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A Strategic Review of International Animal Protection

Paul G. Irwin

Introduction

The level of animal protection activity varies substantially around the world. To some extent, the variation parallels the level of economic development, as countries with high per capita incomes and democratic political structures have better financed and better developed animal protection organizations. However there is not a one-to-one correlation between economic development and animal protection activity. Japan and Saudi Arabia, for example, have high per capita incomes but low or nonexistent levels of animal protection activity, while India has a relatively low per capita income but a fairly large number of animal protection groups.

The level of animal protection activity appears to be influenced not only by the wealth of a country but also by its sociopolitical background and its dominant religious traditions. Wildlife and food animal issues predominate in developing nations, whereas companion animal issues have been the driving force behind the development of animal protection in most of the developed nations.

Early Activities in International Animal Protection

Organized animal protection began in England in the early 1800s and spread from there to the rest of the world. Henry Bergh (who founded the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or ASPCA, in 1865) and George Angell (who founded the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or MSPCA, in 1868) both looked to England and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) as a role model for their own efforts, as did the founders of many other societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals (SPCAs) in the British Empire and elsewhere. In 1877 a group of American organizations established the International Humane Society—the first to carry the adjective “international”—although the name later changed to the American Humane Association (AHA).

Prior to the modern period of animal protection (starting after World War II), international animal protection involved mostly uncoordinated support from the larger societies and certain wealthy individuals and a variety of international meetings where animal protection advocates gathered together to exchange news and ideas. One of the earliest such meetings occurred in Paris in June 1900 although, by this time, there was already a steady exchange of information among animal protection organizations around the world. These exchanges were encouraged further by the organization of a number of international animal protection congresses, including one in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1908, followed by another in London in 1909.

In 1910 an International Humane Congress covering both child and animal protection was organized in Washington, D.C., under the auspices of AHA. The report of this meeting (American Humane Association 1910) is 228 pages long and includes a list of SPCAs outside the United

Table 1
Animal Protection Organizations Represented at
the 1910 International Congress in Washington, D.C.

Country		Country		Country	
United Kingdom*	200	Austria-Hungary	110	Argentina	3
		Belgium	20	Brazil	2
Australia	8	Crete	1	Mexico	5
Burma	2	Denmark	140	Nicaragua	1
Canada	40	France	16	Panama	1
Caribbean	9	Germany	500	Surinam	1
Ceylon	1	Italy	20	Uruguay	1
Cyprus	5	Monaco	1	Venezuela	1
Egypt	8	Netherlands	35		
India	23	Norway	12	Algiers	5
New Zealand	3	Portugal	2		
Singapore	3	Roumania	2	China	2
South Africa	12	Russia	180	Japan	3
		Spain	4		
		Sweden	120	United States	300
		Switzerland	40		

* RSPCA branches
 Source: American Humane Association 1910

States as an appendix. Table 1 identifies the approximate number of societies (or organizations with either a president or secretary) identified in the printed report of the meeting as being active in particular countries.

Other international congresses were organized in 1911 and 1927 (London), and five more were held in Helsingborg, Copenhagen, Philadelphia, Brussels, and Vienna between 1911 and 1947 (Anonymous ca. 1947). The Animal Defense and Anti-Vivisection Society's International Humanitarian Bureau was established in Geneva (the home of the League of Nations) in September of 1928 (Anonymous ca. 1947). The bureau organized a deputation, supported by more than 1,400 animal protection

societies throughout the world, to the president of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments in 1932.

The records of the 1910 Washington meeting indicate that many of the societies outside Europe, the United States, and the British Commonwealth were represented by expatriates (American Humane Association 1910). One example of a foreigner setting up an organization is the American Fondouk. This entity was established in 1920 in Morocco by American traveler Amy Bend Bishop to take care of the needs of animals. She asked the MSPCA to oversee the program, and today the Fondouk treats 15,000 animals annually.

Modern International Animal Protection

After World War II the level of organized international animal protection expanded as national movements grew and flourished. Today there are four major international entities and a number of international activities sponsored by a variety of organizations. The four major entities (listed in descending size) are the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), the international program of the

RSPCA, and Humane Society International (HSI), the international affiliate of The Humane Society of the United States.

