



# AWI Quarterly

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## ABOUT THE COVER

Being nocturnal, this wild hamster is foraging at night for a delicious morsel. Seeds, wild grasses and flowers constitute much of the hamster's diet, which he will stuff in his cheek pouches for maximum carrying capacity before hoarding it away for the long-term. Hamsters tend to be territorial, both in the wild and in the laboratory setting, so these cheek pouches (also known as evaginations) come in handy when trying to keep food away from others living close by. However, it is important for researchers to monitor hoarding instincts in the laboratory, as overeating could lead to health problems.

Read more on page 12.

Photo by Duncan Usher/ Foto Natura/ Minden Pictures

## Making Headway on Capitol Hill

ON OPENING DAY of the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, Rep. Madeleine Bordallo (D-Guam) reintroduced the Shark Conservation Act of 2009 (H.R. 81). A similar measure to strengthen the pre-existing Shark Finning Prohibition Act was passed by the House of Representatives on a voice vote in July; however, the Senate was unable to take action on the bill before the session ended, necessitating its reintroduction in this Congress.

Due to a loophole in the current law, the wasteful and inhumane practice of shark finning—whereby the fins of a living shark are cut off, and the animal is thrown back in the water to die—continues. If passed, the Shark Conservation Act of 2009 will close this loophole.

The first weeks of the new Congress also saw the reintroduction of the Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act (H.R. 503), a bill designed to end the slaughter of American horses for human consumption. The bill was first introduced in the summer of last year and passed out of the House Judiciary Committee, which is chaired by the bill's primary sponsor, Representative John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.). Representative Dan Burton (R-Ind.) also returned as a primary sponsor.

With the bill's early introduction and his skilled leadership, Chairman Conyers has demonstrated his desire to see this bill pass. More than 100,000 American horses were exported to Canada and Mexico last year for slaughter. Passage of this bill will stop that trade.

In addition, AWI continues its efforts to ban the use of cruel traps, require federal law enforcement to track violent crimes against animals, restore protections for America's wild horses and burros, end the sale of dogs and cats for experimentation by random source dealers, and much more through its legislative and regulatory work. 🐾

For the latest news, visit the *Compassion Index*, our online action center, at [www.compassionindex.org](http://www.compassionindex.org).



Fiona Ayerst

Two of the 12 resident bull sharks from a pinnacle off the coast of Mozambique interact with each other.

## ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE QUARTERLY



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**Above Left:** One year after her rescue, former dancing bear Bonanza waits in the Banostor Rehab Center for a permanent sanctuary to be established in Serbia. (Photo by Pavel Pasko); **Top Right:** Rescued animals live and are cared for at the SPARE sanctuary near Saqqara, Egypt. Here, Amina Abaza feeds hay to the donkeys. (Photo by Jacqueline Bos); **Bottom Right:** Remember: Everything in moderation. A large handful of Timothy hay makes the perfect late afternoon snack for this New Zealand white female. (Photo by Evelyn Skoumbourdis).



## A Lost Angel

WHEN A PIT BULL, A MOTHER AND A YOUNG CHILD are featured in the same news story, the ending is often predictable, but in November, the NBC headline was quite different.

A Floridian woman was leaving a playground with her toddler, when a mugger held them up at knifepoint in the parking lot. As if right on cue, a pit bull appeared out of nowhere, baring his teeth and causing the mugger to flee. When the mother got in the car with her son to drive off, the dog jumped in the backseat like he was part of their family. The trio then waited for police and animal control officers to show up.

Wanting to return the favor to the dog who rescued her and her son, the mother offered to adopt their “guardian angel” if no one came forward to claim him. Unfortunately, while no one claimed the animal, further behavior analysis by local animal shelter personnel revealed that the dog was spontaneously aggressive and therefore temporarily unadoptable.

The shelter then sent him to the Michigan branch of Midwest Rescue for behavior training. The rescue is a multimillion dollar operation responsible for rehabilitating the Vick dogs, so there is a very good chance the lost “Angel,” as the woman dubbed him, will one day be placed in a good home. 🐾



Best Friends Animal Society

*Halle, one of the dogs formerly owned and fought by Michael Vick, is another good-hearted pit bull benefitting from rehab and some TLC. She was the first of the Vick bunch to be rehabilitated by Best Friends Animal Sanctuary and accepted into a foster home in December—one step closer to permanent adoption.*

## PIT BULL TAKES BULLET FOR FAMILY

“If it wasn’t for his hard head, he wouldn’t be here,” the vet told Roberta Trawick, owner of the lifesaving pit bull, D-Boy. Trawick was sitting on the couch of her Oklahoma City home in early December, when a man broke in through the front door. He pointed a gun in her face and ordered her to get on the floor.

Though Trawick was paralyzed by terror, her loyal pit bull immediately sprang into action, attacking the armed assailant. The man began shooting at the dog, hitting him with three bullets, one of which entered and exited his head. But the dog kept defending his family, ultimately scaring the gunman off. Despite what looked like lethal wounds, D-Boy survived the gunshots to the tearful delight of the Trawicks, and is in very healthy condition. 🐾

## Parrot Saves Choking Baby

TO THOSE WHO THINK parrots are only capable of mindless mimicry, Willie is certainly no bird brain. According to CBS4 in Denver, the parrot’s owner, Meagan, was babysitting two-year-old Hannah Kuusk when she left the child unsupervised to go to the bathroom. It was then that Hannah started choking on a pop tart, unbeknownst to the sitter.

Recognizing that the child was in distress, Willie began flapping his wings hysterically, squawking, “Mama baby! Mama baby!” alerting Meagan to hurry out of the bathroom. She then performed the Heimlich maneuver on Hannah, who was already turning blue, and saved her life. Meagan says if Willie hadn’t made a fuss, she wouldn’t have come out of the bathroom in time, and Hannah would surely have suffocated. 🐾

Greyhound rescue groups are currently engaged in the most challenging large-scale rescue mission ever attempted: the relocation of 100 racing greyhounds from Guam to the mainland.



Dave Davis

*From left to right: Speedo, April, Scout and Purdy of the now defunct Guam Greyhound Park racetrack were sent to California rescue groups in January.*

For more information visit: [www.guamgreyhounds.org](http://www.guamgreyhounds.org).

## Greyhounds Beat the Odds

THIS PAST ELECTION SEASON resulted in a decisive victory for Massachusetts’s greyhounds, and set a promising precedent for their brethren across the country. Despite the state’s significant racetrack presence, Massachusetts residents voted 56 to 44 percent to ban greyhound racing, a law made possible by the relentless efforts of nonprofit group Grey2KUSA.

Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, greyhounds have been exploited by the racing industry, forced to endure lives of prolonged confinement and contagious disease, deprived of affection, and oftentimes discarded or culled when no longer able to win races. Most track dogs incur injuries from the high-impact nature of the sport, some of which are career-, and ultimately, life-ending.

The racing industry also fuels puppy mills; many greyhounds come from over 800 breeding facilities, both backyard and highly commercialized operations, throughout 43 states. Greyhound pups are churned out *en masse*, contributing to the ongoing pet overpopulation crisis, which is responsible for the euthanasia of four to five million companion animals every year.

Hopefully, Massachusetts’s adoption of the ban represents a tide change in attitudes about greyhound racing in other states across the nation. 🐾

## Dog Crushed by Illegal Trap

NOVEMBER 15, 2008 is a day that Rich Poska will never forget. While walking his 11-year-old therapy dog—a 55-pound Chinook named Rupert—around the White Deer Golf Course in Vernon Hills, Ill., one sunny afternoon, Poska lost sight of him for a brief minute. He then heard a blood-curdling howl from the edge of the woods.

Panicked, Poska ran toward the noise and found Rupert howling with his head crushed between the metal jaws of a Conibear trap. Trying with all his might, Poska was unable to remove the trap. As he watched his dog gasp for air, Poska called 9-1-1. With the help of two burly policemen, the three finally pried the Conibear trap off of Rupert’s head, but by that time, Rupert had already succumbed to the lethal jaws of the trap that slowly and painfully suffocated him.

“I felt utterly helpless, and that I let Rupert down,” said Poska. “I have no doubt he suffered, and I believe it is unconscionable that such traps are still legal.” The traps were set by a private “pest” control trapper hired by the White Deer Golf Course to kill muskrats in and around the golfing area. However, the traps were outside the boundaries agreed upon, and questions remain as to why the trapper was using large Conibear traps (size 160) if he was trapping muskrat.

“The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has informed me that the case is still open, and has not been forthcoming with information about their investigation into this incident,” Poska told AWI Wildlife Consultant Camilla Fox. “My wife and I are determined to ensure that Rupert did not die in vain. We will do all we can to ban these traps so this does not happen again,” he vowed. AWI has also pledged to help the Poskas in their efforts to seek a ban on dangerous traps. 🐾



Stephanie Poska

*Rupert the therapy dog was tragically killed by a Conibear trap late last year.*

# LIFE BEHIND BARS: THE EXPLOITATION OF CAGED BIRDS

**WHILE MANY PEOPLE** are familiar with the inhumane nature of puppy mills—dog breeding operations where animals are overbred, overcrowded and often poorly cared for—most are unaware of mass-breeding bird facilities. The lack of consumer education, coupled with inadequate law enforcement measures to protect captive birds, has perpetuated their popularity in the pet trade. Parrots and other caged birds represent the largest group of captive wild animals in the U.S., and they are the fourth most popular animal kept as pets in the nation, after dogs, cats and fish.

