

Paris memorial will honour war dead of the animal kingdom

EIGHT million horses and unknown numbers of mules and donkeys died on Europe's battlefields during World War One.

Hundreds of thousands of dogs and pigeons were also killed, bringing the total to an estimated 11 million animals.

Now a monument to all animals killed in warfare is to be built in Paris, following lobbying by the Paris Animaux Zoopolis association. Amandine Sanvisens, its president, said: "They have established a working group to establish where it should be, the form and what text should accompany it."

"We weren't invited to take part, but we intend to keep pushing because if it isn't done by the next elections in 2020, it might get pushed aside, forgotten, never built."

The point of the memorial, she said, is to remind people of the carnage that war has often meant for animals.

The centenary of the end of World War One in November was the starting point for the campaign to win recognition for the animal war dead.

"But the council has decided to make the memorial to French animals killed in all wars," she said.

The number of animals killed in the two world wars is not much recognised in France, which has no equivalent to the UK's Dickin

Medal awarded to animals making outstanding contributions in wars.



Photo: Michel Henry

“

It is important to remember, to avoid similar carnage in the future, and to guide opinion as it evolves on question of animal rights

Amandine Sanvisens

Paris Animaux Zoopolis association

and find retirement homes for their animals. France has the second largest population of wild animals in European circuses after Germany, so we need to push hard on this."

A first campaign by the group is less likely to receive widespread popular support

pushing because if it isn't done by the next elections in 2020, it might get pushed aside, forgotten, never built."

The point of the memorial, she said, is to remind people of the carnage that war has often meant for animals.

The centenary of the end of World War One in November was the starting point for the campaign to win recognition for the animal war dead.

"But the council has decided to make the memorial to French animals killed in all wars," she said.

The number of animals killed in the two world wars is not much recognised in France, which has no equivalent to the UK's Dickin Medal, awarded to animals making outstanding contributions in wars.

London has an animal war memorial in Park Lane.

Ms Sanvisens said: "It is important to remember, in order to avoid similar carnage in the future, and to guide opinion as it evolves on the question of animal rights."

"There are a few isolated memorials to animals in the north of France, but we need one in the capital."

"Our association is also running campaigns to improve animal rights in Paris. For example, we want to see the end of fishing there. Fish caught in Paris are too polluted to eat, so what's the point of catching them? Fish aren't toys. It's absurd."

The association is also campaigning to get circus acts involving wild animals banned from Paris.

"Strasbourg and Montpellier have already banned them, and there is a broad public consensus to ban wild animal acts, so we're pushing hard on this one."

"We don't just want wild animal acts banned. We'd like to see the authorities help circuses make the transition

to retirement homes to remember, to avoid similar carnage in the future, and to guide opinion as it evolves on question of animal rights

Amandine Sanvisens

Paris Animaux Zoopolis association

and find retirement homes for their animals. France has the second largest population of wild animals in European circuses after Germany, so we need to push hard on this."

A fourth campaign by the group is less likely to receive widespread popular support in the short term. It is working to end the poisoning of rats in Paris as a means of controlling their numbers.

Ms Sanvisens said: "They use anti-coagulants, which mean the rats die painfully of internal bleeding."

The idea that rats carry diseases is against them.

"We explain rats don't carry any more diseases than dogs, they are highly intelligent, and we could cohabit Paris with them."

"Controlling their numbers could be done by getting rubbish off the streets, so there's less for them to eat, and by putting oral contraceptives down, not poison."

"We're not suggesting that they should live in people's flats but we're saying it would be OK to see them in parks."

"There is no necessity to confine them to sewers, but the policy is they can't be seen - it's a visual problem."

"A first step would be to carry out a large-scale study to count them, understand their living patterns and find scientific ways to control their population."



Paris
Animaux
Zoopolis