

Wild Animal Initiative's Reporting of Financials (2020)

This document contains responses written by the charity. ACE has made no content changes other than the removal of confidential information.

Program 1

Program name: Community strategy

Program expenses (2019):

\$17,673

Proportion of expenses that go to non-staff costs (2019):

20%

2019 Wild Animal Welfare Summit supplies and venue (small AirBnb) and conference admission and travel.

Program expenses (first 6 months of 2020):

\$3,298

(Note: This number does not include employee benefits or tax liability, for which data aren't available yet.)

Proportion of expenses that go to non-staff costs (first 6 months of 2020):

33%

Conference admission and travel.

Approximate number of staff hours invested (2019):

511 hours

Approximate number of staff hours invested (first 6 months of 2020):

268 hours

Approximate number of volunteer hours invested (2019):

0 hours

Approximate number of volunteer hours invested (first 6 months of 2020):

0 hours

Most important outcomes/accomplishments (2019 and the first 6 months of 2020):

Established collaborative relationships with mission-aligned organizations

- We hosted the 2019 Wild Animal Welfare Summit. To our knowledge, this was the first time multiple wild animal welfare organizations officially met to collaborate on movement strategy.
- To facilitate the flow of ideas and avoid the unintentional duplication of efforts, we helped establish regular check-ins between Wild Animal Initiative, Animal Ethics, and Rethink Priorities, including quarterly research updates and monthly leadership meetings.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we redesigned the 2020 Wild Animal Welfare Summit as a series of virtual meetings with other animal advocacy research organizations. Co-hosted by Animal Ethics and Rethink Priorities, these meetings focused on coordinating research priorities across groups.

Deepened understanding of wild animal welfare in adjacent movements

- We hosted three open meetups to facilitate connections between advocates interested in wild animal welfare: one at Effective Altruism Global San Francisco 2019, one at Effective Altruism Global San Francisco-Virtual 2020, and one [standalone event](#) co-hosted by Animal Ethics and Rethink Priorities.
- We delivered twelve introductory presentations on wild animal welfare to live audiences at effective altruism conferences, seminars, and meetup groups. Selected presentations can be seen [here](#).
- We networked extensively with participants at the 2019 Animal Rights Conference to build relationships, get new perspectives on our work, and make the case for extending animal advocacy to address wild animal suffering not directly caused by humans.

Sowed the seeds for broader coordination

- We wrote extensively about the common ground between wild animal welfare, conservation, and restoration, including:
 - A peer-reviewed opinion [article in restoration ecology's flagship journal](#), co-authored by University of Missouri ecology professor Dr. Samniqueka Halsey.
 - A peer-reviewed abstract accepted for [presentation at the next Society for Ecological Restoration's North American RE3 Conference](#) (later canceled because of COVID-19).
 - A [blog post](#) explaining how wild animal welfare contributes to the healthy relationships with nature that ecological restorationists strive for.
 - A [blog post](#) on the connection between conservation and wild animal welfare.
- We attended the 2019 American Veterinary Medical Association Convention to better understand how the veterinary community researches animal welfare and how it conceives of its relationship to wild animal suffering not directly caused by humans.
- After we actively participated in a webinar hosted by the Botstiber Institute for Wildlife Fertility Control, they began regularly mentioning us in their social media posts, supporting our hope to collaborate more closely with them in the future as we continue to explore wildlife contraception.

How, if at all, do you plan to expand/shrink this program?

Expanding our Community Strategy program is our lowest growth priority next year.

Coordinating with other wild animal welfare organizations takes less time now that we've established those systems. We are shifting our relationship-building efforts to conservation and wildlife protection organizations, with the goal of broadening the number and types of organizations that are actively coordinating on wild animal welfare strategy.

The direction this program takes over the next three years is highly dependent on the results we see over the next year as we broaden our coordination efforts.

Of the next twelve positions we plan on hiring for, none are dedicated to community strategy. We expect this work can be completed with the continued involvement of our leadership and the additional contributions of our upcoming Outreach program hires: Communications Specialist (approximate hiring priority under the full-funding scenario: #6), Event Planner (#8), and Outreach Director (#9). For more detail, see our response to the question below: "How many new staff members would you like to—and realistically be able to—hire within the next year if you had sufficient funds?"

What do you expect the total expenses for this program to be in 2021?

