

Research Prioritization

Research Questions

Prioritization begins with a long list of open questions related to animal advocacy. Our 2019 list is available below. In 2021, we will update this list in consultation with advocates working in a range of areas. If you would like to be included in this process, please [contact the Research Director](#).

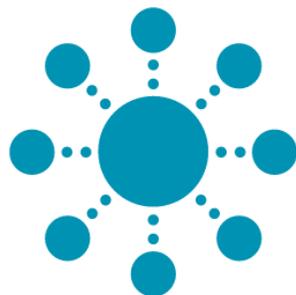


Advocate Priorities

Faunalytics' goal is to conduct high-impact studies, with an emphasis on those that build capacity for the members of the animal protection community. In 2019, a small group of advocates from our community rated the importance of longlist topics. In 2021, we will use what we learned to broaden and systematize this feedback process, inviting anyone from the animal protection community to provide input.

Study Shortlist

Next, we review quantitative and qualitative feedback about advocate priorities and identify a shortlist of topics that are high-priority for animal protection as a whole, or for specific movements within it. Faunalytics' research team then drafts study designs to address each topic.



Study Features

High-priority topics do not necessarily translate into useful or cost-effective studies. Faunalytics' research team estimates each study's feasibility, neglectedness, and cost. Next, the full staff and board estimate their impact. Scores for all these features are averaged, letting us compare studies to one another.



Final Selections

We select our new studies from those that rise to the top of the list. Selected projects are listed on our [Potential Projects](#) page and soon become [Research in Progress](#).

Priority Research Areas

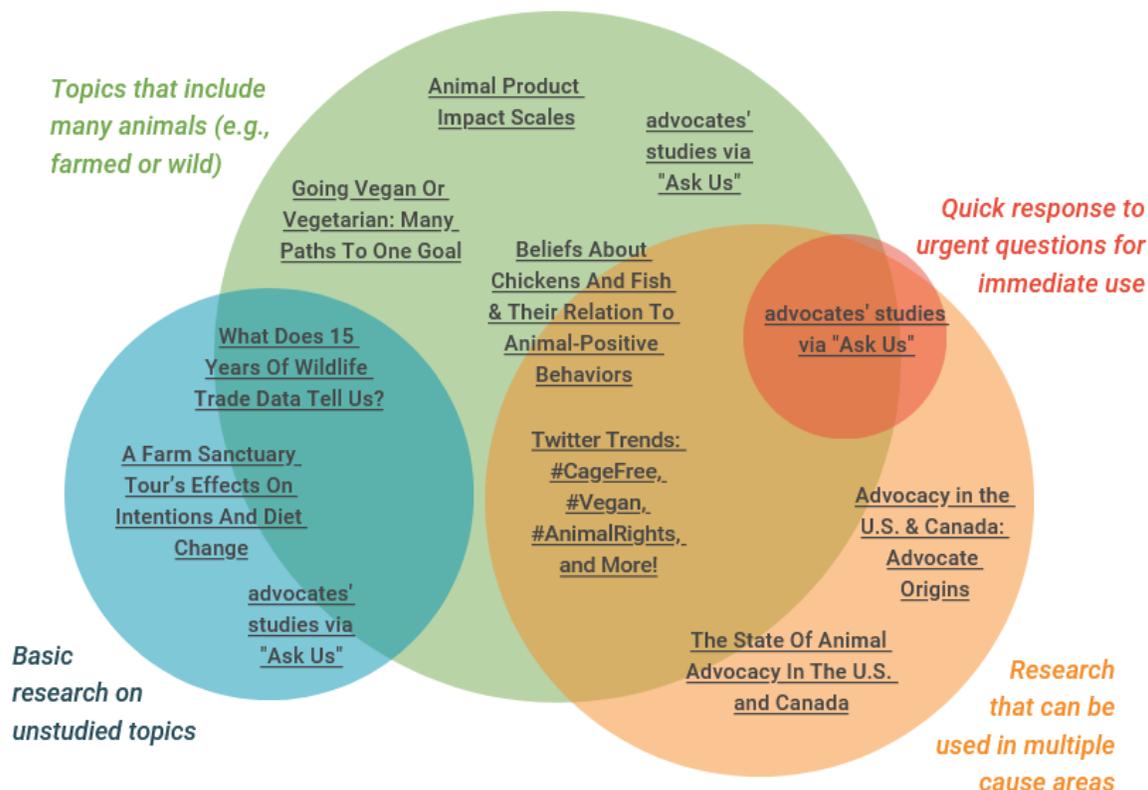
These priorities were determined via our inaugural research prioritization process, conducted in autumn of 2019. This is not a comprehensive list of all research questions important to animal advocates. It focuses on research questions that can be answered using social science methods, as that is where our expertise lies. It also emphasizes topics and questions that match Faunalytics' mission of maximizing movement effectiveness by empowering advocates. And finally, it emphasizes research that can have a strong impact for animals for at least one of the following reasons: the topic touches on many animals, the research can be used by advocates in multiple cause areas, it addresses an urgent question, and/or it provides foundational research on an unstudied topic.

