

Profile



Sabrina Brando is dedicated to caring for animals and the people who care for them. Sabrina is the director of [AnimalConcepts](#) and is pursuing a PhD at the University of Stirling in Scotland on the topic of "[24/7 across lifespan: zoo animal and human wellbeing](#)".

She is a Research Associate with the Smithsonian Institution, manages [24/7 Animal Welfare](#) and is the Primate Care Training Program Coordinator for the [Pan African Sanctuary Alliance](#). She has worked in and with the global zoo and wildlife profession, including zoos, aquariums, wildlife centres and sanctuaries for 27 years.

Sabrina has a BSc. in psychology and an MSc. in animal studies, and recently completed a Compassion Fatigue Strategies certificate with the University of Florida Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program, College of Veterinary Medicine.

Globally known as an animal welfare scientist, she prefers to say, 'I am in the business of animal happiness, PS: the human animal too!'. Animal care professionals are playing a key role in animal wellbeing. Dedication to caring for animals and the people who care for them is the core of AnimalConcepts's philosophy, recognising that the human-animal relationship is essential for the wellbeing of both. Sabrina feels compassion awareness is key in the animal care profession in order for animal care professionals to serve animals and people with compassion and integrity. "My career purpose is to promote positive wellbeing for animals and the people who care for them."

Through AnimalConcepts Sabrina has to date organised 361 events beside presenting at conferences, consulting for organisations worldwide and active engagement with non-profits through pro bono work. Sabrina is a frequent invited and keynote speaker at conferences and seminars and runs a wide variety of workshops through AnimalConcepts. She teaches as a guest lecturer at various universities and colleges as well as many zoos, aquariums and sanctuaries worldwide, on animal welfare, behaviour, environmental enrichment, animal training, the human-animal relationship, and other topics. Sabrina serves on zoo expert groups and collaborates on a wide variety of research projects regarding animal care and wellbeing, behaviour, and advocacy, serves as a reviewer on academic journals, contributes chapters to animal wellbeing books, and has extensively published popular and academic articles.

Sabrina is a [Chief Storyteller](#). She loves storytelling and writing - particularly about animals, the human-animal connection, and the natural world. She often wears a button with "I love stories". The button sparks a lot of great conversations and storytelling about animals among many other topics, from people she meets at conferences to strangers on a plane. If you have a story you want to share about the animal(s) you care(d) for, a special friendship you have with your favourite animal, a great action for animals or for the planet you were involved in, or anything else that makes your heart sing concerning animals and nature, Sabrina would love to hear from you!

Short career summary

Sabrina started her career with animals 27 years ago at the Amsterdam Zoo as a volunteer. In 1992 she took a position as a research assistant and cared for stranded harbour porpoises in a marine mammal rehabilitation centre in The Netherlands. In 1994 she went to Portugal to study a wild population of Bottlenose dolphins with Dr. Manuel dos Santos in the Sado estuary. Since then she has worked in many marine parks, zoos and research institutes with a large variety of animal species in Europe and the USA. In 1999 she began work as a consultant for a zoo in Denmark, and AnimalConcepts was founded in 2004. Sabrina maintained full-time positions beside her consultancy jobs. She was the managing director at a small park in Anguilla and held senior and supervisor positions at Marineland Malta, Fjord & Baelt Center in Denmark, Kolmarden Zoo in Sweden, Marineland Antibes in France, as well as working on a Humpback dolphin population study in Zanzibar Tanzania. In 2005 she took a position as assistant researcher / animal technician at the University of St Andrews in Scotland at the Sea Mammal Research Unit. Since 2008 she works full-time through AnimalConcepts as a consultant in animal care and welfare, working in zoos, marine parks, animal shelters, government facilities, research laboratories and wildlife sanctuaries. Sabrina has worked with a wide variety of species, from rabbits, mice and birds to bears, snakes, crocodiles, elephants, giraffes, dolphins and gorillas. She is currently involved in several research projects on animal welfare, cognition and behaviour. Sabrina teaches workshops on enrichment, training, cognition, animal-human interaction, and behaviour for animal care staff, vets and managers as well as working with large teams as a consultant for multiple zoos research facilities and universities worldwide. Sabrina has also been involved in the planning of exhibits and has been giving feedback on current collections in a variety of zoos. The involvement with the collection planning was with regards to the sustainability of the zoo, the modern and integrated approach of welfare sciences and current knowledge of the species housed, as well as the visitor experience. From August 2017 until May 2019 Sabrina served as the first Director of Animal Welfare with the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. From May 2019 onwards she is fulltime with AnimalConcepts, pursuing a PhD in Psychology with the University of Stirling in Scotland and the Primate Care Training Program Coordinator with the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance. Since September 2019 she has been appointed a Research Associate position with the Smithsonian Institution. Sabrina is a guest lecturer for colleges and universities, e.g., she teaches as a guest lecturer on the MSc. Marine Mammal Science at the University of St Andrews in Scotland and the MSc International Animal Welfare, Ethics and Law at Edinburgh University. Sabrina manages 24/7 Animal Welfare, a website and concept dedicated and concerned with providing good and positive animal welfare for animals in captivity, 24/7 across the lifespan.

