

Wildlife Guardians: Understanding and Protecting Animal Welfare
3 ECTS

About BIP: "**Wildlife Guardians: Understanding and Protecting Animal Welfare**" offers a unique opportunity to explore the welfare, behaviour, health and conservation of wildlife, captive and farm animals through expert-led lectures, practical training and field visits. Participants will develop hands-on skills in animal welfare assessment, behavioural observation, disease surveillance and wildlife rehabilitation while exploring the One Health approach and evidence-based strategies for improving animal welfare.

Teaching methods: Lectures, seminars, case studies, and group discussions will be used during the course.

Practical activities, including analysis of real-life examples and field observations, will be integrated. Independent study and critical review of scientific literature will be encouraged.

Expected learning outcomes: Students will be able to assess the welfare conditions of wild, captive and farm animals. They will understand ethical issues and legal frameworks related to animal welfare. Students will develop critical thinking skills and the ability to propose welfare improvement measures.

Who should register

The BIP is designed for second-year and higher-year students enrolled in Veterinary Medicine, Animal Science, Animal Production, Biotechnology, Ecology and Environmental Sciences study programmes.

Coordinating institution

Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Kaunas, Lithuania).

Partner institutions

Estonian University of Life Sciences (Tartu, Estonia);
West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin (Szczecin, Poland);
Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment "BIOR" (Latvia);
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (Jelgava, Latvia);
Lithuanian Zoological Gardens (Kaunas, Lithuania);
Tadas Ivanauskas Museum of Zoology (Kaunas, Lithuania);
Lithuanian Sea Museum (Klaipėda, Lithuania);
The LSMU Wildlife Rescue Centre (Kaunas, Lithuania);
National Food and Veterinary Risk Assessment Institute (Vilnius, Lithuania).

Key teachers

Prof. dr. David Arney, *Estonian University of Life Sciences (Tartu, Estonia)*;
Prof. dr. Agnieszka Tomza-Marciniak, *West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin, Department of Animal Reproduction Biotechnology and Environmental Hygiene (Szczecin, Poland)*;
Dr. med. vet. Iveta Kociņa, *Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment "BIOR" (Latvia)*;
Assoc. prof. dr. Violeta Baliukonienė, *Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Kaunas, Lithuania)*;
Asist. dr. Rimvydas Falkauskas, *Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Kaunas, Lithuania)*;

Asist.dr. Jūratė Kučinskienė, *Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Kaunas, Lithuania)*;
Asist dr. Vytautas Ribikauskas, *Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Kaunas, Lithuania)*;
Lect. dr. Jurgita Jovaišienė, *Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Kaunas, Lithuania)*;
Veterinarian, dr. Jurgita Autukaitė, *Lithuanian Zoological Gardens, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Kaunas, Lithuania)*;
Justina Morkūnaitė, *Head of Wildlife Rescue Centre at Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Kaunas, Lithuania)*;
Chief Biologist Laura Lupeikaitė-Kuncienė, *Lithuanian Sea Museum (Klaipėda, Lithuania)*;
Veterinarian, residency student Aistė Stankūnaitė, *Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Kaunas, Lithuania)*;
Asist. dr. Rasa Adomkienė, *Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Kaunas, Lithuania)*.

Structure of the BIP

- The BIP will include both online and onsite sessions.
- Application will be completed by **28 September 2026**.
- The online session will take place in the MS Teams on **5-16 October 2026**.
- During the online session, pre-course lectures will be provided.
- The onsite session will be held at the Veterinary Faculty of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, on **19-23 October 2026**.
- The onsite session will include laboratory works, group discussions, and field trips. The laboratory works will be held at the Veterinary Academy.
- At the end of the BIP a short final test will be conducted to assess the student's self-improvement.
- At the closing session, students will be kindly asked to share their expectations before and after the course and feedback.

