on the generous contributions of individual donors and grantors who help make our work possible.

We're grateful to all who support our mission to understand and improve the lives of wild animals, but we'd like to specifically highlight the people and organizations that played a crucial role in funding us in 2022.

2022 TOP SUPPORTERS

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Animal Charity Evaluators | Anonymous | Sean Johnson |
| Anonymous | Anonymous | Cameron Rogers |
| Anonymous | Centre for Effective Altruism | Isaac Rose-Berman |
| Anonymous | Ben Cogan | Lucy Rose-Berman |
| Anonymous | Bryan Egan | Eli Stone |
| Anonymous | Lucas and Zach Freitas-Groff | Robert Yaman |
| Anonymous | Max and Deborah Hayes Stone | |

UNRESTRICTED SUPPORT

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Grants | \$1,012,613.10 |
| Contributions | \$711,071.06 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Total Unrestricted Support | \$1,723,684.16 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|

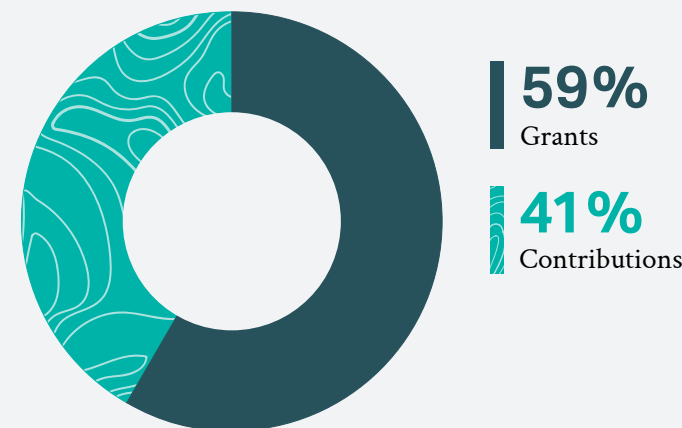
RESTRICTED SUPPORT

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Centre for Effective Altruism | \$32,000.00 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Total Restricted Support | \$32,000.00 |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|

UNRESTRICTED SUPPORT

\$1,723,684.16




2022 ACTIVITIES

JANUARY - MARCH

Announced leadership changes: Executive Director Mal Graham adopted the [new role of Strategy Director](#), and Deputy Director Cameron Meyer Shorb stepped in as Interim Executive Director.


Launched the [Wild Animal Initiative Research Community](#), an online resource for scientists to network and find opportunities related to wild animal welfare in the sciences. After submitting a brief application, vetted members gain free access to a networking database and a listserv of fellow researchers.

Collaborated with [Faunalytics](#) to write about their resources related to animal deaths in the wild.

Announced our [first round of grants](#) to research teams investigating important and neglected aspects of wild animal welfare, sharing seven projects with more than \$400,000 in total funding. 

Held our virtual staff retreat, where we discussed our strategic plan and other long-term visions for Wild Animal Initiative.


Held our [first quarter JEDI Committee](#) meeting to discuss grantmaking and freelancing hiring, among other topics.


Opened our [second call for proposals](#), focusing on the following themes: innovative methods for measuring wild animal welfare; innovative methods for monitoring wild animal welfare; population regulation; and rehabilitation/conservation. 

APRIL - JUNE

Shared a comprehensive list of our [research priorities for wild animal welfare science](#), describing what areas we consider important for advancing our understanding of animal welfare in the wild. The list informs Wild Animal Initiative's internal research process and guides researchers who want to develop a career in wild animal welfare science.


Wrote about [contraception as a promising tool](#) for wild animal welfare improvements.

Attended Effective Altruism Global X Boston and gave a talk illustrating what effective wild animal welfare interventions might look like, drawing on historical cases, new technologies, and speculative futures. 


Presented a poster at the Association for the Study of Animal Behavior Easter Meeting in Newcastle that discusses the purpose of creating natural environments for animals in captivity, exploring whether other positive welfare indicators may be more helpful to enhance welfare. 

Held our [second quarter JEDI Committee meeting](#) to discuss the results of Wild Animal Initiative's 2022 diversity survey.


Welcomed Hiring Manager Emily Sharp and Operations Director Jason Orlando to our team. 

Hosted our own session, "Welfare Implications of Fertility Control," at the [9th International Conference on Wildlife Fertility Control](#) in Colorado Springs. The session examined the potential to improve wild animals' lives with contraception through [presentations](#) and a panel discussion. 

JULY - SEPTEMBER


For the third year in a row, Animal Charity Evaluators selected Wild Animal Initiative as a [Top Charity](#), their highest designation reserved for only a few select animal charities. 


Celebrated the Board of Directors' selection of [Cameron Meyer Shorb as Executive Director](#).

