



**National Council
of SPCAs**

2024 **ANNUAL REPORT**

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LEADERS IN ANIMAL WELFARE IN AFRICA

*For over 65 years we have been protecting our country's animals.
We have entrenched ourselves as the most influential animal welfare organisation in Africa.*

MAKE CONTACT

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For enquiries regarding bequests, partnering with us on life-changing projects, or assisting with fuel costs, please contact our Public Relations Officer by telephone at (011) 907-3590 or write to nspca@nspca.co.za

Audited Financial Statements are available on request from our offices.



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Registration No. 003-189 NPO

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
of SPCAs**

Chairman

ANNETTE RADEMEYER

The National Council of SPCAs serves as a cornerstone in the advocacy for animal welfare in South Africa. In addition to regulating the SPCA movement throughout South Africa, the inspectors of the various units of the National Council of SPCAs work across the country and are dedicated to assisting animals and educating the public about animal welfare. The National Council of SPCAs also deals with various national government departments concerning the bigger picture of animal welfare. Staff are also involved with providing essential welfare input when South African National Standards concerning animals are developed through the South African Bureau of Standards.

Over the past year, various pressing issues have arisen concerning animal welfare which have included fires, floods, and the export of live animals by sea - all covered in the body of this report. This has been exacerbated by the prevailing economic downturn in South Africa, which has made fundraising efforts increasingly challenging for the organisation.

Our staff who man the units are professional and experts in their various fields. They are dedicated and go way and beyond the call of duty in the interest of animal welfare throughout South Africa.

The National Council is being called on more and more to conduct animal welfare training at universities, the South African Police Service, the justice college as well as other bodies. I believe that this bears testament to how highly regarded the work that we do, is.

Social media has become a scourge in that people film acts of horrendous cruelty and then post them for 'likes'. Here I am reminded of Raygun the baboon, acts of bestiality, and the inhumane killing of animals. In most of these cases, our dedicated staff have traced and charged the perpetrators of these horrendous acts. The staff have to watch these videos over and over to look



for clues and identifying items to trace these people and bring them to book. This takes a huge toll on the staff psychologically.

The National Council of SPCAs is at a critical juncture. The need for animal welfare services has never been more urgent, yet the means to deliver these services are severely compromised.

There are large parts of the country where there are no SPCAs and these calls for assistance are usually handled by the National Council. This means that vast distances have to be travelled and accommodation needs to be sourced. Many SPCAs have, unfortunately, also closed their doors due mainly to the economic situation, leaving more of the country's animals exposed and vulnerable.

In these difficult times, the National Council of SPCA's efforts on behalf of animals need to be supported with a corresponding commitment from animal lovers and welfare advocates.

Together, we can then ensure that the mission to protect and advocate for animals is preserved and strengthened, even amidst economic adversity. The animals in our communities depend on our collective action and support.



Our Leadership

PREVENTING CRUELTY AND PROTECTING ANIMALS

**Our Mission is to prevent cruelty and promote the welfare of all animals,
whilst our Vision is to end animal cruelty in South Africa
and engender compassion for all animals.**



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**BACK ROW: DR CHRIS MARUFU, MARCELLE MEREDITH, MARYANN MURRELL, CHRISTINE KUCH, AND DOMINIQUE LLOYD
FRONT ROW: ANNETTE RADEMEYER, ALET STEYN, JUDY HUANG, AND JOHN PENROSE**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Annette Rademeyer	(Chairman)
Christine Kuch	(Vice-Chairman)
Judy Huang	(Financial Director)
Marcelle Meredith	(Executive Director)
Gerhardt Fouché	<i>Removed Oct 2024</i>
Christo Francke	<i>Removed Oct 2024</i>
Dominique Lloyd	
Chris Marufu (Dr)	
Maryann Murrell	
John Penrose	
Lize Pienaar	<i>Removed Oct 2024</i>
Alet Steyn	

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

Marcelle Meredith	Chief Executive Officer
Esté Kotzé	Deputy Chief Executive Officer

MANAGEMENT

Grace de Lange	Chief Operations Officer
Bryce Marock (Dr)	Consulting Veterinarian
Nadine Ferreira	Finance
Lebo Sentle	Animal Ethics
Jacques Peacock	Communications
Nazareth Appalsamy	Farm Animal Protection
Tercia Woest	Society Liaison
Arno de Klerk	Special Projects
Alana Smal (Acting)	Training
Douglas Wolhuter	Wildlife Protection



National Council of SPCAs

The National Council of SPCAs operates on a national level with teams of dedicated Inspectors who are specialists in their fields, dealing specifically with farm animals, wild animals, domestic animals, research animals, equines, and working animals. Animals used in entertainment and sports also receive our focused attention, as do aquatic species under the banner of aquaculture.

In areas where there is no SPCA, animal welfare organisations, or veterinary services, our Inspectors play a vital role in providing extraordinary support to people and their animals through our community projects. When disasters strike and emergencies arise, our skilled teams provide hands-on assistance to animals.

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

We are involved in all areas where there are animals and strive to improve their lives and welfare through education and law enforcement.

Each of our Operational Units handles specific portfolios and undertakes investigations of animal cruelty. Inspectors also work proactively to improve the welfare of animals in the areas where they operate by conducting inspections.

Please see the individual Unit reports for more details on their actions for animals during 2024.



OUR INSPECTORATE

In pursuit of preventing cruelty, the National Council of SPCAs operates on the principle of education before prosecution, unless a situation warrants immediate prosecution, or a person declines educational guidance. All qualified Inspectors are authorised under the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962.

Inspectors undergo a rigorous training programme and receive ongoing training throughout their careers to maintain the highest standards. Inspectors pledge to uphold the law, protect all animals, and treat them with compassion and kindness.

We commend our Inspectors for their compassionate hearts and caring hands, for reaching out to animals in need of help, rescue, and protection, and for seeking justice for those subjected to cruelty.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

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, 631 warnings, notices, and letters of requirement were issued for improvements to living conditions and standards of animal care.

Successful Prosecutions

Justice for animals was achieved with 10 successful prosecutions during the reporting period.

Pending Cases

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





**National Council
of SPCAs**

Executive Director MARCELLE MEREDITH

An extract from our Statement of Policy:

“The National Council of SPCAs believes that every living creature has intrinsic value and is a sentient being. Our primary and motivating concern is the prevention of cruelty to all living creatures and the promotion of the humane treatment of animals through leadership, education and law enforcement.”

In alignment with the above statement, our team diligently embraces the responsibility of protecting all animals and addressing challenges. This ensures improved standards of animal care, and achievement of our organisation’s objectives: the prevention of cruelty and suffering.

The Inspectorate of the National Council of SPCAs comprises skilled personnel whose training and experience collectively cover all animal species. The National Council of SPCAs operates nationwide, particularly focusing on policing all aspects of industries utilising animals. The National Council of SPCAs has been the driving force behind the SPCA movement’s exchanges with industry role players and government agencies to promote animal welfare and address serious shortcomings in practices under their charge or control. This work has involved consistent and committed focus on many identified issues. This includes but is not limited to the use of CO₂ in the slaughter process of pigs, the breeding of captive lions, the shortcomings in the use of animals wild and equine by the South African Defence Force. Successful cases – hunting with dogs. Hundreds of tortoises crossing a main railway line. Notwithstanding the never-ending process of reading thousands of protocols and undertaking inspections in the research industry. The export of live animals. They are ongoing issues that require urgent attention to prevent animal suffering.

During 2024 we have secured 10 successful prosecutions, 102 cases await finalisation through the judicial system. Many of the pending cases date back some years but the National Council of SPCAs remains determined to see these cases come before the criminal courts. It is important that the animals that suffered are not forgotten and that perpetrators of cruelty are held accountable. Some of these cases are those related to the starving farm animals of Thandi Modise, the tongue-tying of a horse by the racing industry, neglect of horses by the SANDF,



the Vrede Dairy (Estina) for withholding veterinary attention, the savage slaughter carried out by Julius Malema, as well as several cases involving Al Mawashi and the export of live animals by sea.

Our Annual Report offers an opportunity to highlight the incredible work undertaken by our individual Units. As a human capital-intensive organisation, our staff members are the legs on which the National Council of SPCAs stands and operates. In the following pages, our dedicated team will share some of the animal welfare achievements and actions for animals taken in 2024. Our Inspectors have worked long hours, often facing horrendous acts of cruelty, yet they have remained steadfast on the frontlines, bringing relief to animals in need.

The National Council of SPCAs is committed to the specialised training of Inspectors, Senior Inspectors and SPCA Field Officers, with numerous delegates having successfully completed training at our Training Centre in 2024. We also continued to provide animal welfare training and the application of the Animals Protection Act to Prosecutors, SA Police Service officials, the road traffic inspectorate, and Animal Health Technician students.

To everyone who has contributed in any way to benefiting the animals we serve, I extend my deepest appreciation and heartfelt thanks for your support and generosity.

We also owe a great debt of gratitude to our remarkable legal teams.

My warmest thanks go to the men and women who make up the National Council of SPCAs’ team – the Board of Directors, our Inspectorate and all those who work behind the scenes as a support team that keeps the wheels turning.



**National Council
of SPCAs**

Protecting Animals USED IN SCIENCE AND TEACHING

ANIMAL ETHICS UNIT

The main purpose of the Animal Ethics Unit is to be the custodians of animals used for scientific purposes and teaching activities. Research on animals is legal in South Africa; therefore, our Animal Ethics Unit is dedicated to protecting and promoting the welfare of these animals.

