Center for Environmental and Animal Protection

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

NYU | ARTS & SCIENCE

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Letter from the Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am pleased to share this annual report for the NYU Center for Environmental and Animal Protection (CEAP). In 2025, CEAP continued to advance understanding of environmental and animal protection, establishing a major new program while sponsoring a variety of research projects related to agriculture, conservation, and other themes.

Our flagship output this year was "Integrating Animal Health and Welfare into the 2030 Agenda and Beyond," a report with Stockholm Environment Institute. The report identifies animal welfare as a key missing issue in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, examines how this issue interacts with all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and proposes three ways forward: integrating animal welfare into SDG implementation, introducing new targets and indicators, and establishing a dedicated goal on animal health and welfare. We also co-hosted two events to mark the report's release, including an in-person event alongside UNEA-7 in Nairobi.

We sponsored a range of other research projects on environmental and animal protection this year as well. In 2025, CEAP projects made the case for including aquatic animals in food justice

frameworks, and for working toward a global ban on industrial animal agriculture by 2050 via a series of informational, financial, regulatory, and just transition policies. They also examined synergies and trade-offs

Jeff Sebo, Director

between climate mitigation and biodiversity conservation, the animal welfare effects of assisted reproduction technologies used for environmental conservation, and the relationship between endangered plants and butterflies in China.

Additionally, we established the Food Impact Program, a new research and outreach initiative that will launch in early 2026. The program will study the impacts of food production on animal welfare, public health, and the environment, and will explore pathways toward more humane, healthful, and sustainable food systems. Supported by a $3.75 million donation, the program will conduct and support research, host public and private events, engage with decision

makers and the general public, and support students and early-career researchers. CEAP will launch the program at a public event in February featuring a panel discussion and reception.

2025 was also a big year for the NYU Department of Environmental Studies, which houses CEAP. Our department launched an Environmental Studies PhD Program with a JD-PhD option, a Dean's scholarship for our Animal Studies M.A. Program, and the Wildlife Inclusive Local Development (WILD) Lab. We also expanded our faculty, integrated Timon McPhearson's Urban Systems Lab, and released influential books, papers, and reports. And we moved into a beautiful renovated space overlooking Washington Square Park, which will be an excellent new home for our community as we continue to grow.

More generally, 2025 brought notable developments for environmental and animal protection worldwide. Cultivated meat products reached regulatory approval and commercial availability in markets such as Australia and New Zealand. Despite declines in the US, plant-based meat sales increased globally and are projected to continue to increase over time. The resumed COP16 biodiversity talks concluded with an agreement to mobilize $200 billion annually for conservation by 2030. And at the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference, governments committed to establishing some of the world's largest marine protected areas, among other gains.

Still, significant challenges remain. Global meat consumption is projected to rise as well, with poultry consumption alone expected to grow 21% by 2034. The H5N1 outbreak has now affected over 184 million birds since 2022 and continues to spread, yet current strategies focus more on preserving the industry than on reducing its scale. The global coral bleaching event has impacted approximately 84% of the world's coral reefs. While Amazon deforestation has fallen, global tropical forest loss reached record highs in 2024. And in general, political and economic tensions are intensifying, making it harder to address these and other problems.

Amidst these mixed trends, our work continues. On food systems, upcoming CEAP projects will examine methods for estimating the true cost of food production, pathways to ending industrial animal agriculture, and climate effects of regenerative grazing. In urban systems, upcoming CEAP projects will examine how cities can better protect farmed and wild animals, including through a forthcoming book. And in terrestrial and aquatic systems, upcoming CEAP projects will develop non-invasive methods for studying octopuses, survey public attitudes toward octopus farming, study wildlife presence and ecological risk in Nairobi, and much more.

The problems facing humans, animals, and the environment are deeply interconnected, and so are the potential solutions. We are grateful to our team, partners, and funders for supporting work that takes these connections seriously, and we look forward to expanding this work through the Food Impact Program and other initiatives in 2026.

With gratitude,

Jeff Sebo
Director

About the Center

Environmental and animal protection originate from the same sources, but this commonality was obscured for much of the late twentieth century, as the environmental protection movement focused primarily on species conservation while the animal protection movement focused primarily on animal research. Recently, however, the environmental protection movement has started to focus more on climate change and the animal protection movement has started to focus more on farmed and wild animals. As a result, these movements have now partially converged.

MISSION

CEAP provides academic leadership for research and policymaking about critical social issues at the intersection of environmental and animal protection.

Advancing environmental and animal protection in a world reshaped by human activity requires broad changes in values, behavior, governance, and technology. The NYU Environmental Studies and Animal Studies communities produce leading research on these issues, examining how humans affect animals, global health, and the environment; how these global changes affect humans and nonhumans alike; and how new systems of governance can address these issues. Yet much more work on these topics is needed to meet the urgency of the moment.

Established in 2018, the NYU Center for Environmental and Animal Protection (CEAP) is an endowed research center that provides academic leadership for research and policymaking related to environmental and animal protection. We play this role by hosting workshops, conducting research projects, supporting research projects, and releasing policy reports, among other activities. Agriculture and conservation are central themes for our work given their global significance for humans, animals, and the environment, but we examine other themes as well.

Our research has three distinguishing characteristics:

(1) Our research is both rigorous and accessible, maintaining the highest scholarly standards while remaining useful for a wide audience;

(2) Our research builds bridges within academia, examining environmental and animal protection through the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences;

(3) Our research builds bridges beyond academia, establishing connections with researchers and policymakers in both the public and the private sectors.

Our work benefits enormously from our integration into the broader Environmental Studies and Animal Studies communities at NYU. We work closely with an outstanding group of faculty and graduate students in the Department of Environmental Studies as well as with collaborators throughout the university, for instance in the School of Law and the School of Medicine. We also share an administrative team with the NYU Center for Mind, Ethics, and Policy (located in the same department), increasing capacity and efficiency for both centers.

2025 Research

CEAP conducts and supports research on environmental and animal protection by contributing funding, labor, or both. What follows is a list of outputs to which our team contributed in 2025.
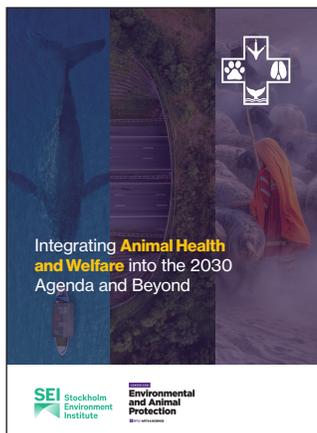
Integrating Animal Health and Welfare into the 2030 Agenda and Beyond
Independent Report

Lead authors:
Cleo Verkuijl (Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) US)
Jeff Sebo (New York University)
Adalene Minelli (New York University)
Katherine Browne (SEI Headquarters)

Contributing authors:
Laura Scherer (Leiden University)
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Michelle Strauss (Birmingham City University)
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Dorien Braam (Praxis Labs and Centre for Existential Risk, University of Cambridge)
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Pamela Frasch (Lewis & Clark Law School, Center for Animal Law Studies)
David Dockterman (Harvard Graduate School of Education)
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Samuel Hazle (Birmingham City University)
Toni Sims (New York University)
Herber Banda-Cruz (NYU School of Law)
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Marybeth Ubanwa (Tailored Food)
Farhan Rhidor (Tailored Food)
Adeline Lerambert (Born Free Foundation)
Giulia Malerbi (Aquatic Life Institute)
Jackson T. Zee (Four Paws International)
Camilla Björkbom (Eurogroup for Animals)

Despite growing recognition of the importance of One Health, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development omits explicit reference to animal health and welfare. This report argues that this omission undermines policy coherence and overlooks critical interconnections between human, animal, and environmental health. Drawing on analysis across all 17 SDGs, it identifies three complementary pathways for integration: strengthening animal welfare consideration in current SDG implementation, introducing new targets and indicators aligned with existing Goals, and establishing a dedicated Goal on animal health and welfare. It also includes a technical supplement that illustrates how the SDGs can be updated with new policy language.

