Minding Animals Bulletin 60

Welcome to Bulletin 60 of Minding Animals International Incorporated (MAI). In this bulletin we will provide an update on the organisation, potential future activities and other matters.

What is Minding Animals International?

Minding Animals International Incorporated (MAI) was established to improve the status of nonhuman animals and alleviate nonhuman animal exploitation by facilitating research and discourse among scholars, students, artists, activists, advocates, and members of the general population, in the transdisciplinary field of animal studies. MAI's main objectives are to further the development of nonhuman animal studies internationally and to help establish legal and moral protections for nonhuman animals, mainly through international conferences, national group activities and the Minding Animals Bulletin.

MAI provides an avenue for the transdisciplinary field of Animal Studies to be more responsive to the protection of animals. It is recognised that animal protection in this context encapsulates both the humanities and zoological sciences, as well as environmentalism, conservation, animal liberation, animal rights, wildlife protection, animal welfare and animal justice (in no particular order of importance). MAI aims to enable discourse between the various interests within this developing transdisciplinary field in ways that will improve the status of nonhuman animals and alleviate nonhuman animal exploitation. As such, MAI facilitates research in Animal Studies as a conduit of non-governmental politics and action. MAI acts as a bridge between academia and advocacy and is a network of more than 3,000 academics, artists, activists and advocates, dedicated to the study and protection of all planetary life through the advancement of Animal Studies.

Donations to Minding Animals International

To continue to operate and provide coordination of all our activities, Minding Animals International is in urgent need of additional funding.

Did you know that, if you are a US citizen, all donations to Minding Animals International are tax deductible? MAI is a registered US 501(c)(3) charity, with all donations eligible for a tax deduction.

If interested in donating, please log on to: http://www.mindinganimals.com/donations/.

Consideration of donating will be greatly appreciated.

The names MAC, MAC5, Minding Animals Conference, MA, MAI, Minding Animals International, MAA, Minding Animals Australia, organisational logos and all content on Minding Animals Websites and Minding Animals Bulletins are © 2026 Minding Animals International Incorporated.

Minding Animals International Board: Call for Nominations

NOMINATIONS CLOSE 31 JULY

The Minding Animals International Board is in need of four additional Directors. All Directors are active members of the Board and are expected to take an active interest and role in all matters related to Minding Animals International Inc. (MAI). MAI is a non-profit corporation under the US State of Delaware statutes. It is a charity with 501(c)(3) status (all donations are tax deductible in the USA). Our current Board of Directors comprises: Dr Rod Bennison (Chair), Dr Candace Laughinghouse (Scecretary), Dr Adam See (Treasurer), Professor Ana Cristina Ramírez Barreto, Dr Yoriko Otomo, Professor Sandra Swart and Dr Rajesh Reddy.

When considering nominating, you should consider how you may be able to actively contribute:

- Having a commitment to the aims and objectives of the organisation
- An understanding of US based corporations and charities, and of constitutional review
- An interest in developing websites and newsletters
- An aptitude and track record in seeking donations and fundraising
- An ability to grow and expand partnerships
- A knowledge of event coordination
- An expertise of or access to networks necessary to sustain and grow MAI

Nominations for Directorship of the Board should be forwarded to the Chair of the Board (Dr Rod Bennison) c/. mindinganimals@gmail.com. Nominations should be accompanied with the following documentation/information:

- An email nomination with details of how you could contribute to MAI
- Resume/CV of your qualifications and experience
- A jpeg of a recent photo of yourself (for the MAI website)

Minding Animals Australia Board

Minding Animals Australia is also looking for an additional member of its Board. If interested, please forward your nomination also by 31 July with your resume/CV of your qualifications and experience c/. mindinganimals@gmail.com

Minding Animals Germany Symposium

The next Minding Animals Germany (MAG) Symposium will take place at the Academy of Media Arts in Köln on 11 and 12 December. To be able to plan a little bit regarding the venue, it would be appreciated to know how many of you would like to come – please add your name to this list at: https://terminplaner6.dfn.de/en/b/a716afea8bcedf3f13b4ac0fe6615bad-1677225

Or contact Ute Horner at hoerner@khm.de or Pascal Dreier at pascal.dreier@khm.de

Vale

Birute Goldikas

It is not easy to follow orangutans through the forest. They swing through the trees with the greatest of ease, forcing the poor lumbering biped to push through brush or wade through swamps, risking life-threatening encounters with insects, snakes, crocodiles and more, to keep up. But this was the life that the young primatologist Biruté Galdikas, who has died aged 79, chose in 1971, and in the decades that followed she added the third and fourth dimensions to the very flat image of these critically endangered animals that scientists had held until then.