Birds currently receive no protection under the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is drafting regulations that are expected to include welfare enforcement provisions for birds in breeding facilities and during transport, but they will apply only to birds sold at wholesale. Given the large number of birds in captivity and the inability to accurately track their numbers, it is questionable whether the USDA will have the resources to even enforce these standards, or if this massive additional workload will dilute its ability to enforce the AWA. Since the AWA does not apply to retail pet stores, there is no federal oversight of pet stores or direct-to-customer “bird mills.”

## WILD-CAUGHT BIRDS

The trade in parrots and other exotic birds once contributed greatly to the devastation of wild bird populations. Before the passage of the Wild Bird Conservation Act (WBCA) in 1992, which instituted a ban on exotic bird imports into the U.S., except under strictly regulated circumstances, there were no restrictions on the practice of capturing birds for the pet market. The U.S. was annually importing an estimated 800,000 wild-caught birds to be sold as pets, and this staggering number did not include the countless birds who died during capture and export. Today, because of groups such as Animal Welfare Institute that led the charge to implement these import restrictions, the number of birds taken from the wild has dramatically decreased.

In 2007, the European Union also banned the import of wild-caught birds because of fears about the transmission of bird flu, indirectly saving millions of wild birds from capture and trade. More recently, Mexico

passed a law prohibiting the capture, export and import of 22 Mexican parrot species after it was uncovered that an estimated 70,000 wild parrots and macaws were being captured in Mexico each year. However, many other countries continue to allow the trapping, export and/or import of wild-caught birds for the domestic and international market, and numerous parrot species continue to suffer irrevocable population depletion because of wild captures.

## THE RISE OF BREEDING FACILITIES

While the WBCA effectively stemmed availability of wild-caught birds for the U.S. pet trade, the demand for exotic birds as pets did not diminish. Domestic bird breeders accelerated their operations to meet the continuing



Central Virginia Parrot Sanctuary

**Top:** These birds surrendered by a breeder last year showed behavioral and physical scars from decades in captivity. **Below:** Mario, after the removal of a growth due to years of neglect.

demand, with some parrot species garnering thousands of dollars each. These industrialized operations often house hundreds of birds in rows of barren cages, depriving these social and intelligent creatures of enrichment or interaction. Even some hobby breeders are cause for concern, due to their often limited knowledge about birds' needs and their interest in profiting from a sale, overriding considerations for bird welfare. Furthermore, with the convenience of the internet as a means to buy and sell birds, badly managed breeding facilities masked by an online venue can proliferate unchecked.

To increase productivity, breeders sometimes remove eggs or newly hatched birds from their parents, which encourages those parents to produce more offspring. The unweaned hatchlings are hand-reared by humans and, to reduce breeders' costs, are often sold to pet stores, where they are frequently fed by inexperienced staff. Though stores may provide some training for prospective owners on the hand-feeding process, birds can suffer serious injuries, such as crop burns, infections, drowning and starvation, if it is done improperly.

Breeders and pet stores falsely market these hand-reared birds as friendlier and better able to bond with humans as a result of early exposure. However, removing a fledgling from his or her parents is inhumane; in the wild, baby parrots stay with their parents for months. It can also lead to many physical and behavioral problems, such as feather plucking and aggression. California is currently the only state that regulates the sale of unweaned parrots in retail venues, allowing the problem to persist in the other 49 states.

## HOMELESS PARROTS

Many consumers purchase parrots when the birds are very young and are often given inadequate information on their care. Consequently, owners are seldom able to provide the considerable time, attention and financial resources that these birds require. Owners may find themselves unwilling or ill-prepared to give lifetime care for a bird who can live up to 60 years. Furthermore, unlike dogs and cats, parrots are not domesticated; they therefore retain their wild needs and instincts. This can pose a problem for both the bird and his or her unwitting owner.

“What people often describe as a ‘parrot behavior problem’ is actually the result of a bird’s natural behavior taking place in an unnatural environment,” explains Denise Kelly, president of the Avian Welfare Coalition. “Flying miles a day, loud vocalizations, foraging for food, chewing and destroying wood and trees, and defending territories are perfectly normal bird behaviors



in the wild, but unwelcome in the average home. So it’s actually a ‘people problem,’ fueled by people’s unrealistic expectations of a parrot’s basic nature.”

Additionally, though some species are marketed for their ability to speak, the novelty can wear off after purchase, or the bird may not perform as expected and becomes a “nuisance.” Unwanted birds suffer neglect, relinquishment to shelters, or in some cases, a short-lived freedom after being released to face unsuitable weather conditions, starvation and predation. Even when birds that are released survive on their own, they can threaten the environment and native wildlife. 🐾

## TAKE ACTION

Only consumer education and better enforcement provisions will reduce the suffering of captive birds. Please contact the Secretary of Agriculture at the below address and express your concern for the plight of captive birds, encouraging the USDA to publish regulations that will provide the strongest possible protections for birds in the pet trade.

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

## Frogs Identify Predators Before Hatching

**FIGHT OR FLIGHT.** They're basic animal responses once considered purely instinctual—or perhaps strictly a natural learning process—but they may actually be a combination of the two. According to [www.livescience.com](http://www.livescience.com), an experiment conducted at Missouri State University determined that wood-frogs can recognize predators before they've even hatched.

Since many amphibians associate the scent of a predator with the resulting distress pheromones of present same-species prey, scientists tested whether frogs could develop this keen association while still in the egg.

The result was a resounding yes. The group of wood-frog eggs exposed to both a distress pheromone and water



A recent study has shown wood-frogs learn to identify predators while still in the egg.

that held fire-belly newts (a natural predator, not of wood-frogs, but of a different frog species) fell motionless at the presence of newt-scented water after they hatched—a telltale sign of predator recognition. The group of eggs that was only exposed to the newt-scented water yielded tadpoles who made no observed anti-predator response when exposed to it post-birth. 🐾

## PYGMY TARSIERS BACK FROM "EXTINCTION"

Believed to be extinct, one of the world's smallest and rarest primates had not been seen alive since 1921. But an Indonesian scientist expedition in 2000 proved decades of assumptions wrong. As reported by Reuters, the group was doing research in the Sulawesi highlands of Indonesia, when they accidentally trapped and killed an infamous pygmy tarsier.

In August of last year, a group of American scientists traveled to the 6,900-foot mountaintops of Lore Lindu



National Park and captured three others—two males and one female—the first live tarsiers seen in 87 years. They attached radio collars to the creatures' necks in order to track their movements.

Tarsiers are described as looking much like Gizmo from the movie *Gremlins*. They are the size of mice with little claws and large eyes and ears, weighing in at a mere two ounces. They have the ability to

turn their heads 180 degrees and, as scientists found out the hard way, are not too shy to bite perceived predators. 🐾

## Curtailing Mexico's Exotic Bird Trade

THE LONG-AWAITED AMENDMENT to Mexico's wildlife law to protect its wild bird populations from exploitation was approved by Mexican President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa on October 13.

The ban prohibits the commercial or subsistence capture, export and import of 22 Mexican parrot species, half of which are deemed endangered. A joint report highlighting the need for the ban was released last year by the Mexican nonprofit conservation organization, Teyeliz, A.C., and the Defenders of Wildlife Mexico. It found that 65,000 to 78,500 wild parrots and macaws are captured in Mexico each year, with an astounding 75 percent dying before reaching a buyer.

Though most surviving parrots are sold at stores and markets throughout Mexico, the report also identified American demand for some species as encouraging the illegal trade. The importation of wild-caught birds has been severely restricted in the U.S. since 1992, yet Mexican parrots are still smuggled into the country. The Mexican ban on imports was a necessary measure, since species shared with Central and South America were being imported and used as a cover for the illegal trade. 🐾

## A Promising Proposal for Wild Non-human Primates

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION proposed a ban on laboratory use of wild-caught apes and monkeys this past November—just short of asking that primate experiments be phased out altogether.

"It is absolutely important to steer away from testing on animals," said European Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas. "Scientific research must focus on finding alternative methods to animal testing, but where alternatives are not available, the situation of animals still used in experiments must be improved."

The proposal, which must go before the Council of Ministers to be approved, requires that "...only animals of second or older generations be used, subject to transitional periods, to avoid taking animals from the wild and exhausting wild populations."

Today 10 percent of the monkeys in European labs are wild-caught, totaling about 1,000 individuals. 🐾

## EXOTIC ANIMAL SMUGGLERS BUSTED

Though they're usually intervening in illegal immigrant and drug trafficking schemes, Chilean officials put the kibosh on a massive illicit shipment of 427 exotic animals en route from Peru to Chile early this year.

