Ocean Warrior
Capt. Paul Watson
Un-washed Ashore

Essay by Susan Barzallo, Associate Editor, The Animals Voice Magazine

After the long Covid-confining winter, it felt wonderful to take advantage of springtime at our local state park. Masks still required, but with the wide-open shoreline we could keep our distance and still enjoy the beach. Several mornings a week, my son and I enjoyed long walks along the water amidst the beauty of Long Island Sound. It was peaceful and inspiring, full of wildlife, flowering dune plants, warm sun and ocean breezes along miles of undisturbed sandy beach.

But then Memorial Day came, and with it, humans from all corners of the state and beyond. The summer kick off was obviously a success as the state park was packed with beach enthusiasts, barbeques, campers, and more. I did not personally witness the crowds, but I know they were there because of everything left behind.

My son and I arrived for our usual walk and realized how the place had suddenly changed. Previously pristine beach was now freckled with cans and bottles, pieces of broken beach gear, bags and wrappers, and even dirty diapers! People had polluted the space and made it not only disgusting, but dangerous for wildlife. Dune plants had litter dangling from branches and all through the underbrush. The tide was grabbing garbage from the shore and hauling it out to sea. Birds and fish were no doubt about to be entangled and injured, even killed by human laziness and thoughtlessness.

How disappointing! How devastating! In one weekend a beautiful state park and refuge for wildlife had become a garbage pile. Sadly, it has remained that way throughout the entire summer despite dumpsters for trash located in every single parking area. The lack of respect for nature, animals, public property, and other people is astounding.

It should be so simple. Public spaces are shared by all—humans and animals alike—and should be respected as such for the benefit of all. What we haul in, we can surely haul out. Do no harm to the creatures that call a place home. I know we can do better. I know we can teach our children better.
Voice of the Voiceless

“...through me the dumb shall speak; till the deaf world’s ear be made to hear the cry of the wordless weak. And I am my brother’s keeper, and I will fight his fight, and speak the word for beast and bird, till the world shall set things right.”

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox
1850-1919

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“For decades I’ve been preoccupied with pain—not my pain, which never amounted to much until now, but rather with the unrelieved and untreated pain of the countless chickens, turkeys, and other animals living in what, in the twentieth century, became factory farms.”
In May this year I suffered a fall that required emergency spinal surgery followed by a lengthy stay in a rehabilitation facility, from June 4-23, in Nassawadox, Virginia, five miles up the road from Machipongo where we are headquartered with our chicken sanctuary. For decades I’ve been preoccupied with pain— not my pain, which never amounted to much until now, but rather with the unrelieved and untreated pain of the countless chickens, turkeys, and other animals living in what, in the twentieth century, became factory farms.

Factory farms are places in which large numbers of genetically and chemically manipulated animals are warehoused to grow into food for human consumption. In these places, animals are mired in the squalor that results when groups of creatures of any species are crowded together in accumulating waste. We now know that these animals are not only forcibly confined in environmental filth including toxic gases, but that they are caged in bodies wracked with painful deformities and diseases inflicted on them by human beings. They are locked into what the twentieth-century animal rights activist Henry Spira referred to as “the universe of pain and suffering” from which there is no escape but in death.

By “we,” I mean those of us in the animal advocacy movement who focus particularly on the plight of farmed animals and who track the evidence reported by agribusiness researchers specializing in farmed animal “diseases of production” and “welfare.” For example, in “Pain in Birds,” animal scientist Michael Gentle writes that the “widespread chronic orthopedic disease in domestic poultry,” added to the fact that there is a “wide variety of receptors in the joint capsule of the chicken,” including pain receptors, supports the behavioral evidence that the birds are in chronic pain.

In 1990, the American Association of Avian Pathologists identified three of the most common bone pathologies associated with the forced rapid growth of present-day poultry: Angular bone deformities, in which the bones become bowed in or out or twisted; tibial dyschondroplasia, in which the bones develop fractures and fissures; and spondylothesis, in which the vertebra become dislocated and/or cartilage proliferates in the lower backbone, pinching on the spinal cord and lower back nerves.

For all of these tortures, no pain relief is offered. Having been in a “pain management” program since May following my spinal surgery, I both can and cannot imagine the unrelieved suffering of these birds. I think about their suffering in its own right and also in terms of our society’s expectation of immediate pharmaceutical relief for everything from mild depression to minor stomach upset.

Before Factory Farms

In his book Animal Revolution, Richard Ryder (who coined the term “speciesism”) offers a glimpse of how animals were prepared for meals in the typical 18th-century English household during the Age of Enlightenment. Alexander Pope, the great English poet of the time, described “kitchens covered with blood and filled with the cries of creatures expiring in tortures.”

Many people believe that the pre-factory-farming era was idyllic, or nearly so, for chickens, turkeys, and other farmed animals. In reality, factory farming is an extension of age-old attitudes and practices toward animals raised for food.

For example, Keith Thomas, in Man and the Natural World, observes that poultry and game birds in previous centuries “were often fattened in darkness and confine-
ment, sometimes being blinded as well.”

Geese were thought to put on weight if the webs of their feet were nailed to the floor, and “it was the custom of some seventeenth-century housewives to cut the legs off living fowl in the belief that it made their flesh more tender.” The London poulterers, Thomas writes, “kept thousands of live birds in their cellars and attics” in conditions forecasting today’s factory farms.

In A Natural History of the Senses, Diane Ackerman describes culinary practices that arose in eighteenth-century England, when “bored city dwellers became fascinated by sadism,” including the idea that “torturing an animal made its meat healthier and better tasting.” One recipe starts out: “Take a red cock that is not too old and beat him to death.” Another instructs: make too much haste, when as you see her begin to roast; for by walking about and flying here and there, being cooped in by the fire that stops her way out the unwarried Goose is kept in; she will fall to drink the water to quench her thirst, and cool her heart and all her body, and the Apple sauce will make her dung and cleanse and empty her. And when she roasteth, and consumes inwardly, always wet her head and heart with a wet sponge; and when you see her giddy with running, and begin to stumble, her heart wants moisture, and she is roasted enough. Take her up and set her before your guests and she will cry as you cut off any part from her and will be almost eaten up before she be dead: it is mighty pleasant to behold!

Eighteenth-and nineteenth-century literature offers additional testimony regarding the treatment of chickens and other domestic fowl. In Tobias Smollett’s novel The Expedition of Humphry Clinker, published in 1771, the Welsh traveler Matthew Bramble complains during a visit to London that “the poultry is all rotten, in consequence of a fever, occasioned by the infamous practice of sewing up the gut, that they may be the sooner fattened in coops, in consequence of this cruel retention.”

In order to whiten their flesh, calves, sheep, birds, and sometimes lambs, were stuck in the neck so that

Factory farms are places in which large numbers of genetically and chemically manipulated animals are warehoused to grow into food for human consumption.

Take a goose, or a Duck, or some such lively creature pull off all her feathers, only the head and neck must be spared; then make a fire round about her, not too close to her, that the smoke do not choke her, and that the fire may not burn her too soon; not too far off, that she may not escape free: within the circle of the fire let there be set small cups and pots of water, wherein salt and honey are mingled; and let there be set also chargers full of sodden Apples, cut into small pieces in the dish. The Goose must be all larded, and basted over with butter: put then fire about her, but do not
the blood would drain out slowly for hours and days. The wound would be stopped up and the animal would be left to linger alive for another day or so. In *The Rural Life of England*, William Howitt describes the practice of hanging live turkeys in the kitchen upside down by their heels to bleed out “through a vein opened under the tongue,” to improve their color. This is also how calves became veal prior to the adoption of the veal crate in the twentieth century—they were suspended upside down from the kitchen ceiling.

**“Evolved” Animal Farming**

The effects of the “controlled evolution” of chickens and other birds bred for the meat industry are described in an article in International Hatchery Practice. Andrew A. Olkowski, DVM, and his colleagues state in “Trends in developmental anomalies in contemporary broiler chickens” that chickens with extra legs and wings, missing eyes and beak deformities “can be found in practically every broiler flock,” where “a variety of health problems involving muscular, digestive, cardiovascular, integumentary, skeletal, and immune systems” form a complex of debilitating diseases. Poultry personnel, they say, provide “solid evidence that anatomical anomalies have become deep-rooted in the phenotype of contemporary broiler chickens.”

An example is a breast muscle myopathy described in 2018 as a worldwide phenomenon. Called “wooden breast,” this condition manifests a manmade impairment in “broiler” chickens so severe that the birds’ breasts develop a hard wood-like texture involving necrosis, fibrosis, and macrophage infiltration relating to the cardiopulmonary system’s inability to supply capillary blood to the bird’s massively growing breast muscle, which as a result hardens and dies.

Ulcerative and necrotic diseases in agribusiness chickens are endemic. Femoral head necrosis occurs when the top of the leg bone disintegrates as a result of bacterial infection, oppressive body weight, and oxygen deficiency in the contaminated chicken houses that exacerbate the birds’ pre-existing pulmonary pathologies. Necrotic enteritis involving the bacterial agent *Clostridium perfringens* shows intestines swollen with gas, oozing putrid fluid, and full of ulcers. *Gangrenous dermatitis*, a skin disease, affects the legs, wings, breast, vent, abdomen and intestines of the birds as a result of toxins emitted by *Clostridium perfringens* in conjunction with exposure to immunosuppressive viruses in the chicken sheds.

**Pain Without Pity**

The idea of a past characterized by compassionate animal farming that could be revived and modernized in contrast to factory farming does not pass scrutiny. Industrialized animal production practices reflect the inveterate view that, as poultry researcher Joy Mench once told me in the comfort of her office, the basic premise of our relationship with “food” animals precludes ethics and empathy. It allows us to decide that morality does not apply to our use of these animals. Traditional animal husbandry practices support this nihilistic viewpoint.

A photograph of turkeys being “noodled” (force-fed) to increase the size and growth rates of their livers and bodies, appears in the March 1930 issue of the *National Geographic*, along with much else that helps to explain why a sixteenth-century observer wrote of animals raised for food: “They feed in pain, lie in pain, and sleep in pain.”

