



## MISSION

The Institute for Critical Animal Studies (ICAS), rooted in animal liberation and anarchism, is an intersectional, transformative, holistic, theory-to-action activist led organization. ICAS unapologetically examines, explains, is in solidarity with and part of radical and revolutionary actions, theories, groups and movements for total liberation. We seek to dismantle all systems of domination and oppression in hopes for a just, equitable, inclusive, and peaceful world.

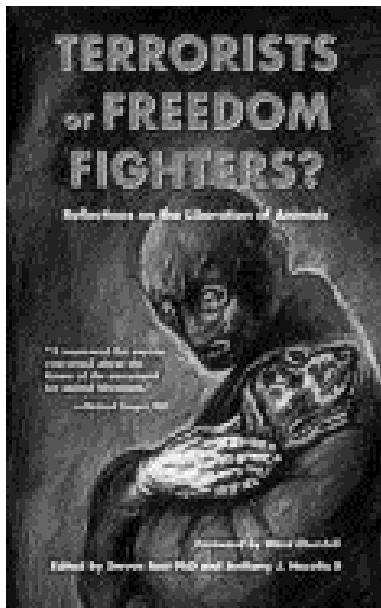
ICAS is committed to modeling in our individual and collective work that scholars can be activists and activists can be scholars.

## HISTORY

ICAS (pronounce the letter “I” and sound out “CAS”) was founded in 2001, first named the Center on Animal Liberation Affairs (CALA). ICAS is the first scholar-activist center dedicated to establishing and expanding Critical Animal Studies (CAS). ICAS has a specific mission, strategic plan, and principles; it is not an apolitical academic association striving to gather all under one umbrella; it is a private political community-based think-tank run by the Board of Executive Directors who make all major decisions for the organization based on consensus-decision-making. The ICAS Board of Executive Directors is structured as a collective. Each member of the Board is an Executive Director of ICAS, as ICAS eschews the traditional hierarchical scheme of president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary.



CALA was co-founded in 2001 by two people, Anthony J. Nocella, II and Steve Best. It arose from their seminal co-edited collection *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters? Reflections on the Liberation of Animals* (Lantern Books, 2004). CALA was developed during the era of the War on Terrorism to defend dissent, revolutionary politics, total liberation activism, and underground liberation groups such as the Animal Liberation Front and the Earth Liberation Front. CALA was the first scholar-activist animal advocacy center to provide education policy, research, and analysis. The first conferences and events of CALA were radical, intersectional, and provided space and place for those who wanted to examine new and emerging ideas from the margins of the scholar and activist communities. CALA had a number of small projects that came and went, but the two that lasted were the annual Animal Liberation Philosophy and Policy Conference (renamed the Conference for Critical Animal Studies in 2007), which was first held at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas.



The other project was the *Animal Liberation Philosophy and Policy Journal* (renamed in 2007 *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* in 2007) founded in 2003 by Best and Nocella.

The term Critical Animal Studies (CAS) emerged out of a great deal of e-dialogue by about a dozen animal rights/liberation scholars and activists around the world in the between late 2006 to April 2007. At the end of April 2007, Anthony J. Nocella II, Steve Best, and Richard Kahn decided to change the name of CALA to the Institute for Critical Animal Studies (ICAS), and on April 30, 2007 [www.criticalanimalstudies.org](http://www.criticalanimalstudies.org) was launched publicly.

From 2007 to 2010, ICAS was based only in North America with the annual Conference for Critical Animal Studies directed by Nocella, the *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* edited by Best, and small projects being managed by a diversity of people. In 2007, ICAS volunteers Steve Best, Anthony J. Nocella II, Carol Gigliotti, and Lisa Kemmerer wrote “Introducing Critical Animal Studies” in Volume 5, Issue 1 of the *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, which included the CAS Ten Principles.

In effort to help clarify and define CAS in this chapter we will share each principle in accompaniment with an explanation of each principle that we feel help to simplify each principle as well as update the principles to address the complex current political climate:

1. Pursues interdisciplinary collaborative writing and research in a comprehensive manner that includes perspectives typically ignored by animal studies such as political economy.

Explanation: Collaboration all organizing and activism such as books, conferences, rallies, protests, die-ins, civil disobedience, podcasts, blogs, social media, and writing essays and book chapters.