According to the Associated Press, Chilean authorities detained the yacht carrying three toucans, 11 alligators, 20 parrots, 20 macaws, 25 squirrels and 348 turtles near the city of Arica, Chile. The total number of animals was appraised at more than \$35,000.

The Chilean Agricultural Service says the skipper will likely be charged with transport of contraband, trade in protected species, and animal mistreatment. As for the captured critters, they were returned to Peru. 🐾



Hundreds of brown pelicans have mysteriously been turning up disoriented, starving and dead along the California coast this winter.

## Hordes of Pelicans Mysteriously Dying

SCIENTISTS AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONISTS are baffled by the sudden malaise plaguing hundreds of pelicans along the California coast this winter. Californians have been calling rescue centers constantly, having found disoriented, exhausted, ill and dead birds in the most unlikely of places. Many pelicans have made their way much further inland than is normal for the species' migratory patterns, and have even wound up on highways, airplane runways and backyards.

The beleaguered pelicans are also bruised and starving. Though it is still uncertain why these adult birds are unable to either hunt for themselves or eat, state and federal wildlife authorities have taken blood samples, which should provide some insight.

Some scientists speculate the birds may have been poisoned by domoic acid, which is produced by algae and absorbed into the pelicans' food supply. The neurotoxin can cause permanent short-term memory loss and other symptoms the birds are exhibiting; however, other marine and wildlife would normally be affected as well, yet aren't. Scientists are also hypothesizing that an unknown pelican-specific virus is the culprit.

Whatever the case, the endangered brown pelicans and those fighting to preserve them cannot afford for this ailment to remain a mystery for long. 🐾

## Random Source Dog and Cat Dealers Under the Microscope

ALTHOUGH NO ACTION WAS TAKEN on the Pet Safety and Protection Act in the last Congress, the Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations bill and the FARM bill were adopted; both include language regarding random source Class B dealers who sell dogs and cats for experimentation. They call for an independent review by a panel of experts to determine how frequently animals sold by Class B dealers are used, and make recommendations regarding such use. In addition, the Agriculture Committee leadership in both the House and Senate called for a Government Accountability Office study on the subject.

In response to Congress's call for action, the National Academies Institute for Laboratory Animal Research (ILAR) formed a committee to "address the use of Class B dogs and cats in research funded by the National Institutes of Health." The 10-member committee representing a broad spectrum of individuals, from vocal opponents of Class B dealers to scientists who purchase and use such animals, is expected to issue its report this spring. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been tasked by Congress to review any recommendations proposed and report how they may be implemented to ensure compliance with the Animal Welfare Act (AWA).

Most of the committee's deliberations have been private, but during two half-day public sessions, an array of people spoke, including Cathy Liss of the Animal Welfare Institute. Liss provided a statement, showed

footage from dealer premises, presented extensive documentation and answered questions based on her 28 years of random source dealer experience.

Two representatives from a licensed Class A dealer facility (a breeder of purpose-bred animals), gave an impressive presentation describing their ability to provide a wide variety of animals and services to the research industry. The breeding facility is able to meet the research demands for dogs and adapt as these needs change. Unlike random source dogs, the health status and genetic background of Class A animals is known.

Another detailed presentation was given by a genetic expert on cats from the National Cancer Institute's Laboratory of Genomic Diversity. He described how to breed cats to ensure genetic diversity, emphasizing that it can in fact be done.

The USDA's Animal Care staff gave two separate presentations and has submitted data to the committee. One chart notes that from November 2007 to November 2008, 2,863 dogs and 267 cats were sold by Class B dealers to research facilities. Currently, just 10 such dealers remain. Compared to historical figures, these numbers clearly represent a dying industry.

Recently, Animal Care has revised the manner in which it conducts tracebacks intended to assess the accuracy of dealer records identifying from whom they purchase their dogs and cats. Tracebacks are an extensive and costly process, yet they cannot provide assurance that the dealers' transactions involving animals were legal. A significant loophole in the AWA is that any person who claims to have bred and raised a dog or cat can sell the animal for profit. Dealers can exploit this loophole knowing it is virtually impossible to disprove their claim.

The suggested machinations to tighten controls and provide oversight of Class B dealers are mind boggling. Based on the evidence provided, it seems inconceivable that the committee can justify a research need on scientific grounds to use any dogs and cats obtained from these dealers. While the vast majority of researchers get their animals from other sources, it is time for the foot-draggers to follow suit. 🐾



Dogs at a Class B dealer facility.

## WRONGFUL POLICE DOG SHOOTINGS: IS THERE ANY RELIEF?

Mayor Cheye Calvo of Berwyn Heights, Md., was changing for a meeting last July after having returned home from walking his dogs, when SWAT team members of the Prince George's County Police Department burst into his house without knocking and opened fire. Before the mayor could make it down the stairs, his two black Labrador retrievers, 7-year-old Payton and 4-year-old Chase, had been shot to death. Mayor Calvo was the innocent victim of a plot by drug smugglers to traffic over 400 pounds of marijuana by delivering it to unsuspecting recipients.

The police department expressed regret for the shootings of Payton and Chase, but the officers involved claimed they felt threatened by the dogs, who were well-known and loved in the community, especially by children. The tragic killings of the Calvo family dogs represent just two of several dog shootings by police across the country over the past year.

In April, New Orleans police responding to a tripped residential burglar alarm shot and killed Jax, a 4-year-old Doberman. At the time of the shooting, Jax was recovering from spine surgery and could barely walk. Eight shell casings were found near the scene.

In October, an Oklahoma police officer got out of his car at a residence to ask for directions, then shot and killed a 4-year-old Airedale terrier named Bruiser, who came running down the driveway toward him. The officer claimed he feared for his life, but at no point did he attempt to get back into his vehicle to protect himself from the dog who had never bitten anyone before and had not so much as lunged at the officer.

In November, police fatally shot an 11-year-old German Shepherd-Lab mix named DeoGee nine times when attempting to serve a warrant to a man. DeoGee suffered for an hour until animal control arrived and euthanized him.

Many wrongful dog shootings could be avoided if police officers were trained to differentiate between dangerous and unthreatening dogs, as well as to subdue those who are aggressive through non-lethal means. Providing officers with proper education, training and the tools needed to handle dogs with non-lethal force are critical in the prevention of wrongful dog shootings.

When a wrongful shooting does occur, the legal system can provide some relief to bereaved families. Since pets are considered personal property under state law, most lawsuits for pet shootings against police officers and the municipalities that employ them are filed under theories of property law. However, state laws vary so widely that legal action may be possible in one state, but not another.



Mayor Calvo and wife Trinity walk Chase and Payton through Berwyn Heights, Md. The mayor says these walks were "a twice daily occurrence, and we walked just like this—they right at our side, Payton on the outside, Chase on the inside. All the children knew their names and would flock to pet them."

One legal option available at the federal level currently being tested with increasing frequency by pet owners is the filing of a lawsuit under 42 U.S.C. §1983. This statute allows for lawsuits against government employees who have violated an individual's Constitutional rights. Recently, several courts have ruled that the killing of one's pet by a public official constitutes a seizure under the Fourth Amendment, which may be remedied via a lawsuit under 42 U.S.C. §1983. Since the Fourth Amendment provides the right to be free from "unreasonable" seizures of property, a pet owner must prove that the killing was in fact unreasonable by showing that his or her possessory interest in the animal outweighed the state's interest in public safety.

Even if a pet owner can establish that much, another hurdle may remain: Government agencies and officials generally have immunity, which shields them from liability for actions performed in their official capacity. A pet owner can overcome this defense if the court finds that a reasonable officer would have known that his or her actions violated the pet owner's Constitutional right. State law and the facts of the case will allow the court to determine whether immunity will vindicate a police officer or municipality responsible for the killing of a pet.

Hopefully, these suits will not only cause police departments to initiate training programs on how officers should handle situations involving dogs, but will act as deterrents to police officers everywhere, making them think twice before pulling the trigger on an animal. 🐾



## Studies and Snack Breaks

Veterinary technician Evelyn Skoumbourdis and environmental enrichment coordinator Casey Coke Murphy discuss proper feeding of small laboratory mammals

**DUE TO THEIR SMALLER SIZE** and handleability, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs and rabbits are widely used in biomedical research studies. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), these species made up more than half of the total population of animals regulated by the agency and used in research studies in 2007. Although popular and well-known to researchers and animal care staff, all of these species have specialized needs when it comes to feeding and nutrition, which can be a hurdle for those attempting to utilize foodstuffs as enrichment.

Though using foodstuffs as a part of an environmental enrichment program can be rewarding for both the humans and animals involved, there are things that should be addressed prior to starting any type of new enrichment. Always first check with the investigators and veterinary staff to ensure that adding supplementary foods to an animal's diet will not interfere with the research project or breeding of the animals. Also remember that food enrichment is merely a supplementation to the animal's diet and should never under any circumstances be used as a sole food source. All supplemental foods should be given in moderation to avoid possible health issues, such as malnutrition, obesity or dental problems.