Farmed animals live and die in lonely, relentless agony that even pain-relieving medication could not overcome. We may think that roasting a live bird in front of a fire and devouring her while she is dying is too cruel and savage for today’s world, but nothing could be further from the truth.

Karen Davis, PhD, is the President and Founder of United Poultry Concerns, a nonprofit organization that promotes the compassionate and respectful treatment of domestic fowl including a sanctuary for chickens in Virginia. Inducted into the National Animal Rights Hall of Fame for Outstanding Contributions to Animal Liberation, Karen is the author of numerous books, essays, articles and campaigns. Her latest book is ‘For the Birds: From Exploitation to Liberation: Essays on Chickens, Turkeys, and Other Domesticated Fowl’ (Lantern Books, 2019).
Legal rights and moral rights

By Tom Regan
Philosophers distinguish between legal rights and moral rights. Legal rights are liberties or protections individuals have because some law says they do. For example, Americans eighteen years of age or older have a legal right to vote. For obvious reasons, legal rights do not come into being on their own; they have to be created through law, whether (here are two ways) by the whims of a despot or by the will of a democratically elected assembly. So one defining characteristic of legal rights is that they are made by human beings; as such, humans can unmake them too.

This leads to another defining characteristic: legal rights often vary from nation to nation, and within the same nation at different times. For example, the legal rights Americans have to religious freedom and to a trial by a jury of one’s peers are not universal among all nations. And the right to vote possessed by blacks and women in America today is the same right that was systematically denied to them throughout much of our nation’s history.

Two of the defining characteristics of moral rights (others will be discussed below) contradict what has just been said about legal rights. First, humans do not make moral rights, nor can we unmake them. Second, moral rights are not limited to the citizens of a particular nation, at a particular time. Moral rights (for example, our rights to life, liberty, and bodily integrity) are universal and timeless.

Belief in moral rights is pervasive throughout representative democracies today. The framers of America’s Declaration of Independence certainly believed in them; they maintained that the sole reason for having a government in the first place is to protect citizens in the possession of their rights, rights that, because they are independent of, and more basic than, legal rights, have the status of moral rights.

“What happens to them matters to them.”
As an advocate of moral rights, I take my stand with America’s founders. The young men who were sent to fight in Vietnam had moral rights, including the rights to life, liberty, and bodily integrity. So did the Vietnamese children who were killed and maimed in the conflict. And each had these rights whether the US government, or any government for that matter, recognized them.

But what does it mean to say, “They had rights”? Suppose we answer by saying, “Well, the rights they had were moral rights, which are universal and timeless.” This is true, no doubt, but it does not take us very far. What else can we say about moral rights to help us understand what they are and why they matter? There are six additional defining characteristics that help provide an answer.

1. RIGHTS AND DUTIES: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

The first thing to notice is the relationship between moral duties, on the one hand, and moral rights, on the other. Some of our duties are so important, they carry rights with them. The duties owed are one side of the coin; the rights possessed are the other side. Let me explain.

When we say something is a moral duty, we are saying that it is something we should do, something it would be wrong for us not to do. Of course, we might not do it. Limited creatures that we are, there are many things we should do that we fail to do. Still, everyone understands the idea of having a duty (to tell the truth, for example, or to keep one’s word). When we ask how to understand our most important duties, part of the answer is simple. Some of our duties are so important they give rise to rights.

2. MORAL STATUS: “NO TRESPASSING”

Another defining characteristic of moral rights concerns moral status. Possession of moral rights confers a distinctive moral status on those who have them. To possess these rights is to have a kind of protective moral shield, something we might picture as an invisible “No Trespassing” sign.

What does this invisible sign prohibit? Two things, in general. First, others are not morally
The duties owed us are one side of the coin; the rights possessed are the other side

free to harm us; to say this is to say that others are not free to take our life or injure our body as they please. Second, others are not morally free to interfere with our free choice; to say this is to say that others are not free to limit our free choice as they please. In both cases, the “No Trespassing” sign is meant to protect our most important goods (our life, our body, our liberty) by morally limiting the freedom of others.

Does this mean that it must always be wrong to take someone’s life, injure them, or restrict their liberty? No. When people exceed their rights by violating ours, we act within our rights if we respond in ways that can harm or limit the freedom of the violators. For example, suppose a mugger attacks you; then you certainly act within your rights if you use physical force sufficient to defend yourself, even if this harms your assailant.

Thankfully, in the world as we find it, such cases are the exception, not the rule. Most people most of the time act in ways that respect the rights of other human beings. But even if the world happened to be different in this respect, the central point would be the same: what we are morally free to do when someone violates our rights does not translate into a more general freedom to violate their rights.

3. MORAL WEIGHT: “TRUMP”

Every serious advocate of human rights not only believes that individual moral rights are important; more, we believe that our rights are the most important moral consideration we can think of. To use an analogy from the card game Bridge, individual rights are “trump.” Here is what this means.

Bridge is played by four people using an ordinary deck of playing cards, fifty-two cards in all, thirteen of each suit: clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades. There are thirteen plays (“tricks”) in each hand, with the most powerful card winning each trick. Ordinarily, the winning card is the highest card of the same suit. The ace of clubs beats every other club, the ace of diamonds beats every other diamond, and so on. However, through an elaborate ritual of bidding, players can decide that a given suit is the trump suit for a particular hand. Once this is decided, the cards in the trump suit acquire added power.

For example, suppose hearts are trump. And suppose the first three cards played are the queen of spades, the king of spades, and the ace of spades. You are the next player. You have no spades. However, you do have the two of hearts. Because hearts are trump in this hand, your lowly two of hearts beats the queen of spades, beats the king of spades, even beats the ace of spades. This is how powerful trump is in the game of Bridge.

The analogy between trump in Bridge and individual rights in morality should be reasonably clear. There are many different considerations that are relevant to moral decision-making. How will we be affected personally as a result of making one decision or another? What about our family, friends, neighbors, fellow Americans? It is not hard to write a long list.

When we say, “rights are trump,” what we mean is that our duty to respect the rights of individuals is the most important consideration in “the game of morality,” so to speak. We mean that desirable outcomes, for ourselves or for our friends, for example, never justify violating someone’s rights. We mean the good that others derive from violating someone’s rights never justifies violating them.
4. MORAL RIGHTS AND MORAL EQUALITY

The next characteristic of moral rights concerns their equality. Moral rights are the same for all who have them, which is why no human being can justifiably be denied rights for arbitrary, prejudicial, or morally irrelevant reasons. Race is such a reason; to determine which humans have rights on the basis of race encapsulates a particularly virulent strain of prejudice. What race we are tells us nothing about what rights we have.

The same is no less true of other differences between us. We trace our family lineage to different places, some to Ireland, some to Lithuania, others to Africa. Some people are Christians, some Jews, some Moslem. Others are agnostics or atheists. A few are very wealthy, many more, very poor. And so it goes. Our differences are many and real. There is no denying that.
Still, no one who believes in human rights thinks that these differences mark fundamental moral differences. If we mean anything by the idea of human rights, we mean that humans who have moral rights have them equally. And we have them equally regardless of our many differences, whether these concern our race, gender, intelligence, religious belief, comparative wealth, or date or place of birth, for example.

5. INVOKING RIGHTS: DEMANDS, NOT REQUESTS

A fifth characteristic of rights concerns their meaning when we invoke them. This is best understood by contrasting claims of rights with requests for charity or generosity. With regard to the latter: sometimes we ask for things we do not deserve. I want a fancy sports car. You have more than enough money to buy one for me. I confront you, saying, “Would you mind buying me a Ferrari?”

One thing about my bizarre request is abundantly clear. I am not in a position to demand that you buy me a Ferrari! Receiving a car from you—any car—is not something to which I am entitled, not something I am owed or due. Were you to present me with the car of my dreams, it would be just that: a present. Your gift would distinguish you as uncommonly generous, not uncommonly fair.

When we invoke our rights, by contrast, we are not asking for anyone’s generosity. We are not saying, “Please, would you give me something I do not deserve?” We are not asking for any favors. On the contrary, when we invoke our rights we are demanding fair treatment, demanding that we receive what is our due. Of course, there is no guarantee that we will receive it. Law-abiding citizens have the right to demand their physical safety when they take a walk through the park, but (tragically) this is a right muggers fail to honor. Nevertheless, everyone understands that we are not asking for something we do not deserve when we take our walk, with the expectation that no one will attack us.

6. RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND THE DUTY OF ASSISTANCE

It sometimes happens that those whose rights are violated do not understand the injustice that is done to them. What sometimes happens to children as well as to those who suffer from serious mental disabilities, whatever their age, are obvious examples of how this can happen. Because of their vulnerability, these humans are easy prey for those seeking some benefit, whether personal or public. When used as means to such ends, not only are the rights of these humans violated; in addition, those of us who understand the wrong that has been done have a duty to intervene on the victims’ behalf, to stand-up and speak-out in their defense. Moreover, the duty here is itself a demand of justice, not a plea for generosity. These victims are owed assistance from us; help is something they are due, not something it would be “awfully nice” of us to render. Arguably, the less able humans are to defend their rights, the greater is our duty to do this for them.

Everyone understands that there is a limit to what we can do in the name of defending the victims of injustice. We simply cannot do everything for every victim. For all of us, however, this limit is not zero. That we cannot do everything in defense of those who cannot defend themselves does not mean that we should content ourselves with doing nothing.

“When we invoke our rights, we are demanding that we receive what is our due.”
McDonald’s announced in June that it will be opening 50 new restaurants and hiring 20,000 new staff in a major expansion across the UK and Ireland. Media outlets reported the news in their business sections, focusing on the employment opportunities and how the company would introduce “more flexible” restaurant layouts to better serve customers whose habits and preferences have been changed by the pandemic.

But what does the growth of one of the UK’s (and the world’s) biggest vendors of beef burgers mean for animals and the environment, and how does it square with new recommendations to make the UK’s food system fit for the future?

