

A Bald Eagle with a white head and yellow beak sits on a nest made of sticks. A small, fluffy grey chick is sitting in front of it. The background shows bare tree branches and some green buds.

# animal wellness action

## 2024

ANNUAL REPORT

### Major Highlights of Our Work in 2024

## Blocking EATS in Congress, banning bear baiting on national preserves, a major step-up in raids of illegal animal fights

### A Message from Our President

Our nation needs a strong organizational voice for animals in the political sphere, and that's the notion that animates our work every day at Animal Wellness Action. There is an asymmetry in power relations between people and animals, and that's why the law must speak and shield animals from human malice, greed, indifference, and cruel customs or habits.

We need public policies to address cruelty in all its forms and to wipe it away — whether the abuse happens in a fighting pit, on a factory farm, in a drug-testing laboratory, at a horse slaughter plant, or in a forest or field where trophy hunters or commercial trappers lay in wait to kill animals for their heads or their beautiful coats.

When you look at our campaigns — whether it's our Cage-Free Future campaign to protect animals in agriculture, our Animal Fighting Is the Pits campaign to eliminate the scourges of dogfighting and cockfighting, or our Kangaroos Are Not Shoes campaign to bar athletic shoe retailers from keeping the skins of majestic marsupials in their supply chains — it feels sometimes like we are playing 15 or 20 games of chess at one time. We are making bold and strategic moves, and we are locked in a struggle with our opponents who seem hellbent on defending the status quo. With each move, the goal is to position us for ultimate success, even if it takes a while to get there.

But “winning” a campaign does not translate into our political adversaries “losing” their way of life or their business operations. Our goal is to find a better way forward for the whole of society, including the people taking actions at odds with the wellness of animals.

Resistance to change is often not grounded on reason, but on reflex. Researchers don't need to torment beagles or primates when non-animal testing methods, such as liver-on-a-chip technology, allows them to search out toxicities for drugs and to rely on more predictive human biology. Farmers don't need to confine animals so severely that they are unable to move; keeping them in less crowded conditions is less stressful for them



*Animal Wellness Action, along with its affiliates the Center for a Humane Economy and the Animal Wellness Foundation, works to promote legal standards forbidding cruelty to animals and seeks robust enforcement of those legal standards.*



and doesn't create an environment where disease spreads so rapidly. Adidas does not need to use kangaroo skins for its shoes, when sustainable fabrics get the job done better for the shoe buyer. Hunters can use non-toxic ammunition when they go afield, rather than continue to rely on poisonous lead ammunition that they scatter in the environment, with bullets continuing to kill eagles, hawks, foxes, and other wildlife long after they've left the barrel.

In the march of human progress, it's a combination of moral purpose and human innovation that can show us the way forward. Making simple changes, and embracing better methods of conducting science, agriculture, or sport, leads to better outcomes for the whole of society. It's the right thing to do, and it's good for just about everybody.

When you take a broad look at our policy goals for animals, you'll see that we are working to close out industries that have dogged animals for decades or centuries. But we are also tackling, and minimizing the worst harms, caused by major institutional users of animals that are likely to be with us for decades to come.

There's little debate any longer that greyhound racing, animal fighting, and horse slaughter are deeply unpopular. They've all got to go, and that's why we are working with diligence to create strong legal standards and enforce those standards with vigor. The laws we pass to phase out these practices will stand as statutory monuments to the moral progress we are collectively capable of achieving in our society.

For more deeply embedded practices, it's important for us to keep the pressure on, with the goal of methodically reducing the numbers of animals used. This is especially true in animal testing in science and in intensive confinement of animals in agriculture. These businesses, which seem normal to the people immersed in them, are seeing eroding public support. They don't happen to have long historical timelines; rather, they are more recent innovations that gained some favor in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and even the middle part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Putting domesticated pigs and chickens in warehouses is just decades old, and cannot be found in the long sweep of human history since the advent of agriculture.

Factory farming is, in its broadest form, a form of human innovations. But it is human creation detached from conscience. What we want to see is human innovations

attached to conscience. That's where we see the best of human genius and conscience in alignment.

So many practices that cause harm to animals persist because they are removed from the daily gaze of the public — a case of “out of sight, out of mind.” But it's our duty to keep these subjects “top of mind” for the public and to show there's a better way.