### HAMSTERS

In the wild, hamsters feed upon seeds, wild grasses and flowers. However, a manufactured hamster diet is nutritionally complete, which means there is no dietary need

**Above:** Get creative! This Timothy hay tunnel (Oxbow Hay Company) allows for both hay consumption and play. Photo by Evelyn Skoumbourdis.

to supplement in the laboratory. Thus, one must be careful when selecting foods for enrichment supplementation, because the hamster is partial to sweeter foods like fruits, and will consume them in preference to the provided diet, which may lead to malnutrition and/or dental issues (such as malocclusion of the incisors).

The hamster has several unique physiological attributes that should be taken into account when choosing supplementary foods. The first is that the hamster has cheek pouches (also known as evaginations) that they will use to store and carry food. As hamsters are territorial, they may choose to hold foodstuffs in their pouches if living with others. One should therefore avoid providing any types of food that may become sticky or increase in size due to moisture. Additionally, hamsters hoard food in the wild and will do the same in a laboratory environment, so it is important to remove any uneaten foodstuffs from the cage to keep them from overeating. Finally, processed sugars should be avoided when choosing enrichment foods, as certain strains of hamster are known to spontaneously develop Type 1 diabetes.

### GERBILS

In the wild, gerbils consume wormwood, grasses, seeds, bulbs and flowers, and will get their water from greens, as well as dew left upon leaves and grasses. However, in the laboratory it is important to provide gerbils with a nutritionally complete diet and fresh drinking water with which to process the nutrients. Gerbils are known to dig in their bedding throughout the day, and will hoard food. Thus, only small amounts of food should be provided, and

all uneaten food should be cleaned from the cage. As is the case with hamsters, this keeps the animal from eating supplemental foods in place of the provided diet, which may lead to malnutrition or malocclusion of the incisors.

Because they live in open, dusty areas in the wild, gerbils have a naturally high rate of metabolism. However, once placed within the laboratory setting, the gerbil runs the risk of becoming obese and/or developing high cholesterol; preferred foods such as sunflower seeds should therefore be avoided, as they are very high in fat and carry a low nutritional content.

### GUINEA PIGS

Although the guinea pig is generally a domesticated species, they will consume green grasses and vegetables when allowed to roam freely, and learn very early in life what foods they require. Due to this early learning, many guinea pigs in the laboratory tend to be neophobic and will only try new foodstuffs after many trials. Thankfully, there are several formulated diets available for use, all of which contain necessary amounts of fat and vitamin C to maintain proper health. Guinea pigs, however, are known to enjoy hays and certain vegetables when added as a supplement to their chow. One must be careful to ensure that the guinea pigs continue to consume their normal diet, not only to avoid scurvy from lack of vitamin C, but because all the teeth of guinea pigs are open-rooted and may overgrow without the proper intake of harder foods, such as chow.

### RABBITS

In the wild, rabbits consume grasses, clover, cultivated plants, fruits, tree bark, twigs and shrubs in order to maintain optimum gut motility and nutrition balance. Manufactured pelleted diets provide the large amount of digestible fiber necessary for the rabbit's digestive system; but because rabbits in the laboratory are more likely to consume hair, due to higher amounts of shedding and occasional fur chewing, supplementation is often necessary to maintain gut motility. Certain foods with low fiber, like some lettuce varieties, can cause the digestion of the rabbit to become rapid. Since this may result in diarrhea, one should be very careful when selecting greens and other supplementary foods.

Hays such as alfalfa and Timothy have large fiber particles that help to push hair and other indigestible bits along the digestive

#### OK TO FEED MODERATE AMOUNTS OF THE FOLLOWING TO Gerbils, Guinea Pigs, Hamsters & Rabbits:

Food item	Notes
Apples	no stems or seeds
Carrots	tops ok too
Dark leafy greens	kale, escarole, chard, etc.
Dried fruits/veggies & treats	commercially available mixes, Bio-serv
Hay	Timothy & alfalfa; loose or cubes
Seeds & nuts	irradiated, commercially available mixes
Strawberries	leaves & stems ok too
Sweet Potato	proactive for treatment of hairballs (rabbits)
Tomato	stem, vines, leaves, etc. are poisonous

#### DO NOT FEED THE FOLLOWING TO Gerbils, Guinea Pigs, Hamsters & Rabbits:

Food item	Notes
Acidic/ Citrus fruits	can cause diarrhea
Lettuce (light colored)	can cause diarrhea
Potato (white)	poisonous
Sweets (candy)	can cause diarrhea, no nutritional value

tract. Feeding items such as these help to maintain motility and avoid impaction of the gut. Other foods like leafy greens and vegetables are also helpful in rabbit digestion. However, when choosing foods, one must be careful not to provide refined sugars or anything starchy, as they can cause an overgrowth of bacteria during the fermentation cycle of the rabbit's digestion. This bacterial overgrowth can lead to illness and possible enterotoxemia. 🐾

#### About the Authors

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# International SOS for Serbian Brown Bears

By Susan R. Johnson

**SERBIA, AT THE HEART** of former Yugoslavia and the Balkans, is one of the few places left in Europe where brown bears continue to be cruelly abused for profit and human amusement. Despite being internationally recognized as an endangered species, the animals have been subject to brutal training methods by gypsies, also known as Roma, to dance for crowds. Until relatively recently, dancing bears were widely tolerated, but today it seems that a majority of citizens disapprove of such abuse. Only a few Roma families still keep dancing bears as a secondary, summer income. They also trade the bears both nationally and across country lines for personal gain.

Serbia, unlike its neighbors Romania and Bulgaria, has yet to establish a modern, transparent, accountable

and professionally managed national sanctuary for these creatures. It is becoming an increasingly urgent objective, since without it—and without stronger enforcement of laws against keeping, mistreating or trading endangered animals—the magnificent Serbian brown bear may soon vanish from its natural historical habitat.

There is a pressing need for Serbian authorities, international organizations and Serbian animal activists to assemble and create a plan to keep Serbian bears in Serbia, as well as enforce existing laws to protect those still there. These groups should also provide appropriate financial and political support to the only existing high-quality bear rehabilitation center in Banostor and establish a permanent bear sanctuary.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO BROWN BEARS IN SERBIA?

For a bear cub to end up in the hands of a human owner, his or her mother first must die. This is usually done by poachers, who track female bears and kill those who do not allow their cubs to be taken from them. The cubs are then sold to various people, but almost always end up with Roma. These gypsies use gruesome and cruel methods to tame the bears, such as piercing the nose and lips with an awl without anesthesia and inserting a metal muzzle attached to one or more chains.

To train the cub to “dance,” a fire is lit in a deep hole and the embers are covered with a tin plate. The cub is thrown into the hole on the burning tin and forced to hop around in pain on its back feet to the sound of a kettledrum, while gypsies pull the muzzle chain. Sometimes the owner throws the chain over a tall branch, pulling it taught and hitting the cub’s forelegs with a stick to force the cub back on his or her feet to “dance.”



**Top:** Dancing bear Marija and her “owner,” Pera Jovic, before the bear’s rescue; **Bottom:** Bozana in an old car shell—her home for 10 years before her rescue in Pancevo, outside Belgrade.

## TAKING THE INITIATIVE

In March of 1998, the small Serbian nongovernmental organization (NGO) known as Arka launched the project “Protect the Bears” with the intent to help brown bears in the wild and captivity. Arka had been established three years earlier by Branka and Pavel Pasko, a couple who have dedicated their lives to the protection and welfare of animals. The bear project was conceived in several phases: (1) research the problem, locate and identify captive and dancing bears, and determine if any are being kept according to the law; (2) build temporary

shelters or rehabilitation centers where confiscated bears could be treated and prepared for transfer to a national sanctuary; and (3) establish a permanent national sanctuary in the Fruska Gora National Park.

## WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

Arka, working with relevant individuals and institutions, including veterinarians, hunting inspectors and police, researched the current “bear situation” as the first phase of “Protect the Bears.” They visited many gypsy settlements to talk with dancing bear owners in order to understand their motives and practices. They would then inform the owners that keeping and abusing bears was illegal under the 1993 Law on Hunting and the 1992 Law on Public Peace and Order. Not a single bear “owner” contacted during this phase or encountered since has been able to provide legal documentation proving how he came into possession of the bear or verifying the animal’s origin. But owners resist confiscation because they are confident they can sell a bear for thousands of Euros. All those spoken to wanted either money for their bear, a state pension or a piece of land.

The next phase of the project was to build a temporary shelter and start confiscating the dancing bears. The first bear to be seized was Bozana from the town of Pancevo, located near the capital city of Belgrade. The rescue was carried out on October 25, 1998, and the bear was placed in a temporary shelter in northern Serbia with a small private zoo. Arka, working with local authorities,



made plans for three more confiscations to be carried out in March of 1999; but the zoo, under pressure from the hunting lobby in the Ministry of Agriculture, backed out of the agreement. When NATO began bombing Serbia in late March that same year, plans were further postponed.