The use of animals in research is a highly regulated practice in South Africa. There are various frameworks, authoritative bodies, and legislation that govern the industry. These include the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962, the South African National Standard for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (SANS 10386:2021), guidelines from the National Department of Health, the National Health Research Ethics Council, and Animal Research Ethics Committees.

All research involving animals must receive prior approval from an appropriate Animal Research Ethics Committee. This ensures that proposed studies are ethically sound and adhere to established standards for animal welfare. Animal Research Ethics Committees may not grant retrospective ethics approval.

All institutions conducting health research involving animals must establish or have access to a registered Animal Research Ethics Committee, as stipulated in the National Health Act 61 of 2003 (NHA). Research utilising animals for scientific purposes—including pre-clinical studies, testing of vaccines and drugs, medical devices, and health-related education and training—is encompassed within the definition of "health research".

Ethics review for proposed health research must be performed by an Animal Research Ethics Committee registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC). Currently, only approximately 33% of Animal Research Ethics Committees are registered with the NHREC.

The Animal Ethics Unit serves on 45 different ARECs countrywide to safeguard the well-being and comfort of animals used in research. Each member of these committees is carefully considered and includes veterinarians, researchers, animal welfare organisations, and members of the public. During 2024, staff from the Animal Ethics Unit attended 265 Animal Research Ethics Committee Meetings.

ANIMAL WELFARE INSPECTIONS ARE UNDERTAKEN AT INSTITUTIONS

The purpose of inspections is to ensure that the institution complies with the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 and SANS 10386:2021. During the inspections, Inspectors from the Animal Ethics Unit take a close look at the following aspects:

- The health, behaviour, and appearance of the animals, numbers and types of animals, as well as the reason for being housed at the facility.
- The housing environment, including size and density of housing, environmental enrichment protocols, feeding regimes, and general environmental conditions (e.g. lighting, ventilation, noise).
- Population, health, and pain management protocols, humane endpoint implementation, and euthanasia.
- Adherence to and compliance with protocols and maintenance of relevant and appropriate documentation.
- General facility structure and infrastructure, maintenance, pest control, and biosecurity measures.



Not only does the Animal Ethics Unit conduct routine inspections but it also undertakes follow-up, pre- and post-approval animal ethics committee inspections, and complaints.

The Animal Ethics Unit conducted 77 Inspections in 2024. Eight corrective actions, i.e. notice to comply and warnings, were issued to facilities.

We place emphasis on post-approval inspections to ensure the research is done in accordance with the ethics clearance and to actively monitor the welfare of the animals during the study.

4R PRINCIPLES

The importance of institutions following the 4Rs principles (replacement, reduction, refinement, responsibility) is paramount. Inspectors continually seek ways to effectively integrate these principles into practices.

Examples of institutions that have implemented strategies to replace, reduce, or refine the use of animals in their research include:

- Multiple studies are utilising banked animal tissue samples from previously approved research. The new studies initiated this month are classified as Cat 0 studies, indicating that no live animals will be involved in these studies.
- Two studies use the data from samples collected during a previously approved study and no live animals will be handled.

INVOLVEMENT WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The National Council of SPCAs' involvement in meetings and conferences with key stakeholders raises awareness about the critical importance of considering animal welfare.

In South Africa, veterinary technologists use technology and laboratory techniques to aid in diagnosing, preventing, controlling, treating, and rehabilitating illnesses and diseases in animals. Their work is essential in ensuring the health and welfare of animals across various settings.



South African Association of Veterinary Technologists' Congress

Inspector Lebo Sentle, Manager of the Animal Ethics Unit, was invited as a guest speaker to present at the South African Association of Veterinary Technologists' Congress, held on 9–10 October 2024. This platform was ideal for Ms Sentle to raise critical awareness about the role of the National Council of SPCAs. She provided valuable insight into the organisation's activities and emphasised the importance of collaboration between the animal welfare and veterinary science sectors.

Online Course

The Scientific Veterinary Consulting company has provided sponsorship for members of the Animal Ethics Unit to participate in the online course titled “Essence of the SANS 10386:2021”. This course is accredited and certified, offering an overview of the fundamental principles outlined in the South African National Standard for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (SANS 10386:2021). It aims to equip Animal Ethics Committees and all stakeholders involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes with the essential knowledge necessary for overseeing, designing, and conducting ethical, responsible, and impactful scientific activities involving animals.

REVIEW OF RESEARCH APPLICATIONS AND PROTOCOLS

During 2024, a total of 2,615 protocols were reviewed by the Animal Ethics Unit, requiring 2,578 man-hours for the evaluation process.

Inspectors from the Animal Ethics Unit apply the four Rs, namely replacement, reduction, refinement, and responsibility when reviewing applications for research on animals.



AN ANAESTHETIC MACHINE USED FOR RODENTS (SMALL MAMMALS) IS INSPECTED TO ENSURE THAT IT HAS BEEN SERVICED AND IS IN SOUND WORKING ORDER.

Recognising Animal Sentience in Science

Sentience is the ability to feel a wide range of emotions, including joy, pleasure, pain, and fear. Scientific research confirms that animals possess thoughts, feelings, and unique personalities. Animals are individuals with distinct preferences, desires, and needs.

Recognising animal sentience is transforming the way research is evaluated. It's not just about numbers and data; it's about compassion and empathy. As the understanding of animals' emotions deepens, we are committed to enhancing ethical practices to fully address the diverse needs and welfare of animals involved in research.

Why does this matter?

Because every creature deserves humane treatment that prioritises their emotional well-being alongside their physical health. This shift is not only enhancing animal welfare but also elevating the integrity of scientific research itself.



The Animal Ethics Unit advocates for the humane treatment of animals in research. Animal sentience is not just a theory, it's a powerful reality that demands our attention and respect. Animals in research are not just subjects, they are living beings with feelings, deserving of respect and humane treatment.



National Council
of SPCAs

Disaster Response AND EMERGENCY ACTION

DISASTER RESPONSE

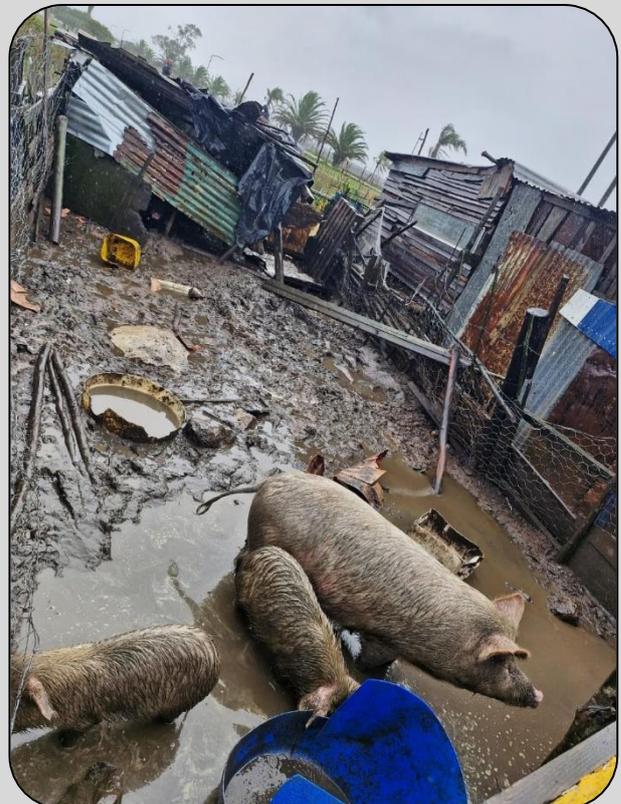
Disasters come in many forms and include floods, fires, and droughts. They are all destructive. Not only do they impact heavily on the lives of people, but animals also fall victim and are threatened with suffering and death. Our trained Disaster and Emergency Response Teams are on standby 24/7 to respond and provide hands-on assistance to animals when disasters strike.

Numerous natural disasters were experienced during 2024, from fires to floods, which affected domestic, farm, and wild animals. Our teams have assisted in five different provinces on seven occasions to help affected communities.

Eastern Cape Floods

In June 2024, the National Council of SPCAs' Disaster and Emergency Response Team assisted animals in the Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage areas affected by the flood. Heavy rains battered the area, with falling trees, mudslides, and flash floods wreaking havoc. Our Team was active in assisting animals in need, including those displaced by the floods, assisting subsistence farmers with access to feed, and ensuring no animal was left to suffer.

Numerous properties were found where dogs were chained and farm animals, primarily pigs, were confined to water-logged enclosures.



The dogs were freed from their chains, and the farm animals were moved from the flooded enclosures to drier areas. Feed to the value of R19,000 was purchased by the National Council of SPCAs and distributed to affected farmers and animal owners.



Tornado in KwaZulu-Natal

On the heels of the flooding in the Eastern Cape, a tornado devastated areas north of Durban, damaging homes and displacing many families. A Disaster and Emergency Response team was dispatched to the area to assess the situation and identify the worst-hit areas. The Gift of the Givers, who identified areas of concern, was contacted to obtain more details of animals needing assistance.

The team travelled across the affected regions to provide aid to animals and their owners. Many inspected properties were uninhabited, but the aftermath of the tornado was visible, with debris littering the roads.



Inspectors conducted on-foot assessments and searched for animals in need of assistance. They provided feed to farm animals, domestic animals, and medical attention to animals in need.

The Durban and Coast SPCA was also contacted to assist with stray and surrendered animals, as well as the disposal of carcasses.



