



# Senior Voice for Animals

As consumers of beauty products, clothing, and chicken nuggets, and as pet owners, horseback riders, or circus spectators, our relationships with animals play a big role in our lives. What are the specifics of the complex relationship between animals and humans? If you want to know more so you can make informed choices—and help others make them, too—this badge is for you.

## Steps:

1. Find out about domestic animals
2. Investigate animals used for science
3. Explore animals in husbandry
4. Take a look at animals used for sports and entertainment
5. Look into an animal issue

## Purpose:

When I've earned this badge, I'll better understand animal issues worldwide and know what I can do to help.

**SIDEBAR:** "Recognize and respect Earth's beautiful systems of balance, between the presence of animals on land, the fish in the sea, birds in the air, mankind, water, air, and land. Most importantly, there must always be awareness of the actions by people that can disturb this precious balance." —Margaret Mead, anthropologist

## Step 1: Find out about domestic animals

Primitive cultures only tolerated dogs in their camps because they would eat smelly scraps and scare off intruders. But eventually humans began caring for animals as pets—from dogs and cats to birds, goldfish, rabbits, and more. How do we treat our pets today? What rights should they have? How are pets protected?

## CHOICES – DO ONE:

**Volunteer at a shelter, at the ASPCA, or at an animal-adoption or spay/ neuter drive.** Find out why spaying and neutering are important, what the animal populations are locally and nationwide, and what overpopulation means for unwanted animals. For more FUN: Organize a spay/neuter drive at your local pet food store. Ask a veterinarian to donate time to help.

OR

**Interview an animal-rescue worker.** Find out what animal issues there are in your community and what it's like to have a career protecting animals. Share your interview with other Girl Scouts.



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OR

**Compose a pets' rights document.** Is it okay to declaw a cat? Or to use a shock collar on a dog? What guidelines should be in place for a classroom hamster, a family dog, or a pet rabbit? Start by looking at city and state laws. Then write up a document stating what you think it takes to treat pets ethically and respectfully.

### **SIDEBAR: Page from the Past**

Requirements from the First Farmer Badge - A Scout must have reared successfully one of the following: A brood of at least 12 chickens under hen or with incubator, A flock of at least 12 pigeons, 12 ducks, 12 geese, or 12 guinea-fowl, A family of rabbits or guinea pigs, A calf, a colt, or a pig.

### **SIDEBAR: More to Explore**

Foster a pet! Animal rescue shelters are often looking for candidates to care for pets until they are permanently adopted or to foster new litters of puppies and kittens. Talk to the animal caregivers to find out what it takes to responsibly foster an animal. What must you know about an animal's food, exercise, and medical needs?

### **Step 2: Investigate animals used for science**

Whether animals should be used for product and medical testing is a controversial issue. First, research the arguments for and against animal testing. What animals are most likely to be used in tests? Are any protected by the Animal Welfare Act?

CHOICES – DO ONE:

**Interview people with opposing viewpoints.** They might be a scientist and an animal-rights activist. From these interviews, make a pros and cons list about the issue. Then check out the rules and guidelines for animal testing. Are they different from state to state? Who regulates animal testing? Where do you stand now that you've heard two opinions?

OR

**Track a beauty product.** Find one that doesn't have "cruelty-free" or "produced without animal testing" written on its label. Research how it was developed. Were animals used? If so, how? Make a visual timeline or diagram of development.

OR



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**Follow an experiment or lab study.** Find out what animals are used for and how they're treated. If possible, also visit a lab where animals are used for beauty-product testing or medical research. Share your experience with Girl Scout friends.

**SIDEBAR:** "We should be evolving into a new age of business with a worldview that maintains one simple proposition: that all of nature—humans, animals, earth—are interconnected and interdependent." —Anita Roddick, animal-rights activist and founder of The Body Shop.

### **SIDEBAR: More to Explore**

Explore pet cloning. Recent medical breakthroughs have made it possible to clone pets. Find out why some people pay thousands of dollars to make genetic copies of their pets and why some people think it's unethical. What do you think?

### **Step 3: Explore animals in husbandry**

Husbandry is the practice of breeding and raising farm animals intended to be used for food. Cows, chicken, lamb, and pigs all come under this category.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

**Visit a working farm or ranch.** Talk to a rancher or staff worker about their animal practices. Share what you learn with family or friends.

OR

**Investigate livestock breeding.** Many farms employ breeders to improve the genetics of the herd and speed up reproduction. For example, embryos from a prime-quality cow might be transplanted into another cow to allow the prime-quality cow to breed again more quickly. What other practices are being used? How are they regulated? What is the science behind farm practices—for instance, why are some farmers moving away from hog confinement barns, and what does that mean for the pigs? Explore the details of breeding one animal and share your findings.

OR

**Look into domestic pet breeding.** Find out what's involved in responsible pet breeding. What testing is done before breeding two parents? How do they choose homes for their animals? Contact breeders to see if they will talk to you or let you visit their facilities. Share what you find out. For More FUN: Labradoodles (a cross between a poodle and a Labrador retriever) were created as an allergy-friendly service dog. (Poodles' non-shedding coats are less irritating to

people with allergies.) What other crossbreeds are there? What breeds do you think would make a great cross?