Using animals for drug screening, according to so many top scientists in the field, is highly inefficient and unreliable. We can develop better, safer drugs at lower costs by shifting to drug-screening strategies grounded on human biology. We will have healthier animals in agriculture when we move toward more extensive systems. One reason for the surge in egg prices is that the government feels compelled to kill every animal on a giant factory farm when there is even a single infected animal, because they believe the infection will spread to millions of animals jammed together on these farms. Vulnerable animals also mean a highly vulnerable supply chain.

There's so much to our work. It's hard. Complex in so many ways. But our team is deeply committed to achieving good outcomes for animals and society. And throughout the travails and setbacks and battles, you've been there to enable this life-saving, life-affirming.

Without you, there's no progress. Only pain. When we ask for your financial support and your engagement in the political process, it's not a casual wish; it's you throwing us and the animals a lifeline. Making the kind of grand change we seek for domesticated and wild animals is perhaps the toughest form of social change. The sweeping change we want is not a spectator sport, but a participatory one. We need your engagement to win. We need a mass movement to win. To win for animals and for the whole of society.

Sincerely yours,



Wayne Pacelle  
President

*When you take a broad look at our policy goals for animals, you'll see that we are working to close out industries that have dogged animals for decades or centuries. But we are also tackling, and softening, major institutional uses of animals that are likely to be with us for decades to come.*



# MORE PROGRESS, LESS PAIN

Here are some of our organization's tangible gains, whether they are small steps or leaps forward in a longer march of sweeping change and societal progress to benefit all animals.

## Our Principles and Core Values

**C**ruelty to animals runs counter to America's long-standing legal traditions and religious values.

**O**ur nation should never tolerate cruelty, no matter the perpetrator.

**A**ctively addressing cruelty to animals prevents the spillover of violence and other crimes in our communities and also to zoonotic disease spillover.

**A**ll animals deserve humane treatment, including animals raised for food.

**W**e must, as a society, embrace sound and cost-competitive alternatives to harmful forms of animal use where available.

**W**e must honor states' rights and local authority and allow democratic decision-making to protect animals at the local, state, and federal levels.



## Campaign: Creating a Cage-Free Future



**I**n 2024, we **blocked the EATS Act in Congress** that was built to undo the most important state laws to protect animals used in agriculture. Specifically, it sought repeal of laws, such as Prop 12 in California and Question 3 in Massachusetts, that halt the in-state sale of pork and eggs from pigs kept in two-foot-by-seven-foot cages and of laying hens jammed in battery cages. We rallied Democrats and Republicans in the House and Senate to defend these anti-extreme-confinement laws, and the proponents of EATS weren't able to overcome our defensive maneuvers and didn't bring up the legislation for consideration. We know we'll have to be ready to defend these state laws in 2025 as some farm-state lawmakers gin up this assault on states' rights and animal welfare.

**M**eanwhile, in a federal court in Massachusetts, we **fended off a legal challenge to Question 3**, which voters approved nearly a decade ago to halt sale of eggs, pork, and veal that come from the worst kinds of factory farms. The factory-farmed pork industry has mounted a two-front assault on state laws — in the federal courts and in Congress — after their drubbing in states where voters chose kindness at the ballot box.

*Our goal is to expand cage-free and crate-free laws, not to see even one repealed. Relying on animal-housing strategies built around immobilizing animals is, on its face, mistreatment of animals.*

These defensive maneuvers to protect Prop 12 and Question 3 also are protective of other state policies coming into effect. For instance, in January 2025, Michigan law will require that all eggs sold in the state come exclusively from cage-free operations.

Our goal is to expand cage-free and crate-free laws, not to see even one repealed. Relying on animal-housing strategies built around immobilizing animals is, on its face, mistreatment of animals. They have needs and wants like any creature, and the most basic idea is that animals built to move should be allowed to move.

*Photo credit: Jo-Anne McArthur / We Animals*



## Campaign: Animal Fighting is the Pits

**W**e prevailed in a federal appeals court upholding a U.S. District Court decision that animal fighting is banned on every inch of U.S. soil, including in the Northern Mariana Islands. This case turned back a cockfighters' challenge to the 2018 national animal fighting law, arguing the law should not apply to this U.S. territory. We won earlier cases in other U.S. District Courts (and in appellate courts), affirming that the national animal-fighting ban is constitutionally sound as applied to Puerto Rico and Guam.