McDonald’s already has around 1,300 restaurants in the UK, serving three million beef patties to 3.5 million customers daily, and meat made from around 30 million chickens a year—though this figure, from 2010, is now likely higher. Globally, there are 39,000 McDonald’s restaurants, 1000 of which opened in 2020. Around 50 million burgers are reportedly sold a day across all these locations. Beef typically generates 60 kilograms of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions per kilogram of meat produced—the most of any food product—and, along with lamb and mutton, requires 100 times more land to produce than plant-based foods.

Chicken is usually thought to be less emissions-
intensive, but the rocketing number of chickens being farmed has hugely increased their impact on the environment, with great swathes of South American rainforest cut down to produce soy for chicken feed.

“Meat production is a leading driver of climate change and biodiversity loss,” says Jennifer Molidor, senior food campaigner at the Center for Biological Diversity. “Expanding corporate reach, without making meaningful strides towards menu changes, is just a way for McDonald’s to pass the buck on climate change and cloak it in ‘job creation.’”

Making changes to its menu is exactly what activists have lately been demanding of McDonald’s. Animal Rebellion, an offshoot of Extinction Rebellion, has recently been engaging in a wave of actions against the fast-food chain to demand it transition to a just, sustainable plant-based menu by 2025. Activists have staged weekly ‘McSit-Ins’ at McDonald’s restaurants, blockaded its distribution centers, and, most recently, blockaded the factory that produces its three million daily burger patties for several days, preventing products from leaving the facility.

Activists say that McDonald’s is a prominent symbol of the system they really want to change—the entire animal agriculture industry.

Molidor thinks activists are warranted in targeting companies like McDonald’s with a big environmental footprint.

“People should stand up to companies that insist on destroying their communities and the planet,” she says. “Companies like McDonald’s have a responsibility to their customers, who are increasingly demanding plant-based options, and their shareholders, who should be concerned about the risks presented by the climate crisis.”

McDonald’s rolled out its ‘McPlant’ plant-based options in the UK this year, following belatedly in the footsteps of other fast food outlets such as Burger King and KFC. There is now a plant-based burger, wrap, and ‘dippers’ available on its menu. Different plant-based options are available in other countries; a McPlant burger, developed with Beyond Meat, is now available in the U.S. and Canada. Whether these plant-based items will prove popular remains to be seen; McDonald’s recently dropped the McVeggie burger from its menu in Australia less than two years after it was introduced due to lack of demand.

Empty Climate Pledges

Aside from adding a few meat-free options, McDonald’s has shown in other ways that it is not oblivious to its impact on the climate, environment, or the animals whose meat it serves to its customers. In 2018, it announced it was setting “Science Based Targets” to cut its GHG emissions from its restaurants and offices by 36 percent by 2030 from a 2015 base year, to reduce emissions intensity (per metric ton of food and packaging) across its supply chain by 31 percent by 2030 from 2015 levels. The company pre-
global definition of beef sustainability outlined by the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) Principles and Criteria…” McDonald’s helped to establish the GRSB in 2011 in order to define sustainability in the beef supply chain. The bulk of the GRSB’s members are from the meat industry, including industry associations and meat processors such as Cargill and JBS, but draws its environmental credibility from founding partner World Wildlife Fund (WWF)—which has been accused multiple times of helping destructive corporations to greenwash their activities.

How do the GRSB principles and criteria improve McDonald’s environmental and climate impact? It’s difficult to tell, as whether or not they have met the criteria “that need to be met in order to adhere to a principle” is determined by the members of the GRSB. What does it mean, for example, for soil health to be “maintained or improved through implementation of appropriate management practices”? What are appropriate management practices and who determines them? Holistic grazing is clearly a big part of the agenda, as the Savory Institute, which promotes this type of livestock management, is also a member.

The research on holistic grazing suggests its capacity to store carbon in the soil is modest and time-limited, and it can significantly increase the amount of land used to raise cattle, often to the detriment of wildlife. By contrast, there is clearer evidence that significantly cutting beef production is needed to reduce GHG emissions and free up land for nature restoration.

Molítor, who has written about the problems of viewing cattle as a climate solution, is unconvinced that McDonald’s can really succeed in becoming more sustainable while continuing with its current food offerings, particularly as it is expanding. “At the scale that McDonald’s produces burgers, even the best practices cause enormous harm to the environment,” she says.

In focusing on the sustainability of its beef, McDonald’s seems to have overlooked the sustainability of its chicken products. Poultry News reported in 2017 that McDonald’s chicken sales outstrip its beef sales in the UK. McDonald’s sources the chicken for its British restaurants from several countries, including the UK, the Netherlands, France, Thailand, and Brazil. The UK alone imports 3.1 million tons of soy per year, the majority from South America, with the Poultry Site estimating that 60 percent is fed to farmed chickens. Last year, a joint investigation by the Guardian, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, ITV, and Greenpeace Unearthed found that retailers, including McDonald’s, source chickens from UK producers fed on soy linked to thousands of forest fires and logging in the Brazilian Cerrado.

“If McDonald’s really cares about its environmental impact, it should be looking to end any reliance on South American soya,” says Rob Percival, head of food policy at the Soil Association. “Or better still, it should be looking to other fast food chains, according to a new report by World Animal Protection. Notably, it has not signed up for the Better Chicken Commitment. In August 2020 campaign group Animal Equality released an investigation into eight British chicken farms owned by major chicken producer Moy Park, one of McDonald’s suppliers, that showed chickens were suffering from injuries and sores from fast growth and unsanitary conditions, deprived of water, and dying by having their necks crushed by workers.

For cattle, the GRSB principles and criteria again set the welfare standards, which are vague and lacking any indication of how McDonald’s monitors or enforces them. The company states that its UK and Ireland restaurants source all their beef and pork from British
and Irish farms, but doesn’t explain how it could source such huge and increasing volumes of meat without relying on industrial cattle feedlots, of which there are now around a dozen in the UK, or intensive pig farms, of which there are now at least 259.

**Lack of Leadership**

McDonald’s UK expansion is happening right at a moment when it is most at odds with the future course Britain needs to set for itself. Right now, a spotlight is shining brightly on the climate leadership of the UK. In April, the government set in law the world’s most ambitious national climate target, vowing to cut emissions by 78 percent by 2035.

The UK is also the host of the UN Climate Conference, COP26, in November. The recently published government-commissioned National Food Strategy lays out what this all means when it comes to food policy, calling for a 30 percent reduction in meat by 2030, as well as big cuts to the amount of junk food consumed by British people for the sake of public health.

“All businesses—from retailers to restaurant chains—will have a role to play in helping us to achieve (and ultimately go beyond) these targets,” says Percival. “If McDonald’s is expanding, we can only hope they increase their provision of healthy plant-based options. At the moment there isn’t a single vegetable offered on the children’s menu.”

The government is certainly not giving businesses any nudges. In its 2021 progress report to parliament, the government’s advisory Committee on Climate Change (CCC) warned that the government has failed to implement policies to meet the CCC’s more modest recommendation of a 20 percent reduction in meat consumption by 2030.

Even so, Molidor, like Animal Rebellion, thinks that a huge company like McDonald’s could make a difference if it would take the initiative. “McDonald’s should step up to be a leader in this industry by making real commitments to better menus,” she says. “It could make creative and effective marketing efforts to support such changes. Less beef, more plants, smaller meat portions, and alternative milks for milkshakes are some easy steps that provide menu choices and lighten the company’s impact. Without making a bold effort long-term, this company’s wimpy climate efforts compared to competitors may leave customers deciding its menus belong back in the stone age.”

This article was originally published by Sentient Media and can be found here: Sentient Media.org/will-mcdonalds-ever-stop-expanding.

Claire Hamlett writes on animals, environment, and climate. She lives in Oxford, UK, where she moonlights delivering organic veg boxes on a cargo bike.
What makes a person get up before dawn, travel to an unremarkable factory outside Scunthorpe in the north of England with other activists and storm a rooftop, ‘lock on’ outside the gates or affix oneself to the top of a bamboo tower or van as part of a three-day blockade? We spoke to three activists to find out.

On a dark Thursday morning earlier this month, a group of climate and animal justice activists launched a bold plan to take on the ‘great enemy.’ The tactics were simple—blockade the entrance to a factory that to many would seem like any other—yet their demands, if realized, would have world-changing implications: go plant-based by 2025, McDonald’s.

Camera in hand, we travelled over to the OSI Food Solutions factory on the outskirts of Scunthorpe in Lincolnshire, where an estimated three million burgers are produced every single day supplying every McDonald’s franchise restaurant in the UK. In fact, according to Animal Rebellion, the animal and climate justice group responsible for the blockade, OSI is the only supplier of patties made from cows’ flesh to McDonald’s making it the perfect target when looking to send a strong message about an industry that exploits animals and the environment.

**“SKITTLE”**

Tell us why we’re all here?

We’re here peacefully blockading the only McDonald’s burger distribution center in the UK to peacefully send a message that we want them to go plant-based
by 2025. They represent the cruelty and fragility of our food system. They’ve become this monolith of a corporation that is raping our planet and destroying so many animals. The conditions that these animals live in is just horrific. There’s absolutely no standard of care. They are a product from the moment they’re brought into this world as babies to the moment that they’re taken out.

We’re here for the environment as well. Just in the last few days, we’ve had news of the terrible flooding—many people died or have gone missing. Then you’ve got Greenland melting and the Amazon emitting more carbon than it’s sequestering. McDonald’s is just the perfect representation of all of that.

They already have the infrastructure, the money and the resources. All they have to do is switch the animal products to plant-based alternatives. That is all we are asking them to do. And yes, our approach is a peaceful one because we believe that we cannot fight hate with hate or violence with violence. We need to be better and rise above that.

Is peaceful, non-violence really the right approach?

The peacefulness has really helped us because the police just don’t know how to react to our non-violence. They’re so used to people confronting them and they just respond with the same force. But because we are just this very loving and supportive community, they don’t know how to respond. They know that if they are violent to us, the public will be on our side. And if they do nothing, then we can continue spreading our message. I’m here for the animals because they are my main motivation for everything that I do.

We understand that you were one of the activists on the van?