Veld Fires

Veld fires in South Africa cause severe harm to lives, property, and animals each year. These fires result from carelessness, malicious acts, or natural causes like lightning. Dry veld and high winds create conditions where small sparks can escalate into runaway fires, sometimes leading to large-scale disasters. Farm animals are the most affected, however, domestic and wild animals also fall victim to the devastating flames. Some animals are burnt to death in the initial blaze and smoke inhalation is another common cause of death. Animals with severe injuries may survive the fire but have severe and permanent damage to the eyes, nose, ears, feet, and genitals. In most cases, these severely burnt and dying animals will need compassionate assistance by emergency euthanasia to prevent suffering.



Veld fires impacted several regions during the past year. Disaster Response Teams from the National Council of SPCAs were on hand to respond and provide on-the-ground assistance to farmers and their animals.

Free State: Fires in Thaba Nchu, Tweefontein, and Botshabelo caused minimal animal casualties due to swift responses from the National Council of SPCAs Disaster and Emergency Response Teams and local farmers. Farmers in the area collaborated to contain the fires, successfully preventing further damage and saving many animals. Most game farms received assistance, and rural areas remained unaffected. Neighbouring farms successfully relocated animals to safety.



An Inspector searches the area for small animals that may need assistance

North West: Fires devastated the Mosega area, Molopo Oog, and surrounding areas, including grazing lands. However, thanks to the combined efforts of local farmers, the National Council of SPCAs, Mafikeng SPCA, Cat Angels Refuge, and landowners, the impact on animal life was minimised.

Inspectors also discovered and removed 19 snares, which were destroyed to prevent further harm to animals; an indication of the high rate of poaching and hunting in that area.



The firefighting team used a helicopter to help halt the spread of the fires, limiting the damage and saving countless animal lives.

Two teams from the National Council of SPCAs diligently scoured the affected areas, ensuring the welfare of animals, with a particular focus on farms that had burned down. While no farm animals or other large mammals were found to have succumbed to the fires, several snakes and smaller animals had been caught in the blaze. Our Inspectors took great care to ensure that each one was no longer suffering.

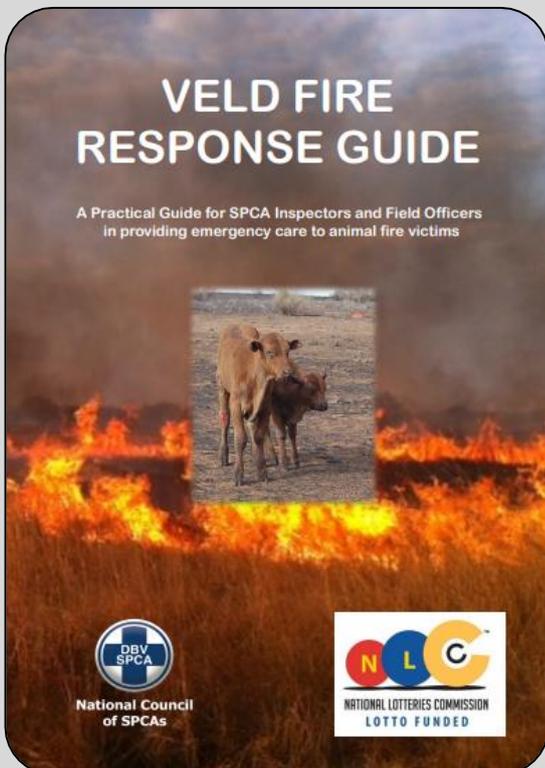


CENTRAL SOUTH AFRICA WILDFIRE EXPO

Inspectors Sibande and White represented the National Council of SPCAs at the annual Central South Africa Wildfire Expo on May 3–4, 2024, as part of the organisation's ongoing engagement with stakeholders on disaster preparedness, particularly concerning veld fires.



The expo featured presentations from various speakers who discussed veld fire-related issues and offered insights into the anticipated challenges of the 2024 fire season. The National Council of SPCAs also hosted a booth distributing educational materials, including the National Council of SPCAs' Veld Fire Response Guide, which emphasises the impact of veld fires on animals. The Inspectors were able to connect with key stakeholders in the field, establishing relationships that will ultimately benefit animals in the future.



EMERGENCY ACTION

Overturned Chicken Truck

National Inspectors responded to an urgent situation involving a truck accident near Reitz in the Free State. The truck was transporting 10,000 chickens, with over 7,300 succumbing to the impact. Despite the devastating scene, some chickens within the modular cages remained alive. SPCA teams quickly mobilised, dividing their efforts between the truck and the trailer. However, the working conditions around the modules proved perilous, posing a risk of collapse onto SPCA personnel. To mitigate this danger, the modules were carefully stabilised, allowing the teams to safely access the injured chickens. Over 600 birds had to be euthanised on-site due to their severe injuries. The remaining survivors were carefully loaded onto a relief truck for transport.

Complicating matters further, a significant number of birds had sought refuge in a culvert beneath the road, necessitating the intervention of an Inspector to retrieve the injured animals. Despite efforts to save them, many of the birds that hadn't perished immediately from the impact ultimately succumbed to their traumatic injuries.





National Council
of SPCAs



Improving Animal Welfare THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Our Community Projects address a wide variety of challenges faced by animals and their owners in disadvantaged circumstances.

We work towards improving the overall quality of life for the animals, and through education, training, and law enforcement (where necessary), we ensure that owners take responsibility and can care for their animals.



By improving animal welfare standards, we contribute to the upliftment of impoverished communities and empower owners, benefiting all of their animals in the future.

During the projects, teams of specialist staff provide on-site home inspections and support, which may include replacing inhumane equipment, offering primary health care, conducting sterilisations/vaccinations, providing housing, and empowering donkey owners with skills in harnessing, handling, and animal care.

Our strategies improve the overall well-being of all animals.



National Council of SPCAs

TRANSFORMING LIVES

Inspectors strive to improve the welfare of working donkeys, who play a vital role in South African communities. Working donkeys are assessed on the weight of loads, their body condition, the effectiveness of harnessing, and treatment by owners.

During the past year, 339 donkey owners were educated on the welfare of donkeys, the proper handling of the animals, and the value of proper harnessing. Community meetings were held to address various issues, from the theft of donkeys to the welfare of their animals.

Hands-on workshops provide donkey owners with the skills and materials to make harnessing for their animals. Horses are often used to draw carts carrying people and materials.

Many of the problems we find are related to a lack of knowledge or empathy. Although owners are educated wherever possible, there are still consequences for abusing or neglecting an animal. Owners are guided and assisted to make the necessary welfare improvements. If necessary, warnings are also issued that explain the law and responsibilities of the owner. The warnings are filed and followed up on to ensure that welfare is maintained.





ASSISTING COMMUNITIES AND THEIR ANIMALS

Our outreach team of Inspectors embarked on a journey to improve the lives of animals and their owners in Khowa (formerly Elliot) and Nqanqarhu (formerly Maclear), Eastern Cape. Partnering with local veterinary clinics, the National Council of SPCAs conducted a vital sterilisation campaign to tackle the root causes of pet overpopulation. Despite logistical challenges, our dedicated Inspectors diligently navigated the absence of street names and house numbers, ensuring pets received essential care.



The National Council of SPCAs believes that only providing food or inoculations for animals is not “outreach” – we aim to improve the entire life of the animal.

Home inspections offered advice and assistance, fostering a culture of responsibility and compassion. Follow-up inspections ensured that welfare concerns were addressed comprehensively, marking a significant step towards sustainable change within these communities.



Our team took every opportunity they received to educate youth, instilling values of compassion and responsibility towards animals from a young age.





**National Council
of SPCAs**

Protecting Farmed Animals AND PROMOTING POSITIVE CHANGE

FARM ANIMAL PROTECTION UNIT

The Farm Animal Protection Unit strives for positive change and improved welfare of all farmed animals.

The SPCA is opposed to forms of farming, farming systems, and animal husbandry practices which cause or may cause pain, suffering, distress, and/or significant harm.

The Farm Animal Protection Unit's main goal is to continuously improve the welfare of farmed animals. To achieve this, the Unit conducts national inspections at a wide range of facilities, including abattoirs, agricultural schools, aquaculture farms, livestock auctions, feedlots, dairy farms, and many others. The Unit also monitors live animal exports, rodeos, and religious slaughter practices.

In addition to facility inspections, policy changes are implemented through the formulation of new industry welfare standards facilitated by the South African Bureau of Standards, and current standards are periodically reviewed as new information or practices arise. Standards are subsequently used as supporting evidence when compiling dockets for contraventions of the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962.

FACILITY INSPECTIONS

Most animals raised for consumption are farmed in intensive systems, which often compromise their well-being. These animals are kept in confined spaces, subjected to surgical mutilation, deprived of natural behaviours, and fed additives like growth stimulants, antibiotics, and hormones to boost production. The management and housing structures make it nearly impossible to inspect or provide humane care for individual animals.

During the period under review, 1,407 inspections were undertaken nationally to inspect the welfare of farm animals and ensure compliance with the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 and relevant National Standards.

A total of 28 warrants in terms of Section 8(1) of the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 were obtained from various Magistrates nationwide to access facilities where obtaining consent from owners was not feasible.

Where contraventions of the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 were encountered, criminal charges were laid. Six new case dockets were registered with the South African Police Services (SAPS) and two convictions were secured (dog killed with axe and rodeo) after the accused were found guilty of

animal cruelty. The Unit has a further 34 criminal cases pending finalisation.

