

COMMISSION OF ANIMAL CONTROL AND WELFARE



**ANNUAL REPORT
2021**

To The San Francisco Board of Supervisors

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COMMISSIONERS

- **Nina Irani** is the Commission Chair and has served since February 2019. She lives in District 1 with her husband and their sweet Maine Coon, Henry, who was adopted from the San Francisco SPCA.
- **Jane Tobin** is the Commission Vice-Chair and has served since May 2015. Jane also serves as an advisor on the Joint Zoo and Recreation and Park Committee. She lives in the Haight with her animal-loving husband, their sweet cat Lincoln and friendly pooch Halley.
- **Michael Angelo Torres** is the Commission Secretary and has served since September 2019. Michael lives downtown with his human partner and two adorable senior Chihuahuas named Ladybug and Cricket.
- **Iris Chan** has served on the Commission since May 2021, after receiving her BS in Animal Science and MA in Animal Studies. Iris has an 8-year-old deaf Yorkie rescue named Japchae that she carries around with her everywhere!
- **Annemarie Fortier** has lived in San Francisco for over two decades. She has been the happy guardian to several dogs, two children and was recently adopted by a cat.
- **Irina Ozerney** was appointed to the Commission in May 2021. She also volunteers at Yggdrasil Urban Wildlife Rescue and is working towards her certificate in wildlife rehabilitation. Irina's feline overlord KeeKee is adorable beyond words, and a talented paper artist!
- **Brian Van Horn, DVM** is the licensed veterinarian member of the Commission. He has served on the Commission since February 2019.

Department Representatives:

Dr. Shari O'Neill, DVM – San Francisco Animal Care & Control

Officer Joe Majeski – San Francisco Police Department

Chris Campbell, Chief Natural Resources Specialist – San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department

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The Commission of Animal Control and Welfare advises the Board of Supervisors on all issues related to animals. The Commissioners study and make policy recommendations that include issues of interest from members of the public and Supervisors. This report fulfills the Commission's responsibility to render a written report of its activities to the Board in accordance with San Francisco Health Code section 41.3

STATEMENT FROM THE COMMISSION CHAIR



Although we spent another year socially distant and virtual, we continued to welcome members of the community and are grateful to all our guests who joined us at this year's meetings.

We have a lot to be thankful for. A variety of local animal organizations joined us to share their wisdom and compassion. What we learned from their work helping countless animals and their human families is detailed in this year's report.

We're also grateful to our city representatives who took time in this busy year to attend our meetings and connect with us offline to advance this year's achievements. We're thankful to Supervisor Safai and his staff for sponsoring our resolution that will help countless farm animals live more humanely. It was also a pleasure to host the Offices of Supervisors Melgar and Stefani and the Office of Mayor London Breed, along with Supervisor Connie Chan.

We continued to be inspired by the members of the public who are often on the front lines caring for our city's animals. This year, we learned of locals working to rescue community cats, promote coexistence with urban wildlife, and care for vulnerable San Franciscans – feathered, furry, bipedal, and otherwise.

We also welcomed our newest commissioners. These commissioners bring their talents and energy, and remind us that our work is a continuum – we build on the efforts of those who came before us and work hard to strengthen our foundation for those who will come after.

We're excited to engage with everyone next year as we work on ending cruel wildlife trapping practices, advancing animal and climate-friendly consumer choices, and bringing attention to adoptions with the return of "Kitty Hall" and the introduction of "Smalls Hall," featuring our tiniest companions.

We look forward to seeing you in 2022!

Nina Irani
Chair, Animal Commission

In 2021, the Commission achieved the following:

Board Approval of Resolution Supporting Proposition 12

The Board of Supervisors unanimously voted in favor of the Commission's resolution supporting compliance with California's Proposition 12. The resolution encourages local businesses to prepare to meet the law's requirements by sourcing eggs, pork, and veal from cage-free facilities in time for the law's 2022 compliance deadline. Supervisor Safai sponsored the resolution, stating that:

"Proposition 12, passed in 2018, was revolutionary in the sense that it mandated how we treat our animals and livestock... . This is a humane right not only for animals but for consumers. ...The statement that you are what you eat really means something now in California."

Public Education Program

This year, the Commission initiated a speaker series, inviting local animal organizations to present regarding their work at our monthly public meetings. The presentations created a forum for the community to discuss support for animals and people alike, and showed that although our city's geography is small, there is room for all to coexist peacefully.