IFAW

IFAW was founded by Brian Davies. (The actual incorporation of IFAW in Massachusetts was in 1975.) Davies's initial focus was the Canadian seal pup cull and, as a result of his campaigns, the Canadian seal issue is now well known around the world. Davies slowly built IFAW into the largest international animal protection organization, with an annual budget of more than \$60 million per annum (the largest amount being raised in the United Kingdom) contributed by more than 2 million donors around the world. Its expansion in the 1990s was particularly impressive, as its budget increased from \$30 million in 1994 to \$62 million in 1998; the number of donors grew from 750,000 to 1.8 million over the same period. IFAW employs more than two hundred staff persons in its Massachusetts headquarters and in offices in another thirteen areas around the world (Asia/Pacific, Canada, China, East Africa, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Latin America, the Netherlands, Russia, Southern Africa, and the United Kingdom).

A few years ago, IFAW divided its programs into three broad areas—reducing commercial exploitation and trade, saving animals in distress, and preserving habitat for animals. These programs include working on trade through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (known as CITES), elephant protection, seal protection, opposition to bushmeat (usually understood to refer to the meat of terrestrial wild animals consumed for food), providing emergency relief, and working to establish marine reserves.

WSPA

The World Federation for the Protection of Animals (WFPA) was founded in 1953 by Dutch animal protection

interests and was headquartered for most of its existence in Geneva. It tended to draw most of its support from animal groups in Europe, although The HSUS became involved in WFPA's governing body in the 1970s. Another organization, the International Society for the Protection of Animals (ISPA), was established in 1959 with the support of the RSPCA and the MSPCA. It had its headquarters in London but it had an office in Boston as well. ISPA became known for its disaster and emergency relief work—John C. Walsh, currently WSPA International Projects director, in particular, was involved in a number of dramatic rescue operations—while WFPA was recognized for its work on the development and eventual passage of several animal protection conventions at the Council of Europe.

The 1960s was marked by significant competition between WFPA and ISPA. During the 1970s, however, the leaders of both organizations recognized that there would be considerable benefits from a merger, and they began to work toward this end. In 1981 the two organizations formally merged to become the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), with offices in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland. In the 1980s the Swiss office was closed, but WSPA established new field offices in Costa Rica, Colombia, and Canada. Today the organization has offices in thirteen countries; 400 animal protection organizations from 91 countries as members; more than 400,000 individual supporters; and an annual budget of approximately \$15 million.

RSPCA

The RSPCA has been the model that organizations have followed when establishing animal protection groups in countries outside the United Kingdom. It also has supported animal protection overseas for much of its more than 175-year existence. Currently its international programs are overseen by an internal division.

The International Department can call on any of the professional staff in the RSPCA's U.K. headquarters to assist with international projects.

The RSPCA was a key supporter of the establishment of ISPA and, more recently, was the initiator of Eurogroup for Animal Welfare (see below). The RSPCA works proactively in East Asia and in Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe. It uses a variety of tools to improve animal welfare, including training courses for government officials, nonprofit groups, and others. It gives out grants and has an association scheme to link with groups worldwide. It has run more than a hundred training courses in the past few years and in 2002 funded projects in more than forty countries.

HSI

HSI was established in 1991 to provide coordination for the international efforts of The HSUS. It has some similarities to the RSPCA international program in that it is able to draw on the program experts of The HSUS to provide expertise as needed. However, unlike the RSPCA, HSI has offices overseas. As of 2003 it had major programs in Costa Rica, Australia, and Europe, and new offices had been established in Asia, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. Other affiliates of The HSUS, including EarthVoice and the Center for the Respect of Life and the Environment, also support international activities on the environment and animals.

Other Groups

The RSPCA and various groups in Europe formed Eurogroup for Animal Welfare in 1980. Eurogroup now is supported by leading animal welfare organizations in all fifteen member states of the European Union. Headquartered in Brussels, Eurogroup's role is to present a united animal welfare voice and to lobby for new or improved European legislation to provide greater protection of animals. It is recognized as an influential and powerful lobby with many achievements to its credit.

For many decades the MSPCA has overseen animal protection programs in North Africa and Turkey. Various organizations in the United Kingdom have raised money to support animal protection activities in Japan, Greece, and North Africa—the Society for the Protection of Animals in North Africa (SPANNA) is a particularly successful example—also for decades. The North Shore Animal League (Long Island, New York) and the National Canine Defense League (United Kingdom) teamed up in the mid-1990s to organize a series of capacity-building conferences in Eastern Europe focused around the idea of no- or limited-euthanasia programs. The U.S.-based People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) recently has established offices overseas and is becoming more engaged in international activities. A consortium of animal protection groups has come together to represent animal protection interests on alternatives to animal testing at meetings of the OECD Chemicals Directorate. As of 2003 the Hong Kong SPCA was organizing a capacity-development and training conference for Asian and other groups to follow up on an earlier conference in the Philippines.

