Welcome Back To SPEAK

From the Editor’s Desk

Welcome to our third issue – my, how time flies! Good news! We have expanded our distribution into Orange County. Now you can find Speak in Los Angeles County, San Diego County, AND the OC.

Last month was a rescue theme; this month is a wildlife theme. Every month you will see our regular features, such as Vet Talk, Product Review, Meet Our Readers, and Book Review. But also expect the unexpected – this month’s Activists Speak focuses on Marc Bekoff – field biologist, animal behaviorist, and prolific writer. The Book Review is on his most recent effort, The Animals’ Agenda, co-authored with Jessica Pierce. We talked to two wildlife groups – CLAW, which focuses on specific wildlife issues in the Los Angeles Basin, and Project Coyote. Project Coyote is based in Northern California. Its focus is national.

A new feature this issue, which will be a part of every issue going forward, is a Healthy Eating section. Each month we will have a delicious plant-based recipe, which I encourage you to try for yourself and give us feedback. These recipes are the result of an alliance forged with Jane Velez-Mitchell, of Jane Unchained.com.

In conclusion, I invite you to email me with article queries, suggestions for topics, and feedback of any kind. My email is mary.speakmagazine@gmail.com.

For the animals,
Mary Holmes, Editor

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A RESCUE PLEA: PICM/SPEAK is dedicated to and encourages rescuing companion animals of all types. There are thousands of animals in California and across our nation needing a forever home. If you are interested in rescuing a companion animal there are hundreds of rescue organizations in California. A good resource is petfinder.com, a database for companion animals of all types. A rescued animal can add a great deal to your family and provide you with undying gratitude.

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Mice and rats are complex beings who are very social and have the capacity to experience a wide range of emotions. They become attached to one another, enjoy playing, love their families and sleep curled up together. They groom themselves daily, have excellent memories, like being tickled and can recognize their names if given them, and make a chirping noise like laughter. Once a rat learns a navigation route, they never forget it. They deserve humane care, especially if you prefer them out of your own home.

HUMANE KEEP RODENTS OUT OF YOUR HOME

Glue traps and poisons are futile, dangerous to humans, and extremely cruel, as animals often spend days suffering before eventually dying in agony. Poisons are highly toxic to humans and pose risks to companion animals and non-target wildlife who come into contact with them or with the bodies of poisoned rodents. Glue traps also pose risks to all small animals as well as posing disease risks to humans (Health Canada and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention both caution against their use). Lethal methods never work to keep rodents away in the long run and will actually backfire. This is because when animals are killed or otherwise removed, the resultant spike in the food supply causes accelerated breeding among survivors and newcomers—and this means increased populations.

Rodents are attracted to areas with adequate food sources and shelter, both indoors and outdoors. Eliminate access to food by keeping counter surfaces, floors, and cabinets free of crumbs and storing dry food and food-storing can also help determine the places that rodents frequent. Repel rodents by using ammonia-soaked rags or cotton balls; animals won't like the smell and will leave. Once animals have been repelled, seal entry points temporarily using steel wool or insulation.

LIVE-TRAPPING MICE AND RATS

After rodent-proofing the building, any animals who remain can be humanely live-trapped during mild weather and released nearby.

Humane trapping is effective so long as traps are checked hourly. Mice and rats can die from stress-induced disorders, exposure, or dehydration in just a few short hours. Traps should be scrubbed with a mild bleach solution (to eliminate food smells), disabled, and securely stored when not in use—especially during cold weather and times when they cannot be checked hourly!

Peanut butter is an effective bait. The bait must be at the very back of the trap so that the rodent’s tail won’t get caught in the trap door, which can break it. Set the traps against walls in areas frequented by the rodents (i.e., places where you’ve seen droppings!). Again, the traps must be checked hourly and disabled when this isn’t possible!

Captured mice and rats can be kept calm by placing a towel over the trap. Release them within 100 yards of where they were trapped.

Releasing a mouse or rat into a strange area will almost surely result in the animal’s death because relocated animals don’t know where to find adequate food, water, or shelter and often become weak and succumb to predation or foreign parasites or disease against which they lack a natural immunity. Mice and rats deserve our compassion and respect, so it’s essential that we use humane methods in order to peaceably live together.