This report was co-sponsored with Stockholm Environment Institute.

Read the executive summary, main report, and technical supplement

Preview Event: Integrating Animal Health and Welfare into the 2030 Agenda and Beyond
November 25 2025, online

We previewed our report at an online event moderated by Henry Mance (*Financial Times*) and featuring experts from academia, civil society, and international organizations. Cleo Verkuijl (SEI) and Adalene Minelli (CEAP) summarized the evidence, arguments, and recommendations from our report; Cristina Romanelli (World Health Organization) discussed the One Health approach and links between animal welfare, biodiversity, and human health; Rebeca García (UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) offered policy perspectives on integrating animal welfare into sustainable development frameworks; and Cynthia Schuck-Paim (Welfare Footprint Institute) discussed methods for measuring and addressing animal welfare impacts.

CEAP co-hosted this event with *Stockholm Environment Institute*.

View a recording of the online preview event

Launch Event: Reinvigorating the Conversation on Animal Welfare and Sustainable Development
December 5 2025, Nairobi

SEI and CEAP launched our report at a special event in Nairobi, hosted by Ambassador Vivian Nain Kuma (Head of Mission at the Cameroon Consulate) and featuring a number of important researchers and policymakers. Cleo Verkuijl (SEI) and Adalene Minelli (CEAP) summarized the main recommendations from our report; Wachira Benson Kariuki (Africa Network for Animal Welfare) discussed interventions for research and policy; Dr. Naphtali Mwanziki (Directorate of Veterinary Services, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Kenya), discussed the role of animal welfare in preventing antimicrobial resistance; and Isaiah Otieno (UNEP) discussed the UNEA mandated report on animal welfare, environment, and sustainable development.

Report authors Cleo Verkuijl and Adalene Minelli at the launch event.

CEAP co-hosted this event with *Stockholm Environment Institute* and *World Federation for Animals*.

SELECT MEDIA COVERAGE

Aktuell Hållbarhet

New report: The global goals miss an important issue
By Anders Hellberg, 12/8/2025

"Animal welfare and health must be given greater priority by all countries in the world, something that could advantageously happen within the framework of the work on the UN's global sustainability goals, Agenda 2030."

CLIMATE LENS
News from Climate, Energy & Sustainability

Animal Welfare Experts Urge UNEA-7 to Embed It in Global Sustainability Goals
By Benjy Kwabe, 12/10/2025

"The report outlines several priority areas where action is most urgent, such as transforming industrial animal agriculture and integrating welfare considerations into conservation and anti-trafficking efforts."

IISD | SDG Knowledge Hub

Missing Piece at UNEA: Animal Welfare in Addressing Triple Planetary Crisis
By Jewel Omollo, 12/10/2025

"These dynamics reveal that today's food systems are profoundly transboundary, linking the environmental and social outcomes of countries situated in opposite regions of the globe. Recognizing these linkages is essential for addressing unequal environmental and social costs and identifying solutions that extend across borders."

LANDETSFRIA TIDNING

Researchers want to include animal welfare in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals
By Hanna Westerlund, 12/17/2025

"The fact that Agenda 2030 lacks goals for animal welfare and animal health endangers human health, environmental protection and social equality, according to the report authors."

Miljö&Utveckling

New report: Animal welfare missing from UN's Sustainable Development Goals – risks public health
By Ebba Kulneff, 12/9/2025

"A new report from the Stockholm Environment Institute, SEI, and New York University's Center for Environmental and Animal Protection, CEAP, warns that the UN's Global Sustainability Goals (SDGs) ignore animal health and welfare."

ScienceAfrica
AFRICA'S LEADING PUBLICATION ON SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

SDGs: Lack of Animal Health Integration Threatens Public Health, Environment
By Duncan Mboyah, 12/10/2025

"The report cautioned that new societal developments, such as artificial intelligence and deep-sea exploration, are rapidly outpacing governance structures, highlighting the need for forward-looking One Health–aligned approaches."

Managing for Climate and Production Goals on Crop-Lands

Nature Climate Change 15: 642–649

Shelby C. McClelland (New York University, Stony Brook University)
Deborah Bossio (The Nature Conservancy)
Doria R. Gordon (Environmental Defense Fund)
Johannes Lehmann (Cornell University)
Matthew N. Hayek (New York University)
Stephen M. Ogle (Colorado State University)
Jonathan Sanderman (Woodwell Climate Research Center)
Stephen A. Wood (The Nature Conservancy)
Yi Yang (Colorado State University)
Dominic Woolf (Cornell University)

This study models the climate and crop yield effects of adopting natural climate solutions on croplands through 2100. It finds that favorable "win-win" outcomes—simultaneous climate mitigation and sustained crop yields—are the exception rather than the norm. When practices are restricted to those that avoid crop losses, GHG mitigation potential drops substantially. The findings suggest that soil management improvements, while valuable, will constitute only a fraction of food system decarbonization—and that reaching climate goals will require closer scrutiny of GHG-intensive foods, including meat.

Read the article here (open access).

SELECT MEDIA COVERAGE

CORNELL CHRONICLE

Study offers insight into balancing climate solutions and crop yields
By Krishna Ramanujan, 5/19/2025

"The predictions will help farmers, policymakers and sustainability professionals mix and match optimal management plans based on location, as different practices will work better or worse depending on local conditions."

TECH EXPLORIST

Study challenges assumptions about climate-friendly farming and crop yields
By Pranjal Malewar, 5/19/2025

"Cover crops, particularly legumes, have been widely promoted for their ability to enrich soil and curb carbon emissions. Yet the study highlights a key tradeoff: while legume cover crops boost yields, they offer far fewer climate benefits than grasses."

Towards a Global Ban on Industrial Animal Agriculture by 2050: Legal Basis, Precedents, and Instruments

Jeff Sebo (New York University)
Emma Dietz (New York University, Weitz & Luxenberg P.C.)
Toni Sims (New York University)

Industrial animal agriculture is increasingly central to the global economy yet imposes significant harms on humans, animals, and the environment, contributing to climate change, biodiversity loss, infectious disease risk, antimicrobial resistance, and other global challenges. Drawing on precedents from international law that regulate activities causing massive, unnecessary, and transboundary harms, this paper argues that a global ban on industrial animal agriculture is both morally necessary and legally and politically feasible. It proposes a pathway toward a ban by 2050, advancing through coordinated informational, financial, regulatory, and just transition policies aligned with broader global sustainability targets.

Read the article here (open access).

Why Aquatic Animals Matter for Food Justice

Chiawen Chiang (New York University)
Jeff Sebo (New York University)

Two recent books, *Healthy Eating Policy and Political Philosophy* and *Food, Justice, and Animals*, offer promising frameworks for food justice. However, this paper argues that these frameworks need to be expanded to account for aquatic animals, given their sentience, diversity, and vulnerability. It examines the global health, environmental, and socio-economic impacts of aquaculture and industrial fishing, and considers whether and how aquatic animals can count as stakeholders and participants in public reason frameworks. It also assesses the rights aquatic animals might hold under food justice theories. Without settling every question, the authors suggest that properly protecting aquatic animals will require rethinking aquatic animal farming and fishing.

