

# 2023 Annual Report





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## THE BEGINNINGS

WellBeing International (WBI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in the United States, was founded on the premise that **people, animals, and the environment are interrelated and interdependent**. WBI's vision includes this core premise and is articulated in the following quotation.

*"A responsible caretaker of our world must safeguard people, animals, and the environment, for each element is tightly connected to and dependent on the well-being of the others."*

This recognition profoundly influenced the creation of WBI and its mission, implemented through collaborative engagement, education, direct care, and science.



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

WellBeing International (WBI) is celebrating its sixth anniversary! As we reflect on our journey, we are reminded of our vision to achieve a sustainable world, we must consider human well-being, the well-being of animals, and the well-being of the environment. This vision, which you have all supported and endorsed, continues to guide our actions and inspire us to do more.

We also take heart from the thought, often attributed to the anthropologist Margaret Meade, that runs as follows, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." While some may argue that this quote overstates the importance of individual action and commitment, WBI's founders have been privileged to work with or be part of several actual instances where an individual or a small, organized group of committed individuals did indeed bring about local, national, and even international policy changes. Frank Sinatra also immortalized the idea that one can overcome insurmountable obstacles in his song, "[High Hopes](#)."

The world currently faces many daunting social and economic challenges. WBI will continue to promote appropriate direct-action projects, call on scientific expertise, and seek collaborative partners to highlight and amplify actions and approaches to produce sustainable global outcomes for people, animals, and the environment.



Andrew Rowan, *President*



## WBI PROGRAMS

WBI programs are not siloed but rather interrelated where organizational resources are leveraged to deliver impact across all campaigns and focus areas.



**Animals in Conflict:** a campaign to assist humans and animals in areas of war and ongoing conflict such as Ukraine and Afghanistan.



**Global Awareness:** a campaign aiming to identify and emphasize behavior change solutions that enhance the well-being of people, animals, and the environment.



**Democratizing Information:** a program providing a free, accessible digital repository, a virtual reservoir of reliable knowledge and information on the well-being of people, animals, and the environment.



**Animals in Our World:** A program dedicated to ensuring animals are included in every conversation about environmental and human well-being, recognizing their essential role in a healthier, more sustainable world.



**Animal Sentience:** a program enhancing understanding of the topic, raising global awareness of its significance, and encouraging decisions leading to a humane and sustainable world.



**Feel Better:** a campaign to provide trusted information to individuals enabling them to make better choices for themselves, others, animals, and the environment.

## WBI FOCUS AREAS

- Companion & Working Animals
- WellBeing International Studies Repository
- *Animal Sentience*
- Animals in Research & Testing
- Farmed Animals & Land Use
- Climate, the UN & Biodiversity
- Health
- Wildlife
- Wild Lands & Re-Wilding
- Ukraine Rescue, Relief & Rebuild



**COMPANION ANIMALS**

## DOGS



WBI continued its Global Dog Campaign, which was highlighted by a plenary talk on Ending Global Dog (and Cat) Homelessness at the International Companion Animal Welfare Conference in Cyprus in October 2023. The talk emphasized the need to develop accurate data documenting the impact of humane management techniques over time, with a focus on longer-term impacts

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### In Pursuit of a Silver Bullet for Pet Population Control: a Chemical Sterilant for Dogs and Cats

*TOW, Vol 5(6), Jul 2023*

### Pet Demographics: Evolving Numbers and Insights

*WBN, Vol 5(11), Dec 2023*

### International Companion Animal Welfare Conference

*Presentation by Andrew Rowan, Oct 2023*

## CATS



Australia and New Zealand are dealing with a significant issue related to the serious impact of domestic cat predation on their unique native wildlife. Ongoing debates in both countries are focused on determining the best approach to controlling the impact of domestic cat populations on native wildlife.

### Managing Cats in Australia

*TOW, Vol 5(1), Jan 2023*

### Managing Outdoor Cats

*WBN, Vol 5(4), Apr 2023*

### Rudyard Kipling's – The Cat That Walked by Himself

*TOW, Vol 5(7), Aug 2023*





## PARTNER SHELTERS COMMUNITY OUTREACH



In 2023, WBI continued to provide support for the U3R Consortium partners and worked with AHPPA and the Mayhew to track and report progress in the management of animals and the creation of humane communities.

**AHPPA (Costa Rica)** is working with Costa Rican government agencies to care for and adopt out animals rescued from abusive situations. In 2023, the shelter received 13,218 animals from government agencies (out of a total intake of 13,643 animals) and adopted out almost 12,000 animals (a 6-fold increase in adoptions compared to the period from 2010 to 2015 before the government seizures began).

