An insight into the frontline of animal welfare during COVID-19

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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How has the current Coronavirus pandemic taken its toll on animal welfare organisations around the globe during the past six months? World Animal Day on October 4 is an opportunity to find out, through interviews with advocates working hard to ensure that animals are not overlooked during the crisis.

There are currently 93 World Animal Day Ambassadors in 73 countries across the globe. One thing they all have in common is their passion for animal welfare.

Each Ambassador works for a registered, not-for-profit animal welfare organisation and proudly waves the World Animal Day banner. They were interviewed to give a behind-the-scenes look at the incredible work they do (and, against the odds, continue to do) throughout the pandemic.

Many of the organisations provide essential neutering and veterinary services in their local communities.

Khageshwaar Sharma, from the Himalayan Animal Rescue Trust (HART), in Nepal, said: “The animal birth control program was halted for a couple of months. Also, a pass was required to drive to animals in need because veterinary work isn’t recognised as an emergency service by the government of Nepal.”

“We plan to use social media to interact with veterinary students and the general public who are interested in learning more about animal health. HART resident vets will be available online to answer queries.”

Thomas Kahema, Executive Director of the Tanzania Animal Welfare Society (TAWESO) said: “[Lockdown] means we have to focus on emergency relief, rather than regular animal welfare services and education. The world isn’t focusing much on issues other than COVID-19, at the moment.”

This year, TAWESO will use World Animal Day to deliver free veterinary services at the Community Animal Hospital and educate people on their responsibilities.

Ryan O’Meara, former pro dog trainer and founder of K9 Magazine and adoption website DogsBlog.com, said: “Dog rescues in the UK have been badly affected by COVID-19. There is likely to be a serious uptick in the number of dogs surrendered to shelters in the coming years because of unethical breeders too.”

He said that World Animal Day would be used to “bring awareness to the plight of dogs produced by irresponsible breeders and try to help people understand how they can help”.

Dr. Sulaiman Tamer, a veterinarian with the Kurdistan Organization for Animal Rights Protection (KOARP) said: “COVID-19 has altered our plans slightly, but we’ll celebrate World Animal Day by vaccinating stray dogs and treating sick animals.”

“World Animal Day is the best way to share our message with the whole world. It helps to publicise our activities and media coverage helps us immensely.”

Svetlana Manojlovic, founder of the Society for the Protection of Animals Podgorica, in Montenegro, said: “Like everywhere, the pandemic has caused many problems for animals. The state has supported us in publishing promotional material urging owners not to abandon their pets, as well as promoting various charities’ projects.”

Zhang Dan, co-founder of the China Animal Protection Media Salon in Beijing, said: “From February to May, all offline activities were cancelled. From June onwards, I’ve been able to hold lectures around China again.”

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Related Keywords:

World Animal Day :: #WorldAnimalDay :: Animal Welfare Organisations :: Animals ::

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She hopes that, in the future, "…all the World Animal Day Ambassadors around the world will be able to get together to exchange ideas and gain more courage and wisdom!"

Most animal welfare organisations have adapted so that they can continue to share their educational messages, despite social distancing.

Sujoy Kumar Dutta, Secretary of People For Animals (PFA) Siliguri, India, said: "COVID-19 has changed many things for us — our work hasn't fully stopped, but we need to be safe so we can come back better and stronger. We host online consultations for people with sick/injured animals. If it's an urgent case, we make sure to visit but with strict safety precautions. Recently, we've taken to social media to create awareness around animal welfare issues."

Mau Hamada, the founder of Alexandria Turtle and Wildlife Rescue Team in Egypt, said: "Many plans were changed or cancelled because of COVID-19, but I still give awareness lectures and workshops on a weekly basis via video-link. I'm preparing a video about animal welfare in my country displaying positive examples of shelters, vets and rescuers. It's a thank-you message, and it's good for networking, education and outreach".

World Animal Day is coordinated every year by Naturewatch Foundation, a registered animal welfare charity based in the UK.

Caroline Ruane, CEO of Naturewatch Foundation, said: "We are honoured that our Ambassadors choose to be involved in World Animal Day. Each one of them is an expert in their field and is completely dedicated to their work, not just on October 4, but throughout the year. The extraordinary difference they make to animals' lives is beyond words."

"If you work in animal welfare, or know someone who does, we regularly welcome new Ambassadors to our amazing team. Just email info@worldanimalday.org.uk to find out more, or visit the website at worldanimalday.org.uk."

To find ways to get involved on Sunday October 4, go to https://www.worldanimalday.org.uk/get_involved

To read the full interviews, visit
https://www.worldanimalday.org.uk/news/view/world-animal-day-ambassadors-share-their-thoughts

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OTHER INFORMATION:

About World Animal Day

https://www.worldanimalday.org.uk/

World Animal Day HQ encourages animal welfare organisations, community groups, youth and children's clubs, businesses and individuals to organise events in celebration of World Animal Day, held every year on October 4. Involvement is growing at an astonishing rate and it's now widely accepted and celebrated in a variety of different ways in many countries, with no regard to nationality, religion, faith or political ideology.

Events are organised under the World Animal Day umbrella by being publicised on the website and advertised using the World Animal Day brand and logo. Global branding effectively ties all events together and, over the years, this approach has been particularly helpful to grassroots groups who struggle to attract media attention in order to raise awareness of their work and fundraise. This draws attention to animal issues and makes them front-page news – a vital catalyst for change. Each year the logo becomes more widely recognised as a global brand for animals.

With the help of a team of Ambassadors, World Animal Day HQ is committed to encouraging support for the movement's mission to raise the status of animals around the globe.

The History of World Animal Day.

About Naturewatch Foundation (coordinator of World Animal Day)

https://naturewatch.org/

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

- Publishing the Compassionate Shopping Guide (since 1993)
- 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

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Images

World Animal Day logo and images of Ambassadors – http://ow.ly/jEzK50BHFdB

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