[Note on our budgeting process: We do not have detailed financial projections for 2021 because we revise our budget in February of each year, after we have accounted for end-of-year fundraising. As a young organization in an emerging cause area, we are frequently revising our plans and responding to new opportunities. Therefore, we believe detailed projections beyond the fiscal year would not be informative enough to justify the opportunity cost of spending our limited staff time.]

We plan to devote a similar proportion of our resources to this program over the coming year. The majority of expenses will be payroll costs. We expect other expenses to include (in descending estimated order): conference admission and travel, venue and supplies for a wild animal welfare summit, and possibly software to support more interactive virtual meetups.

Program 2

Program name: Research

Program expenses (2019):

\$135,425

Proportion of expenses that go to non-staff costs (2019):

7%

Conference admission and travel, office supplies and software, and professional service fees.

Program expenses (first 6 months of 2020):

\$36,689

Proportion of expenses that go to non-staff costs (first 6 months of 2020):

9%

Conference admission and travel, office supplies and software, and professional service fees.

Approximate number of staff hours invested (2019):

3,980 hours

Approximate number of staff hours invested (first 6 months of 2020):

2,313 hours

Approximate number of volunteer hours invested (2019):

0 hours

Approximate number of volunteer hours invested (first 6 months of 2020):

0 hours

Most important outcomes/accomplishments (2019 and the first 6 months of 2020):

Charted promising directions for wild animal welfare research

- [2019 Research Agenda](#)
- [2020 Research Agenda](#)

Conducted research for publication in peer-reviewed journals

- [“What is the value of wild animal welfare for restoration ecology?”](#) (published in *Restoration Ecology*) argues that considering wild animal welfare can simultaneously advance the goals of restoration ecology. The article was co-authored by University of Missouri ecology professor Dr. Samniqueka Halsey.
- [“Accounting for demography in the assessment of wild animal welfare”](#) (manuscript in preparation) proposes a novel approach to estimating population-level welfare that uses only commonly available demographic data.

Published detailed white papers to guide future research

- [“Assessing biomarkers of aging as measures of cumulative animal welfare”](#) outlines how methodologies developed to research aging could be applied to objectively measure wild animal welfare in a wide variety of taxa. This report resulted in a collaboration with a researcher who ultimately won a grant through our Grant Assistance program.
- [“Persistence and reversibility: Long-term design considerations for wild animal welfare interventions”](#) examines tradeoffs between the features of ideal wild animal welfare

programs, informing priorities for research and policy. This report has already influenced our current project to assess the policy landscape for emerging biotechnologies. A wildlife manager referenced it in our first meeting with him, suggesting that he found our framework useful for understanding the benefits and limitations of his turtle headstarting project.

- [“Improving pest management for wild insect welfare”](#) lays a conceptual and practical foundation for further research into humane insect management, which has the potential to be the most cost-effective and scalable approach to improving wild animal welfare this decade. The report reviews the evidence for insect sentience, estimates the potential impact of improving agricultural insecticide practices, outlines common insecticide practices and what is known about their welfare consequences, and recommends next steps for researchers.

Introduced new lines of inquiry in exploratory research notes

- [“The relevance of trophic interactions to wild animal welfare”](#) demonstrates that the welfare consequences of predation are far more complicated than predators hurting prey. A holistic understanding of trophic interactions would consider their implications for the number of animals an ecosystem can support, the relative frequency of different causes of death, and the relationship between ecosystem functioning and welfare.
- [“Optimal population density: trading off the quality and quantity of welfare”](#) introduces a new concept for wildlife population management that can be used to increase welfare even under conditions of radical uncertainty.
- [“Applying the Conservation Evidence Database to wild animal welfare”](#) illustrates how conservation evidence can inform predictions of the target and non-target effects of wild animal welfare interventions.
- Summer intern Anthony DiGiovanni revised a classic [model of predator-prey predator-prey interactions and density-dependent population growth](#), improving both its biological realism and its relevance to welfare research. We expect to publish a paper based on Anthony’s work in the coming year.
- Summer intern Dylan Quinn catalogued the [different definitions of “animal welfare”](#) that have been applied in the literature, informing our approach to communicating the concept across disciplines.

Shared our strategies for breaking ground in unexplored areas

- Work toward reliable [signposts](#) of progress rather than commit to a single vision of what a better future for wild animals would look like.

- Limit the time spent on [research prioritization](#) given the value of exploration at this stage of field development.
- Focus on reducing the uncertainty around [non-target effects](#) of wild animal welfare interventions rather than totally eliminating it.
- Build [resilient models](#) that can be applied to a wide range of ethical and empirical assumptions.
- Use [expected value estimates](#) to make decisions involving species of uncertain sentience.
- Use [reference systems and adaptive management](#) to guide ecosystem-level wild animal welfare interventions.

