



Making Scotland the best place in the world for an animal to call home



Scottish SPCA Manifesto
for the 2024 UK General Election

Scotland should be the best place in the world for all animals to call home

It should be an environment rich in the things animals need to thrive - protection, food, shelter and kindness. The Five Domains of nutrition, environment, health, behaviour and mental state should be a model for countries all over the world to follow where animals are given the love and protection to live in nature and alongside humans in harmony.

But there is an animal welfare crisis ongoing in Scotland and the Scottish SPCA believes it is the duty of everyone, particularly our elected representatives to work harder to stamp out the cruel, selfish activity which is jeopardising the health and wellbeing of our domesticated and wild animals.



MPs across the United Kingdom have the power and voice to help tame the excesses of animal cruelty and neglect by backing our four key areas of campaign activity.

1. Animal Abuse

2. Animal Breeding

3. Animal Ownership

4. Animals and the Environment

The Scottish SPCA is Scotland's only all animal emergency service. We are the only animal welfare charity in the UK that is authorised to enforce the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 and are a reporting agency to the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service.

We are calling on MPs to help us tackle the growing animal welfare crisis now, before it is too late.

In 2023 the Scottish SPCA responded to:

**10%
Rise**

in calls to our
Animal Helpline

**126
People**

who were looking to
relinquish their pet due
to the cost-of-living crisis

**25%
Increase**

in animal arrivals
to our centres

**4,051
Incidents
where
animals
had suffered**

from unintentional abuse mainly due to
owners having a lack of knowledge or
struggling financially to care for their animal

**606
Incidents**

of animals who had suffered
from intentional abuse

**63
Incidents**

where animals had suffered due to
human impact on our environment
which for them is their home

We conducted:

106

Investigations into
the illicit pet trade

189

Investigations with links
to serious organised crime

04

Investigations into
animal fertility clinics

159

Inspections
on farms

81

Investigations into
animal fighting

**8,647 Rescues
involving wildlife**

Our investigations led to:

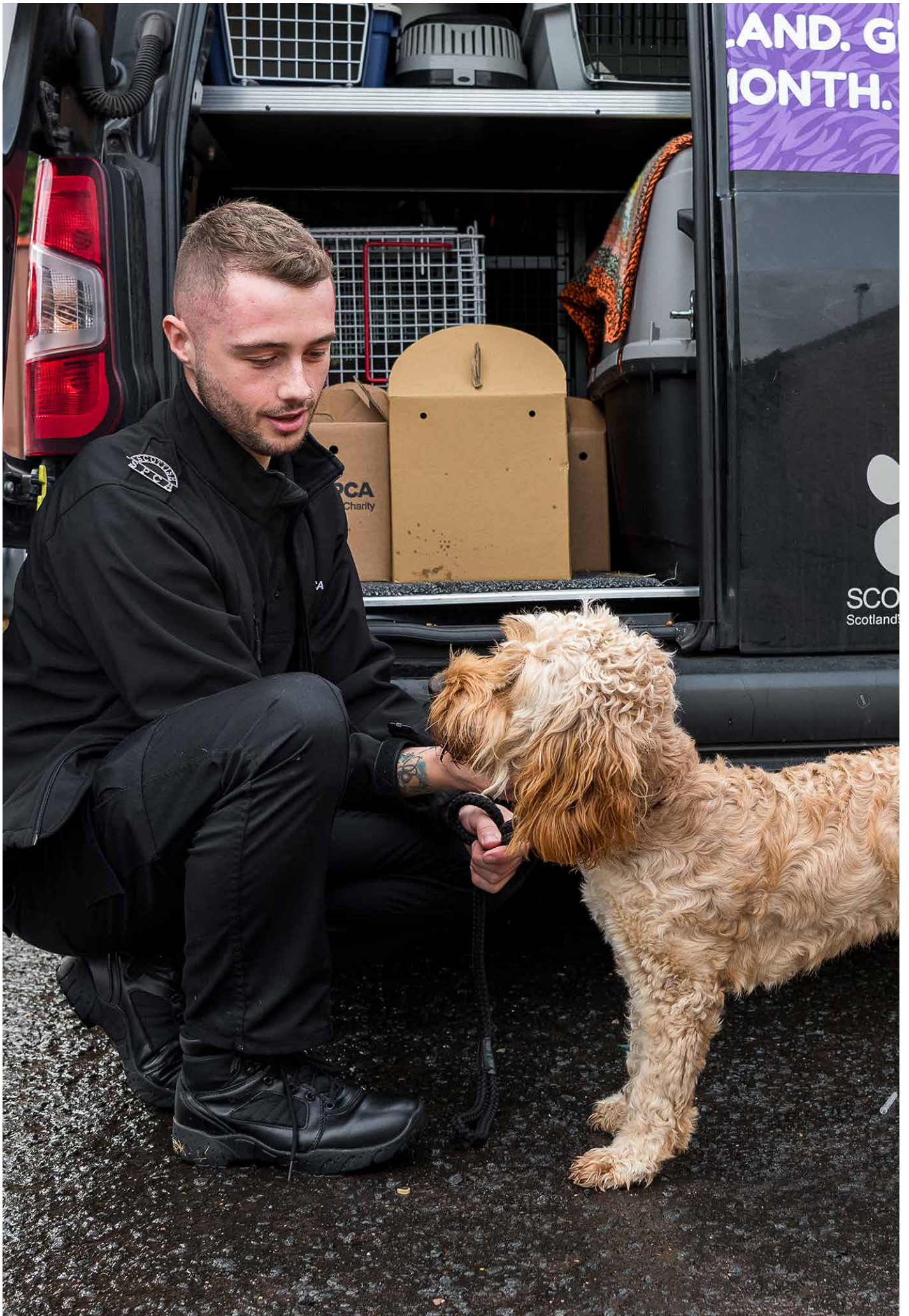
111

Animals being rescued
from those who intended
to harm them or who
looked to put profit
over welfare

471

Animals seized from decision
notices and rehomed without
having to sit in a rescue
centre waiting for a court
case to be heard

70 Prosecutions



Animal abuse

We need to tackle the link between animal abuse and human abuse and enhance traceability and monitoring of animal welfare offences.



What can be done now?

- We need better ways to share intelligence between enforcement bodies so that reoffending can be tackled and more opportunities are created to intervene before animals suffer unnecessarily.
- We need to ensure the sentencing of animal related offences is consistent and effective and that all options available to the courts are considered to ensure they act as both punishment and deterrent.

What's next?

- We need to establish a UK National Animal Offenders Register that is incorporated into existing intelligence systems so that we can truly tackle that link between animal abuse and human abuse.

Our long term goal

We need to connect a UK National Animal Offenders Register with international intelligence systems so that we truly make an impact when it comes to breaking the cycle of animal and human abuse.

Animal breeding

Animal fertility procedures should only be conducted by those who are suitably trained and qualified to do so. We must tackle irresponsible breeding by lay people.



Our long term goal

We no longer have animals being bred in the UK with morphological, physiological or behavioural characteristics that impact their quality of life.

Irresponsible breeding can result in morphological, physiological or behavioural characteristics that would have an impact on an animal's quality of life.

What can be done now?

There must be formal regulation of Animal Fertility Clinics and greater enforcement of The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 and equivalent regulations across the UK.

What's next?

There needs to be an overhaul of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 to tackle those who carry out veterinary procedures but are unqualified to do so and unbeknown to the public who are paying them.





Animal ownership

Animal suffering often begins at the start of their life when they need our help most. We must tackle the irresponsible breeding, sale and ownership of animals and prevent suffering in the first place.

Our long term goal

An animal ownership licensing register for anyone who has responsibility for an animal regardless of species has been established. Being responsible for an animal should be seen as a privilege.

What can be done now?

- Fraud involving pet advertising and selling must be included in the Online Safety Act 2023. Suitable resources must be allocated so that there can be greater enforcement of the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010, Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 and equivalent regulations in other parts of the UK.
- Microchipping of cats should be compulsory across all nations of the UK with one National Pet Microchipping database.
- Positive, reward-based animal training techniques should be the norm and the use of electronic training devices such as electric shock collars should be banned.

What next?

- There needs to be proper investment in animal welfare education and for it to be a mandatory element of the school curriculum across the UK.
- There needs to be an overhaul of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 to outlaw the deeds of dogs, not the breeds. Banning all dogs in three breeds and two types of dog does nothing to protect the victims of dog attacks. The danger to the public should be judged on a dog's behaviour not simply the breed they are. Anyone found guilty of owning a dog that is out of control and injures a person should be banned from dog ownership for life.
- All farmed animal welfare codes of practice/animal welfare guidance need to be updated to move beyond the five freedoms and instead reflect the five domains of animal welfare and ultimately promote higher standards across the UK with farmers given the resources they need to improve welfare.

Animals and the environment



We must halt biodiversity loss and ensure that wild animals have the resources available to them to thrive.

What can be done now?