Attended the [Universities Federation for Animal Welfare \(UFAW\)](#) International Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland. 

Released the [results of our staff diversity survey](#), committing to continue assessing our diversity to promote an equitable and inclusive workplace.

Shared our [2022 Strategic Plan](#), which details our theory of change and lists three- and ten-year goals.


Attended the [Ecological Society of America](#) 2022 Meeting and hosted a workshop on wild animal welfare and the ["3Rs" of wildlife research](#). 

Welcomed Physiology Research Specialists Michael Beaulieu and Bonnie Flint; Outreach Coordinators Janire Castellano-Bueno and Anne Clay; and Development Coordinator Ryan Torres to our science and development teams. 

Held our [third quarter JEDI Committee meeting](#) to discuss diversity in relation to our hiring practices.

OCTOBER - DECEMBER


Celebrated and planned collaborations with the [New York University Wild Animal Welfare Program](#), the first academic program dedicated to wild animal welfare.

Opened our [third call for proposals](#), focusing on density-dependent welfare, as well as system dynamics and network effects. 

Held an in-person staff retreat in Washington, DC, where many colleagues traveled from around the world to meet each other face-to-face for the first time.


Launched our fellowship program and invited early-career researchers to apply.

Attended the [Animal and Vegan Advocacy Summit](#) in the Washington, DC area, where we hosted a session on wild animal welfare in collaboration with [Rethink Priorities](#) and [Animal Ethics](#). 

Welcomed Grants Coordinator Kelly Forsythe, Services Coordinator Grey Fernandez, and Visual Communications Specialist Jacie Woznicki to the team. 

Collaborated with [The Humane League](#) to write a blog post about how wild animal welfare researchers and farmed animal welfare researchers can work together.

Held our [fourth quarter JEDI Committee meeting](#) to discuss benefits that might increase equity and inclusion, committee leadership, and other topics.

Announced [four additional wild animal welfare research projects](#) we funded in 2022, with \$240,000 granted among the four projects. 

Shared a [wishlist of projects for 2023](#) that we could accomplish with additional end-of-year donations.

AWARDED \$600,000+ TO 11 PROJECTS 

ATTENDED 6 CONFERENCES 

TOP CHARITY 3RD YEAR IN A ROW 

ADDED 10 STAFF MEMBERS 

OUR TEAM

EXECUTIVE

Cameron Meyer Shorb
Executive Director

Mal Graham
Strategy Director

SCIENCE

Vittoria Elliott
Science Director

Michaël Beaulieu
Physiology Researcher

Janire Castellano Bueno
Scientific Events & Outreach
Coordinator

Anne Clay
Scientific Events & Outreach
Coordinator

Simon Eckerström Liedholm
Researcher

Grey Fernandez
Services Coordinator

Bonnie Flint
Physiology Researcher

Kelly Forsythe
Grants Coordinator

Luke Hecht
Grants Manager

COMMUNICATIONS

Cat Kerr
Communications Director

Amy Klarup
Content Specialist

Jacie Woznicki
Visual Communications Specialist

DEVELOPMENT

Ryan Torres
Development Coordinator

OPERATIONS

Jason Orlando
Operations Director

T. Hall
Operations Coordinator

Mark Onley
Project & Impact Manager

Emily Sharp
Hiring Manager

FELLOWS AND INTERNS

Suzanne Van Arsdale
Law & Policy Fellow

BOARD

Christine Perry
Board President

Josh You
Board Secretary

Ignacio Moore
Director

Nikolai Gates Vetr
Director

PHOTO CREDITS

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Wildlife Fertility Control
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Cedric Streit
Sigmund

“As an ecologist who is passionate about promoting the implementation of the 3Rs principles (Replace, Reduce, Refine) in wildlife research, I am excited that Wild Animal Initiative has been asking grant applicants to consider applying the 3Rs in their proposed projects. By using these principles, researchers can decrease animal suffering and distress while still achieving meaningful results.”

Miriam Zemanova, Research Associate
University of Fribourg, Switzerland





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Minneapolis, MN 55437
USA

VISIT US ONLINE

wildanimalinitiative.org

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2023 EVENTS

We have a busy summer ahead. Find us at these conferences in the United States, Mexico, and Germany.

Species on the Move 2023

May 14-19, 2023

Bonita Springs, Florida, US

The Third International Student Symposium on Animal Behaviour and Cognition 2023

June 21-23, 2023

Mexico City, Mexico

Animal Behavior Society 2023

July 12-15, 2023

Portland, Oregon, US

Ecological Society of America 2023

August 6-11, 2023

Portland, Oregon, US

Behavior 2023

August 14-20, 2023

Bielefeld, Germany