How, if at all, do you plan to expand/shrink this program?

Expanding our Research program is our third-highest growth priority next year.

As part of our effort to identify a promising short-term wild animal welfare intervention, we are preparing to launch our first field research project. This would involve setting up bait stations to administer contraceptives to wild urban populations of rock pigeons (*Columba livia*), monitoring population levels, and collecting data on welfare indicators. So far, we have prioritized desk research because it is low-cost and fast-paced, but the specifics of this project make it more efficient to lead ourselves. We have identified an academic collaborator who will advise the project and another who will carry out laboratory analyses of samples. The project is currently waiting on funding.

Otherwise, the next step for this program is to hire a full-time Research Director to lead strategic revisions to our research agenda, support our research team, and evaluate the impact of our research (approximate hiring priority under the full-funding scenario: #4). This would multiply the impact of our research time by improving the pace, quality, and strategic value of their work. For more detail on our hiring plans, see our response to the question below: “How many new staff members would you like to—and realistically be able to—hire within the next year if you had sufficient funds?”

If funding allows, the Research Director could also launch our Summer Research Fellowship as a joint project of our Research and Outreach programs. In the past, our fellows and interns made remarkable contributions relative to the limited time they’ve spent with us. In addition to supporting more such research breakthroughs, the Summer Research Fellowship would offer a richer and more collaborative experience to empower early-career academics to lead a new frontier in science.

The fellowship program would:

- Bring together 4-8 early-career scientists (graduate students or postdoctoral researchers) to work on high-impact wild animal welfare research projects.
- Introduce them to key concepts, methods, and research in wild animal welfare.
- Involve them in practical field-building strategy discussions.
- Culminate in the opportunity to pitch further research projects to funders who have expressed interest in funding a postdoc to work on wild animal welfare.

After expanding our other programs, and if our evaluation efforts indicate our internal Research program is continuing to accelerate the broader field of wild animal welfare research, we can easily scale our Research program by hiring more researchers. Because researchers can work very independently, we expect negligible operational obstacles. Because there are limited opportunities for ecologists beyond the highly competitive academic job market, we don't expect any talent supply constraints.

What do you expect the total expenses for this program to be in 2021?

Because research is our most developed program, we plan to focus our growth on other programs over the coming year. As a result, we expect our core Research program to represent a smaller proportion of our expenses in 2021. The majority of expenses will be payroll costs, which will increase. In addition retaining our four researchers, we will increase one of them from half-time to full-time after he finishes his PhD and hire a Research Director if funding allows (approximate hiring priority: #4). We expect other expenses to include (in descending estimated order): conference admission and travel, office supplies and software, professional service fees, and journal publication fees.

However, research would represent a larger proportion of our expenses if we launch our first field research project or our first Summer Research Fellowship. Both projects are dependent on additional funding and highly flexible in their design. Field research expenses could include (in descending estimated order): payroll costs for the staff researcher leading the project, filming, lab costs, contraception and bait stations, banding and measuring, fecal sampling, nest boxes, and travel.. Summer Research Fellowship expenses could include (in descending estimated order): payroll costs for summer fellows, payroll costs for the Research Director and staff researchers, venue, travel, catering, and office supplies and software.

Program 3

Program name: Outreach

Program expenses (2019):

\$53,745

Proportion of expenses that go to non-staff costs (2019):

15%

Conference admission and travel, office supplies and software, professional services, and advertising.

Program expenses (first 6 months of 2020):

\$10,350

Proportion of expenses that go to non-staff costs (first 6 months of 2020):

13%

Conference admission and travel, office supplies and software, and advertising.

Approximate number of staff hours invested (2019):

2,645 hours

Approximate number of staff hours invested (first 6 months of 2020):

1,569 hours

Approximate number of volunteer hours invested (2019):

40 hours. Volunteers contributed articles to the Nature Ethics project, which we discontinued in July 2019 after deciding it wasn't sufficiently tailored to our primary audience of academic researchers.

