

# Animal welfare abroad: How we can all do our bit

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## Introduction

Animal welfare does not stop at borders. Everywhere in the world there are animals that in need requiring human help. But the attitudes of the people towards animals differ largely from region to region. They are often influenced by religious, cultural or traditional aspects different from our conventions and sentiments.

Tourists in foreign countries frequently have to face the issue of animal welfare. Who has never seen the large numbers of stray cats and dogs flocking in the hotel areas or on beaches, near the humans, waiting to be thrown a few leftovers from a meal or to be stroked. Very often compassionate tourists feed during their stay. And at the end of the holiday, they inevitably ask themselves the question what will become of "their" animal after they have left and what are the best ways for them to help.

But even a stroll over the local market, a visit at the zoo or the knowledge about what goes on behind the walls of the bullfight arenas can cause a bad feeling with many tourists.

This brochure is aimed at showing a way how you can act for the welfare of the animal in such, or similar, situations and what you as an individual can do for the protection of animals in foreign countries.

Stray animals still being a big problem in all southern and eastern countries to this present day, we will be dealing with this issue first. At the end of the brochure we provide information about other kinds of cruelty to animals, as well as tips on how to act for the welfare of the animal.

## The problem of stray animals

### (1) Where do the stray dogs and cats come from?

The root for the problem is that most cat and dog owners do not control the reproduction of their domestic animals. Many people in southern and eastern countries see castration as a thing against nature and reject the concept categorically. During the day the animals stray around freely in the communities together with their conspecifics. In addition, particularly in the eastern countries such as the Balkans, Bulgaria and Romania, the people themselves are often poor and cannot afford feeding their animals, which go on the search for food during the day. This loosens the ties between an owner and his animal. It is also a sad truth that the cutest puppy is allowed to stay in the house while the other offspring and their mother are simply released onto the streets. These animals do no longer have a home, searching shelter in empty houses or parks, living off waste and field mice, begging humans for food. The animals flock together in groups and try to find their way through and to raise their offspring. Misery is pervasive.

How do the authorities react?

Unfortunately, the communities rarely accept stray animals in their midst. The animals are regarded as cumbersome. The citizens are often afraid of the stray dogs. This fear is increased still further by the killing initiatives of the communities. Sometimes, animals are poisoned with the holiday season gone. Also, most communities have animal catchers who catch the animals and bring them to so-called sanctuaries, often located on waste dumps. There they are kept under appalling conditions and killed after a few days. The absurdity and inefficiency of such killing action is shown by the fact that the number of stray animals caught and killed every year in such countries has been the same for many years.

Killing is not a solution

Catching and killing stray animals conflicts with the thought of animal welfare and such measures are no contribution to a solution for this problem.

Every habitat provides the basis for the subsistence of a certain number of animals of the same kind. The number of animals which can subsist in such an area is limited by the factors of: food supply, water and options for shelter. If a species populates such a new area, the a balance between the birth rate and the death rate will prevail after a certain amount of time, so that the number of the individual animals of that species remains the same. Now, if the death rate increases (e.g. through human interference), this is compensated quickly by the increase of the survival and procreation rate of the remaining individual animals. Furthermore, uncastrated dogs or cats often occupy the land that has become free through such killing initiatives.

In a nutshell: Killing initiatives are cruel and absolutely inane!

The only solution is – castration

In the long run, the number of stray animals and the misery connected with it can be reduced only if the procreation rate of the animales is reduced. To achieve this, the owners of cats and dogs have to be willing to act responsibly. They must have their animals castrated or at least keep their bitches and cats indoors and under supervision during their heat. If fewer animals are born, fewer animals are "disposed of" on the streets. At the same time, the animals on the streets need to be caught, castrated, inoculated, marked and released in the areas from which they come. Only such measures can solve the problem in the long run.

Local animal protection groups must convince vets and veterinary clinics to carry out the castration for a low price. The animal welfare organisations are then responsible for the care for, and the observation of, the animals released. Last but not least, accurate figures are needed to document how many stray animals exist within an area. This is very important in order to check the success of the castration measures and also to prove at a later time that the measures really reduced the number of stray animals. An important prerequisite for the success of the measure is that the community is willing to suspend the killing initiatives. In addition, the community needs to issue an official and binding authorisation allowing released animals to live in the villages. Whole projects have failed time and again because animal catchers caught the animals, forcing the animal welfare activists to ransom them. The community has to support the whole project and also make its contribution to success: it must place the animals under its protection and penalise any person who tortures or kills such animals.