Her patient observation of the 'people of the forest' – the English translation of the Malay expression orangutan – revealed that they have the longest birth interval of any land mammal, with a female producing an infant every seven or eight years and investing herself intensively in its rearing. She showed that although orangutans were omnivores, fruit constituted the major part of their diet. They acted as the 'gardeners of the forest', being the only animal big enough to distribute the seeds of the larger plants, through the simple act of digestion. By breaking the occasional branch in the canopy they also let in the light, encouraging regrowth. Nor were they strictly solitary, as had been thought. The males were, though even they occasionally came down from the canopy to lope across the forest floor, but the females lived in loose matrilineal groups – a pattern found across the great apes.

Following Galdikas's pioneering example, other fieldworkers would observe orangutans using tools – something that Jane Goodall had reported earlier in chimpanzees, and that had previously been considered exclusively human. They showed that the orangutans' choice of tools and the tasks for which they used them varied across populations, which was evidence of culture.

The picture that Galdikas and those who came after her built, of a species whose survival depended on the transmission of information across groups and generations, went a long way towards explaining why orangutans are so vulnerable to threats to their environment – and why their declining population numbers have occasionally tipped into freefall. It was natural, then, that Galdikas should become preoccupied with conservation early in her career. In this she followed her friends, Goodall, who died last year, and the mountain gorilla expert Dian Fossey, who was murdered in Rwanda in 1985. Photos of the 'trimates', as the three women were affectionately dubbed, cuddling orphaned apes or leading them by the hand graced many a magazine cover, until they triggered a backlash.

Galdikas, in particular, was criticised for her work as a surrogate mother to hundreds of orphaned orangutans. The infants she reared behaved differently from their wild counterparts by the time they were released, the critics said, and she was altogether too close to them. This not only affected her objectivity, they claimed, but it also increased the risk of interspecies disease transmission.

Gillian Forrester, who researches ape cognition at the University of Sussex, defended the trimates. Disease risk was less well understood in their day, she said, and although the methods of rehabilitation have evolved in light of new knowledge, human surrogate mothers are still often the only option for orangutan orphans that would normally spend their first seven years inseparable from their real mothers. "Those women worked in an age of discovery", Forrester said. "Now we're moving into an age of responsibility".

The criticisms should not detract from the women's remarkable achievement, she maintained, which was to add the female perspective to our understanding of our closest relatives, and in so doing to narrow the illusory perceptual gap between humans and the other apes. They did so by asking questions that male primatologists had not thought to ask – about the role of female choice in shaping social hierarchies, for example, or about gender based decision making day to day. By revealing the

remarkable strength of these animals' social bonds, their individual characters and the depth of emotion of which they were capable, the trimates portrayed them as more human like than science had previously allowed.

Biruté was born in Wiesbaden, Germany, to Antanas Gildakas, a house painter, and his wife, Filomena (nee Slapsis), who worked as a nurse. Her parents, who were both of Lithuanian origin, eventually moved the family – Biruté and her two brothers and a sister – to Toronto, Canada, where Biruté nurtured a fascination for human evolution. That fascination would crystallise around orangutans – the only great ape found in Asia – because they were thought not to have evolved very far from their ancestral state, and because of their eyes. "Their eyes have whites around the iris … just like humans", Galdikas told an interviewer in 2011, on the release of a film about her work, *Born to Be Wild*.

As a student at the University of California, Los Angeles, she encountered the palaeoanthropologist Louis Leakey, who encouraged her and her fellow trimates to undertake fieldwork – the reason they became known, alternatively, as 'Leakey's angels'.

