The History of Animal Welfare

1. Animal Welfare in History

1.1 Animal Behaviour and Welfare

Animal Behaviour and Welfare

Introduction, History and Concepts of Animal Welfare

The History of Animal Welfare: Interactive Session
Animal Welfare in History

This is an interactive exercise which will help you to understand more about how animal welfare has been viewed through the ages.
1.3 Animal Welfare in History

Views on animal welfare have changed over the years. Different countries and philosophies have influenced the way we think about animal welfare.

This exercise will briefly outline some of the key people and points in time.

On the next slide you’ll see a timeline.

Click on an date to find out what happened when.
1.4 Timeline
1.5 Pre-History

Pre-History

- It's difficult to know how ancient cultures viewed animal welfare.

But there are clues . . .
The History of Animal Welfare.
Animal Behaviour and Welfare MOOC Slide Notes

Pre-History

Graves...
Much of our information on early cultures comes from the way they venerated and disposed of their dead.

Burials are a display of effort and respect and it's important to note that animals were often ceremonially buried alongside humans.

It's possible that this was because animals were a valuable commodity to take into the next life.

Egyptian cat mummies from the British Museum.
Credit: Mario Sanchez
Pre-History

Religion...

Animals featured as deities in many ancient religions all over the world.

Some religions, like Buddhism, expressly state that animals should not be harmed.

Ancient Egyptians famously worshipped cats. Mistreatment of cats was therefore taboo for some of the Egyptian period.
Pre-History

Art...

Representations of animals can be found throughout prehistory.

From the earliest cave paintings in France to more complex mythological imagery, animals have been depicted through human art for millennia.

While this does not tell us much about how everyday animals were treated, it does show how important animals were to early cultures.

The Solvognen (Sun Carriage) dates from around 1800-1600 BCE. It was found in Norway and features a horse-drawing the sun across the sky, a Norse myth.

Picture credit: Malene Thysen
1.6 Pre-History

Pre-History - Dogs

- Dogs deserve a special mention because they've been with us for an incredibly long time.

- The archaeological evidence of the association between dogs and humans goes back at least to 12,630 BCE.

- The Beaker People, who were the first society to create complex pottery, existed 2800-1800 BCE.

- So you could say we had dogs before we could make the clay bowls to feed them with!
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This evidence is mainly the remains of dogs (the skulls are considered distinct from wolves) in the hearth area of human dwellings.


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Pre-History - Dogs

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- So you could say we had dogs before we could make the clay bowls to feed them with!

Or rather 'Bell-Beaker Culture', a term coined by John Abercromby to refer to the loosely related cultures across western Europe in the late stone age, early bronze age.
Human history really takes a while to get going ...

Traditionally we use the Three Age system to describe this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Characterised by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stone Age</td>
<td>Palaeolithic (2.6 million - 10,000 Years BCE)</td>
<td>Simple stone tools, carvings and in the late Palaeolithic there is evidence for burials, basic religion and art. 99% of human prehistory here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mesolithic (10,000-5000 BCE)</td>
<td>Complex stone tools, basic farming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze Age</td>
<td>China (3000 BCE - 700 CE), India (3300-1200 BCE), Europe (3200 BCE - 600 CE)</td>
<td>Metal working, craft, trade, potter's wheel. City-states and state religion emerge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Age</td>
<td>China (600 CE - 200 CE), India (1200 -200 BCE), Europe (1200 BCE -400 CE)</td>
<td>Iron tools (complex metal working), governments and national economies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.7 500 BCE – The Greeks

**Pythagoras** (580-500 BCE)
Noted believer in *animism* - he thought that animals and humans had the same kind of soul

(In line with his beliefs, he was known to set animals free from markets.)

**Aristotle** (384-322 BCE)
Animals are below humans on the *scala naturae* - he developed the first attempts at taxonomical categorisation.

Animals are not rational therefore exist in a different moral realm

**Notes:**

In karker - animism worldview that non-human entities including animals plants and inanimate objects possess a spiritual essence
animism (Slide Layer)

500 BCE - The Greeks

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Noted believer in animism, he thought that animals and humans had the same kind of soul

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Animals are not rational therefore exist in a different moral realm

Animism is the worldview that non-human entities, including animals, plants and inanimate objects, possess a spiritual essence.
Emperor Ashoka decreed a series of edicts which were inscribed on the Pillars of Ashoka.