BIP training course
Wildlife Guardians: Understanding and Protecting Animal Welfare

Online session (October 5-16, 2026)

Day	Time*	Activity
Monday <i>(October 5)</i>	14:00-14:45	Welcome word and opening of BIP 2026. Introduction of project agenda, aims, and composition, annotation, and brief introduction of all teachers.
Tuesday <i>(October 6)</i>	15:00-15:45	Lecture ** Poultry welfare Dr. med. vet. Iveta Kociņa
Wednesday <i>(October 7)</i>	15:00-15:45	Lecture ** The welfare of wild birds / Wild Birds: Disease Risks to Public Health <i>(The lecture topic and presenter may be subject to change)</i> Justina Morkūnaitė / Evelina Urbonė
Friday <i>(October 9)</i>	15:00-15:45	Lecture Seal Health, Welfare and Rehabilitation Chief Biologist Laura Lupeikaitė-Kuncienė
Monday <i>(October 12)</i>	15:00-15:45	Lecture About animal welfare of animals kept in captivity Dr. J. Autukaitė
Tuesday <i>(October 13)</i>	15:00-15:45	Lecture ** Welfare of Alpacas Used in Alpaca-Assisted Therapy Prof. dr. Agnieszka Tomza-Marciniak
Wednesday <i>(October 14)</i>	15:00-15:45	Lecture Introduction to Animal Welfare prof. David Arney
Friday <i>(October 16)</i>	15:00-15:45	Farm Animal Welfare Dr. Vytautas Ribikauskas

* Kaunas time

** Lecture date and time may change

BIP training course
Wildlife Guardians: Understanding and Protecting Animal Welfare

Onsite session (October 19-23, 2026)

Day	Time*	Activity
Monday (October 19)	9:00-9:45	WELCOME AND COURSE OVERVIEW <u>Meeting point:</u> Department of Food safety and quality, room 201, building no 5, Tilžės str. 18, Kaunas Getting to know of the teachers and participants. <i>Assoc prof. dr. V. Baliukonienė</i> <i>Lect. dr. J. Jovaišienė</i> <i>Asist. dr. R. Falkauskas</i> <i>Asist. dr. R. Adomkienė</i>
	09:45-10:00	Coffee break
	10:00-12:30	ANIMAL WELFARE LAB: LEARN, EXPLORE, ASSESS <u>Meeting point:</u> Department of Food safety and quality, room 201, building no 5, Tilžės str. 18, Kaunas Hands-on laboratory training in animal welfare and environmental assessment. <i>Assoc prof. dr. V. Baliukonienė</i> <i>Lect. dr. J. Jovaišienė</i> <i>Asist. dr. R. Falkauskas</i>
	12:30-13:30	Free time for lunch ***
	13:30-16:00	FROM LAB TO FARM: ANIMAL WELFARE IN PRACTICE <u>Meeting point:</u> near entrance of the Main building (no 1), Tilžės str. 18, Kaunas Hands-on laboratory training in animal welfare and environmental assessment. <i>Place of activity: Akacijų str. 2, Giraitė, Kaunas distr.</i> <u>Students will be delivered by the University transport</u> <i>Assoc prof. dr. V. Baliukonienė</i> <i>Lect. dr. J. Jovaišienė</i> <i>Asist. dr. R. Falkauskas</i>
	16:00-16:30	Transfer to Veterinary Academy
Tuesday (October 20)	8:30-10:00	BEYOND THE LAB: ANIMAL WELFARE AND VETERINARY SCIENCE <u>Meeting point:</u> near entrance of the Main building (no 1), Tilžės str. 18, Kaunas Visit to the National Food and Veterinary Risk Assessment Institute (NFVRAI).