My buddy “Cauliflower” and I climbed on at 3am yesterday morning and stayed there until a couple of hours ago. So about 30 hours, and we slept there last night. It’s been an incredible experience. Honestly, I think the hardest part of the whole experience was the abuse from the locals because they see us coming with a message they don’t agree with and take it so personally. Consuming animals is so ingrained in our culture, within our families and in our everyday lives. I think people have this visceral reaction that they just want to hate us.

People came here to throw meat at us and people were getting quite violent. Ironically, the police actually had to be our protectors. There were these three men in a car, they drove past with a dismembered pig’s head stuck out the window. That was very distressing. I don’t mind the shouts, it’s more that you know the animal meant nothing to them. That was really intense.

When you see something like that and you’re confronted with that visceral, almost hatred, how do you get past that?

My initial reaction, obviously, is to be hurt, but then I just feel sad for them because it’s not really them as people. We can’t be angry, it’s the system that they’ve
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EXPLOITERS: FRIENDS of ANIMALS

They have no idea what researchers have in store for them.

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grown up in. They can’t actually see an alternative. So, when they are shouting “get a job” or “fuck off stinky hippies” I feel like, honestly, deep down that they envy that we have this peaceful and supportive community.

Maybe they want to be a part of that, but they don’t know how to break out of this paradigm that they are stuck in. I honestly just feel really sympathetic for those people, because I want everyone to be able to experience something like this. I want everyone to know what it’s like to live by your morals: it feels so good and freeing. I know that those people are going to go home and they’re going to eat pigs and cows and ruin their own bodies, ruin their families, and also those animals’ lives. It’s not a way to live for people. I’m here for those people as well; I want them to break out of the vortex of hatred.

To anyone sitting at home who knows that McDonald’s and animal farming is bad, but aren’t ready to come down here and help, what would you say to them?

I would say, firstly, it’s amazing that you’re vegan, and thank you so much. But second of all, I was like that too. When you first go vegan, you’re outside of the activist world. I would say just join your local Animal Save, Animal Rebellion or other grassroots group and if you ever feel like you are an outcast in your community for being vegan, you will meet so many friends and feel normal again. If you join an activist movement, you will feel empowered to make change; you really feel like you’re making a difference.

Even if McDonald’s never goes plant-based, you will know that you made a difference and you stood up for what you believe in. When you find yourself in this world, you won’t be able to go back.

What would you say to those animal rights activists who say we shouldn’t be asking for McDonald’s to go plant-based but rather an end to corporate exploitation?

I would say that it’s a means to an end. Most people don’t have an anti-corporate mindset and we need to be as inclusive as we possibly can. Even though what McDonald’s is doing is horrible, there are a lot of people out there with full-time jobs and kids who need that fast, cheap, accessible option. McDonald’s could be just that, as long as they’re selling healthy and peaceful food, because many people can’t just shop at Whole Foods or a farmers’
That’s how we’re going to bring veganism to the masses. As someone once said to me, when McDonald’s goes vegan, that’s when we know we’ve won. Would you agree with that?

Absolutely. If McDonald’s went totally vegan, everyone would follow suit. I’ve heard there was a vegan Burger King in Germany, which I think is great, but also I don’t know if that’s just greenwashing. That’s the tricky thing.

You’ve talked about receiving hate from the public, but have you had any positive interactions?

When we were on top of the van we had a lot of lovely conversations with people. One that really stood out in my mind was one with someone walking by who said he worked for two years at this burger distribution factory. He told us about the horrific working conditions. He asked for a normal working contract and they let him go because of that. He said that when he did eventually leave, his co-workers and his boss messaged him awful things, calling him a “freak” and a “fucking idiot” for having a different opinion to them.

He also told us some really harrowing sanitary facts about what goes on inside, such as that the meat they get delivered could be eight or nine months old and it’s frozen, not ‘fresh.’ They don’t care, and when they ask whether they should be doing health checks, they say that they’ve already been done. He said that the pig flesh that gets delivered sometimes has faeces on it and they just cut it off. That is the food that people are being sold and McDonald’s doesn’t give a shit.

It’s just really, really sad. Because he’s a migrant worker, he had no other choice. People will say that there’s always a choice, but I think that’s just a very privileged mindset when he has a family to care for. There are a lot of young workers in there straight out of school or college, he said. They’ll go there and then they get sucked into it and then it’s the only job that they can do. I am here primarily for the animals, but I want to say that I’m here for the workers, too, because McDonald’s also oppresses them. As much as the animals are just meat, to McDonald’s, the workers are just hands to pack burgers.

“CHARLIE” Animal exploitation is everywhere, so why McDonald’s?

McDonald’s activities are causing so much devastation. If we can convert the world to a plant-based food system, then we reduce the problem significantly. We’re here to highlight the facts that the world is waking up to, and to give climate scientists more confidence to tell people what’s going on. I’m obviously a lot older than the young people here, but they are giving up their freedoms to show that they really do care. I’m here to support them, anything that helps.

How have you found the reaction from the public and passersby?

It’s been a mixed bag and it seems to be 50/50. People are becoming more aware all the time and how much of a problem the climate is. You only have to read the newspapers to see that—49 degrees Celsius in some parts of the world is unprecedented. Just cars passing by, there have been some people swearing at us, but others giving food and support. Even that balance is reassuring.
The Extinction Rebellion environmental message has sometimes been at odds with Animal Rebellion’s full set of demands. What can you say about that?

I would say that we’re getting there with the environmental movement. They’ve become very aware of us within the core group and at the recent G7 rebellion in Cornwall, they were shocked by how many Animal Rebellion people were arrested and were affronted. They saw it clearly as an injustice really, and because of that, they began to understand the message and what we’re about.

In a sort of tacit admission, the latest redraft of the XR demands and principles now includes species which has never happened before. You can never satisfactorily say that’s because of us, but yes, it’s probably because there has been a push in that way.

Can you see McDonald’s going plant-based by 2025?

They’ve got a massive production system going, so it’s probably a big ask for us to imagine, but somewhere in McDonald’s there are directors with children, and they’ll be reading this stuff and now know that they’re killing their own kin.

“Rain”
Why do you think McDonald’s is a good target for this action?

McDonald’s is not only a massive corporation, but a massive symbol, too. It represents a system that is completely corrupt and needs to change. Even if we ignore the animal suffering and remove that from the equation, we need to go plant-based to have a sustainable future. That’s not just my opinion, that’s what scientists are saying. McDonald’s has the power and resources to do that and have a massive cultural impact. We’re starting here because they have the power to create massive change.

Isn’t calling for a plant-based menu just a recipe for green capitalism?

In an ideal world, McDonald’s wouldn’t exist. Even going plant-based, there will still be so many issues. We’ve talked about the worker exploitation side of things and there’s so much that needs to change, but this is a starting point. We just need action to happen and quickly. I’m not saying that McDonald’s going plant-based would be the end of it and everything would then be okay, but it’s the beginning of a transition.
How has the public reacted to your message?
It’s been a mix. I wouldn’t say that they’re all happy we’re here, but they’re not all angry either. We’ve had some really lovely people being supportive, bringing us water and asking what we need. And then yes, we’ve also had some less positive responses. But on the whole, I’ve been surprised. I don’t expect everyone to go out and become a vegan activist, but people have laughed and said to me that they now have things to think about. And that’s what we want—to plant those seeds of change.

There was like a group of guys who were really hostile yesterday and were just hanging out sort of frightening people.

Have you spoken to any of the workers?
We’ve actually spoken to a lot of people who used to work here, coming to show their support and tell us about how horrible the working conditions were when they were here. We haven’t spoken so much to the people that currently work here, because we wanted to make sure no one was trapped inside when we blockaded, hence the 3am start. There were a couple of workers who were here before we arrived, so we made sure they were able to get out, and a manager who spoke to us yesterday, but that’s the most interaction we’ve had. McDonald’s and OSI don’t seem to want to speak to us.

What would you say to anyone who doesn’t see the point in this blockade?
I’d say that individual change is great, but it’s not enough. What we need is wide-scale systemic change; the problem that faces us is just so much bigger than I think any of us can fathom. And to be able to even stand a chance to fight against it, whether you care about climate change or whether you care about the masses of animal exploitation and suffering, which are so interlinked. I don’t think you can address one without the other.

In order to make a change, what we need is system change. We can write petitions, we can talk to politicians, we can do whatever we want, but the truth is they’re not listening and they’re not acting fast enough. We need to take drastic action, and that’s why we’re here. That’s why we do what we do.

For more information, visit AnimalRebelion.org. This article was originally published by SURGE and can be found at SurgeActivism.org/articles/faces-of-the-rebellion-the-animal-activists-taking-the-fight-to-mcdonalds.

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THE SEED NEVER SEES THE FLOWER.

Tom Regan
A Whale of a Conversation

I spoke with an acquaintance who confessed that she had gone to Sea World in San Diego. She said she felt sad when she remembered some of the things I had told her about wild animals in captivity, but she wanted to know where else people would learn about killer whales if not from marine mammal parks?

I asked her what she had learned at Sea World about the whales. Did she, for example, know anything about their diet?

“Fish,” she said excitedly.

“You mean dead, frozen fish,” I pointed out to her. “Did you learn they sometimes eat dolphins and seals?”

“No,” she replied. She didn’t know that about them.

Did she learn anything about their behavior?

“They can do incredible tricks,” she added, less enthusiastically, but delighted to have learned something about the performing whales.

“So you learned that the whales can do in a pool what they do in the ocean, only in the pool they do it in exchange for eating, so as to not starve?”

She said I was making her feel bad.

I asked her if she had learned anything about the whales’ social behavior, their close family ties, their life-long bonds to one another?

No, she admitted, she hadn’t. She didn’t know the animals spent their entire lives with members of their own families.
I asked her if she had learned anything about their daily lives; that, for example, in the ocean, the whales swim between 70 and 100 miles in a day? No, she added, even more solemnly, she didn’t know that about them.

Did she know about their sonar capabilities, their hunting abilities, their interactions with one another or other pods of whales, their habitats in the oceans and where they are found most frequently, or for how long they live? No.