Approximate number of volunteer hours invested (first 6 months of 2020):

0

Most important outcomes/accomplishments (2019 and the first 6 months of 2020):

- Spoke or corresponded with 63 relevant academics and wildlife managers, resulting in 57 working relationships including 4 participants in our Grant Assistance program.
- Established an [advisory panel](#) of five scientists with diverse expertise across animal welfare science, behavioral ecology, computational ecology, disease dynamics, and veterinary epidemiology.
- Co-authored an [opinion article published in Restoration Ecology](#) with University of Missouri ecology professor Dr. Samniqueka Halsey.
- Shared [advice for pursuing a career](#) in wild animal welfare research.
- Networked extensively with scientists at the 2019 American Veterinary Medical Association Convention, the 2019 Annual Meeting for the Ecological Society of America, the Conservation Optimism Summit 2019, and the 2019 British Ecological Society Annual Meeting.

How, if at all, do you plan to expand/shrink this program?

Expanding our Outreach program is our second-highest growth priority next year.

We are looking forward to hosting the first ever (to our knowledge) academic workshop dedicated to understanding the full suite of welfare challenges wild animals face in the wild. After updating participants on the state of the field today, the workshop will give them the opportunity to share their research, build relationships, and explore collaborations with each other. The workshop will culminate in the drafting of a prioritized research agenda for the field, informed by the expertise and varied perspectives of participants. We had originally planned to host this workshop in 2020, but delayed it due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If a coronavirus vaccine is widely accessible in 2021, we will host the workshop in person. If not, we will host a virtual version informed by best practices developed over a year of global experimentation in virtual events. In future years, we hope to replace the workshop with a flagship annual conference.

As funding allows, our next hires for the Outreach program (and their approximate hiring priority under the full-funding scenario) are:

- Communications Specialist (#6): Develop content across platforms to more effectively explain to academic researchers what wild animal welfare research is, why it's an exciting new scientific frontier, and how they can contribute to groundbreaking work.
- Event Planner (#8): Engage more scientists more deeply by planning workshops, webinars, the first annual wild animal welfare conference, and the Summer Research Fellowship.

- Outreach Director (#9): Lead our newly expanded Outreach program, guiding our messaging as an organization and managing our efforts to build a generation of wild animal welfare scientists.

For more detail on our hiring plans, see our response to the question below: “How many new staff members would you like to—and realistically be able to—hire within the next year if you had sufficient funds?”

In 2019, attending academic conferences yielded an exceptionally high return on our investment. After a coronavirus vaccine is widely accessible, we plan on attending as many relevant conferences as funding (our primary constraint) and time allow. The modularity of conference outreach makes it a high-value investment for any additional funding that isn’t enough to support the next hire.

If funding allows, the Summer Research Fellowship would also represent a major expansion of our Outreach program. See our Research program expansion plan above for more details.

What do you expect the total expenses for this program to be in 2021?

We expect our Outreach program to represent a larger proportion of our expenses in 2021. The majority of expenses will be payroll costs, which will increase as researchers spend more of their time on outreach (and less on research). Payroll costs will increase again if funding allows us to hire a Communications Specialist, an Event Planner, or an Outreach Director. We expect other expenses to include (in descending estimated order): conference admission and travel, workshop venue, workshop catering, marketing, professional service fees, workshop office supplies and software, and other office supplies and software.

If funding allows for the Summer Research Fellowship, that would be a major use of Outreach program funds. In addition to the expenses listed in the Research program 2021 expenses (above), this would include (in descending estimated order): payroll costs for outreach staff, marketing, and professional service fees.

Program 4

Program name: Grant assistance

Program expenses (2019):

\$3,570

Proportion of expenses that go to non-staff costs (2019):

0%

Program expenses (first 6 months of 2020):

\$669

Proportion of expenses that go to non-staff costs (first 6 months of 2020):

0%

Approximate number of staff hours invested (2019):

87 hours

Approximate number of staff hours invested (first 6 months of 2020):

62 hours

Approximate number of volunteer hours invested (2019):

0 hours

Approximate number of volunteer hours invested (first 6 months of 2020):

0 hours

Most important outcomes/accomplishments (2019 and the first 6 months of 2020):

We are in the first phase of rolling out the Grant Assistance program with the limited staff time currently available. So far, we have successfully demonstrated that we can identify relevant funding opportunities, help scientists develop project ideas, and support them in improving the quality of their proposals.

In 2019, we identified a promising researcher working on wildlife disease, worked with her to develop a grant proposal, and successfully advised the funder to fund it in full (\$189,000). We also developed a proposal to study biomarkers of aging as measures of cumulative welfare. In the first half of 2020, we started developing a working relationship with a researcher qualified to carry out the project. (We ended up securing full funding for his \$105k-proposal in the latter half of 2020.)

How, if at all, do you plan to expand/shrink this program?

Expanding our Grant Assistance program is our highest growth priority next year.