We need to see adoption and proper enforcement of key Scottish and UK legislation that exists to protect our natural neighbours this includes better enforcement of:

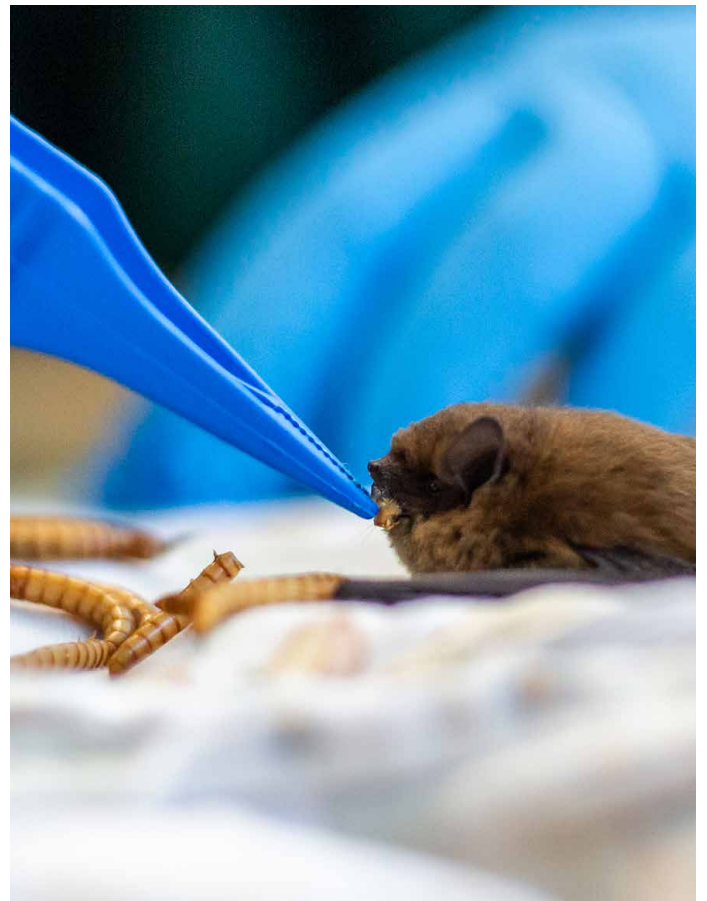
- The Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Act 2024
- Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
- Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Marine (Scotland) Act 2010

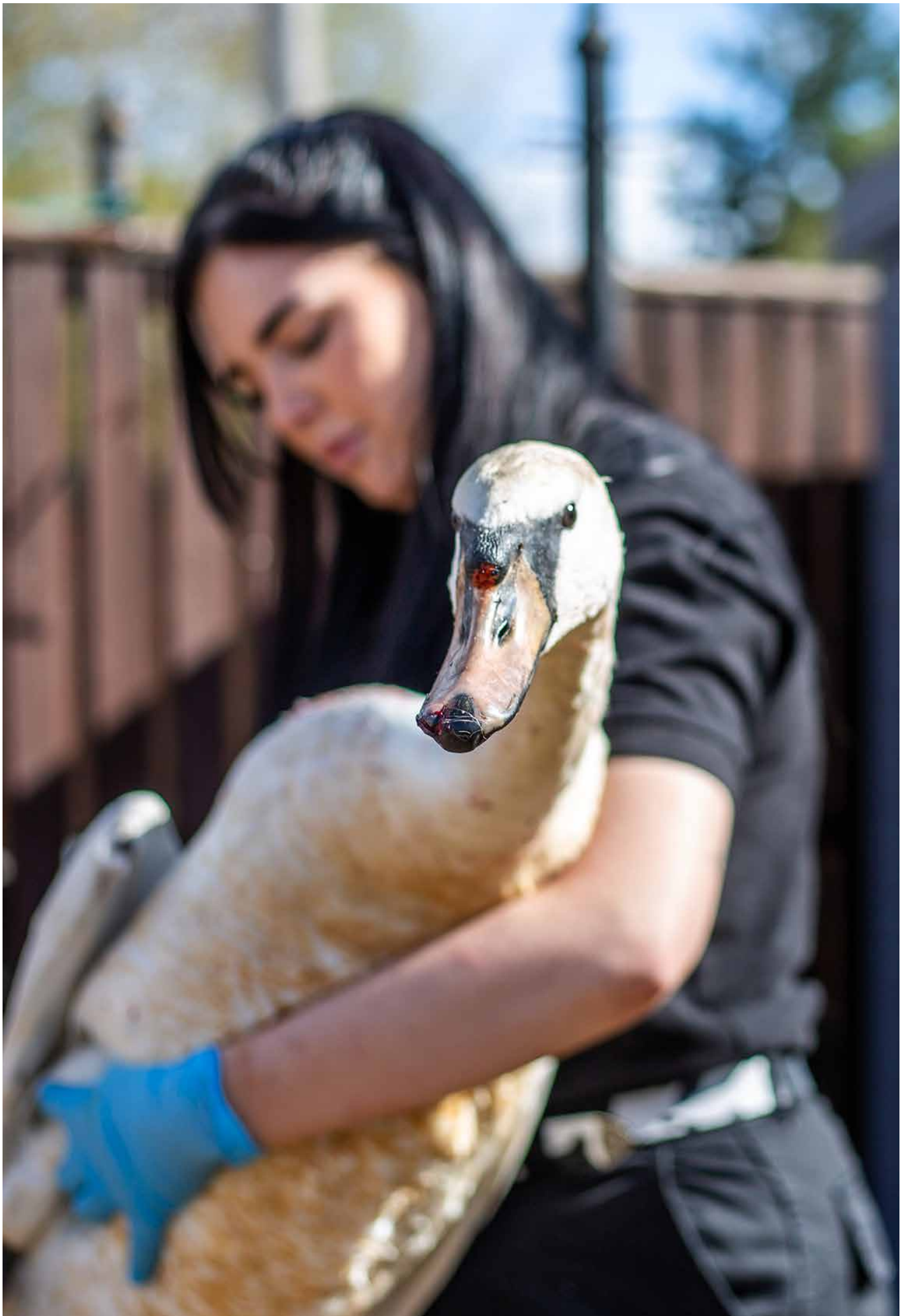
What's next?