A. THE MOUSE HOTEL is a humane mouse trap that does not harm the mouse.

• 4 air ventilation holes in the roof to allow the mouse fresh air while it waits for you to release it back into the wild.
• This no kill mouse trap has a simple door that closes behind the mouse while he’s eating.
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• Available on Amazon for $12.99

B. HAVAHART HUMANE TRAP

• A humane set and release wire mesh humane trap with rolled edges to protect the animal. Appropriate for rats. Hand guard for carrying.
• havahart.com has a video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=DE7pN6n03lg
• Product Description 17” x 5” x 5.5”
• Available from Havahart.com for $39.99

C. HUMANE SMART MOUSETRAP

• The Smart Mouse Trap senses when the mouse enters to retrieve the bait and snaps the door shut. The mouse will stay in the trap until you come and release him in a safe place.
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As we reach out to save the lives of pets across the nation, we need more compassionate and capable people to lend their expertise.

We’re looking for people with expertise in diverse skills, interests and experience in select cities and here at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary.
This bill, authored and introduced by Assembly Member Patrick O'Donnell (D-Long Beach), according to a press release on O’Donnell’s website, “requires all dogs, cats, and rabbits offered for retail sale in California pet stores to be obtained by an animal shelter or non-profit rescue organization.”

GREAT NEWS! Social Compassion in Legislation has released an update. The bill was presented to the California Senate Standing Committee on Business, Professions, and Economic Development on July 17th, and passed out of committee with a 7-1 vote. Next step is a hearing before the full California Senate. If you would like to be instrumental in ending puppy mills, please call your State Senator to support this bill.

SPEAK contacted Assemblymember O’Donnell about this bill and what motivated him to get involved as an author. He said he has always had companion animals in his family, since boyhood, and that his family currently has two rescued dogs. He loves his dogs and adopted them as rescues by choice. He is opposed to puppy mills. To him, AB485 is good public policy. It reduces the number of animals in shelters, thus saving taxpayers money, and it saves animals’ lives. Regarding other animal-related legislation, he stated, “If they’re bills that need to be put forward to save animals lives you can consider me a supporter and possibly an author of that legislation.”

NEWS FROM PENNSYLVANIA & VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf signed Libre’s Law on June 28th. The Animal Abuse Statute Overhaul, according to Kristen Tullo, director of the Humane Society in Pennsylvania “updates and clarifies the existing animal abuse statute and increases penalties for abusing any animal.” Libre was a Boston terrier rescued from a breeder in Lancaster County in 2016 where he was on the verge of dying from starvation, skin infections, and other ailments. He has since fought his way back to health, on his way galvanizing the State of Pennsylvania into action. Libre is now a celebrity and the Pennsylvania animal abuse laws have been strengthened significantly.

The City Council in Vancouver, British Columbia just banned the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits in Vancouver pet stores. Instead, they can “present pets available for adoption through recognized animal rescue organizations. Vancouver is the third municipality in British Columbia to pass such an ordinance, and it was prompted by AB485, now making its way through the California legislature.

On the rodenticide ban, he makes a valid point, “... as we're trying to preserve our wildlife, being out there poisoning them is not a good idea.” And further, “It’s almost like we're setting a trap to kill the very wildlife we’re trying to preserve.” Koretz is at the forefront of City efforts to look at other municipality’s best practices concerning pest management, in hopes to bring a viable alternative to the City of Los Angeles. To date, through the combined efforts of Koretz and CLAW, they have succeeded in having second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides banned in all 16,000 acres of City parks. Now they are working on a first-generation ban. Koretz understands the importance of preserving biodiversity. He refers to the City of Los Angeles as a “biodiversity hotspot.” In essence, “There are a lot of species that aren’t present anywhere else in the world. If I don’t know they’re there, we can’t protect them.”

Pick an animal issue that affects the City of Los Angeles and Koretz is there, always on the right side of the issue. Why? He’s been an animal advocate his entire life. If only we had more politicians like him. “It’s not that often that an animal activist gets elected to public office, so I’m sort of like the kid in the candy store. I get to do as many good things as I can in as much time as I have. I’ve been doing that ever since I first got elected.