*There were a record number of animal fighting busts in the United States in 2024, and that's because of the prominence of our no-tolerance-for-animal-fighting campaign, our on-the-ground investigations, and our work with law enforcement.*

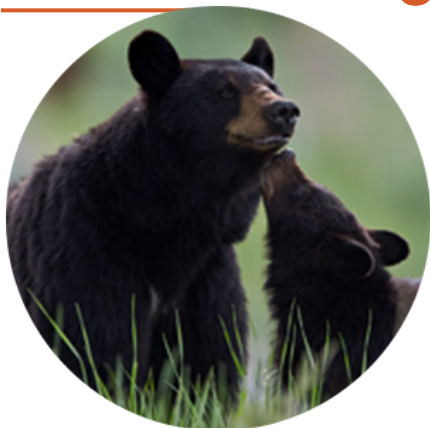
**T**here were a record number of animal-fighting busts in the United States in 2024, and that's because of the prominence of our no-tolerance-for-animal-fighting campaign, our on-the-ground investigations, and our work with law enforcement. There has been a series of federal cases against dogfighters, including the apprehension of a former senior Pentagon official knee-deep in the blood and guts of this betrayal of the human-animal bond. There has been an uptick in federal cases against cockfighting, but local sheriffs have done the spadework here — from Florida to Texas to California and in dozens of other states. We are reshaping and toughening up our animal-fighting laws, feeding information on these ongoing crimes to authorities, and demanding relentless action. There's never been a riskier moment for scofflaw animal fighters.

A dramatic step-up in enforcement will be triggered when we persuade Congress to enact the FIGHT Act. In 2024, we built unprecedented law enforcement support for the measure, winning the backing of the National Sheriffs' Association and the National District Attorneys' Association, which represent all 5,000 elected officials in every county. More broadly, we have 760 agencies and organizations endorsing FIGHT. Passing this legislation is among our top priorities for 2025.



At the end of 2024, H5N1, or bird flu, was on the march and, in response, the USDA has conducted mass killing of laying hens, turkeys, and backyard flocks of birds. Animal Wellness Action has been sounding the alarm bells for a long time about the threat of zoonotic diseases posed by cockfighters who breed, ship, and handle fighting birds. We are quite certain, even though the USDA refuses to disclose details, that cockfighting has played a major role in the spread of H5N1 in the United States, just as it fueled the spread of the disease throughout Asia.

## Campaign: Ending Bear Baiting



**W**e worked to promote a final rule-making action by the National Park Service to **impose a ban-bear baiting on 20 million acres of national preserves in Alaska** — an area the size of South Carolina. Baiting involves setting out a pile of food for a bear and then shooting the animal while he or she is feeding, violating all norms of wildlife management that feeding bears and habituating them to human food sources is dangerous and foolish. The rule stops that abusive, unsporting, appalling practice. The new Administration and Alaska’s lawmakers may target this rule, and we’ll be ready to defend it.

## Campaign: Modernize Testing

**I**n December, the U.S. Senate passed the **FDA Modernization Act 3.0 without dissent**, directing the FDA to complete work on its regulations to end the animal-testing mandate for new drugs and embrace 21<sup>st</sup> century human-relevant science. The Senate action is a harbinger of our likely success in getting this measure passed in final form early in the new year.

*We’ve seen nearly 1,000 news stories and science publications featuring that law and what profound changes it promises to usher in for animal well-being and the future of human health and wellness, too.*

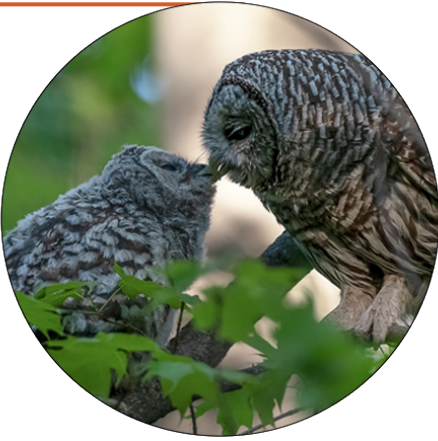


The FDA has been dragging its feet in embracing the law we passed in 2022 — the FDA Modernization Act 2.0 — to eliminate an 84-year-old animal-testing mandate for drug development protocols. Pharmaceutical companies and other drug developers, long bound by this archaic directive, annually use beagles, primates, and other animals to screen new treatments and cures for the wide range of human illnesses. We estimate that as much as 75% of all animal testing is driven by drug development work.