A Grant Program Director is the next hire we plan to make as soon as funding becomes available (unless we receive enough funding to support rapid growth, in which case we may hire a Hiring Manager first). The Grant Program Director will take our Grant Assistance program to the next level by contributing grant-writing expertise, expanding our portfolio of promising mainstream scientific funders, and offering our academic contacts a streamlined service to secure funding for wild animal welfare research.

If funding allows, we will quickly move to expand the program by hiring an additional Grant Writer (approximate hiring priority under the full-funding scenario: #5). This will expand the number of applications we can support and increase the odds of engaging mainstream funders in wild animal welfare research. For more detail on our hiring plans, see our response to the question below: “How many new staff members would you like to—and realistically be able to—hire within the next year if you had sufficient funds?”

Because even the most effective grant writers have low rates of success, we expect it will take three years to fully develop this program and determine its effectiveness. If our metrics reveal that the program has not been successful within the target timeline, we are ready to pivot to other mechanisms for accelerating research. If the program is successful in that time, we plan to build it up with more staff and promotional programs. This could include launching an academic journal or annual conference to showcase the work funded through the program and encourage further engagement with the ideas.

What do you expect the total expenses for this program to be in 2021?

We plan to devote a much larger proportion of our resources to this program over the coming year. The majority of expenses will be payroll costs for the Grant Program Director, the Grant Writer (if funding allows), and staff researchers. We expect other expenses to include (in descending estimated order): office supplies and software, marketing, and professional services.

What was your charity’s total revenue in 2019?

\$717,020

What was your charity’s total revenue in the first six months of 2020?

\$126,736

What were your charity's total expenditures in 2019?

\$341,809

What were your charity's total expenditures in the first six months of 2020?

\$290,820

What were your charity's financial assets (i.e., cash, savings, investments, etc.) in 2019?

\$432,378

What were your charity's financial assets (i.e., cash, savings, investments, etc.) in the first six months of 2020?

\$268,458

What were your charity's liabilities (if any) in 2019?

\$12,150

What were your charity's liabilities (if any) in the first six months of 2020?

\$0

Did your charity receive any large (>20% of your budget) grants in the past two years? If so, specify the amount and (expected) date of disbursement if possible.

After Wild-Animal Suffering Research merged with Utility Farm to form Wild Animal Initiative in 2019, the Effective Altruism Foundation (which had been incubating Wild-Animal Suffering Research) transferred Wild-Animal Suffering Research's reserves to Wild Animal Initiative.

In both 2019 and 2020, grants from the Centre for Effective Altruism Animal Welfare Fund cumulatively comprised more than 20% of our budget for the respective year.

Grant details:

(1) Effective Altruism Foundation (Wild-Animal Suffering Research): \$155,840. Disbursed 22 Jan 2019 as part of the merger.

(2) Effective Altruism Foundation (Wild-Animal Suffering Research): \$137,881. Disbursed 29 Apr 2019 as part of the merger.

(3) Centre for Effective Altruism (Animal Welfare Fund): \$50,000. Disbursed 6 Mar 2019.

- (4) Centre for Effective Altruism (Animal Welfare Fund): \$65,000. Disbursed 23 Aug 2019.
- (5) Centre for Effective Altruism (Animal Welfare Fund): \$85,000. Disbursed 26 Nov 2019.
- (6) Centre for Effective Altruism (Animal Welfare Fund): \$65,000. Disbursed 11 Mar 2020.
- (7) Centre for Effective Altruism (Animal Welfare Fund): \$80,000. Dispersed Aug 2020.

If your charity receives any restricted donations, approximately how much did it receive in the past year, and what programs did that support?

(1) In September 2019, the Center on Long-Term Risk (then the Effective Altruism Foundation) granted us \$39,200 to research long-term considerations for wild animal welfare, supporting our [report on long-term intervention design considerations](#) and our ongoing investigation of the policy landscape for emerging biotechnology regulation.

(2) In September 2019, Animal Ethics re-granted us \$1,600 to research causes of death in wild animals. This was part of a grant Animal Charity Evaluators had originally made to Animal Ethics for the same purpose. We had agreed to continue the research Animal Ethics had started, in part because a key researcher on their project had completed his internship at Animal Ethics and joined Wild Animal Initiative as a permanent team member.

If your charity has any revenue-generating programs, how much revenue did they generate in 2019 and the first six months of 2020?

We do not currently have any revenue-generating programs.

