

To the Rescue – IFAW's role in rescuing animals from Cape Cod to Cape Town via Cape Naturaliste

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ABSTRACT

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) is an international non-government organisation founded over 30 years ago and dedicated to the welfare of animals worldwide. IFAW works from offices in over 15 countries, including Australia, and works to improve the welfare of wild and domestic animals throughout the world by reducing commercial exploitation of animals, protecting wildlife habitats and assisting animals in distress. IFAW assists individual animals as well as populations, whether part of a disaster involving large numbers of animals or a response to a smaller event; strives to improve standards for emergency relief, rehabilitation and sanctuaries for the welfare and survival of rescued animals; actively promotes prevention and mitigation/contingency planning; links the cause of distress to issues of habitat and commercial exploitation; and uses these links to enable the rescue and rehabilitation of animals to become a powerful tool for change. IFAW has supported wildlife rescue and rehabilitation work in response to bushfires, tsunamis, oil spills, forest fires across the globe from Indonesia to Siberia.


IFAW's "Emergency Relief" programme aims to minimise the suffering of animals affected by natural and man-made emergencies. IFAW maintains a group of highly trained professionals ready to help animals when disaster strikes and can mobilize a team within 48 hours to respond. When disaster strikes, animals are often the forgotten victims, caught in the path of a bushfire or a snowstorm, a flood or an oil spill. Working with local communities, IFAW steps in to alleviate suffering, save lives and educate for the future. IFAW's ER Team does what it can to help ease the suffering.

Who is IFAW?

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) is an international non-government organisation dedicated to the welfare of animals worldwide. We began over 30 years ago when a number of concerned people joined together to try and stop the massive and brutal commercial hunt for young harp seals in Canada. Over the years, IFAW has grown to more than 200 experienced campaigners, legal and political experts, and internationally acclaimed scientists working from offices in 15 countries around the world.

We are now joined in this important work by some two million contributors worldwide. This broad base of support makes it possible for IFAW to engage communities, government leaders, and like-minded organisations around the world and achieve lasting solutions to pressing animal welfare and conservation challenges - solutions that benefit both animals and people. Over the years, our approach has been as varied as the species we protect.

Since 1990, IFAW has maintained a presence in Australia to work for the protection of native wildlife, domestic dogs and cats, and the whales that live in the waters of the Asia Pacific region. We work with Australia's people and governments to improve the well-being of wild and domestic animals.



IFAW Mission Statement:

IFAW works to improve the welfare of wild and domestic animals throughout the world by reducing commercial exploitation of animals, protecting wildlife habitats and assisting animals in distress.

IFAW seeks to motivate the public to prevent cruelty to animals and to promote animal welfare and conservation policies that advance the well-being of both animals and people.



Emergency Relief

IFAW works to minimise the suffering of animals affected by natural and man-made emergencies. Through our Emergency Relief (ER) work we also seek to maximise the conservation outcomes from such emergencies and to maximise the amount learned through such events.

In the last decade, IFAW's ER program has emerged as a world leader in oiled wildlife response and has also developed significant expertise in wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and release. Our goal for the next five years is to expand the program to become one of the leading rapid response, rescue, rehabilitation and prevention programs in the world.





Overview

IFAW maintains a group of highly trained professionals ready to help animals when disaster strikes. Team members are trained to operate in difficult circumstances, often for weeks or months at a time. Working with local communities, IFAW helps alleviate suffering, save the lives of animals in crisis or distress, and educate local officials to avoid and/or prepare for future disasters.

Responding to manmade and natural disasters

- IFAW responds to help animals affected by both manmade disasters, such as oil spills, and natural disasters such as hurricanes, tsunamis and fires

- IFAW has responded to over 25 major oil spills worldwide
- IFAW has responded to more than 20 natural disasters around the world
- IFAW's ER Team will attend major disasters where its expertise can help with the rescue, rehabilitation and release of animals affected by the crisis.

