



**National Council  
of SPCAs**

**Leaders in Animal Welfare in Africa**



## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**September 2019 to August 2020**



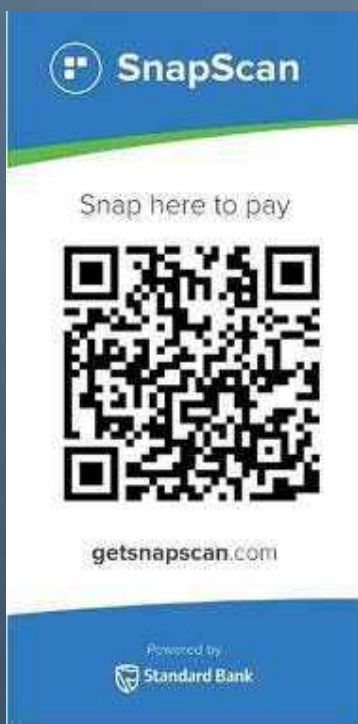
National Council  
of SPCAs

## WE PREVENT CRUELTY AND PROTECT ANIMALS

### CONTACT US

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### ABOUT US

Registration Number : 003-189 NPO

Copies of the Audited Financial Statements are available on request from our offices.

For enquiries regarding bequests or partnering with us on life-changing projects, please contact the Public Relations Officer on 011-9073590 or write to [comms@nspca.co.za](mailto:comms@nspca.co.za)

We are a certified B-BBEE contributor.  
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All donations are tax deductible. Visit our website at [www.nspca.co.za](http://www.nspca.co.za) for easy donation methods.

### BANKING DETAILS

#### Current Account

Account Name	National Council of SPCAs
Account Type	Current
Account No.	201 032 015
Bank	Standard Bank
Branch Name	Alberton
Branch Code	006 405 00

#### Internet Specific Account

Account Name	SPCA National Council of SA
Account Type	Current
Account No.	220 639 744
Bank	Standard Bank
Branch Name	Alberton
Branch Code	102 342 00





National Council  
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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

**"Things are not always what they seem. The Deer is not crossing the road, the road is crossing the forest."**

What a year it has been!

Animal Welfare has been challenged in ways unthinkable. We have an incredible team fighting the battle against animal cruelty. I would like to thank Team NSPCA for the commitment and passion towards our cause and the animals we serve. Our various Units were shifted and shaped in ways unimaginable, yet they continued to warrior forward. We do have exceptional people of whom I am so proud.

This past year brought difficult and uncertain days. We were faced and challenged like never before. In my report last year I mentioned Change, Chance and Choice. We may ask what has changed in the last year. The world has changed. People have changed. The way we show affection towards each other, the ways we communicate and socialise have changed. Lives of animals have changed, not all for the worse. Whether by virtue of ending irreparable suffering, by enriching lives through the channels of education, or by having animals adopted by responsible families, we have made a difference!

What has remained, sadly, is the vicious circle of cruelty. Not even a full lockdown or COVID-19 could stop live exports despite our many tireless efforts. The battle though is ongoing, and never in our text, will it ever read that we gave up. Our various Units continued to push through every day regardless of the challenges that the lockdown brought. The animals had no idea what was really happening in the world, and despite the human suffering and financial loss, that we still and are going to endure, for some animals it brought a tiny bit of relief. Nature had a break as most humans worldwide were homebound. I am forever grateful to the staff that continued to monitor, inspect and serve the animals kept at various institutions.

When people suffer, animals suffer. Our Inspectors were deeply aware of the silent suffering that increased as COVID-19 continued.

The immense task our organisation has is often met with animosity, and we have seen many onslaughts this year, specifically from those that do not have animal welfare at heart, and others that benefit from animal trading. Facing this animosity on a daily basis is extremely difficult, yet we have to keep our focus on the cause. We have to remember what it is we do and who we are doing it for. As an organisation governed by an Act of Parliament, we do not hesitate to enforce the law when all other avenues have been exhausted. Inspectors from the National Council of SPCAs spend so many days of the year between the walls of Court voicing for the ones that have suffered and could not speak for themselves. I salute you all, and I thank you all for not giving up. It is so easy to give up. It is hard to keep fighting but we do.

I am proud to be associated with the National Council of SPCAs and it has been an absolute honour to Chair the Board of Directors for the last three years. I have one year remaining as the Chairperson and I have no intention of giving in or up, and every intention of doing whatever it takes to support and help grow the National Council of SPCAs.

To my fellow Directors, the Management Team of the National Council of SPCAs and all our donors and supporters, thank you for your generous contributions and kindness. I hope and wish that the next year will bring the same kindness to every human that crosses the path of our precious animals.

**THEA SMIT**



**National Council  
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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thea Smit (Chairman)  
Annette Rademeyer (Vice-Chairman)  
Mary Nicolaou (Financial Director)  
Marcelle Meredith (Executive Director)  
Barend Kellerman  
Chris Marufu (Dr)  
J Marston (Dr)  
Victoria McDonald  
Rita McFarlane

Resigned in January 2020



Mary Nicolaou, Marcelle Meredith and  
Barend Kellerman

Thea Smit (Chairman)  
Annette Rademeyer (Vice-Chairman)

Chris Marufu, Victoria McDonald and  
Rita McFarlane

## THE TEAM

For over 60 years the National Council of SPCAs has been protecting our country's animals.

We prevent cruelty, promote kindness and alleviate the suffering of animals.

Our Vision is to end animal cruelty in South Africa and engender compassion for all animals.

## MANAGEMENT

The Management Team is made up of personnel with specialist skills and experience who manage their respective Units :

Marcelle Meredith	Chief Executive Officer
Esté Kotzé	Deputy Executive Officer
Erika Bornman	Animals Ethics Unit
Arno de Klerk	Special Projects Unit
Grace de Lange	Farm Animal Protection Unit
Morgane James	Training Unit, Donkeys and Outreach
Bryce Marock (Dr)	Consulting Veterinarian
Vonny Strachan (Acting)	Society Liaison Unit
Wendy Willson	Special Investigations Unit
Douglas Wolhuter	Wildlife Protection Unit

## INSPECTORATE, ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

The National Council of SPCAs operates with a team of qualified Senior Inspector and Inspectors who are spread across the various Units. Administration and Communications staff members collectively handle administration, bookkeeping, public relations, social media and the fundraising function.





National Council  
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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The greater part of the reporting year has seen the world in the firm grip of the COVID-19 pandemic. The regulations and restrictions introduced by the South African Government to stave off the spread of the virus and mitigate the risk, has affected the livelihoods and the capacity of South Africa's people to provide for their households. All of this has had a knock-on effect on the National Council of SPCAs and how we were able to bring the necessary aid and support to people and their animals. Our responses to the crisis are detailed in the body of the report.

In addition to a struggling investment market which affected our financial status, fighting the virus has required unbudgeted expenditure to protect our staff and to act responsibly with those we come into contact with. We are therefore extremely grateful to the many donors who have assisted financially or with the donation of Personal Protective Equipment for our staff members.

Along with the trials presented by the pandemic, the sad tragedy of the live export of sheep from our shores added to the challenges we faced this year. We have worked relentlessly to stop this major source of suffering for farm animals. Thousands of animals are affected and the cruelty cannot go unchallenged. The actions we have taken to stop the trade in live animals by sea are detailed in several pages of this year's report, and the fight is not yet over. To our committed legal team Adv Kevin Hopkins, Adv Alexandra Ashton, and Dean Wright and Dominique Lloyd of Wright Incorporated – you have all stood shoulder to shoulder with us in this important fight for animals. I also acknowledge with heartfelt appreciation, Animals Australia for their consistent and substantial support. My deepest gratitude to you all.

My special thanks are extended to my whole team of staff members who have remained committed to our mission in protecting animals throughout a difficult year. They have worked long hours, have often faced horrendous cruelty yet they have remained on the frontlines bringing physical relief to animals. Further inroads have been made on the dogfighting front with more raids and successful prosecutions. Working animals have continued to receive focused attention as have animals used in sport. Training is a critical feature of all aspects of animal care and protection and despite the restrictions, we have managed to present some of our courses. The captive lion trade continues to stay at the forefront of the monitoring and inspection process, and this has resulted in prosecutions. In the field of animals used for scientific purposes, we continue to advocate reflection on and the implementation of the 4R principles.

All of our Inspectors are trained to enforce the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 and seeking justice for animals through the courts is often the only recourse when there is deliberate cruelty. The caseload across all Units of the National Council of SPCAs continues to increase with over 100 cases recorded at the end of the reporting period. A staggering 122 days were spent in court during the period under review.

Despite the many challenges, a great deal has been achieved across all the Units in the past months. My appreciation is extended to my Deputy CEO, Esté Kotzé, for her assistance and support in maintaining our focus and addressing the critical issues that affect animals.

In closing, thank you to the Board of Directors for their commitment and giving of their time.

**MARCELLE MEREDITH**



## LIVE EXPORT

In October 2019 the South African Government approved the export of some 60,000 live sheep from East London harbour to the Middle East. The approval was given despite the strong motivation provided by the National Council of SPCAs to the Government to refuse the export on grounds that the welfare of the sheep would be severely compromised if the long-distance transport during one of the hottest months of the year was allowed to go ahead.

The National Council of SPCAs believes that the export of live animals by sea for slaughter is completely unacceptable and unnecessary. Strongly opposed to this abhorrent practice, the National Council of SPCAs called on the public to add their names to a petition to the South African Government calling for a stop to the export of live sheep.

*With a written report detailing the serious animal welfare concerns raised in respect of the live export of animals by sea, and the support of some 81,000 petition voices, the National Council of SPCAs urged the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to make the right decision and send an empty ship home to Kuwait. Our pleas did not result in a compassionate response. Instead, the South African Government gave the go-ahead.*

Determined to act on behalf of the sheep that had been condemned to a horrific three-week journey, Inspectors of the National Council of SPCAs together with some Inspectors from SPCAs in the Eastern Cape undertook inspections at the feedlot where the sheep were being held and at the harbour where the

sheep were loaded onto the vessel, Al-Shuwaikh. The inspections were undertaken under difficult and hostile circumstances, which hindered Inspectors in undertaking their duties.

Inspectors recorded that feedlot animals and animals on the dock were treated in an inhumane manner, and attempts were made to load sick, injured and lame animals onto the vessel. Conditions on board the Al Shuwaikh, included dangerously high ammonia levels on some of the enclosed decks, dirty conditions including faeces in the food and water troughs, and other serious welfare concerns.

These sentient beings apparently meant nothing to the officials and exporters. "Our pleas to treat the animals humanely fell on deaf ears," said Grace De Lange, Manager of the National Council of SPCAs' Farm Animal Protection Unit who was present at the harbour.

Before the vessel's departure, ammonia levels on board were already higher than what is considered safe. With the build-up of excrement which was not removed during the journey, these levels would have increased. Seeing the suffering of these sheep even before their departure was heart-breaking for those SPCA staff members present at the harbour. And a terrible sadness filled the air as the vessel sailed out of the East London harbour carrying its "cargo" of living animals – animals doomed to more suffering.