Read the article here (open access).

Aristolochia Zhuhaiensis, a Self-Supporting New Species of Aristolochiaceae from Guangdong, China and Notes on *Aristolochia Thwaitesii*

PhytoKeys 254: 61-76

Yifan Wang (New York University)
Zirui Guo (Suzhou Lianhelvyou Ecological Agriculture Development Co.)
Sven Landrein (Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden)
Joyce G. Onyenedum (New York University)
Shuai Liao (Chinese Academy of Sciences)

This paper describes a newly identified plant species, *Aristolochia zhuhaiensis*, and explains how it is closely related to a rare species found only in Hong Kong. Because only a very small population has been found, the new species was immediately classified as Critically Endangered. The paper also highlights the wider ecological importance of this group of plants: close relatives serve as host plants for endangered butterflies, including the protected Chinese windmill butterfly. Since *Aristolochia* plants often have close relationships with butterflies, this discovery shows how identifying and protecting plants can also support insect conservation and strengthen efforts to preserve interconnected ecosystems.

Read the article here (open access).

Phylogenomics of *Aristolochia* subg. *Siphisia* (Aristolochiaceae) Reveals Widespread Incomplete Lineage Sorting and Supports a Novel Pollinator-Filtering Hypothesis

bioRxiv

Yifan Wang (New York University)
Shuai Liao (South China Botanical Garden, Chinese Academy of Sciences)
Zirui Guo (Suzhou Lianhelvyou Ecological Agriculture Development Co.)
Pan Li (Zhejiang University)
Yusong Huang (Chinese Academy of Sciences)
Joyce G. Onyenedum (New York University

This project aims to clarify the identities of several endangered pipevine plants (*Aristolochia*) that have long been misidentified. Using a combination of DNA analysis and close study of plant traits, the research will distinguish five previously unrecognized species that were mistakenly grouped with other plants in scientific studies. These pipevines are especially important because they serve as host plants for protected swallowtail butterflies but are rapidly declining due to habitat loss and illegal trade. By creating a clearer and more accurate classification, the project will support better research, stronger conservation strategies, and improved protection for both the plants and the butterflies that depend on them.

Read the article here (open access).
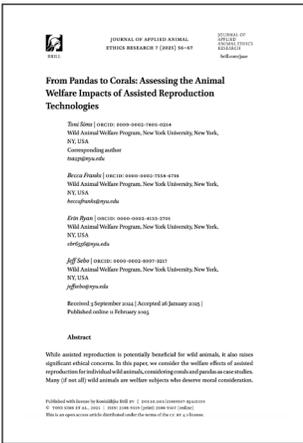
From Pandas to Corals: Assessing the Animal Welfare Impacts of Assisted Reproduction Technologies

Journal of Applied Animal Ethics Research 7(1): 56-67

Toni Sims (New York University)
Becca Franks (New York University)
Erin Ryan (New York University)
Jeff Sebo (New York University)

This article examines the ethical implications of using assisted reproductive technologies (ART) in wildlife conservation. Although ART is often promoted as a tool for preventing extinction and preserving biodiversity, its effects on the welfare of individual animals are frequently overlooked. The chapter argues that many wild animals are welfare subjects and thus merit moral consideration. It analyzes both direct and indirect welfare impacts of ART, including invasive procedures and disruptions to natural behavior, and questions tradeoffs that prioritize species survival over individual animals. In the context of accelerating biodiversity loss and climate change, the article calls for ethical scrutiny to support more just and effective conservation practices.

Read the article here (open access).

Navigating Synergies vs. Trade-Offs Between Climate Change Mitigation and Biodiversity Conservation

npj Biodiversity 4(22): 1-5

Shermin de Silva (University of California, San Diego)
Natalie Jacewicz (University of San Diego)
Karen Kovaka (University of California, San Diego)
Kristy Ferraro (Yale University)
Craig Callender (University of California, San Diego)
Dale Jamieson (New York University)
Aseem Prakash (University of Washington)
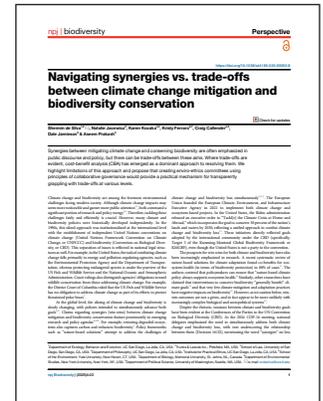
Efforts to address climate change and biodiversity loss are often presented as mutually reinforcing, but trade-offs frequently arise. When they do, policymakers often rely on cost-benefit analysis (CBA) to decide between competing goals. This article argues that CBA is poorly suited to this task because biodiversity is difficult to measure and compare, and because impacts are unevenly distributed. Another option involves creating environmental ethics committees grounded in collaborative governance. These committees would bring together diverse expertise and perspectives to transparently deliberate trade-offs, better address equity concerns, and support more credible environmental decision making at multiple levels.

Read the article here (open access).

One Health and Multispecies Urban Infrastructure

The Cambridge Handbook of One Health in the Law

Jeff Sebo (New York University)
Alisa E. White (Stanford Law School)
Toni Sims (New York University)

This chapter makes the general case for including animal welfare in local policymaking, with special focus on institutional and infrastructural change. It begins by discussing the importance of animal welfare for the One Health framework, along with key questions about animal welfare. It then discusses general principles and policies that can guide cities in building multispecies urban infrastructure. For example, cities can implement bird-friendly building materials, improve road design and operation, provide guidance for incorporating animal shelter and habitat into green infrastructure, and shift their lawn maintenance practices. These and other policies have the potential to benefit humans, animals, and the environment alike.