Look for more of the SPEAK interview with Paul Koretz in future issues of our magazine. — MARY HOLMES
THE DANGERS OF KEEPING Exotic “Pets”

There is a reason the most popular domestic animals in the United States today are dogs and cats. According to the most recent scientific estimates, humans started sharing their households with dogs somewhere between 13,000 and 30,000 years ago. Cats joined our households much later, somewhere around 7000 BCE when we started cultivating crops. Domestic dogs and cats live very harmoniously as members of human families, partly due to the longevity of their associations with the human species.

On the other hand, choosing to bring an exotic animal into the home generally ends in disaster. This association is not beneficial to the humans, or the exotics, for several reasons. Millions of exotic animals are part of the worldwide exotic “pet” trade each year. Many are transported out of their countries of origin illegally, and transported under inhumane, often dangerous conditions. As such, many do not survive the journey.

Compounding this are the legal issues. Throughout the United States is a virtual patchwork quilt of laws concerning the sale, transport, and owning of exotics. There are federal laws regulating the importation of exotics into the United States. Under the Endangered Species Act it’s illegal to possess, sell, or buy endangered species. There are also state and local laws regulating exotics; the variations in laws from locality to locality are overwhelming.

Exotics pose a public health risk. Many diseases carried by exotics are zoonotic, meaning they can be transmitted across species, or from non-human to human. Primates can transmit, among others, Hepatitis B virus, Simian B virus, Monkey Pox, and the Ebola virus. Approximately 90% of reptiles are carriers of Salmonella virus. These diseases can all be transmitted to these animals’ human caregivers or guardians.

Many well-meaning humans acquire exotics as infants, when the animals appear cute and cuddly. Most do not know how to care for exotics correctly. Proper care and the proper food can be costly. Most of these animals are confined in unnatural environments that are too small, does not provide for their need for exercise, or interaction with others of their species. This makes for unhappy animals, who often exhibit stereotypic behaviors (behavior that is repetitive or ritualistic, signifying an animal’s discomfort at the least to mental ill health at most). These animals often resort to aggressive behaviors, lashing out at their guardians or other visitors to the home.

We frequently see stories in the media about exotics that have gone “bad” and the resultant injuries and deaths. Why? Because we insist on taking these animals out of their natural habitats, and putting them in environments which are contrary to their very natures. This insistence inevitably leads to negative outcomes. Exotics deserve better.

Exotics frequently react negatively to these conditions, which can bring on a plethora of health problems which the owner is unwilling or unable to address properly. Most exotics being kept as “pets” live much shorter lifespans than their brothers and sisters in the wild, just as is the case with animals in zoos and in the public display industry. And, when a “manageable” exotic turns into an unmanageable exotic, either due to the maturation process or dissatisfaction with their current environment, exotic owners frequently sell their animals, give them to zoos, or, in many cases, have the animals euthanized. From start to finish, these animals are victims of the humans who trade in them and/or make them “pets.”

If you have been toying with the idea of making an exotic a member of your household, think again. The market for exotics exists because of civilians, individuals making poor choices in their acquisition of companion animals. Stick with dogs and cats as your choice for companion animals. And remember – adopt, don’t shop.
If you buy a parrot from either a pet shop or a breeder, it simply makes the problem worse. By adopting rather than buying a parrot, you help reduce the demand that drives the commercial breeding of pet birds. Also, if you purchase a parrot, you probably won’t have a great deal of support if you have questions about your bird’s behavior or care further down the line. By contrast, reputable parrot rescue groups do provide that support, offering advice and resources as you and your new bird adjust to life together.

**HOW MUCH DO PARROTS COST?**

Another good reason to adopt rather than buy a parrot is that you’ll most likely spend a lot less money. A parrot can cost hundreds or thousands of dollars, depending on the species. Adopting a parrot costs considerably less, and you will have the satisfaction of knowing you have saved a life.

**SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER**

These birds are intelligent, sensitive, curious animals, but living with them and caring for them properly can be much more challenging than people imagine. If you’re thinking about getting an exotic pet bird, consider the following:

- Birds, even the ones bred in captivity, are not domesticated animals. Domesticated animals, such as cats and dogs, have been bred for hundreds of years to live in the care of humans and are distinct from their wild ancestors. Birds commonly kept as pets are no different than their wild relatives; they are the native species of other countries.