International profile

- IFAW partners with more than 25 rehabilitation and sanctuary projects in 11 countries around the world
 - The IFAW ER team is composed of more than 25 people in 15 countries
 - IFAW supports and works closely with local NGOs and government agencies in disaster responses.
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Treating street dogs in Indonesia

Specifically trained

IFAW can be ready to mobilize a hands-on response team anywhere in the world within 48 hours to rapidly assess an event, communicate with relevant NGOs and the media, and initiate an appropriate integrated campaign to rescue as many animals as possible.

- The IFAW ER team is trained to deploy anywhere in the world within 48 hours
- IFAW ER team members engage in hundreds of hours of specific training every year in preparation for disaster work
- IFAW adopts the highest possible protocols, including accepted veterinary standards, in its disaster response work

The Emergency Relief program

IFAW's ER program can be divided into two overarching themes:

- Emergency Response
- Rehabilitation and Sanctuary

All ER activities can be viewed as falling into these two themes. For example during a response to a natural disaster such as a flood, or man-made disaster such as an oil spill, activities are split into rescue and capture (emergency response), and captive care and return to the wild (rehabilitation)

The Emergency Relief program responds to help animals that are victims of:

- Disaster: Oil spill, hurricane, cyclone, typhoon, flood, snow/ice storm, fire, volcano, disease
- Commercial exploitation: illegal trade, unethical hunting
- Human/animal conflict
- Cruelty
- Marine mammal strandings & entanglement

Provides rehabilitation and sanctuary:

- Provides for the welfare and expert care of those animals requiring emergency rescue, but which cannot remain in, or be immediately returned to the wild
- As a priority, and wherever possible, rehabilitates these animals and releases them back to the wild.
- When release is not possible, and only when an adequate quality of life can be ensured in captivity, places animals in safe sanctuary in which to live out their lives.



IFAW also works to:

- Develop globally recognised protocols and standards of care for wildlife in crisis and distress, based on sound science. These standards aim to provide the highest achievable standard of animal welfare whilst being sensitive to cultural differences and applicable in both the developed and developing world
 - Develop a network of response teams, rehabilitation centres and sanctuaries around the world through collaboration with like minded individuals and institutions, partnerships and grants. We encourage the pursuit of the highest standards of animal welfare.
 - Assess the root causes of animals in crisis and distress globally and identifies which of these causes IFAW can influence by campaigning for legislative change.
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A SNAPSHOT OF IFAW'S ER WORK:

Internationally

Disaster Relief: Saving the Forgotten Victims

When disaster strikes, animals are often the forgotten victims, caught in the path of a bushfire or a snowstorm, a flood or a fire. Working with local communities, IFAW steps in to alleviate suffering, save lives and educate for the future. IFAW's ER Team does what it can to help ease the suffering.

Even during a war, IFAW will help where it can. In 2003, the international IFAW ER team comprising of logistics and zoo management specialists, travelled to Iraq to assist the animals affected by the war in Iraq, and particularly those left behind in Baghdad Zoo. Many animals were stolen from the Zoo by looters, but those remaining behind, including lions, tigers, and cheetahs were near starvation. The Team put in place a medium and long term plan to ensure the welfare of the remaining animals at Baghdad Zoo. The IFAW Team provided logistical support in terms of sourcing and establishing a steady food supply for the zoo animals, arranged for electricity, clean water and security for the Zoo, and provided shade, swimming pools and mud baths, and veterinary treatment for the animals, and supported local zoo staff in getting a practical system in place to ensure the zoo would run smoothly during the transition period ahead.

Animals being cared for at the Baghdad Zoo included 19 lions, plus tigers, brown bears, wolves, foxes, jackals, camels, ostrich, badgers, and some primates. Following the recent strife in Iraq the animals were left severely traumatized and without food and water. Looters stole most of the zoo equipment and zookeepers were unable to provide any support for the creatures in their care.

After Hurricane Katrina and Rita hit the US Gulf Coast in August/September 2005, IFAW was there. IFAW conducted door-to-door search and animal rescue operations in areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina where evacuees were forced to leave their pets behind, helping to rescue and relocate thousands of animals as well as reunite hundreds with their missing pets.