**Mayhew (Afghanistan)** is continuing its sterilization and rabies vaccination program in Kabul, Afghanistan having been invited by the new city administration under the Taliban to continue a project started in 2017.

**Save the Dogs and Other Animals (Romania)** is a Ukraine Rescue, Relief & Rebuild (U3R) consortium partner. It has delivered over 900 tons of pet food and other supplies to Ukraine to support pets left behind.

**Sloboda Zvierat (Slovakia)**, a U3R partner, runs shelters throughout Slovakia, with headquarters in Bratislava. In 2023, it continued to provide free veterinary care, pet food, and supplies to Ukrainian refugees and their pets and sent food and supplies to Ukraine.

**The Street Dog Coalition (USA)**, another U3R partner, has equipped and deployed a mobile veterinary clinic into Ukraine with the assistance of Worldwide Vet.

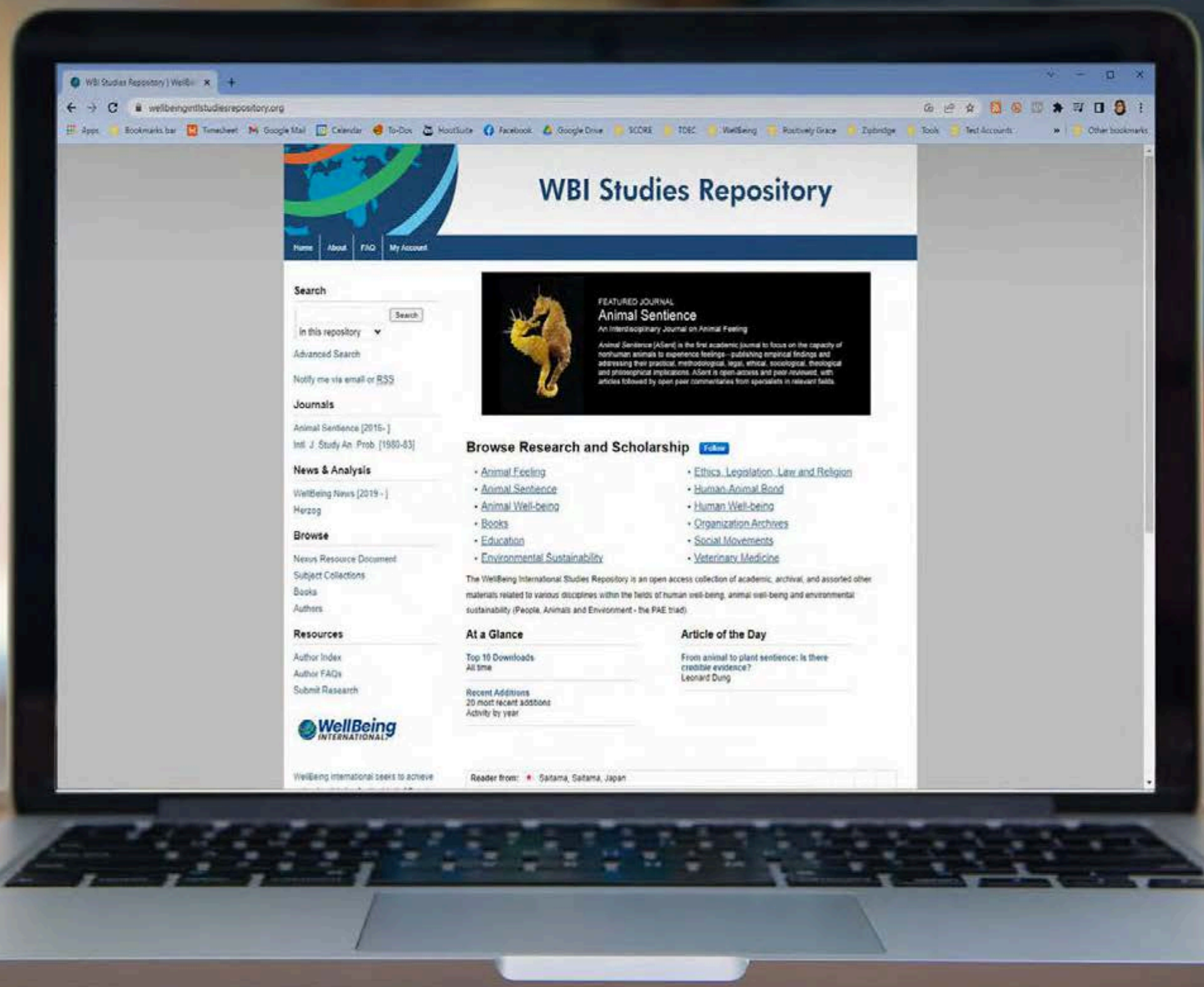


## SLOBODA ZVIERAT'S FIRST CANICROSS EVENT

In canicross, the owner and dog run together in a cross-country race. The human wears a waist belt, while the dog has a special harness. Dog and human are connected by a bungee (or elastic) chord that reduces the shock to both owner and dog when the dog pulls on the chord. The sport originated in Europe as off-season training for the “mushing” (sled-dog racing) community but is now institutionalized and includes national and even international competitions. [Read the full article.](#)

# WELLBEING INTERNATIONAL STUDIES REPOSITORY

By 2023, the WellBeing International Studies Repository (WBISR) had become a state-of-the-art digital library hosting over 5,800 open-access documents related to the well-being of people, animals, and the environment. Additionally, it includes the academic journal *Animal Sentience*. Since 2014, the WBISR has been used over 3.5 million times by individuals from 232 countries and territories and 35,000 institutions. In 2023 alone, there were over 500,000 usages. This repository is a valuable resource that supports all of WBI's programs and focus areas. The documents in the WBISR digital library are freely available for download by anyone worldwide with access to the internet.



# ANIMAL SENTIENCE

## ANIMAL SENTIENCE JOURNAL

The journal, *Animal Sentience*, is a unique resource. It is an open access peer commentary academic journal that publishes peer-reviewed target articles on relevant topics and then invites and publishes peer commentaries on the target articles. Such open-peer commentary journals support a vital, transparent scientific discussion of challenging and controversial topics, such as whether animals are capable of suffering or experiencing pleasure. The journal is currently in its ninth year of publication. Earlier volumes have published target articles arguing that fish are not sentient, that various invertebrates are sentient and that plants are sentient. The expert peer commentaries plus the responses by the authors of the target articles provide a rich set of arguments delineating approaches allowing the reader to determine how the sentience of an organism might be determined.