Did you set a fundraising goal in 2019? If so, what was the fundraising goal and did you meet it?

In 2019, we aimed to raise \$450,000 (excluding the transfer from Wild-Animal Suffering Research). We raised \$420,430, or 93% of our goal.

How many full-time staff are currently employed by your organization? Please specify by country.

United States: 3 permanent employees

Sweden: 1 permanent contractor (employed by Effective Altruism Sweden)

How many part-time staff are currently employed by your organization? Please specify by country.

United States: 2 permanent employees, 2 summer fellows/interns

United Kingdom: 1 permanent contractor (employed by Safeguard Global)

Is there anything else you'd like us to know about your charity's staff?

Special Projects Advisor Stien van der Ploeg joined our team in July 2020. Stien volunteers 20 hours of her time to Wild Animal Initiative per week. Stien shares our commitment to fair and competitive compensation, but chooses to donate her time instead (read more on her decision [here](#)). She is not displacing a paid position; we created her position in response to her offer to volunteer and tailored it to the unique intersection of her skills and our needs. Stien is based in Poland as of July 2020, but will be moving to the U.S. in January 2021.

Is there anything else you'd like us to know about your charity's funding situation?

In keeping with nonprofit best practices, Wild Animal Initiative aims to continuously build and maintain a 10-to-12-month operating reserve. In other words, we budget to spend one year what we raised the previous year. This allows us to grow strategically while protecting ourselves against events beyond our control that could impact fundraising.

The COVID-19 pandemic has proven the necessity of this budgeting strategy earlier than we ever expected. Fortunately, we had managed to establish financial stability just in time. This was thanks in part to the merger that formed Wild Animal Initiative, which included a \$293,721 transfer from Wild-Animal Suffering Research. Wild Animal Initiative then raised an additional \$423,299, for total revenue of \$717,020 in 2019.

While our first year's operating reserve helped us weather the onset of the pandemic, it can't eliminate the uncertainty of the pandemic's continuation and eventual aftermath. Now more than ever, we rely on the generosity of donors who believe in a better future for wild animals.

Do you expect your funding situation in 2021 to differ significantly from the situation in the past few years? If so, how?

Absent an ACE recommendation, we expect funding to grow slightly relative to 2020, roughly continuing the 22% growth we observed between the first half of 2019 and the first half of 2020. This trend seems reasonable given two competing mechanisms. On the one hand, we expect funding to grow as we build on our track record (more donors, larger donations from existing donors, improved fundraising strategies). On the other hand, we expect donations to grow less quickly than they otherwise would because of current events. The COVID-19 pandemic has left many donors with less income at the same time as community relief efforts, resurging Black Lives Matter protests, and U.S. federal election campaigns rightly call on them to give more. Because most of our donors are in the U.S., where the pandemic continues to be mishandled, we expect the economic fallout and general sense of scarcity to continue to shape donation trends well into next year, making the first half of 2020 a reasonable proxy for continued growth.

With an ACE recommendation, we imagine our funding would increase substantially. In addition to any funds we might receive directly from the Recommended Charity Fund, we expect an ACE

recommendation to bolster our funding by three mechanisms. First, an ACE recommendation would expand awareness of Wild Animal Initiative's work beyond the relatively small audience we have reached so far. Second, an ACE recommendation could persuade donors who are already interested in our work but unsure of how to estimate its relative cost-effectiveness. From personal conversations, we suspect this potential donor pool is at least as large as our current donor pool. Finally, an ACE recommendation would help us build trust with new audiences as we begin targeted outreach to donors with a long track record of supporting wildlife.

Do you make a projection of your financial situation in 2021? If so, what do you expect your revenue, expenses, and assets to be?

We do not have a detailed financial projection for 2021 because we revise our budget in February of each year, after we have accounted for end-of-year fundraising. As a young organization in an emerging cause area, we are frequently revising our plans and responding to new opportunities. Therefore, we believe detailed projections beyond the fiscal year would not be informative enough to justify the opportunity cost of spending our limited staff time.

To operate responsibly under this uncertainty, we base our mid-year budget updates on a highly pessimistic scenario: raising only minimal funds and cutting expenses to payroll only. This allows us to make decisions with limited data while still practically guaranteeing the sustainability of our programs.

Our financial projection for 2021 under the highly pessimist scenario is as follows:

- Assets at the beginning of 2021: \$358,813
- Revenue over 2021: \$305,000
- Expenses in 2021: \$359,996
- Assets at the end of 2021: \$303,818

As an organization, what are your most important goals for 2021? If we've previously evaluated your organization, have your goals changed since then?

