

CO-EXIST

An Initiative by the Animal Welfare Group at IISc.

Animals should not require our permission to live on the earth. They were given the right to be here long before we arrived. - A. D. Williams

Our expansive campus is home to a multitude of beautiful flora and fauna. Co-existence with them becomes essential. However, when different species try to live in the same space there are bound to be conflicts.

The idea of having an animal welfare group on campus was put forth by the Registrar and was subsequently taken up by a few compassionate students and other members of the IISc community. The goal of this committee is to create sensitivity on all matters concerning animals in campus in order to minimize human-animal conflicts. In the long run this will ensure a safer environment for humans and animals alike.

The immediate goals are:

1. **Exhaustive database** of the cats and dogs on campus : This helps in taking better care of them, avoids the dumping of new strays on campus and curbs the dogs which are astray
2. **Vaccinate** the dogs regularly : If bitten by a dog, which is not aggressive until provoked, the humans concerned should not be at any risk.
3. **Spay and Neuter** the animals on campus : This keeps the population of animals on campus under control and also contributes to numerous health and other benefits.
4. The **committee** is right now a **temporary** one set up for the above 3 purposes, we would like to **make it a permanent setup** at IISc.

The long term goals are:

1. Have a **grievance cell** to address complaints regarding any conflict between animals and humans and cases of irresponsible feeding and cruelty towards animals.
2. Have a **system in place to report injured animals** and have a platform to take care of them.
3. Conduct an **annual vaccination drive** to make sure that the animals are disease free.
4. **Spread awareness** about handling strays and hence, in future, minimize the conflict.

Work towards the immediate goals (on points (1), (2) and (3)) has already begun. There is a 3-month long Animal Birth Control Drive under way at IISc, in collaboration with CARE (Charlie's Animal Rescue Center), an animal rescue NGO based in Bengaluru. The process has started with dogs and will proceed to cats thereafter. Dogs are being collared to mark the fact that they are already vaccinated (red collars) and sterilized (blue collars). Please DO NOT remove the collars, it only doubles the work for the volunteers. We highly suggest these Dos and Don'ts be followed while interacting with our furry friends. This will help ease the conflicts.

DOs:

1. For a very good reason, they do not trust people upfront. **Try approaching them while talking to them, do not make continuous eye contact in the beginning, this might come off as aggressive.** If they bark, growl, show you their teeth or do any other action that screams ‘back off’, please do back off. Consent is taken very very seriously in the animal kingdom.
2. If they let you approach them, great, you are just about to make a friend for life. **Let them smell you**, that’s how they are going to remember you in future.
3. **Talk to them in a calm voice and look them in their eye** (once they know you), they do not understand language but they understand tones.
4. If you are very scared of them or just don’t like them, just **walk away**, no animal attacks unless provoked. Please don’t go looking for trouble. If you think any animal has a disease or injury, **report it** as soon as possible. (Email us at iisc.animal.welfare@gmail.com) Timely help can really help save these wonderful souls.

DON'Ts:

1. **DO NO HARM.** This is the first principle and we cannot stress this enough. If you are unable to help, then please do not cause harm in all sense. Live, and let live.
2. **Do Not Remove the collars.** It is not in the interest of anyone to remove the collars. They provide a way to store the details of the animal in the system. The red collars represent the ones who are vaccinated and the blue represent the ones who are sterilized.
3. **Do Not feed irresponsibly.** Yes, it is good to feed them. It keeps the animals happy and reduces the chance that they will trouble any humans. But know the type of food and the animal before you feed them. Here are a few common examples - Milk: only in tiny quantities, curd is okay, so is powdered milk, Raw eggs: not a good food item for cats, Butter: not good, Cream Biscuits: not good for dogs (such information can easily be found online). Animals are susceptible to issues like heart disease, digestive trouble, psychological illness etc just like humans. Please **ONLY Feed Responsibly** if you want to.
4. **Do Not tease, hit or otherwise provoke any animal.** They are friendly creatures, do not give them a reason to not be so. Some of them might run away, but if even one retaliates, it will mean a series of injections for you and more conflict in the future.

Lastly, for those of you who are still unconvinced, there are laws in the Indian Penal Code to protect animals from cruelty. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act passed by the Parliament of India aims to prevent the infliction of unnecessary pain or suffering on animals. The [Animal Welfare Board of India](#) works vigorously towards the safety and welfare of the animals. As per the laws passed by the government of India a person is allowed to feed a stray animal, there are also laws that prohibit relocation of the animals from their environment and those that prohibit killing, to mention a few. Here’s a [reference](#) to read at leisure (a much more detailed account can be found [here](#)).

Let’s save lives and make this world a (slightly) better place to live in!