The Fifth Pillar read:

Twenty-six years after my coronation various animals were declared to be protected - parrots, mainas, aruna, ruddy geese, wild ducks, nandimukbas, gelatas, bats, queen ants, terrapins, boneless fish, vidareyaka, gangapapataka, fish, tortoises, porcupines, squirrels, deer, bulls, okapinda, wild asses, wild pigeons, domestic pigeons and all four-footed creatures that are neither useful nor edible. Those nanny goats, ewes and sows which are with young or giving milk to their young are protected, and so are young ones less than six months old. Cocks are not to be castrated, hens hiding living beings are not to be burnt and forests are not to be burnt either without reason or to kill creatures. One animal is not to be fed to another.
304-232 BCE

Emperor Ashoka decreed a series of edicts which were inscribed on the Pillars of Ashoka. The Fifth Pillar of Ashoka's Edict states:

Emperor Ashoka was an Indian Emperor who ruled over almost all of the Indian subcontinent from 269 BCE to his death in 232 BCE. He began as a conqueror but after witnessing the deaths wrought in his Kalinga War, he converted to Buddhism.

The Edicts are thought to be the very first example of animal welfare and environmental legislation.
304-232 BCE

Emperor Ashoka decreed a series of edicts which were inscribed on the Pillars of Ashoka. The Fifth Pillar read:

Twenty-six years after my coronation, I declared to be protected under the law: Clarks’ ruddy gese, wild ducks, swans, other waterfowl, peacocks, goldfish, great kingfisher, pied kingfisher, Indian myna, Indian ringneck, rufous treepie, curl-crested jay, crossbills, sunbirds, Indian peafowl, the golden pheasant, the blue pheasant, white cockatoos, black cockatoos, green and silver pheasants, the male red pheasant, the female red pheasant, the kingfisher, the vervet monkey, the rhesus monkey, Bengal tigers, the leopard, tigers, leopards, bengal tigers, rarinth, Sumatran leopards, annam malayan tigers, Malayan tigers, Indo-Chinese tigers, Sumatran leopards, snow leopards, gaur, hog deer, bull, okapi, wild asses, wild pigeons, domestic pigeons, and all four-footed creatures that are neither useful nor edible. Those nainy goats, ewes and sows which are with young or giving milk to their young are protected, and so are young ones less than six months old. Cocks are not to be castrated, hawks hiding living beings are not to be hunted and forests are not to be burnt either without reason or to kill creatures. One animal is not to be fed to another.
0-1500s CE

In the western world much of this era is influenced by the Judeo-Christian ethics which give man...

“dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth”

Genesis 1:26

Notes:

-Sara should come up here saying that more will come next topic
0-1500s CE

In this era there is not a great deal of literature documenting the development of attitudes to animal welfare.

Remember that we will tackle how different religious views influence animal welfare ethics in Topic 2 "Understanding different viewpoints on welfare".
1.10 0-1500s CE

0-1500s CE  Rene Descartes

Rene Descartes (1596-1650)
The Father of Modern Philosophy

"one sees that magpies and parrots can utter words just as we
can, and yet they cannot speak as we do, that is to say, by
testifying to the fact that they are thinking about what they
are saying; on the other hand, men born deaf and dumb, who
are deprived of the organs that aid others in speaking just as
much as, or more than the beasts are wont to invent for
themselves various signs by means of which they make
themselves understood to those who, being with them on a
regular basis, have the time to learn their language. And this
attests not merely to the fact that beasts have less reason
than men but that they have none at all."

Discourse on the Method for Conducting One’s Reason

Descartes believed that animals were automatons and that humans
could use them freely.
0-1500s CE  Rene Descartes

Rene Descartes (1596-1650)  
The Father of Modern Philosophy

Although it would be more accurate to say the ‘Father of Western Philosophy’.  
Descartes certainly greatly influenced Western thinking and ‘Meditations on First Philosophy’ is now a classic text.  
He also came up with ‘cogito ergo sum’ or “I think, therefore I am”

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Discourse on the Method for Conducting One Reason

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0-1500s CE  Thomas Aquinas

Another influential thinker in this period was...