AL KUWAIT LIVESTOCK VESSEL

In February 2024, the National Council of SPCAs and the Cape of Good Hope SPCA dealt with the Al Kuwait, a live export vessel in Cape Town Harbour. The ship, carrying 19,000 cattle from Brazil to Iraq, emitted a strong stench that reached the city centre, alarming the public. The smell indicated appalling conditions on board, with cattle enduring a 2½-week journey amid accumulated faeces and ammonia. The Cape of Good Hope SPCA secured a warrant to humanely euthanase the suffering animals. Senior Inspector Grace De Lange and Dr Bryce Marock, who is the National Council of SPCAs’ veterinary consultant, worked extensively on this effort. A criminal docket has been registered regarding the incident.

UPDATE ON RODEO CRIMINAL CASE

The National Council of SPCAs achieved a significant victory in its prosecution against Leon “Kylon” Liversage, a prominent rodeo organiser and participant. The landmark judgment was handed down by the Middelburg Magistrate’s Court on 13 February 2024.

Mr Liversage faced charges stemming from a rodeo event held on 25 March 2023, at the Ribbokkloof Lodge in Middelburg, Mpumalanga. Despite explicit prohibitions under warrant against the use of bucking straps, spurs, and bells, which are devices known to inflict severe distress and injury upon animals, Mr Liversage persisted in allowing their continued use. This blatant disregard for the warrant led to his arrest on the day of the event for contempt of court.

Following an arduous prosecution, during which National Inspector Daryl White and the National Council of SPCAs’ Veterinary Consultant, Dr Bryce Marock, testified, the Middelburg Magistrates’ Court found Mr Liversage guilty on all four counts. These charges included animal cruelty as defined in sections 2(1)(a), 2(1)(f), and 2(1)(q) & (r) of the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962.

The Court sentenced Mr Liversage to twelve months’ direct imprisonment, suspended for five years on the condition that he does not commit the same offences during the suspension. Additionally, the Court cautioned Mr. Liversage to inform other rodeo participants that the cruel equipment should not be used again.

While the National Council of SPCAs would have preferred a more severe sentence, it is still thankful that Mr Liversage will carry a criminal record with long-lasting consequences. This ruling serves as a resounding condemnation of rodeo activities that employ cruel practices violating animal protection laws. The NSPCA commends the court’s decision, emphasising the urgent need for greater scrutiny and regulation of rodeo events nationwide, especially concerning licenses authorised under the Performing Animals Protection Act 24 of 1935,

which should safeguard these sentient beings against cruelty and exploitation.

DEATH ON FISH FARM

In July 2024, the Molefe Fish Farm in Volksrust was inspected after complaints about dying Mozambican tilapia. The owner initially denied access to Inspectors from the Farm Animal Protection Unit but after obtaining a warrant and SA Police Service assistance, Inspectors found several issues, including inadequate shelter, poor water quality, and dead fish, with no live fish present.



The farm, funded by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), was in poor condition despite the Department’s knowledge of it. The DALRRD provided the owner with fingerlings, equipment, and minimal training but failed to ensure proper fish care education. The issue gained media attention, and the Green Scorpions are investigating irregular government funding. The facility is now closed and has not received further support from the Department.

TSOLO POUND CRISIS

In June 2024, Inspectors from the National Council of SPCAs discovered 17 decomposing cattle carcasses and one horse carcass at the Tsolo Pound in the Eastern Cape, highlighting a long-standing issue. The pound master, Mr. Luvuyo Lutshetu, received a warning for failing to provide adequate supplementary feed and grazing for the animals. A security guard reported that no feed had been delivered for two months. While Mr Lutshetu explained that the feed supplier had failed to deliver and the municipality lacked burial equipment, he assured the inspectors that the carcasses

would be removed and feed would be secured. However, by 26 June, the carcasses remained in the enclosure despite the presence of feed. Criminal charges have been filed, and the Mthatha SPCA is conducting follow-up inspections.

NATIONAL STANDARDS / REGULATIONS

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

The Alpaca Welfare Standard was given the green light, and a working group was expected to start drafting the document by the end of 2024. However, the SABS has reported ongoing issues with their system, which began in November, hindering the project's registration. Feedback is awaited, and development of the standard is predicted to begin around March 2025.

With regards to the revision of the Pig Welfare Standard, a meeting was held on 14 November 2024 during which the use of modified gestation crates was discussed. All parties, except for the National Council of SPCAs, seemed to focus on the duration and not the inability of the sow to turn around. No consensus was reached at this meeting as the National Council of SPCAs expressed its disapproval of animals being confined in such a manner that they cannot turn around. The National Council of SPCAs has explicitly advised that we are seeking legal counsel regarding the legalities around such unnecessary confinement.



Crocodile Slaughter Regulations

In April 2024, the Farm Animal Protection Unit provided final comments on the draft regulations. The regulation is still with the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment System.

Rabbit Slaughter Regulations

The Presidency has assessed the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIAS) Report as per the following:

1. Initiating Institution: Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
2. Permission is granted to proceed with the Final Impact Assessment of the above Regulations. The stamp of

approval expired for gazetting; the department commenced the process of obtaining an extension.

AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT BILL

The Farm Animal Protection Unit finalised its comments early in 2024. The public consultation process for comment submission closed on 19 January 2024, followed by intergovernmental consultations. The period for comment submission during intergovernmental consultations concluded on 8 March 2024.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment consolidated all received comments in preparation for the review process. Subsequently, relevant comments were incorporated into the draft Bill. The reintroduction of the Bill in Parliament is planned for the period between October and December 2025. Prior to this, the Cabinet process is scheduled for execution under the new incoming administration.

HAPPY ENDING FOR SPIRITED SADDLER

On 29 April 2024, a Farm Animal Protection Unit Inspector responded to a complaint about a neglected saddler horse at Revelation Hill Stables in Pretoria. The 14- or 15-year-old chestnut stallion, named Emeralda Dear-Born, was severely emaciated, covered in bandages and plasters, and unable to stand. With the assistance of staff, the horse was helped to its feet. It was discovered that the horse had previously belonged to an owner in the Northern Cape, where similar welfare issues had been reported.

The Farm Animal Protection Unit has opened an animal cruelty case against the horse's former owners in the Northern Cape, citing cruelty, neglect, and the failure to provide necessary medical attention. The case is currently under investigation.

After several follow-up inspections, the horse, now named Warrior (a name inspired by his fighting spirit), has made a full recovery from his extensive injuries and is receiving the love and care he deserves. Warrior's owners have decided he no longer needs to perform and can now enjoy an early retirement as a companion animal.





**National Council
of SPCAs**



All Animals ARE WORTHY OF PROTECTION

SPECIAL PROTECTS UNIT

The Special Projects Unit manages a diverse portfolio, working with all animal species.

UPLIFTING THE LIVES OF ANIMALS

Inspectors in this Unit work toward improving and changing the lives of animals used in safeguarding, those classified as opportunistic animals, and animals used in legal and illegal forms of racing. Inspectors also focus on monitoring and improving the welfare of animals being transported through the country's ports of entry. The maiming of animals forms part of this portfolio, which also includes a direct focus on the organised criminal activities of animal fights, hunting with dogs, as well as the sexual abuse of animals.

INSPECTOR TO THE RESCUE

In January 2024, a Special Projects Unit Inspector rescued a Southern African Python from poor conditions in a village near Kraaipan, North West. The snake was confiscated and treated, at Bryanston Avian, Exotic & Small Animal Clinic, and rehabilitated by Friends of Free Wildlife.

In August 2024, the individual responsible was found guilty of violating the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 and the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act

(NEMBA) 10 of 2004 and received a three-year prison sentence or a R30,000 fine, with half the sentence suspended for five years.

The rescue operation was supported by the SA Police Services Stock Theft Unit and the North West Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (DEDECT).

ENSURING THAT ANIMALS TRAVEL SAFELY AND HUMANELY

Road Transport

Inspectors of the Special Projects Unit travel extensively across South Africa to ensure the humane treatment of animals during transport, and covered 97,670 km in 2024.

Border inspections are vital to upholding welfare standards, ensuring vehicles meet regulations on stocking densities, travel times, and humane transport practices. In June 2024, Inspectors participated in a multi-agency roadblock on the N8 national road near the Ramatlabama border post, inspecting animal transport vehicles alongside SAPS and the Department of Transport. The Unit prioritises animals transported over long distances for processing at borders. Inspections were conducted at key borders, including Beitbridge (South Africa-

Zimbabwe), Maseru, Ficksburg, Caledonspoort (South Africa-Lesotho), and Lebombo (Komatiport). These efforts aim to prevent animal suffering during road transport and border crossings.



After over six months of advocacy by the National Council of SPCAs, the Border Management Authority has confirmed that live animals will now be prioritised at South Africa's ports of entry and exit. This change aims to prevent prolonged waits in stationary, poorly ventilated trucks, which often lead to dehydration, heat stress, and respiratory issues. Animals will now be processed more quickly, particularly in extreme weather conditions.

In November 2024, during a break-the-seal operation at Ramatlabama Border, Senior Inspector Moseki had to humanely euthanase a downer cow after it was found compromised on the back of a truck. Senior Inspector Moseki further addressed the driver about the importance of compliance with the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 and the South African National Transport codes when transporting animals by road.

During the festive season, the number of animals transported through our national borders naturally increases and because of this, additional inspections were conducted at the Lebombo and Mananga Borders ahead of the festive season. Inspector Sibande was able to provide valuable training to the border officials on the requirements for transporting animals by road.