On their journey of at least 22 days some 57,000 sheep were exposed to:

- High ammonia levels which would have led to respiratory and ocular infections



- Living in their excrement
- Motion sickness
- Overcrowding
- Overheating in high temperatures
- Physical trauma and injuries
- Severe thirst and hunger due to overcrowding resulting in most animals being unable to access feed and water troughs

## ACTION TAKEN BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SPCAs

In November 2019, the National Council of SPCAs laid criminal charges in terms of the Animals Protection Act No 71 of 1962 against the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, as well as Eastern Cape Rural Development and Agrarian Reform, Al Mawashi - the owners of the Al Shuwaikh vessel, who have a company in South Africa, the captain of the Al Shuwaikh, the Page Farming Trust, and individuals from the Page Farming Trust. This following the harrowing days spent at the East London harbour by Inspectors of the National Council of SPCAs in October 2019, when approximately 57,000 sheep were loaded for shipment to the Middle East.

The matter is with the South African Police Services and the investigation is still ongoing.

Since the shipment in October 2019, the National Council of SPCAs attempted to gain information from both the exporters and the Government, regarding plans for the next shipment of animals. This information was not forthcoming. **However, with the number of sheep being held in the feedlot owned by the Page Farming Trust and leased by Al Mawashi in Berlin, Eastern Cape, growing steadily and reaching some 70,000 in February 2020, it became clear that a further shipment was planned.**

## URGENT APPLICATION TO HIGH COURT

In February 2020, the National Council of SPCAs launched an urgent application to the High Court to interdict the intended export by sea of live sheep to Kuwait in March 2020. The matter was set to be heard in the Grahamstown High Court on 28 February 2020.

Sadly, the 70,000 affected sheep were let down in the Grahamstown High Court **when the National Council of SPCAs' application was struck off the roll with costs, due to procedural issues. The National Council of SPCAs thanks Adv Gerrie Nel and our advocates from AfriForum, as well as Matthew Klein, Adv Kustav Weich and Justin Powers for their assistance in this case.**

Despite the unfavourable outcome in the High Court in February 2020, the National Council of SPCAs did not give up on the sheep and continued to take action to ensure that they were at least treated humanely while in South Africa. Attempts were made to

engage with Al Mawashi in the best interests of these 70,000 sheep but an agreement was not reached.

A request from the National Council of SPCAs to have their veterinarian travel with the sheep to the Middle East was declined. This left the National Council of SPCAs with no option but to obtain warrants to ensure that Inspectors had access to the animals during their holding period at the Al Mawashi feedlot in Berlin before loading and at the East London Harbour to monitor the loading of the sheep.

In March 2020, the Al Messilah vessel arrived in South Africa and the National Council of SPCAs had teams ready at both the feedlot in Berlin and at the East London Harbour to monitor the loading of these sentient creatures.

It was an exhausting week for staff of the National Council of SPCAs who worked tirelessly to protect the sheep that were eventually loaded onto the vessel which was destined for Kuwait and Oman. It was an uphill battle from beginning to end - court proceedings, protesters, challenges gaining access to the harbour, and our Inspectors being treated with contempt by the employees, agents, and associates of Al Mawashi, and the Page Farming Trust. Despite all these challenges, as well as knowing what the devastating end for these creatures would be, our team stood tall for the voiceless. We are unsure of the final number of animals loaded on board as the employees and crew were completely uncooperative and hindered our team at every given opportunity. It is estimated that 54,500 animals were loaded.



*A case of animal suffering*

Despite the National Council of SPCAs having an order from the court to inspect the vessel prior to, during breaks and at the end of loading, our Senior Inspectors and Veterinarian were instructed to leave the ship before our inspection was complete after an injured animal was pointed out. It was impossible to intervene under the circumstances, and Al Mawashi acted in contempt of the Magistrate's order.

Due to our team being rushed off the ship, a thorough inspection was not possible. Despite Al Mawashi insisting to the public and the courts that welfare was paramount to their business and that they had employed an "independent" veterinarian who would travel with the animals on board the vessel, no veterinarian was on board.

## A REPRIEVE FOR SHEEP

On 9 June 2020, the National Council of SPCAs was victorious in the Grahamstown High Court after applying for an urgent *interim* interdict against *inter alia*, Al Mawashi and the Kuwaiti company who owns the Al Messilah vessel. The case was heard on an urgent basis, following the unexpected arrival of the Al Messilah vessel, in East London.

The National Council of SPCAs had already applied for an interdict against Al Mawashi and the Kuwaiti company and the application was set down for 16 July 2020 (later postponed until 6 August 2020). When the Al Messilah approached the South African coastline, the National Council of SPCAs and their prestigious legal team acted swiftly to ensure that an urgent application was heard before the loading of some 70,000 sheep destined for the Middle East.

Judge Jaji, ruled in favour of the National Council of SPCAs, confirming the *interim* interdict against Al Mawashi and the Kuwaiti company, together with an order for costs (in favour of the National Council of SPCAs). This *interim* interdict was in place, pending the hearing on 6 August 2020. Al Mawashi and the Kuwaiti company could not transport any sheep from the feedlot, nor export any sheep from South Africa, pending the outcome of the Court hearing in August 2020. Although the fight was far from over, we were overjoyed with this victory.

## NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SPCAS REFUSES TO ABANDON SHEEP

The National Council of SPCAs is both disappointed and horrified to confirm that the outcome in the High Court to interdict the impending live export by sea to the Middle East, was not in favour of the 56,000 sheep.

On 25 August 2020, Judge Dukada handed down an order, allowing the Kuwaiti exporters, Al Mawashi and KLTT, to export no more than 56,000 sheep over the equator on the Al Messilah vessel in the hottest month of the year. Furthermore, Judge Dukada ordered that the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development must monitor the loading process and provide reports to the Court – this is the same Department that the National Council of SPCAs has laid animal cruelty charges against in previous shipments.

The order stated that reasons for the Judgment would be provided on or before 15 September 2020.

The glaring issue in the order is that it does not protect the animals from heat stress and other cruelty that takes place on these ships, which is the reason that the National Council of SPCAs brought about an application in the first place.

The Judge ruled that no more than 56,000 sheep could be exported on the Al Messilah livestock vessel and the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development was ordered by the judge to monitor the entire process starting with the removal of the sheep from the Castledale Feedlot, the loading onto the Al Messilah vessel, and the planned transport of the sheep to Kuwait with specific reference to the prescripts contained in the OIE Chapter 7.2 *Transport of Animals by Sea*.

Under the watchful eye of a contingent of SPCA Inspectors, the loading of the sheep from the feedlot to the harbour commenced on 30 August 2020 and ended on 1 September 2020. Numerous contraventions of the Animals Protection Act as well as violations of the OIE Standards were recorded. Criminal charges have been laid by the National Council of SPCAs.

The vessel departed from the East London Harbour on 3 September 2020 but did not make its way to the Middle East and instead went in the opposite direction and bunkered just outside the Port of Port Elizabeth to refuel on marine diesel and oil. The vessel only left the area on 5 September 2020 at approximately 17:55.

"We are devastated for the 56,000 sheep that will have to endure this treacherous journey. The undeniable cruelty that takes place on these voyages is simply unacceptable. We will not give up and we will continue to fight this," said Marcelle Meredith, Executive Director of the National Council of SPCAs.

## BALANCE OF CONVENIENCE SUPERSEDES ANIMAL WELFARE

On 15 October 2020, exactly a month later than promised, the National Council of SPCAs received long-awaited correspondence from the Grahamstown High Court. This included the "reasons" for the National Council of SPCAs' Part A application being set aside on 25 August 2020, resulting in the Al Messilah livestock vessel leaving South Africa in September 2020 with some 51,000 sheep and 650 cattle.

In his 20 pages of written reasons, Acting Judge Dukada quoted countless case law extracts and he further stated, "*Significantly, the regulatory authorities at the times they inspected the sheep did not raise any queries.*" This begs the question, why would the regulatory authorities raise any queries when animal welfare is not their mandate?

Acting Judge Dukada ultimately surmised that the National Council of SPCAs' allegations of what transpired in 2019 concerning violations of the Animals Protection Act, No. 71 of 1962 were not reasonably likely to recur in 2020. This conclusion was reached despite the fact that the National Council of SPCAs laid further



criminal complaints regarding the September 2020 export which leaves one confused by Acting Judge Dukada's findings.

Nevertheless, Acting Judge Dukada's primary reason for permitting the most recent export of sheep relates to a balance of convenience – this balance being between the financial loss that could be suffered by the respondents should the export be prevented *versus* that of the welfare of the exported sheep.

The Judge stated, *"It cannot be gainsaid that the First and Second Respondents have already suffered substantial damages for the delay in transporting the sheep by ship from East London Harbour to the Equator. In their answering affidavits, the First and Second Respondents mentioned a financial loss of R139,431,135,14 per day incurred since 9 June 2020 in order to maintain the 70 sheep at the Castledale Feedlot; and approximately R591,000,00 per day incurred to keep the MV Al Messilah in the East London Harbour since June 2020."* (sic).

Acting Judge Dukada further stated that *"the NSPCA has placed great reliance on heat stress which causes extreme cruelty to the sheep. There is a serious dispute of facts between the parties as to whether the heat stress is avoidable by modern technology"*.

Our legal team believes that our papers in comparison to the respondents are more comprehensive and are higher in evidentiary value, as recognised by the late Judge Jaji and Judge Bloem, who heard and granted the previous interim interdicts. There was an overwhelming amount of evidence submitted and this caused the court papers to exceed 2300 pages.

Interestingly, Acting Judge Dukada stated, *"The main problem with the case presented by the NSPCA is that it has ignored the Terrestrial Animal Health Code (2019) published by the World Organisation for Animal Health of OIE – chapter 7.2 of the OIE Standards Transport of Animals by Sea."* (sic).

The primary legislative framework relating to animal offences within South Africa is the Animals Protection Act, No. 71 of 1962. The Judge however deferred to "international law" or guidelines declaring that South Africa is bound by it. It is, however, perplexing as it is not even recognised as such by the international body that developed and maintain these guidelines.

The application was not dismissed nor granted, it seems to have been an impractical compromise and therefore, the National Council of SPCAs' legal team launched an application for leave to appeal. Leave to appeal was, however, not granted by Acting Judge Dukada. The National Council of SPCAs' legal team has approached the Supreme Court of Appeal and this has been registered with the Registrar.

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*"We are disappointed that the company's financial loss superseded the suffering of the 51,000 sheep that were transported over the equator at the hottest time of year – a financial loss that could have been completely avoided as the company knew well in advance that the National Council of SPCAs intended to bring about High Court proceedings. It is unacceptable that animals suffered in the name of money"* said Grace de Lange, Manager of the Farm Animal Protection Unit.

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The National Council of SPCAs is still pursuing the outright ban of the live export of sheep from South Africa across the equator.



## THANK YOU

The National Council of SPCAs extends its appreciative thanks to our prestigious legal team consisting of Adv Kevin Hopkins, Adv Alexandra Ashton, and Dean Wright and Dominique Lloyd of Wright Incorporated for their dedication and expertise. We also express our gratitude to Animals Australia for their consistent and substantial support.