I asked her if she knew there are different types of killer whales, how the males differ in appearance from females, about their vocalizations and intelligence, or how they love to scratch their bellies on the small pebbles on the ocean’s floor in Puget Sound? No, she said, she didn’t know any of those things. And now she seemed ashamed and embarrassed by everything she didn’t know about killer whales.

“So what DID you learn about orcas?” I politely asked her, wondering what else she must have learned about them at Sea World. Her reply? “What’s an orca?”

Essay by Laura Moretti
Ocean Warrior
Captain Paul Watson

By Susan Barzallo
“I think our audience really should be children. Children will listen. When people ask me what should we teach our children, I tell them don’t teach them. Listen to them. They already know the answers.”
Captain Paul Watson aboard the ‘Steve Irwin’; Antarctica. Photo courtesy Jo-Anne McArthur and We Animals Media.
“If the ocean dies, we die with it.”
—Captain Paul Watson
Sea Shepherd, and saving the oceans

Captain Paul Watson is a Canadian/American marine conservation activist who was one of the founding members of Greenpeace and then founded the direct action group, The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. He’s one of the world’s most determined, outspoken, and forceful defenders of the ocean, and has authored many books on the subject, including, most recently, *Orcapedia: A Guide to the Victims of the International Orca Slave Trade*, *Death of a Whale: The Challenge of Anti-Whaling Activists and Indigenous Rights*, and *Urgent! Save Our Ocean to Survive Climate Change*.

From Watson, we learn that orcas, in particular, are so popular at sea aquariums because they are extremely big, very beautiful, and are “formidable.” They are a draw for sea aquariums and, under the guise of “education,” aquariums are reluctant to give up their big attraction. Yet, Watson says, “There is really no educational excuse for marine aquariums. Everything we need to know about them is available through documentation—everything from video games to documentaries, David Attenborough, and so on. There are so many ways of teaching people about nature instead of this artificial environment. Studying an orca in a marine aquarium doesn’t tell you anything about orcas at all.”

“With 3D projections, the technology is so advanced now that sea aquariums are archaic,” he adds. “Any pretense that they are educational is no longer valid. We have to face the truth. The only reason [orcas] are there is for amusement. It is a side show. A circus. It is the only reason they have ever been there. It is a slave trade in sentient, socially complex, intelligent living beings. They are being bought and sold for profit. That is what it is all about. As a consequence, 162 orcas have died in captivity and 56 remain enslaved. It really needs to be shut down.” Plus, he notes, not a single orca has ever attacked a human in the wild. They may be ‘killer whales,’ but it is humans who kill orcas, not the other way around.

Humans would not be able to handle the torturous life orcas are forced to live in aquariums. Lolita, for example,
at Florida’s Miami Seaquarium, lives in a pool only eighty feet long; this, for an animal
who was born to swim a hundred miles in a day. Most pools at aquariums are not
much bigger. Even worse than the size of the tank is the concrete construction which,
for an animal who uses echolocation to navigate, makes just staying alive a night-
mare, equivalent to a human living in a house of mirrors. The sounds of human voic-
es, clapping, and everything else, bounces off the concrete walls in a constant rever-
berating cacophony of noise. A special tank called the “Tilikum Tank” was constructed
to show humans what it is like to live in that environment. “People cannot take it for
more than ten minutes,” Watson says. The tank lives in France. Pamela Anderson,
Sea Shepherd Director, was the first to step in the tank in 2016. She lasted three
minutes (see PamelaAndersonFoundation.org/news/2016/5/15/the-tilikum-tank for
more information about the Tilikum Tank).

There is lobbying for not only the illegalization of capturing and holding marine
mammals, but releasing those already in captivity back into the wild. There are organ-
izations (for example, The Whale Sanctuary Project: WhaleSanctuaryProject.org)
working right now to free captive orcas. Some argue that release is impossible.
Watson suggests that, “There are ways of doing it. Sea pens, for example, can cli-
matize orcas, even ones born in captivity. They’re highly intelligent creatures. We
have shown this with Keiko. He was successfully rehabilitated back to sea.” He says
Keiko’s death was not due to his being released, but to illness from being confined in
the first place.

When he’s asked how we can be a voice for the animals in captivity when people
are so reluctant to listen, he replies, “Well, they will listen. But I think our audience
really should be children. Children will listen. When people ask me what should we
teach our children, I tell them don’t teach them. Listen to them. They already know the
answers. They have intuition. They have imagination. Cultivate and encourage their
intuition and imagination.”

There are so many threats to our oceans, including overfishing, plastic pollution,
dead zones, illegal fishing and whaling, discarded fishing nets, trawling, and the list
goes on and on. What is the biggest threat? “All of these are serious threats and
all of them must be addressed,” Watson says. “In addition, there is noise pollution,
chemical and radiation pollution, invasive salmon farms and fecal pollution. We need
to overcome all of these threats if humanity is to survive.”

Additionally, the ocean plays a major role in climate change. “If you want to ad-
dress climate change, the solution is simple,” he surmises. “Leave the ocean alone!
It will repair the damage that we have done to it.”

At the Cop 21 conference in Paris in 2015, Watson’s advice was to call for a 50-
year moratorium on all industrialized commercial fishing to allow the ocean to repair
itself. He still believes this is something that should happen.

“There is no sustainable fishing industry anywhere,” he explains. “The problem, of
course, is not people out of Africa or India going out in their little canoes and catching
the fish they need. But that is what the fishing industry wants you to think. Because
they always come back with this argument, ‘There’s a billion people who depend on
fish to survive.’ Yeah, we are not talking about them. We are talking about the factory

Photo: commercial sea bass production in the Mediterranean.
farm problem, we are talking about giant super trawlers, giant drag nets, industrialized corporate fishing. That is why I said at the 2015 conference, ‘shut it all down for 50 years at least and see how it works.’ That is the only thing that is going to protect [the ocean].”

There are companies claiming that they sell only fish that has been “sustainably caught.” Yet there actually is no definition for sustainable fishing. How are these companies getting away with claiming something they cannot explain, and therefore, misleading consumers? “There is no such thing as sustainable commercial fishing,” Watson says. “The word ‘sustainable’ has been abused for decades and now simply means business as usual under another name. Unless you live in an impoverished third world coastal village and fish from a canoe or a small boat, you should not eat fish.”

He reminds us that plastic is also a significant threat to the ocean. “Plastic is a major design flaw. It should not exist. Recycling is a short-term remedy. What is needed is biodegradable alternatives.” Only 9% of plastic even gets recycled. Watson says that Sea Shepherd removes tons of plastic from the ocean every year, as do other organizations. They also work with Parley for the Ocean, researching real and viable alternatives to plastic.

Watson contributed an article that we featured in The Animals Voice Magazine about the problems of plastic in 2006. In it, he wrote, “We live in a plastic convenience culture; virtually every human being on this planet uses plastic materials directly and indirectly every single day. Our babies begin life on Earth by using some 210 million pounds of plastic diaper liners each year; we give them plastic milk bottles, plastic toys, and buy their food in plastic jars, paying with a plastic credit card. Even avoiding those babies by using contraceptives results in mass disposal of billions of latex condoms, diaphragms, and hard plastic birth control pill containers each year. Every year we eat and drink from some 34 billion newly manufactured bottles and containers. We patronize fast food restaurants and buy products that consume another 14 billion pounds of plastic. In total, our societies produce an estimated 60 billion tons of plastic material every year.”

His perspective about how he remains positive when he has presented the facts, year after year, and people refuse to heed the warnings, remains on point. “I don’t get depressed, pessimistic or frustrated,” he says, “because I focus on the present. What we do in the present defines what the future will be. We do what we can within the boundaries of the laws and practicality. We are just a small part of a diverse and interdependent movement, but I firmly believe that the answer to an impossible problem is to harness passion to courage and imagination to find an impossible solution. You have no power of the future. You have total power over the present.”

In the past fifteen years, we have gone from 300 to 500 dead zones in our oceans—yet another major threat to ocean habitats and fueled, in part, by global animal agriculture. “The animal agriculture industry is the single largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions,” Watson argues, “the single largest contributor to groundwater pollution, the single largest contributor to dead zones in the sea, and the single largest threat to human health. I should add, however, that agriculture in general, including the mass production of crops, is a major contributor to dead zones due to the use of pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, germicides, and chemical fertilizers.”

In describing his formidable organization, Watson says, “Sea Shepherd is not an organization. It is a global movement and is registered in numerous countries as independent entities that work cooperatively under the umbrella of Sea Shepherd Global based in Amsterdam. Currently, we operate the following ships: (1) Sam Simon and (2) Bob Barker, both presently
patrolling the waters of West Africa. (3) The Sea Eagle and (4) The Conrad, both presently doing patrols in the Mediterranean Sea. (5) The Emmanuel Bronner, patrolling in the Baltic. (6) The Ocean Warrior, presently operating out of Peru and doing investigations into the operations of the Chinese fishing fleet in the Eastern Tropical Pacific. (7) The White Holly, working with Panama to protect Coiba Island National Park’s marine reserve and with Colombia to protect Malpelo Island National Park. (8) The John Paul DeJoria, patrolling in the Caribbean. (9) The Sharpie and (10) The Farley Mowat, both working with Operation Milagro to prevent the extinction of the Vaquita porpoise. (11) The Martin Sheen, doing research on whales in the Pacific waters of Mexico, and (12) The Jairo Mora Sandoval, working with the NGO Biosfera to patrol the waters of Cabo Verde. We also have turtle protection programs in Papua, New Guinea, and on Mayotte Island in the Indian Ocean. Remote beach cleanups at Cocos Island (Costa Rica), Cocos Keeling Island (Australia), and the remote beaches of Northern Australia. In addition, we organize dozens of beach clean-ups worldwide.

“We have intercepted and seized some 65 poaching ships in West African waters over the last two years and we have working enforcement partnerships with the nations of Tanzania, Namibia, Gabon, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Sao Tome, Cabo Verde, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia. Additionally, we have enforcement partnerships with Peru, Colombia, Panama, Mexico, and The Galapagos Islands (Ecuador).