**Thomas Aquinas** (1225 - 1274CE)

An Italian Dominican Friar

“He that kills another's ox *sins*, not through killing the ox, but through injuring another man in his property”
0-1500s CE  Thomas Aquinas

In Aquinas' view animals are still property, but when animals are hurt it hurts humans too.

“He that kills another's ox sins, not through killing the ox, but through injuring another man in his property”
1600s CE  Early Legislation

- It was in the 1600s that we begin to see some legislation giving animals legal protection

1635 - Ireland
1645 - Massachusetts
1600s CE  Early Legislation

1635
The Parliament of Ireland passed "An Act against Plowing by the Tayle, and pulling the Wooll off living Sheep"

The aim of this act was to prevent cruelty to horses and sheep.
In 1641 the Massachusetts Body of Rights was passed by the Massachusetts General Court.

Section 92 'Off the Bruite Creature' read:

92. No man shall exercise any Tyranny or Crueltie towards any bruite Creature which are usuallie kept for man's use.

93. If any man shall have occasion to leade or drive Cattel from place to place that is far of, so that they be weary, or hungry, or fall sick, or lambe, It shall be lawfull to rest or refresh them, for competant time, in any open place that is not Corne, meadow, or inclosed for some peculiar use.
1.13 1700s CE

1700s CE  Immanuel Kant

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804CE)

An influential philosopher in the 18th century, Kant was against animal cruelty because he believed it might reduce a person's ability to empathise with their fellow humans.
1700s CE  Jeremy Bentham

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) is commonly regarded to be the father of Utilitarianism.

When discussing slave rights in 1789, he said of animals...

... A full-grown horse or dog, is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day or a week or even a month, old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?
1700s CE  Jeremy Bentham

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The Utilitarian view is an ethical stance which attempts to maximise the happiness and minimise the suffering of most individuals.

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1.15 1800s CE

1800s CE  Charles Darwin

Charles Darwin (1809-1882CE)

As well as his famous thesis on natural selection, Darwin wrote extensively on “The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals” comparing and contrasting how animals and humans feel and think.
1.16 1800s - Darwin and Animal Welfare

The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals

Darwin was very interested in how animals expressed emotions including suffering.

Darwin believed animals could suffer and wrote expressively about how his pet dog’s sadness could be alleviated by a walk . . .
1.17 1800s - Darwin's Dog

The 'Hot-House Face' - Darwin's Dog

I will here give one other instance of antithesis in expression. I formerly possessed a large dog who, like every other dog, was much pleased to go out walking. He showed his pleasure by trotting gravely before me with high steps, head much raised, moderately erected ears, and tail carried aloft but not stiffly. Not far from my house a path branches off to the right, leading to the hot-house, which I used often to visit for a few moments, to look at my experiment plants. This was always a great disappointment to the dog as he did not know whether I should continue my walk; and the instantaneous and complete change of expression which came over him, as soon as my body swerved in the least towards the path (and I sometimes tried this as an experiment) was laughable. His look of dejection was known to every member of the family, and was called his hot-house face... His aspect was that of piteous, hopeless dejection; and it was, as I have said, laughable as the cause was so slight. Every detail in his attitude was in complete opposition to his former joyful yet dignified bearing; and can be explained, as it appears to me, in no other way, except through the principle of antithesis. Had not the change been so instantaneous, I should have attributed it to his lowered spirits affecting, as in the case of man, the nervous system and circulation, and consequently the tone of his whole muscular frame and this may have been in part the cause.
The 'Hot-House Face' - Darwin's Dog

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His aspect was that of piteous, hopeless dejection; and it was, as I have said, laudable as the cause was so slight. Every detail in his attitude was in complete opposition to his former joyful yet dignified bearing; and can be explained, as it appears to me, in no other way, except through the principle of antithesis. Had not the change been so instantaneous, I should have attributed it to his lowered spirits affecting, as in the case of man, the nervous system and circulation, and consequently the tone of his whole muscular frame and this may have been in part the cause.

By this Darwin means that certain states of mind elicit certain behaviours and postures (e.g. a happy dog is instantly recognisable) and a directly opposite state of mind elicits a "strong, involuntary tendency" to change behaviour.
William Wilberforce (1759 - 1833)

The Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was formed in the UK in 1824 thanks to William Wilberforce, Richard Martin and Revered Arthur Broome.

