Animal Law: Towards a Global Definition?

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According to a common definition: "Animal law is the law that relates to animals"1.

In general, animal law is synonymous of animal protection law (as taught and commonly understood)².

In a wide sense, animal protection law subcategories are widlife law, welfare law and rights law.

In a strict acception, animal protection law relates to individual beings. In a wider sense, it also covers wild species preservation, which is at the border between environmental and animal law.

More specifically, it relates to *environmental law* where aiming at *conserving wild animal species from extinction* when endangered (from an environmental approach). And it relates to *animal law* in the stricter sense when aiming at *protecting individual beings from suffering*, in order to protect their welfare and/or their rights (see below).

Wide sense Animal Law Subcategories		
	Stricter sense	
Wildlife Law	Welfare Law	Rights Law
At the border of environmental law	At the core of current animal laws	At the forefront of future animal law
Conservationism (environmentalism)	Protectionism (welfarism)	Egalitarianism (abolitionism)
Wild species	Sentient beings	Non-human animals
Avoid species extinction Preserve endangered animal species	Avoid "unnecessary suffering" Improve living (and killing) conditions	Avoid spiciest discrimination Dedicate rights → abolition of animal exploitation
Sustainable development of natural resources	Reduction of animal suffering (vs. real animal well-being)	Equal consideration of similar interests
Universally endorsed (National, European, international & UN legislation)	Internationally present (National & European laws, OIE Standards)	National examples (Recent decisions in Argentina & India)

As for global animal law, it can be considered as the field of animal law which is global, meaning universal (for all countries). In research, it can be considered to be a global approach of animal law, covering all

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¹ BROOMAN, S. et D. LEGGE, Law Relating to Animals, Cavendish, 1997. Here it can be legitimate to ask:

¹⁻ Which law is concerned? Animal law involves various sectors of the law (criminal, civil, constitutional law) as well as all levels of legislation: national, regional (eg European) and international law.

²⁻ Which animals are concerned? Stricto sensu, animal law relates to sentient animals (to be protected against suffering).

² In this common sense, animal law is understood as the law for the animals, and not against them. But in reality, animal law also covers all kind of animal (ab)uses that are addressed in the laws (eg methods of exploitation and killing etc.).

animals, all human activities and interractions with animals, and all levels of legislation (national, regional (eg: European) and international. Finally, Global Animal Law (GAL) is a conference cycle³, a university program⁴ and a leading organization called the Global Animal Law GAL Association. It provides key ressources and solutions for improving the law in favor of animals globally, onlineat www.globalanimallaw.org.

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³ See for instance the last Global Animal Law Conference III held in Hong Kong in 2018, online at https://law.lclark.edu/live/events/283980-global-animal-law-conference-iii.

⁴ This Program is directed by Dr Anne Peters at the Max Planck Institute. More at https://www.mpil.de/en/pub/research/areas/public-international-law/global-animal-law.cfm.