Hurricane Katrina

IFAW's hurricane relief efforts also included helping to coordinate the massive request for pet supplies and shelter assistance, as well as delivering multiple financial grants to help local animal organizations with the hurricane pet rescue.

Soon after deadly tornadoes blasted through four Georgia counties in the southeastern US, IFAW worked with the local animal welfare authorities and organisations, and local volunteers to provide shelter for injured and displaced animals, including dogs, cats, horses, cows, goats, birds and wildlife.

In Russia, IFAW provided emergency funding to enable rangers to protect from poachers tens of thousands of migratory birds, including geese and swans, that had been forced to land en masse in the Archangel region, following heavy snow storms.

When heavy rainfall caused major flooding in impoverished settlements along the Jukskei and Klip rivers in South Africa, IFAW's ER Team worked with other organisations to provide immediate relief.


We helped feed and treat about 350 dogs and 95 cats in little more than seven hours. In three severely affected communities, IFAW distributed 2,500 cans of moist food and 300 kilograms of dry dog and cat food, gave rabies and distemper vaccinations, and treated animals for kennel cough, biliary, ticks, fleas and worms.

In India, torrential rains and flooding of major rivers in August 2006 ravaged the states of Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat respectively leaving a trail of destruction. IFAW provided financial support through the Wildlife Rehabilitators Exchange Network in India managed locally through IFAW's partnership with the Wildlife Trust of India and other local groups for organising relief efforts for

livestock, pet and wildlife rescue, care, and rehabilitation. IFAW also provided inflatable rafts which were used by local NGOs to get around during the floods and supply food packets to affected people whilst continuing animal rescue work. IFAW's support helped obtain animal rescue equipment such as snake tongs, transportation crates, shelter cages and more. Some of the wildlife handled by the team includes wild mammals (civet cat, Hanuman langur, palm squirrel), birds (koel, myna, barn owl, Pariah kite, egret, crow, parakeet, barbet, peafowl, pigeons) and reptiles (common cobra, Russell's viper, saw scaled viper, krait, rat snake, chequered keel back, striped keel back, wolf snake, trinket, cat snake, sand snake, bronze backed tree snake, blind snake, wine snake, earth boa, banded racer, monitor lizard, Indian soft-shell turtles).

Oil Spills: Rescuing Animals, Protecting the Seas

A single spill from an oil container can wreak enormous devastation on wildlife and habitats, yet hundreds of millions of litres of oil pour into the seas every year. In response, IFAW and the International Bird Rescue Research Center (IBRRC) have partnered together to form the world's leading international oiled wildlife rescue and rehabilitation organization.





Cleaning oiled birds

Since 1989 when IFAW supported groups responding to the massive *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in Alaska, we have developed a world-class team who are experts in rehabilitating animals injured in oil spills.

Because oil spills cause widespread devastation to coastal ecosystems and marine life, IFAW formed an ER Team which aims to provide the best achievable care for oiled wildlife globally and to develop practical and achievable prevention strategies.

We support and work alongside local groups and community-based wildlife rehabilitators and veterinarians in order to most effectively rescue and rehabilitate oiled wildlife.

In 2000, IFAW and the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) mounted a rescue and rehabilitation operation that stands as the largest oil spill wildlife rescue operation ever undertaken.

At that time the *MV Treasure*, a Panamanian-registered freighter, sank eight kilometers off the coast of Cape Town, South Africa, releasing more than 1,100 tonnes of heavy bunker fuel oil. The oil began washing ashore on Dassen and Robben Islands, home to more than 40 percent of

the world's population of African penguins. Over 20,000 endangered penguins were treated and 90% of them were successfully released back into the wild.

When the bulk carrier, *MV Jessica*, sank with a cargo of more than 758,000 litres of bunker oil and diesel fuel near San Cristobal in the Galapagos Islands in January 2001, IFAW sent a 12-member ER Team to the area.

The team set up a temporary rescue and rehabilitation centre on the island's naval base, and worked closely with the Darwin Scientific Station and National Parks officials on cleaning oiled wildlife and establishing an oil spill protocol to assist in the event of a similar event re-occurring.