Animals Transported by Air

Inspectors regularly conduct inspections at OR Tambo International Airport and other airports nationwide to ensure compliance with the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animal Regulations. Inspectors also respond to complaints about cruelty, abandonment, delays, inadequate crating, smuggling, and other issues. Additionally, Inspectors provide ongoing advice and support to airport and border personnel on animal welfare, trade, and illegal activities involving animals.

Bloody Horror Scene Greets International arrivals at OR Tambo

A shocking incident of animal cruelty occurred at OR Tambo International Airport on 8 November 2024. A French national,

who had arrived in South Africa with her small dog two days prior, was caught on video surveillance throwing the dog over a three-story balcony railing in the airport atrium. The dog survived the fall but sustained severe internal injuries. Despite the efforts of the Kempton Park SPCA, who responded to the scene and transported the dog to a veterinary hospital, the injuries were too extensive, and the dog was euthanased. The woman's connecting flight to Brazil was halted, and the National Council of SPCAs initiated an investigation. Criminal charges were filed against the French national.

The National Council of SPCAs expressed its determination to hold her accountable for this horrific act by laying animal cruelty charges in terms of the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962. The French national has since passed away due to illness, and as a result, the criminal case could not continue.

MISSIONS OF MERCY

Dogfighting in Britstown

The Special Projects Unit received a complaint regarding dogfighting in Britstown. Acting swiftly upon this information, warrants were secured to inspect two properties believed to be involved in this cruel and illegal practice.

The inspection revealed a harrowing scene of animal neglect and abuse. The 4 dogs at both properties were living in deplorable conditions, with their enclosures riddled with filth and lacking necessities.



The animals exhibited a variety of injuries, including lacerations, puncture wounds, and broken bones, clear signs of their involvement in violent dogfights.

The National Council of SPCAs' Consulting Veterinarian assessed the dogs' conditions and decided to humanely euthanase two of them due to the severity of the injuries and to prevent further suffering.

However, hope was not lost for two other dogs found on the properties. Despite sustaining minor injuries, these dogs were deemed suitable for rehabilitation. The National Council of SPCAs immediately took action to ensure their well-being. The dogs were castrated to prevent future breeding and transported to Johannesburg, where they would have a better chance of finding loving homes.

The Britstown mission highlighted the urgent need to combat the cruel practice of dogfighting. By raising awareness and taking decisive action, the National Council of SPCAs is working tirelessly to protect vulnerable animals and create a more compassionate society, as well as bringing the offenders before the courts for committing these serious offences.

Dogfighting in De Aar

The Special Projects Unit received a video of a dogfight in De Aar, Northern Cape. Inspector Sibande, accompanied by Senior Inspector Semanya, obtained a warrant and went to the properties where the dogs were kept. Four dogs were removed, one of which was severely emaciated and left with infected and untreated injuries. Sadly, it had to be humanely euthanased. A docket was compiled, and charges of animal cruelty have been laid against the perpetrators.

HUNTING WITH DOGS

Inspection 1

The Special Projects Unit, along with the South African Police Services Stock Theft and Endangered Species Unit, the South African Police Services Rural Safety Unit, Kasselman Security Services, and the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, took part in a joint operation after information was received about hunting taking place on farmlands in an area outside Standerton, Mpumalanga. During a field operation, minors were caught attempting to hunt with six dogs in the veld and were warned before being sent home. Another group, aged 16-18 years old, was found illegally hunting a Blesbok with six Greyhounds. The antelope escaped, the hunters were apprehended, and their dogs were seized for safekeeping. Parents of the offenders were contacted and fined R500 each for illegal hunting and trespassing. Inspectors later found unhygienic conditions where the dogs were kept, issued a warning, and took the dogs to the SPCA for safekeeping. After three days, the owner resolved the issues, retrieved the dogs, and follow-up inspections were initiated to ensure compliance. All dogs received care for minor injuries and regular follow-ups were undertaken.

Inspection 2

The Unit was alerted to a case where 26 individuals were caught with 82 dogs in bakkies, taxis, and trailers. Three Steenboks and one Riverine Rabbit carcass were found in the suspect's possession. The Carletonville SPCA assisted us by collecting the dogs and housing them for two nights. Inspector Sibande had to humanely euthanase 12 dogs immediately due to the injuries sustained and a further 17 dogs were humanely euthanased during the veterinary examination. Cruelty charges have been added and reports, charge sheets, affidavits, and photographic evidence have been compiled and sent to the Investigating Officer who oversees the case.

The case has recently been finalised with 10 of the accused pleading guilty to animal cruelty and hunting with dogs. They were fined R6,000 or 6 months imprisonment, suspended for

5 years on condition that they do not contravene the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 or Transvaal Nature Conservation Ordinances. They were further deemed unfit to own any dogs.

WORKING DOGS AND HORSES

The National Council of SPCAs does not oppose the use of working animals provided that strict welfare standards are met and maintained.



These standards include appropriate housing, rest periods, nutrition and health, environmental enrichment, and adequate exercise for non-operational dogs and horses, as well as the use of humane training methods and equipment.

During 2024, the Special Projects Unit undertook inspections at facilities that use dogs and horses for safeguarding, detection, and border protection.

Facility	Inspections
SARS Customs and Exercise (detector dogs)	7
Department of Agriculture (detector dogs)	2
Department of Correctional Services K9 Unit	12
Department of Correctional Services Mounted Unit	3
ACSA Runway Dog Inspections	8
South African Police Services K9 Unit	66
South African Police Services Mounted Units	16

Warnings were issued regarding concerns such as inadequate cleaning of kennels, lack of veterinary care, dogs being kept without water, poor kennel maintenance, lack of fly repellent, and insufficient hygiene and drainage within the kennels. Follow-up inspections were also conducted to ensure compliance with the warning issued.

The Special Projects Unit also continued to conduct inspections at private security companies that use animals for safeguarding. The Special Projects Unit predominantly focuses its investigations on security companies in areas where there are no SPCAs. The Unit also guides SPCAs across the country in cases where animals are used for security.



Education and Training FOR A KINDER WORLD

TRAINING UNIT

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

INTERNAL TRAINING COURSES

The vast majority of South Africans come in daily contact with animals and in many cases rely on animals for their survival and well-being. Unfortunately, animal owners do not always have the knowledge to care for their animals correctly and education is a vital component of animal protection. This is a key role undertaken by Inspectors and Field Officers.

In cases where deliberate or malicious cruelty to animals occurs, Inspectors are legally empowered to investigate complaints and take the necessary action to assist the animals and prosecute the offenders.

The Training Unit hosts training for these staff members around the country to ensure they meet the necessary standards to be authorised in terms of national legislation.

Knowledge and application are the cornerstones of a successful organisation. To assist with the sharing of knowledge and the transfer of skills, courses were hosted at different levels, accommodating people's growth and development. The planning of logistical aspects regarding

training courses is vital to ensure that training is delivered professionally.

Training course material, including handouts and presentations, is regularly updated to ensure an effective training process for both the presenters and the delegates attending the courses.

Opportunities were provided for Field Officers, Inspectors, and Committee Members within the SPCA movement to grow their knowledge and advance their careers.

The past year's training diary is reflected below:

Field Officer Training

Field Officers play an important role within SPCAs, caring for animals, engaging with community members, identifying opportunities for education and upliftment, and helping rescue animals that are in need. They also play an important support role for Inspectors.



One Field Officer Course was hosted in April 2024. The Training team welcomed 16 delegates to this course, who, amongst theory modules, undertook a working equine practical and a pro-active day, which consisted of door-to-door inspections to educate animal owners and assist animals in Protea Glen, Gauteng.



Inspector Training

Inspectors are the keystone of the SPCA movement, demonstrating animal welfare through education, leadership, and prosecution. Specialised training courses hosted by the Training Unit are designed to ensure that SPCA staff around the country (Inspectors and Senior Inspectors) are highly trained and skilled in dealing with both people and animals. The presenters on training courses are all specialists in their fields and are thus able to answer questions and allow delegates an insight into a variety of subjects, as well as provide a valuable learning experience. Inspectors also attend Refresher Courses to sharpen their skills and supplement their knowledge.

Inspectors Training Course 22 July to 2 August 2024

16 delegates attended the Inspectors Training Course: Gauteng (7); Eastern Cape (1); KwaZulu-Natal (1); Limpopo (1); Mpumalanga (1); and Western Cape (5).



Refresher Inspectors Training Course 13 to 24 May 2024

8 Delegates attended the Refresher Inspectors Training Course: Gauteng (4); KwaZulu-Natal (2); and Western Cape (2).
2 Trainee Inspectors attended the Refresher Inspectors Training Course: Gauteng (2).

Refresher Inspectors Training Course 11 to 22 November 2024

13 Delegates attended the Refresher Inspectors Training Course: Gauteng (6); KwaZulu-Natal (1); Limpopo (1); and Western Cape (5).

2 Trainee Inspectors attended the Refresher Inspectors Training Course: Gauteng (1) and Swartland (1).

These two-week intensive training courses not only provide Inspectors with the opportunity to refresh their knowledge

and enhance their skills but also allow delegates to discuss challenges experienced in their SPCAs. Group work and discussions are important aspects of learning and provide the opportunity to problem-solve. The delegates attend practical learning excursions during this course and find these sessions extremely valuable.

Senior Inspector Training

Inspectors are presented with the opportunity to advance their careers. If they meet the required application criteria, including operating as an Inspector for a required length of time and prosecuting animal cruelty cases, they can apply to attend a Senior Inspectors Training Course. These courses are presented every two years with the next course scheduled for 2025.