- You may be surprised to learn that more than 350 species of parrots have been identified, and each species has distinct behaviors and particular needs in terms of care. So, before you adopt a parrot, you’ll need to educate yourself about the characteristics and needs of the species you choose.

- Parrots have been compared to human toddlers in terms of their emotional and social lives, which means they need a lot of daily interaction with people and/or other birds. If these needs aren’t met, they can easily develop behavior problems, such as feather plucking.

- All parrots have long life spans. Depending on the species, they may live 20 to 50 years, and some species live longer than that. Caring for a bird is often a lifelong responsibility.

- Parrots are noisy. Vocalizing via squawking and chirping is a parrot’s way of communicating. Also, you should know that not all parrots are talking birds. While all parrots are vocal, not all of them learn to talk or choose to talk.

**EDUCATION IS KEY**

If you’ve never had a parrot in your life before, get to know some real parrots and learn how to handle and relate to them. Educate yourself thoroughly about all the things you’ll need to know to keep your parrot happy and safe. The points mentioned above are only the tip of the iceberg. You should spend several weeks or months learning about parrots from books, magazines, and people. You’ll need to read about parrots in general and about the particular species of parrot you plan to adopt. (The Avian Welfare Coalition website is a good resource: www.avianwelfare.org).

If you have had a parrot before whom you no longer have, you may need to ask yourself some difficult questions: What is the reason you no longer have your parrot? Is your life stable and secure enough for you to make the required commitment? Are you knowledgeable enough to keep your parrot safe and well? Remember, a choice for a lifetime is not one to be made on an impulse.

If, having considered all of the above, you still want to adopt a parrot, you may find the most wonderful friend of your life – one who is intelligent, magical, whimsical, loving, entertaining, and endlessly fascinating. To view adoptable birds at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Kanab, Utah, visit www.bestfriends.org. Parrots First offers adoptions in Los Angeles. For more info, visit www.parrotsfirst.org.

There are several good reasons to adopt a bird rather than buy one. First, it’s the right thing to do because commercial breeding operations are flooding the market with exotic pet birds, many of whom end up in rescue groups when consumers realize the complexities of caring for these animals.
In this wildlife issue we are profiling the work of two organizations who deal with interspecies relationships between human and non-human animals. Both do amazing work in their respective areas of focus, and both are doing everything possible to ameliorate the challenges associated with coexistence in the 21st century. We had the opportunity to interview Camilla Fox, founder of Project Coyote, and Tony Tucci and Alison Simard, two of the co-founders of CLAW (Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife). They explain why they founded their organizations, and what each is doing today. Project Coyote, based in the Bay Area, deals with wildlife concerns throughout the United States. CLAW, as you might assume from its title, deals with issues specific to the Los Angeles urban environment. Biodiversity and the interdependence of all species are catchwords in today’s environment. These organizations are making a difference; the work they do daily affects every one of us.

**A WILDLIFE CORRIDOR**

A wildlife corridor is one of the only ways to maintain natural food chains. Without a wildlife corridor, animals can’t get to the food, shelter and mates they need to survive. One of CLAW’s biggest allies, in both the wildlife corridor efforts and the ban on rodenticides, is Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Koretz, who represents Los Angeles’ 5th District. He made the time to speak to us for this issue, and you can find his remarks in the Animal Rights section. He has been working hand in hand with CLAW since its inception, and devotes himself to a myriad of other animal issues as well.

The use of rodenticide, commonly known as rat poison, wreaks havoc with the wildlife in the Santa Monica Mountains and elsewhere. These poisons are designed to kill rats, mice, gophers, and squirrels. This is primary poisoning. Secondary poisoning occurs when predators consume the poisoned mice. CLAW has been in concert with several entities in the City of Los Angeles to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of rodenticides within the City. Here are some numbers that should convince you of the dangers of rodenticide to wildlife. Simard quotes a UCLA wildlife biologist studying cats and wild cats. The numbers are staggering. 95% of the cats in the Santa Monica Mountains have been poisoned and 85% of the coyotes. There has been a major upsurge in the number of bobcats and mountain lions suffering from notoedric mange (feline scabies). This is a treatable disease that up until this point has been seen in domestic cats, not felines in the wild. Left untreated it can lead to death.