2. Rejects pseudo-objective academic analysis by explicitly clarifying its normative values and political commitments, such that there are no positivist illusions whatsoever that theory is disinterested or writing and research is nonpolitical.

Explanation: Own and articulate one's subjectivity and locate themselves such as at the beginning of a presentation, lecture, panel discussion, roundtable, workshops, teach-in, rally, protest, book chapter, book, essay, or conference explain one's socio-political and economic status and experiences.

3. Avoids eschewing narrow academic viewpoints and the debilitating theory-for-theory's sake position in order to link theory to practice, analysis to politics, and the academy to the community.

Explanation: Dismantle and disassociate one's self, movement and group from academia, academics, academies, and the academic industrial complex as they institutionalize and detach from social movements because they are part of the dominating schooling system and a beaurcracy. Rather be a scholar-activist and activist-scholar who daily engages in local communicaties and radical revolutionary activism, which informs their scholarship and in return their scholarship informs their activism and aids the movement.

4. Advances a holistic understanding of the commonality of oppressions, such that speciesism, sexism, racism, ableism, statism, classism, militarism and other hierarchical ideologies and institutions are viewed as parts of a larger, interlocking, global system of domination.

Explanation: Support community circles and transformative justice on addressing conflict and see conflict as an opportunity to learn about others, oneself, and socio-political and economic issues, rather than a negative situation. Acknowledge the holistic interdependency among all elements and life on this planet.

5. Rejects apolitical, conservative, and liberal positions in order to advance an anti-capitalist and, more generally, a radical anti-hierarchical politics. This orientation seeks to dismantle all structures of exploitation, domination, oppression, torture, killing, and power in favor of decentralizing and democratizing society at all levels and on a global basis.

Explanation: Supports anarchism and is an anarchist beyond simply life-style, but for socio-political and economic reasons.

6. Rejects reformist, single-issue, nation-based, legislative, strictly animal interest politics in favor of alliance politics and solidarity with other struggles against oppression and hierarchy.

Explanation: Support and engage through activism intersectionality by being in solidarity and an alliances with other movements. Understand that people, groups, and communities have multiple invisible and visible indentities stemming from socio-political and economics constructions.

7. Champions a politics of total liberation which grasps the need for, and the inseparability of, human, nonhuman animal, and Earth liberation and freedom for all in one comprehensive, though diverse, struggle; to quote Martin Luther King Jr.: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

Explantion: To participate in total liberation by make sure to daily engage in other revolutionary radical activism and movements and not identify as one type of activist over another or an activist promoting a particular issue over another or at other movement events.

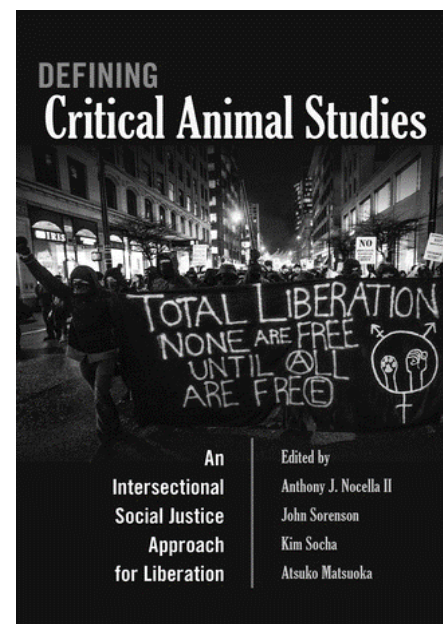
8. Deconstructs and reconstructs the socially constructed binary oppositions between human and nonhuman animals, a move basic to mainstream animal studies, but also looks to illuminate related dichotomies between culture and nature, civilization and wilderness and other dominator hierarchies to emphasize the historical limits placed upon humanity, nonhuman animals, cultural/political norms, and the liberation of nature as part of a transformative project that seeks to transcend these limits towards greater freedom, peace, and ecological harmony.

Explanation: Go beyond and be against social constructed binaries and oppressive language and labels that are divisive and detaching.

9. Openly supports and examines controversial radical politics and strategies used in all kinds of social justice movements, such as those that involve economic sabotage from boycotts to direct action toward the goal of peace.