Our heartfelt appreciation to our donors for their generous donations towards the costs involved in pursuing legal action to protect these sheep. It has been a long and costly exercise but we will vigorously pursue an end to this cruel trade.

Together with our compassionate supporters we did not stand idly by and let the perpetuation and growth of this cruel and brutal trade go unchallenged. We stood together against animal cruelty and we stand united now in promoting the compassionate treatment of animals and the end to the live export of animals from our harbours!



## REACHING OUT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As an essential service provider, the National Council of SPCAs continued to undertake duties around the country during Lockdown to ensure the welfare of the animals we serve.

### ANIMAL WELFARE RECOGNISED AS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE DURING NATIONAL LOCKDOWN

In terms of the definitions in the Government Gazettes issued in March 2020 at the beginning of the South African Lockdown, the National Council of SPCAs and SPCAs around the country were classified under the heading “*essential animal welfare and emergency veterinarian services*”.

The pandemic literally changed the face of our organisation with our Inspectors strictly adhering to safety protocols and wearing facemasks to assist with preventing the spread of the virus.

Following the announcement by President Cyril Ramaphosa regarding the mitigating actions and restrictions sanctioned by the Government, the National Council of SPCAs strategised on how best to deal with the crisis within the restrictions. Internal strategies were implemented to ensure the safety of staff and to cope with the COVID-19 disaster which is seriously affecting our country’s people and its animals. For the early days of the lockdown working from home became the norm but Inspectors from all of our operational units continued to undertake field

inspections to ensure the welfare of farm, wild and domestic animals.

Despite a plea to Government in April 2020 for consideration that animal welfare be considered as a group deserving of relief





measures, none were forthcoming. The National Council of SPCAs has had to cope with the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) and sanitiser with limited funding. We were therefore very grateful for the donations of facemasks, PPE and sanitisers received from various individuals and companies. We are also truly thankful for the generosity of our supporters who have donated so generously during the months of lockdown. Just saying thank you hardly seems adequate for the tremendous support we have received.

## COVID-19 COMMITTEE

The National Council of SPCAs' COVID-19 Committee, which was established to coordinate affairs related to the changes brought in during the various stages of the lockdown, has been invaluable.

This has included workplace management and requirements for personal protective equipment.

Many documents and evaluations were conducted on the situation at SPCAs around the country and the committee has guided SPCAs on the risks and mitigations in their fields of operation.

obtained and all the safety procedures had to be followed which were vitally necessary but also time-consuming.

During the initial lockdown when movement was very restricted some of the donkey cart owners tried to carry on as normal with their business of transporting building materials and goods. However, police and army roadblocks also stopped the donkey carts and they were warned and sent home. The only carts allowed to work were those transporting essential items such as water, food and taking people to clinics. The benefit of this was that so many donkeys had a brief respite from the never-ending work schedule.

During the Level 5 lockdown, we still responded to emergency calls for donkeys in need of urgent assistance but had to be mindful of the safety of our staff. Of course, we took the necessary safety precautions and ensured our staff wore masks at all times to protect them. Unfortunately, owners very seldom followed safety regulations and when our staff had to work up close with owners (such as during treatments) then they gave owners masks to wear as a safety precaution. All of these requirements, of course, have added strain on staff and this has been an emotionally draining time.



The public was also advised that there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be transmitted from domestic animals to humans and cautioned the public not to rely on news spread on social media but to instead research information through reliable sources. One of our greatest concerns was that members of the public would believe that animals can transmit the Coronavirus and abandon them – we worked with all of our SPCAs on social media to try and guide the public. With it being unclear whether or not the virus is transmissible from wild animals to humans, the public was strongly discouraged from interacting with wild animals – not only for ethical reasons but now also for health reasons.

No-one knew the effect that COVID-19 would have on our country and how to handle these unknown challenges. We had to act rapidly and strategise to try and prepare for the worst-case scenario and put measures in place to protect animals across the country.

One of the new challenges we faced was the travel restrictions on personnel. As essential service providers, our staff were not only operational but travelling across provincial boundaries to respond to calls of animals in need. The necessary documentation had to be

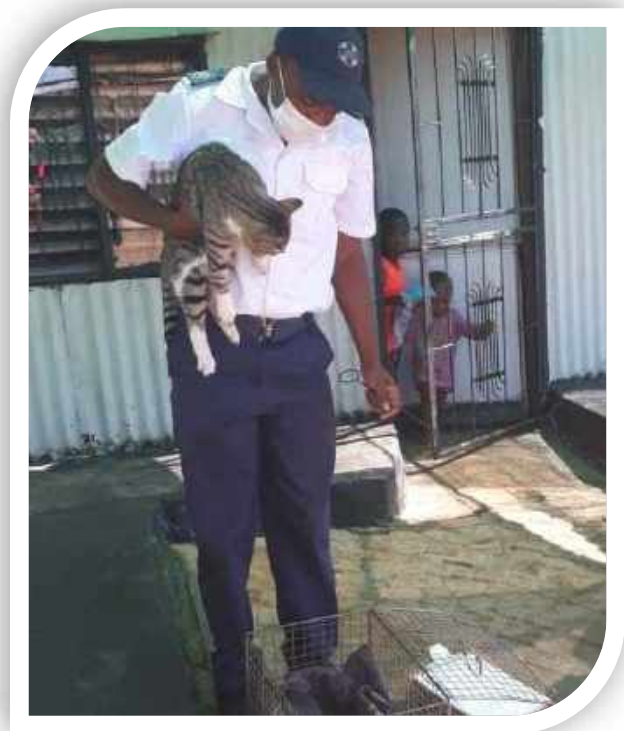


Another significant setback has been the closing of schools and our inability to reach the youth on a large scale. We now are limited to working only with children directly involved with the caring for the family donkeys and only spend the necessary time with them for safety reasons. Only when it is safe to do so will be back with our schools' groups but sadly this may only be much later in the year.

And then the lockdown was extended and we had to again re-strategise and prepare for even more challenges. The economic impact and loss of jobs have had ripple effects that have negatively impacted animals. Many owners who are now without work and income have reached out for help.

Sadly though across the country there has been an increase in pets being relinquished because owners simply cannot afford to care for them as jobs have been lost – we have been there to provide a safe haven for them. This has caused great financial strain and also enormous emotional strain on our staff.

We deployed Inspectors across the country to deal with specific crisis areas – to step in where personnel at SPCAs were sick or absent and in areas where there was no one to help.



In some cases, we have been able to provide emergency food and veterinary relief to animals – a short term solution while people were waiting to get back to work.

Despite all the challenges we have faced during this COVID-19 pandemic we have carried on reaching out across the country and our staff have been on the front line proudly serving. We were the lifeline for many and the communities were so grateful for the assistance.





**National Council  
of SPCAs**

# **WE PAY TRIBUTE TO OUR EVERYDAY HEROES**

So much has been written in the press and on social media about the unsung heroes of the pandemic. Our Inspectors need to be added to the list of these special individuals who risked their lives to ensure the welfare of others.

Inspectors pledge to uphold the law and to protect ALL animals and treat them with compassion and kindness at all times.

This team of dedicated animal welfarists continue to undertake their daily duties in difficult circumstances with the additional pressures associated with this uncertain and frightening time.

We applaud them for their compassionate hearts and caring hands and for reaching out to animals in need of help, rescue and protection.





National Council  
of SPCAs



## LAW ENFORCEMENT

The National Council of SPCAs works proactively to uplift the welfare of animals in this country and ensures that the protection animals have under South African law is upheld and respected.

Our Inspectors play a critical role in enforcing the Animals Protection Act No. 71 of 1962.

# Protecting Animals

## ABOUT OUR INSPECTORS

The functions of an Inspector are broad-based, requiring commitment, the ability to be objective and the willingness to learn. The Inspector has a critical role in animal welfare, and carries out a variety of functions from sensitising children to compassion for animals to educating members of the public about the correct animal handling and care; to inspecting circuses and wildlife facilities, abattoirs and sale yards; and rescuing animals or investigating and laying criminal charges against people who have perpetrated deliberate or negligent acts of cruelty.

The National Council of SPCAs believes that all animals deserve the same level of care and compassion and Inspectors deliver the same high standard of service and protection to every animal they work with from snakes and fish to sheep and jackal.

We are involved in all fields where there are animals and strive to improve the lives and welfare of animals through education and law enforcement.

## ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN FOR ANIMALS IN THE PAST YEAR

Each of our Operational Units, which handle specific portfolios, undertake investigations of animal cruelty. Inspectors also work proactively to improve the welfare of animals in the areas in which they operate by undertaking inspections. Please see the individual Unit reports for more detail on their actions for animals during the period under review.

## Warnings and Notices

Suggestions for improvements to living conditions and diets are provided and warnings are issued when more serious matters are encountered, such as the need for improving hygiene or providing veterinary treatment.

During the period under review, 410 warnings, notices and letters of requirements were issued for improvements to living conditions and standards of animal care.

## Successful Prosecutions

Justice for animals was achieved with eight successful prosecutions during the reporting period.

## Pending Cases

A further 102 cases are awaiting finalisation through the judicial system. These cases related to equine, farm animals, wildlife and domestic animals.



# Farm Animal PROTECTION UNIT

Inspectors working in the Farm Animal Protection Unit share a simple common purpose – to ensure that farm animals are treated humanely. Determined action is undertaken on a daily basis by bringing physical relief to many individual farm animals and working towards progressive change to ensure the future wellbeing of farm animals. This includes meeting with magistrates, prosecutors, advocates, universities, the Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development, the National Stock Theft Forum, the National Disaster Management Advisory Forum, the Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee, South African Ostrich Business Chamber and other industry role-players.

The National Council of SPCAs is strongly opposed to farming practices which cause suffering or distress to animals.

Farm animals across the world are farmed for their eggs, meat, skin and milk. These animals are usually farmed intensively and confined in crates, cages and pens, often unable to turn around or lie comfortably. Animals that are farmed are often subjected to painful mutilations deemed necessary by industry.

Farmed animals remain the most exploited and abused animals in the world. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that, these days, farmed animals endure a kind of hell on earth. Ending the suffering of farmed animals in today's world is a moral imperative, and although these truths may be difficult to bear, it is through awareness that positive change can be achieved.

As part of its actions for animals, the Farm Animal Protection Unit conducts physical inspections of all farmed animals, interacts with governmental departments and the relevant industry role-players. The Unit pushes for Regulations and the development of National Standards through the South African Bureau of Standards to promote the welfare of animals. Standards and regulations are used as supporting documents for contraventions of the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962.

## STANDARDS UNDER DEVELOPMENT

The Farm Animal Protection Unit remains involved with the development and review of National Standards. The Poultry Welfare Standard, Rabbit Welfare Standard and revision of the Crocodiles in Captivity Standard are all currently under development.

## REGULATIONS

The Farm Animal Protection Unit is currently working on new draft regulations for the slaughter of rabbits and crocodiles in abattoirs. However, progress this year has been slow due to the restrictions related to the COVID 19 pandemic.