Read the chapter here (open access).
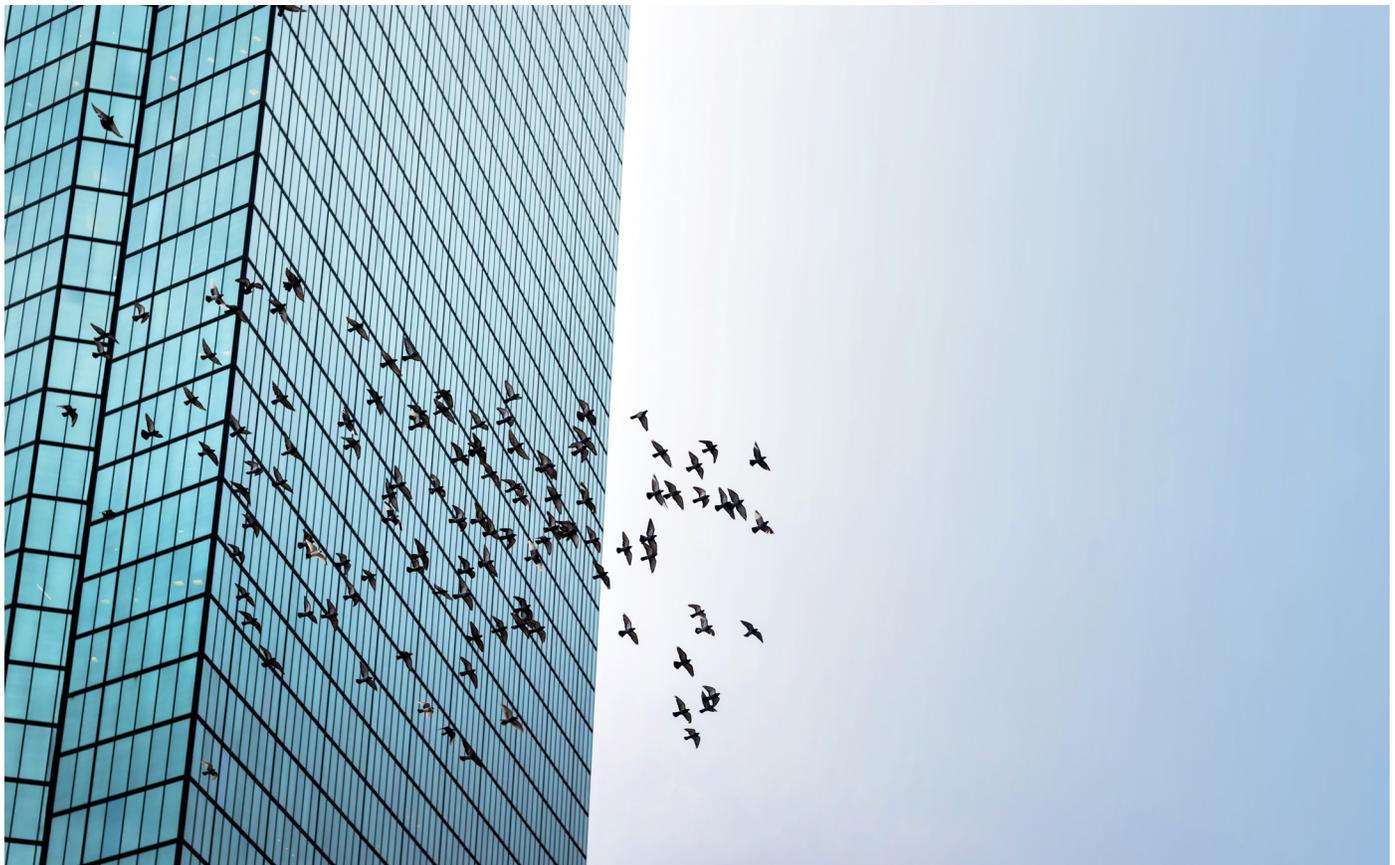
Announcing the Food Impact Program

CEAP is thrilled to announce the establishment of the Food Impact Program, a new research, outreach, and field-building initiative housed within the Center.

The Food Impact Program will provide academic leadership on the impacts of food systems and pathways toward reform. Industrial animal agriculture has fed millions, but it imposes a range of harms on humans, animals, and the environment that rarely appear in impact assessments and policy decisions. Our program aims to fill this gap, serving as an international hub for rigorous, systematic research on food systems.

Our research will be integrative and multi-faceted, drawing from the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences to assess the animal welfare, public health, and environmental impacts of food systems at local, national, and international scales. Central to our mission will be a broad conception of public health and food security that encompasses the health and wellbeing of human and nonhuman animals alike.

The program will involve outreach and field-building activities as well. Our team will engage with decisionmakers and the general public through events, public speaking, public writing, and stakeholder consultation. We will also support students and early-career researchers and policymakers through awards and fellowships; research and teaching resources; and speaking, writing, and networking opportunities.

A generous $3.75 million donation raised by CEAP and the Department of Environmental Studies will fund the first five years of the program, and Matthew Hayek will serve as the inaugural Coordinator. We thank our supporters, department, and broader community for making this program possible, and we look forward to working with you all to significantly scale up our work on food system transformation in the years to come.

Other Highlights

CEAP Director Jeff Sebo published a new book called *The Moral Circle*, which received positive reviews and appeared on *The New Yorker*'s Best of 2025 list. He also did a lot of public engagement; for instance, he published op-eds about banning industrial animal agriculture and building wildlife-friendly infrastructure; he gave multiple talks about AI for animals, among other topics; and he spoke with the media about animal diplomacy, dark sky policies, animal consciousness, welfare assessments, and more.

CEAP Founding Director Dale Jamieson published a perspective in the Brooks Animal Law Digest about the relationship between science and animal protection, tracing a history from early anti-vivisection campaigns through modern consciousness declarations, while cautioning against alliances with anti-science forces. He also published a review of Rob Dunn's *The Call of the Honeyguide* in *Science*, praising its discussion of mutualism while noting it stops short of addressing the ethical questions it raises.

CEAP Executive Committee Members Becca Franks and Jennifer Jacquet co-authored an article with Janelle Kaz and Christine Webb about studying and protecting octopuses on their own terms. They argue that respect for animal autonomy and ecological imperatives is better both scientifically and ethically, since it allows us to improve our understanding of what animals are like and how to protect them. Becca also spoke with Vox for articles about whether fish feel pain and the welfare effects of salmon farming.

Jennifer Jacquet also co-authored articles on the meat industry's early knowledge of climate change, the meat industry's obstruction of climate action campaigns, an expanded evaluation of global fisheries management organizations, and the prevalence of endangered shark trophies in automated detection of the online wildlife trade. She also published chapters on the meat industry's obstruction of climate action and use of a university professor to create, launder, and legitimize ignorance.

CEAP Executive Committee member Yifei Li co-authored an article on everyday oblivion in eco-civilized China, examining everyday environmental sensibilities under China's ecological civilization framework during the zero-Covid period. Drawing on ethnographic evidence in a range of contexts, the authors document a touchless, ultrasanitized, tech-ubiquitous urban experience, and they argue that ecological civilization functions as a denaturalizing and dehumanizing project despite its progressive aspirations.

CEAP Postdoctoral Researcher Shelby McClelland accepted a new position as a PRODiG+ Fellow and Lecturer in the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at Stony Brook University. She also spoke with *CNN* about the future of agricultural productivity and with *Legal Planet* about how industrial animal agriculture risks undermining climate action, critiquing a new FAO report that claims "a "lack of consensus among scientists" about the industry's greenhouse gas emissions.

CEAP Senior Fellow Adalene Minelli—along with Jeff Sebo and Becca Franks—submitted expert testimony in support of state legislation banning octopus farming in Hawaii and Oregon this year. Each letter emphasized that octopuses are highly sensitive and intelligent animals, and that octopus farming carries significant risks for animal welfare, public health, and the environment. The team is tracking pending legislation banning octopus farming in other states as well and will continue this work in 2026.

A recent article in *Science* argues that culling infected poultry is preferable to letting avian influenza spread unchecked. In response, CEAP team members Colin Jerolmack and Jeff Sebo joined CEAP grantee Ann Linder to argue that this framing is too narrow. The deeper problem is industrial animal agriculture itself: Facilities confining stressed birds in cramped conditions create ideal environments for viral amplification and adaptation. Addressing these structural conditions is essential for creating better options.

2025 was a big year for the NYU Department of Environmental Studies, which houses CEAP. Our department established an Environmental Studies PhD Program, a Dean's scholarship for our Animal Studies M.A. Program, the Food Impact Program described above, and the Wildlife Inclusive Local Development (WILD) Lab. We also expanded our faculty, integrated the Urban Systems Lab, and moved into a beautiful new space overlooking Washington Square Park to support our continued growth.

Our partner programs released important research, outreach, and field-building work this year, as well. For example, the Center for Mind, Ethics, and Policy released a number of research outputs, including an article on evaluating animal consciousness in *Science*. They also hosted a number of events, including a talk by Cass Sunstein about a bill of rights for animals, a talk by John Adenitire and Raffael Fasel about constitutional protections for animals, and summits related to animal law and nonhuman consciousness.