In 2023, WellBeing News published an article, [Exploring and Debating Sentience – of Fish and Plants](#), arguing that discusses the range of arguments regarding the sentience of organisms.

## ANIMALS IN RESEARCH & TESTING



WBI has periodically reported on trends in the use of laboratory animals and the development of non-animal methods (NAMS). In the last fifty years, there have been substantial changes in laboratory animal oversight and use (an estimated 50-75% reduction in the number of laboratory animals used in developed countries). These changes are reflected in the chart that plots animal use on a scale where peak use is set at 100. Please see newsletter article “Where is the Evidence that Laboratory Animal Use is Falling?”

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### Laboratory Animals and Non-Animal Alternatives

*WBN, Vol 5(8), Sep 2023*

### Update – Food & Drug Administration’s Animal Testing Mandate

*WBN, Vol 5(1), Jan 2023*

### Laboratory Primate Supply

*WBN, Vol 5(5), May 2023*

### Monkey Business

*WBN, Vol 5(7), Aug 2023*

### Where is the Evidence that Laboratory Animal Use is Falling?

*WBN, Vol 5(10), Oct 2023*



**FARMED ANIMALS & LAND USE**

## BIRD FLU

An extremely contagious avian flu virus is spreading globally, resulting in the deaths of millions of chickens and turkeys. The virus has also affected and resulted in the deaths of numerous mammalian species. Fortunately, there is currently no evidence of human-to-human transmission. Health authorities are concerned about the potential for the current bird flu virus to become transmissible between humans. The Spanish Flu in 1918, which led to an estimated 20-40 million deaths worldwide, was caused by an avian flu virus.



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### Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

*WBN, Vol 5(1), Jan 2023*

### Bird Flu: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza – An Update

*WBN, Vol 5(2), Feb 2023*

### Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Revisited

*WBN, Vol 5(8), Sep 2023*

**One Health and Bird Flu:** One Health initiatives note that around three-quarters of new and emerging diseases (e.g., Covid, SARS, and NIPAH viruses) are transmitted by animals.



## MEAT CONSUMPTION

The production of animal products, such as meat and dairy, for human consumption is connected to issues such as global warming, declining biodiversity, and human health problems. It has been calculated that if humans ate the cereal and pulses currently used as animal feed, the world could easily feed ten billion people and potentially return more than half, and perhaps three-quarters, of the world's farmland back to its natural state.

