

Follow-Up Questions for Animal Ethics (2017)

Are you willing to share your financial information for 2016? (Just overall revenue and expenditure is fine.)

Revenue: \$87,515

Expenses: \$46,973

What do you estimate your revenue will be for 2017?

We expect to get between \$45,000 and \$60,000.

Can you tell us any more about your planned quantitative study with students? (Will it be an RCT, what outcome measure and treatments will it use, etc?)

After a pre-test, this is currently under review. We can share it with you in its current form, but we ask that you not make it public because we aren't ready to make it public yet.

Do you have policies in place to prevent harassment and discrimination?

Yes. Anyone working at Animal Ethics in any position must be treated respectfully and in line with our anti-discrimination policy. We currently have one Internal Communication and Antidiscrimination officer to ensure that this is the case, and to handle issues related to discrimination and harassment. We plan to expand this to a committee of at least three people.

To what extent are board members and other stakeholders (e.g. staff, volunteers) involved in Animal Ethics' strategic planning?

Board members together make the final decisions, and consult staff and involved activists regarding the fields they work on. We wouldn't plan to do something in an area where we have a coordinator if the coordinator didn't agree with it or thought it infeasible.

When Animal Ethics speaks at conferences or distributes leaflets, do you find that people are receptive to advocacy for wild animals? Do you find that the public's attitudes towards wild animals have changed at all over the course of your work? Do you think people's attitudes will change in the near future?

We have talked about animal suffering in nature and helping wild animals to very different audiences, including the general public, high school students, university students, academics, animal activists, people defining themselves as effective altruists, and people running animal organizations. People tend to be receptive to this idea. To many people, this idea is more acceptable than veganism, for instance, as it seems less demanding.

Among these different groups of people, those who are typically more resistant to the idea of helping wild animals are people running animal organizations. They fear that people will react negatively to the idea. But these fears are not backed by empirical evidence and what we have been able to see is different.

We would like to invite animal activists with concerns that people may not be receptive to this idea to try to include concern for wild animal suffering in their message and test how it goes. They may try this just as a small pilot project (we'd be happy to provide them with any help they need, without them having to give us any credit for it). On the basis of our experience, we expect that if they try to do this they will find that most people are open to this idea to at least some degree.

It's too soon to assess the extent to which the general public's attitudes towards this have changed. While we and other people concerned about wild animals have succeeded in changing the minds of many of the people we have reached, the number of people we have reached is small. So, overall, change among the general public is occurring, but slowly. There has been a change among certain key groups where our impact has been proportionally much more important. This includes animal activists or people sympathetic to animal advocacy, people working under the effective altruism label, and academics.

We don't expect that the general public's attitudes towards wild animals will change much in the next few years. If we are successful, though, we may see a big change in the next few decades. We also believe that other animal organizations, including some of the largest ones, will eventually get involved in this cause too, as they see that the issue can be well accepted by the general public. In addition, we think that academic research assessing the best ways to intervene to aid animals in the wild will eventually develop as a new field. This is not going to happen in the next few years, but we think it can happen before the next decade.

Some might say that before working to promote concern for wild animal suffering, we should do more research on effective interventions for promoting concern for wild animal suffering. Why is Animal Ethics focusing on education first?

As indicated in the answer to the previous question, we have reasons to believe that the kind of education we are doing is effective. We do not claim that it is the most effective that it can be, but it would take more resources than we have to carry out a large study to assess whether there could potentially be more cost-effective courses of action. We think that currently our resources are best used working towards what we believe to be highly effective based on the current information we have. We also make use of current research about attitudinal change in general and about showing at least a partial solution to the problems we draw attention to.

We do conduct some focused research. We are currently designing a study to learn more about the different views students and academics have about helping wild animals. One of our main goals is promoting more academic research about the lives of wild animals and about effective ways to help them, and that is one of the focuses of our education and our more modest research goals. We expect that concern will increase as more attention is paid to what some people call (animal) welfare ecology and more research is done about effective interventions to help wild animals.

In addition to working to promote concern for wild animals, it seems we as a movement also need to do some work to figure out which interventions would best help wild animals. Which type of work do you think should come first, or should we be doing both at once?

Most people have never imagined that what happens to animals in the wild may be a serious issue. Because of this, the main obstacle to changing the situation of these animals is not ignorance about how to help them, but lack of concern about it. This is why promoting concern about this issue is key and we believe that at this moment, raising concern should take priority. One reason is that by doing this we will be able to get many new people on board, and among them will be researchers interested in this issue—which will help us to gain better knowledge about how to best intervene.

One of our aims at Animal Ethics is to try to introduce this issue among scientists so it eventually becomes a respected field of research in academia. We think it's crucial to do this for several reasons. One is that academics are in a much better situation to do research on how to best intervene to aid wild animals than we or other animal activists are. By succeeding in making animal welfare ecology a respected scientific field, we will be making it possible for a huge amount of research be carried out. This kind and amount of research could not be carried out with the resources animal organizations have.

In addition, research done outside academia tends to be considered by key influencers such as academics, politicians, and educators as not authoritative enough—and not suitable for informing new lines of research, policy making, or student curricula.

Carrying out some research on specific points may be useful to achieving our goals. But their aim should be to raise concern about this issue and to encourage more interest in it. That's why we have the texts on our website about [the situation of animals in the wild](#), the reasons [why wild animals matter](#) and [how to aid them](#). Their point is not to answer the complex questions that need to be addressed in order to figure out the main interventions that should be furthered. Rather, it is to increase concern about this issue as much as possible.