Tucci has spent considerable time studying the integrated pest management program being utilized in the County of Ventura. It uses no rodenticides, costs less, and has produced positive outcomes. He hopes in time other cities and counties will adopt a similar program, and is working with the City of Los Angeles, and in specifically with the Rec and Parks Department to move them towards adopting something similar.

Like Project Coyote, CLAW has accomplished much in a short lifetime. If you want to know more about them, or make a donation, please visit them at clawnline.org.

— MARY HOLMES

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF WILDLIFE CORRIDORS?**

**A wildlife corridor** is a stretch of land (and/or water) across which animals travel to feed, seek refuge and migrate between seasons. A wildlife corridor allows an exchange of individuals between isolated populations, which helps prevent the negative effects of inbreeding and reduced genetic diversity. A wildlife corridor helps re-establish animal populations that have been reduced or eliminated due to random events such as fire, disease or overbuilding. A wildlife corridor moderates some of the worst effects of habitat fragmentation. A wildlife corridor is one of the only ways to maintain natural food chains.

PEAK recently had the opportunity to interview Alison (Ali) Simard and Tony Tucci, two of the three co-founders of CLAW. As animal organizations go, I’d have to call CLAW a hidden gem. I’ve lived in Southern California many years, and never heard of this fantastic group until Damon Nagami, of NRDC, suggested I talk to them. Like Project Coyote, CLAW is promoting biodiversity and coexistence, but it’s all being done right in our backyards. Its official birth was in 2013, but elements of the organization came together some five years earlier.

I’m sure most of you have heard of P-22, the famous cougar who makes his home in the Santa Monica Mountains. National Geographic photographer Steve Winter captured him in a majestic, mountain-like scene in 2013. It was really a good idea to start CLAW. It would be about open spaces and wildlife protection in the City of Los Angeles. An apex predator, in simple terms, is the one at the top of the food chain. Scientists clearly state that apex predators are the key to maintaining ecosystems; they maintain a proper balance between prey species and the rest of the system. In this case, the local ecosystem is wedged between the 405 and the 5 freeways, which makes it a bit of a challenge. CLAW’s goal, according to its website, is to “protect and restore environments of wildlife of Los Angeles and California by dwindling open spaces.” Their mission is “to promote, educate, and protect the fundamental importance of wildlife, wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors everywhere.” As Tucci stated, “I’m thinking about our logo, and how important it was to get the land in the logo. You’re not just protecting the mountain lion, you’re protecting the earth he traverses.” Right now, two of CLAW’s major efforts are protecting and enlarging Los Angeles area wildlife corridors, or as they prefer to call them, “wildlife habitat linkage zones,” and the banning of rodenticides in the city. A third effort, which is currently doing quite well is Let’s Buy a Mountain. Let’s Buy a Mountain is well on its way to fruition. According to the CLAW website, “The Laurel Canyon Association in coordination with CLAW has initiated an agreement to purchase 17 acres of nearly pristine hillside in historic Laurel Canyon. This land will be maintained as open space by the Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority in coordination with CLAW and the Laurel Canyon Land Trust. This purchase will cost $1.6 million, which is way below market price.” This land will thus be protected from development. What is the purpose of wildlife corridors? Wildlife corridors serve multiple purposes. CLAW describes a wildlife corridor as follows:

• A wildlife corridor, habitat corridor, or green corridor is an area of habitat connecting wildlife populations separated by human activities such as roads, fences or structures.

• A wildlife corridor is a stretch of land (and/or water) across which animals travel to feed, seek refuge and migrate between seasons.

• A wildlife corridor allows an exchange of individuals between isolated populations, which helps prevent the negative effects of inbreeding and reduced genetic diversity.

• A wildlife corridor helps re-establish animal populations that have been reduced or eliminated due to random events such as fire, disease or overbuilding.

• A wildlife corridor moderates some of the worst effects of habitat fragmentation.