“Our many years of campaigning to stop illegal whaling in the Southern Ocean resulted in
the Japanese ending their Southern Ocean whale campaigns. National campaigns are selected by the individual member nations. Global campaigns are selected by the Sea Shepherd Global Board of Directors. We intervene where we can make a difference and when invited in by national governments.

The Galapagos, considered one of the treasures of the earth, are a haven for diverse and endangered species, but is this very important ecosystem sufficiently protected? “There are absolutely no marine reserves or sanctuaries anywhere in the world that are sufficiently protected,” he says. “Marine sanctuaries are where the poachers go to easily find fish.” For example, 300,000 sharks a year are taken out of the Galapagos Marine Reserve every year. The sea animal most in danger is “the vaquita porpoise. They have only one habitat and there may be fewer than 10 vaquitas alive now.”

When asked what the single most important thing a person, on an individual level, can do to save the oceans, Watson simply says, “Reduce or eliminate single use plastic and don’t eat fish.” “Every single plant and animal on this planet has value,” he added. “We are not a keystone species.” Phytoplankton provide 70% of the oxygen in the atmosphere and there has been a 30% reduction since 1950. And without phytoplankton, everything else dies. Watson reminds us that humans have to remember we are not the most important species. Phytoplankton, worms, and bees are more important because they can live without us—but without them, humans die.

“I think we will only be able to see significant change when we abandon the anthropocentric perspective, this attitude that we are all important and dominant over all other living things. We need to embrace biocentric thought, to understand that we are a part of everything and, if we do not learn to live in harmony with all other species, we will not survive. If the ocean dies, we die with it.”

Read more about Captain Paul Watson and Sea Shepherd Conservation Society at SeaShepherd.org.

Captain Paul Watson’s books are available on Amazon.com and SeaShepherd.org.
Dr. Jr. Jane Goodall releases video endorsing move of Waystation chimps to sanctuaries

World-renowned ethologist and activist Dr. Jane Goodall, DBE, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and UN Messenger of Peace, released a video today announcing her unequivocal support of the Chimpanzees in Need campaign and its efforts to move the 26 chimpanzees remaining at the closed Wildlife Waystation to accredited sanctuaries.

“I do hope that you’ll do anything you can to help this campaign,” Goodall implored of the video’s viewers. “So far, (the chimpanzees’) life histories have been tragic. Once they are moved to their new homes, that will change,” she said of the chimps, most of whom were previously used in biomedical research and are now stranded at the closed refuge outside of L.A.

Goodall supports the efforts of the North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA), which is overseeing the Chimpanzees in Need grassroots fundraising effort that emerged as part of an urgent rescue required to save 42 chimpanzees left in limbo when the Wildlife Waystation closed unexpectedly in 2019. Twenty-six of the original 42 remain at the Waystation while enough money is raised to fund expansion projects and their long-term care at sanctuaries that have agreed to take them in, including the Center for Great Apes in Wauchula, FL, Chimpanzee Sanctuary Northwest, in Cle Elum, WA, and Chimp Haven in Keithville, LA.

“I’ve visited these sanctuaries,” Goodall said. “They’ll provide perfect environments where these chimpanzees, who’ve known so much suffering, can live out their lives in peace,” she said, adding that the sanctuaries will keep the established social groups intact.

NAPSA Program Director, Erika Fleury, said the campaign is grateful for Goodall’s support.

“Many people are working tirelessly to care for these chimpanzees and get them rehomed,” Fleury said. “We are very appreciative of Dr. Goodall’s support in this endeavor. She has a solid understanding of the situation and knows the special care chimpanzees require, which they will receive at the sanctuaries,” Fleury said, adding she also is grateful to Waystation staff members who continue to care for the chimps while funds are being raised.

The once-flourishing Wildlife Waystation
NIH:
Terrifying monkeys with rubber spiders and wasting your tax dollars

Visit PETA.org/Taxes and text* FRIGHT to 73822 to help end these pointless $36 million experiments.

*Terms for automated texts/calls from PETA: http://peta.vg/txt. Text STOP to end. HELP for more info. Msg/data rates may apply. U.S. only.

was the first of its kind, tending to thousands of animals over its 40-year history. But after years of repeated damage from wildfires and financial challenges, the refuge was forced to close, leaving behind over 480 wild animals, including bears, tigers, lions, monkeys, apes and more.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) stepped in to relocate the animals, and succeeded—except for placing the chimpanzees. These strong, social, and complex primates have unique needs that few places can accommodate. Only a few sanctuaries can provide quality care for chimpanzees, but they were at capacity and construction of additional living spaces is needed for them to accept more individuals into their care.

Most of the chimpanzees began their lives at a private medical research laboratory affiliated with New York University, which is where Goodall said she first encountered many of the chimpanzees.

“I met many of these in the LEMSIP lab and was saddened and angry to see the terrible conditions they suffered there,” Goodall said.

Now their fate is dependent upon the fundraising efforts of the Chimpanzees in Need campaign. The Waystation has an inadequate water source, is perpetually at risk for wildfires and has significant infrastructural repair needs. The chimpanzees cannot stay on site, and so the collaborative campaign is working to rescue and rehome these chimps as quickly as possible.

“I thank everyone working to save them,” Goodall said.

To learn more about the chimpanzee rescue effort and how to help, visit ChimpsInNeed.org.

Help is needed! Please visit 600MillionDogs.org for information.
Michelle Shwegmann and Josh Hooten founded The Herbivore Clothing Company (HerbivoreClothing.com) out of the spare room of their apartment in Portland, Oregon in 2002. It started out small, although Herbivore had an expanding original clothing line and growing stock of everything else as well. In 2007, they got together with the founders of Sweetpea Baking Company (SweetPeaBaking.com), Food Fight! Vegan Grocery (FoodFightGrocery.com), and Scapegoat Tattoo (ScapeGoatTattoo.com). Together they opened what they jokingly called the “vegan mini-mall.” They are still there and going strong in Portland where veganism is thriving.

Michelle says, “Part of why Portland is so vegan friendly is because we started Herbivore and others started Food Fight! Vegan grocery store. Portland is very into supporting small business and it has always been that way. They’ve always supported buying local. It’s very popular here. It is a city with cool little neighborhoods. Vegans support vegans so that has just grown and grown and grown. There was not even a vegan restaurant in 2000 and now there are about fifty and some that are vegetarian.”

Herbivore sells ethically made, cruelty free original designed clothing, as well as accessories, hats, wallets, bags, and more. They carry vegan items for the house, pantry, and beyond, including books, baby items, stickers, mugs, and just about anything else you need for green, ethical, and compassionate living.
A few years ago, Michelle and Josh published a cookbook called *Eat Like You Give a Damn* (HerbivoreClothing.com/eat-like-you-give-a-damn-cookbook.html) and last year started a YouTube Channel with cooking demos from their book and other vegan cookbooks they love. (YouTube.com/channel/UCqtdUnoswGUk6NgN9g). After watching Michelle’s engaging, down-to-earth videos, and trying out many of her recipes, I knew I wanted to talk with her.

We had a wonderful zoom chat where we talked veganism, cooking, compassion, raising a vegan child, activism, and more.

Michelle and Josh are vegan for the animals. Michelle says, “I am an animal rights activist. Behind every action we take, we want it to be, ‘How is this going to help animals?’ Because it’s animal rights, not just veganism.”

In the book, Michelle and Josh write, “One of the best parts of running this company is the freedom it gives us to take on new projects and follow our interests. Over the years, we’ve been involved with numerous related activities including organizing animal rights conferences, publishing books and a magazine, and hosting a wide variety of events at the store. The book you’re holding is the result of this freedom and our desire to find new ways to help animals. While it is great to be able to take on any kind of creative project we’re interested in, since our very first design we made it a priority to spread the word about animal rights. We use the respected voice of our business to speak up for animals, we donate design work and products to major and many small-scale animal rights and social justice groups, and we do direct fund-raising year after year. The number of groups, people, and campaigns we’ve supported is in the hundreds. Even more than that, we’re proud that as of this writing, we’ve helped raise over $125,000 for animal sanctuaries. Although it is very gratifying to make a living from our hard work, it’s equally important to give back to the movement that supports us.”

Michelle and Josh understand that animal rights, human rights, and environmental issues are all connected. Throughout the years, Herbivore has also given to LGBTQ organizations, Haiti earthquake relief, Trevor Project, BLM, and various environmental organizations. Michelle said that the pandemic has put a lot of groups’ fundraising on hold, but that currently they are involved in some fundraising efforts for Black Resilience Fund, a Portland non-profit.

One of their favorite things to do is visit sanctuaries.
I asked Michelle to give a shout out to her favorites. “We love Wildwood Farm Sanctuary and Preserve, Out to Pasture Animal Sanctuary, Green Acres, and so many more. We’ve done design and work and fundraising for so many sanctuaries over the years, from Farm Sanctuary to Woodstock to Brother Wolf. There are so many incredible people working tirelessly to make the world better for animals, and we are inspired by all of them!”

Michelle and Josh raised their daughter, Ruby, now in high school, vegan from the start. Michelle says when Ruby was younger, she was so surprised to learn people actually ate animals. As a parent, Michelle has been questioned from time to time about raising a vegan child, but luckily never had to defend it. In the cookbook, Michelle and Josh write that they have heard people express concern that they are raising a kid who is different from everyone else. Their answer: “If we lived in a place where everybody was racist or homophobic, we wouldn’t teach our daughter to be racist or homophobic just so she would fit in. Parents teach what they believe is right and wrong, so we are teaching our daughter how to stand up for her beliefs and to defend her innate compassion for animals.”

Michelle told me, “I’ve had to explain to people what it means, and most often folks say they think it’s great. It’s starting her off ‘on the right foot’ and that it’s admirable we are able to live according to our values. That makes me sad because it means lots of folks don’t feel able to make choices that are a bit different, whether it’s because they do not have support or because they are unsure what their beliefs are.”

“Ruby had a little bit of teasing in grade school, but mostly, folks were jealous of her lunches. Portland is very vegan friendly, but we’ve traveled to many places that are not, and we just do our own thing, come prepared and smile as we answer questions about what delicious food we’re eating. People are often surprised that we’re just nice, normal people eating plants, not animals. As if vegans are scary or something!”