Stranded Whales and Dolphins: Something Can be Done

One of the world's hotspots for mass strandings is on the doorstep of IFAW's international headquarters in the USA, so we've been working to rescue stranded whales and dolphins since the 1980s and helped create the Cape Cod Stranding Network in 1998.

The Cape has an unusually high number of strandings each year of about 15 different species including pilot whales, humpback whales and harbor porpoises. The area is particularly known

for the mass strandings of up to hundreds of animals, mainly common and striped dolphins, that occur regularly.

Whilst some marine mammal strandings can be attributed to illness or injury, the causes of many strandings are not completely understood and no single factor has been identified as the cause of strandings. Through our years of experience with marine mammal strandings, we know that rescue, rehabilitation and release is successful. IFAW also works to prevent the unnecessary suffering and death of stranded marine mammals.



Pilot whales stranding at Cape Cod

Our work with marine mammals at risk also extends to the waters surrounding Grand Manan Island, Canada. By supporting the work of the Grand Manan Whale and Seabird Research Station, IFAW has saved the lives of hundreds of porpoises, freeing those trapped in the fishing weirs nets of the local fishermen

Australia and New Zealand has one of the highest rates of marine mammal strandings in the world. IFAW is working towards coordinated contingency plans for stranding events in Australia and regionally. For example, in 2004 IFAW together with the then Federal Department of Environment and Heritage, ran a national workshop on marine mammal strandings to 1) develop standard protocols for the collection of scientific information from stranded animals and 2) develop a national strandings network.

Sanctuaries: Vital Havens that Save Lives

IFAW helps ease the suffering of wild and domestic animals whenever possible. Whether airlifting bears or relocating 'problem' elephants, IFAW gives to wild animals the sanctuary they need, either for long-term care or prior to release back to the wild. By tackling the root causes of their displacement, we are supporting vital long-term conservation efforts.

Individual wild animals are continually being placed into crisis situations as a result of human activities, such as unethical hunting practices, habitat loss, wildlife trade and commercial exploitation.



Young elephants being translocated to safety

IFAW helped the Kenya Wildlife Service relocate ten "problem" elephants in the Laikipia area to the safety of Meru National Park. The successful translocation took two weeks to complete. The joint effort not only saved the lives of these elephants by defusing conflict with humans, but helped rebuild the elephant population at Meru Park.

Across Africa, tens of thousands of animals are killed, orphaned or abused as a result of the bushmeat trade. A two-year-old chimp named Commando is one of those victims. He had been captured, beaten and illegally held as a pet after bushmeat hunters killed his parents. Commando was initially rescued by the African Rainforests and Rivers Conservation group in the Central African Republic. They called IFAW to find him a safe refuge, and IFAW's ER team made urgent plans to transport the injured chimp to Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage, in Northern Zambia.

Asiatic black bears, commonly called "moon bears," suffer terribly on Chinese "bear farms" where crude catheters are implanted in their stomachs to drain the bile from their gall bladders. The bile is used in Traditional Medicines (TM). IFAW is working to eliminate bear farming, provide humane treatment for bears currently imprisoned on "farms," and to promote herbal alternatives to bear bile in TM. An IFAW-funded Bear Farm Investigation resulted in new regulations improving conditions for captive bears. In addition, the Chinese government has stopped issuing new bear farm licenses and bear farming has been reduced by 24 percent.

IFAW rescued two Russian brown bears -- Fenja, a 38-year-old former movie star, and Ljalja, her six-year-old companion -- from desperate conditions at Moscow State University. With no funding available, the bears were forced to live in small cages. Until IFAW stepped in, they survived on nothing more than leftovers fed to them by students. The bears were airlifted to the Netherlands to be cared for at a shelter run by the International Bear Foundation.

Also in Russia, IFAW is helping to rehabilitate bear cubs orphaned by hunters so they can be released to protected forests. We are also campaigning for a ban on killing hibernating bears in Russia, which leaves hundreds of cubs to die.