• A wildlife corridor is one of the only ways to maintain natural food chains.

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SPEAK had the opportunity to speak to Camilla Fox, Founder and Executive Director of Project Coyote, at the Animal Legal Defense Fund Conference 2017. It was held in Los Angeles in May, the topic was Wildlife. Learning about Project Coyote’s work from Fox was fascinating. Fox holds a master’s in Wildlife Ecology, Policy and Conservation. Prior to founding Project Coyote, she already had amassed over 20 years of experience in the environmental and animal protection movements. After completing her master’s in 2008, she saw a need for, as she put it, “a voice for predators, coexistence, and compassionate conservation.” This was the birth of Project Coyote. Based in Mill Valley, CA, in the Bay Area, they work nationwide. The organization is mostly volunteer in nature, with a small core staff, and approximately 17 representatives scattered around the country. Like many organizations of this nature, they form alliances with like-minded groups to work on specific issues as the need arises.

Fox said that her thesis committee advisor became one of the founding advisors for Project Coyote. In her estimate, this was a key component of the organization. She feels, “…the development of a science advisory board with knowledge and expertise in predator conservation was a critical foundation so that we bring the best available science to our advocacy and political work for wildlife.”

At any one time, Project Coyote is working on numerous projects simultaneously. At the time we spoke in May, they were working on the production of two films – one about “killing contests” and the other about the Marin Livestock & Wildlife Protection Program. Coyotes, otherwise known as song dogs, get a proverbial bad rap. Farmers and ranchers see them as predators, and want them eliminated. Many of Project Coyotes efforts are focused on ways coyotes and humans can peacefully coexist. Convincing people of this can often be an uphill battle, thus the need for the films.

As Fox wrote in an article for Earth Island Institute: “At least 19 subspecies of coyotes roam North and Central America. As the top carnivore in some environments, coyotes may function as ‘keystone predators’; helping regulate the number and density of smaller mesocarnivores (skunks, raccoons, foxes, feral cats). In this way, coyotes help maintain healthy ecosystems and local biodiversity.”

What Project Coyote is doing is helping to maintain biodiversity. We hear all sorts of buzzwords today. Discussions of biodiversity and climate change are ubiquitous. And the two are very much interrelated. Climate change has a deleterious effect on biodiversity, but so do “killing contests.” “Killing contests” are contests, where participants win cash and prizes for killing the most or largest of a given species, are unjustified ecologically and ethically according to Project Coyote, which led to a successful effort to prohibit predator killing contests in California in 2014. Research has shown that killing adult coyotes often increases the coyote population, as more coyote pups survive.

Project Coyote is also working on a film about The Marin County Livestock & Wildlife Protection Program, which they describe as a non-lethal model for coexistence. Thanks to the efforts of Camilla and a coalition of local and national groups that she helped form, the Marin County Board of Supervisors decided in 2000 to stop contracting with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Wildlife Services predator control program. Instead, according to a Project Coyote Fact Sheet, “the Board approved an alternative non-lethal community-based program to assist ranchers with livestock predator conflicts known as the Marin County Livestock and Wildlife Protection Program (hereafter MCLWPP), a collaborative effort involving multiple stakeholders from local wildlife protection organizations to ranchers, scientists, and county government officials.” The program was extremely successful. The film documenting this project aims to highlight this model program and encourage other communities to consider adopting alternatives to federally subsidized lethal predator control.

Since we talked in May, Fox has brought yet another issue to our attention, the use of M-44s “Cyanide Bombs.” These are being utilized indiscriminately by the USDA Wildlife Services for predator control (and were once used in Marin County and in California before they were banned). Project Coyote is a participant in a coalition of groups who are seeking to ban the use of M-44s after an Idaho family lost their dog to a cyanide bomb placed near the family home. The family’s son was rushed to the hospital after suffering exposure to the sodium cyanide bomb and was severely traumatized having watched his beloved dog die from the deadly poison. On June 15, the Wildlife Services announced they had issued additional guidelines and an expanded review of their use as “predation damage management” devices.