That animal-testing policy in federal law since 1938 has, in practical terms, meant that there’s no such thing as a “cruelty-free drug” because every drug went through a battery of animal tests — until, that is, we passed the FDA Modernization 2.0 two years ago.

The U.S. Senate, with Cory Booker, D-N.J., Rand Paul, R-Ky., and Eric Schmitt, R-Mo., leading the way on the latest bill, has twice passed bills to turn the page on ineffective, wasteful, and inhumane animal testing — in September 2022 and now in December 2024. We’ve seen nearly a thousand news stories and science publications featuring that law and what profound changes it promises to usher in for animal well-being and the future of human health and wellness, too.

## Campaign: Give a Hoot About All Owls



**W**e filed a federal lawsuit against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to stop its plan to kill nearly half a million barred owls in the Pacific Northwest. The plan is by far the largest-ever raptor killing program instituted by any nation. We also built a coalition of more than 250 groups, and it's our goal to block the entire kill before it starts in the spring of 2025.

*We also built a coalition of more than 250 groups, and it's our goal to block the entire kill before it starts in the spring of 2025.*

Barred owls are a range-expanding North American native species long protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Range expansion is a naturally occurring ecological phenomenon. Especially in an era of climate change, we cannot punish species that adapt to opportunity or changes in the environment caused by humans. According to one study, a total of 111 other native North American bird species have engaged in recent range expansions, with 14 of them into more states or provinces than barred owls have. We've rallied 200 organizations to oppose the assault on owls.



## Campaign: Keeping Wild Horses Wild

**W**e worked with allies to stop a roundup and removal of the iconic wild horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park, with a major assist from North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum. But we know we must tackle the larger problem of tens of thousands of wild horses and burros being rounded up across our western public lands at an enormous cost to the animals and to American taxpayers. With Burgum now serving as Interior Secretary, we may find a sympathetic voice to halt this abuse of free-roaming horses and burros and to give a break to taxpayers unwittingly financing a wasteful and inhumane program that's been on auto-pilot for years, no matter whether Democrats or Republicans have been in charge of it.



## Campaign: Ending Greyhound Racing and Horse-Slaughter for Human Consumption



**W**e are poised to close out a century of greyhound racing and slaughtering horses for human consumption, given the breadth of political support we've built in Congress on both these policy reforms. We planned to pass a legislative amendment to the Farm bill on these reforms in 2024, but Congress deferred action on the legislation. We'll be ready to secure these policies and to close out inhumane businesses not in alignment with American values and now on the back end of a long decline.

*We are poised to close out a century of greyhound racing and slaughtering horses for human consumption, given the breadth of political support we've built in Congress on both these policy reforms.*



## Campaign: Saving Wolves

**W**e blocked Congressional efforts by anti-wolf lawmakers to eliminate federal protections for the wild canids across most of their range. Meanwhile, we sued the federal government to restore federal protections for wolves in the Northern Rockies, where wolves are under assault. The killing is particularly ruthless in Wyoming, where it's legal to run down and crush wolves with snowmobiles. It's because of that extreme cruelty that we formulated a national legislative campaign — the Snowmobiles Aren't Weapons (SAW) Act — to ban using motorized vehicles to assault wolves and coyotes.



We are also working to stop assaults on mountain lions, bobcats, and other native cats in the West, along with battling to stop the killing of bears for their gallbladders and bile for Traditional Chinese Medicine.

We are seeking to halt the mistreatment of dairy cows, engineered at the expense of their well-being for hyper production only to see the milk they dispense thrown away in the National School Lunch Program, which requires the milk be provided exclusively to 15 million kids who are lactose intolerant and don't want it.