Explanation: Engage and support by any means necessary revolutionary radical action that breaks the law such the aboveground civil disobedience such as home demos and sit-ins, underground groups such as the Animal Liberation Front, and armed struggle such as the Zapatistas and the former Black Panther Party.

10. Seeks to create openings for constructive critical dialogue on issues relevant to Critical Animal Studies across a wide-range of academic groups; citizens and grassroots activists; the staffs of policy and social service organizations; and people in private, public, and nonprofit sectors. Through – and only through — new paradigms of ecopedagogy, bridge-building with other social movements, and a solidarity-based alliance politics, is it possible to build the new forms of consciousness, knowledge, social institutions that are necessary to dissolve the hierarchical society that has enslaved this planet for the last ten thousand years.



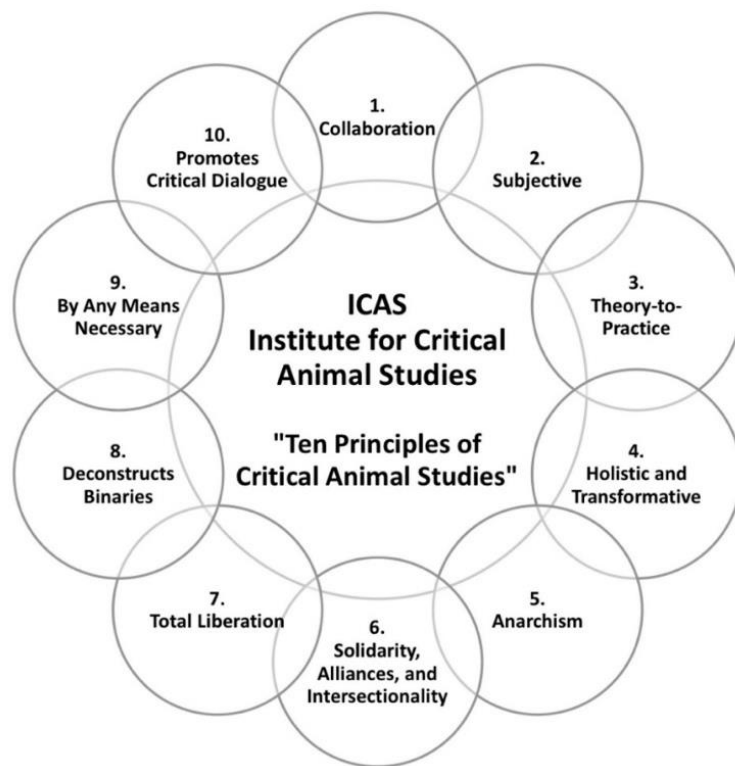
Explanation: Promote and organize safer, inclusive critical radical spaces and places for meeting, networking, and discussing new and controversial issues to unite together and explain differences among groups, movements, and people.

These principles are meant to aid in explaining and defining CAS and serve as strong guiding principles for groups of CAS scholar-activists a foundation from which they engage in their local and diverse enactments of CAS. As educators, with many students that require further breaking down these points, we have reworked the points for clarity in efforts to break it up for students and newcomers to CAS. For this reason ICAS has created the following ten points with terms and illustrated in this Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Ten Principles of Critical Animal Studies**

Many have argued that critical animal studies is whatever anyone wants it to be. That is false, as all terms have definitions; therefore, to change the definition as it was initial created is simply co-optation, manipulation, or ignorance. If one does not agree with any of the ten principles above, they by definition are not critical animal studies scholar-activists. In kind, the follow details what CAS is *not*:

- Critical animal studies is not studying animals and intersectionality.
- Critical animal studies is not reform such as arguing for reform through legislation and voting.
- Critical animal studies is not about speaking out against home demos, activism, or the Animal Liberation Front.
- Critical animal studies is not against anarchism, but for it.
- Critical animal studies is not for scholarship by those that are not involved in radical activism.
- Critical animal studies is not single-issued or involved in other movements to only further animal rights and veganism.



From 2007 to 2008, ICAS was a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization. In 2009, under the direction of a new board, ICAS changed into a non-authoritarian collective and ended its 501(c)3 status. In 2009, Nocella founded the Critical Animal Studies Book Series with Rodopi Press (now Brill Books), which is edited by Vasile Stănescu and Helena Pedersen.