In 1971 Galdikas created her first camp in central Borneo, with her then husband, the photographer Rod Brindamour, whom she had married the previous year. "The swamps, swollen by rain, were waist deep and impassable", she told National Geographic four years later, about arriving at the site they would name Camp Leakey in her mentor's honour. "Leeches were everywhere. Bloated with our blood, they fell out of our socks, dropped off our necks, and even squirmed out of our underwear".

It was a foretaste of the life to come, embedded in the forest, living at the rhythm of the orangutans – being alert from the moment they left their nest, typically before 6am, to the moment they built a new one at dusk. She had to be there all day every day for years, so that the animals accepted her presence and she could discern patterns in their behaviour – the reason, perhaps, that when she and Brindamour divorced in 1979 they agreed that he should have custody of their young son, Binti.

It was physically demanding, lonely work, but Galdikas wanted no other. Meeting her at a wildlife film festival in New York City in 2014, at which they were both being honoured, the US primatologist Mireya Mayor recalled: "She seemed like someone who had stepped out of the forest temporarily … her heart and mind were still there".

Galdikas understood that outreach was essential to conservation, as was the involvement of local people. The organisation that she created in 1986, Orangutan Foundation International, will continue to be run by an Indonesian team headed by Frederick, her son with her second husband, Pak Bohap, a native Bornean, whom she married in 1981. The foundation has contributed to the release of more than 1,000 rehabilitated captive orangutans into the wild, and rescued and relocated another 200 wild orangutans.

When she talked about her work, Galdikas did not shy away from the dangers she faced. The greatest threat to the animals' habitat came from loggers and palm oil plantation owners. She received death threats and was once kidnapped. "I was struggling against an industry that was making billions of dollars", she said in an interview last year. "It did sometimes come to physical violence".

She nearly died of malaria too, but in the end, arguably, it was the forest that claimed her. She was diagnosed with lung cancer and pulmonary fibrosis, two conditions exacerbated – in the view of those close to her – by her efforts to contain wildfires in her beloved Borneo. Bohap died in 2022. Biruté Galdikas is survived by her children, Binti, by Frederick and Jane, her children from her second marriage, seven grandchildren, and her sister, Aldona. She was born 10 May 1946 and died 24 March 2026,

An excerpt from Biruté's obituary by Laura Spinney published in The Guardian, 10 April, 2026

Mona al-Khalil

Lebanese environmental activist Mona Khalil, whose work helped turn a stretch of coastline in southern Lebanon into one of the eastern Mediterranean's most important nesting sites for endangered sea turtles, has died after being wounded in an Israeli strike. Khalil, 76, was injured when her house on Mansouri beach, near the southern city of Tyre, was hit during Israeli attacks in southern Lebanon.

“She is a deeply committed environmental defender”, Hisham Younes, the founder and president of Green Southerners, told the BBC. "She used to talk about the beach like it was a person. Her bond to the sunset, her bond to the water and the turtles….she was really into conservation, and into the soul, the spirit of conservation".

For more than 25 years, Khalil dedicated herself to protecting endangered loggerhead and green sea turtles that nest along Lebanon's southern coast. Her conservation work began after what her loved ones described as a life changing encounter with a turtle laying eggs on Mansouri beach in 1999.

A refugee of the Lebanese civil war, Khalil was living in the Netherlands but had returned to visit her family's seaside home. She was on the beach one night and saw a green turtle laying eggs on the beach. After learning that sea turtle populations in Lebanon were under threat, she committed herself to protecting them and later returned permanently to the country.

Khalil helped establish an ecotourism and conservation initiative overlooking Mansouri beach. What began as a small guesthouse evolved into a centre for environmental education, wildlife protection and marine research, attracting volunteers and visitors from around the world.

Khalil spent decades monitoring nesting sites, documenting marine life and campaigning against coastal development, pollution and destructive fishing practices. Her efforts helped secure protected status for parts of the coastline and raised awareness of the threats facing marine ecosystems in Lebanon. Friends and colleagues said she remained committed to her work despite years of conflict in southern Lebanon. Her home had previously been damaged during the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, but she refused to leave the beach she had spent years protecting. Environmental groups said Khalil's legacy would endure through the conservation movement she helped build and through the generations of turtles that continue to return to Lebanon's shores.