# ELECTING HUMANE-MINDED LAWMAKERS

**Animal Wellness Action, as a 501(c)(4) organization, is equipped to elect humane-minded lawmakers and to oust anti-animal lawmakers, because good policies flow from politicians who are alert to animal welfare sensibilities.**

**A**nimal Wellness defeated three anti-animal welfare incumbents in the U.S. House of Representatives in the national elections in November 2024. These incumbent lawmakers distinguished themselves by rarely if ever supporting mainstream animal welfare initiatives; they also voted in favor of weakening protections for animals, including by supporting efforts to remove federal protections for wolves and to block federal agencies from restricting the use of deadly and toxic lead ammunition in sport hunting. We conducted winning independent expenditure campaigns, educating voters with television advertising and social media work about the dismal records of incumbent lawmakers and highlighting the pledges of their challenges to do much better. One challenger we backed in the Central Valley of California won by just 187 votes, underscoring that the actions of every animal-friendly voter mattered in tipping this race to an ally of animal welfare.

**W**e also successfully defended four of our top allies in Congress. Our television ads collectively achieved millions of impressions to achieve these electoral milestones.

**W**e also worked to support dozens of state candidates for office and even got involved in efforts to defeat sheriffs in Oklahoma that looked the other way when cock-fighting crimes occurred in their communities. We had a major setback in Colorado, with the defeat of Prop 127 to halt the trophy hunting and commercial trapping of mountain lions, bobcats, and Canada lynx. But we are dusting ourselves off and are committed to securing major reforms for native wildlife in the state of Colorado, with the goals of banning hounding of lions and any fur trapping of bobcats.

**S**ince its inception in early 2018, Animal Wellness Action has worked to defeat a raft of lawmakers who disregard the importance and values of animal welfare in the law. We are proving to all lawmakers that an ethical concern for animals is a political norm that must be honored in the law.

*We are a strategic organization that takes calculated risks. None of this progress or possibility would be achievable without you — your advocacy for animals, your financial support, and our shared purposes to make the world safer for animals. We are poised for major gains in the new year, but only with your active engagement.*



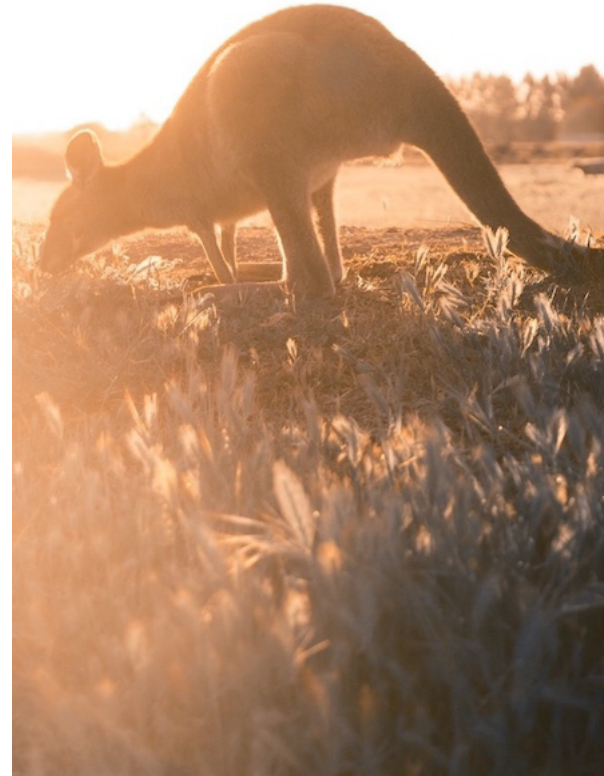
# INSIDE ANIMAL WELLNESS ACTION

We see a time when animal cruelty is no longer common or accepted.

## Financial Summary for 2024

In 2024, Animal Wellness Action had unaudited cash basis total revenues of \$2,163,300, and an additional \$141,900 in revenue for Animal Wellness Action PAC. The organization had unaudited expenditures of \$2,460,500, and the PAC had expenditures of \$139,000. Animal Wellness Action ended the year with assets of \$2,091,700, and the PAC, with \$133,800. In even-numbered years like 2024, Animal Wellness Action makes significant expenditures for candidates and issue elections, spending more than in odd year. We build more cash reserves in the odd years so that we can play in a major way in national and state elections. In addition to driving better policy outcomes for animals, Animal Wellness Action seeks to inject animal welfare into the national political discourse and to drive better policy outcomes for animals.