Education

In progress:

- PhD Psychology with the University of Stirling, Scotland
"24/7 across lifespan: zoo animal and human wellbeing"

- Certification Training for Compassion Fatigue Professionals (CCFP)
- MSc. Psychology with California Coast University, USA
- Open University Amsterdam - module Ethology Open University Amsterdam - module Ethics
- Open University Amsterdam - module Natural Sciences Open University Amsterdam - module Business Writing

Completed:

- Compassion Fatigue Strategies certificate with the University of Florida Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program, College of Veterinary Medicine.
- MSc. Animal Studies 2016 at Humane Society University. Thesis "An evaluation of zoo animal welfare assessment from inspection to daily practices with recommendations for a holistic approach".
- Chief Storyteller with the Storytelling Academy in the Netherlands & Storytelling Clan.
- BSc. Psychology 2011 at Californian Coast University.
- Modules Animal welfare science, ethics & law - September 2010 at Cambridge University, UK.
- High school certificates German, French, Dutch & English, 1989.

Publications

The following is a list of published works written by or in collaboration with Sabrina Brando (born Labberte):

Brando, S.I.C.A. & Hosey, G. Trends in Captive Marine Mammal Literature: A Need for more Welfare and Husbandry Related Research. (in review)

Brando, S.I.C.A & Coe, J. Confronting Back-of-House Traditions: Primates as a Case Study. (in review)

Brando, S. I. C. A., & Sharpe, N. (2020). Promoting optimal primate welfare outside regular working hours. In L. Robinson & A. Weiss (Eds.), *Welfare of Nonhuman Primates*: Springer.

Brando, S., Kooistra, N., & Hosey, G. (2019). Pre and post session behaviour of captive bottlenose dolphins *Tursiops truncatus* involved in "Swim-with-Dolphin" events. *Journal of Zoo and Aquarium Research*, 7(4), 195-202.

Brando, S.I.C.A. & Burghardt (2019). Studying Play in Zoos and Aquariums. In Kaufman, A. B., Bashaw, M. J., & Maple, T. L. (Eds.). *Scientific Foundations of Zoos and Aquariums: Their Role in Conservation and Research*. Cambridge University Press.

Brando, S., Broom, D. M., Acasuso-Rivero, C., & Clark, F. (2018). Optimal marine mammal welfare under human care: Current efforts and future directions. *Behavioural processes*, 156, 16-36.

Brando, S., & Buchanan-Smith, H. M. (2018). The 24/7 approach to promoting optimal welfare for captive wild animals. *Behavioural processes*, 156, 83-95.

Gjerris, M., Birkved, M., Gamborg, C., & Brando, S. (2016). Eating to save wildlife: is a truly conservation-minded zoo/aquarium a vegan zoo/aquarium? In book: Food futures. Ethics, science & culture Publisher: Wageningen Academic Publishers Editors: I. Anna S. Olsson, Sofia M. Araújo, M. Fatima Vieira

Brando, S.I.C.A. (2016) MSc. Thesis "An evaluation of zoo animal welfare assessment from inspection to daily practices with recommendations for a holistic approach". Thesis focusses on bottlenose dolphins and common marmosets. Read white paper

Brando, S.I.C.A. (2016). Wild Animals in Entertainment. In B. Bovenkerk & J. Keulartz (Eds.). *Animal Ethics in the Age of Humans. Blurring boundaries in human-animal relationships* (295-318). Dordrecht: Springer.