SPCA Management Committee Training

Committee members play an important role in supporting the management and healthy development of SPCAs. This year, we have had the privilege of sharing knowledge through the training of 49 delegates representing 30 different SPCAs. The training consists of aspects such as staff management, legislation, pet adoptions, and committee responsibilities. These training events also provide SPCAs with opportunities to network and build relationships.

EXTERNAL TRAINING COURSES

External training courses are conducted by operational units within the National Council of SPCAs with stakeholders outside the organisation. This included courses for SA Police Service Officers, Stock Theft Officers, and Prosecutors. Our courses provide training on aspects such as legislation, applicable standards, and the required actions when dealing with stock theft, traffic incidents involving animals, and animal cruelty matters.

Training for Stock Theft Officers

During 2024 training was conducted with 126 Stock Theft students in attendance at the SAPS College in Hammanskraal.



Training for Animal Health Technician Students

We continued to conduct yearly training with Animal Health Technician students at the North West University and a total of 177 students attended the training at the end of 2024. The students participated in lectures that included legislation and domestic animal welfare, followed by working donkey welfare and farm animal welfare.



The lectures consisted of theory, practical activities in the classroom, and fieldwork where the students learned about the welfare of working donkeys and farm animals. Students were provided with important knowledge and understanding of welfare concerns and how to identify these when they work with animals.



TRAINING FOR A KINDER WORLD BY SHARING THE WELFARE MESSAGE AND BEST PRACTICE PROTOCOLS



**National Council
of SPCAs**

Consulting Veterinarian A VITAL MEMBER OF THE TEAM

Dr Bryce Marock's skills and knowledge make him an invaluable asset to the National Council of SPCAs. His determination, courage, and unwavering commitment to animal welfare are evident in his relentless efforts to stand up for animal victims. He works alongside Inspectors of the organisation's specialised Units and provides professional input on a variety of animal welfare issues. Dr Marock's deep compassion enables him to recognise the silent suffering of animals used in sports, agricultural practices, service, and illegal hunting.

SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE

The National Council of SPCAs continued to collaborate with the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to maintain an acceptable horse/rider and dog/handler ratio. This effort has spanned many years, during which the National Council of SPCAs has accepted retired horses and dogs and ensured that retirement processes were carried out correctly. This involved

travelling to all provinces in South Africa for unannounced inspections and communicating with the highest levels of the military.

The National Council of SPCAs has also been co-opted as the only civilian body to sit on the Animal Ethics Committee, which is chaired by the General Officer Commanding of the South African Infantry. The committee was included in the Memorandum of Understanding between the National Council of SPCAs and SANDF in 2016; however, it was only established in December of 2024. Two meetings have already yielded positive results and the participation of high-ranking generals in even relatively minor details has sent a clear message to the military that animal welfare is a priority.

The next phase of correction within the SANDF focuses on wildlife management, starting with the first base in 2024 at the Engineers' School in Kroonstad. With persistence and expertise, the National Council of SPCAs assisted the SANDF in bypassing the usual bureaucratic hurdles to reduce the wildlife population on the base. Unfortunately, the National Council of SPCAs had to manage feeding and watering of animals on the base until this was achieved. The Wildebeest were translocated successfully and the NSPCA is using the same

model to ensure overstocked military bases throughout South Africa are managed correctly.

AL KUWAIT LIVESTOCK SHIPMENT

In February 2024, the Al Kuwait, a live export vessel, docked at Cape Town Harbour. The ship was loading feed and carrying 19,000 bulls bound for Iraq from Brazil. Together with a team of inspectors from the National Council of SPCAs and the Cape of Good Hope SPCA, Dr Bryce Marock was involved in the examination of the animals aboard the Al Kuwait, working with a warrant.

Concerns were raised by members of the public regarding the noticeable stench emanating from the ship docked at Cape Town Harbour, reaching the city centre and surrounds. This smell was indicative of the awful conditions the animals were forced to endure with a build-up of faeces and ammonia. The stench onboard was unimaginable, yet the animals faced this every day. The entrance of this ship into South African waters was cited as a potential environmental and economic disaster for South Africa because of diseases that could enter the country.



The welfare of the animals was disastrous, resulting in actions required to be taken to mitigate the immediate suffering onboard, and a criminal case was compiled by the National Council of SPCAs. Unfortunately, due to threats to the South African herd because of possible disease, the animals could not be offloaded in South Africa, so it could only force purchasing of medications, cleaning of the vessel, euthanasing animals unlikely to recover, and reducing stocking on some decks.

This vessel is the showcase carrier used by industry in countries such as Brazil, New Zealand, and Australia. It is touted as the future of Live Export of Animals by Sea. A report was prepared, and data was provided to legislatures in New Zealand and Brazil regarding the potential unbanning of live export in the former and impending legislation in the latter. This vessel is supposedly the “solution” to improve animal welfare at sea. The impact of this incident on global trade is unquantifiable, but it undoubtedly shattered the myth that this trade can be fixed.

EXPORT OF LIVE ANIMALS FROM SOUTH AFRICA TO KUWAIT

During March 2024, the National Council of SPCAs’ Inspectors and the Consulting Veterinarian conducted inspections at the feedlot where animals were being held before being loaded onto the vessel. Key concerns noted during inspections included inadequate shelter, non-adherence to stipulated guidelines, confrontations, disease prevalence, inhumane shearing, and loading of pregnant animals despite welfare concerns. The loading of animals with “orf”, a zoonotic disease, has been a key feature in shipments to the Middle East. The National Council of SPCAs collected samples and submitted them for laboratory testing before departure. This resulted in sheep with signs of the illness being removed (usually they would continue with the journey, even if they have the illness, as the Department has never demanded testing.) The presence of this disease onboard a vessel has caused major disasters where vessels were turned away from destination countries. The animals also suffer from mouth lesions during the journey. Unfortunately, there were some undetected and it did cause a significant delay in unloading in Kuwait, but at least it is now being taken seriously by both the importing and exporting countries, an example of how the industry is not proactive without organisations like the National Council of SPCAs.

The National Council of SPCAs employed a veterinarian, at its own cost, to scan for pregnancy, ensuring no pregnant ewes or lambs would suffer on the journey. The exporters attempted to prevent the National Council of SPCAs from doing so through an unsuccessful High Court interdict. It is worrying that the Department did not scan for pregnancy or force the exporters to do so. This, despite having a report by their own appointed Independent monitor that detailed the suffering of lambs and pregnant ewes on board on a previous journey during the hottest periods in Middle Eastern waterways. The report also detailed severe heat stress, as argued by the National Council of SPCAs in court. Unfortunately, the Department has not suspended shipments during this period. The National Council of SPCAs did compile draft regulations with the Department and this provision will be contested during the public participation phase. A criminal docket was registered for the inhumane treatment of animals. The National Council of SPCAs remains strongly opposed to the cruel and unnecessary transportation of live animals by sea. Until this practice ends, the National Council of SPCAs will leverage all available legal powers to ensure animal welfare is prioritised and continue with inspections to ensure that only healthy and suitable animals undergo such arduous journeys.

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS WITH GOOD NEWS FOR RATS

The past two years have been an exciting time with the evolution of practical solutions for animals regarded as pests. One product currently being registered is called “Evolve Soft Bait”. The bait has proven to be effective in

sterilising pest rodents to such a degree that population numbers drop dramatically. The product is safe for the environment, protects wild animals, and is non-toxic to humans. It is in the process of being registered. The National Council of SPCAs is responsible for facilitating the deal between the local importer and the supplier in the United States, as announced on the US stock exchange.

The National Council of SPCAs has written to the Minister of Agriculture imploring him to prioritise registration of this product. It is more effective than poisons when deployed citywide, on farms, or at retailers. The ingredient is simple and cost-effective. The National Council of SPCAs believes the mass rollout of this product is essential. The company that has received the agreement to sell by the US-based company is the biggest in the southern African market.

NATIONAL HORSE RACING AUTHORITY

The National Council of SPCAs has approached the National Horse Racing Authority (NHA) in terms of improving welfare in the industry by insisting on 4 key provisions:

1. The phase-out of the crop, the first phase being overhand use.
2. The phaseout of tongue ties.
3. The prohibition of racing horses until they are at least three years old.
4. Significant punishment for jockeys that are repeat offenders in any form of abuse, even referral for criminal punishment.

The NHA has agreed to provide scanning personnel at thoroughbred races to prevent the use of unsuitable horses (those with chronic injuries). They will assist in identifying horses that have chronic injuries and are being used for any sports during their post-racing career. The National Council of SPCAs has in the meantime been co-opted onto the National Horse Racing Authority's Inquiry and Appeals board, the body that investigates all contraventions of rules, and not only welfare. It will, however, not compromise on the 4 provisions and plans to act in the coming year.

GLOBAL WELFARE

Live Export by Sea in the Spotlight

Dr B Marock was invited to present at the World Veterinary Association's 39th Congress held in Cape Town in April 2024. Dr Marock's presentation, titled "*Live Exportation of Animals by Sea: Animal Welfare Issues and the Shifting Trade Routes*", was delivered to an audience that included large animal production veterinarians as well as state veterinarians. It was well-received by both local and international veterinarians attending the conference. The presentation was notable for its inclusion of data and footage from the National Council of SPCAs' archives, which span decades.

