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PRESS RELEASE – Immediate

**NATUREWATCH FOUNDATION LAUNCHES ‘FIVE POINT PLAN’ FOR ANIMAL WELFARE**

**Naturewatch Foundation is calling on all political parties to commit to animal welfare post-Brexit.** The Gloucestershire-based animal welfare charity has published a ‘Five Point Plan Manifesto’ based on their key campaign areas. Naturewatch Foundation speaks out on behalf of animals campaigning peacefully, lobbying policy-makers and raising public awareness.

**Naturewatch Foundation’s five-point plan:**

1. Increasing prison penalties for animal cruelty
2. Tackling badger crime
3. Banning animal testing
4. Stopping puppy farming
5. Respecting that animals are sentient

Naturewatch Foundation Chief Executive Caroline Ruane, said:

“This general election is about the future of the UK and what we, as a nation, care about. As a country, we pride ourselves on being a nation of animal lovers.

Naturewatch Foundation is calling on all political parties to be committed and passionate about animal welfare post-Brexit. In the UK, animals are abused for research, profit and for ‘sport’. The UK still has shockingly low animal cruelty penalties with only a maximum of six months imprisonment. Our five point plan addresses key issues which will make a real difference in the lives of animals.”

Naturewatch Foundation is known for co-ordinating World Animal Day on 4 October each year. In 2019, World Animal Day reached a record-breaking number of animal lovers across the world, trending on the internet in 56 countries.

The charity’s main UK campaigns focus on stamping out cruel puppy farming, the horrors of badger baiting, and raising awareness of the millions of animals used in laboratory research in the UK each year. Naturewatch Foundation’s Compassionate Shopping Guide is a great reference source for many cruelty-free shoppers. The charity also extends its work to campaign on important UK-wide animal protection policy issues such as increasing prison sentences for animal cruelty and for the sentience of animals to be recognised in UK law.

**ENDS**

**More Information:**

**Naturewatch Foundation’s Five Point Plan for Animal Welfare 2019**

1. **TOUGHER ANIMAL CRUELTY SENTENCES:** The UK has shockingly low animal cruelty penalties with only a maximum of six months imprisonment. **Naturewatch Foundation is calling for an increased maximum sentence for those convicted of animal cruelty to five years**. There is a strong recorded link between animal cruelty and human violence such as domestic abuse.
2. **END BADGER CRIME:** The illegal persecution of badgers remains a significant problem in the UK today and is a current UK Wildlife Crime Priority, as identified by the National Wildlife Crime Unit, due to the sheer volume of crime and intelligence. The UK government should make all wildlife crime recordable to the Home Office with improved and consistent police incident coding nationwide to enable police resources to be efficiently located to fight this crime. **We also urge the government to make wildlife crime notifiable** so those convicted have a criminal record added to the Police National Computer.
3. **BAN ANIMAL TESTING:** With over FOUR million animals abused in the UK each year during the development and testing of products, we urge policymakers to support non-animal research methods. **The UK government should repeal Section 24 of the ‘Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986’, the so-called Secrecy Clause**, which blocks access to information about animal experiments. Consumers can also take action by choosing truly cruelty-free products such as those featured in the Naturewatch Foundation Compassionate Shopping Guide.
4. **BE PUPPY FARM AWARE:** Breeding dogs are often kept in dreadful conditions with puppies exposed to serious, often life-threatening illness.Puppy farming also fuels dog theft.  Half the puppies purchased in the UK each year come from puppy farms. **We support strong public awareness campaigns** to expose the profit motivated industry and often dubious breeding standards. For the best friend you’ll ever have, ‘adopt, don’t shop’!
5. **RESPECT THAT ANIMALS ARE SENTIENT:** Animals can feel pain, fear and joy! When UK government makes new laws, **they should pay ‘full regard’ to the impact on animals’ welfare**. We support proposals from across the animal protection sector to create an **Animal Protection Commission** to help the government in fulfilling its duty to animal welfare, ensuring policy decisions are underpinned by the best scientific and ethics expertise.

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**About Naturewatch Foundation**

Naturewatch Foundation is a registered charity that has been speaking out on behalf of animals for over 25 years by:

* Campaigning peacefully against animal abuse
* Lobbying to improve animal protection legislation
* Raising awareness through education
* Supporting the World Animal Day movement to raise the status of animals around the globe

[www.naturewatch.org](file:///%5C%5Cnwf-server%5CNWF%20Files%5C4%20-%20UK%20Dog%20Welfare%5CComms%5Cwww.naturewatch.org)

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