		<i>Place of activity: J. Kairiūkščio str. 10, Vilnius</i> <u>Students will be delivered by the University transport</u> <u>Accompanying teachers:</u> <i>Assoc prof. dr. V. Baliukonienė</i> <i>Lect. dr. J. Jovaišienė</i> <i>Asist. dr. R. Falkauskas</i>
	10:00-10:10	Arrival, coffee and welcome remarks
	10:10-10:40	Visit to NFVRAI laboratories and facilities
	10:40-10:55	Serological investigations of infectious diseases in Lithuanian domestic and wild animal populations . <i>Speaker: dr. Jūratė Butkuvienė, Head of the Serology Testing Department</i>
	10:55-11:10	Molecular Detection of Infectious Diseases in Wildlife. <i>Speaker: dr. Simona Pilevičienė, Head of the Molecular Biology and Genetically Modified Organisms Testing Department</i>
	11:10-11:25	Bacterial Pathogens and Antimicrobial Resistance. <i>Speaker: Česlova Butrimaitė Ambrozevičienė, Head of the Bacteriology Testing Department</i>
	11:25-11:40	Interesting Cases in Veterinary Forensic Pathology. <i>Speaker: Viktoras Maskaliovas, Head of the Pathological Anatomy and Histology Testing Department</i>
	11:40-12:00	Discussion and questions
	12:00-13:10	Free time for lunch *** <i>Lunch at iLunch, Mokslininkų str. 6A, Vilnius (https://www.ilunch.lt/en) (10 minutes' walk from NFVRAI)</i>
	13:10-14:00	Transfer to the next venue <u>Meeting point:</u> will be specified by the accompanying teacher
	14:00-15:15	ANIMAL WELFARE THROUGH A ZOOLOGICAL LENS Guided an educational tour in Vilnius University Museum of Zoology. <i>Place of activity: VU Life Sciences Center, Saulėtekio av. 7 Vilnius</i> <u>Students will be delivered by the University transport</u> <i>Assoc. prof. dr. Grita Skujienė, VU Life Sciences Center</i>
	15:30-17:00	Transfer to Kaunas

Wednesday (October 21)	9:00-10:30	LIFE BEHIND THE EXHIBIT: ANIMAL WELFARE IN THE ZOO <u>Meeting point:</u> near the <i>main entrance of the Zoo</i>, Radvilenu av. 21, Kaunas Visit to Lithuanian Zoological Garden. Place of activity: Radvilenu av. 21, Kaunas (https://www.zoosodas.lt/educacijos-ekskursijos?_sft_educaciju_kategorijos=educacijos-ekskursijos) <i>dr. Jurgita Autukaitė, veterinarian of Lithuanian Zoological Garden</i>
	10:30-12:30	WILD MINDS: OBSERVING AND UNDERSTANDING ANIMAL BEHAVIOR Wildlife welfare assessment, behavioural observations (ethograms). Place of activity: Lithuanian Zoological Garden, Radvilenu av. 21, Kaunas <i>Dr. V. Ribikauskas Dr. J. Kučinskienė Asist. A. Stankūnaitė</i>
	12:30-14:00	Free time for lunch *** <i>Lunch at iLunch, Donelaičio str. 60, Kaunas (https://www.ilunch.lt/en) (10 min by car, 20 min by public transport, or 30 min on foot from the Zoo)</i>
	14:00-16:00	BEYOND THE LIVING: UNDERSTANDING ANIMALS AND THEIR WELFARE <u>Meeting point:</u> near the <i>main entrance of the Museum</i>, Laisves av. 106, Kaunas Visit to Kaunas Tadas Ivanauskas Museum of Zoology. Place of activity: Laisves av. 106, Kaunas <i>J. Morkūnaitė Asist. A. Stankūnaitė Dr. V. Ribikauskas Dr. J. Kučinskienė</i>
Thursday (October 22)	7:00-11:00	FROM RESCUE TO RELEASE: THE JOURNEY OF MARINE ANIMALS <u>Meeting point:</u> near entrance of the Main building (no 1), Tilžės str. 18, Kaunas Guided tour at the Baltic Sea Animal Rehabilitation Centre. The centre's activities and the exhibition “I Change - the Sea Changes”. Place of activity: Smiltynės str. 3, Klaipėda <u>Students will be delivered by the University transport</u> <i>Laura Lupeikaitė-Kuncienė, Chief Biologist of the Lithuanian Sea Museum</i>