8TH African Animal Welfare Conference

In September/October 2024, Dr B Marock presented on Live Export by Sea at the 8th African Animal Welfare Conference held in Kenya by the African Network for Animal Welfare and the United Nations. The National Council of SPCAs has been invited on several occasions and Dr B Marock has spoken on a wide range of topics from welfare at pounds, culling of diseased animals, and live transport. Previous conferences were held in Ethiopia, Botswana, and the Gambia.

International Coalition for Animal Welfare

Six International Coalition for Animal Welfare (ICFAW) meetings were attended during 2024. This is the official organisation through which animal welfare is represented at the World Organization for Animal Welfare (WOAH), described under the Farm section. It is the World Trade Organisation's technical body for the health and welfare of animals. It is made up of the global collective of the Department of Agriculture, but because industry participates, so then must global animal welfare organisations. Dr B Marock represented the National Council of SPCAs at ICFW and was a member of the technical sub-committee for global welfare's contribution to the revision of the sea and land transport standards. This included communication with the WOAH and submission of technical submissions based on the National Council of SPCAs' experience with ICFW's submissions. These standards are very vague and will unlikely ever be enforceable in countries that have never had animal protection legislation, so the goal for the National Council of SPCAs is to ensure some protection is provided specifically in these other countries.

Worldwide Vets 2024 Golden Star Award Nominee

We are proud to report that Dr Bryce Marock was one of the nominees for the Worldwide Vets Golden Star Award 2024. The Golden Star Award is an award for veterinarians who have made a special contribution to animal welfare or conservation. Dr Marock has dedicated the past decade to serving as a Consulting Veterinarian at the National Council of SPCAs. His compassion and dedication have been the cornerstone of his fight against animal cruelty. Recognised as a leading expert in organised dogfighting forensics in Africa, Dr Marock has played a pivotal role in prosecuting many dogfighting cases, most resulting in the imprisonment of the perpetrators, a historic achievement in South Africa and Africa. Positive feedback on the National Council of SPCAs' role in combatting animal cruelty was received from all parts of the world.





**National Council
of SPCAs**

Protecting Wildlife AND ENSURING WELFARE STANDARDS

WILDLIFE PROTECTION UNIT

The Wildlife Protection Unit is a dedicated specialist operational unit equipped to ensure that animal welfare is always considered for any human-related activities, for both free-living and captive wildlife.

PROTECTION FOR LIONS

Law and Policy

The past months saw the Law and Policy officers of the Wildlife Protection Unit pay focused attention to several major policy, regulatory, and legislative documents and strategies requiring research, and comment, often with back-to-back deadlines.

The National Council of SPCAs has been advocating for animal welfare through the recently enacted "well-being" clause in the National Environmental Management Laws Amendment Act (NEMLA). This clause stems from a landmark legal case regarding the lion bone trade. However, the South African Game Hunters and Conservation Association (SAHGCA) is challenging the clause's inclusion in the National

Environmental Management Biodiversity Act (NEMBA), claiming it could harm their commercial interests.

SAHGCA sought direct access to the Constitutional Court to overturn the "well-being" provision without notifying or involving the National Council of SPCAs, which has a legislated mandate to protect animal welfare. The National Council of SPCAs discovered that SAHGCA attempted to settle the case unilaterally, prompting the National Council of SPCAs to file an urgent application in the High Court. On December 16, 2024, the High Court granted an interdict preventing SAHGCA from settling the matter without the National Council of SPCAs' participation.

The National Council of SPCAs has now formally filed its intervention and opposition application in the Constitutional Court, ensuring its voice is heard in this significant matter affecting animal welfare in South Africa.

Inspections

During 2024, several lion farms were inspected, and numerous welfare concerns were observed. These included unsanitary conditions, inadequate shelter and nutrition, overweight lions, health concerns which included injuries, and lack of water. The findings of these inspections highlight ongoing and serious welfare concerns at these lion facilities.

The unsanitary conditions and lack of adequate care pose significant risks to the health and well-being of the lions. Warnings were issued, insisting that welfare concerns be adequately addressed, and follow-up inspections were undertaken.

Emerging Trends

The National Council of SPCAs has, on almost every lion farm inspection, found tigers being kept and bred at the facilities. We have noticed an alarming upward trend in the number of tigers being “farmed” at these lion facilities. We believe it has much to do with the Government’s intention to close down the lion farming industry after all the pressure from the National Council of SPCAs and other NGOs.

When the National Council of SPCAs submitted comments to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment on the draft notice prohibiting certain activities involving African lions, it took the liberty to include other exotic animals, like tigers, in the submission. It has a very real concern that intensive tiger farming will become the norm in South Africa if it doesn’t intervene as it does. The move to farming tigers is a strategic shift on the part of the farmers as there are very few laws in South Africa to protect exotic species. The Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 is the only Act that truly affords protection to all species, regardless of whether they are indigenous to South Africa or not.



Captive Lion Cubs Rescued

Sadly, lions have become one of the most exploited species in South Africa. From once wandering the vast savanna to being commercially and intensively bred “farmed” animals. Recently, these majestic creatures have become a hot commodity as pets and are confined to small gardens in residential areas.

In May 2024, the National Council SPCAs assisted the Kloof and Highway SPCA in rescuing two lion cubs illegally kept in a

residential area in Westville in KwaZulu-Natal. Initially denied entry, Inspectors eventually gained access with SAPS and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW) officials. The owners denied possession, and the cubs were found on a neighbouring driveway.

To ensure their safety amidst growing public interest and threats, the cubs were removed and housed by the SPCA. After veterinary assessments, arrangements were made to transfer the cubs to a secure, accredited facility in the Free State. While the Free State conservation body DESTEA supported the process, EKZNW delayed issuing export permits, compromising the cubs’ welfare.

Despite threats and legal challenges, the National Council of SPCAs successfully relocated the cubs, prioritised their welfare, and disclosed their location to SAPS for pursuing criminal charges under the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act (NEMBA). The cubs are now thriving in a pre-release camp, preparing for a safe and natural future.

ACTIONS FOR ELEPHANTS

Charley is Free!

For over three years, the National Council of SPCAs has been liaising actively with the Pretoria National Zoological Garden (PNZG) regarding the pitiful situation of Charley, a captive African elephant. The goal has been twofold: Firstly, to prevent the zoo from bringing in more captive elephants, and secondly, to advocate for Charley's release to a suitable sanctuary. Trapped and taken from his wild home in Zimbabwe in 1982 as a two-year-old calf, Charley was brought to South Africa and forced to perform in a circus. After 17 years of suffering, he was transferred to a different but equally distressing environment, this time at the PNZG, where he has spent the last 23 years.

Through the combined efforts of various animal rescue organisations, Charley was successfully transported to his new home at the Shambala Private Game Reserve in July 2024. By all accounts, he is settling in well and enjoying mudbaths and his new freedom. Charley can now ultimately look forward to a happy retirement in the company of other elephants on the reserve.

Madikwe Game Reserve Tragedy

The National Council of SPCAs has raised serious concerns about the dire conditions at Madikwe Game Reserve in North-West South Africa, where severe overgrazing and poor veld management have left wildlife, particularly elephants, starving and dying in large numbers. Despite being promoted as a top conservation area, the reserve is failing its animals, with insufficient vegetation within its boundaries, compared to the lush surroundings outside its fences. During inspections, National Inspectors discovered emaciated animals, including

an elephant calf that had to be euthanased. Since August 2024, elephant deaths have risen sharply, with approximately 1,600 elephants currently at risk. Aerial surveys revealed more dead animals, including a giraffe and two other struggling elephants. The National Council of SPCAs accuses conservation authorities of ignoring the escalating crisis caused by years of inaction, overpopulation, and bush encroachment.

On 13 December 2024, the National Council of SPCAs demanded clarity regarding the situation and an action plan from entities including the North West Parks and Tourism Board and the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation, and Tourism (DEDECT). Urgent and drastic action is required to alleviate the immediate suffering of elephants and other herbivores, particularly browsing species. At the meeting, DEDECT confirmed that a Task Team was set to be appointed by the MEC of the province, with the National Council of SPCAs included as members of the team.

The Wildlife Protection Unit Inspectors have been on-site, closely monitoring the situation and assessing the animals most in need of assistance. Our team is dedicated to ensuring that the relevant authorities take prompt and effective action to relieve the suffering of the animals in the reserve.

This disaster is attributed to human negligence rather than natural causes. The National Council of SPCAs is committed to pushing for urgent action to hold those responsible accountable.

BLOEMFONTEIN ZOO

The Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality had plans to reopen the Bloemfontein Zoo, despite a pending criminal prosecution for gross animal cruelty and neglect under the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962. The National Council of SPCAs opposed this move, citing the zoo's history of mismanagement and cruelty. The Municipality intended to use funds from the "Community Services" budget to operate the zoo until a formal budget was approved, raising concerns about diverting resources from essential services.

A High Court order granted to the National Council of SPCAs prohibits the Municipality from acquiring new animals until it approves a sufficient budget. The National Council of SPCAs has engaged with conservation authorities regarding the potential issuing of permits for the Municipality to procure any animals for the zoo and remains steadfast and resolute in our opposition to the re-opening of the Bloemfontein Zoo.

URGENT RELIEF FOR MARLOTH PARK ANIMALS ORDERED

The High Court of South Africa, Mpumalanga Division, Mbombela, issued an urgent order on 22 November 2024 following a petition by the National Council of SPCAs to address the suffering of wildlife in Marloth Park.

Marloth Park, a town bordering Kruger National Park, allows free-roaming wildlife to coexist with residents. However, mismanagement has led to severe overpopulation and overgrazing, causing starvation, illness, and death among animals. Despite warnings from the National Council of SPCAs over the past decade, authorities have failed to act. A 2017 blanket interdict imposed by a residential group further restricted culling efforts.