Michelle knows she is sometimes the only vegan in the room, a vegan business owner as well, representing vegans. And she knows how she presents herself matters. She said, “I try to show people I’m the same as them; I just don’t eat animals. It is okay to be an emotional, caring, compassionate person.”

Michelle and Josh’s cookbook, Eat Like You Give a Damn, is full of vegan “go to” recipes. About the book, Michelle says, “[I wanted the book to be] easy things that everybody can eat, family friendly, no esoteric ingredients, and simple! Also good for you and delicious! All of those things!”

The book opens with an introduction called, “The Reason,” which explains, through the eyes of an undercover investigator, not only what happens on factory farms, but the difficult, painful work of documenting animal suffering. It is a very powerful way to introduce a vegan cookbook, hopefully motivating vegans and inspiring those trying to become vegan. I asked Michelle what gave them the idea to open the book in such a brilliant way.

“We believe that if people have experiences with animals who are raised for food, like at a sanctuary, it can create a connection to compassion that can help along the path to veganism. We wanted to keep our reason
for being vegan, which was first about animals, in an important place. We chose to tell this story, about what a human goes through as an undercover investigator, to illustrate the there is a much bigger reason to be vegan than recipes. Veganism is an ethical choice, and what better way to introduce the reader to veganism than the reason why we went vegan in the first place.”

The recipes in the book are family favorites for Michelle, Josh, and Ruby. She told me, “We make many of the recipes as staples; it’s something I am very proud of! In no particular order: Roasted Beet Burgers, Mama Herbi-vore’s Oatmeal, Tahini Sauce, Hummus, Herbi-vore’s Tofu Scramble, Simple Gravy, Creamy Tarragon Ranch Dressing, Popeye Pesto, Seitan Roast and Sausages, Better Than Bacon, Go-To Tofu, Only Kale Can Save Us Now Salad, Brussels Slaw, Polenta Fries, Creamy Polenta, Crushed and Crispy Potatoes, Chickpea Pancakes, The Wellington, and all of the bowl recipes!”

Michelle does most of the cooking at home. Her pantry staples are simple things. Some of the things she listed are, nutritional yeast, beans, chickpea flour, tahini, Vegenaise, oatmeal, polenta, tortillas, good olives, vegan butter (usually her own homemade from Miyoko’s Homemade Vegan Pantry book (Amazon.com/Home made-Vegan-Pantry-Making-Staples/dp/1607746778/). She says, about her cooking, “I was a decent omni cook first, and then I got lots of practice because I love food! I am friends with lots of amazing vegans who are authors, chefs and food lovers. Isa Moskowitz is the first vegan chef and writer who helped me feel like I was competent and had good ideas. I just watch people cook, ask lots of questions, read all the cookbooks (vegan and not) and spend a lot of time in the kitchen. I have learned so much from amazing non-vegan cooks, too, like Martha Rose Schulman, Mark Bittman, and Madhur Jaffrey, just to name a few.”

In writing her own cookbook, the hardest part was finding exact measurements for what she usually does by eye and taste; “a sprinkle of this and a dollop of that” had to become exact for others to follow the recipe. She told me, “I am terrible at writing things down. It was very difficult to train myself to be intentional and remember to do that. I would put a giant piece of paper on the fridge and have a sharpie and jot it down. Then we’d make it again. And then again. And then one more time. I have so much respect for recipe developers and writers and editors. A good cookbook is the result of many minds and hearts and requires expertise I had not experienced before. Now I can tell when a book was not made with as much care, which is a bummer to see.”

In the book, Michelle writes about her transition to veganism. It was a difficult one at first. I asked her what advice she has for those struggling to give up favorite foods, like cheese, but knowing it is the right thing to do. She said, “Because I was so afraid to give up cheese, I can really empathize with folks who are still in that place. I didn’t want to make my life more difficult. I didn’t want to be so ‘extreme’ and I just loved it so much that I did all kinds of mental gymnastics to justify eating cheese as long as I could. When I realized that I was putting a lot more work into the mental game of twister than it would take to just develop some new habits and give up eating a product I felt guilty for purchasing, suddenly the weight just left my mind. It was a liberation for me, in a sense, because finally I was being honest in my actions and my beliefs. That felt great! So, I would say to folks... if you think that the way the dairy industry treats animals is wrong, and you feel bad about it, you can end that by simply purchasing a different brand of dairy product that is not made from animals. BAM! You’re vegan!”

When asked what they would like The Animals Voice Magazine readers to know about Michelle, Josh, and Ruby, Eat Like You Give a Damn, and Herbivore, Michelle said, “We are here to help folks be the happiest vegans they can be! We want to support people in flying the vegan flag, as well as encourage people to expand their
veganism and compassion to issues that affect not only non-human animals, but human animals as well. Truly, oppression of one is oppression of all, and until we work together to uplift any being facing oppression and exploitation, we are all oppressed. We are vegan and we love you! Compassion is Invincible!”

For more information: HerbivoreClothing.com and Eat Like You Give a Damn: HerbivoreClothing.com/

“Because I was so afraid to give up cheese, I can really empathize with folks who are still in that place.”

eat-like-you-give-a-damn-cookbook.html

POLENTA FRIES
Eat Like You Give a Damn, page 110
Also see video: YouTube.com/watch?v=HgtEzI92ssY

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups water
- 1 ½ cups no-salt added vegetable broth
- 1 cup coarsely ground yellow cornmeal
- ½ cup nutritional yeast flakes
- ½ teaspoon salt

Put the water and broth in a large saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Slowly whisk in the cornmeal, stirring constantly. The polenta will thicken quickly and bubble (stand back to avoid splatters). Decrease the heat to low (keep stirring!) and stir in the nutritional yeast. Cover and cook, stirring frequently to prevent sticking, until the polenta is as thick as you like it, 10 to 15 minutes.

Mist a large rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray or line it with parchment paper.

Spread the polenta on the prepared baking sheet about ½ inch thick. Smooth the top. If the polenta has cooled enough, you can spread it with wet hands. Refrigerate for 1 to 12 hour or put in freezer for 15 minutes.

When you’re ready to bake the fries, preheat the oven to 450 degrees F. Cut the cold polenta into French-fry shapes or triangles or use a cookie cutter to make whatever shapes you like. Mist with cooking spray or brush lightly with olive oil and sprinkle with the salt. Bake for 25 minutes.

Makes 4 servings

Per serving: 138 calories, 5g protein, 1g fat (0g saturated), 27g carbohydrates, 310mg sodium, 10mg calcium, 6g fiber
“Oh, MY GAWD, Andrew, it LOOKS LIKE REAL FOOD!”

This is just one of many comments I regularly receive from customers at Shayna B’s By The Sea, a vegan and gluten-free restaurant in Westbrook, Connecticut. When I got into the restaurant business, my goal was to prepare cruelty-free, nutritionally dense meals for the population. Now, fourteen years into this business, I’ve come to realize it is so much more. Much of our day is spent preparing meals, desserts, and other tasty items for our customers, but we also spend just as much time educating people that vegan food is not just a salad in a bowl. We work tirelessly to enlighten as many people as possible to, just like Andrew, enjoy food that is cruelty-free and tastes amazing.

Explaining that our sugar is not bleached or processed by animal bones was an eye opener for one customer; she was left speechless. We convince customers on a daily basis that our chixen salad is made from jackfruit and is much better for you than its two-legged animal friend. According to One Green Planet, “It was calculated that the average person who eats vegan for just one month can save the lives of thirty animals” (Feb. 24, 2019).

Though we have vegans, vegetarians, and omnivores walking through our doors, my hope and mission is, by one meal at a time, we change the stigma of vegan food, continue our fight for animal rights, and use our platform to help and educate as many people as possible.

Christine Reed is owner/operator of Shayna B’s By The Sea in Westbrook, Connecticut. ShaynaBsBytheSea.com; Facebook.com/Shayna-Bs-By-The-Sea-295974250919293.

—Christine Reed
“The Most Important Comic Book on Earth: Stories to Save the World”

A new comic anthology by Rewriting Extinction features 300 leading environmentalists, artists, authors, actors, filmmakers, and musicians for 120 stories that bring attention to species extinction. One of these stories, “The Shepherd and The Thunder,” captures the drama of an 110-day chase of the poaching vessel Thunder on Operation Icefish in 2015.

Developed by Sea Shepherd Captain Peter Hammarstedt with writer Brian Azzarello, the comic book features art by Danijel Zezelj and lettering by Bernardo Brice. Sales of the book help support Rewriting Extinction’s projects to halt species extinction on land and at sea. Available November 2; pre-order from your local bookstore or from Amazon.com/Most-Important-Comic-Book-Earth/dp/0744042828.

Shark defense campaigns featured in Eli Roth’s new documentary “Fin”

A dramatic new documentary from director Eli Roth and executive producers Leonardo DiCaprio and Nina Dobrev exposes the criminal enterprise behind the mass extinction of sharks and contains exclusive footage from Sea Shepherd’s campaigns battling illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in West Africa. “Fin” premiered during July’s annual Shark Week programming on Discovery+ (U.S.). Learn more at FinTheMovie.com.

TWO WAYS TO TAKE ACTION NOW

In the United States: Write to your representative and ask them to support the Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act, H.R. 2811, to stop the trade of shark fins in the United States.

In Europe: Demand the end of the shark fin trade in the European Union by signing the European Citizens’ Initiative to ban the shark fin trade: bit.ly/StopFinningEU.

UK Government to introduce world-leading ban on shark fin trade

Many species of shark face significant population pressures. Out of over 500 species of shark, 143 are listed as ‘under threat’ under the International Union for Conservation of Nature—with different species ranging from ‘vulnerable’ to ‘critically endangered.’ The presence and variety of sharks in marine areas acts as a key indicator for ocean health while the animals also play a vital role in marine ecosystems by helping to maintain healthy levels of fish below them in the food chain.

Demand for shark fin products is a significant driver for these pressures, alongside over-fishing. Banning detached fins from being brought into the UK will help to protect wild populations of shark species, such as the endangered short fin mako shark and overfished blue shark, which have both declined rapidly as a result of unsustainable fishing practices.