## Step 4: Take a look at animals used for sports and entertainment

Think about the first time you saw an elephant in a circus. Or visited a marine park and watched killer whales perform. Or attended a rodeo to see calf-roping competitions. Worldwide, from bullfighting in Spain to foxhunting in England, animals are part of our sport and entertainment culture.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

**Take a look at animals in sports.** Choose a sport to research. It might be rodeo, greyhound racing, polo or dressage, horse racing, or falconry. If possible, attend an event, talk to the participants, and explore how the owners and handlers care for the animals. Share your findings. For More FUN: Look into the sport's history—there are some fascinating stories of how and why animal sports began!

OR

**Write about animals in entertainment.** Choose an animal to research. It might be in a movie, circus, zoo, or dog show. Write a short story, poem, or article from the point of view of a performing animal. What would you imagine a day in its life is like? Share your creative piece with friends or family.

OR

**Interview people behind the scenes.** This might be a zookeeper, animal trainer, or the owner of a show dog. Prepare a list of questions. Find out the daily routine for the animals, how they're cared for, and what happens when they get sick and can't perform. Share your interview with Girl Scout friends.

## SIDEBAR: Careers to Explore

- Animal scientist
- Veterinary technician
- Zookeeper
- Zoologist
- Biochemist
- Ranch manager
- Animal nutritionist
- Wildlife and habitat planner

- Wildlife-management biologist
- Animal behaviorist
- Park ranger
- Director of animal control
- Animal-welfare manager
- Guide-animal trainer
- Herpetologist
- Fish and game warden
- Zoo photographer and videographer
- Wildlife photographer
- Animal-habitat architect
- Pet therapist
- Ecotourism guide
- Outdoor-recreation planner
- Animal-refuge manager
- Environmental educator
- Animal-advocacy lawyer
- Ornithologist
- Wildlife and natural history writer
- Farming-reform advocate

## **SIDEBAR: More to Explore**

Pretend you're a Girl Scout in 1930. As girls did to earn their Land Animal Finder badge, list the game animals in your area and learn how they're protected. How are game laws made and administered in your state?

## **SIDEBAR: Famous Animal Advocates**

- Dian Fossey was an American zoologist who spent 18 years studying gorilla groups in Rwanda. She died in 1985, but the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International continues her work.
- Karen Davis is the founder and director of United Poultry Concerns, a rescue and advocacy group for factory-farmed chickens, turkeys, and ducks. A former college English professor, she also founded the Animal Rights Coalition in 1989.
- Stella McCartney is an animal rights activist and a designer who refuses to use fur or leather in her fashions. She is also the creator of a skin care line that is made with organic ingredients and never tested on animals.

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- Jane Goodall is considered by many to be the world’s leading expert on chimpanzees. She is best known for her 45-year study of wild chimps in Gombe Stream National Park, Tanzania.
- Steve Irwin was the host of the popular TV show The Crocodile Hunter. He was a conservationist who worked to promote awareness about endangered species and other environmental issues. Though he was killed by a stingray in 2006, his family continues his work.
- Bob Barker, who hosted The Price Is Right from 1972–2007, always ended the show by reminding viewers to have their pets spayed or neutered. He is the founder of the DJ&T Foundation, a group that promotes pet population control.
- Michael W. Fox is a well-known veterinarian and former officer of the Humane Society of the United States. He has written more than 40 books, many of them about animal care and animal behavior.
- Lamon Brewster is a retired boxer who now works to raise awareness about dog fighting. In 2007, he filmed a public service announcement against dog fighting.
- Sylvia Alice Earle is an American oceanographer and a renowned marine biologist. She is Explorer in Residence at the National Geographic Society and works to protect marine areas.
- Carole Noon was a primatologist. She founded Save the Chimps, an organization that created the world’s largest sanctuary for captive chimpanzees.
- Cesar Milan started his career as a dog groomer but became one of the world’s best-known dog trainers. As host of the TV show The Dog Whisperer, he promoted “rehabilitation” for dogs that were difficult to train.
- Carol Buckley is the cofounder of The Elephant Sanctuary, the country’s largest natural habitat refuge for endangered African and Asian elephants. In 2010, she went on to found the nonprofit group Elephant Aid International

### Step 5: Look into an animal issue

Choose an issue and find out more!

CHOICES – DO ONE:

**Debate a policy decision.** Pretend you can make a law, and invite people to present both sides of your animal issue, such as:

- Eating meat vs. vegetarianism
- Wearing fur, leather, or other animal products vs. not wearing them



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- Medical advances for humans vs. animal rights
- Zoos that aid conservation vs. zoos that keep animals confined

For More FUN: Host a screening for your Girl Scout group, friends, or family that centers around a feature or documentary film about your animal issue. After the screening, share information, invite conversation, then have the debate.

OR

**Compose an editorial.** Present your issue in an opinion article. You might want to post it in a blog or on a website devoted to your issue.

OR

**Create a public service announcement.** Put your audiovisual skills to work and create a two-minute public service video or slide show to get your message across.

**Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:**

- Creating an ongoing website for communication and information on animal issues
- Planning an event to build awareness of an animal issue
- Volunteering at an animal rescue organization, a shelter, or the humane society

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