Two thousand and eight saw many milestones and the blossoming of ambitious and challenging campaigns. Plus World Animal Day events reached record numbers. All in all 2008 was an outstanding year.
Over the year, Naturewatch Foundation and the Lithuanian Society for the Protection of Animals (LiSPA) provided direct rescue and veterinary care to over 900 individual wild animals.

In respect to other types of animals, there are now dog and cat shelters in every main city, the national zoo is continuously improving conditions for its animals, the State Veterinary Service Inspectors safeguard livestock animals and LiSPA is a member of the Laboratory Animal use and Ethics Committee.

This has been achieved because LiSPA and Naturewatch have worked closely with the national authorities since 1993 to promote animal welfare issues and achieve a first class working relationship with everyone involved. LiSPA staff members (four) have this year written many articles and provided interviews to journals, TV, radio, and news media. LiSPA has responded to countless local and national issues and has lobbied both its MP’s and MEP’s.

A comprehensive overview of our work in Lithuania, and indeed all our activities, is available at www.naturewatch.org.
World Animal Day

EVENTS WERE HELD IN 66 COUNTRIES AROUND THE GLOBE IN CELEBRATION OF WORLD ANIMAL DAY 2008!

Thank you so much to everyone who got involved and helped make it the best year yet! Launching the World Animal Day Ambassador initiative in early 2008 has helped tremendously to speed up the growth of World Animal Day. So far we have appointed 38 Ambassadors representing 37 countries and they all work tirelessly to raise awareness of World Animal Day. Their hard work helped ensure a huge increase in the number of events held and the amount of media coverage gained. Our Ambassadors have proved to be invaluable! With the aim of having a World Animal Day Ambassador represent each country, we will connect millions of people and achieve our goal: to be successful in uniting the animal welfare movement throughout the globe. For comprehensive coverage of the World Animal Day initiative (sponsored by Naturewatch) and the truly inspiring events that took place in celebration of World Animal Day 2008, please visit www.worldanimalday.org.uk.

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Animal Experiments

In spring 2008, Naturewatch reported on the hi-tech non-animal alternatives which could replace animal testing, discussed at the conference “Nanotechnology: towards ending animal testing”. Tissue engineering, skin models and “bio-chips”, offer real hope of humane scientific research, yet progress towards developing and implementing non-animal alternatives over the 50 years since replacement was first advocated has been desperately slow. So our focus in 2008 has been on the support that industry and government can provide, to developing and encouraging the use of non-animal replacements.

Following the release of Home Office figures for 2007, confirming an increase for the sixth successive year in the number of animals used in experiments, Naturewatch sent a 5 page briefing document to all MP’s, entitled “Scientific Procedures on Animals: encouraging non-animal alternatives.” This highlights serious deficiencies in the present system of licensing animal experiments, and suggests a series of measures to quicken the pace towards alternatives, and reduce the number of animals subjected to experiments.

While, Early Day Motion 2183, tabled by Martin Horwood MP on behalf of Naturewatch, aims to demonstrate support for measures that will encourage the use of non-animal alternatives in scientific procedures, and halt increases in the numbers of animals used. As an ongoing campaign, the EDM has been re-tabled (EDM 545) to continue throughout the 2009 parliamentary session.

Badger Campaign

As a result of the Badger Crime Awareness campaign we launched in conjunction with Crimestoppers in Wales, the profile of crimes against badgers increased significantly throughout 2008. With the aid of up-to-date intelligence, Wildlife Crime Officers have been able to carry out operations against known perpetrators, which included the execution of search warrants against notorious badger baiters.

Our campaign has enabled the South Wales Police and neighbouring forces to show they are taking crimes against badgers seriously, with many of the investigations still in progress, and possible prosecutions in the pipe-line.

We are now in the process of putting together a document, which will consist of more than a decade’s research carried out by Naturewatch, all pointing to the same conclusion; that badger crime should be made notifiable to the Home Office. This report will be distributed to all MP’s, members of PAW and other official bodies involved in addressing wildlife crime.

China Campaign

Throughout 2008 Naturewatch donated a total of £35,000 to help animals across China. Most of the funds are supporting the work of three animal welfare groups (photos below), whilst the remaining funds have helped to finance a number of smaller projects in China. To help raise awareness about our Spotlight on China campaign, we have built a website dedicated to its cause - www.naturewatch.eu

Having been forced to relocate to a rundown retirement home with over 100 animals, we provided CSAPS with funds for basic necessities like water, electricity, waste disposal and fencing, and we funded a consultation from a highly experienced UK shelter expert.

We funded the production of leaflets that promote pet sterilisation, and we are helping CSAPS and SZCats enhance their neutering programme, including a vet training work shop, whereby vets from around the globe are volunteering to train vets in China.

We funded the production of a paper, written by ACTAsia for the International Animal Protection Legislation, on animal welfare legislation in the current Chinese society, and the promotion of animal protection to the Chinese public.

We have helped to purchase 100 humane cat catching cages, which have been distributed to fifteen animal rescue groups around China.

To educate the younger generation that all animals are sentient, we provided funds to print leaflets that promote the humane treatment of animals and to build an education programme for students at colleges and universities.

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