During the winter months in Russia, wealthy hunters pay more than US\$2,000 each to rouse bears from hibernation and kill them. The hunters' dogs dig and bark at the den and wake the bear while the hunters wait nearby with rifles poised. When the bear climbs out of the den, the hunters shoot without knowing if it is male or female.

After the adult bear is killed, many cubs are abandoned to die. Some are taken from their dens and given to local villagers to be kept as pets. Others go to street photographers, mobile zoos, and circuses. There is also a demand for bear meat in hunting restaurants.

In the US, IFAW financed the relocation of a tiger, lioness and cougar from a family-run facility in Massachusetts that had shut down to the *Wild Animal Orphanage* (WAO) in San Antonio, Texas. While the animals had been well cared for by their previous caregivers, finding new homes for them was not easy.

IFAW's ER program paid for the relocation, including transport and new enclosures. We're pleased that these cats will be able to live out their lives at WAO, a well-respected facility that provides sanctuary for hundreds of wild animals.

IFAW's ER team works to actively rescue individual wild animals and place them into appropriate places of safety, to undertake rehabilitation for release back to the wild or place them in sanctuaries for long term care. All the time we are seeking ways to assist in addressing the ultimate cause of their displacement, and therefore facilitating the conservation of species and biodiversity.

AUSTRALIA

In Australia, IFAW ER work is focused on both natural and man-made disasters:

- Bushfires
- Floods
- Drought
- Oil spills
- Marine mammal and reptile strandings and entanglements

Natural Disaster

In Australia, IFAW:

- works with Wildlife care groups to alleviate the suffering of wild animals caught in the paths of natural disasters;
- lobbies governments for the inclusion of animals and their welfare needs in disaster management plans;
- provides training and equipment to teams to respond; and



- provides \$ relief grants to wildlife carer groups after disasters such as bushfires and floods.

Our response goals are the provision of best practice immediate response to minimise deaths, alleviate suffering and assist the rehabilitation of affected wild animals.

In Australia, IFAW works with both government agencies and voluntary groups and individuals to support the planning for and response to wildlife emergencies. The planning, preparedness, expertise and capacity of agencies varies greatly between different states and between different types of responses.

IFAW has provided grants to a number of organisations and individuals to help animals in Australia and the wider Asia Pacific region. Some examples are given below.

Education for youth about the welfare and conservation of wild and domestic animals
(Indonesia)

- Provision of a mobile vet clinic for street dog program in Bali
- Business development and field clinic support (Samoa)
- Volunteer vet program (Samoa)
- Wildlife rescue trailer (NSW, Qld, Vic)
- Bushfire relief funding in (NSW, Vic, ACT)
- Cyclone emergency relief (Qld & WA)
- Koala rehabilitation plan (Vic)
- Spay program for the pets of pensioners (NSW)
- Ongoing medical care for injured & orphaned wildlife (NSW)
- Emergency relief funds following floods to rebuild enclosures (NSW, Vic)



State Wildlife Councils

IFAW is also supporting the establishment and operation of State

Wildlife Rehabilitation Councils across Australia and encouraging the development of a National Council to work for the interests and needs of wildlife rehabilitators.

It is hoped that, amongst other things, these Councils could support individual wildlife carers and care bodies by:

- promoting the best standards for wildlife rescue, care and rehabilitation,
 - providing a forum for carers to liaise with decision makers and funding organisations,
 - promoting the sharing of information on all aspects of wildlife care, rescue, rehabilitation and release,
 - acting as an advisor and advocate to all levels of Government, business and the community on wildlife rehabilitation issues,
 - promoting education, training and awareness raising
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Conclusion:

IFAW's ER work:

- Assists individual animals as well as populations, whether part of a disaster involving large numbers of animals or a response to a smaller event.
- Strives to improve standards for emergency relief, rehabilitation and sanctuaries and to establish best practice, in order to improve the welfare and survival of rescued animals.
- Actively promotes prevention and mitigation/contingency planning.
- Links the cause of distress to issues of habitat and commercial exploitation.
- Uses these links to enable the rescue and rehabilitation of animals to become a powerful tool for change.