The High Court directed the Nkomazi Local Municipality to urgently implement humane population control measures and provide supplementary feeding and veterinary care. The National Council of SPCAs, though disappointed by governmental inaction, will oversee the implementation of these strategies to ensure animal welfare.

CONVICTION FOR SNAKE IN BONG

Dirk de Jager, a man from Limpopo, was convicted for animal cruelty after a viral video showed him exposing a live snake in a jar to what is believed to have been cannabis smoke. The National Council of SPCAs' Wildlife Protection Unit investigated the case after receiving a complaint and successfully identified de Jager.

He was arrested in August 2024 and pleaded guilty in October 2024. De Jager was sentenced to a fine of R2,000 or 30 days' imprisonment, suspended for 12 months, provided he avoids similar offences.

While the Wildlife Protection Unit is disappointed in the leniency of the sentence, we are grateful that he is facing repercussions for his actions, including a criminal record. We remain committed to tracking and prosecuting those responsible for any form of cruelty to animals. We sincerely hope that de Jager's case will deter others from engaging in these sorts of appalling activities.



Promoting the Welfare AND PROTECTION OF ANIMALS

COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

The Communications Unit’s portfolio aims to reach the public to promote the work of our Operational Units for all animal species and to garner and sustain moral and financial support. Team members strive to convey animal welfare messages and represent the National Council of SPCAs as a leader in animal welfare in Africa.

PROMOTING THE ANIMAL WELFARE MESSAGE

Ad Outpost

The National Council of SPCAs’ pro bono billboards on the M2 highway, titled ‘Imagine Never Moving’, were in circulation by Ad Outpost, on an ad hoc basis and when billboard space became available.

JCDcaux

The National Council of SPCAs’ pro bono billboards with ‘We Protect Them All’ and ‘Adoptim’ messages were flighted for free on available billboards across Gauteng.

Boundless

During the reporting period, the National Council of SPCAs was approached by the advertising agency, Boundless, to conduct

We’re for All Animals

In April 2024, the National Council of SPCAs secured screen time on the largest digital billboard in Africa, owned by Epic Outdoor, being on the N1 North, before the New Road off-ramp (Midrand, Johannesburg) free of charge. See visual above. A further seven electronic billboards in Gauteng were also included. Our “We’re for all animals” billboards were flighted on the available sites.

a pro bono campaign for the National Council of SPCAs. The campaign centred around “Adoptim: A furry prescription”, a message that aimed to promote responsible adoptions and explain the health benefits associated with owning a pet. Boundless pulled out all the stops, including obtaining billboards, news features, influencer participation, and other electronic advertising mechanisms completely free of charge.



District Media Group

The National Council of SPCAs' pro bono digital billboards in Sandton City, Sandton Gautrain Station, Umlazi, and Soweto remained in circulation. The "Adoptim" billboards have also been rolled out on digital sites across the country.

Tractor Outdoor

A new relationship was forged with Tractor Outdoor, which has digital billboards across South Africa. An agreement was made that the National Council of SPCAs would be provided with screentime on billboards across South Africa, all free of charge.

CAMPAIGNS

During the reporting period, several campaigns were undertaken on our social media platforms. These campaigns are defined as a series of posts, with a continuous message, that is spread out over specific periods.

Unchain a Dog Month Campaign

Unchain a Dog Month (January 2024) raised awareness about the welfare of chained or tethered dogs and aimed to promote their well-being. Many dogs spend a significant portion of their lives chained or tethered outdoors, which can lead to various physical and psychological problems. This worldwide initiative encourages dog owners to consider alternatives to chaining, such as providing a fenced yard or at least suitable running chains, to ensure that dogs have the opportunity to enjoy all Five Freedoms. It also serves as a reminder for communities to advocate for the humane treatment of animals and to support the National Council of SPCAs.



Election Campaign

This campaign ran on 27, 28, and 29 May 2024. The aim was to align with Election Day and used the concept of "making your mark" to encourage people to stand up against animal cruelty and promote animal welfare in South Africa. Over the three-series post, we highlighted various integral aspects of the National Council of SPCAs, specifically, doing more for animals, rescuing the country's animals, and fighting against animal cruelty. Throughout the campaign, supporters were

encouraged to donate R10 to the National Council of SPCAs on Election Day 2024.

Mandela Day Campaign

A three-post campaign was run in the weeks leading up to and on Mandela Day 2024 (5, 11, and 18 July). This included two static posts and one video. The campaign supported the Mandela Day theme for 2024, which was #ItIsInYourHands. We encouraged all our supporters to take it upon themselves to make a difference in the lives of animals. We highlighted Nelson Mandela's compassion for everyone, humans and animals alike, and asked people to embrace his vision of a more empathetic world for all. Our message highlighted how important it is to help those who can't help themselves. We also kindly asked people to support animals in need by donating to the National Council of SPCAs in remembrance of the humanity exhibited by Mandela. The reaction to this campaign was positive.



National Wills Week Campaign

This campaign ran on 16, 18, and 20 September 2024. The aim was to align with National Wills Week to encourage people to consider leaving a bequest or legacy to the National Council of SPCAs in their will. Over the three-series post, we highlighted how the National Council of SPCAs works to prevent cruelty and deals with animal abuse and neglect. We emphasised the impact that bequests and legacies have on the work we do and how our Units can benefit from the donation. We also explained the importance of a will and how to get assistance with leaving a bequest to the National Council of SPCAs.



Tourism Month Campaign

A three-post campaign was run during Tourism Month and posted on 23, 25, and 27 September 2024 in the lead-up to World Tourism Day on 27 September 2024. The campaign was also used to celebrate Heritage Day on 24 September 2024. The campaign included three static posts, based on cartoon artwork that was done by Cuan Miles.

The campaign focused on ethical tourism, encouraging people to stay away from any activity that encourages interactions with wildlife or the exploitation of wildlife. The focus was on the harm to animals from activities like elephant rides, lion cub petting, and keeping marine animals in captivity. The message was to support responsible wildlife attractions and pointed supporters to the National Council of SPCAs' accredited facilities.



YapScan Campaign

YapScan, which relies on artificial intelligence software (AI), was developed as a “first layer of protection” for pet owners. It is a free app that scans a dog’s nose and uses the scan as a form of identification for that specific dog.

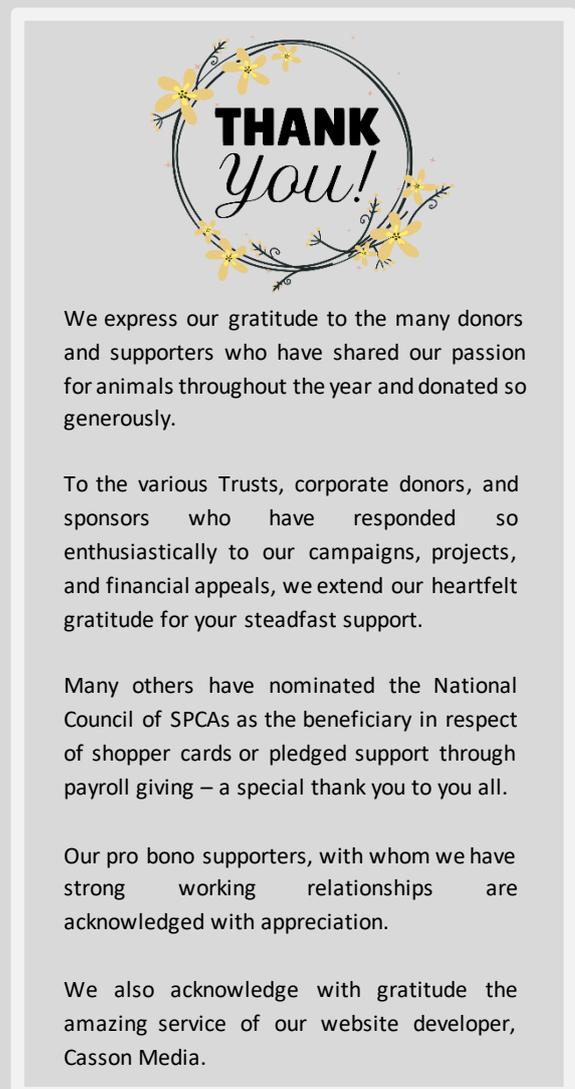


The app works on the principle that a dog’s nose is as unique as a human’s fingerprint. The scan is loaded onto the app along with the dog’s details and goes into the online “kennel” database. The app will work similarly to a microchip as a tool of identification for missing dogs. If a missing dog is picked up, the dog’s nose can be scanned using YapScan. If the dog has been registered on the app, the owner’s details will pop up. The owner can then be contacted so that they can be reunited with their dog. For every scan, the National Council of SPCAs receives R1, up to a ceiling of R1 million.

MEDIA COVERAGE AND PUBLICATIONS

During the reporting period, 36 media statements were issued with subsequent enquiries handled. The media statements resulted in a wide coverage of the issues on television, radio, print, and online.

Eleven articles that were submitted have appeared in various magazines/publications. The content of these articles covered a range of subjects from responsible pet care to ethical tourism and animal crimes.



Remembering

those who have suffered at the
hands of live export by sea in 2024

51,250 sheep from South Africa to the Middle East
19,000 bulls from Brazil to Iraq, via Cape Town
11,290 cattle & **3,000** small livestock from South Africa to Mauritius

84,540



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