[Where's the Beef? Climate Change and Animal Product Consumption,](#)

*WBN, Vol 5(5), May 2023*



# CLIMATE, THE UN & BIODIVERSITY





## CLIMATE: COP28

*“The increase in attendance reflects growing global concern about the impact of climate warming after what is likely to be the warmest year on record, with average global temperatures now about 1.3 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial temperatures.”*

### COP28, Climate Change, and the Global Stocktake

WBN, Vol 5(10), Oct 2023

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## MORE ON COP28

### COP 28 – Running Out Of Time

WBN, Vol 5(10), Oct 2023

### Methane and Climate Change

WBN, Vol 5(11), Nov 2023

### COP28: Moving Forward

WBN, Vol 5(11), Nov 2023



## CLIMATE: PLASTIC WASTE

*“The modern plastics industry may have been a boon to consumers, but the world is drowning in non-degradable plastic waste.”*

### Plastic Waste and the World’s Seas

WBN, Vol 5(4), Apr. 2023

**Climate Change & Marine Life – Carbon Storage:** Recent studies show that whales and other marine life can substantially mitigate the harmful climate effects of excess atmospheric carbon dioxide.

## THE UNITED NATIONS



### UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

In late 2022, WBI produced an [extensive resource document](#) with input from transformative experts on the nexus between animal welfare, environmental well-being and sustainable development. In 2024, WBI sent a copy of the resource document to UNEP for reference. A draft scoping report for the Nexus Report has now been circulated to UN Member States for feedback.

### UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

[UN Support for Children, Animals, and Healthy Development](#), WBN, Vol 5(7), Aug 2023

[Children Observing Violence and Public Health Outcomes](#), WBN, Vol 6(2), Feb 2024



## BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity is a complex concept that is not easy to reduce to a few overarching measures. While one can track potential impacts on climate change by measuring the concentrations of a few gases (e.g. carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) in the atmosphere, there are no relatively simple measures (e.g. number of species or species extinction rates) that can be used to track biodiversity loss.

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### COP 15 – Can We Meet Biodiversity Goals & Targets?

*WBN, Vol 5(10), Oct 2023*

### Measuring Biodiversity and Biodiversity Trends

*WBN, Vol 4(11), Dec 2022*

**Bees and Other Insect Pollinators:** Insect pollinators are an essential but often unappreciated component of food security, human livelihoods, and biodiversity. Modern nicotinoid pesticides are a possible cause of the reductions in bee and other insect populations. Insect declines also affect other animals.

# HEALTH

Experiencing and protecting nature is a relatively simple option for individuals that will improve their health and subjective well-being and lead to "Feeling Better."

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## The Blue Zones, Well-being, and Feel Better

*WBN, Vol 5(11) Dec 2023*

## World Happiness Report 2023

*WBN, Vol 5(xx) xxx 2023*

## One Health: A Public Health Solution or Slogan?

*WBN, Vol 5(xx) xxx 2023*

## A Circular Economy and "Feel Better"

*WBN, Vol 5(11) Dec 2023*

## Reducing Deaths & Anxiety Through Trees

*WBN, Vol 5(3), Mar 2023*



# WILDLIFE, WILD LANDS & REWILDING





## WILLIE B.

WBI published a three-part series by Dr. Terry Maple, about Willie B., Atlanta’s iconic ape and one of the most famous gorillas in the world. Willie B. was captured in Cameroon, probably in 1960, and was estimated to be three years old when he arrived in Atlanta in 1961.

“[Willie B.] was lonely, but he still carried himself like a silverback. Atlanta’s zoo in the seventies was dilapidated and underfunded, but its fate, along with Willie B.’s, was about to change.”

Part 1: [Coping with Captivity: The Tragic Journey of Willie B.](#)  
*ToW, Vol 5(2), Mar 2023*

“The Ford African Rainforest exhibit opened in 1988, becoming the home for Willie B. and eight other lowland gorillas from Yerkes.”

Part 2: [The Socialization of Willie B.](#)  
*ToW, Vol 5(3), Apr 2023*

“It takes a village to raise a great ape. Willie B.’s peers and heirs now thrive at Zoo Atlanta thanks to the community’s commitment to a zoological garden with ethical standards second to none.”