It is therefore indispensable that the purpose of such initiatives be explained and made transparent to the local people. For only understanding and rethinking can improve things for the animals.

Help for self-help

The measures described above are part of a project that requires long-term planning and cannot be implemented by individuals. Several animal lovers living in the respective country have to join forces to start such a project.

The German Association for the Protection of Animals (Deutscher Tierschutzbund) promotes above all projects abroad managed by local animal welfare groups with the aim of reducing the number of stray animals in the long run. It has cooperative member organisations which are actively promoting the protection of animals abroad.

**These activities for the protection of animals include:**

- Educational measures by informing the local people on adequate animal keeping, handling of animals, animal ethics and the valid animal protection laws in the respective country, as well as information on the use and advantages of castration.
- Information of the local animal welfare organisation on the activities of the own initiative in the country and on possibilities for solving animal welfare problems together through cooperation.
- Collaboration with the local authorities.
- Collaboration with local vets.
- Veterinary care for stray animals
- Initiation and execution of castration projects for the targeted regulation of the stray animal populations.
- Set-up and operation of animal shelters and sanctuaries. Following the castration and care, either bringing the animals back into their habitat after consultations with the authorities, or temporary accommodation in the sanctuaries with the aim of finding new owners for them, locally if possible.
- Permanent marking of the animals for identification.
- Information of the authorities on grievances observed or infringements of the applicable local animal protection laws.
- Explanation of the problems in the country to tourists and tips as to how everyone can help.
- In exceptional cases, finding respectable animal shelters for the animals in Germany.

The projects cost huge amounts of money. As most of the countries are poor, they require financial help from abroad. If you would like to support foreign projects, please transfer your donations - with the keyword "Auslandstierschutz" (foreign animal welfare) to the donations account of the Deutscher Tierschutzbund, 40 444 at the Sparkasse Bonn (branch no. 380 500 00). The Deutscher Tierschutzbund not only provides financial support, it also uses public relations to inform about the work and the challenges faced by the local animal welfare groups, supporting its members with all available financial means. In particular, it asserts pressure on the representatives of authorities, parties and embassies, working for improved framework conditions for foreign animal welfare.

Next to the financial support through donations, it is of course also very helpful when tourists on site are willing to bear the costs for the veterinary care or the castration of some animals. The best solution would be to contact one of our cooperative member organisations active in your holiday destination. This organisation is able to tell you which kind of help is currently needed the most. We would be pleased to send you the addresss and telephone number. Beside financial support, food and in-kind donations are also welcome. And maybe some of you will want to become active themselves in the protection of animals during your holiday. There are numerous possibilities for cleaning, constructing, painting, repairing and of course stroking (for there are never enough stroking hands) in the animal shelters.

I have found an animal

But what do you do for the welfare of the animal if just found a stray dog on the beach or a large number of cats by the hotel?

Yes, this is a problem, and a difficult one.

Cats are often accepted near hotels only during the season. The tourists feed the cats. When they have gone, the cats are no longer catered for, but chased away or even killed in the worst case. In the next season, hungry cats from the vicinity come again to the hotel to get food. And the population grows once again ...

Explain the biological background to the hotel management. If the management was willing to castrate the cats living by the hotel, these would stay there but not procreate. The care of the tourists and the management could make these stray cats into well-groomed cats which would gain the hotel the reputation of an exemplary and animal-friendly place recommended by many animal lovers.

Do not take an animal home from vacation without thinking!

If you grew to love a stray animal during your vacation, you as an animal lover simply cannot and must not take it home with you without thinking first. Before even considering it, clarify the following questions:

- Can you safely preclude that the animal suffers from an infectious disease? You will have to have it examined by a vet to be sure you do not take it home with an infectious disease, because it could infect other animals at home. Since all dogs and cats have worms, deworming is imperative. Of course, the animal needs to be inoculated as well<sup>1</sup>.
- Who will be responsible for the animal at home? Thinking about taking an animal home is generally allowed if you really intend to keep it for yourself, or if you are willing to search a good place for it to live. Be honest with yourself with regard to the time needed, your occupational situation as well as the living conditions. Never take an animal with you to hand it over to the next sanctuary at home. Despite the will to help many sanctuaries have only limited possibilities. They are often in financial need. Particularly during the holiday season in the summer, they often do not have sufficient space available. Therefore, do not confront them with a fait accompli by knocking at their door with your animal.
- Every animal must be inoculated against rabies. The inoculation must take place at least four weeks before the entry into Germany. The execution of the inoculation as well as the confirmation of the animal's health must be certified by the official veterinarian. Please note that the import regulations in Germany have been tightened as of 1st October 2004. Please inform yourself carefully about the legal provisions applying for your holiday destination.