## AFRICAN SWINE FEVER

In July 2020 a case of African Swine Fever was reported in Heidelberg, Gauteng. The Farm Animal Protection Unit monitored the humane euthanasia of over 150 pigs. There is no treatment or vaccine and pigs suffer tremendously. The disease is currently suppressed with no new outbreaks reported.

## LIVE EXPORT

An extraordinary amount of time has been spent by Inspectors from the Farm Animal Protection Unit in dealing with the export of live animals by sea. See page 4 for detail of the action taken by the National Council of SPCAs to stop the animal suffering which goes hand in hand with this cruel and unnecessary practice.



## GENERAL INSPECTIONS

The Farm Animal Protection Unit has experienced a very challenging year. In March 2020 the President declared the coronavirus pandemic a national disaster. Restrictions resulting from the pandemic put a strain on routine/pro-active inspections being conducted by the Unit as the safety of staff was paramount. The Unit however pushed on, responding to complaints and inspecting facilities whilst exercising extreme safety precautions.

Farm Animal Protection Unit Inspectors operate nationally and undertake random, proactive inspections. All complaints received are also fully investigated. During the period under review, 782 inspections were undertaken around South Africa to ensure that the welfare of farm animals was not compromised. Facilities inspected included:

abattoirs, feedlots, poultry farms, hawkers, sale yards, dairy farms, pounds, pig farms, correctional facilities, rabbit farms, crocodile farms, cull outlets, aquaculture farms, petting farms, alpaca, mohair and agricultural farms.

Appropriate action was taken to address any welfare concerns encountered during inspections. This action included recommendations for improvements as well as warnings to correct shortcomings.

Where contraventions of the Animals Protection Act No. 71 of 1962 were encountered charges were laid. Seven new cases were registered with the South Africa Police Services and convictions were secured in respect of two people who were found guilty of animal cruelty.

The Farm Animal Protection Unit has a further 31 cases pending finalisation through the legal system. This includes the Thandi Modise case. Ms Modise, the current Speaker of the National Assembly, appeared in court for the first time in July 2019 on charges of animal cruelty. The case is being privately prosecuted on the National Council of SPCAs' behalf by AfriForum and has been postponed on several occasions. The trial was set for 24 – 26 March 2020 but Ms Modise failed to appear. The matter was subsequently postponed until 1 July 2020 but due to COVID-19 pandemic, the case has been rescheduled for 1 - 3 December 2020.

## AQUACULTURE

Aquaculture is a portfolio that falls under the Farm Animal Protection Unit. The Unit is concerned about the use of gill nets and the permits that are being issued. Meetings were held to discuss this with the Assistant Director: Pelagic and High Seas Fisheries Management at the Western Cape Department of Agriculture. The use of gill nets is currently being researched as the National Council of SPCAs believes that the capture process causes severe suffering and alternatives should be used.

The Unit continues to work on addressing the various stunning and slaughter methods being utilised, high stocking densities at farms and harvesting methods.



## QURBANI

The annual religious celebration of Eid-ul-Adha (Qurbani) was held nationally from 31 July and continued until the 2 August 2020 by the Muslim community. Thousands of animals including sheep, goats and cattle were slaughtered. There were no reports of camels being slaughtered this year. Again, Inspectors of the National Council of SPCAs were faced with sights of unimaginable cruelty. Some staff members also dealt with threats of physical violence at one of the sites.

The Farm Animal Protection Unit continues to advocate for humane handling and slaughter practices.



# Animal Ethics UNIT

Animals used in research, teaching and training must receive humane and compassionate treatment at all times. The Animal Ethics Unit promotes measures that will replace animals, reduce the number of animals used for research, and refine experimental methods and procedures to ensure the most humane treatment possible for animals that are used for scientific purposes.

## ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEES

The Animal Ethics Unit represents the National Council of SPCAs as the Category C (welfare representative) member on 46 Animal Ethics Committees nationally. Not only does the Unit attend meetings to review protocols, but we also advise on procedural matters such as administration, communication and responsibilities of Ethics Committees that need to be aligned with the SANS 10386: *The Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes*.

A total of 208 Animal Ethics Meetings were attended during the period under review.

## RESEARCH APPLICATIONS AND PROTOCOLS REVIEWED

Research protocol applications, standard operating procedures, terms of reference and other additional documentation are under constant review, and most of the Unit's time is spent ensuring ethical science and good animal welfare through our processes. In addition to research applications, researchers submit morbidity and mortality reports, progress reports and correspondence, all of which need to be reviewed by the Unit to remain up to date with the status of the animals in the animal units and updates on active protocols. The Unit regularly consults with other units of the National Council of SPCAs to assist us in giving the correct and most recent updates when advice is provided on facilities such as farms and wildlife institutions.

We reviewed a total of 1,900 animal research protocols during the year, a process which represented 1,600 hours of work.

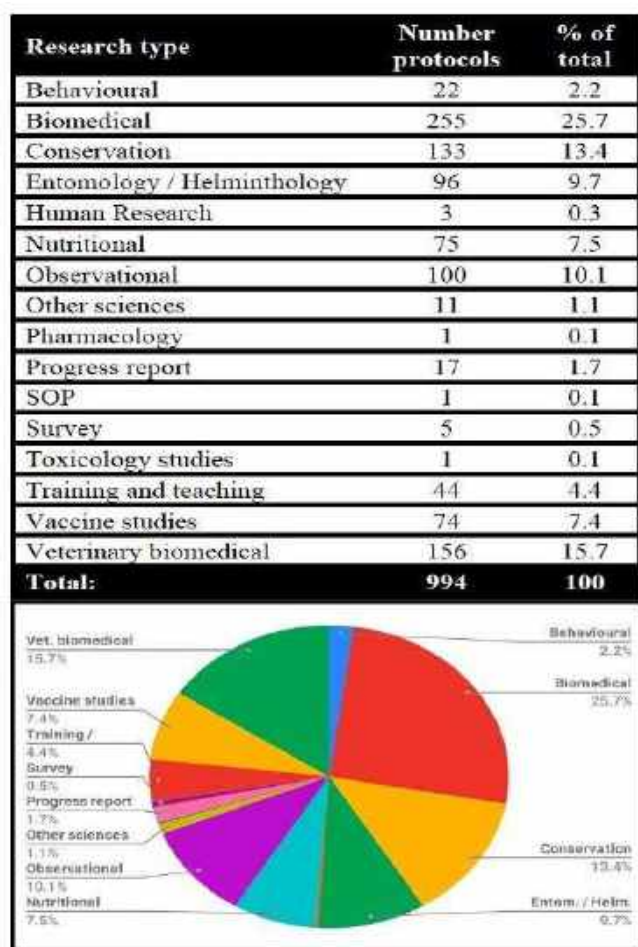
## ANIMAL USED FOR SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES

Approximately 135,000 animals were used for scientific purposes in the past year. The National Council of SPCAs is the only welfare organisation that keeps a close eye on animal use statistics. We are in the position to produce very accurate numbers because of our involvement with Animal Ethics Committees countrywide.

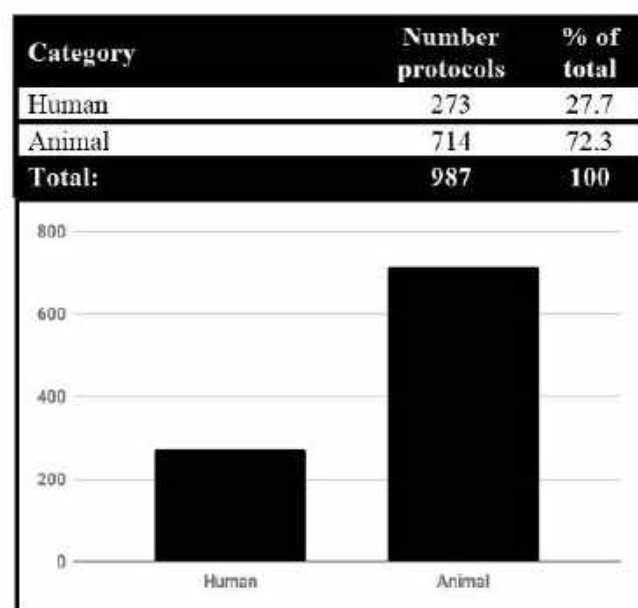
Our main goal, however, remains finding alternatives to animal research and our involvement in these committees in no way justifies the use of animals.



The table below presents an analysis of protocols by research type. The largest category was biomedical (25.7%), followed by veterinary biomedical (15.7%), conservation (13.4%) and observational (10.1%).



Animals remain the primary beneficiaries of scientific studies on animals. The graph below shows that the majority of research protocols (72.3%) involved research intended to benefit animals, often in the context of their conservation.



## INSPECTIONS

Inspections are conducted in accordance with SANS 10386: *The Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes*. Inspections include, but are not limited to, housing, husbandry, handling and the health status of the animals at research animal facilities. Not only does the Unit conduct routine inspections, but we also do follow-up, pre- and post-approval, animal ethics committee inspections and complaints. The Unit carried out 208 inspections during the reporting period.

79 warnings/notices/requirement letters were issued during the period under review.

## THE EFFECT OF SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) ON ANIMALS USED FOR SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES

The effect that Covid-19 has on animals that are used for scientific purposes cannot yet be determined during the lockdown but the Unit took the initiative of conducting a survey of animal research facilities to evaluate the effect of the pandemic on the status of animals, humans and the potential for using alternatives during this time.

The lockdown restrictions made it very challenging to proceed with normal day-to-day tasks and it is not only people that are affected but also animals. Most institutions were commended on proactively implementing measures to ensure the wellbeing of the animals in their care. The lockdown affected facilities in different ways. Some had to re-evaluate the housing and care of laboratory animals and others had to reduce their number of animals drastically. A questionnaire was sent out to research facilities, with feedback received from 29 facilities. The survey revealed the following :

- A major reduction in the number of new applications submitted.
- The advent of Covid-19 has promoted the use of alternatives, especially in the training and teaching field. There is a growing realisation that online teaching will become more of a reality in future instead of using animals. Unfortunately, many institutions appear not to have yet considered using methods other than animals for their research.
- Around 50% of facilities decreased their animal breeding. Some facilities changed to cryopreservation of species to minimise the number of animals kept at one time. This is an excellent way of replacement and is encouraged by the Unit.
- Facilities reduced their animal numbers by approximately 50% to cope with the workload.
- Around 23% of animals were culled during the lockdown.

## SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL STANDARD

Since 2013, the Unit has been involved in the review process of SANS 10386:2008: *The Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes*. This has been a lengthy and ongoing process. The document has been distributed for public comment by the South



African Bureau of Standards (SABS). Working groups included stakeholders from various animal research institutions, private industries, animal welfare organisations, state entities as well as animal rights groups. The aim was to have the document published by May 2020, but COVID-19 impacted work progress and there is currently no specific anticipated time of completion.

## ALTERNATIVES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

We have been continuing our work with the Department to find alternative methods to teach scholars without using animals. We invited the Department to visit the skills laboratory at Onderstepoort, University of Pretoria after introducing them to the “breeding Betsy” model. “Breeding Betsy” is an artificial cow model that replaces the real animal for educational purposes by allowing learners to do practical examinations. A request has been sent to the Department for purchasing a few models for the five agricultural schools in Gauteng.