In 2011 and 2012, ICAS became international with chapters on each continent (except Antarctica). Lara Drew, Carolyn Drew, Jess Ice, and Jess Ferry founded ICAS Oceania, Felipe Andrusco and Federico Alfredo Berghmans founded ICAS LatinaAmerica, ICAS Asia was founded by Scott Hurley, ICAS Europe was founded by Richard White, and ICAS Africa was founded by Les Mitchell, Aragorn Eloff, and Anastasya Eliseeva.

In 2012, the Critical Animal Studies and Theory Book Series with Lexington Books was founded by Nocella, which he edits with Joel Helfrichand and Scott Hurley. In that same year, ICAS began to have monthly meetings via Skype, but they were not frequent, facilitated, or maintained until 2013.

During 2013, Drew Winter developed the ICAS online store; Rocky Schwartz and Daniel Frank, undergraduates at Vassar College, founded the Students for Critical Animal Studies; Joe Leeson-Schaltz founded the Intersectional Research Collective, of which he is Executive Director; Ian Purdy founded the “Top Five” posts; and the ICAS Executive Directors founded the Annual Tilikum Awards to protest initiatives that ICAS opposes. Finally, in 2013, Alexandra Navarro and Anahí Gabriela González co-founded the *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Críticos Animales (Spanish Journal for Critical Animal Studies)* with the first issue published in 2014.

At the beginning of 2014, Anthony J. Nocella II, John Sorenson, Kim Socha, and Atsuko Matsuoka co-edited *Defining Critical Animal Studies: An Intersectional Social Justice Approach for Liberation* (Peter Lang), which defines the goals and scope of CAS based on the founding CAS Ten Principles. The CAS Ten Principles are the foundational philosophy of ICAS. As of 2014, ICAS has matured, settled, and become well recognized internationally within the animal liberation movement, while holding to a specific mission and set of principles. During that same year, Ian Purdy founded the Scholar-Activist Spotlight and the ICAS Executive Directors agreed to consolidate all the regional websites (which were created in 2012) and LibNow.org into one: [www.criticalanimalstudies.org](http://www.criticalanimalstudies.org).

In 2015, ICAS set out to streamline and have a more focused strategic plan, so that others within the CAS community would develop their own initiatives, as ICAS does not claim a monopoly on the field. The work of 2015 also included redeveloping the bylaws and mission and developing an ICAS Manual, which contains ICAS’s history and philosophy, administrative structure, guidelines, processes, managerial tools, code of conduct, and official organizing materials. ICAS now also has an active E-Newsletter and online Google Calender to help inform the public of our global activities. In 2015, Johnny Lupinacci became the Executive Director of Publications, which includes managing the development of the three journals: *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, *Peace Studies Journal* (a partner project with the Academy for Peace Education), and *Green Theory and Praxis Journal*, each of which has its own website. Finally, ICAS became a 501(c)3 again in 2015, as led by Amber George, the Executive Director of Finance.

ICAS strives to educate people about tactics and movement history, while streamlining their focus on two main areas— theory and action. This is an important space of collaboration and synergy within the movement—via critical discussions, publications, forums, conferences, and social media—to discuss collective political support for the following seven topics (1) Animal Liberation Front, (2) total liberation, (3) anarchism, (4) intersectionality, (5) activism, (6) fighting repression, and (7) the history of the animal advocacy movement.

ICAS encourages scholars and activists to engage in regular critical self-reflection individually and in relationship with others in the group so that individuals do not adopt destructive cultural behaviors like the co-optation or appropriation of ideas in support of opportunism, careerism, and commodification. It also helps to hold one another accountable so we do not adopt habits of dominant culture that undermines commitments to total liberation.

More specifically we view the elitism of academia as a problematic form of exclusionary violence. The excessive use of academic jargon and exclusionary language often found in academia in connection with the systemic individualism contribute to the reinforcement of an academic industrial complex. In addition to self-reflection and an awareness of the violence of academia, ICAS seeks to engage in collaborations with a commitment to all the diverse forms of ideas, communication, and actions that exist and emerge from shared commitments to total liberation.

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For more information about ICAS please contact at:  
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