The Paskos turned to Plan B and used the time to complete a “temporary” facility for nine bears on their property in Banostor along the Danube River. By November 1999, they confiscated three more bears: Mishko, from a factory yard in the town of Kraljevo, who was voluntarily handed over; Kasandra, with extremely damaged lips, kept in the shell of a small car in the town of Krusevac; and Marija from the town of Paracin.

Startled by Arka’s action aided by local authorities, other dancing bear owners bartered their bears for horses with other Roma, which complicated finding them. Police were still able to locate the owner of two more dancing bears, Uske and Dorinda, in the town of Jagodina, where they were being kept in a yard tied to a tree. Uske, a

female about six or seven years old when seized, was in relatively good physical condition, but aggressive due to psychological problems from abuse. Dorinda had deliberately been blinded and suffered a cancerous melanoma on her paw. She died in Arka’s Bear Rehab Center three years later.

The last bear to be confiscated was Elvis, who lost a front leg when he was confined in the same cage as his father at the Palic Zoo. The zoo illegally released Elvis in the Tara National Park, where he soon approached a children’s camp to forage for food. The park director ordered him to be shot. Luckily for Elvis, a local man recognized him from the zoo and contacted Arka to ask for their help in saving Elvis. He was rescued on March 8, 2002. Arka estimates that there may be still at least 10 bears in Serbia that should be seized, but every confiscation has to be carefully prepared and carried out by Arka in cooperation with responsible local authorities.

In August of last year, local police contacted the organization asking for their assistance in confiscating three more dancing bears. The joint

operation was in the midst of seeking help from the Ministry of Environment, when they learned that the Bulgarian representative of an Austrian NGO had illegally bought the three bears and obtained export certificates from the Ministry of Environment to transfer them to a sanctuary in Bulgaria. Such illegal buying—regardless of motive—only encourages the poaching and capture of bears in Serbia. Arka contacted responsible officials, including the Public Prosecutor in Belgrade, and the export licenses were cancelled. Action to confiscate these three bears is on hold. Arka is in need of funds, and their request to the Ministry of Environment for financial support is still pending.

#### A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

For nearly 10 years and against incredible odds, Branka and Pavel Pasko have established and maintained the Bear Rehabilitation Center in their yard in Banostor. By using primarily their own resources, they have somehow managed to provide an important humane service that has saved seven bears to date. Now they need help to continue operating their “temporary” facility, while pursuing their dream to establish a permanent sanctuary in the Fruska Gora National Park.

Scientific research shows that bears were actually living in Fruska Gora more than a thousand years ago, making it the perfect site for a sanctuary. The Paskos hope the site would also become a special nature school for children, where they could learn about bears and their right to live freely in their native habitat.

Arka has met with officials at the Serbian Ministry of Environment and requested a meeting with the dynamic young politician now serving as its new Minister. In early November, I joined Arka for a meeting with the Minister’s Chief of Staff. As the meeting came to a close, the official asked me for suggestions on a course of action.

I have visited the Bear Center at Banostor several times and was impressed with the facility. My suggestions for the Minister were those outlined at the beginning of this article: Keep Serbian bears in Serbia, enforce the laws more seriously, and provide government support to Arka’s facility at least until a permanent sanctuary is established and operating successfully.

The Banostor Bear shelter and the brown bears being abused, forced to dance, or caught and sold need international help. Without it, current efforts will not be sustainable. Furthermore, much international attention and assistance will be needed to give new impetus to the “Protect the Bears” project and establish a proper sanctuary in Serbia. Won’t you join me in helping the bears? 🐾

**Susan R. Johnson** has been a career foreign service officer since 1979, and a life-long animal lover. For over 10 years, she has supported animal welfare groups in Romania, Bosnia and Serbia, and advocates compassionate public policy and action to improve conditions for animals in the Balkans.



*Bozana eating walnuts in the outdoor enclosure of the Center, which uses a natural feeding program to stimulate the bears to return to normal behavior, including hibernation. Photos by Pavel Pasko.*



**Top:** Marija being liberated from her chains upon arrival at the Rehabilitation Center; **Bottom:** Three-legged bear Elvis emerging from his cage to the outdoor enclosure of the rehab center.

*If you would like to help the Serbia bears, donations can be made to the “Protect the Serbian Bear Project,” care of the Animal Welfare Institute at:*

*Animal Welfare Institute  
P.O. Box 3650  
Washington, DC 20027*

*If you would like to contact Susan Johnson, you can reach her at [srj4dgs@yahoo.com](mailto:srj4dgs@yahoo.com).*

## A Broken Food Chain

ACCORDING TO A RECENT REPORT published by the University of British Columbia in Canada, 90 percent of the global small fish catch—which includes anchovies, sardines and mackerel—is processed into fish meal and fish oil and used in animal feed. These forage fish are heavily exploited, since they form large, dense schools that are easy to spot and inexpensive to catch in large numbers.

Industries usurping these resources include aquaculture, fur producers and intensive agriculture production of poultry and pigs. Small forage fish are also used in the pet food industry, yet since there is no definitive percentage of use recorded, it could be even higher when compared to the industries listed above.

The report voices concern for how this unsustainable use of the fish contributes to the present global overfishing problem and global food security threats. For many communities, especially in developing countries, forage fish provide an important source of nutrition. In some areas, this has placed the subsistence for local people in direct competition with the animal feed industry. Forage fish also play a vital role in the world's marine ecosystems, as they transfer energy from the plankton to larger fish, marine mammals and sea birds. 🐾

## Global Animal Welfare Meeting Held in Egypt

THE SECOND GLOBAL CONFERENCE on Animal Welfare was convened by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) last year in Cairo, Egypt, from October 20 to 22. The conference had a dual purpose: assess progress of the 172 member nations in implementing outcomes of the 2004 Conference in Paris (standards covering live animal transport and slaughter, killing for disease control purposes, and stray dog population control for rabies prevention) and determine how next to proceed in developing global standards of on-farm animal management.

Over 400 people attended, representing OIE national delegates (the chief veterinary officers of each member country), deans of veterinary faculties, heads of research institutes, regulatory officials, and representatives of partner organizations, nongovernmental and farmers' organizations. AWI was represented by Senior Farm Animal Policy Specialist Marlene Halverson. Her report on the conference is available on the AWI website at: [www.awionline.org/farm/OIE.htm](http://www.awionline.org/farm/OIE.htm). 🐾



istockphoto

These striped mackerel are one of several forage fish species who are overfished to be used in animal feed.

## NOXIOUS EMISSIONS FROM ANIMAL WASTE EXEMPTED

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) exempted all agribusiness in December—no matter how industrialized, no matter the animal product produced—from having to declare noxious emissions produced by animal waste. The EPA says that reporting these emissions is unnecessary, regardless of the toxicity level, since a federal response to these reports would be unlikely.

While the decision may mean a few less administrative headaches for small farmers, it ultimately lets multimillion dollar factory farms avoid vital responsibilities under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), both of which protect surrounding ecosystems and communities from veritable poisoning.

Though agricultural operations would still have to report levels of any other toxic substance leeching into the ground, water or air, levels of ammonia and methane found in animal waste are often significant enough to markedly damage animal, plant and human life.

Flying in the face of this lame duck relaxing of ag standards, Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.) vowed to investigate "what remedies are available to block or reverse this regulatory change," according to the *Wall Street Journal*. The Congressman also asserted in a written statement that the EPA action "is nothing more than a giveaway to Big Agribusiness at the expense of the public health and of local communities located near large factory farms." 🐾

## FDA Caves to Big Ag Pressure; Endangers Human and Animal Life

IN LATE NOVEMBER, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) revoked its ban on extra-label antibiotics used in rearing farm animals, particularly in intensive systems.

The ban was proposed last summer as an effort to curtail the spread of drug-resistant pathogens and public health risks largely associated with factory farms and their overuse of antibiotics. But the FDA quickly reneged on its recent crusade against extra-label drugs, due to a great deal of protest from powerful ag lobbies, and much to the chagrin of the American Medical Association and a spate of savvy consumers.

Extra-label drugs like cephalosporins are used to "treat" respiratory diseases in food-producing animals, but are deemed "extra-label" because they are only approved for human use or used to treat a condition for which they were not approved. Factory farms feed their animals drugs on a daily basis as a specious means of controlling or preventing clinical outbreaks of disease.

Scientists at universities including Johns Hopkins have argued time and again that the health repercussions of this practice could easily reach pandemic proportions, worse than the dreaded Avian Flu, SARS and Mad Cow Disease, to name a few.