Since we collaborated with the Department, they have been tightening their involvement with agricultural schools and as a result one of the schools removed pigs from the school as it was seen to be unnecessary and expensive to use as educational models.



## AGRICULTURAL SECONDARY SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

As part of promoting the 4R principles for the use of animals in teaching activities, we initiated contact with the Gauteng Department of Education. We agreed that we would start doing inspections at the agricultural schools in Gauteng. The first inspection was conducted at an Agricultural Secondary School, which currently has 19 cattle used in teaching activities under their care. It falls within our ambit to monitor and inspect facilities that use animals for teaching purposes.

Due to the shortcomings observed on the day of the inspection, we made recommendations to ensure the welfare and care of the animals are improved.

The school has given its cooperation and considerable progress has been made as a result of our intervention:

- Proper shelter is being erected and should be completed by the end of August.
- Additional feeding and drinking troughs have been purchased.
- Additional feed has been purchased and will last for three months. An order will be placed for the next delivery in time to make sure enough feed is available at all times.
- Two additional workers have been appointed to assist with the cattle.
- A veterinarian has been to inspect the cattle and has provided the school with guidance on managing their health.



## CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

The following conferences and workshops were attended during the early part of the period under review:

- The annual Oppenheimer Research Conference.
- Presented (by invitation) on animal ethics as a topic at UNISA as part of the curriculum.
- Presented the topic of “openness in animal research” to the University of Cape Town.
- Attended a two-day SAALAS (South African Association for Laboratory Animal Science) training workshop.
- Presented an informal introduction to animal welfare to the Endangered Wildlife Trust animal ethics committee.

Since physical attendance of workshops during the lockdown was out of the question, the Unit kept abreast of continued professional development by attending the following international webinars:

- National Centre of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of animals in Research (NC3Rs); E-learning modules on anaesthesia, euthanasia and pain and distress assessment.
- 36<sup>th</sup> World Veterinary Conference; COVID-19 Live Panel session, the effect of Covid-19 on animals.
- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); Research Ethics – Inclusion in the time of Covid-19.

# Veterinary CONSULTANT

Dr Bryce Marock, the Consulting Veterinarian of the National Council of SPCAs, works alongside the Inspectors of the organisation's specialised Units and provides professional input on a variety of animal welfare issues. Collaboration is largely with the Farm Animal Protection Unit and the Special Investigation Unit. However, assistance is also provided to the other Units of the National Council of SPCAs concerning working horses and dogs and those horses used in endurance racing events.

Dr B Marock is also a valued team member on community outreaches and sterilisation campaigns.

## LIVE EXPORT OF ANIMALS BY SEA

During the period under review, Dr B Marock's collaboration with the Farm Animal Protection Unit has been almost exclusively on the live export of animals by sea.

In 2018, the live sheep trade to the Middle East from Australia was thrown into disarray. A brave whistle-blower secretly recorded horrific footage on five voyages in 2017, handing them over to 60 minutes Australia and Animals Australia. The footage shocked the public and even decision-makers. The reports on these voyages had been sitting in a desk drawer gaining no attention until they were plastered on to every Australian's television screen. A moratorium was immediately put into place, leading to several high profile reviews, eventuating into a three and a half month ban during the hottest northern months of the year, with drastically reduced stocking densities, government-employed independent observers (paid for by the exporters), and so much more. The biggest exporting country became a regulatory nightmare to the live export companies.

In 2018, Al Mawashi's CEO Usama Boodai announced to the media that due to Australia's changing regulatory stance towards live export, the company would be seeking alternative countries to source live sheep from.

In 2019, the National Council of SPCAs learnt that this company, Al Mawashi, had registered a business in South Africa. After a meeting with the operations manager of the company, it was clear that the company intended moving at least half of its operations to South Africa. The National Council of SPCAs decided that this level of cruelty could not be ignored. (See page 4 for details on the action taken by the National Council of SPCAs).



## DOGFIGHTING

For the Special Investigations Unit, Dr B Marock performed 10 examinations that have resulted in veterinary reports for the purposes of prosecution. The registered cases include that for organised dogfighting and bestiality. Dr B Marock also assisted external veterinarians on the intricacies of compiling reports for these complicated cases, especially for those where dogs are not seized during active organised dogfights, but for those used for this purpose (i.e. possession).

## OTHER IMPORTANT PROJECTS

In collaboration with the Farm Animal Unit, Dr B Marock has been involved in the development of a humane method to cull poultry, advising on health matters at national and international forums, presenting at local and continental conferences, and assisting with fieldwork in criminal cases.

Assistance has also been given to the Special Projects Unit in terms of veterinary examinations for prosecution, mostly in combatting neglected and abused greyhounds.

## ANNUAL AFRICA ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

The 2020 Annual Africa Animal Welfare Conference was scheduled to take place in Ghana, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the conference was instead held by way of a webinar on 7 September 2020. Dr B Marock submitted a paper and presented at the conference. His presentation was well-received by delegates, with requests for more information. The presentation addressed the live export of animals by sea. It was heartening to see the interest of delegates and their concern for the animal welfare issues surrounding the transportation of livestock.



# Special Projects

## UNIT

The Special Projects Unit's animal welfare focus is varied and includes a diverse range of issues not covered by the other operational units of the National Council of SPCAs.

### **HUMANE DETERRENTS AND ANIMAL CONTROL METHODS**

While the National Council of SPCAs acknowledges that under certain circumstances, pest control and/or extermination may be required, the National Council of SPCAs only supports the use of humane methods. The National Council of SPCAs does not support methods of pest management that cause suffering, pain, or distress to any animal.

During the period under review, the Special Projects Unit received 26 complaints and enquires regarding humane animal control and has dealt with different pest control companies advising those using inhumane methods to consider the most humane methods available. Letters were issued to online retailers selling glue traps, inhumane animal equipment and electronic training devices informing them of the cruelty animals are subjected to, and requesting that trade of such traps cease. The Unit has had great success.

### **ANIMAL RACING**

#### **Pigeon Racing**

The Special Projects Unit started the year off by conducting inspections at the South African Million Dollar Pigeon Race lofts in Sasolburg, Gauteng, in preparation for the race. On 30 January 2020, the Unit was present during the basketing and tagging of the pigeons for the race. The Unit ensured that the pigeons were handled humanely, had sufficient ventilation in the baskets, that no overcrowding took place and ensured that the pigeons had access to food and water, during the day as well as when they were loaded on the truck for departure the next morning.

On 1 February 2020, the Special Projects Unit staff monitored the liberation of the birds at a point 10 km outside Hanover. A total number of 1,548 pigeons were liberated to fly a distance of 600km back to the loft in Sasolburg in the Free State. Before the end of the day, only three pigeons had returned and by day two the number of pigeons at the loft was less than 100 birds. To date, a total of 704 pigeons are recorded to have returned which leaves 55% or 844 pigeons unaccounted for. The 804 pigeons that returned were sold on auction to any willing buyer, given away to upcoming fanciers or just discarded for not winning.

The Unit has also conducted 21 Pigeon Loft inspections around Gauteng and Mpumalanga.



In June 2020 the National Council of SPCAs together with the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) joined forces to shed light on the South African Million Dollar Pigeon Race (SAMDP) that is held every year in South Africa.

This race is considered as the "Olympics of Pigeon Racing" by pigeon fanciers but statistics and investigations reveal disturbing truths. We have been monitoring the SAMDP for many years. Every year, we see alarming statistics regarding the high number of losses at the race," says Senior Inspector Arno de Klerk, Special Projects Unit Manager with the National Council of SPCAs. "These sentient beings either suffer and die in the wild or join other pigeon flocks, raising serious environmental concerns, including potentially spreading harmful diseases and threatening public health."

South African law prohibits certain activities involving invasive species, such as pigeons, from being carried out without a permit. Many of these activities are central to the SAMDP, and therefore, race organisers were required to obtain an invasive species permit. PETA US and the National Council of SPCAs requested access to this permit from the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) and were told that it had no record of such a permit. Thus, PETA US and the National Council of SPCAs have submitted a legal complaint requesting that DEFF take enforcement action and prohibit the 2021 SAMDP from going ahead.

## Equine Endurance Races

The Unit monitored the *Race the Wild Coast* endurance race which took place from 20 to 27 October 2019 with the assistance of Special Investigations, Farm Animal Protection Unit and Donkey Project Inspectors. The teams left early mornings and worked until after dark to monitor the use of horses. Pre-race and post-race meetings were held to discuss the way forward.

The Unit has identified three new races for 2020 but due to the national Lockdown, no races have been scheduled and will not continue until sanctions have been lifted. All major races such as the Fauresmith race has been provisionally postponed but will most likely be cancelled this year due to the riders not being able to reach requirements to compete.

## THE MOVEMENT OF ANIMALS ACROSS OUR BORDERS

### Airports

The Unit has undertaken extensive work at OR Tambo International Airport. Before the National Lockdown, bi-weekly inspections were conducted at all cargo warehouses to monitor the movement of animals through this port.

The Unit conducted 33 Airport Inspections at six different airports and visited 349 cargo companies during these inspections. 4,628 animals arriving and departing from these warehouses were observed. Animal species included day-old chicks, pigeons, exotic bird species, dogs, cats, rats, mice, livestock, horses, wild animals and aquatic species such as fish, crayfish, crabs and abalone.



In November 2019 when South African Airways (SAA) cancelled most of their flights due to staff going on strike, we sprang into action and met with SAA officials at OR Tambo International Airport. We also requested the assistance of local SPCAs with inspections at other airports across the country. This action aimed to ensure that alternate arrangements were made for animals and to ensure that no animals were left stranded at the cargo warehouses or pet lounges.

### Land Border Posts

The Special Projects Unit continues to work at borders across South Africa. Complaint and proactive inspections are conducted by both the Special Projects Unit and Farm Animal Protection Unit Inspectors.

During the period under review, the Unit conducted 18 Border operations and Inspections at 10 different borders posts and attended several meetings at the ports to improve welfare and working relations.

A Border Campaign was conducted at the Nakop Border Post. The Special Projects Unit team conducted inspections during the arrival and departure of vehicles transporting animals and spent some time assisting the border personnel with the trapping of feral cats, arranging for sterilisation and returning them to the border.

Meetings were held with all the departments operating at the border thus creating awareness of how animals should be handled and the requirements of transporting animals. There has been a significant improvement of working relations between stakeholders and the National Council of SPCAs at this border post. South Africa has been engulfed in the COVID-19 pandemic which has shaken the country and changed the way we live. The pandemic caused all ports of entry to close for several months with only certain ports remaining open to ship essential cargo supplies. Land borders and airports have limited any animal shipments to only the bare minimum. Animals were only allowed to leave South Africa via aeroplane if the owners were repatriated to their home



country or via aeroplane to South Africa in the case of South African citizens returning to this country.

All commercial ports have reopened and cross border operations have restarted with certain restrictions remaining in place. Most small border crossings and airports remain closed for the time being. This, however, has not deterred the Special Projects Unit Inspectors from reaching air and land ports. We were not only conducting inspections but also utilising the time to train border personnel from various departments on the importance of animal welfare.