Part 3: [Life of Willie B. – Public Policy & Psychological Well-being](#)  
*ToW, Vol 5(4), May 2023*



# ASIAN ELEPHANTS

WBI published a 3-part series on managing elephants safely which has always been a challenge for human handlers. Finding an appropriate way forward that ensures the well-being of captive elephants, their human handlers, the communities who work with and depend on elephants, and the natural environment will take much work.

## Part 1: The Asian Elephant and its Interaction with People and the Environment

*ToW, Vol 5(6), Jul 2023*

Is the Asian Elephant an example of a self-domesticated species, and if so, how should the species be managed?



## Part 2: The Asian Elephant: Training and Control

*ToW, Vol 5(7), Aug 2023*

The challenges in ensuring that elephants are trained so that human caretakers can safely work with them.



## Part 3: Elephant Care and Welfare in Southeast Asia Today

*ToW, Vol 5(8), Sep 2023*

Elephant care traditions in Southeast Asia are changing as elephant welfare becomes a growing issue.



WBI's partner, the Center for Large Landscape Conservation, announces significant progress in protecting wild lands from fragmentation.

**[Exciting Developments for the Connectivity of Wild Landscapes](#)**

*ToW, Vol 5(3), Apr 2023*

Philip Lymbery, CEO of Compassion in World Farming, focuses on the importance of trees for human and animal well-being.

**[Reducing Deaths And Anxiety: Why Trees Should Be Cause Célèbre For Our Health And Well-Being](#)**

*WBN, Vol 5(3), Mar 2023*



## REWILDING

Rewilding projects are proliferating around the globe and frequently rely on enhancing Nature's ability to restore itself.

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**Rewilding: Letting Nature Do its Own Thing!**

*ToW, Vol 5(4), May 2023*

**To Love not Man the Less, but Nature More'**

*ToW, Vol 5(6), Jul 2023*



**ANIMALS IN CONFLICT**



## UKRAINE RESCUE, RELIEF & REBUILD



During times of war, both people and animals, as well as the environment, suffer and are at risk. This is especially evident in Ukraine. With the support of neighboring countries, organizations, and individuals, the collective efforts to provide care and assistance can offer a temporary uplift to the spirits of affected people and animals. WellBeing International founded the **Ukraine Rescue, Relief & Rebuild (U3R)** consortium. The consortium partners are:

**Save the Dogs and Other Animal** (Romania) continued to support the animals of Ukraine throughout 2022 and 2023 sending more than 900 tons of pet food along with medical and pet supplies.

**Sloboda Zvierat** (Slovakia) continued to supply free veterinary care, medicines, and pet supplies to the pets of Ukraine refugees. In addition, pet food and supplies are sent directly to Ukraine.

**Street Dog Coalition** (USA) purchased, equipped, and deployed a veterinary mobile clinic into Ukraine with the assistance of Worldwide Vets.

**Tigers in America (USA)** is an organization that specializes in rescuing, finding temporary accommodations, and relocating large, dangerous animals to permanent sanctuaries. TIA assisted in rescuing nine lions and other large animals in Ukraine.

**WellBeing International (USA)** remains committed to connecting partners, funders, and potential projects and visiting U3R partners in Slovakia and Romania. WBI is providing funding, website coverage, social media and news outreach, and continuing efforts to build a communication network for the rebuilding effort in Ukraine.

## Looking Forward from the CEO

WBI is dedicated to addressing global challenges and finding solutions. We are committed to making an impact through our five major programs: Global Dog Campaign, Global Awareness (including UN initiatives), Feel Better, WellBeing International Studies Repository, including the *Animal Sentience* journal, and the Ukraine Rescue, Relief, and Rebuild coalition; U3R.

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, especially for new organizations, WBI has remained true to its founding principle that people, animals, and the environment are interconnected and interdependent. WBI's business model has been implemented based on minimal investment in bricks and mortar, emphasizing partnering with transformative professionals underpinned by a range of new communication, digital, and business technologies.

Now, we are looking to expand our programs and fundraising efforts. This growth will be achieved through collaborative engagement, education, direct care, and scientific research, all in line with our core principles. Additionally, we are committed to maintaining our credibility and trust as an organization that prioritizes impact over size, responds quickly, and proactively identifies and addresses critical issues.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Rowan".