Current State of Animal Protection

International animal protection is healthy and expanding in both influence and sophistication. Table 2 provides some indication of the level of animal protection activity in different regions around the world. This table is compiled from a variety of sources. The number of animal protection organizations in each country was obtained from the International Directory of World Animal Protection; wildlife conservation groups were not included in the tally. (The directory does not include a complete tally of organizations, but the numbers probably are accurate enough for the rough analysis provided in the table.)

The country populations were obtained from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook on the Worldwide Web (www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook). The approximate per capita income in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) also was obtained from the Worldwide Web. (PPP incorporates differences in cultural demand to provide a picture of comparative standards of living that is more accurate than a simple comparison of annual per capita incomes in local currencies.) The analysis could have been refined further to attempt to incorporate broad cultural factors (e.g., dominant religions) but that would have produced a level of detail and fragmentation not necessarily helpful for the level of analysis discussed here.

Briefly, there are three regions in the world (North America, Northern Europe, and Australia/New Zealand, or Group A) where support for animal welfare is very strong and where there is a robust and well-funded animal protection presence. All three regions tend to be characterized by high standards of living and Protestant religious traditions.

In four regions of the world (Southern Africa, the Caribbean Islands, Southern Europe, and Eastern Europe, or Group B) animal protection activity is reasonably healthy, although all four regions could use help to bolster their programs and the level of animal protection expertise available to them. The activity in Southern Africa and the Caribbean is almost certainly a legacy of British colonial traditions and/or proximity to the United States (producing a supply of expatriates to staff animal protection programs and some funds to support projects and organizations). Southern and Eastern Europe are upgrading their animal protection activities because of parity demands within the EU (in the case of countries in the EU) or in hopes of being able to join the EU sometime in the future. However, none of the organizations in these countries is well-funded.

Of the other regions, Central and

South America (in Group C) have weak animal protection activities but exhibit signs of a growing interest and some hope for the future. These regions have reasonably high standards of living, but cultural factors (including possibly their strong Roman Catholic religious traditions) seem to work against the development of a healthy animal protection capacity. Some attitude surveys in Central America (see Drews, in this volume) show that the public appears to have the same strength of humane sentiment as that seen in the United States. However without the tradition of animal protection activity, those attitudes are not yet being translated into behaviors that support animal protection.

Group D includes most of Asia, most of Africa, and most of the former Soviet countries. In Asia animal protection is mostly weak to nonexistent. Japan has a very high standard of living, which usually is equated with concern for animals, but perhaps the religious and cultural traditions discount moral concern for animals (e.g., see Kellert 1993). Nonetheless there are some signs of an interest in developing an effective animal protection capacity in Japan, and recently a group of Japanese animal groups came together to try to develop a more robust political presence.

In India the standard of living is relatively low but the religious traditions tend to support moral concern for animals. India has a relatively large number of animal protection organizations, but they tend to be financially weak. Maneka Gandhi has provided strong leadership to help develop improved animal welfare standards, but economic barriers and the sheer size of the country make her task formidable indeed. She was removed from her position as a minister in the Indian government in 2002 and, therefore, no longer has the political power that she used quite effectively to challenge such activities as animal research oversight.

In the rest of Asia (including Indonesia, the Philippines, China, and the Koreas) animal protection is con-

Table 2
Animal Protection Activity Around the World

Region	Exemplar Countries	Total Population	# of Animal Protection Orgs. (APOs) ¹	# APOs/m people	Approx. per Capita Income (000s) (PPP\$) ²	Group
Europe—Western and Northern	United Kingdom, Germany, Scandinavia	211 million	1,865	8.840	22.5	A
Europe—Southern	Spain, France, Greece	178 million	348	1.960	18.0	B
Europe—Eastern	Poland, Hungary, Ukraine	194 million	158	0.820	4.5	B
Middle East	Turkey, Iran, Israel	239 million	46	0.190	5.4	C
Russia and Central Asia	Russia, Kazakhstan, Georgia	219 million	22	0.100	3.6	D
Asia—India and neighbors	Afghanistan, Bangladesh	1,367 million	128	0.094	1.5	D
Asia—Southeast	Thailand, Malaysia, Laos	229 million	16	0.070	3.5	D
Asia—Indonesia and Islands	New Caledonia	217 million	3	0.014	3.3	D
Australasia	Australia and New Zealand	23 million	220	9.690	19.0	A
Asia—Philippines and Islands	Philippines, Tonga, Guam	78 million	5	0.060	3.6	D
Asia—China and Korea	China, North and South Korea	1,358 million	8	0.006	3.3	D
Asia—Japan	Japan	127 million	30	0.240	23.4	C

