

Tab 1

# Amplifying Your Impact for Animals

Dietary choices help animals. Strategic decisions about donations and career can help exponentially more.

## Reframing the Problem

**The core issue is speciesism, not non-veganism.** Speciesism is treating some species as less morally important than others. This matters because it opens up more ways to help animals beyond changing what you eat. Donating to effective charities, volunteering strategically, or pursuing an animal-focused career might reduce more suffering than dietary choices alone. Personal purity and maximum impact aren't always the same thing.

## A Framework: Scale, Neglectedness, Tractability

When deciding where to focus efforts, effective advocates consider three factors:

**Scale:** How many animals are affected by this particular issue, and how much do they suffer? All else equal, the more animals affected, the more worthwhile it is to focus on the issue.

**Neglectedness:** How much attention and resources does this issue receive? Less crowded problems offer more room for impact. Fish make up the majority of farmed animals by number, yet receive disproportionately little advocacy attention relative to their numbers.

**Tractability:** How easy is it to make progress on this issue? Perhaps it's more worthwhile focusing on issues that are easier to resolve that affect the same or larger number of animals. For example, with 6 billion laying hens confined to cages, [corporate campaigns](#) have proven highly tractable with "89% of cage-free commitments with deadlines 2022 or earlier already being completed".

This framework helps identify where your time or money can do the most good.

## The Most Neglected Animals

Most advocacy focuses on farmed chickens, pigs, and cows. Other groups get far less attention:

- **Fish and marine animals:** Over 1 trillion caught annually, representing 90%+ of farmed animals by number. Most die slow, painful deaths with virtually no welfare protections.
- **Insects:** Farmed in the trillions for animal feed and human consumption with no welfare standards, and there's a good chance this number significantly increases in the future.
- **Amphibians and reptiles:** Used in research, food, and the pet trade with minimal oversight.

Focusing on neglected species means less competition for resources and potentially more impact per effort. Where others aren't looking might be where help is needed most.

## Wild Animal Suffering

Most animals live in the wild. Most wild animal lives involve substantial suffering—starvation, disease, parasitism, predation. From an individual animal's perspective (not an ecological one), nature is often harsh.

Organisations like [Wild Animal Initiative](#) explore how we might reduce [wild animal suffering](#) without damaging ecosystems. This seems strange at first—and it's speculative. But if the goal is reducing suffering regardless of species, it's worth investigating whether helping wild animals is possible. This doesn't mean we have clear answers yet, but the scale of impact is enormous.

## Time Horizons: Now vs. The Future

Traditional interventions, like improving farm conditions or advocating for political change, help specific animals now. Long-term interventions—cultured meat research, legal precedent-setting, or making AIs of the future consider animal interests—might help far more animals later, but with less certainty.

The choice depends partly on how you weigh certainty against scale, and present against future animals.

## Keep a Scout Mindset

Approach these ideas with a "scout mindset"—seeking truth over defending current beliefs. This helps navigate complex trade-offs like welfare vs. rights or near-term vs. long-term impact. Ask:

- What's the evidence for this approach?
- What might be wrong here?
- How should views change based on new information?

The animal advocacy space is complex. Reasonable people disagree on priorities and tactics.

## How You Can Help

The goal isn't to do everything—it's to find where your particular skills, resources, and interests can make the biggest difference.

### Your Money: Strategic Giving

Not all animal charities are equally effective. Top-rated charities achieve significantly more impact per dollar than the average animal charities, often 10x or more.

**Where to give:**

- [Animal Charity Evaluators](#) evaluates animal charities and recommends the most cost-effective organisations

- [Farmkind](#) simplifies donating to highly effective farmed animal charities

**Why cost-effectiveness matters:** If Charity A spares 100 animals from suffering per \$1,000 and Charity B spares 10, your donation to Charity A helps 90 more animals. When resources are finite and suffering is vast, strategic giving means dramatically more animals helped.

## Your Time: Career & Volunteering

Your career represents roughly 80,000 hours of work. Choosing strategically might be your highest-impact decision. High-impact animal advocacy careers include research scientists working on cultured meat, policy advocates advancing farm animal welfare laws, communications specialists at effective charities, or earning-to-give in high-paying fields to fund effective work.

### Where to start:

- [Animal Advocacy Careers](#) offers resources, advice, and job boards specifically for animal advocacy careers
- [80,000 Hours](#) provides evidence-based career advice for maximising positive impact, including guides on animal advocacy careers

### Lower-commitment actions:

- Join your local Effective Altruism or effective animal advocacy groups
- Join animal advocacy communities online (e.g. [Hive](#))
- Share evidence-based content or perspectives on the [Effective Altruism forum](#)
- Dedicate a few volunteer hours to high-impact organisations (consequently building high value connections within the movement)
- Check out this [list of animal advocacy resources](#) by Rethink Priorities
- Talk to friends about how they can help (not just through diet) and share this post with them!