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CEAP launched a new website! You can now find us at enviroanimal.org.

Center for Environmental and Animal Protection

Looking Ahead

Here are some upcoming projects that our team is either leading or supporting. These projects are subject to change, and this list is not exhaustive; some projects are not yet ready to share, and we also leave room in our plans to take advantage of additional opportunities as they arise.

Animal Agriculture Accountability Project
In preparation

Ann Linder (Yale University)

This project aims to systematically assess litigation strategies used to address the harms of industrial animal agriculture. It will compile a comprehensive database of past and ongoing cases and analyze which approaches are most effective in achieving legal success, raising public awareness, and improving conditions in practice. Drawing on cases across animal law, environmental law, labor law, consumer protection, antitrust, and related fields, the project seeks to identify promising legal pathways for challenging and reforming industrial animal agriculture.

The Animal City: Why Cities Matter— and What They Can Do—for Farmed and Wild Animals
*University of California Press (in preparation)*

Jeff Sebo (New York University)
Adalene Minelli (New York University)
Alisa E. White (Stanford Law School)

Farmed and wild animals are among the most affected yet overlooked stakeholders in health and environmental policy, and cities are uniquely positioned to drive change as policy innovators and influencers. Despite this potential, urban animal welfare remains underdeveloped. This book shows how cities can improve outcomes for humans and nonhumans through tools such as procurement, infrastructure design, conflict management, emergency response, and public education. Blending rigorous analysis with accessible storytelling, it demonstrates how local policy can integrate animal welfare into mainstream governance.
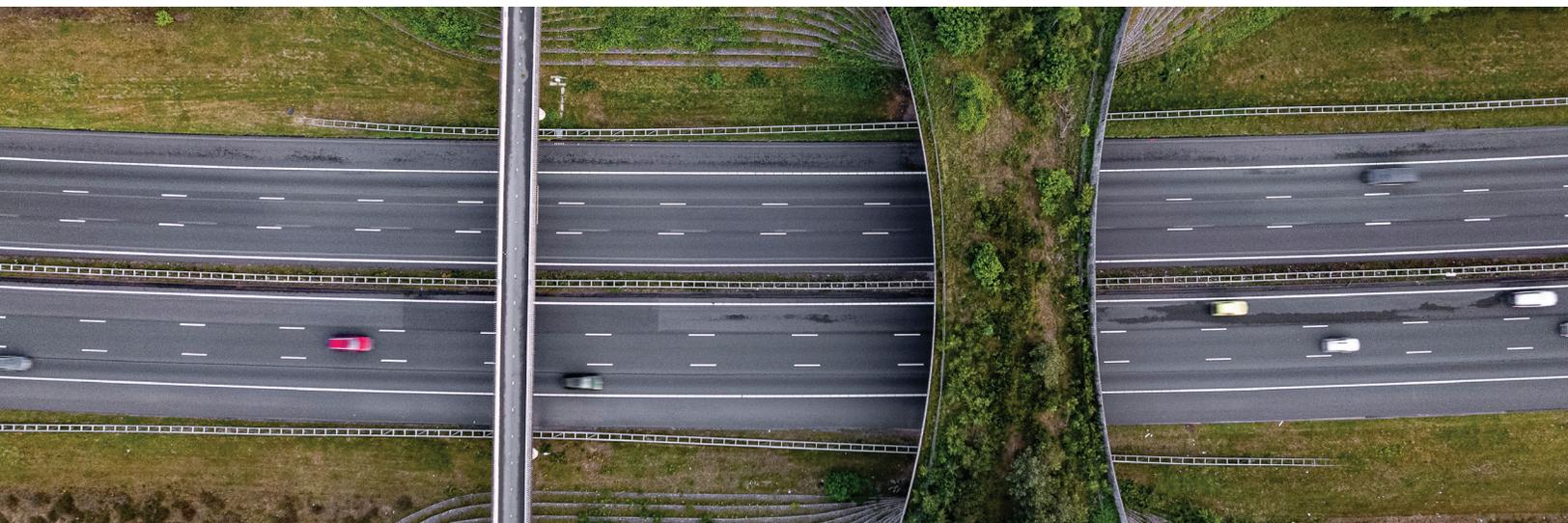
Animal Welfare First: US Pet Owners' Preferences, Knowledge, and Willingness to Pay for Sustainability Attributes in Pet Food
In preparation

Bob Fischer (Texas State University)
Lonnie Hobbs, Jr. (Kansas State University)
Kanyon Alexander (Kansas State University)

The authors surveyed 1,000 US pet owners on sustainability in pet food purchasing decisions. Results indicate sustainability features meaningfully influence product choice, though secondary to price and protein type. Across generations, respondents rate animal welfare as more important than environmental sustainability, yet substantial confusion exists regarding tradeoffs between the two. Willingness-to-pay estimates reveal strong premiums for welfare-oriented claims—particularly third-party certification—relative to environmental claims. These findings suggest animal welfare is the dominant sustainability dimension driving consumer value in pet food.

Animal Welfare in Local Policies on Pest and Conflict Management
Independent report (forthcoming)

Adalene Minelli (New York University)
Jeff Sebo (New York University)
Becca Franks (New York University)
Toni Sims (New York University)
Katrina Wyman (NYU School of Law)
Arthur Caplan (NYU School of Medicine)
Laurie Sellars (New York University)
Viveca Morris (Yale Law School)

This report discusses how cities can manage conflicts with wild animals in a way that protects humans, animals, and the environment at the same time. Drawing on examples where non-lethal methods and preventive measures have been successful, this project outlines strategies to mitigate human–wildlife tensions in urban environments without resorting to inhumane practices. By integrating animal welfare, public health, and environmental considerations, the report guides policymakers toward humane, healthy, and sustainable conflict management policies.

Anticipating Shifts in Consumer Attitudes Toward Insect Production: Sustainability vs. Humaneness
Under review

Bob Fischer (Texas State University)