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Table 2
Animal Protection Activity Around the World

Region	Exemplar Countries	Total Population	# of Animal Protection Orgs. (APOs) ¹	# APOs/m people	Approx. per Capita Income (000s) (PPP\$) ²	Group
America—North	U.S.A. and Canada	310 million	6,400	20.675	27.0	A
America—Central	Mexico, Panama	135 million	27	0.200	5.5	C
America—Caribbean	Bahamas, Cuba	38 million	44	1.157	3.5	B
America—South	Chile, Brazil, Columbia	346 million	112	0.324	6.3	C
Africa—North	Morocco, Egypt, Ethiopia	292 million	7	0.024	1.0	D
Africa—West	Guinea, Nigeria, Ghana	186 million	5	0.027	1.5	D
Africa—Western/Central	Congo, Cameroon	74 million	0	0.000	1.2	D
Africa—Eastern/Central	Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania	102 million	10	0.098	1.0	D
Africa—Southern	Angola, South Africa, Mozambique	126 million	115	0.913	3.0	B
Total		6,049 million	9,569	1.580	6.0	

¹Taken from World Animal Protection Directory

²PPP stands for Purchasing Power Parity and is used by the World Bank to compare countries.

fined to a few pockets of effective activism or to leftovers from colonial times (e.g., the Hong Kong and Singapore SPCAs). Africa north of the Zambesi River is mostly lacking in any significant animal protection activity (with a few noteworthy exceptions in East and North Africa), as is the Middle East, where only Israel has any active groups. There are signs of a stirring of animal protection interest in Russia and some of the other Soviet republics, but the movement is still very new and weak.

Types of International Activities

International animal protection activities can be segmented into several areas. One obvious activity is the pressuring of international organizations—e.g., the World Trade Organization (WTO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (see Trent et al. in this volume), International Whaling Commission (IWC), and CITES—

to adopt more animal-friendly policies. In terms of hands-on animal protection activities, the programs can be divided into those that address dog and cat issues, those that address farm and draft animal issues, and those that address wildlife issues. Some organizations are engaged in programs to set aside land for wildlife and to promote humane, sustainable development activities.

Advocacy

All four of the major international organizations are active in advocating for animals on a wide range of international issues. The WTO is currently a particular concern, because countries with strong animal protection laws are being threatened with trade sanctions if they use those laws to restrict the import of animal products from countries with weaker or nonexistent animal protection legislation or enforcement. However animal protection has had a major presence at CITES since its establishment in 1973 and at the IWC for the past thirty years. Indeed the current restrictions on whaling are largely a result of the effectiveness of animal advocates over this period. Some of the other international treaties that intersect with animal protection concerns are:

IATTC/IDCPA: Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission and dolphins (dolphin protection);

WSSD: sustainable development, animal agriculture, fisheries, drift-nets;

ISO: international standards involving humane farming and trapping;

FAO: trade, fisheries, whaling, farm animal husbandry, slaughter and transport;

SPAW: specially protected areas and wildlife in the Caribbean;

CMS: Bonn Convention on migratory species;

CBD: convention on biological diversity.

Several organizations (including HSI and WSPA) now have consultative status at the United Nations and are using that status to campaign for animals at the level of these international organizations.

Dogs and Cats

Although companion animals are a driving force behind the development and growth of animal protection organizations in Group A countries, they have not carried the same weight in countries in Groups B, C, and D. Most of the organizations established in

developing countries were set up to address domestic dog and cat issues, however, often by expatriates from Group A countries. Currently most of the companion animal activities are focused on attempts to gain some control of community and stray dog populations. In developing countries the “pet” dog makes up a relatively small proportion (perhaps 5 percent or less) of the total dog population. Most of the dogs are either community dogs, with some tenuous connection to a household or group of households, or true strays who survive exclusively by scavenging. These populations can be very significant; for example, 85 percent of households in Miacatlan, a Mexican village, have stray/community dogs who use the house as home base for their territory (Orihuela and Solano 1995).