In even-numbered years like 2024, Animal Wellness Action makes significant expenditures for candidates and issue elections, spending more than in odd year. We build more cash reserves in the odd years so that we can play in a major way in national and state elections. In addition to driving better policy outcomes for animals, Animal Wellness Action seeks to inject animal welfare into the national political discourse and to drive better policy outcomes for animals.



## Board Members

**Deborah Wilson, M.D.**  
Chair of the Board  
Phoenix, Arizona

**Sherry Kellett**  
Treasurer  
Clyde, North Carolina

**Annie Harvilicz, D.V.M. CVA**  
Los Angeles California

**Joseph Goode**  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

**Stacey Dorfman Kivowitz**  
Las Vegas, Nevada

**Jon Lundberg**  
Bristol, Tennessee

**Ari Nessel**  
Ross, California

**Candis Stern**  
Carlsbad, California

Animal Wellness Action has earned  
Guidestar's Platinum Seal of Transparency.  
You can view our profile [here](#).



Gloria Butler  
Kimberly Friedmutter  
Gigi Gartner  
Tracey Gluck  
Stacey Kivowitz  
Bobi Leonard  
Louise Linton  
Joanne Mizell  
Kimberly Ovitz  
Randall Roe  
Laura Schuman  
Jennifer Sullivan  
Alanna Tarkington

# Ways You Can Help

1

**Get educated  
on animal  
issues**

Stay updated on animal welfare issues by reading our blog [here](#) for an in-depth look at what's happening at the intersection of animals and politics.

2

**Influence  
lawmakers**

Take action on our [Contact Congress](#) page. And don't forget to [sign our petitions here](#). Make your voice heard by letting your local, state and national lawmakers know you want them to introduce new animal welfare bills and vote for existing ones.

3

**Vote with  
your  
conscience**

Vote in your local, state and national elections for candidates who support animal welfare policies and programs. Check if you're registered to vote by [clicking here](#). Or you can [register to vote here](#).

4

**Be social**

Keep up on the latest in animal welfare news by following us on social media and alerting your followers to the opportunities to help the animals.



5

**Donate for  
change**

Donate to candidates and lawmakers who support better animal welfare laws. Support organizations like [Animal Wellness Action](#) that move forward public policy surrounding animals. We have [multiple ways for you to give](#) to help prevent cruelty to animals by supporting our work influencing legislation that shapes animal welfare laws and regulation.

6

**Campaign for  
compassion**

Seek opportunities to campaign and support legislators, law enforcement personnel, judges, and other candidates for public office who support animal welfare policies. Volunteering at their campaign offices, door-knocking, and phone banking are easy and productive ways to help.

7

**Show  
appreciation  
for legisla-  
tive leaders**

Spread the news about legislation and legislative leaders. Write letters to the editor, post information on social media about key legislative items. Remember to thank lawmakers who carry animal protection legislation and help lead on our issues.

8

**Educate  
others**

Further the dialogue surrounding animal welfare issues with friends and families. Make sure the people who care are getting the latest information by sharing our feeds.

9

**Urge proper  
enforcement  
of animal  
welfare laws**

Speak out with any information you have about the inhumane treatment of captive, farmed or companion animals, wildlife trafficking or environmental crimes by calling The Environment and Natural Resources Division of the U.S. Department of Justice at 202-514-2701. And send tips about the cruel spectacle of illegal animal fighting here: [animalcrueltytips@animalwellnessaction.org](mailto:animalcrueltytips@animalwellnessaction.org)

10

**Eat and  
act with  
conscience  
and purpose**

Eat more plant-based foods, reduce food waste, minimize packaging waste, buy cruelty-free products, and live your life as if every choice matters. When we live this way, we create a healthier planet and build a more humane economy.

# animal wellness action

helping animals helps us all



[animalwellnessaction.org](https://animalwellnessaction.org)

[info@animalwellnessaction.org](mailto:info@animalwellnessaction.org)