### **Do not feed**

Binding an animal to you during your holiday will not help this creature. Therefore you should not feed it thoughtlessly. If the animal is in a normal condition, it has other sources of food. Emaciated animals, however, pose a particular ethical problem. Such an animal cannot find a source for food and is obviously unable to feed itself. But feeding it for one or two weeks and then leaving it to itself cannot be the right way either. Maybe you should have it examined by a vet. It is possible that the animal has a disease and you can consult the local vet as to the best measures to help it.

### **Other animal welfare issues abroad**

It goes without saying that you as a tourist should be careful not to support cruel behaviour against animals by, for example, visiting events where animals are tortured or at least not kept in appropriate conditions. Bullfights or similar cruelties should be out of bounds for any animal loving tourist. Zoos where animals are kept solemnly for the entertainment of the public without taking the natural behaviour of the creature into account should also be avoided by the critical tourist, because the amount of visitors ensures the subsistence of such facilities. Never allow your picture to be taken with sweet animal babies in your arm, because this business with the helpless young animals is a terrible cruelty. Do not buy animals out of a feeling of compassion. Every animal for which you buy freedom will be replaced by another. The unscrupulous animal traders live off the compassion of the tourists and make excellent profits with it. Souvenirs for which animals had to die or suffer, such as crocodile leather bags, fur, carving from ebony or even the sale of livestock such as birds of apes, must be strictly dismissed, not just for moral reasons but also for reasons to do with the protection of species and customs law.

Time and again we receive reports from tourists informing us about animal rights incidents after their return from holiday. Sadly, we are often unable to intervene retroactively. Therefore we appeal to all tourists who observe cruel treatment perpetrated against an animal to address the person responsible and try to politely but resolutely point out the suffering of the animal to him. If this does not help, you should immediately file a report, which should ideally be documented with photos, at the local police and inform the local animal welfare organisation if there is one nearby. It is important to get the evidence right: you need to state the exact location, the date, the detailed description of the cruel treatment you observed and the persons responsible for the treatment as well as witnesses, if any. Direct protest on site is much more effective, and in most of the cases it is not possible to effectively help the animals from Germany.

If you observe an unacceptable situation and think it is the deed of an individual person, please also protest against the situation at the embassy of the country and appeal to the ambassador to exert his authority against the suffering of the animal. If you have decided you no longer want to spend your holiday in this country due to the unacceptable situation, please by all means tell your travel operator of your decision. Tourism is the only source of income for these companies, which is why you can have influence there.

The more frequently the authorities and the tourism associations are confronted with complaints, the more difficult it will become for them to close their eyes before the subject of animal welfare. Even if you get the impression that the police does not take your complaint serious, or if you expect that the embassy will not respond to your complaint, you still contribute to the aim that the protection of animals in whatever country of the world cannot be hushed up.

The Deutsche Tierschutzbund is a founding member of the EUROGROUP for Animal Welfare. This European umbrella association houses the leading animal welfare organisations of the EU member states. The EUROGROUP coordinates the contacts between the national animal welfare organisations and the institutions of the European Union. Our aim is that animals in the European Union are protected for the sake of themselves and that protective regulations are implemented for the welfare of animals. Together with these partner organisations, the Deutsche Tierschutzbund tries to achieve, among other things, that laws for the protection of animals are passed in all countries, and that existing laws are improved and that the compliance with legal provisions is also ensured by regular inspections. This is the only way to create the conditions for an appropriate keeping and a respectful treatment of animals in the long run.

Do not hesitate to ask the respective organisation within your holiday destination for support in case of animal welfare issues. The current addresses and telephone numbers can be found on the website of the EUROGROUP ([www.eurogroupanimalwelfare.org](http://www.eurogroupanimalwelfare.org)).