It’s thought to be the oldest animal welfare charity in the world and was given royal patronage by Queen Victoria in 1840, making it the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).
The RSPCA, despite originally being banned by the Catholic Church in Rome, became a model for animal welfare charities across the globe, including the RSPCA Australia (1871), Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (1824), Ulster Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (1836) and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (1866). It's the oldest such body in the world and was given royal patronage by Queen Victoria in 1840, making it the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).
1.19 1900s CE

Notes:

Sara - IFAW is helping

Sara - some people have been concerned that a history of non-pet ownership would result in citizens with a lack of ability to empathise to non-human animals. This does not appear to be the case and China is very interested in animal welfare legislation.
1900s CE  Karl Marx

The Communist Philosopher Karl Marx felt that humans and animals had

Karl Marx published the Communist Manifesto in 1848.

Many countries all across the world had governments which identified as Communist in the 20th Century. These included: Afghanistan, Angola, Benin, Cambodia, China, Cuba, Ethiopia, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, South Yemen, Vietnam and the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

discouraged in the Soviet bloc.
1900s CE  Karl Marx

The Communist Philosopher Karl Marx felt that humans and animals had mutually exclusive natures and criticised the owning of private property, including pets, as bourgeois. For various reasons, ‘Of’ or ‘belonging to’ the middle class, typically referencing materialistic values or conventional attitudes.

Animal welfare societies were also discouraged in the Soviet bloc.
1.20 1900s CE

Animal Concerns & Ethics

Several influential books on animal ethics were published in the 20th Century.

Click on the books to find out more.
1900s CE  Animal Concerns & Ethics

Ruth Harrison (1920-2000)
In 1964 Harrison published ‘Animal Machines’.

The book was said to expose the reality of modern, intensive farming and has been frequently cited by people as a motivation for behavioural change.

“In fact, if one person is unkind to an animal it is considered to be cruelty, but where a lot of people are unkind to animals, especially in the name of commerce, the cruelty is condoned and, once large sums of money are at stake, will be defended to the last by otherwise intelligent people.”
1900s CE  Animal Concerns & Ethics

Peter Singer
In 1975 Singer published 'Animal Liberation'.

The book popularised the term 'speciesism', i.e. to exploit animals because they are not the same species.

“To protest about bullfighting in Spain, the eating of dogs in South Korea, or the slaughter of baby seals in Canada, while continuing to eat eggs from hens who have spent their lives crammed into cages, or veal from calves who have been deprived of their mothers, their proper diet, and the freedom to lie down with their legs extended, is like denouncing apartheid in South Africa while asking your neighbors not to sell their houses to blacks…”
1900s CE  Animal Concerns & Ethics

Tom Regan


This book introduced Kantian thought, namely that all living things possess intrinsic value and must be treated as ends within themselves (not as a means to an end).

"Those who satisfy the subject-of-a-life criterion themselves have a distinctive kind of value - inherent value - and are not to be viewed or treated as mere receptacles"
1.21 1900s CE

1900s CE  Welfare Frameworks

Welfare Frameworks
In the 20th Century different frameworks of welfare were established.

This includes concepts like the Five Freedoms.

We also started to talk about positive animal welfare such as the Life Worth Living concept - not just preventing suffering but providing a good life for animals under our care.
The History of Animal Welfare.
Animal Behaviour and Welfare MOOC Slide Notes

Life Worth Living (Slide Layer)

1900s CE  Welfare Frameworks

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1.22 Future

Challenges for the Future

The growing human population presents multiple challenges to the conservation and welfare of animals.

Through education, innovation and legislation we can work to protect animals in the future.
Challenges for the Future

This data, based on the UK government’s ‘Foresight’ report on global farming, gives some indication of how important it is to educate people about animal welfare now.

As the world population grows, so does demand for animal products.
Your Learning Outcomes

- After completing this session you can:
  - Recognise there is a historical global interest in animal welfare.
  - Describe some of the many different opinions on animal welfare.
  - Explain that in the future there will be greater challenges to animal welfare as the world's population increases.
About this Learning Object

This learning object was designed by Dr Jill MacKay for the Animal Behaviour and Welfare MOOC on Coursera.

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