

PRINCIPLES

animals count



**A political party to help create a better world for
people and animals**

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi recognised that the foundation of a wise and humane society is shown in the compassion extended to less fortunate members of society and, in particular, in the relationship between humans and animals:

“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”

We like to think that only in those countries where human rights are violated, or not even recognised, respect for animals is non-existent. However, in so-called ‘developed’ countries, animals are often not treated with respect, either. People who abuse animals have usually never learnt to be kind to other sentient creatures, and are rarely corrected for their cruel or ignorant behaviour towards animals. However, it is institutionalised cruelty that causes suffering at a massive scale. Examples include the exploitation and cruel treatment of hundreds of millions of farmed animals, and mutilating them without anaesthesia; the use of millions of animals in scientific research, testing and education; hunting; and the use of animals in circuses and other ‘entertainment’. In many societies animals are regarded as mere objects, in contradiction to our civilised values.

There is ample scientific and anecdotal evidence about the link between inter-personal violence and animal abuse.¹ Where children or other family members are at risk from abuse, animals often are too. Children who experienced animal cruelty during childhood are more likely to become perpetrators of violence themselves. The cost to society of anti-social behaviour is enormous, and can partly be avoided by fostering compassion, respect and kindness toward all forms of life, embedded in legislation, education and many other aspects of society.

Humans comprise only part of life on Earth, which we are privileged to share with many other (sentient) beings. Despite the apparent delusions of some humans, we are not the pinnacle of evolution. Evolution is ever continuing and we need to acknowledge that although we have the potential to ‘shape’ the world to some extent, we cannot and should not seek to dominate and change nature to suit our needs, at the expense of other creatures and the environment. We are rapidly depleting the earth of its resources, and causing mass extinctions of plant and animal species. This is neither sustainable nor ethical. It is, in fact, arrogant and short-sighted, and we need to rise above such a limited world-view.

To halt the destruction of the environment and the violation of the rights of other sentient beings, we drastically need to change our civilisation, similar to previous social movements striving for the abolition of the oppression of women, children and slaves. Concordant with our ‘Respect for Life’ philosophy outlined in our Constitution, the treatment of people, animals, and the environment with respect is our core principle.

Animals Count’s principles are five-fold:

1. Raising the legal and perceived moral status of animals
2. Furthering respect for all life
3. Reducing and replacing harmful animal use
4. Encouraging sustainable development activities that benefit the environment, animals and people
5. Promoting healthy living

¹ E.g. Arluke A, Levin J, Luke C & Ascione FR (1999). The relationship of animal abuse to violence and other forms of antisocial behaviour. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 14: 963-975.

Therefore, as the UK political party most strongly advocating for the protection of animals, the party's principles are:

General

- 1.1 To raise human perceptions of the *moral* status of animals by recognising animals as sentient beings.
- 1.2 To raise the *legal* status of animals to reflect their status as sentient beings, including protection in national and international law.
- 1.3 By promoting animals' rights, to further respect for both humans and non-human animals.
- 1.4 To facilitate increased respect for all sentient life by promoting animal protection education, at all educational levels.
- 1.5 To protect the environment by ensuring that farming and development activities are sustainable.
- 1.6 To promote healthy living.

Animals farmed for food

- 1.7 To phase out farming systems with poor welfare consequences for animals.
- 1.8 To improve animal welfare by raising farming standards and by ensuring trade regulations and other measures encourage high welfare standards.
- 1.9 To support farming methods that enhance animal welfare or reduce use of or dependency on animals.
- 1.10 To phase out livestock farming subsidies in sectors where consumer demand is falling, and redirect such subsidies towards plant-based agriculture and the promotion of biodiversity, and to the general areas of environment, education and public health.
- 1.11 To end the long distance transportation of live animals to or from destinations within the UK of over 200 miles, and to continental European destinations and further afield.

Animals used in research, testing and education

- 1.12 To immediately ban the harmful use of all non-human primates in experiments.
- 1.13 To ban all harmful use of animals in scientific research, toxicity testing and education.
- 1.14 To establish an independent transparent scientific inquiry to thoroughly review the ethical, scientific and economic implications of the use of animals in scientific research, toxicity testing and education.

1.15 To facilitate increased funding for the development, validation and implementation of non-animal alternatives.

Animals living in the wild

1.16 To ban all trapping and snaring, and hunting and shooting for recreational purposes.

1.17 To promote wildlife preservation, habitat conservation and biodiversity.

Animals kept as companions

1.18 To establish a basic national animal health care system similar in some ways to the NHS, including state funding of animal rescue organisations such as the RSPCA and PDSA.

1.19 To establish a list of animal species and breeds that can suitably be kept as companion animals based on their needs. All non-listed animals would be unsuited as pets and should not be kept.

1.20 To ban breeding of companion animals to meet breed standards or for other purposes that result in hereditary anatomical, physiological or other impairments potentially contrary to good welfare.

1.21 To improve legislation and regulations against animal neglect and abuse, by strengthening and extending police powers, increasing penalties for offenders, and increasing public educational programmes concerning responsible companion animal care and related topics.

Animals used for entertainment, fashion and art

1.22 To ban the harmful use of animals for blood sports, racing events, any other form of entertainment or cultural event.

1.23 To ban the harmful exploitation of animals for advertising, fashion and art.