You can find addresses of animal welfare organisations in countries outside the European Union with the World Society for the Protection of Animals, WSPA, under the following Internet address: [www.wspa-international.org](http://www.wspa-international.org)

The Deutsche Tierschutzbund offers a large number of informational brochures, including:

- Seit 1881 Kampf für die Wehrlosen (Der Deutsche Tierschutzbund) [*Fighting for the defenseless since 1881 (The Deutsche Tierschutzbund)*]
- Akademie für Tierschutz [*Academy for the protection of animals*]
- Das Deutsche Haustierregister® [*The German pet register*]

- Verbraucher haben die Macht\* [*Consumers have the power*]
- Welches Tier passt zu mir? [*Which animal is suitable for me?*]
- Katzenelend [*Cats' misery*]
- Die Haltung von Katzen [*Keeping cats*]
- Die Haltung von Hunden [*Keeping dogs*]
- Die Haltung von Meerschweinchen [*Keeping guinea pigs*]
- Die Haltung von Zwergkaninchen [*Keeping dwarf rabbits*]
- Die Haltung von Goldhamstern [*Keeping golden hamsters*]
- Die Haltung von Wellensittichen und Kanarienvögeln [*Keeping budgies and canaries*]
- Die Haltung von Aquarienfischen [*Keeping aquarium fish*]
- Die Haltung von Ratten [*Keeping rats*]
- Artgerechte Pferdehaltung [*Appropriate horsekeeping*]
- Tierschutz- Hundeverordnung [*Animal protection – Dog Regulation*]
- Gassi gehen – kein Problem [*Walking the dog – No problem*]
- Tierversuche [*Animal experiments*]
- Tierversuche in der Kosmetik\* [*Animal experiments in cosmetics*]
- Forschung ohne Tierversuche\* [*Research without animal experiments*]
- Stoppt Gentechnik an Tieren [*Stop genetic engineering in animals*]
- Die Haltung von Legehennen\* [*Keeping laying hens*]
- Schweine – Haltung und Verhalten [*Pigs – Keeping and behaviour*]
- Stadttaube und Mensch [*Town pigeon and man*]
- Igelschutz [*Protecting hedgehogs*]
- Winterfütterung der Vögel [*Winter feeding of birds*]
- Pelztragen – Gewissensfrage [*Wearing fur – a matter of conscience*]
- Tierschutz im Ausland [*Animal protection abroad*]
- Stierkampf [*Bullfights*]
- Die Jagd [*Hunting*]
- Reisen, um zu töten. Deutsche Jäger im Ausland [*Travelling to kill. German hunters abroad*]
- Wie kann ich Tieren helfen? Ratgeber zur Abfassung eines Testamentes (kostenlos) [*How can I help animals? A guide to drafting a last will (no charge)*]

We would be pleased to send you individual brochures at no cost if you send one envelope per brochure, postage paid with EUR 0.95 (EUR 1.44 for brochures with \*) and bearing your address (long format) to the following address: Deutscher Tierschutzbund, Baumschulallee 15, 53115 Bonn. For larger order volumes, please ask for our order list with one call: Tel. +49 (0)228/60 49 60, Fax: +49 (0)228/60 49 640. Or send an e-mail to: [bg@tierschutzbund.de](mailto:bg@tierschutzbund.de). You can also find the order list on the Internet: [www.tierschutzbund.de](http://www.tierschutzbund.de)

## Take care of the pennies .....

We are a member of the German Donations Council (Deutscher Spendenrat), which takes care of the fiduciary handling of donated funds. We do not work with associations or organisations that pay door-to-door promoters to procure memberships or donations, or with organisations which entice the members of other animal welfare organisations or whose status of common public interest has been withdrawn.

**du und das tier** – the official publication of the Deutscher Tierschutzbund

We use our magazine **du und das tier** to inform citizens, policy makers as well as media representatives about all important developments in the field of animal and environmental protection in Germany and Europe. **du und das tier** is published six times per year. The members of the Deutscher Tierschutzbundes receive the magazine at no cost.

## ANIMAL WELFARE WITH HEART AND SOUL

Please help us help the animals!

The competent animal welfare pursued by the Deutscher Tierschutzbund costs large sums of money. To be able to continue our work for the good of the animals, we and our member organisations depend on the support of the population.

Only an association with a lot of members will be heard by the policy makers.

Therefore:

- Help us clarify the issues. For example, you could support our campaigns. We would be pleased to inform you about current campaigns.
- Become a member of the Deutscher Tierschutzbund.
- Please also help us by making donations.
- Plus: Win further like-minded activists for animal welfare. We would be pleased to send you information and application forms.

Call us.

You can find our address, telephone and fax number as well as the donations account on the back side of this brochure.

By the way: Your donations and member fees are tax-deductible.

We would also be pleased to arrange contact with an animal protection centre in your vicinity.