Paul Abi Rached, the president of Terre Liban, recalled taking his children to visit Khalil in Mansouri in 2017 when they helped her release baby sea turtles onto the sand, and watched them make their way to the Mediterranean. "Her love for the turtles was evident in every word and every action, but so was her love for people", he told the BBC. "That, perhaps, is Mona's greatest legacy - she did not only protect turtles; she inspired people to care about them."

From an obituary published by the BBC from Samantha Granville with additional reporting by Angie Mrad, June, 2026

Special Issue Call for Papers

Please note that *Animals* is an international open access journal publishing peer reviewed research on animals and animal related issues. The journal received a CiteScore of 5.2 in 2024 and ranks among leading journals in the fields of Veterinary Science, Animal Science, and Zoology. An Article Processing Charge (APC) of CHF 2400 currently applies to all accepted papers.

We reproduce the call for papers below as a matter of interest to our readers, whilst noting that Minding Animals International Inc. has the long standing view that publishing costs should always be borne by publishers and not authors (whether academics, students or activists).

Special Issue

Moral Dilemmas in Human-Animal Interactions: Ethics, Conflict, and Coexistence

Message from the Guest Editor

The aim of this Special Issue is to explore the moral complexities of human–animal interaction across all contexts where humans and animals interact, including spaces that may appear benign but may be coercive or conflictual, such as fields where animals "work" to serve human needs, such as in animal-assisted therapy, assistance animal work, ecotourism and sporting contexts.

We welcome submissions that address the moral foundations of human–animal interaction, especially submissions that consider how these foundations are reshaped over time. Original research articles are welcomed, including qualitative research, as are systematic or narrative reviews and method-focused papers. Topics might address:

- Moral and ethical dilemmas in veterinary care, ecotourism, animal-assisted therapy and interspecies sports;
- Power, morality and animal labour;
- Artificial Intelligence and its impact on the ethics of human–animal interaction;
- Human–wildlife conflict and coexistence;
- Power dynamics in pet ownership;
- Navigating the divide in moral concern across the species spectrum: human interaction with "low" vs "high" status animals.

Guest Editor

Dr. Rachel Hogg

School of Psychology, Faculty of Business, Justice and Behavioural Sciences, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, Australia

Deadline for manuscript submissions

10 March 2027

Animals

an Open Access Journal by MDPI

Impact Factor 3.2
CiteScore 5.5
Indexed in PubMed

Animals
Editorial Office
MDPI, Grosspeteranlage 5
4052 Basel, Switzerland
Tel: +41 61 683 77 34
animals@mdpi.com

mdpi.com/journal/animals

The Future of Animal Studies: a call for articles

Over the next few issues of the Minding Animals Bulletin, we will be providing readers with a series of articles from renown and emergent Animal Studies academics and authors on the current state of Animal Studies.

Would you like a short paper presented in the Minding Animals Bulletin? Just send your draft to mindinganimals@gmail.com for consideration. Our second article from Professor Marc Bekoff follows:

Minding Animals Enhances Emotional Intelligence and Empathy

- Developing our emotional intelligence can improve our sense of empathy and increase our effectiveness.
- Humane education focuses on turning knowledge into compassion, and its importance can't be overemphasized.
- Jane Goodall celebrates a message of hope, responsibility, and connection in a challenging world.

As a kid, I spent as much time outdoors as possible. Even at age 3, I rode my tricycle along Brooklyn sidewalks, eager to encounter all the dogs, birds, squirrels, and ants who shared our neighbourhood. My parents told me I was constantly 'minding animals' - conversations that resulted many decades later in a book of the same title. Later, I understood this to mean two things: I attributed minds and emotions to animals, and I was concerned with how they were treated. As a youngster, my fascination with animals continued in the woods of Long Island. I could feel their emotions as I soaked in their dogness, frogness, and fishness. On these forays into nature, I fostered my own empathy and compassion; it felt natural to imagine the points of view of different animals. I think that's true for most children.