Community Strategy

- (1) Maintain our existing collaborations with nonprofits and social movements working on wild animal welfare.
- (2) Establish regular strategic communications with at least 3 conservation or wildlife protection organizations doing relevant work.
- (3) Speak at 3 conservation- or wildlife-protection-focused conferences.
- (4) Develop and share best practices for communicating wild animal welfare issues to new audiences.

Research

(1) Advance to the next stage in developing a pilot project that can improve wild animal welfare in the field within two years at low-enough cost that funding is not the main barrier to implementation. Based on our research this year, we believe that project could be replacing urban pigeon poisoning with contraceptive management. We are currently planning an experiment to test the effectiveness of a contraceptive on pigeon population dynamics and welfare.

(1.a.) If we cannot launch that experiment this year, our goal for next year will be to launch the experiment and report on results.

(1.b.) If we succeed in launching that experiment this year, our goal for next year will be to continue the experiment for a second field season, report on the results, and recommend either further research or expanded implementation.

(1.c.) If we succeed in launching that experiment this year and recommend expanded implementation, our goal for the following year will be to launch a pilot campaign to convince pigeon population managers (city governments, transportation authorities, utility companies, or property managers) to replace existing poisoning programs with contraceptive management.

(2) Author or co-author four papers accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals.

(3) Based on the results of the academic workshop (see Outreach Goal #1), develop a prioritized research agenda for the wild animal welfare field at a large.

Outreach

(1) Host the first ever academic workshop dedicated exclusively to wild animal welfare research. (Note: This goal was carried over from 2020 because we could not host the workshop in person during the pandemic and we were not prepared to host a virtual workshop that could provide sufficient opportunities to build lasting relationships.)

(2) Double our outreach rate to connect with over 114 new scientists working in relevant fields.

(3) Causally contribute to our work or the work of our collaborators being covered in at least 4 news articles in outlets scientists are likely to read (e.g., major general news outlets, popular science web outlets).

Grant Assistance

(1) Secure funding for the three projects currently in the pipeline:

(1.a.) Validating the use of telomeres as a biometric of cumulative welfare

(1.b.) Evaluating the welfare benefits of a potentially more humane mosquito pesticide

(1.c.) Testing the efficacy and welfare effects of a rock pigeon (*Columba livia*) contraceptive

(2) Run at least 3 additional rounds of the Grant Assistance program.

(3) After 3 rounds, conduct a program retrospective to identify areas for improvement and revise processes accordingly.

Do you have plans to start any new programs? If so, please elaborate and include the expected costs of these programs.

Over the next three years, we expect to focus most of our growth on expanding our existing programs: community strategy, research, outreach, and grant assistance. Together, these programs will build the talent and ideas necessary to catalyze the growth of a thriving wild animal welfare research community.

Along the way, we expect to learn a lot about the highest-leverage ways to facilitate field growth. To remain nimble and responsive to new evidence, we have avoided committing to detailed plans beyond the scope of our current experiments. But based on our current theory of field development, we expect the next phase of our work to focus on launching institutions to support and sustain the wild animal welfare research community. These could include a dedicated research journal, an academic research institute, or new nonprofits or businesses dedicated to scaling up evidence-backed wild animal welfare interventions.

Do you have plans to start any new expansions to other countries? If so, please elaborate and include the expected costs of these expansions.

Our current model has been highly effective at achieving a global reach while streamlining operations. Most of our staff are based in the U.S., with two researchers contracted through international employers of record in Europe. Together, we have successfully engaged scientists worldwide. Because our work consists almost entirely of sharing ideas, collaborating on desk research, building relationships, and directing funding, we expect this model will continue to serve us well for the near future.

This might change as our programs evolve, such as if we establish a research institute at a leading university or if field work becomes a core part of our Research program. When our programs become more rooted in specific locations, we will reconsider international expansion.

How many new staff members would you like to—and realistically be able to—hire within the next year if you had sufficient funds? Please specify for what roles or programs.

If we had sufficient funds, we are prepared to hire up to 12 new staff members next year. We envision this growth happening in three conceptual phases. Positions are listed in approximate order of priority.

PHASE 1: Invest in growth

(1) Hiring Manager: Manage hiring for all subsequent roles, maintaining the rigor of our evaluation process and increasing the diversity of our applicant pool while keeping everything on schedule. To be hired on a one-year contract with the possibility for extension if funding allows us to continue rapid growth.