## WORKING ANIMALS

During the period under review, the Special Projects Unit conducted inspections at entities that use working animals (dogs and horses) for various reasons including, safeguarding, detection, response etc.

The Unit conducted 83 inspections at South African Police Services, South African Revenue Service, South African National Defense Force, Department of Agriculture, Airports Company SA runway dogs, correctional facilities, anti-poaching units and private security companies.

The Draft Regulations relating to working animals has been due for publication and implementation but due to the national Lockdown this matter has been set aside until the Minister and the Department can gazette the regulations.

The National Council of SPCAs has a sound longstanding relationship with the Private Security Industry Regulations Association, which has empowered us to work together in fighting security companies that contravene the Animals Protection Act and Private Security Industry Regulation Act.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

During the year under review, 111 warnings and notices were issued in instances where inadequate provision was made for animals.

A total of 15 days were spent in Court. One case of animal cruelty was successfully prosecuted and the Unit has nine court cases pending.

### 31 Greyhounds Confiscated

In April 2019, the National Council of SPCAs removed 20 Greyhounds from a property in Mafikeng. These dogs were forced to live in enclosures that were unkempt and parasitic. Some of the dogs were underweight, some had old wounds that were left untreated and had become infected. Charges were laid in terms of the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962.

Over the past year, Inspectors from the Special Projects Unit have undertaken follow-up inspections at the property to ensure that the remainder of the dogs that were being kept on this property were being adequately cared for. Our Inspectors found a vast improvement. However, on their last visit in May 2020, they found that the conditions had taken a turn for the worse which led to the removal of the remaining 31 dogs on the property.



Dogs were found with severe scarring, cuts, and abrasions, and old, untreated injuries. There was inadequate shelter available, the dogs had external parasite infestations and wounds that were consistent with wild animal attacks which occur when dogs are used for hunting. Many dogs were underweight and were being bullied by other dogs. Charges of animal cruelty were laid.

The accused will appear in court in October 2020 for the first case against him.

# Outreach PROJECT



## NORTHERN CAPE STERILISATION OUTREACH

Our sterilisation outreach in Louisvale and Keimos in the Northern Cape was very successful. In these communities there were significant welfare problems due to the overpopulation of domestic pets – abandonment and inhumane disposal of animals was rife. Many dogs were suffering from Transmissible Venereal Tumours (TVT) malnutrition and parasites.



A team of Inspectors, Trainee Inspectors, Veterinary Nurses and Veterinarians went to the area and set up a temporary operating facility. Our team of specialist outreach vets, able also to perform early-age sterilisation were kept working non-stop even during the challenges including extreme heat and power outages.

Each animal was sterilised and treated for internal and external parasites and went home with food, blankets, bowls and educational material. Field teams ensured that home inspections were undertaken for each animal to ensure that welfare conditions were suitable and they provided the necessary support and education to the owners. We ensured that each animal had their whole life improved - very necessary in an area where many dogs are chained due to roaming, fighting and breeding-related issues.

We have a very positive response from the community and the team was proud to have sterilised 472 pets, with 523 welfare inspections undertaken. One team stayed in the area for another few days undertaking spot inspections and maintaining a high presence in the area in the event that an animal needed emergency care and to undertake welfare follow-up inspections.

## FARM ANIMAL WELFARE OUTREACHES

Some of our outreaches focused on farm animal welfare to address the problems where animals were kept in unsuitable facilities with poor hygiene, lack of shelter, water and protection.



Lack of good management and care was addressed with the owners and the teams worked with them showing by example how conditions could be improved – cleaning pens and digging draining channels to prevent unhygienic and muddy conditions (often leading to health problems and sickness or death).

Shelter for animals is a legal requirement and owners were shown how to effectively install shade and shelter using different materials. These practical training sessions gave an opportunity to illustrate the benefits of good welfare to the animals and subsequent benefits to the owners. Empowering owners with skills and knowledge is an immensely powerful and effective method of improving the welfare of animals. As we change and improve the owners' perceptions we change the future and ongoing welfare for the animals in their care. Owners were grateful for the assistance, guidance and support. Even in cases where warnings were issued, owners accepted these with a new understanding of their responsibilities and we found that on follow-up inspections the owners were proud to show how they had advanced in the care of their animals.

And of course, we also reached out to different SPCAs where we were able to provide support and assistance especially during COVID-19 and ongoing upskilling of staff and local communities.



# Wildlife

## PROTECTION UNIT

The Wildlife Protection Unit actively participates in national and provincial forums to bring about change in respect of wild animals utilised by the wildlife industry in South Africa.

Proactive inspections and investigations afford the opportunity to change mindsets, improve captive conditions and, where necessary take legal recourse to protect animals.

### FIGHTING FOR THE WELFARE OF WILD ANIMALS

The Wildlife Protection Unit welcomed the opportunity offered by the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) to provide information and insight on matters pertaining to elephant, lion, leopard and rhinoceros as requested by the Advisory Committee (High-Level Panel) appointed under section 3A of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998).

The Advisory Committee is responsible for a review process on existing policies, legislation and practices relating to the management and handling, breeding, hunting and trade of elephant, lion, leopard and rhinoceros, as contemplated in the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004).

In response to an invitation for the public to make submissions, we responded to ensure that the National Council of SPCAs' pursued litigation triumphs for animal welfare that resulted in the respected recognition by the Constitutional Court of South Africa (Case no. CCT 1/16) that animal welfare and animal conservation reflect two intertwined values will be incorporated into the overall management of wildlife industry of South Africa. In addition, in a High Court ruling in favour of the National Council of SPCAs (Case No. 86515/2017), the court stated that regardless if animal welfare does not form part of a governmental department's mandate, the government is now legally obligated to consider animal welfare in all its conservation decisions, otherwise it goes against the spirit of Section 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

The complex nature of each of the topics under review by the Advisory Committee as provided in the terms of reference is simplified by the fact that it would be both irresponsible and reckless if humanity continues on the current trajectory, ignoring the collective warnings and threats caused to the natural environment and the species dependent on it for survival. Feedback is awaited.

### INSPECTIONS AND COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION

The Wildlife Protection Unit carried out 64 inspections which included; predator facilities, zoos, rehabilitation facilities, breeding farms, game reserves, pet shops, sanctuaries and other various facilities which fall within the above. The reason for the lower



figures on inspections was due in a large part to the restrictions placed on the Unit with the COVID-19 lockdowns.

This year saw the escalation of the enforcement of the criminal implication of contravening the Animals Protection Act and the Wildlife Protection Unit has laid criminal charges against 15 accused. The cases will be pursued by the Inspectors until completion.

The Wildlife Protection Unit has brought about criminal charges against what we have identified as perpetual offenders. In two such cases, we have evidence of a history of abuse over a period of years. In some instances, the cases were resolved by means of a warning and follow-up, yet the abuse continued. The stance of the Wildlife Protection Unit is that we will not tolerate any contraventions of the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962. In the event that the facility is one which 'farms' wildlife, we expect there to be an emphasis on the welfare of the animals in the facility's care. We expect there to be requisite specialised knowledge of the species being farmed.

The National Council of SPCAs makes use of experts when putting dockets together and the welfare contraventions are proven with science which makes it very costly to put our dockets together, as well as time-consuming. The benefit though is priceless to us and the animals we serve.



The captive lion trade has been the focus of the Unit for just over a year now and the Unit is finally starting to reap the benefits of intensive investigations. The project has now seen nine people criminally charged with contraventions in terms of the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 just for captive predator facilities alone.

## PARLIAMENTARY COLLOQUIUM

The National Council of SPCAs is aware that there was a motion from a colloquium held in 2018 which was to push towards a closedown of the lion farming industry. Sadly, this motion appears to be going no-where with two governmental departments – the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) and the Departments of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) still working on farmed lion aspects such as national norms and standards. Recently there was another alarming change and that included lions as one of the wildlife species being moved under the ambits of the Animals Improvements Act 62 of 1998. This effectively renders lions as farmed commercial species.

The Wildlife Protection Unit is extremely concerned about this development, and after receiving intensive training from the famous carnivore specialist veterinarian, Dr Peter Caldwell, are now very aware of the tragic implications for the African lion. Implications such as that of disease, over-breeding, over-crowding, genetic manipulation, dietary shortfalls, vaccinations, antibiotics and bacterial infections to name a few concerns are cause for every South African to question the motives of the DEFF/DALRRD when weighing up commercial gain against animal welfare.

The National Council of SPCAs has noted a trend that nature reserves have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 Lockdown. Recently the National Council of SPCAs has investigated two nature reserves wherein animals have been suffering from lack of supplementary feeding due to financial implications as well due to the lockdown. Additionally, the drought and severe winter season have also seen animals being more compromised and die-offs have been a result thereof.

Regardless of species – the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 applies, and we will ensure justice for abused animals.

## IMPORTANCE OF ANIMAL WELFARE REINFORCED

The National Council of SPCAs was invited by the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries to participate at their annual Legotla in Kimberly. The National Council of SPCAs presented to a large audience comprising of Environment Management Inspectors (EMI) and heads of departments, provincially and at a national level. We emphasised the importance of welfare with conservation and reinforced entwined values.

The National Council of SPCAs was also invited to a question and answer seminar after the main presentation where the National Council of SPCAs was inundated with numerous questions regarding welfare within the conservation fields. Many pointed questions raised a lively debate, and in the end, the National Council of SPCAs walked away knowing vital information had been imparted to the EMI officials.

The result of this was that there has been a large increase in communications between EMIs and Wildlife Protection Unit staff of the National Council of SPCAs and the sharing of information.

## ANIMALS IMPROVEMENT ACT NO. 2 OF 1998 (AIA)

The National Council of SPCAs has expressed serious reservations about the sudden addition of 33 wildlife species to fall under the authority of the AIA. This effectively means these wildlife species which include: lion, rhinoceros (Black and White), cheetah, giraffe and various other indigenous wildlife, can be intensively farmed.

In this, there are extremely serious ramifications in terms of animal welfare. Overcrowding will lead to more diseases, which leads to more vaccinations and resistance to diseases. Parasite control becomes an overburden due to the intensive conditions and the animals are unable to use natural resistance to keep parasites such as ticks and worms at bay. Thus commercial use of anti-parasitic



measures comes into play, reducing the wild animals' natural resistance even further.

## **PROMOTING ANIMAL WELFARE TO FUTURE CONSERVATIONISTS**

The Wildlife Protection Unit was invited to lecture on animal welfare and the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 to honour students at UNISA that were studying conservation. There was fantastic debate and we believe we have opened eyes to the link between welfare and conservation and we look forward to the impact these students may have in the future in their chosen careers.

## **SUN CITY REPTILE TRAFFICKING**

The National Council of SPCAs carried out a joint raid along the Sun City road and was successful in the removal of four tortoises and three arrests on the raid. It remains a huge concern that the public is consistently buying the reptiles on offer, possibly assuming they are doing a good deed, when in fact this is fuelling the trafficking.