The ban will maintain the UK’s position as a world leader in protecting animal welfare restricting the import of and export of detached shark fins as well as products which contain shark fins including soup and other products.

Learn more at Gov.UK: tinyurl.com/3vb3ahjz
Odd Burger completes construction of London, ON, location; two more to open soon

Odd Burger Corporation, one of the world’s first vegan fast-food chains and first to go public, announced today its newest location in London, Ontario, is largely complete and is scheduled to open mid-August. Odd Burger South London (645 Commissioners Road East) brings the chain’s total to four locations, with two additional restaurants set to open soon.

The company’s Vaughan, ON, location (9960 Dufferin Street) held its grand opening August 1, and treated the neighborhood to 99-cent non-dairy soft-serve ice cream all day and swag bags for the first 50 customers. Half of all profits from grand opening sales were donated to The Save Movement, a global grassroots organization founded in Toronto that works to save animals, save the climate, and save human health.

Odd Burger also announced progress at its Waterloo, ON (75 King Street South), and Hamilton, ON (920 Upper Wentworth Street), locations. Construction is well underway, and both are expected to meet projected opening dates of August and September, respectively.

All new stores incorporate the new Odd Burger brand and design in interior decor and signage. Odd Burger plans to open 20 locations by this time next year, including a flagship New York City restaurant in Manhattan.

Learn more at OddBurger.com.

The Case Against Zoos: a Review

In a recent *New York Times* opinion piece, “The Case Against Zoos” (June 11, 2021), environmental writer and author Emma Marris took on the zoo establishment in a big way. The article preceded her just released book, *Wild Souls*, which has a chapter focused on zoos.

One of many issues Marris investigated is the conservation claim made by zoos. She points out that Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) facilities spent nearly five billion dollars in 2018 alone on operations and construction—and barely one-twentieth of that amount on conservation projects. Although the AZA says its members are involved in more than 50 reintroduction programs
for threatened or endangered species, Marris found that the vast majority of animals in zoos “will spend their entire lives in captivity, either dying of old age after a lifetime of display or by being culled as ‘surplus.’” The exceptions to this are few.

Marris found no “unambiguous evidence” that zoo visitors care more or take action to support conservation after a zoo visit. She pointedly states that while 700 million people visit zoos and aquariums worldwide each year, biodiversity is still in decline. Marris cites research which shows that most people do not visit zoos to learn about animals; it’s mainly a day out with the family—and no justification for keeping wild animals on display, especially when many of them do not thrive in captivity.

Perhaps the most insightful part of Marris’ article is her suggestion that zoos stop breeding animals—the majority of whom do not represent threatened or endangered species. She asks, “What if zoos stopped breeding all their animals, with the possible exception of any endangered species with a real chance of being released back into the wild? What if they sent all the animals that need really large areas or lots of freedom and socialization to refuges? … Eventually, the only animals on display would be a few ancient holdovers from the old menageries, animals in active conservation breeding programs and perhaps a few rescues.”

The Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) has long opposed the breeding of captive wild animals for a life in captivity—whether on display in zoos, circuses, or other entertainment—where they are unable to fully be elephants or tigers or bears. As a true sanctuary, we do not breed our animals, sparing future generations a life that can never measure up to the one they are designed to have in nature—whether a lone tiger traversing territory measured in tens of square miles, or elephants who are part of a dynamic social network that encompasses hundreds of other individuals. That is the world we need to protect so wild animals can live their own lives, complete with the risks that come with it. The truth is that captivity comes with its own risks, including serious physical and psychological harm. As we’ve seen with captive elephants, the health problems that plague them in captivity are often long and drawn out and lead to their premature deaths.

In Marris’ book, she writes: “I don’t think breeding animals for a life in zoos can be defended in any ethical system. It violates the rights of many animals to express their capabilities and flourish. It lacks compassion. It is the wrong sort of ‘care.’ Even the utilitarian argument falls short, since so little ‘good’ is produced by the animals’ exhibition. My preference for a ‘fun day out’ does not justify generations of animal captivity.”

We couldn’t agree more. At PAWS we are striving to provide the best life possible for wild animals already in captivity who have no other option. We work to give them more choice in their lives and the ability to engage in more natural behaviors, in a peaceful, natural environment. That is the very least we can do for them.

*Learn more at PAWSweb.org.*
Mustang roundups fuel deepening debate as drought grips West

The sound of the helicopter propeller thundered across the horizon as it dipped down toward mustangs dotting the golden brown plain. The horses burst into a gallop at the machine’s approach, their high-pitched whinnies rising into the dry air.

That helicopter roundup in the mountains of western Utah removed hundreds of free-roaming wild horses, shortly before the Biden administration announced it would sharply increase the number of mustangs removed across the region. It’s an emergency step land managers say is essential to preserving the ecosystem and the horses as a megadrought worsened by climate change grips the region.

“What we’re seeing here in the West gives some insight into a new norm,” said Terry Messmer, a professor at Utah State University who studies wild horse management.

The removals are adding fuel to longstanding conflicts with activists for the animals whose beauty and power make them an enduring emblem of the American West. They say the U.S. government is using the drought as an excuse to take out horses in favor of cattle grazing.

Continue reading: tinyurl.com/cy99vht8.

“We are in this tragic position because of the BLM’s failure to implement solutions that have been available for over 20 years,” said Neda DeMayo, president of Return to Freedom Wild Horse Conservation. “For nearly 50 years, these horses have had to suffer this management program and the Americans who love them suffer with them.”

“This is even more tragic because other solutions exist now,” DeMayo continued. “The agency has resisted creating an infrastructure and a culture that could have made a sustainable and effective fertility control program possible. It has rounded up horses year after year while waiting for longer-acting vaccines instead of using the safe, proven, and humane fertility control that’s available right now. These sensitive habitats are vulnerable to drought and, knowing this, a national land management agency tasked with the preservation and protection of our wild horses should have been prepared long ago and in a much better position today.”

Tell Congress: BLM must immediately increase fertility control for wild horses. Sign the petition here: tinyurl.com/3ev78ut4.

National Animal Rights March in London

Save the date! Saturday, August 28. Meet at 12:30 at Smithfield Market. Organized by Animal Rebellion:

“Driven by the momentum of the Animal Rights Movement past and present, we will unite against the exploitative system and vision a brighter future for all beings and our planet. It’s time to act.”

To learn more: tinyurl.com/57yek2s2.
Why whales in Alaska have been so happy

The Covid pandemic brought tourism to a near-halt in Alaska last year. What will happen to the majestic humpback whale when cruise ships and visitors return in August? Christine Gabriele sat at her desk at the Glacier Bay National Park headquarters in Gustavus, Alaska, and turned up the volume on her computer. The sound of gurgling and bubbling water enveloped the room. The lull was occasionally punctuated by the hollow roar of a male harbour seal, seeking to impress potential mates.


Something is killing gray whales

For thousands of years, the gray whales of the eastern Pacific have undertaken one of the longest annual migrations of any mammal—starting in the cold waters of the Arctic, then down past the densely populated coasts and beaches of California before finally finding refuge in the warm, shallow estuaries of Mexico’s Baja California Peninsula. Only to turn around and head back north a few weeks later. Starting in December 2018, this magnificent migration took a fatal turn. The bodies of California gray whales began washing up along the protected inlets of Baja, where gray whales come every spring to nurse their young and mate. The first to die was a young male, beached along the shore of Isla Arena, in Guerrero Negro Lagoon. Two days later, the decomposing body of a young female was found sloshing in waves along a beach in Ojo de Liebre Lagoon, just a few miles south of the first.

Continue reading (L.A. Times): tinyurl.com/4v8wdtpe.

Is a catfish farm abusing its fish? An animal rights group says yes

Shortly before 7:45 a.m., the slaughterhouse workers trudged inside the nondescript building at the end of a dirt road and headed to what they called the "kill floor." There, when no one was looking, one of them would flip on a hidden camera and record the animals writhing on a conveyor belt. The worker was an undercover investigator for an animal rights group, Animal Equality, which had conducted hundreds of such investigations around the world. But this one was among the more unusual. It involved not pigs or cows or chickens, but fish.

Continue reading (NBC News): tinyurl.com/vmyps369d.

South Korea to grant legal status to animals to tackle abuse, abandonment

Jin-hui, a cream-colored Pomeranian, was buried alive and left for dead in 2018 in the South Korean port city of Busan. No charges were filed against its owner at the time, but animal abusers and those who abandon pets will soon face harsher punishment as South Korea plans to amend its civil code to grant animals legal status, Choung Jae-min, the justice ministry’s director-general of legal counsel, told Reuters in an interview. The amendment, which must still be approved by parliament, likely during its next regular session in September, would make South Korea one of a handful of countries to recognize animals as beings, with a right to protection, enhanced welfare and respect for life.

Continue reading (Reuters): tinyurl.com/2745a9th.

Animal rights groups sue over latest Iowa farm trespass law

A group of animal rights and public interest groups filed a lawsuit Tuesday challenging the latest Iowa law designed to criminalize investigations into animal treatment on livestock farms. The lawsuit, filed in federal court, alleges violations of First Amendment free speech rights. It asks the court to declare the law unconstitutional and issue an order preventing officials from enforcing it. It is the third attempt by Republican lawmakers to outlaw farm investigations.

Continue reading (AP News): tinyurl.com/y59z6fnx.

Animal rights group claims Central Park carriage horses are in bad shape

Despite repeated reports to the NYPD and NYC Department of Health, an emaciated carriage horse with visible open wounds continues to be working on Midtown streets. An NYC carriage driver was video-
taped working the injured, malnourished horse, and threatened the woman capturing the scene on video. The carriage license number is #1166. According to experts and veterinarians who have received the videos and photos, the horse needs to be immediately taken off the streets and examined.

In July, activists called for a state investigation into a mass horse-doping scandal, following the guilty plea of Michael Kegley Jr., a drug company’s sales director, for his role in a horse racing doping scheme in federal court.

Learn more at NYCLASS.org/news.

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