Fox states, “We work to change laws and policies to protect native carnivores from abuse and mismanagement, advocating coexistence instead of killing. We seek to change negative attitudes toward coyotes, wolves and other misunderstood predators by replacing ignorance and fear with understanding, respect and appreciation.” She summarizes much of her organization’s work in the Earth Island article “Coyote.” Project Coyote promotes innovative research into humane, practical, and ecologically based approaches to coyote-human/livestock conflicts. We work with researchers to identify areas that need further investigation and we organize collaborative enterprises between government agencies, carnivore experts, ecologists, and organizations that share a similar vision.

Through a combination of public education, coalition-building, scientific inquiry, and political activities, Fox and Project Coyote have accomplished much in a short lifetime. For further information on their projects, or to donate, please visit them at projectcoyote.org.

In closing, here is Project Coyote’s vision, as stated on their website.

Project Coyote envisions a world where…

• Human communities coexist synergistically and peacefully with wildlife.
• Science empowers lasting solutions for resilient carnivore populations;
• Native carnivores are valued for their critical ecological role and their intrinsic worth;
• Children understand the value of Wild Nature;
• Compassionate conservation drives wildlife stewardship.

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The Roadside Memorial Project is an ongoing site-specific installation of reflective road signs that act as a memorial for animals killed on the road, as well as a new kind of warning sign for drivers in Frankfort, Kentucky. The project started several years ago after I moved from an urban environment to a rural one and was struck by how many animals were being killed on our narrow two lane country roads. Witnessing the bodies of animals unburied and unmourned on roadways has always been something that had saddened and disturbed me. When I was a child and we would drive by an animal that had been killed on the road, I would close my eyes and silently grieve — hoping the animal had died quickly, did not suffer, and was no longer in pain. All these years later, I still feel the same, and as an artist I wanted to create a project that acknowledged these animals’ lives and mourned their deaths.

I researched the subject of “road kill” extensively and learned that over a million animals die each day on U.S. roadways alone. That is a staggering number of deaths that doesn’t even account for animals killed outside of the United States. The accidental nature of “road kill” coupled with the sheer numbers of animals killed and encountered daily works to naturalize the phenomenon, and contributes to a fatalistic atmosphere of disengagement with these animals and their deaths. Because of this, the issue of “road kill” seems unsolvable, although there are a variety of approaches that can help reduce wildlife mortality on roads.

During my research, I learned that most animals are killed at dusk and during the night when they attempt to cross the road and the headlights of automobiles blind them. I also learned that the reflective technology used in road signs is inspired by the retro-reflectivity of nocturnal animal’s eyes. With all these things in mind, I thought it could be interesting to reimagine road signs as both a memorial and a warning sign for drivers to watch for wildlife and to slow down.

For The Roadside Memorial Project, I created silhouettes of an animal commonly killed on Kentucky roads and staggered them on the ground, some at the edge of the road, others just beyond. Unlike standard road signs, the signs are positioned so that they sit low to the ground. The hope is to shift the driver’s gaze from looking up towards signs that are situated at the height of the human body, to looking down, towards signs that are situated at the height of the nonhuman animal’s body and toward the edges of the road, where wildlife is most likely to appear. Each double-sided sign is covered in a white reflective sign material that can be seen by drivers coming in either direction. The color white was chosen not only because it is the most highly reflective color, but because it references the iconography of human roadside memorial crosses and denotes innocence, sacrifice, spirits and ghostly specters. The installation comes to life at night, and is “turned on” by the passing drivers who illuminate it, many of whom slow down. The number one way to reduce wildlife mortality is to reduce driver speed, so this was an unexpected and pleasing outcome of the project.

I’m currently looking to expand the project by partnering with individuals and organizations in different geographic locations across the U.S. and/or internationally, to create signs that reflect the diversity of species that are being killed and raise awareness of this issue across the world. I would be really interested in creating an installation in California, because it has been a leader on this issue. The University of California, Davis’ Road Ecology Center has created the California Roadkill Observation System, which uses volunteer data to track the species of animals that are hit, the number of animals that are killed and the locations where animals are found. All this information is being used to help reduce wildlife mortality in California’s roads. Programs such as this should be instituted all over the world, so we can compile concrete data that shows the true scope of the problem, which will allow us to take measures to reduce the impacts that human automobility is having on native wildlife populations.