It is an offence to buy these indigenous species and we have it on good authority, that the Nature Conservation body in the North West Province, will be seeking prosecutions on those people buying the reptiles. The best course of action is to report the activities, if approached at an intersection, take video footage and send an affidavit with the footage to both the Nature Conservation body and the National Council of SPCAs.



## **NATURE RESERVES**

2020 has brought havoc to many wildlife facilities and nature reserves have not escaped the ruthless economic onslaught that COVID-19 and the lockdowns have brought with them.



The National Council of SPCAs has been forced to interject with wildlife management at a number of reserves this year. The cause for the involvement of the National Council of SPCAs is due to lack of food resources due to over-grazing, over-population and drought. Where human interference has caused an imbalance which negatively affects wildlife, the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 (APA) applies. As such it can be said that even in a massive nature reserve such as the Kruger National Park, the decisions taken by the management of the park have to be taken with consideration of the Animals Protection Act and must include the welfare of animals.

## **DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES (DEFF)**

After a meeting with Minister Creecy and voicing our concerns about the illegal trade of wildlife in South Africa, particularly with an emphasis on the activities at OR Tambo airport, the Minister proposed a Memorandum of Understanding between DEFF and the National Council of SPCAs. As the National Council of SPCAs sees this, there has been a proliferation of crimes which impact animal welfare long prior to the location of the skeletons/horn at the point of exit.

In the past, DEFF has not seen fit to give over the location of the origin of the parts, which hampers the National Council of SPCAs in inspections of those facilities. The Memorandum of Understanding is still under review as the National Council of SPCAs is of the opinion that we would need the buy-in from the provincial authorities as well and we would need to carry out joint operations with these entities.

# Donkey UPLIFTMENT

Prior to COVID-19 and the restrictions, routine project work was carried out in Limpopo and North West Province to maintain the welfare of donkeys in the communities as well as issue warnings where necessary. Donkeys were removed where necessary and cruelty charges laid against abusers.

Mokopane remains the busiest hub of donkeys worked commercially. We continue to work in this community to uphold the law and to continue with training and education. Owner compliance and donkey welfare continue to improve. However, a full-time staff member here would be ideal.

We spent time assisting the Mokopane SPCA and training personnel so that they know and understand the challenges with the donkeys and because they live in the area they are in the best position to work with this donkey community.

This is in addition to the educating and training of donkey owners and users because each family and community member has a role to play in good animal welfare.



## MPUMALANGA DONKEY SKIN TRADE

Mpumalanga shares international borders with Mozambique and Swaziland and we had some unconfirmed reports of donkeys being stolen and either being moved alive on foot or slaughtered and the skins being moved across the borders for the Donkey Skin Trade.

We undertook a field trip to Mpumalanga to investigate this. Many donkey owners were aware of the Donkey Skin trade but this was from listening to the radio. There were many reports of donkeys being stolen but not for the skin trade but to use for carting in different villages. And some of the donkeys were being used to assist in transporting wood that is illegally cut from the tree plantations in the areas.



Lephalale SPCA has been another focal point in Limpopo Province. We have worked in the area and large surrounding communities and are aware of the poverty and challenges for the donkeys and their owners. Assisting this SPCA has been important and provided the opportunity of participating in the training and guiding of a staff member who has recently qualified as a Field Officer and has started working towards his inspectorate qualifications. We are assisting with the expansion of fieldwork and greater community reach.

Youth and Community Education as always is very important to us and although we have not been able to reach as many learners in schools as planned, we have used every opportunity to provide education and support to small groups and community members.

We investigated all these reports and met with different SAPS officials to discuss these problems and also used this opportunity to provide training and education on animal welfare and enforcement of the Animals Protection Act.

And during these investigations, we were able to help the donkeys and horses we inspected – improving their welfare and educating and uplifting their owners.



# Special Investigations UNIT

The Special Investigations Unit places its focus on animal fighting and its driving dynamics, working events/shows that use fighting breeds of animals and animal sexual abuse cases. The Unit also assists with any other cases of animal crime that warrant more in-depth investigation.

## MAN ARRESTED FOR SEXUAL ABUSE OF DOG

One of the Special Investigations Unit's priority animal crimes is the sexual abuse of animals (bestiality). Not only does this crime represent terrible animal cruelty, but cases of sexual abuse of an animal indicate towards a criminal who is a risk to both animals and vulnerable human individuals in the community, especially children.

When the Mareetsane Police Station in the North West Province received a report of suspected bestiality; their prompt and direct contact of the National Council of SPCAs ensured immediate action. The Special Investigations Unit could not only guide the investigation that followed but also dispatch a National Inspector to rescue the victim and properly handle the scene evidence and oversee the sample collection. This resulted in the arrest of the perpetrator, his bail being denied and the docket being completed swiftly and timeously for his first appearance in Itsoseng court on 28 May 2020. This case continues on the 27 November 2020.

Bestiality is rarely a standalone sexual crime. The link between the sexual abuse of animals and human cruelty is real and important and the National Council of SPCAs encourages communities to give this sexual crime a voice.

## DIRECT IMPRISONMENT FOR PITBULL BREEDER

In November 2019 a Pitbull breeder chose to plead guilty and was sentenced to R40 000 fine and eight months' direct imprisonment suspended for five years for keeping 32 dogs in horrific conditions. He was also denied ownership of any dogs on his person or property for the next five years.

Despite this sentence still fresh in his mind, a second raid on his property by Inspectors of the National Council of SPCAs uncovered multiple compromised animals and over 100 animals were seized. This case is being heard in the Protea Magistrates Court.





## LOCKDOWN CHALLENGES FOR PEOPLE AND THEIR ANIMALS

In South Africa, it has been noted that movement restrictions, aimed at stopping the spread of the coronavirus, have resulted in violence in homes becoming more frequent, more severe and more dangerous. Sadly, this includes violence towards companion animals, premeditated animal cruelty and a rapid rise in street-level dogfighting.

The Special Investigations Unit has had to adapt quickly, not only to changing crime patterns in the world of dogfighting but an unprecedented spike in premeditated companion animal abuse and violence which has resulted in the Unit's skills being in great demand.

For so many of us, it's the faithful dog at our side that brings comfort, companionship and hope during these confusing and isolated times. Many families and inner-city residents in our poorer project areas, where we have been active in addressing arising dogfighting concerns, realised that they are going to struggle to be able to feed themselves, let alone their furry best friend in these dark times and reached out asking for help from the National Council of SPCAs' Special Investigations Unit.



The Unit decided that it would be in everyone's best interest to do what we could to try to keep these animals with the people they love so that they can see this through together. With our supporters' generous help we were able to provide much-needed emergency medical care and dog food to families in 14 poverty-stricken areas over three provinces.

Inspectors conducted public education in seven different areas, assisted 123 animals and their owners with emergency medical care and food, conducted 67 property checks, removed or rescued eight dogs from dangerous circumstances, issued 15 warnings and laid cruelty charges in two cases under the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1992.

Eventually, the lockdown will all end. But as the confinement status that follows drags on, the danger of premeditated animals cruelty and violence, in all its forms, seems likely to intensify. Studies show that abusers are more likely to abuse their partners and others in the wake of personal crises, including lost jobs or major financial setbacks. With Covid-19 ravaging the economy, such crises are set to become much more frequent.

## LEGAL ACTION

The Special Investigations Unit continues to secure successful prosecutions in both its own cases and that of assisted cases with SPCAs, with the Regional Court sentences having steadily built in severity laying a strong punishment precedent. The Unit secured five successful prosecutions in its own cases and three successful prosecutions in assisted cases with SPCAs during the reporting period.

COVID-19 has had a disastrous effect on the Courts and the Special Investigation Unit cases have backed up and been postponed to a degree where the prediction is that a very large portion of 2021 will be spent in court.

The Veterinary Genetics Laboratory has pledged its ongoing forensic support to the Special Investigations Unit in their fight to change how animal crime is addressed and prosecuted in South Africa.

## Bringing additional cases to Court

A total of 11 cases were opened by the Special Investigations Unit this reporting period and 22 accused individuals arrested (seven organised crime dogfighting cases, two animal sexual abuse cases and two animal trade cruelty cases).

A further two dogfighting cases, one sexual abuse case and two cruelty cases were opened by local SPCAs under the direct guidance of the Special Investigations Unit.



# Training

## UNIT

Training for a kinder world is achieved by providing both internal and external courses to ensure that the welfare message and best practice protocols are shared far and wide to benefit animals.

### INTERNAL TRAINING COURSES

Training is a critical feature of all aspects of animal care and protection in SPCAs. At the National Council of SPCAs, Field Officers, Inspectors, Senior Inspectors and Committee Members are able to advance their careers, receive appropriate training and skills to perform their work in animal protection as well as the education necessary to support and guide all personnel in the SPCAs.

### Training of Inspectors

Inspectors Training Courses are offered to the staff of SPCAs around the country. Trainee Inspectors attend Inspectors Training Courses presented by the National Council of SPCAs where they are provided with the necessary skills to enable them to function confidently and effectively in the field to benefit animals.

Inspectors receive ongoing training throughout their careers and the National Council of SPCAs ensures that courses for Inspectors and Senior Inspectors are regularly updated, reviewed and revised to ensure that high standards are maintained.

### Refresher Training Course for Inspectors 17 to 28 February 2020

13 delegates attended- Gauteng (6); KwaZulu Natal (2); Mpumalanga (1); Western Cape (4)

The first course of the year went very well. Some new lectures and practical exercises were used to good effect. Refreshers can be a difficult course because the delegates are often tired and jaded and in some cases lost confidence in themselves and the legal system. Activities are designed to uplift, upskill and encourage them going forward.

Specific actions that delegates included during evaluation:

*"Will do better with dockets and testifying. Pay more attention to detail"*

*"Will pay more attention to Inspectorate duties"*

*"Yes - I can now apply the law better "*

**Training for a  
Kinder World**

## **Inspectors Training Course**

### **24 August to 04 September 2020**

10 delegates attended- Gauteng (5); KwaZulu Natal (1); Mpumalanga (1); Western Cape (2); North West (1)

We were very pleased to undertake our first Inspectors Course of the year. Again we were limited with the number of delegates that could attend due to COVID-19 regulations but had good representations from across the provinces. Safety precautions were maintained and we also had to change some of the practical sessions due to the COVID-19 restrictions. However, the group was very positive and the course was successfully completed.

*"Pay more attention to cruelty farm animals receive, I was never fully aware of it until the course";*

*"I feel more confident now";*

*"Standards of our society knowledge has been elevated and improved by this course"*



They are responsible for conducting education within communities, undertaking rescues and emergencies, doing home inspections and assisting Inspectors and other SPCA employees with various duties.

The course consisted of a theoretical aspect, a lot of interactive educational and practical activities during the classes and then a practical day where they went to sale yards/hawking sites to learn how to identify animal welfare issues and how to assist animals that are compromised.

An evaluation in the form of an exam is conducted at the end of the course to ensure that delegates are ready and have the knowledge to qualify as Field Officers so that they have the skills to help prevent cruelty to animals.