If industrial ag is as worried about preventing infectious disease as it says it is, perhaps a cleanup of its horrifically unsanitary high-confinement conditions would be the best place to start. 🐾

## A CLEAR VOTE AGAINST INTENSIVE CONFINEMENT OF FARM ANIMALS

The California referendum to prohibit housing sows in gestation crates, hens in battery cages, and veal calves in crates by 2015 passed in November by a nearly two-to-one margin. AWI supported the measure because of our vehement opposition to the practice of confining animals in a manner that prevents even the most basic movement and behaviors, including the ability to simply turn around or spread one's wings. With the adoption of the measure, it is our hope that farmers will respond by keeping animals in ways that are harmonious with their needs. 🐾

## Report Finds Insufficient Gov't Oversight at Slaughter Plants

IN RESPONSE to the Hallmark-Westland slaughter plant exposé, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) assessed what had transpired at Hallmark, if it could have been prevented, and whether similar problems exist at other plants. OIG evaluated 10 slaughter facilities which, like Hallmark, kill cull cows (dairy animals who are no longer viewed as productive). Cull animals are oftentimes in a weakened physical condition, and are therefore more susceptible to becoming downed (non-ambulatory).

OIG's November 2008 report concluded that Hallmark's problems, which included the abuse of downed animals by forcing them to stand, and violations of the ban on slaughter of downed animals, were not systemic. However, OIG recommended that the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) take 25 steps to improve the agency's enforcement of the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act.

Notably, the report concluded that "...there is an inherent vulnerability that humane handling violations can occur and not be detected by FSIS inspectors, because FSIS does not provide continuous surveillance of all operating areas within a slaughter establishment at all times." Regarding video surveillance, which Hallmark was installing, OIG stated, "...there is no assurance that this would have prevented abuses from occurring." Further, three of the 10 audited establishments had video monitoring, but FSIS was prohibited access to their systems.

The OIG Report, *Evaluation of FSIS Management Controls over Pre-Slaughter Activities*, can be accessed at [www.usda.gov/oig/webdocs/24601-07-KC.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/oig/webdocs/24601-07-KC.pdf). 🐾



Compassion Over Killing

# PROTECTING THE ANIMALS OF CAIRO



BY MARLENE HALVERSON

**WHILE ATTENDING THE OIE** Global Animal Welfare Conference in Cairo, I was fortunate to meet Amina Tharwat Abaza, founder of SPARE, the Society for Protection of Animal Rights in Egypt. Colleague Jacqueline Bos and I were able to visit the SPARE shelter, located along a canal of the Nile in Giza. On the appointed day, Amina sent her trusted friend and taxi driver Ismael to get us.

Upon arrival, we were welcomed by Amina; SPARE's administrator Madame May (whom Amina describes as the "heart and soul" of SPARE); Dr. Mohamed Nabawy, one of three veterinarian's working for SPARE; several of the impressive young men who help care for the animals—Mahmoud, Wahid, Omar, and Mr. Mossaad—and scores of happy, healthy, sociable

animals who greeted us like new playmates. That day, the shelter was hosting 90 dogs, 42 cats and one donkey. SPARE provides free veterinary service to the local community, advocates better conditions at Cairo Zoo, and cooperates with other groups to end stray dog killings and improve conditions at Egyptian slaughterhouses. SPARE teaches classes on respect for animals and disseminates information about Islam's teachings regarding animals, while working with media to change attitudes. It also operates a stray animal sterilization and release program. Treated strays are returned to neighborhoods where they were found only if they will be safe there. Otherwise, they are put up for adoption. A potential adopter from the community must first work with the animal at the shelter and learn how to provide for him or her. Recently, SPARE has rented an adjacent building and is restoring it to hold additional animals and expand its education program. SPARE is fundraising to purchase the building and ensure the permanency of the animals' quarters.

Animals at SPARE are the lucky ones, brought in by an owner or a concerned Cairo resident, or taken in after an emergency call or after employees have observed them in trouble. Upon arrival, dogs and cats are bathed, treated for external parasites, tested for rabies, sterilized, vaccinated, dewormed and microchipped. Then they are quarantined to determine their health status before being introduced to the existing population. Thereafter, the socialization process can take weeks for the most abused animals.

The morning of our visit, SPARE received a call from a boy about a dog in trouble. When staff investigated, they found a small, cream-colored puppy being used as a football in a street game. They brought the puppy back to the shelter and gave him a shampoo, treatment and much needed affection and rest. He

Photos: Page 20: Mother dog retrieving her pup (Mazlouma) from a Nile canal (photo by Jacqueline Bos); Page 21 (left to right): Dr. Nabawy and shelter dogs; Omar with Fawzi; Mahmoud with a shelter cat (photo by Jacqueline Bos); Amina and dogs, Wahid, and Jacqueline Bos; Mr. Mossaad and the recovering donkey; Lower photo: Madame May with Mazlouma (photo courtesy of SPARE). Photos by Marlene Halverson unless otherwise noted.



was already recovering nicely. We also met a cat who had been blinded by acid, and a fearful dog who had been showered with acid, both recovering under the staff's dedicated care.

The donkey was being treated for injuries sustained from months of wearing an ill-fitted halter and yoke. When healed, he will be returned to the owner who requested SPARE's help. Dr. Nabawy explained that because owners need their farm and working animals for economic survival, it is important for SPARE to return them when they are well and teach the owner how to care for them. Otherwise, the owner may not want to seek treatment for his animals in the future. If the owner clearly does not care about the animal's welfare, SPARE takes custody. Those animals are taken to SPARE's sanctuary near Saqqara on the olive plantation owned by Amina's husband, Raouf Mishriki, to live out their days with the best of care.

Dr. Nabawy treats Cairo's weary beasts of burden and farm animals, both inside and outside the city. He drives into the countryside in SPARE's mobile clinic, donated by two American ladies, where he treats horses, donkeys, cows, sheep and goats. Each time the mobile clinic is taken out, it costs SPARE around \$300 for medicines. While SPARE receives some medicine donations, the needs of animals in Egypt are enormous, and SPARE's financial resources are modest. SPARE has had to curtail routine visits to the countryside where it was easy for owners to bring animals for regular care. These days, the mobile clinic is able to respond only to emergencies.

Amina and colleagues have been criticized for using resources for animals when so many humans suffer. She responded in a 2007 interview in *Al-Ahram Weekly*,

saying, "I realise mercy is indivisible. Say there is a man with a wounded donkey; it's usually a poor man who can hardly provide for himself. Well, having treated the donkey, I would also help the man. If my calling was to help the man, I would still want the donkey treated. It is indivisible."

Toward the end of the day, Amina invited us to visit SPARE's sanctuary where 18 rescued donkeys were residing. On a bridge in the village where we stopped to buy hay from some farm women, a frantic mother dog was trying to grasp and carry a wet and dirty pup. The pup was large for the mother's mouth, and every time she had hold of her and started to move away, people (thinking she was harming the pup) would shout and frighten the mother into dropping her. Amina rescued the puppy.

It later became clear that the mother dog had been attempting to retrieve her pups from the canal where some children had thrown them. One only had to look at the steep, almost perpendicular sides of the canal to know how difficult this must have been for her. At the sanctuary, Amina gave the pup warm milk and cleaned her up. Then, after we had seen the donkeys, Ismael drove us back into the city. Amina later wrote to say the mother was okay and the pup had survived and was living with other pups at the shelter.

"I called her Mazlouma, which means in Arabic 'victim of injustice,'" Amina says. "But in fact, knowing what had happened to her, all of us at the shelter spoiled her, and now she is not a victim anymore. She is the alpha puppy of all the puppies, and they and we are her victims. The staff teasingly says we should shorten her name to 'Injustice.'" 🐾

For more information on SPARE, please see [www.sparelives.org](http://www.sparelives.org).



## MEXICO TRIES TO CRUSH “DOLPHIN SAFE” TUNA LABEL VIA WTO

By Mark J. Palmer

The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), Earth Island Institute (EII) and a coalition of supportive groups have been crying foul since the government of Mexico demanded late in October that the World Trade Organization (WTO) overturn U.S. law and federal legal decisions that protect dolphins.

In the tropical Pacific Ocean off Latin America, dolphins swim with schools of yellowfin tuna. Though the reason for the close association is still unexplained, fishermen learned early on that wherever the dolphins swim, the commercially-hunted tuna follow beneath.

AWI and EII have successfully fought for years to reduce the drowning of dolphins in tuna nets, which have caused the deaths of more than seven million dolphins since the introduction of purse seine tuna fishing in the late 1950s. One hundred thousand dolphins were being killed annually in the fishery before our boycott and lawsuits led

to the adoption of the “Dolphin Safe” tuna label in 1990. Congress then established standards for use of the label that require no dolphins be chased or netted.

But Mexico’s tuna fleet, rejecting these restraints, kills more dolphins than any other tuna fleet in the world. Despite Mexico’s efforts to weaken U.S. standards, with support from both the Clinton and Bush administrations, AWI, EII and our coalition have blocked these efforts in Congress and federal courts.

Since Mexico’s latest challenge to the label in the fall, it has up to a year to request a full trade dispute panel from the WTO. Unfortunately, these panels are made up of people who have no knowledge of dolphins or environmental laws—they are essentially trade bureaucrats. Yet the panel could rule that the U.S. law is a barrier to free trade and must be repealed. This is often the case with the WTO, which has time after time

ruled against the environment in the name of so-called free trade. If the U.S. refuses to adhere to its policies, the WTO can impose expensive trade sanctions against the nation.