While discussions of insect production emphasize sustainability, research on consumer attitudes toward livestock reveals that animal welfare concerns often equal or exceed environmental considerations in purchasing decisions. This paper examines trends in consumer attitudes toward farm animal welfare to anticipate challenges to the insect industry's social license, applying those trends to black soldier fly production. As public awareness grows, welfare concerns will likely emerge as a
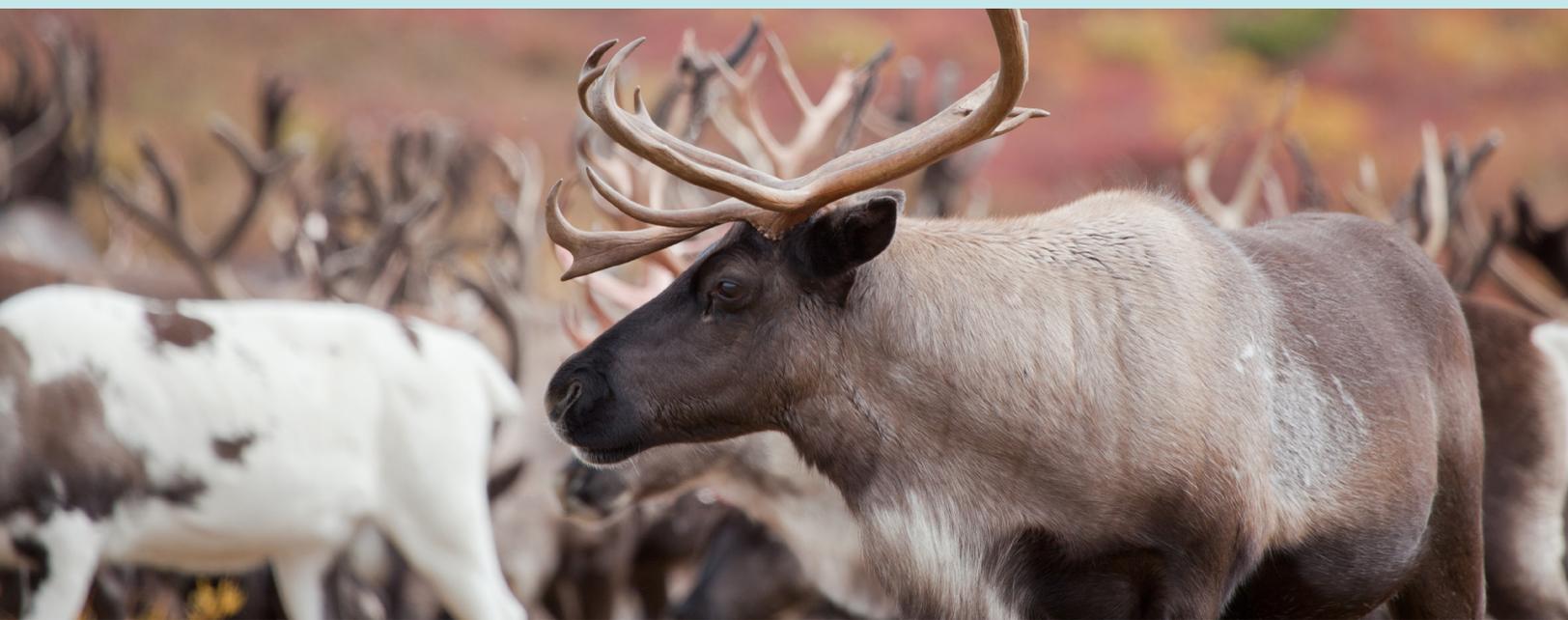
determinant of industry acceptance. Proactively addressing the most emotionally salient welfare issues represents a strategic investment in maintaining consumer trust.

Assessing Drivers of Caribou Stress and Decline Using Non-Invasive Techniques
In preparation

Kristy Ferraro (University of Michigan)
Eric Vander Wal (Memorial University)
Quinn Webber (University of Guelph)

Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) are a keystone species in northern ecosystems, yet their populations are declining due to habitat loss, disease, human disturbance, and climate change. This project uses innovative, non-invasive methods to examine how nutrition, parasites, and physiological stress interact to affect caribou health. Focusing on Fogo Island, Newfoundland, the research explores how these factors contribute to local population declines and how climate change may intensify them. The findings will support more targeted conservation strategies and demonstrate non-invasive approaches for assessing wild animal welfare.

Assessing the Impact of Rapid-Onset Wildfires to Human-Farmed Animal Relationships in Urban Environments
In preparation

Cameron T. Whitley (Western Washington University)
Seven Mattes (Michigan State University)
Beau Jay (Western Washington University)
Kaitlin Barrailler (Western Washington University)
Leslie Irvine (University of Colorado at Boulder)

This study examines how the 2025 Los Angeles County wildfires affected urban farmed animals and their human caretakers, addressing a major gap in disaster research. Using surveys, interviews, and geospatial data, it explores evacuation decisions, access to resources, and emotional impacts on both animals and people. Because farmed animals receive far less disaster protection than companion animals, the study aims to inform more inclusive preparedness policies, strengthen community resilience, and improve protections for animals and caregivers in future climate-related emergencies.

Beneath The Surface: Dewilding Risks in US Shark Tourism
In preparation

Laurie Sellars (New York University)
Becca Franks (New York University)

Sharks face extinction from anthropogenic activities, yet negative human perceptions of them continue to hinder conservation efforts. Shark-centered tourism—sportfishing, ecotourism, and aquariums—claims to aid conservation but may drive dewilding by harming targeted sharks and perpetuating negative stereotypes about them. This project evaluates these industries' treatment of sharks in the US, finding that while some "model" operators exist, many engage in dewilding practices and attitudes. Notably, tourists need not pay more for less harmful activities.

Breaking Down Agricultural Emissions: Climate Pathways through Time and Space
In preparation

Matthew N. Hayek (New York University)
Shelby C. McClelland (New York University, Stony Brook University)

This project—which continues ongoing research on agricultural emissions—examines initial results indicating that making livestock production more efficient through feedlots and feed additives like seaweed will not be enough to meet climate targets. Methane emissions will not decrease fast enough, unless beef and dairy consumption are also reduced. These findings are summarized in a poster for the American Geophysical Union Annual Meeting. The results (subject to change) will be published in a corresponding peer-reviewed paper.

View poster
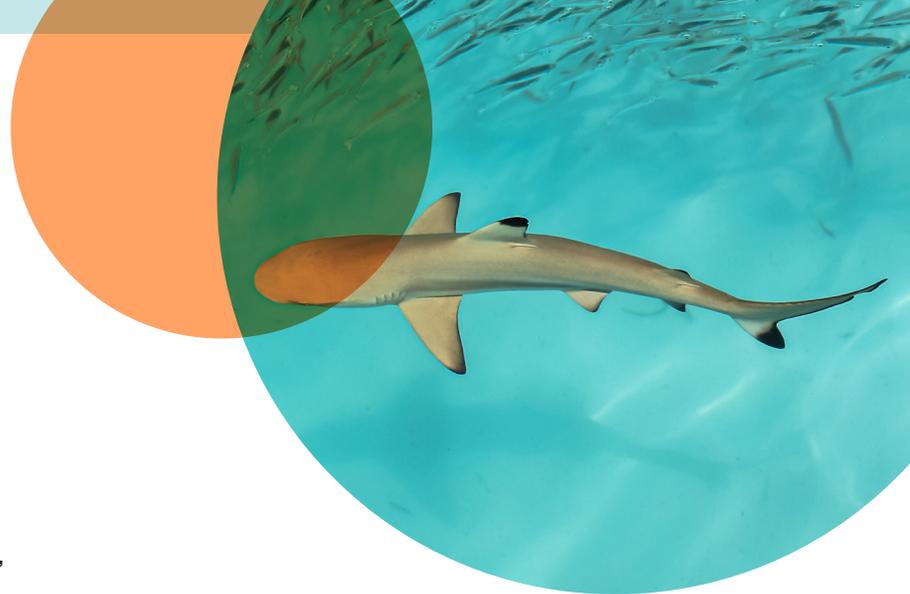
Community Gardens and Grassroots Greening as Havens for Pollinator Diversity and Connectivity in the Urban Matrix
In preparation

Maximiliano Ayala (New York University)
Grace McGuigan (New York University)
Micah Sagar (New York University)
Neo Ng (New York University)
Alissa Kushner (New York University)
Adam Roddy (New York University)
Julia Monk (New York University)

Urban areas have traditionally been overlooked in discussions of biodiversity and agriculture, yet they now house more than half of the world's population and can serve as important ecological refuges. This project partners with a grassroots community garden network in New York City to study how gardens and small green spaces support native pollinators and connect habitats. Using non-invasive camera systems and plant surveys, the research examines pollinator diversity, floral resources, and habitat connectivity across gardens, parks, and micro-green spaces, informing more biodiversity-friendly urban design.

