



## ANIMAL LAW COMMISSION



NEWS FROM THE PLANET



Dear Animal Law Commission Members and Colleagues,

Welcome to the first 2025 edition of *News from the Planet* that will provide you with international animal law news and upcoming events.

In education, AI continues to be a hot topic, and we will host another webinar, “AI and Animals” with George Washington University Animal Legal Education Initiative this fall.

The UIA Guadalajara Congress will be held 29 October – 2 November. The Animal Law Commission will present at two sessions. One on the “Sustainable Use of the Oceans” with the Agrifood Commission and the other session is “Tackling Climate Change: Lawyers Must Act Now for A Sustainable Future” in conjunction with the Banking and Financial Services Law and Human Rights commissions. Also, on Friday, 31 October, I will moderate a UIA-ABA joint session on “The United Nations at 80: The State of Play of Business and Human Rights.

We will also continue our traditional “Public Service for Animals” in Guadalajara. Work is underway to find a charity and organize the event.

This year UIA/LexisNexis Publishing will publish *Global Wildlife Law: Treaties, Laws, and Agreements that Impact Biodiversity, Conservation, and Trade*. I will serve as editor and UIA members Alice Di Concetto, Jim Karani, and Ashu Thakur will contribute chapters.

I hope to see you in Guadalajara!

Sincerely,

*Yolanda Eisenstein*

2025-1

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## Upcoming 2025 Events

**UIA Date TBD:** A webinar on International Animal Law Litigation with George Washington University. Details to come.

**UIA Date TBD:** AI and Animals webinar. We will continue to keep you informed on the latest developments in artificial intelligence as it relates to animals.

**UIA 29 October - 2 November:** UIA Guadalajara Congress

**AVA 17 – 20 July:** Animal and Vegan Animal Advocacy Summit, Nairobi, Kenya

**IUCN 9 – 15 October:** IUCN World Conservation Congress, Abu Dhabi

## International Animal Law News Briefs

[The Colorado Supreme Court rules that elephants are not legal persons and cannot file lawsuits.](#)

On January 21, 2025, the U.S. Colorado Supreme Court ruled that elephants are not “persons” under the state’s habeas corpus statute and therefore cannot sue for their release. The case, brought by the Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP), involved five African elephants - Missy, Kimba, Lucky, LouLou, and Jambo - who were confined at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo.

While the court acknowledged the elephants might fare better in a sanctuary, it found no legal violation, stating the zoo was operating lawfully. It concluded that habeas corpus protections apply only to persons under current Colorado law, and any extension to nonhuman animals would require legislative change.

The decision reinforces the legal precedent that nonhuman animals are not entitled to personhood rights under existing statutes in Colorado.

[Global Campaign Launched to End the Dog and Cat Meat Trade](#)

The Coalition for Cruelty Free Africa (CFCFA), alongside the Liberia Animal Welfare and Conservation Society (LAWCS), has launched a global campaign urging legislative action to end the dog and cat meat trade. Backed by international animal protection groups, the initiative highlights the severe public health risks and zoonotic threats linked to this practice.

The campaign also promotes compassion toward animals and encourages communities to adopt alternative protein sources and sustainable agriculture, aiming to build a healthier, more humane future.

### [Portugal approves a legally binding ban on Deep-Sea Mining until 2025](#)

Portugal has passed a moratorium on deep-sea mining in its territorial waters until 2050, citing environmental risks and limited scientific understanding. The decision follows Portugal's 2023 vote against deep-sea mining at the International Seabed Authority (ISA).

Mining the seabed threatens marine biodiversity, disrupts ecosystems, and harms fisheries. The bill, proposed by the Pessoas-Animais-Natureza (PAN) parliamentary group, reinforces Portugal's commitment to marine conservation. PAN's president, Inês de Sousa Real, emphasized this in 2023, stating: "The future of humanity goes hand in hand with the future of the oceans. We are the country with the greatest marine biodiversity in Europe, and that is why we must be able to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources."

Portugal's moratorium is a major victory for marine life, reinforcing global calls for a cautious approach to ocean resource exploitation.

### [Norway Rejects Salmon Farming Ban Amid Wild Salmon Decline](#)

Norway's Environment Minister, Andreas Bjelland Eriksen, has dismissed calls for a ban on open-net salmon farming, despite the ongoing decline in wild salmon populations (a drop of 50% since the 1980s). While acknowledging the decline as "an existential threat" and the impact of the pollution created by the industry, Eriksen emphasized the need for sustainable food production and stricter regulations rather than a complete ban.