(2) Grant Program Director: Take our Grant Assistance program to the next level by contributing grant-writing expertise, expanding our portfolio of promising mainstream scientific funders, and offering our academic contacts a streamlined service to secure funding for wild animal welfare research.

(3) Development Director: Grow and diversify the community of supporters that make Wild Animal Initiative's work possible. Build relationships with wildlife defenders to minimize our reliance on limited animal advocacy resources while maximizing our engagement with the stakeholders most passionate about wildlife.

PHASE 2: Leverage capacity

(4) Research Director: Lead strategic revisions to our research agenda, support our research team, and evaluate the impact of our research.

(5) Grant Writer: Help more wild animal welfare scientists get more funding by expanding our capacity to improve their grant applications to mainstream scientific funders.

(6) Communications Specialist: Develop content across platforms to more effectively explain to academic researchers what wild animal welfare research is, why it's an exciting new scientific frontier, and how they can contribute to groundbreaking work.

(7) Operations Director: Establish and improve systems to keep our organization running smoothly as we continue to scale our team and our impact.

(8) Event Planner: Engage more scientists more deeply by planning workshops, webinars, the first annual wild animal welfare conference, and the Summer Research Fellowship.

PHASE 3: Scale up

(9) Outreach Director: Lead our newly expanded Outreach program, guiding our messaging as an organization and managing our efforts to build a generation of wild animal welfare scientists.

(10) Early-career Outreach Coordinator: Broaden our outreach efforts by speaking at universities about opportunities in wild animal welfare research and coordinating volunteer-led seminar groups in relevant departments.

(11) Mentorship Director: Match each postdoctoral candidate funded through our Grant Assistance program with a pair of academic advisors: one in ecology and one in animal welfare science. This project would foster neglected interdisciplinary research while simultaneously bringing at least three scientists at a time into wild animal welfare research.

(12) Development Specialist: Support our work at scale by maintaining relationships with the growing community of supporters who make it possible to work toward a better world for wild animals.

This hiring plan reflects the following considerations:

(a) Realistic growth rate: This year, two people working part-time on hiring hired three new team members in under three months, which involved reviewing over 700 applications. With a hiring manager working full-time on hiring and increased operations support, we think it is realistic to

hire four new team members each quarter for three quarters. The fourth quarter serves as a buffer in case we need to pause hiring or some roles take longer to fill. Without a hiring manager, we could still hire at least six people next year.

(b) Minimal talent constraints: We don't expect talent availability to be a rate-limiting constraint for most of these roles. So far, we have filled every opening on schedule, often with an excess of qualified applicants. We expect this to continue to be the case through the next three hiring phases because (i) most of these roles are common in nonprofits and academia and (ii) few of them require precise value-alignment before joining the team. One exception is the Development Director, which we expect to be challenging to hire because (i) we have highly specific needs for the role and (ii) other animal advocacy organizations have struggled to fill similar roles in recent years.

(c) Nimbleness: This plan is made to be changed. As a young organization in an emerging cause area, we place a high value on responding quickly to new evidence. Hiring in phases allows us to regularly step back, re-evaluate our plans, and pivot as necessary. If we see promise in a new program or discouraging results in an old one, we may change which roles we hire for next. If we discover evidence against our theory of change, or if we need to build better systems to support this pace of growth, we can delay the start of the next phase and resume as soon as we're ready.

If you raised 1.5x your fundraising goal next year, what would you spend the additional funding on?

Our first priority is hiring staff to scale up our impact. Our most urgent needs are positions that can empower us to grow and leverage the full potential of our current team (see Phase 1 and Phase 2 of our ideal growth plan, above).

After we see we can meet those needs, we would launch the Summer Research Fellowship, a cohort-based experience to empower early-career scientists to push the frontiers of wild animal welfare research (see "Programs 2: Recent Outcomes and Expenses" for more detail). Because the number of fellows and the nature of the programming are both flexible, the Summer Research Fellowship could be adjusted to fit a range of budgets. The Research Director and the Event Planner would lead the program in its first year, but if we decide to continue the program we would consider hiring a staff member dedicated to it.

If we meet unexpected constraints on hiring or on launching the Summer Fellowship Program, any additional funding can quickly be repurposed to fund academic researchers directly. This would help jump-start our Grant Assistance program, because we could guarantee funding to worthy projects in case they fail to win highly competitive grants from mainstream funders.

Does your organization have a strategic plan? If so, please provide a link here or email it to us.

[Strategic Plan v3.0](#) (18 Sep 2020 update)