## **Field Officer Training Course**

### **22 to 26 June 2020**

11 delegates attended- Gauteng (1); KwaZulu Natal (2); Western Cape (1); Limpopo (3); Free State (1); Mpumalanga (3)

During June 2020 we were able to conduct a Field Officers Training Course despite the COVID-19 Pandemic. We did, however, have to restrict the number of delegates that attended to ensure that lockdown regulations were adhered to, and all delegates and lecturers were required to wear masks and practise social distancing. Every morning the delegates had their temperature taken and they were screened for symptoms before they were allowed to enter the training centre for the day. We had to adapt some of the practical exercises and activities to ensure that we kept delegates and presenters safe and this posed some challenges which we successfully dealt with.

Even with all these restrictions, the course was very successful. Field Officers do not have the power to enforce legislation like qualified inspectors but they do play a crucial role in preventing cruelty to animals.

## **Training for SPCA Committee Members**

Committee members voluntarily take on the enormous task of guiding and supporting the SPCAs they serve. In order to do this competently, committee members require not only on-site learning at their Societies but also attendance of committee training courses.

### **14-15 September 2019**

#### **KwaZulu Natal**

15 delegates attended - Amanzimtoti (2); Dundee (1); Eshowe (2); Greytown (1); Lower South Coast (2); New Castle (1); Richards Bay (2); Umngeni (2); Vryheid (2).

*"Thank you, Vonny and Marcelle!"*

*"I feel it was done perfectly."*



## 23 to 24 November 2019

### Gauteng

16 delegates attended- Boksburg (2); Dundee (1); Edenvale (2); Garden Route (2); Germiston (2); Heidelberg (2); Johannesburg (1); RandWest (1); Sandton (2); Tshwane (1).

"I just want to say thank you for what NSPCA (SPCA) does and stands for, and I am grateful to have the opportunity of being a part of this";

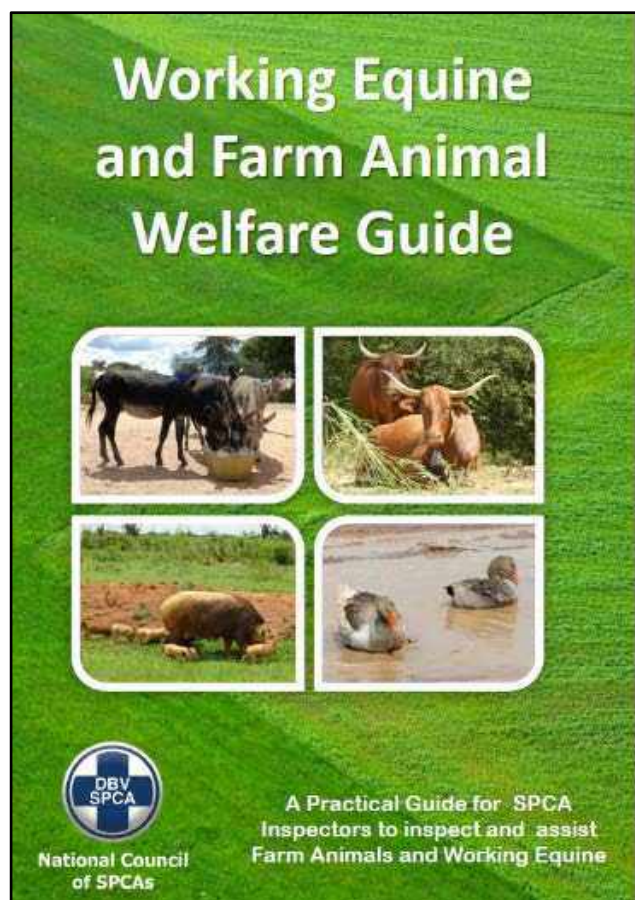
"Presenters are experienced and pitched presentations and interactions in the correct way."

## 16 to 17 November 2019

### Limpopo (held in Gauteng)

14 delegates attended – Lephalale (2); Mokopane (7); Rustenburg (5)

This was an unscheduled course held specifically to assist the new committees of these three Societies. These new members had stepped onto the committee to try and save the Societies from closing. They urgently needed the training and information provided in the course to guide and restore their Societies.



## TRAINING GUIDE

To assist SPCAs and Inspectors supplementary guides are compiled, printed and distributed. This year we finalised the Working Equine and Farm Animal Welfare Guide. It is very informative, highly illustrated with photographs and easy to use and understand. This guide will assist Field Officers and Inspectors to identify a wide

variety of animal welfare problems and achieve meaningful solutions.

## EXTERNAL TRAINING

Providing training on animal welfare to other organisations such as Animal Health Technicians and South African Police Services is a valuable means of extending our goals and reach to protect as many animals as possible.

### North West University Lectures

We continue to provide training to Animal Health Technician students at the North West University and the four-day training was well received. Subject matter included an introduction to animal protection legislation, domestic animal welfare, working donkey welfare and the welfare of farm animals. This training provides students with an understanding of typical challenges with animal care and management and practical methods to resolve these in the communities they will work in.

### Justice College

We were again invited to provide training to prosecutors in central training areas in Bloemfontein and Pretoria. This is always a very important opportunity to discuss the seriousness of animal abuse and animal protection legislation to key people working in the judicial system who are instrumental in handling animal cruelty cases and presenting these wisely to the courts.

### Onderstepoort

We continue to give presentations to veterinary students at the faculty to give them insight into animal protection legislation and animal welfare challenges and their role as veterinarians.

## EDUCATIONAL PAMPHLETS

Eleven of our educational pamphlets were selected to be translated into a larger selection of languages English, Afrikaans, Tswana, Zulu, Sotho and Xhosa. Translators were identified and the text obtained. The text then had to be manually inserted into each of the pamphlets for finalisation.

## ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

Rescue Rehab SA invited us to attend this conference in the Western Cape and to present several topics to the delegates:- 'Does Animal Welfare Matter', 'Animal Welfare and the Law', 'Victims in Dog Fighting' and 'Arising Challenges in Animal Welfare'. The delegates were from other animal rescue, rights and shelter organisations and the National Council of SPCAs was very well received. This was a dynamic and inspiring conference and was a very good platform to engage with other organisations and have relevant and meaningful discussions.

# Communications UNIT

## LIVE EXPORT CAMPAIGN

### Initial Campaign

We launched a Live Export Campaign with the assistance of GREY Advertising. It started with a video on Facebook, showing a hero trying to rescue a dog from a hot car by smashing the window. The reveal video drew a comparison of a dog in a hot car and a sheep on a ship for three weeks in much worse conditions. The video reached 1.8 million people.

Billboards were flighted and a petition was launched which gained over 80,000 signatures.

Two segments were aired on Carte Blanche and a Social Media campaign was launched. The topic exploded on social media platforms and in the media.

### MEDIA COVERAGE

Online	Print	TV/Radio	Total
2,858 articles	32 articles	14 segments	2,904

The campaign continued during various court cases and when the ship was in South Africa.

See page 4 for an exposé on the live export case and the action taken by the National Council of SPCAs on behalf of the sheep.

## BRANDING AND MARKETING

### Gautrain

The Gautrain kindly offered the National Council of SPCAs a partnership for a year worth over R1 500 000.00. We were offered four campaigns throughout the year and to have our adverts placed on the Gautrain's static and digital billboards at the station. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic placed this on hold. The last campaign was during the festive season.



## GENERAL MEDIA COVERAGE

During this reporting period, 43 media statements were issued, with subsequent enquiries handled. The media statements resulted in a wide coverage of the issues on TV, radio, print and online.

## WEBSITE

Website traffic for the period under review is as follows:

Visitors: 117 316 people

Page Views: 238 132 views

With the generous pro bono assistance of the **Casson Media** team, our website was redesigned to include current user trends and Google's best practice principles while also being donor-centric.

An online shop was also launched in August 2020.

## GENERAL MEDIA COVERAGE

During this reporting period, 43 media statements were issued, with subsequent enquiries handled. The media statements resulted in a wide coverage of the issues on TV, radio, print and online.

## OUR DONORS MEAN THE WORLD TO US

We express our gratitude to our many donors and supporters who have shared our passion for animals throughout the year.

Our pro bono supporters, with whom we have strong working relationships, are acknowledged with appreciation.

To the various Trusts, donors and sponsors who have responded so enthusiastically to our campaigns, projects and financial appeals, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your steadfast support.

Many others have nominated the National Council of SPCAs as the beneficiary in respect of shopper cards or pledged support through payroll giving – a special thank you to you all.





National Council  
of SPCAs

## THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

**576,304** kms were travelled around South Africa in the line of duty.

**1,995** inspections were undertaken.

**52** dogfighting related actions were taken.

**158** animals removed from cycle of violence.

**22** animal sexual abuse cases were investigated.

**8** premeditated violent cruelty cases were investigated.

**410** warnings, notices, or requirement letters were issued to improve animal care.

**8** successful prosecutions were achieved.

**102** court cases are pending for animal welfare offences.

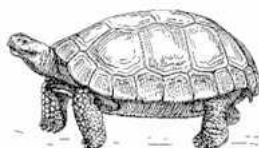
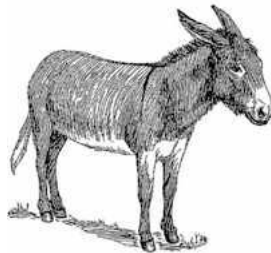
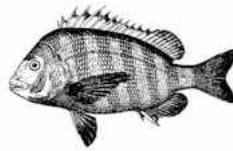
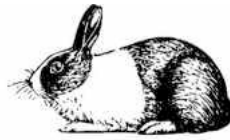
**103** people charged for animal cruelty.

**122** days were spent attending to court cases.

**282** animals were assisted in traffic accidents and disasters.

**647** working donkeys and mules were assisted.

**464** donkey owners and users were assisted.



**738** learners were educated on donkey and animal welfare.

**110** wild and exotic animals were rescued.

**347** cargo warehouse inspections were undertaken at airports.

**16** commercial land border posts were inspected.

**1,900** animal research applications were reviewed, representing **1,600** man hours.

**208** Animal Ethics Committee meetings were attended.

**4** sporting/recreational events using animals were monitored.

**176** meetings with external parties were attended to achieve improved conditions for animals.

**10** workshops and conferences were attended and **17** workshops were presented.

**240** practical training sessions were conducted on site in the areas of individual SPCAs.

**16** training courses were presented.

**292** delegates attended our external training courses.

**116** SPCA delegates attended our internal training courses.

**10** SPCA Regional Meetings were attended.



Somewhere an animal is calling for help.

Add your **VOICE** in answer by supporting one of our life-saving projects.

Visit our website at [www.nspca.co.za](http://www.nspca.co.za) and **DONATE TODAY**

## A LEGACY OF LOVE

One of the most meaningful ways that you can make sure that your love for animals counts beyond your lifetime is by remembering the **National Council of SPCAs** in your Will.

This simple action will ensure that you leave a legacy of love in the caring hands of an organisation you can trust to do whatever it takes to prevent cruelty and protect animals in the years to come.

*Write to us at [nspca@nspca.co.za](mailto:nspca@nspca.co.za) to sign up as a legacy partner.*