For those familiar with the [concepts of Effective Altruism](#), these priorities and the prioritization process shown above clearly align with the values of importance, tractability, and neglectedness. They are described here through the lens of Faunalytics' unique strengths and audience. Projects that fall under more than one of the four impact types are particularly valuable to the movement as a whole. With our long history of providing research support to animal advocates (since 2000!) we are uniquely positioned to use research as a capacity-building tool.

The following Venn diagram shows an approximation of how our current and recent projects map onto these dimensions. As you can see, almost all of our work focuses on topics that include many animals. We also pursue topics that impact many animals as well as multiple cause areas. For instance, research on donations or advocacy experiences can be used by advocates who support farmed animals, wild animals, companion animals, and more.

Impact Type By Study

Last updated: Q2 2021 (research from past 12 months)



Topics With Impact In Multiple Cause Areas

Faunalytics is unique among Effective Animal Advocacy (EAA) groups as an organization with a strong focus on capacity-building. These “meta” topics related to capacity-building typically have a more indirect or long-term effect on animals, but achieve their impact through their wide applicability.

They are the highest priority for Faunalytics for two reasons: First, because they build capacity and connections throughout all areas of the animal advocacy movement, in line with our mandate. And second, because Faunalytics may be the best-positioned EAA organization to research these topics. The depth and breadth of our audience give us the resources and connections to research these topics effectively, to the benefit of the whole community.

Topics With Impact On A Large Number Of Animals

These topics, while applicable to only subsets of the animal advocacy movement, have the potential to affect a large number of animals, often more directly than those in the previous section. In terms of fit between the topics and the organization, Faunalytics is approximately as well-positioned as other EAA organizations to research these topics. The exceptions to this are topics where another EAA organization is working directly on the type of campaign in question (e.g., corporate lobbying) and therefore probably has better insight and connections than we do.

Topics With Impact Via Urgency And Immediate Use

Because Faunalytics' original research is not tied to a particular client, stakeholder, or campaign, we are agile and able to address urgent movement needs when they arise. We leave room in our research program for a few projects with quick turnaround and direct impact on high-level decision-makers. The best example of this type of project is our [COVID-19 & Animals poll](#), conducted with a 2-week turnaround during the North American COVID-19 outbreak.

Unstudied Topics With Very High Impact Within A Limited Scope

This category is based on the principle that small amounts of research have high marginal utility in previously unstudied areas. That is, there is a qualitative difference between having zero empirical data on a topic and a small amount of data. Although we do not actively seek out projects that impact only a small group of animals, we allow a small amount of space in our program for basic research on topics that meet this criteria. In areas where advocates have no data at all, even small-scale, low-cost research can have a long-term impact for animals if it changes how advocates in that area approach a problem.

To view our complete Prioritization webpage, please visit <https://faunalytics.org/prioritization/>.