Brando, S., Bowles, A.E., Böye, M., Dudzinski, K.M., van Elk, N., Lucke, K., ... & Wahlberg, M. (2016). Proceedings of Marine Mammal Welfare Workshops Hosted in the Netherlands and the USA in 2012. *Aquatic Mammals*, 42(3), 392.

Newman, N. & Brando, S. (2015) Further ideas on enrichment to increase useable surface area in standard mouse cages. *Animal Technology and Welfare*, 13(3): 219-222.

Brando, S.I.C.A. & Benz-Schwarzburg, J. (2015) Chapter on Marine mammals. *Lexikon der Mensch-Tier-Beziehungen*, 232 - 235. Publisher transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, Germany.

Brando, S.I.C.A. (2015) Chapter on Circus. *Lexikon der Mensch-Tier-Beziehungen*, 431 - 435. Publisher transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, Germany.

Brando, S.I.C.A. & Harfeld J. (2014) Eating Animals at the Zoo. *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, Vol. 12, 1, 63-88.

Hopster & de Jong 2014. Welfare of sea lions in travelling circuses. Participated in the research survey.

Brando, S.I.C.A. (2012) Animal Learning and Training: Implications for Animal Welfare. *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Exotic Animal Practice*. Vol. 15, 3, 387 - 398.

Brando, S.I.C.A. (2012) A Practical Environmental Enrichment Workshop for Laboratory Animals. *The Enrichment Record* Volume 10, January.

Brando, S.I.C.A. (2010) Advances in Husbandry Training in Marine Mammal Care Programs. *International Journal of Comparative Psychology*, 23, 777-791.

Genevieve Desportes, Lisette Buholzer, Kirstin Anderson Hansen, Marie Anne Blanchet, Mario Acquarone, Gwyneth Shephard, Sabrina Brando, Arndt Vossen, and Ursula Siebert (2007) Decrease stress, train your animals: the effect of handling methods on cortisol levels in Harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) *Journal of Aquatic Mammals*, 33.3.

Teilmann, J., Tougaard, J., Kirketerp, T., Anderson, K., Labberte, S. & Miller, L. (2006). Reactions of captive harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) to pinger-like sounds. *Marine Mammal Science*, 22(2): 240 - 260.

Lockyer, C., Desportes, G., Hansen, K., Labberte, S., & Siebert, U. (2003) Monitoring growth and energy utilisation of the harbour porpoise, *Phocoena phocoena*, in human care. NAMMCO Scientific Publications Volume 5, 107 - 120. Publisher The North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission 2003.

Teilmann, J., Miller, L., Tougaard, J., Kirketerp, T., Labberte, S. & Anderson, K. Habituation to pinger- like sounds shown by Harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*). Ph.D. thesis.

Kastelein, R. A., Koene, P., Nieuwstraten, S.H., & Labberte, S. (1997) Skin surface temperature changes in a Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) while on land. *The Biology of the Harbour porpoise*, 255 - 264. Publisher: De Spil, Woerden, The Netherlands.

Current Posts

- Director of AnimalConcepts since 2004
- Guest lecturer MRes Marine Mammal Science, University of St. Andrews, St. Andrews – UK: since 2008
- Primate Care Training Program Coordinator (pro bono) with the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance: since 2009
- Guest lecturer MSc International Animal Welfare, Ethics and Law, University of Edinburgh – UK: since 2019

Invitations, Events and Conferences from 2011 (prior available upon request)

From 2012 onwards all are available via the AnimalConcepts website.

- Animal welfare lecturer, IAT, UK: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010.
- Invited CPD workshop organizer Institute for Animal Technology Congress - UK, November 2011.
- Invited speaker at the Advanced Animal Learning Seminar - UK, November 2011.
- Invited speaker at International Working Group Specialist Dogs – The Netherlands, October 2011.

- Keynote speaker at Australian and New Zealand Laboratory Animal Association - Australia, September 2011.
- Invited speaker at Innovative Environmental Enrichment Satellite Symposium (combined with the AALAS Conference) - USA, September 2011.
- Workshop organizer on Environmental Enrichment in Israeli Zoos - Israel, September 2011.
- Workshop organizer on Environmental Enrichment in Russian Zoos - Russia, June 2011.
- Invited CPD workshop organizer Institute for Animal Technology Congress - UK, April 2011.
- Invited workshop moderator at Helicon Zookeeper School - Netherlands, April 2011.