A Comparative Analysis of the Benefits of No-Entry Marine Protected Areas for Wild Marine Animals
In preparation

Gabrielle Carmine (Duke University, Georgetown University)
Jennifer Jacquet (University of Miami)
Patrick N. Halpin (Duke University)

The United Nations has set a goal to protect 30% of the world's oceans by 2030, yet marine protected areas (MPAs) vary widely in purpose and effectiveness. This project compares two rare and highly restrictive MPA types: no-take MPAs, where fishing is banned, and no-entry MPAs, which exclude all human activity. Using global species data from ocean biodiversity databases, the study assesses differences in biodiversity, species richness, and abundance, reframing MPA evaluation around ecosystem health and potential animal welfare rather than fisheries outcomes alone.

Comparing Impacts Across Take, No-Take, and No-Entry Zones in the Florida Keys
In preparation

Spencer Roberts (University of Miami)
Jennifer Jacquet (University of Miami)

Many marine species depend on refuge from human disturbance to survive. While no-take marine reserves are known to support greater abundance and diversity than fished areas, emerging evidence suggests that no-entry zones may offer even stronger benefits. This study examines whether these differences reflect reduced poaching or genuine habitat preferences by analyzing vessel traffic and animal behavior across take, no-take, and no-entry areas in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The findings aim to inform the design of more effective marine protected areas in a rapidly changing ocean.

Cultural Transmission in Fishes: A Systematic Review with Conservation Implications
In preparation

Becca Franks (New York University)
Kim Carlson (New York University)
Chiawen Chiang (New York University)

Conservation science increasingly recognizes the importance of animal culture for effective management, yet its role in fishes remains underexplored. This project synthesizes evidence of cultural phenomena in bony fishes through a systematic review, focusing on traits linked to social learning and cultural transmission. Preliminary results suggest that evidence of cultural transmission is closely tied to research effort and that several species of conservation concern show relevant social traits. This study clarifies how fish culture can inform management strategies and policy decisions.

Domesticating Empire: American Power and the Industrialization of Life
In preparation

Oliver Lazarus (Harvard University, University of Wisconsin, Madison)

This project traces how the US federal government played a central role in transforming animal agriculture into a 70-billion-animal industry occupying 40% of Earth's habitable land. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the US state expanded its powers to stabilize the sector against disease and trade threats, then exported its model of agricultural governance worldwide. The project illuminates how farmed animal life—and the systems sustaining it—spread globally in alignment with US interests throughout the twentieth century.

eDNA detection of Octopus (genus) in South Miami, FL
In preparation

Janelle Kaczmarzewski (University of Miami)
Jennifer Jacquet (University of Miami)

Project InkLink develops ethical, non-invasive methods to monitor *Octopus americanus*, a cognitively complex marine invertebrate with major data gaps. Using environmental DNA (eDNA) analysis of seawater collected by trained citizen scientists, the project estimates octopus abundance at two South Florida sites. The study provides a proof of concept for baseline population monitoring, advances octopus ecology, and supplies evidence to inform nearshore protections. More broadly, it offers a scalable, non-lethal framework for monitoring octopuses and other hard-to-study marine species to support evidence-based fisheries policy.

Ending Industrial Animal Agriculture by 2050: A Policy Roadmap
In preparation

Jeff Sebo (New York University)
Stephanie Feldstein (Center for Biological Diversity)
Mia MacDonald (Brighter Green, New York University)

Ending industrial animal agriculture by 2050 is necessary to address its massive animal welfare, public health, and environmental harms. But what would this transition look like in practice? This project develops a concrete policy roadmap showing what informational, financial, regulatory, and just transition targets different actors must hit by different timeframes to achieve this goal. Drawing on principles of common but differentiated responsibilities, the authors specify how high-income countries can lead while supporting lower-income countries. They also identify coordination mechanisms to keep diverse actors aligned.

Environmental Impact of Cell-Based Meat Adoption: Consumer Substitution Patterns and Market Dynamics
In preparation

Tom Bry-Chevalier (AgroParisTech-INRAE, BETA, Université de Lorraine)
Oliver Frings (AgroParisTech-INRAE, BETA, Université de Lorraine, University of Cambridge)

This project examines the environmental impacts of emerging protein alternatives, including plant-based, cultivated, and hybrid products, by studying consumer substitution patterns. Although alternative proteins can reduce environmental harms, their benefits depend on whether they replace conventional meat or lower-impact foods. Using a discrete choice experiment, the research links consumer substitution patterns with life cycle assessment data and price sensitivities. The project provides evidence on likely market outcomes and offers guidance for policymakers and industry stakeholders seeking to promote more sustainable protein consumption.

The Ethics of Food and the Environment
In preparation

Christopher Schlottmann (New York University)

This book analyzes the environmental dimensions of our food system and clarifies major conceptual and ethical questions in this space, proposing improvements to our value systems that benefit humans, animals, and the environment. This includes characterizing the problem more accurately, identifying assumptions and implicit values that might benefit from explicit analysis, identifying areas of sufficiently strong arguments and areas of uncertainty or weakness, assessing stories and future paths that better account for the features of the current and future world, including high population, climate change, and modern technology.

Extreme Heat, Dying Cows: A Sentinel of Climate-Driven Welfare Risks
In preparation

Carol Ourivio (New York University)
Sonali Shukla McDermid (New York University)
Margaux Alfare (New York University)
Benjamin Lecorps (Bristol Veterinary School)
Lauri Torgerson-White (New York University)
Becca Franks (New York University)

Heat stress poses an urgent, yet not fully understood, problem for cows. There are over 9.3 million cows used for dairy in the United States; and many are experiencing the increased frequency, duration, and intensity of extreme heat events, some lethal. This research examines how heat stress impacts these cows, the effectiveness and sustainability of mitigation strategies, and policy implications. At the intersection of climate science and animal welfare, investigation into the impacts of climate change on cows necessitates the integration of a climate science systems-level approach with a welfare approach that retains focus on the individual animals affected.

Feeling at Home with Animals: Exploring How Bonds with Animals Shape Our Care for the Environment
In preparation

Sally Seo (New York University)
Katherine Compitus (New York University)
Jennifer Vonk (Oakland University)

This project examines how connections with animals can foster environmental stewardship. Drawing on conservation psychology and sense-of-place research, it investigates whether feeling solidarity with animals predicts pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors, and whether place attachment helps explain this relationship. Using mixed-methods surveys and established psychological measures, the study provides new empirical insight into how relationships with animals shape environmental identity and action, with implications for environmental education, conservation communication, and efforts to encourage ecological responsibility.

How Cities Can Manage Human-Wildlife Conflict
The New Era of Animal Policy: The Politics of Welfare in a Changing World (invited)

Adalene Minelli (New York University)
Jeff Sebo (New York University)
Toni Sims (New York University

This chapter argues that cities and other local governments have both an opportunity and a responsibility to manage human-wildlife conflict in ways that protect humans and nonhuman animals alike. It begins by developing guiding principles for interspecies conflict management, including harm reduction, prevention over reaction, and coexistence over control. It then presents a practical menu of local policy options—from animal-friendly infrastructure and land-use planning to improved waste management and public education—that allow cities to move away from reactive, lethal responses and toward proactive, humane ones.