Because community and stray dogs are an important conduit through which humans contract rabies (and a range of other diseases, such as hydatidosis), the World Health Organization has worked with WSPA to develop approaches to control populations of stray and community dogs. For the most part, developing countries have tried to deal with stray dog issues by periodically killing as many dogs as they can (often by poisoning). However canids respond to such programs by having larger litters and breeding more frequently, therefore 70 percent or more of a dog population must be killed before a significant drop in the population may be noticed. Such dog control programs rarely have the resources to take the first essential step—to conduct dog population studies.

Over the past ten years, it has been suggested that a variation of the “trap, neuter, vaccinate, and release” approach currently used to control stray cats in developed countries might be used for control of community and stray dog populations. Only a few of such dog trap, neuter, vaccinate, and release programs have included the collection of dog population data, so it is not yet possible to conclude that this approach can work. However a

program in Jaipur, India, has recorded a decline in street dog populations (C. Townsend, personal communication, n.d. 2003), and HSI (2001) reports that a Bahamian program reduced the number of strays on the streets, left the sterilized strays in a healthier state, and began to change the attitudes of local human populations toward the street dogs.

It is clear that dog and cat welfare projects in the developing world cannot involve simply the direct application of approaches that have been used in Europe and North America. New, appropriate technology programs need to be developed that recognize that, although the nurture of animals is a universal phenomenon of human nature, appropriate nurturing behavior does not simply appear without role models acceptable to the local community and adequate opportunity to engage in such behavior. It must also be recognized that animal nurturance, and animal protection, cannot thrive where human communities do not have adequate security or opportunities to provide food and shelter for themselves.

Farm and Draft Animals

Farm and draft animals are vital in providing families with food security (in the context of availability, not of safety) and the means to support themselves in much of the developing world. In parts of Africa, cattle and other livestock are a family’s social security system and “bank.” Thus the welfare of these animals is tied closely to the welfare of families and communities. The FAO is working with HSI on a range of humane slaughter initiatives that not only address animal welfare but also include such elements as food security and hygiene for local communities and the relevant state. Draft animals (e.g., working equines) also are important for local communities, and it is important to help support their health and welfare with appropriate initiatives.

Wildlife

For most of the developing world, wildlife represents either a competitor for resources or a resource in itself. Therefore wildlife protection issues in developing countries involve:

- (1) attempting to establish appropriate protected areas where wildlife can thrive;
- (2) attempting to enforce protections for populations of threatened and endangered species; and
- (3) dealing with the many associated cruelties of the trade in wildlife and bushmeat and attempting to address human-animal conflicts.

These issues frequently interest both wildlife conservation and wildlife protection groups and provide opportunities for such groups to work together to support land protection, conservation initiatives, and wildlife protection. The work of many conservation organizations already involves significant overlap with the programs put in place by the international animal protection groups. For example, HSI ran a three-year project to support wildlife rehabilitation around the world. Many zoos and conservation groups, most notably the Wildlife Conservation Society, which is based in the United States, support similar veterinary programs. Animal protection groups campaign against various aspects of wildlife trade. The U.K.-based WildAid runs active programs to educate people in source countries about the harmful impact of wildlife trade and provides training to rangers and customs officials in source countries to enable them to be more effective. WSPA has developed a very successful bear protection initiative ("Liberty") to address the cruelties involved in harvesting bear products for the traditional medicines market and in performing-bear activities throughout Asia.

While the U.S.-based Nature Conservancy is the giant of land preserva-

tion activities, other organizations also do their part. For example, EarthVoice has been working with U.K.-based Fauna and Flora International to set aside land in Africa and the Americas that secures important habitats for wild species. HSI has been engaged in a project to explore the potential of developing an immunocontraceptive vaccine to manage elephant populations in Southern Africa without resorting to culling.

Conclusions

International animal protection has been growing in its sophistication, reach, and impact for the past quarter century. The Internet provides a valuable new tool to support the activities of the major international groups as well as assist local individuals to be more effective in their advocacy. In ten years animal protection will have a foothold in those countries where it is now mostly a curiosity and will be much stronger around the globe. The message of kindness to animals is developing sophisticated new clothing. As the habit of helping and protecting animals spreads around the world, not only will the animals will be better off, but humans, and the communities, societies, and nations they people, also will grow less violent and more civil. The dream of a safer and more nurturing world gradually will emerge into reality.

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