- Invited consultant on animal welfare and student learning, Nijenroden Business School - The Netherlands, April 2011.
- Workshop organizer on Environmental Enrichment in Zoos - The Netherlands, March 2011.
- Workshop organizer on Environmental Enrichment in Wild life parks and rehabilitation centres - The United Arab Emirates, March 2011.
- Presenter at the European Association for Aquatic Mammals Symposium - Spain, March 2011.
- Invited speaker at the Roskilde Technical School - Denmark, March 2011.
- Invited animal welfare consultant (volunteer) - Cambodia, February 2011.
- Invited speaker at the Hansenberg Technical School - Denmark, January 2011

Experience

- Animal welfare assessment and program development input for 8 zoos in Thailand 2018
- Animal welfare assessment and program development input for Saigon Zoo - Vietnam 2018
- Volunteer PASA workshops Cameroon, Kenya (2x), South Africa, Congo (2x) 2009
- Visiting Scholar at the Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster - PA, USA 2008 - 2015
- Volunteer with Animals Asia 2014 - 2015
- Animal welfare lecturer - Hansenberg, Denmark 2010 - 2014
- Animal welfare lecturer - Roskilde Zookeeper School, Denmark 2010 - 2014 EAAM Board member, 2004 - 2013
- Animal welfare consultant - Royal Dutch Police Force, The Netherlands: 2010 – 2016

- Animal welfare consultant - Paris Zoo, France: 2013 - 2017
- Guest lecturer Postgraduate course Animals & Society, University of Edinburgh - UK: 2016 – 2018 (entire course was discontinued)

- European Association for Aquatic Mammals (EAAM) Secretary / Treasurer and Board member. Duties included bi-annual Board meetings, organization of location, hotel and visit of host for the EAAM annual conference, Board meetings, minutes, report writing, communication with EAAM committees and members. www.eaam.org
- Animal welfare lecturer - Vilvorde, Denmark 2010 – 2012
- External expert - EU project Zoos & Science 2010 - 2012 Advisor on educational programs and communication materials on zoo animals in relation to welfare and science.
- Behaviour consultant, Chester Zoo, Chester, UK 2009 - 2012 Development of an integrated animal care and welfare program for a wide variety of animal species. Lectures and practical work on animal environments, enrichment, training, behaviour and the human-animal interaction.
- Advisory Council, Barcelona Zoo, Barcelona - Spain 2008 - 2012 Part of advisory panel on master planning of the new Barcelona Zoo with regards to animal welfare and input in the collection planning.
- Animal Welfare Consultant Ocean Park Hong Kong - Hong Kong 2010 – 2012 Development of an integrated animal care and welfare program for a wide variety of animal species. Lectures and practical work on animal environments, enrichment, training, behaviour and the human-animal interaction.
- Animal welfare lecturer, Tinley Institute, Ter Appelscha - The Netherlands 2010 - 2012 Lecturer on the Higher Education degree on to become a professional animal trainer.
- Animal welfare consultant, Le Pal Zoo, Dompierre-sur-Besbre France 2008 - 2010 Development of an integrated animal care and welfare program for a wide variety of animal species. Lectures and practical work on animal environments, enrichment, training, behaviour and the human-animal interaction. Working with a staff of approx. 30 keepers, curators and veterinarian.
- Animal welfare consultant, Twycross Zoo, Twycross - UK 2007 - 2010 Development of an integrated animal care and welfare program for a wide variety of animal species. Lectures and practical work on animal environments, enrichment, training, behaviour and the human-animal interaction. Working with a staff of approx. 30 keepers, interns, curators and veterinarians.
- Animal welfare consultant, Seaquarium Montpellier, France July 2010. Development of an integrated animal care program for a group of seal and sea lions as well as staff training on animal learning and welfare. Working with a staff of 6 animal care takers.
- Animal welfare consultant, Franklin & Marshall College Lancaster - PA, USA 2008 – 2010. Development of behaviour and enrichment programs for 2 colonies of squirrel and capuchin monkeys. A total of 1 month on site work with the animal technician and the students as well as the researchers to coordinate the different programs. Since then we have conducted research projects on animal welfare and presented at conferences and papers are being written collaboratively.