He believes that with proper regulation, salmon farming can coexist with healthy wild salmon stocks, balancing industry growth and environmental protection. This stance contrasts with recent bans in regions like British Columbia and Washington State, where similar concerns led to a halt in open-net farming.

### [Shaping the Future of Animal Law & Ethical Investing](#)

Global Animal Law's president and founder, Dr. H.C. Antoine F. Goetschel, recently spoke at the Hamburg Forum on Comparative Animal Law, emphasizing the need for stronger global frameworks to enhance animal welfare. Beyond legal advocacy, the group is also working on animal-friendly financial investment opportunities, enabling investors to create a positive impact for both animals and people.

### [Norway Officially Bans Fur Farming with Last Farm Closing in February 2025](#)

Norway has fulfilled its commitment to animal welfare by fully implementing its ban on fur farming. This milestone, set in motion several years ago, required all fur farms to cease operations by February 2025, and now the country is officially free from this inhumane practice.

The decision to end fur farming reflects Norway's leadership in prioritising ethical treatment of animals, setting a benchmark for other nations to follow. This significant step forward ensures that animal welfare prevails over outdated and cruel practices.

### [South Africa Sets No-Fishing Zones to Save Endangered African Penguins](#)

In a major conservation victory, South Africa's Pretoria High Court has mandated no-fishing zones around six key breeding areas of the endangered African penguin. The ruling, issued in March 2025, restricts sardine and anchovy fishing—the penguins' main food sources—for the next 10 years.

With populations dropping from 15,000 in 2018 to under 9,000 by 2023, African penguins could vanish by 2035 without urgent intervention. Conservation groups led the legal push, but experts stress that enforcement, monitoring, and continued collaboration are essential to secure the species' future.

### [Brazil Legalizes Targeted Blue Shark Fishing, Ignoring Declining Populations](#)

In April 2025, Brazil authorized the commercial fishing of blue sharks under Portaria Interministerial Nº 30, allowing up to 3,481 tons to be caught annually. Once considered bycatch, blue sharks are now officially a target species.

The government claims the move supports sustainability and traceability. However, conservationists warn it ignores declining populations and lacks independent oversight or reliable data. Listed as Near Threatened by the IUCN, blue sharks play a vital role in ocean health. Critics argue the new law prioritizes profit over precaution, setting a dangerous precedent for global shark conservation. Blue sharks are legal catch in Brazil today—but it doesn't have to stay that way.

### [Iceland Cancels Whaling Season for Second Year in a Row](#)

Iceland's only whaling company, Hvalur hf., has called off its 2025 fin whale hunt—despite holding a permit to kill 200 whales—marking the second consecutive year without a whaling season.

The cancellation comes amid declining demand and falling prices in Japan, Iceland's main export market for whale meat. It also reflects growing public opposition and environmental awareness within the country. While Iceland remains one of the few nations still allowing commercial whaling, this ongoing pause signals a hopeful shift toward more ethical marine practices.

## WHO Pandemic Agreement Recognizes Animal Welfare as Part of Global Health

On May 20, 2025, the World Health Organization adopted its first-ever Pandemic Agreement, uniting over 120 countries in a new effort to prevent and respond to future pandemics.

While centered on human health, the agreement embraces the One Health approach, which recognizes that the health of humans, animals, and ecosystems is deeply interconnected.

Given that most pandemics originate from animals—through wildlife trade, factory farming, and habitat destruction—this global commitment has important implications for animal welfare. Improving the way animals are treated is not just a moral issue; it's a crucial step toward preventing future global health crises.

## Iceland Foods Supermarket Backtracks on Cage-Free Egg Commitment

UK supermarket Iceland has announced it will no longer honor its 2025 commitment to sell only cage-free eggs, citing the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. The company says it must prioritize keeping food affordable for customers. However, this decision marks a step backwards for animal welfare, especially as most major UK retailers continue to move forward with their cage-free goals. In fact, over 70% of the eggs currently sold by Iceland still come from caged hens—significantly more than most of its competitors.

Hens in caged systems are confined to spaces so small they can't stretch their wings, nest, or express other natural behaviors. This leads to high levels of stress, injury, and poor welfare overall. While economic pressures are real, the ethical treatment of animals should not be treated as expendable. The shift away from cage-free policies raises serious concerns about whether short-term costs are being prioritized over long-term responsibility and progress.