		<u>Accompanying teachers:</u> <i>J. Morkūnaitė</i> <i>Asist. A. Stankūnaitė</i>
	11:15-12:15	Guided tour at the Aquarium: Aquarium Stories. <i>Place of activity: Smiltynės str. 3, Klaipėda</i> <i>Laura Lupeikaitė-Kuncienė, Chief Biologist of the Lithuanian Sea Museum</i> <u>Accompanying teachers:</u> <i>J. Morkūnaitė</i> <i>Asist. A. Stankūnaitė</i>
	12:15-13:00	Free time in Lithuanian Sea Museum
	13:00-15:00	Free time to explore Klaipėda and have lunch *** <u>Meeting point:</u> will be specified by the accompanying teacher
	15:00-18:00	Transfer to Kaunas <u>Meeting point:</u> will be specified by the accompanying teacher
Friday (October 23)	9:00-12:00	RESCUE, REHABILITATE, RESTORE: ANIMAL WELFARE IN ACTION <u>Meeting point:</u> near entrance of the Main building (no 1), Tilžės str. 18, Kaunas Visit to the Wild Animal Rehabilitation Centre: animal welfare assessment, observation, challenges, and creating enrichment items to improve animal well-being. <i>Place of activity: Wildlife Rescue Centre, Jurginių str. 6, Naujieji Muniškiai, Kaunas distr.</i> <u>Students will be delivered by the University transport</u> <i>J. Morkūnaitė, Head of Wildlife Rescue Centre of LSMU</i> <i>Assoc prof. dr. V. Baliukonienė</i> <i>Lect. dr. J. Jovaišienė</i> <i>Asist. dr. R. Falkauskas</i>
	12:00-12:15	Coffee break
	12:15-13:00	LEARNING CHECK Short Quiz <i>Place of activity: Wildlife Rescue Centre, Jurginių str. 6, Naujieji Muniškiai, Kaunas distr.</i> <i>Assoc prof. dr. V. Baliukonienė</i> <i>Lect. dr. J. Jovaišienė</i> <i>Asist. dr. R. Falkauskas</i>
	13:00-14:00	SHARING OUR FINDINGS

		Student Project Presentations and Discussion <i>Place of activity: Wildlife Rescue Centre, Jurginų str. 6, Naujieji Muniškiai, Kaunas distr.</i> <i>Assoc prof. dr. V. Baliukonienė</i> <i>Lect. dr. J. Jovaišienė</i> <i>Asist. dr. R. Falkauskas</i>
	14:00-15:00	Closing & Farewell Coffee
	15:00-15:30	Transfer to Veterinary Academy

* Kaunas time

** Lecture date and time may change

*** During the BIP, participants will be offered coffee, tea, biscuits, and sweets; Lunch at participants' own expense.

Contacts

All questions related to the BIP - Rasa Adomkienė, rasa.adomkiene@lsmu.lt or Jurgita Jovaišienė, jurgita.jovaisiene@lsmu.lt

Accommodation

All hotels, condo hotels and more, can be found at <https://www.booking.com/>

Hotels and apartments that we recommend to book are here:

- Moxy Kaunas Center hotel address: Maironio st. 19, Kaunas, Lithuania;
- Zaliakalnio terasos apartamentai address: Savanoriu avenue 276-393, 3rd floor, 50201 Kaunas, Lithuania;
- Kaunas City address: Laisves al. 90, Kaunas, Lithuania;
- LoveKaunas Apartments address: A. Mickeviciaus st. 39, 44244 Kaunas, Lithuania;
- Villa Kaunensis address: Rotuses aikste 21, LT-44279 Kaunas, Lithuania;
- House 22A Studio Apartments address: Sv. Gertrudos st. 22A, 44260 Kaunas, Lithuania;
- Moja Accommodation address: Gedimino st. 28, LT-44319 Kaunas, Lithuania;
- Happy Inn address: Vytauto avenue 21, LT-44352 Kaunas, Lithuania;
- Oak house apartments address: Ausros st. 31, 44157 Kaunas, Lithuania.