These youthful explorations led me to become a field ethologist. Not only did I want to observe animals as a career, but I also wanted to prove through research that what I intuitively knew as a young person was true - that nonhuman animals are sentient beings, are aware, and experience rich inner lives of their own. Of course, now we know this because of an enormous amount of research. But we didn't then. And this knowledge must influence how we, as individuals and as a society, care for and interact with animals.

That's the premise of a new book *Love in Their Hearts: A Celebration of Animal Emotions and a Guide to Compassionate Action*, which I co-wrote with young adult author Jeff Campbell. Through science and stories, I want to inspire readers, especially young people, with the rich emotional lives of animals, to show the importance of emotions for all beings, and to spark a compassionate desire to improve the lives of animals whenever we can. Animal emotions matter. Their emotions absolutely matter to them, and they matter to us.

Emotional intelligence can save your life

Observing and respecting animal emotions improves our emotional intelligence. It trains us to suss out what might be going on inside any being - human and nonhuman. Emotional intelligence is a key life skill, one that many educators teach. In fact, nonhuman animals are excellent teachers. Many animals are intelligent about emotions and demonstrate an incredible ability to read others. They also demonstrate tremendous compassion.

For instance, I share the story of Jethro, an adopted dog who was my companion for 23 years. Jethro once arrived whining at the front door with a creature in his mouth, only to belch out a very young, very wet bunny. I couldn't see any injuries. It was a small bundle of fur that had been abandoned by

the mother and now needed care, food, and love. Jethro looked up, wide eyed and standing tall, clearly proud of his compassionate self, his entire being urging: come on, do something.

For two weeks, we nursed Bunny (as I named her, very original) back to health, and the entire time, Jethro wouldn't leave her side. I was afraid he might harm her, but he only protected and adopted her as his friend. When we finally released Bunny, she hid in a woodpile for an hour before hopping away, and for months after, Jethro kept returning to the woodpile, as if hoping to see his friend again.

Another story embodies a different lesson. Orca trainer John Hargrove once started a training session with Freya, the matriarch of the killer whales within the sea life park. But Freya was angry - Hargrove could see it in her eyes and manner - and she aggressively trapped Hargrove in the centre of the pool, threatened to hit him with her fluke, and started mouthing and briefly holding him underwater. Hargrove knew, even if Freya was only sending a message, he could easily drown before she stopped. Swimming away might provoke worse aggression. Instead, Hargrove engaged Freya in training manoeuvres, and then he escaped.

Later, reflecting on Freya's recent behaviour, Hargrove realized she'd felt disrespected. He had prioritized other orcas in training, which she resented, and he knew, from then on, he had to treat her with the deference her rank as matriarch demanded. Afterward, Hargrove and Freya trained together amicably for years, with no more aggressive episodes—because he understood and respected her emotions and point of view.

Humane education and the impact of Jane Goodall: 'Jane Magic'

It is essential to remember Jane Goodall's tireless efforts to help all beings. She led a life of science, hope, humanitarianism, and peace. People worldwide call Jane's global impact 'Jane Magic'. Before she died in October 2025, Jane Goodall wrote the foreword for *Love in Their Hearts*. She was a dear friend, and we co-wrote books (including the forthcoming children's book *Every Elephant Has a Name*, due in 2027). In addition, I was, and still am, an ambassador for Jane Goodall's Roots and Shoots, the youth action program Jane founded in 1991. There are Roots and Shoots groups in 75 countries that educate children of all ages about animals, people, and the environment, and empower them to take action in their communities.

Reprinted with permission from an article first published in *Psychology Today* on 11 June, 2026: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/animal-emotions/202606/minding-animals-enhances-emotional-intelligence-and-empathy

Minding Animals Website and Contact Emails

Please check out the Minding Animals website at www.mindinganimals.com, www.mindinganimals.net, or www.mindinganimals.org If you have problems accessing any of the sites, you may need to clear your cache. The emails are:

Enquires	Relevant Email Addresses
Minding Animals email (always available)	mindinganimals@gmail.com
Minding Animals Australia	mindinganimals@gmail.com
Minding Animals Germany	benzschwarzburg@googlemail.com
Minding Animals Danmark	kontakt@mindinganimals.dk