The Commission was honored to host the following guests:

- **SF Dog**, who shared about their collaboration with the **Latino Task Force** and **SF SPCA** to create a food pantry for companion animals at the **Mission Food Hub** during the Covid-19 pandemic. The collaboration was providing approximately 3,600 pounds of dog and cat food every month.
- **WildCare**, a non-profit dedicated to protecting and rescuing our local wildlife and shared habitat, including providing medical care to wildlife in their open-admissions hospital, presented guidance on tending to our backyards and gardens in ways that respect and protect the wildlife living there.
- **Vet SOS** shared their work providing veterinary services to companion animals of unhoused San Franciscans. Their pop-up clinics not only provide medical services and supplies for animals but also a point of contact for human health services.
- **NorCal Bats**, an organization dedicated to rescuing and rehabilitating bats and educating the public, presented regarding bats' positive impact on the environment. We learned about how they benefit our agriculture and reduce the spread of disease, and about the serious threats to their survival.
- **Palomacy** presented regarding their work rescuing, fostering, and placing domestic pigeons and doves for adoption. We learned about these animals' unique behaviors and their dependence on humans, and how to recognize and help creatures in distress.
- **Project Coyote** promoted compassionate conservation and safe coexistence between people and wildlife. Their presentation coincided with a tragic incident involving a coyote taking a dog in the Lone Mountain neighborhood and included practical guidance for the public to keep their companion animals safe.
- **Canine Grooming Academy** and **Five Keys Charter** introduced their approach to creating career paths for individuals with barriers to employment in the growing dog grooming industry.

The Academy will train domestic violence survivors, formerly incarcerated individuals, and others while expanding access to grooming services for low-income animal guardians.

- **Animal Care & Control's** Director gave a virtual tour of its state-of-the-art shelter facility that opened this year, welcoming the public to the new space. In the fall, ACC gave their annual presentation on emergency and disaster preparedness for companion animals and their guardians.
- The **SFPD's Vicious and Dangerous Dog Unit** shared an overview of how the unit operates to investigate dog-related complaints, impound dogs, and hold hearings to decide whether dogs are vicious and dangerous. The presentation also shared information regarding the possible outcomes of hearings, including mandated training and proof of improved behavior, and euthanasia.

Reforming the Commission's Name and Foundational Code

Commissioners voted unanimously on a new name – the Animal Commission – and other upgrades to their enacting legislation (Health Code section 41.1). The new name best reflects the values of the Commission as an organization that addresses animal issues beyond welfare and control, including animal rights and the intersections of animals and the environment, equity, and public health.

The Commission also proposes allowing for fair compensation that will, at a minimum, reimburse Commissioners for the expenses they incur in administering the Commission. Finally, the amendment would open the seat reserved for a licensed veterinarian to practitioners residing in San Francisco regardless of where they practice. The Commission is working with Supervisor Mandelman's office to implement the changes.

The Commission also continues to work towards securing formal administrative support from a city department. The Commission's enacting legislation should be amended to include a mandate for a department – most likely the Office of the City Administrator – to provide support. Alternatively, the Commission can enter into an agreement with a department. This will ensure that the Commission will continue to be able to serve the city in a compliant and efficient way.

Promoting Plant-Based Agriculture and School Meals

The Commission recommended that the city endorse Assembly Bill 558, the California School Plant-Based Food and Beverage Program, and Assembly Bill 1289, the Smart Climate Agriculture Program.

AB 558 will create a reimbursement program for schools providing plant-based meal and milk alternatives. The Commission worked to gain the support of the San Francisco Unified School District and its food vendor, Revolution Foods, for AB 558. SFUSD welcomes certainty and support regarding funding that will help provide students with much-needed dairy alternatives and assist with increased food costs due in part to the pandemic.

AB 1289 requires the California Department of Food and Agriculture to provide grants to small and midsize farmers who wish to transition from raising livestock or growing feed crops to plant-based agriculture. An increase in plant-based agriculture will have a significant positive impact on climate change, as animal agriculture is a leading cause of greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation. The Commission is working to gather support from the Department of the Environment on AB 1289.

These bills are set to be considered by the State Legislation Committee at its January meeting.

Recognition of Animal Allies

The Commission initiated a program to recognize community members working to help animals, including good Samaritans who aid animals in emergencies. The Commission honored Lisa Wayne, who recently retired from the Department of Recreation and Parks, for her decades-long career supporting our city's wildlife. Lisa Wayne helped establish the Natural Resources Division, which oversees thirty-one natural, open spaces in the city, many of which were previously neglected. Her work means that San Franciscans – humans, companion animals, and wildlife alike – can now enjoy these areas.



Reporting from the Department of Animal Care and Control

The Commission continued to gather monthly reports from Animal Care & Control regarding animal intakes and outcomes, and shelter operations.

The reporting data includes:

- the number of animals that come into and leave the shelter;
- whether the animals were found or were surrendered by their guardians;
- how the animals left the shelter (i.e. adopted, transferred to a rescue partner, or released into the wild);
- how many animals were euthanized and whether the reason was medical or behavioral.

With over a year's worth of data collected, the Commission will be assessing patterns and changes, and plans to use the analysis in support of its policy recommendations.



Cartier is our annual cover animal. Cartier's rescuer found him alone on the streets of San Francisco in June. Through the SPCA's Community Cats program, he was neutered and microchipped. He spent his summer in foster care, showing off his energetic, athletic, and loving nature while adapting to living with humans again. In November, he made a great match when he was adopted by an experienced SPCA volunteer. Cartier has touched the lives of everyone he's met on his journey to his forever home.