- There is more nature in Scotland than 10 years ago and the recovery continues.
- We have seen a significant reduction in wildlife crime in Scotland.

Our long term goal

Wildlife crime no longer exists. The restoration and regeneration of Scotland's biodiversity across the country has been achieved.





We must show the world that the United Kingdom is committed to improving animal welfare, that we care about all animals, forever.

This means doing what has already been promised from clamping down on the importation of animals, particularly young animals or pregnant females, to protecting public health with proper screening for disease and health certificate checks.

It means that animals should not be seen just as 'property' in the eyes of the law.

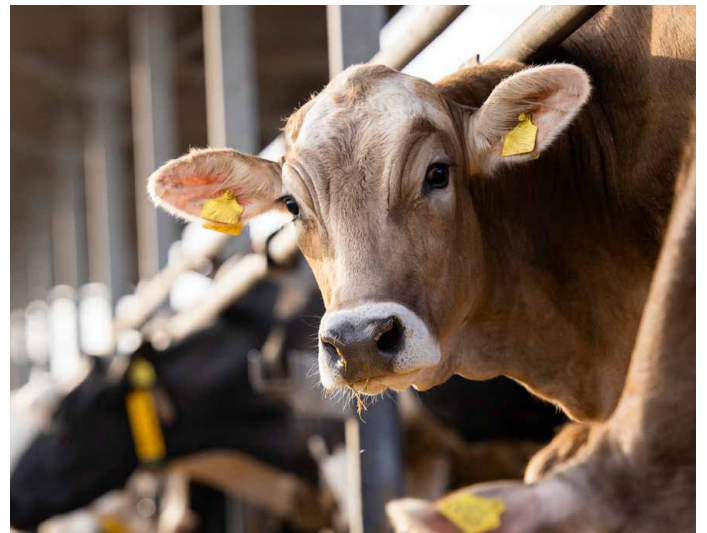
Pet abduction has a significant impact on both human and animal welfare.

It means primates should not be kept as pets and no hunting trophies should be able to be imported into the UK.

It means ensuring responsible people who rent have the right to keep a pet.

It means taking the care, love and respect for animals seriously with meaningful and resourced political and societal support.

For all MPs and prospective wparliamentarians, it means treating animals as you would your own family.



The background of the image is a scenic landscape. In the foreground, two sheep are grazing in a field of tall, golden-brown grass. One sheep is on the left, looking towards the camera, and the other is on the right, with its back to the camera. The middle ground shows a calm body of water, likely a bay or fjord, with a large, dark sea stack rising from the water. The background consists of rolling green hills under a soft, hazy sky, suggesting a coastal or island setting.

We call on all candidates

**to back our manifesto and
commit to ensuring a safe
and healthy future for all
animals across
the United Kingdom.**

 Public.Affairs@scottishspca.org

 www.scottishspca.org

 [@official_scottishSPCA](https://www.instagram.com/official_scottishSPCA)

 [@scottishSPCA](https://www.x.com/scottishSPCA)

 [scottishspca](https://www.linkedin.com/company/scottishspca)