Mexico claims the “Dolphin Safe” label is a trade barrier, when in fact, Mexico can legally export dolphin-deadly tuna to the United States. Major U.S. tuna companies and consumers, however, refuse to buy tuna that is not truly dolphin safe; Mexico therefore wants to change U.S. standards to allow their tuna—stained by the blood of thousands of dolphins—to be falsely labeled “Dolphin Safe.”

AWI and EII are seeking to intervene in the WTO dispute on behalf of dolphins. Our groups have already submitted research to government lawyers with the U.S. Trade Representative’s office, proving that Mexican tuna fishing methods kill dolphins.

For now, American consumers can buy “Dolphin Safe” tuna knowing that dolphins are not chased or netted during fishing operations. But the WTO challenge by Mexico still looms as the most serious threat thus far to the otherwise successful “Dolphin Safe” label. 🐾

For further information, visit [www.DolphinSafe.org](http://www.DolphinSafe.org).

Mark J. Palmer is associate director of Earth Island Institute’s International Marine Mammal Project.



Todd Puseer/Minden Pictures

*Manatees may fall victim to boats, not because they can’t flee fast enough, but because they can’t hear them coming.*

### Manatee Deaths Rise in 2008

OUT OF 337 MANATEE CARCASSES recovered in Florida last year, 101 were very young calves, compared to the 59 dead calves found in 2007. Though reasons for this increase are unknown, more manatees are also dying from boat collisions—90 perished as a result last year, compared to 73 the year before. Recent studies point to the manatees’ inability to hear boats, instead of their innate slowness, as previously thought. Scientists have discovered that manatees aren’t even slow to begin with. 🐾

### AUSTRALIA WELCOMES NEW DOLPHIN SPECIES

Up until recently, it was thought that only two species of bottlenose dolphins existed—the Indo-Pacific and the common bottlenose. But recent DNA tests performed by researchers at Australia’s Macquarie and Monash Universities have revealed a new species.

Resembling the common dolphin in appearance, but not genetic makeup, the newly discovered coastal dolphin is thought to have a very limited range, and therefore deserves special protection.

DNA tests also enabled the discovery of another mammal in Australia, the snubfin dolphin. In July, researchers at James Cook University announced the new species, initially thought to be members of the Irrawaddy species. These discoveries highlight how much more we have left to learn about marine biodiversity, particularly as so many species are threatened with extinction. 🐾

## Compromising the Commercial Whaling Moratorium

THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION (IWC) recently held two meetings of the “Small Working Group on the Future of the IWC,” which was formed at the last annual meeting in Santiago, Chile. Despite civil society being excluded from these important discussions, Susan Millward and D.J. Schubert ensured AWI’s attendance at the margins of both these meetings held in St. Petersburg, Fla., and Cambridge, UK. Our staff was there to glean firsthand information from attendees, provide our opinions on the process, and interact with government representatives seeking our expertise.

Sadly, the U.S. is front and center of these “future” negotiations, with the IWC Chair and head of the U.S. delegation, William Hogarth, Ph.D., leading the charge. With the pro-whalers pushing for a resumption of commercial coastal whaling, and the conservation-minded camp clamoring for a whale sanctuary, any consensus will inevitably include measures to placate both sides. The result will be more needless whale killing, despite Hogarth’s ridiculous protestations that the package is a move to reduce the number of whales being killed.

Such a compromise would result in more whale deaths, because 1) it would not address the ongoing abuse of loopholes in the Whaling Convention that allow whales to be killed by countries with objections to the whaling ban and for scientific research; 2) enforcement mechanisms to effectively police any agreement are virtually impossible; 3) it would not be possible to prevent additional countries from whaling, since whaling quotas are based on populations of animals; and 4) it would not protect the most vulnerable populations of whales who live in coastal waters, some of whom are critically endangered.

IWC member nations and organizations that follow the whaling issue closely must not be duped by the rhetoric. AWI and colleagues with many decades of IWC experience are consistently countering these attempts to compromise the moratorium and are actively opposing the U.S. delegation’s role in these discussions, while strongly urging the new administration to change direction. 🐾



NOAA

*The World Trade Organization and Mexico’s virulent tuna fleet are threatening a deadly blow for the Dolphin Safe tuna label and current U.S. laws.*

# the COY coyote

Learning to Coexist with an Adaptable Carnivore

by Camilla Fox

COYOTES AND HUMANS have shared the same environment since long before European settlers arrived in North America. To many Native American cultures, coyotes were powerful mythological figures endowed with the power of creation and venerated for their intelligence and mischievous nature. The Aztec name for the coyote was “*coyotl*,” which loosely translates to “trickster,” while Navajo sheep and goat herders referred to the coyote as “God’s dog.”

European settlers, however, viewed coyotes as a threat to livestock and a competitor for game species—an attitude that unfortunately still persists in many areas of North America. As a result, the coyote remains the most persecuted native carnivore in the United States.

Despite over a century and a half of extermination efforts, coyotes have expanded their range threefold since the 1850s, largely in response to human alterations of the environment and the eradication of wolves, which left a vacant niche. At least 19 subspecies of coyote

now roam throughout North and Central America, from California to Newfoundland, and Alaska to Panama, occupying a broad range of habitats: grasslands and deserts, eastern woodlands and boreal forests, and agricultural lands and urban parks.

Even in fragmented and urbanized landscapes, coyotes can play an integral role in their environment by helping to maintain healthy ecosystems and species diversity. One way they do this is by helping to regulate mesocarnivore populations, which consist of mid-sized predators like foxes, raccoons, opossums and skunks. In an important study conducted in Southern California, it was shown that the decline and disappearance of the coyote, in conjunction with the effects of habitat fragmentation, affect the distribution and abundance of smaller carnivores and the persistence of their avian prey. The increase in mesocarnivores in turn negatively impacted ground-nesting bird populations. Similar findings

involving coyotes have been made elsewhere in North America, revealing both direct and indirect effects on waterfowl, songbirds and rodents. So, in addition to providing free rodent control services, coyotes help maintain avian diversity by keeping bird-eating predators in check.

As opportunistic omnivores, coyotes feed on a wide variety of mammals, insects, vegetables and fruit, though rodents are often their main food source. Indeed, the success of coyotes is a testament to their ability to survive and even thrive on whatever food is available. This remarkable adaptability has allowed them to adjust to and tolerate humanized landscapes, bringing them into greater contact with people in the expanding cities and suburbs of North America. For example, in recent years, several coyotes made their way into New York City’s Central Park—likely crossing highways, bridges and other densely populated residential neighborhoods on their journey. A nine-year urban coyote ecology study in Chicago, Ill.,

has shown that not only do coyotes exist in almost all green spaces and patches within the city limits, but they often live in large family groups—sometimes in close proximity to people using fire roads, aqueducts, flood control channels, freeways, erosion gutters, city streets and sidewalks—but travel and forage at night to avoid human activity. Stanley Gehrt, lead researcher of the Chicago coyote study commented, “...it was obvious almost immediately after starting the fieldwork that we had underestimated the ability of coyotes to exploit an urban environment, and they have shared a story with us that continues to amaze us.”

The urban/wildland fringe offers an abundance of food, water and habitat to coyotes and other urban wild animals who thrive in fragmented, humanized landscapes. For a coyote, such landscapes are the perfect haven, particularly if interspersed with protected green spaces. While coyotes have little trouble living in human-dominated areas, some people show little patience for coyotes in their neighborhoods. Many people who move to the outskirts of urban areas forget that with wild lands comes wildlife. Most people are unaware that there are coyotes in their midst, as coyotes tend to keep a low profile and avoid humans. The vast majority of human-coyote encounters are therefore mere sightings. When conflicts do

occur between people and coyotes, intentional or unintentional feeding of coyotes (and other wildlife) is most often at the root. Coyotes may prey on unsupervised cats and small dogs, since these animals are similar in size to their natural prey. Solutions to these conflicts can frequently be found in simple alterations of human behavior; for example:

- Keep cats indoors and livestock protected in predator-proof enclosures, especially at night
- Walk your dog on a leash, particularly during coyote pupping and denning season (spring) when adult coyotes may be more territorial and protective of their young
- Don’t leave pet food outside
- Secure garbage cans and compost piles
- Put garbage out the morning of scheduled pick-up instead of the night before
- Pick up fallen fruit (coyotes eat fruit!)
- Ensure that bird feeders don’t overflow (coyotes are attracted to both the birdseed and the rodents who are attracted to the birdseed)
- Landscape to reduce hiding and denning areas around homes
- Keep a clean yard and neighborhood

Coyotes are smart and they can easily become habituated to human environments. Therefore, in addition to removing the things that will attract coyotes, we must try to outwit this intelligent and adaptable animal. For example, motion-activated sprinkler systems can help keep coyotes (and other unwanted wildlife) out of gardens. Installing coyote-rollers ([www.coyoteroller.com](http://www.coyoteroller.com)) along perimeter fencing can also be very effective at keeping coyotes out of places where they are not welcome. It is crucial that every person take responsibility to keep our wild neighbors wild. Remember: A fed coyote is a dead coyote!

