



- CALL FOR PAPERS -

3rd Annual Colloquium on Animal Welfare, Human Rights, Rights of Nature, and Human-wildlife Coexistence

In partnership with DFFE, SANParks, SANBI, and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife

Date: 15 to 17 September 2025, Potchefstroom (in person)

Background and theme

The relationship between human societies and the natural world, including the diverse array of animal life, is undergoing profound changes. Intensifying human pressures on ecosystems have escalated interactions often framed as human-wildlife conflict. Simultaneously, there is a growing global movement advocating for enhanced animal welfare, the recognition of the inherent value and 'rights' of nature, and the equitable treatment of all stakeholders within environmental contexts, including the human dimension of conservation and coexistence.

This complexity is reflected in evolving legal and ethical landscapes. Recent legislative proposals signal a shift towards explicitly acknowledging the well-being of wild animals and imposing a duty of care towards all components of biodiversity. These developments necessitate a critical examination of how different value systems – including anthropocentrism, sentientism, and ecocentrism – can be reconciled to inform policy and practice.

This call for papers invites scholarly and practical contributions that explore the dynamic interplay between these interconnected themes. We seek submissions that delve into the challenges, opportunities, and ethical considerations arising at the nexus of animal welfare, human rights, the legal and philosophical concepts akin to the rights of nature, and the practical realities of human-wildlife coexistence.

We welcome interdisciplinary perspectives from fields such as environmental law, ethics, conservation biology, veterinary science, sociology, human rights, and related disciplines. Papers should engage critically with the complexities and offer insights for fostering sustainable and just relationships between humans and the natural world.

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- **Evolving Legal and Policy Frameworks:** Analysis of the implications of new or proposed legislation (such as the draft National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Bill) for animal well-being, human rights, concepts of State trusteeship of biological diversity, and managing human-wildlife interactions. This includes examining provisions related to species listing, permitting, emergency interventions, and the management of invasive species or wildlife trafficking.
- **The Concept and Implementation of Duty of Care:** Exploring the practical, ethical, and legal dimensions of a duty of care towards biodiversity and the well-being of wild animals in contexts of human-wildlife interactions and broader ecosystem management.
- **Balancing Conservation Goals and Individual Animal Welfare:** Analysing the ethical and management challenges of achieving conservation objectives (often focused on populations or ecosystems) while respecting the well-being and individual needs of animals involved in conflict or management interventions. This includes discussions on different moral perspectives.
- **Human Rights, Equity, and Transformation in Biodiversity:** Examining how efforts to address historical imbalances, facilitate transformation, and achieve equity within the biodiversity sector intersect with human-wildlife coexistence challenges, animal welfare considerations, and the equitable distribution of benefits arising from the sustainable use of biodiversity (e.g., bioprospecting, biotrade).
- **Integrated Approaches:** Investigating the potential and limitations of frameworks like One Health and One Welfare in addressing human-wildlife coexistence by linking human health, animal health and welfare, and environmental well-being. This includes exploring how these approaches can incorporate different moral perspectives.
- **The Role of Stakeholders and Governance:** Analysing the contributions, powers, and duties of various actors, including governmental bodies, statutory bodies (like the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), the Scientific Authority, and the National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NSPCA)) in navigating these complex issues, including their roles in law enforcement (e.g., private prosecution).
- **Moral and Ethical Considerations:** Examining different moral viewpoints in the context of human-wildlife coexistence, including how these views shape perceptions of animal well-being, the intrinsic value of nature, and the rights or entitlements of humans and non-humans.

Abstracts

Please submit your abstracts (limited to 300 words), to niel.lubbe@nwu.ac.za by **15 August 2025**. Registrations for attendance will close on **1 September 2025**.

Registration fee

R1800 (R900 for students)
and includes the Colloquium dinner.

This call seeks to foster a deeper understanding of how to reconcile potentially competing interests and values to build a future where humans and wildlife can coexist sustainably, ethically, and justly.