How Cities Can Support a Dairy Transition
Dairy in Transition: A Legal Blueprint for Protecting Animals, Humans, and the Environment (invited)

Adalene Minelli (New York University)
Jeff Sebo (New York University)

Cities are uniquely positioned to drive food system transformation through informational, financial, and regulatory policies. While much attention has focused on meat, dairy production poses similar challenges: significant greenhouse gas emissions and land use, serious animal welfare concerns for billions of cows and calves, and public health risks including antibiotic resistance. This chapter adapts city-level policy frameworks to dairy, examining how procurement standards, labeling requirements, advertising restrictions, subsidies for plant-based alternatives, and zoning regulations can reduce dairy consumption alongside meat.

Integrative Governance in the Wildlife Economy of Zimbabwe
In preparation

Tariro Kamuti (Stellenbosch University)

This study examines Zimbabwe's 2023 Biodiversity Economy Strategy, which promotes a wildlife economy with implications for environmental and animal protection. It analyzes how animal welfare and biodiversity governance instruments, institutions, and actors interact within this approach, focusing on underlying structures, policy processes, and dominant discourses. The study explores how wildlife economy policies are integrated into the mainstream economy and assesses the governance challenges involved in balancing economic objectives with animal welfare and biodiversity conservation.

Introducing Dialogic Care and Consensual Release for Cetaceans
In preparation

Nora Teter (New York University)
Lori Marino (New York University)

This project addresses the failings of the currently prevailing husbandry paradigm for captive cetaceans and introduces the concept of "dialogic care" as the fundamental principle for a new paradigm that includes agency alongside welfare as a primary aim. Unlike conventional welfarist husbandry, dialogic care involves the active participation of nonhuman animals as coauthors of the protocols that govern their care. It thus can culminate in a protocol for consensual release, in which animals are asked whether they want an end to their captivity and see the answer honored.

Public Perspectives on Proposed Commercial Octopus Farming in the European Union and UK
In preparation

Rebecca Niemiec (Colorado State University)
Lori Kogan (Colorado State University)
Andrew Mertens (University of California, Berkeley)
Elena Lara (Compassion in World Farming)
Keri Tietge (Eurogroup for Animals)
Walter Sánchez-Suárez (Independent Researcher)
Jennifer Jacquet (University of Miami)

This study examines public attitudes toward industrial-scale octopus farming, which is being developed in Spain and raises animal welfare, environmental, and public health concerns. Surveys of more than 14,000 adults across 13 EU countries and the UK tested how different factual messages affected public opinion. The results show that most respondents were supportive of, or neutral toward, policies restricting intensive octopus farming, and that educational messages significantly increased support for bans on the practice.

Quantifying the 'Urban Vibroscape' and Its Impact on Insect Vibrational Communication in New York City
In preparation

Adam Roddy (New York University)
Carla Cao (University of Murcia)

Communication is essential to animal survival and wellbeing, yet urban noise increasingly disrupts acoustic signaling. While sound-based communication is well studied, many insects rely on vibrations transmitted through plants and other substrates. This project examines whether urban noise interferes with insect vibrational communication, how communication varies across noisy and quiet environments, and whether insects prefer certain plants as signaling substrates. It also tests whether urban green spaces improve vibrational communication, offering insights into how city design can better support insect communication and welfare.

Regenerative Grazing as a Climate Change Mitigation Strategy: A Systematic Review
In preparation

Docker B. Clark (New York University)
Shelby C. McClelland (New York University, Stony Brook University)
Jasmine A. Dillon (Cornell University)
Matthew N. Hayek (New York University)

Ruminant livestock production contributes significantly to global greenhouse gas emissions, and regenerative grazing has been promoted as a climate solution through soil carbon sequestration and improved animal welfare. This study reviews all regenerative grazing experiments to date and evaluates their evidentiary strength. While reported soil carbon gains vary widely, the highest estimates come from weaker study designs. In higher-quality studies that control for key confounding factors, soil carbon sequestration is not significantly

different from zero, calling into question claims of substantial climate mitigation benefits from regenerative grazing.

Repair
In preparation

Jessica Bardsley (New York University)
Katherine Clary (Independent Producer)
Meredith Zielke (School of the Art Institute of Chicago)
Mike Mansur (Cave Formation Repair Project)

Beneath our feet lies a hidden universe of delicate beauty and ecological importance—cave systems that have taken millennia to form and mere moments to damage. Repair is a short documentary film that follows a dedicated team of volunteer conservationists, led by Mike Mansur, as they work to repair and restore a damaged cave environment in Carlsbad Caverns National Park, revealing both the fragility of these underground ecosystems and the remarkable resilience they can show when given proper care.

Swords of the Med
In preparation

Paul Greenberg (New York University)

Atlantic swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) are pursued by an over-subsidized fleet from 22 nations and are vanishing from the Mediterranean. Worse, this sometimes fifteen-foot predator is shrinking. In fish markets from Catania to Catalunya, the dinner-plate steaks once cut from cross sections have been replaced by meager tapas-sized rounds—evidence that we are not only taking the last adults but eating their young. This article documents the crisis and proposes ways to reintroduce Mediterranean citizens to swordfish as wildlife, not seafood.

Towards a Comprehensive Estimate of the True Cost of Meat
In preparation

Jeff Sebo (New York University)
Bob Fischer (Texas State University)
Matthew N. Hayek (New York University)
Kevin Kuruc (Middlebury College)
Andrew Stawasz (University of Michigan Law School)

Industrial animal agriculture imposes significant environmental, public health, and animal welfare costs not reflected in the price of meat. While some impacts have been studied individually, others remain neglected, and integrated assessments across categories remain rare, risking underestimation of total costs and support for alternatives that reduce some harms while increasing others. This project will synthesize existing research on the true cost of meat, present policy recommendations based on current evidence, and develop a research agenda identifying gaps in knowledge.

Urban Wildlife and Ecological Resilience: GIS Mapping in and Around Nairobi National Park
In preparation

Amina Odhiambo (University of Nairobi)
Samuel Muthoni (Independent Consultant)
Sharon Wooten (University of Nairobi)
James Kariuki (Kenya Wildlife Service)

This project uses GIS mapping to study wildlife presence and ecological risks at the boundary between Nairobi's expanding urban area and Nairobi National Park, a rare savanna ecosystem within a capital city. Using non-invasive tools such as remote sensing, camera traps, and community monitoring, the research identifies key wildlife corridors and high-risk zones where development threatens animal well-being. The resulting maps provide practical guidance for urban planners, conservation managers, and policymakers seeking to balance rapid urban growth with ecological resilience and human–wildlife coexistence.

Our Team

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How Can We Build a Better Food System?
A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

February 6, 2026, 4pm
NYU Silver Center for Arts and Science, Hemmerdinger Hall

With Becca Franks, Matthew Hayek, David Kanter, and Christopher Schlottmann
With special remarks from CEAP Founding Director Dale Jamieson
Hosted by Sonali McDermid and Jeff Sebo

The NYU Food Impact Program will launch with a roundtable discussion between program founders Sonali McDermid and Jeff Sebo and Environmental Studies faculty Becca Franks, Matthew Hayek, David Kanter, and Christopher Schlottmann, with opening remarks from Dale Jamieson. Drawing on perspectives from the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, the discussion will range from how food systems affect animal welfare, public health, and the environment to how individual, corporate, and governmental action can overcome obstacles to reform. We will also have time for discussion with the audience, and a vegan reception will follow for in-person guests.

To RSVP for this and other Food Impact Program events,
please visit the new Food Impact Program website and sign up for our mailing list.

Center for Environmental and Animal Protection

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