Time and again, coyotes have proven themselves remarkably resilient animals; it’s little wonder that the Navajo called this cunning and resourceful species “God’s dog.” If we’re smart, we’ll recognize that coyotes have much to offer us, not only by keeping ecosystems healthy and diverse, but also by providing inspiring examples of ingenuity and adaptability in an ever-changing world. 🐾

For more information about coyotes and how to coexist with them, visit Project Coyote ([www.ProjectCoyote.org](http://www.ProjectCoyote.org)), a new national project founded by AWI wildlife consultant Camilla Fox.



Left: Coyote (*Canis latrans*) illegally fed by a tourist in spite of warning signs; Right: Coyote looking for handouts from tourists. Both photos taken at Mather Point parking lot on South Rim, Grand Canyon National Park, Ariz. Photos by Yva Momatiuk & John Eastcott/Minden Pictures.

## GLARING DEFICIENCIES IN GAO REPORT ON WILD HORSE AND BURRO PROGRAM

With the fate of thousands of America's wild horses and burros at risk, there was palpable optimism when the Government Accountability Office (GAO) announced that it would be issuing a report on the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Wild Horse and Burro Program to debut in October of last year. With the program's ongoing managerial and budgetary problems, as well as recent announcements that the BLM might begin mass euthanasia of healthy wild horses, many hoped the investigation would be comprehensive, critical and catalyze a programmatic overhaul.

The report, entitled "Bureau of Land Management: Effective Long-Term Options Needed to Manage Unadoptable

Wild Horses," was ostensibly issued in response to a request by Rep. Nick Rahall, Jr., (D-W.V.), Chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources, who has been critical of the program. Yet regardless of taking more than a year to prepare, the report utterly failed to deliver the sort of bold analysis that the GAO is known for as a federal watchdog agency. Instead, it offered a stunning lack of investigative research, despite comprehensive GAO interviews.

Key issues to the wild horse and burro situation were left completely unaddressed, with the report instead focusing almost singly on what to do with the tens of thousands of "unadoptable" horses currently held in captivity at

taxpayers' expense. The report never so much as questioned the very policies that enabled the animals' removal from the range in the first place, the reduction of their historic range by more than 19 million acres, or the "unadoptable" label arbitrarily applied by the BLM to tens of thousands of horses. The GAO failed to assess whether animals might be reintroduced onto the range, and instead deferred ultimate responsibility to the

BLM's alleged ongoing internal review of the issue.

Even at the most fundamental level of analysis, the report is unquestioning of the BLM's claim that wild horse and burro populations increase annually by 20 percent, though this contentious figure forms the backbone of many BLM round-up policies. In fact, the removal of wild horses and burros from significant portions of their rangeland, along with the BLM's failure to conduct accurate population censuses, have contributed to the current "crisis" that has led some to call for the mass culling of wild horses as a means of population and budget management.

The one point in the report that AWI agrees with is the recommendation that the BLM should consult with stakeholders and Congress to discuss possible amendments to the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act to ensure it is in line with Congressional intent and public opinion. The legislation was fundamentally altered in 2004 by Sen. Conrad Burns (R-Mont.) to allow the sale of wild horses to slaughter, a highly unpopular move. While AWI continues to work on Capitol Hill to affect this change, we have joined members of Congress in calling on the BLM to refrain from taking any lethal measures. 🐾



Wild horses and burros were left out in the cold yet again by lackluster "protective" efforts under governmental agencies.

### BEQUESTS

If you would like to help assure AWI's future through a provision in your will, this general form of bequest is suggested:

*I give, devise and bequeath to the Animal Welfare Institute, located in Washington, D.C., the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ and/or (specifically described property).*

Donations to AWI, a not-for-profit corporation exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3), are tax-deductible. We welcome any inquiries you may have. In cases in which you have specific wishes about the disposition of your bequest, we suggest you discuss such provisions with your attorney.

## Dirt—The Erosion Of Civilizations

By David R. Montgomery,  
University of California Press, 2007  
ISBN-10: 0520258061  
296 pages; \$16.95



Painstakingly, Montgomery, a geomorphologist and professor of earth and space sciences at the University of Washington, leads us on a verbal journey spanning millennia and the globe to give us a convincing lesson on the importance of soil and soil-dwelling organisms to life as we know it. Compelling and admirably thorough, *Dirt* details the rise and collapse of cultures that, failing to appreciate the complexity and fragility of the soil, exploited it without giving back. *Dirt* tells us the world is running out of soil, and soon agriculture will not be able to support the population. Montgomery does not look to chemical fertilizers or genetically modified organisms to save us. Instead he makes the case for a new intergenerational stewardship based on appreciation for this life-supporting substance and the widespread adoption of more sustainable farming methods, requiring more people to practice intensive organic-type agriculture on smaller farms, using technology but not high capitalization. 🐾

## See it through my eyes

2008; Runtime: 7 minutes

*See it through my eyes* is a revealing documentary produced by three Girl Scouts on the horrific practice of "soring."

Soring achieves an exaggerated gait in Tennessee Walking horses and other gaited breeds through the application of chemical or mechanical irritants to the forelegs. The film describes how diesel fuel, kerosene, mustard oil and other corrosive and carcinogenic agents are painted onto the legs, which are then wrapped in plastic to allow the chemicals to "cook" into the flesh. Bleeding and ulceration of the skin is common and so excruciating that the horse hesitates to put his or her front feet down, quickly raising them back up when forced to move. Mechanical irritants include the insertion of nails and screws into the foot bed, and filing the hooves down to the nerves to induce pain upon contact.

## FREEDOM MOON

By Animals Asia Foundation  
2008  
124 pages; \$40



FOR 10 YEARS, the Animals Asia Foundation has made it its mission to rescue and rehabilitate majestic moon bears from cruel bear bile farms in China and Vietnam. In celebration of the many success stories and in memory of the losses, Animals Asia has released a picture book of the bears that have touched their lives and were given a chance at a life free of pain and torture.

The book is a beautiful documentation of the bears who were rescued following agreements with Chinese and Vietnamese farmers to retire the cruel practice and relinquish their licenses. Pre-rescue images of horrifically compromised bears in cages, hooked up to bile extracting catheters, are juxtaposed with post-rescue images of carefree bears socializing in the lush sanctuary.

This inspiring book proves that if there's a will, there's a way, and it's never too late for a new beginning. The rebounding spirit of the bears, many of whom wear evidence of years of agony, is truly breathtaking. 🐾



Viewers watch with horror and wonder how anyone could find this abuse or its resulting spectacle desirable. The filmmakers won a much deserved Gold Award from the Girl Scouts of America for their work.

Fortunately, the U.S.

Department of Agriculture has stepped up its enforcement of the Horse Protection Act. The nonprofit group Friends of Sound Horses (FOSH), of which AWI is a member, also offers hope. FOSH seeks to educate the public about training principles free of cruelty, endorses sound horse shows, and works to end soring altogether. To learn more, visit [www.fosh.info](http://www.fosh.info). The film can be viewed on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). 🐾

# Good and Bad News for Belugas

WHILE THE U.S. TOOK A LEAP toward beluga conservation in October by adding Cook Inlet belugas to the Endangered Species List, the animals remain grossly overhunted in Greenland. The country's Environmental Infrastructure Ministry declared the West Greenland subpopulation of beluga whales "critically endangered" on its list of at-risk plants and animals in July of last year.

Unfortunately, the listing was not enough to safeguard the belugas from overhunting. Although it is estimated that this population has already declined by 62 percent—most likely a result of overharvesting—Greenland's government still set the kill quota at 250 whales, nearly double the expert recommended cap of 130.

Even this generous quota was not adhered to: Hunters in Upernavik requested an additional 50 whales; despite their request being granted, they illegally killed another 29, bringing Greenland's total number of belugas killed that season to 329.

Beluga whales, which are found only in arctic and sub-arctic waters, mostly inhabit the coastal shallows of Greenland, Russia, Canada



Carrie Vonderhaar, Ocean Futures Society

*Belugas continue to be massacred in Greenland, while in Alaska, state government has renewed the fight to remove these struggling creatures from the list under the Endangered Species Act.*

and Alaska. As a predominantly coastal species, they are particularly vulnerable to pollution from human activities. In Alaska, the Cook Inlet beluga population has fluctuated from a high of 653 in 1994 to a low of 278 in 2005, and the species faces a variety of threats, including oil spills, disease, predation and habitat degradation as a result of oil and gas exploration.

On October 22, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) listed the Cook Inlet beluga whales as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), citing that the subpopulation was in danger of extinction and that current protections were insufficient. The listing means that federal agencies must first consult with NOAA before starting a project to determine whether the activities will negatively affect belugas.

The agency first proposed the listing in April 2007, with AWI as one of many groups and individuals that commented in support of the proposal. Those opposing the listing included Vice Presidential nominee and Alaskan Governor, Sarah Palin, who argued it might hamper oil drilling projects. 🐾



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