- Research assistant & trainer, University of St Andrews St Andrews, UK 2005 – 2008. Duties included the daily care of the seals, training for husbandry and research projects, pool maintenance, data collection and entry using Access and Excel.
- Behaviour consultant, Instituto Zooprofilattico delle Venezie, 2006. Duties included a 1 week on site lecture-based program combined with practical session with the primates housed in the research facility.
- EAAM Research Committee member, 2006 – 2011.
- European Association for Aquatic Mammals (EAAM). Duties include review of submitted abstracts for the EAAM Annual Conference, review of research proposals, book reviews, judging of oral and poster presentations at the EAAM Annual Conference, collaboration with other committees within the EAAM.
- Senior marine mammal trainer, Marineland Antibes, Antibes, France 2002 – 2005.
- Senior trainer at the killer whale stadium, duties included training for cross-modal match to sample research project in collaboration with the University of St Andrews, husbandry and show training. Supervisor of the dolphin, sea lion and seal area.
- Organiser IMATA Europe, 1999 – 2005. Organizer of the International Marine Animal Trainer's Association (IMATA) Regional Meetings in Europe. All meeting were hosted in conjunction with the EAAM meetings and changed country on a yearly basis. Duties included program development, communication with host and attendees, report to Head Office IMATA and follow up communication and distribution of workshop materials to attendees.
- Behaviour consultant, Aalborg Zoo, 2000 – 2001.
- Design, implementation and evaluation of a behaviour, husbandry and enrichment programme including sea lions, polar bears and red pandas. Theory and practical sessions with the staff as well as behavioural observation and enrichment development.
- Research & husbandry trainer, Fjord & Baelt Centret, Kerteminde - Denmark, 1997 - 2000. Duties included care of Harbour porpoises, research and husbandry training, behavioural observations, data collection and entry and behavioural and acoustic observations of wild porpoises.
- Husbandry trainer & Facility Manager, Malta, Spain & Anguilla 1994 - 1997
- Between 1994 and 1997 Sabrina held several positions as an animal care specialist and facility manager at different facilities and in different countries. Duties included animal care and training and enrichment programs, observation of new born animals and rehabilitation of stranded marine mammals, including a Hooded seal and Striped dolphin. Sabrina also carried management responsibilities as a part of the facility management team. Staff training, program development and evaluation, as well as overseeing a 8-person staff and a group of Bottlenose dolphins.
- Research & husbandry trainer, Dolfinarium, Harderwijk - The Netherlands, 1992 - 1994. Duties included the care of stranded cetaceans. Research project on the physiology of Pacific walrus and the cognitive abilities of the Californian sea lion.

Care for a large aquarium with different fish species and the educational programs and talks for the general public.

Field Experience

- June - September 2012 - 2015 - Marine mammal behaviour research project Iceland.
- September 2011 - Wildlife (marine and terrestrial) watching in Tasmania, Australia.
- May 2011 – 2015 Wildlife (marine and terrestrial) watching in Iceland and Greenland.
- March 2011 - Wildlife (marine and terrestrial) watching in United Arab Emirates and Oman November 2010 - Wildlife (marine and terrestrial) watching in South Africa.
- May 2010 - Wildlife (marine and terrestrial) watching in Cameroon.
- November 2009 - Wild life (marine and terrestrial) watching in Kenya.
- October 2009 Whale watching in Nova Scotia and Quebec - Blue whale, minke whale, fin whale, beluga, Humpback whale and many other species of marine mammals & birds.
- July 2009 - Whale and dugong watching in Queensland – Australia.
- February 2008 - Wildlife watching in Queensland & NSW – Australia.
- November 2007 - Wild life (marine and terrestrial) watching in South Africa.
- January 2004 - May 2007 - Whale watching and seal observation – Scotland.
- July - Sept 2002 Field observations on Indo-pacific Humpback dolphins around Zanzibar and the coast of Tanzania.
- November 1998 Field observations on Harbour porpoises and Dall's porpoises around San Juan Islands - WA – USA.
- Fall 1994 Research Assistant observing a wild Bottlenose dolphin population the Sado Estuary, Portugal.

Languages

- I was born in the Netherlands and my mother is Italian. I have lived in many different countries over the last 16 years, allowing me to learn about different cultures and languages. As a result, I speak Dutch, English & Italian fluently, French very well and Spanish & German conversationally. I understand and speak some Danish.