Kathleen Rowan, CEO

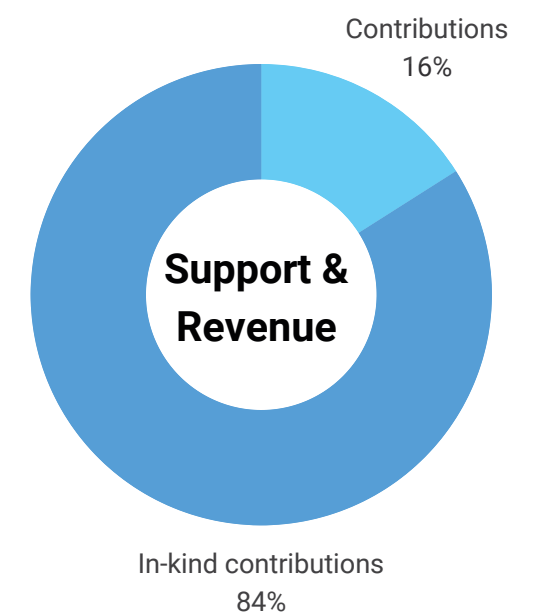
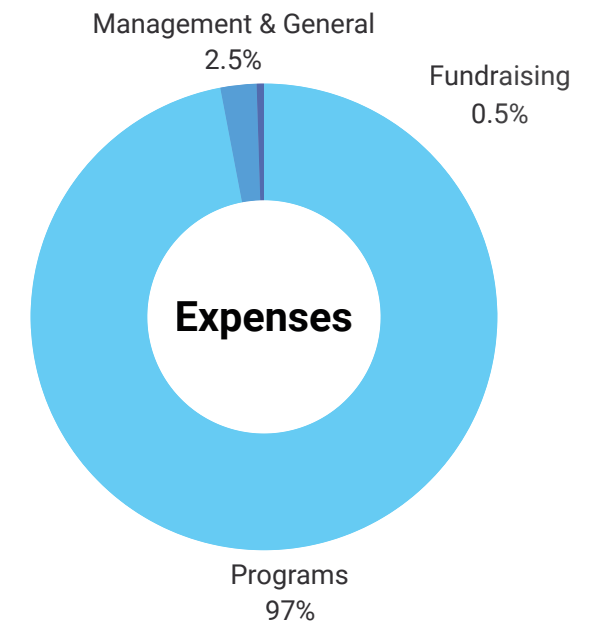


# Financial Operations Report *for the year ending December 31, 2023*

Statement of Financial Position (Audited)			
Assets		Liabilities	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$29,886	Liabilities	\$1,848
Contributions and grant receivables	15,865	Net Assets	
Pre-paid expenses	19,817	Without donor restrictions	55,355
Non-current assets	3,286	With donor restrictions	11,651
		<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$67,006</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$68,854</b>	<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$68,854</b>

WBI is a platinum-level GuideStar participant demonstrating its commitment to transparency.

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets (Audited)			
Support and Revenue	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Contributions	\$56,789	\$39,682	\$96,471
In-kind contributions	540,545	-	540,545
Other Income	608	-	608
Net assets released from donor restrictions	49,483	(49,483)	-
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>	<b>\$647,425</b>	<b>(\$9,801)</b>	<b>\$637,624</b>
Expenses			
Program Services			
Healthy, Humane Communities	177,847	-	177,847
Sustainability-People, Animals & Environment	58,434	-	58,434
Education, Engagement & Policy	420,298	-	420,298
Partner Support & Collaboration	2,715	-	2,715
Total program services	659,294	-	659,294
Supporting Services			
Management & general	16,805	-	16,805
Fundraising	1,639	-	1,639
Total supporting services	18,444	-	18,444
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$677,738</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$677,738</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>(\$30,313)</b>	<b>(\$9,801)</b>	<b>(\$40,114)</b>
<b>Net Assets at Beginning of Year</b>	<b>\$85,668</b>	<b>\$21,452</b>	<b>\$107,120</b>
<b>Net Assets at End of Year</b>	<b>\$55,355</b>	<b>\$11,651</b>	<b>\$67,006</b>



## **Board of Directors**

Andrew Rowan, *DPhil, President & CPO*

S. Chinny Krishna, *PhD, Vice President*

Kathleen Rowan, *MPA, CPA, Secretary & CEO*

William Voorhees, *CPA, Treasurer*

Eric Bernthal, *JD, Director*

Jacqueline Bruner, *PhD, Director*

Julie Levy, *Director, DVM, PhD, Director*

## **Editor-in-Chief, Animal Sentience**

Stevan R. Harnad, *PhD*

## **Global Ambassadors**

Arnold Arluke, *PhD*

Andrea Gung

John Hadidian, *PhD*

Hemanta R. Mishra, *PhD*

Jennifer Sullivan, *JD*

Keiko Yamazaki





**WellBeing**  
INTERNATIONAL