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This is a NEW book, just published in April of this year, and it's one of the best books about animals I've ever encountered. That's saying a lot; I read animal books all the time. What makes this book so outstanding? Well, to begin with, these authors are both experts in the field. Marc Bekoff is an animal behaviorist by trade, and Jessica Pierce is a bioethicist. Their combined efforts make for a thought-provoking read, one that will force you to re-evaluate many of the assumptions you may hold about animals, animal behavior, and animal well-being in our present era. The publisher refers to the "major paradigm shift that is needed to truly ensure their [the animals'] well-being." If any book can help bring about this paradigm shift, it would be this one.

Bekoff and Pierce talk about animal freedoms, and share the history of the Five Freedoms, which were established by a UK entity known as the Brambell Commission. It was established in the early 60s to study livestock husbandry issues in Britain. These Freedoms were deemed to be the only ones animals under human care needed. In essence, they included freedom from hunger and thirst; freedom from discomfort; freedom from pain, injury, and disease; freedom to express normal behavior; and freedom from fear and distress. For the time, this was a major step forward in our thinking about animal needs. Some fifty years later, though, major progress has been made in our understanding of animals. Consequently, these Five Freedoms are insufficient to guide us in our treatment of animals today.

The authors propose that the time has come for us to adjust our collective thinking and no longer base our treatment of animals based on animal welfare science, but on the science of animal well-being. Science has given us a much deeper understanding of both the emotional and intellectual lives of all animals; it is imperative we use that knowledge to alter the way we treat all sentient beings.

Their conclusions are based on two foundations, that of science (animal behaviorism and biology, principally) and ethics. The approach is both well-reasoned and well-documented. The book is not lengthy -- a mere 182 pages, with a bibliography of over 15 pages. It offers food for thought for everyone from the well-read, long-standing vegan to the animal welfare/animal rights neophyte. I guarantee, no matter your background, this book will challenge your thinking in any number of ways. The book was published by Beacon Press and is available at your local book-seller or online.

To accompany this book review, this issue contains an interview with Marc Bekoff, focusing on wildlife, wildlife management and wildlife field studies, which is designed to give you more of a taste of the book contents. In a later issue, expect an interview with co-author Jessica Pierce.

ZOODLES WITH
Roasted Garlic Pesto Sauce

How to Make Zoodles
Recipe courtesy of Chef Lisa Karlan
(serves 4 large or 6 small plate portions)

4 - 6 organic firm zucchini, cut off the ends to make a the ends flat. (This allows the zucchini to fit securely on to the spiralizer)

“Spiralize” the zucchini and place in a colander. Use a clean cotton kitchen towel to press out any remaining liquid from the zucchini just before tossing it with the sauce.

INGREDIENTS
1 head of garlic, roasted in the oven at 400°F for 20 min until softened and carmelized
1 lemon, large (juiced)
6 oz (1/2 pkg) Mori Nu Tofu, soft, silkened and non GMO verified
1 tsp salt
1 cup pine nuts, raw (roasted gives a slightly different flavor)
1/2 cup fresh basil leaves
2 cup frozen organic peas, defrosted
1/2 cup nutritional yeast
1 tsp salt
6 oz (1/2 pkg) Mori Nu Tofu, soft, silkened and non GMO verified
1 tsp salt
DIRECTIONS
1. Place all ingredients into a high power blender and process until smooth.
2. If too thick, add 1 tsp of water at a time and blend until desired consistency is achieved.
3. Use as a dressing on a baked potato or sweet potato, on a vegetable stir fry over a bed of rice

Roasted Garlic Pesto Sauce

Jane Velez-Mitchell's Plant Based Recipes

This is the OXO Good Grips 3-Blade Spiralizer with StrongHOLD Suction. The grey lever on the bottom creates suction to a flat surface, so the unit stays secure during use.

The "green blade" makes noodles from a zucchini or other dense vegetables such as a yellow squash or cucumber. It's available at Bed, Bath and Beyond and Amazon. $39

Here is the spiralized zucchini, roasted garlic pesto sauce and organic cherry tomatoes.
Our book review this issue features *The Animals’ Agenda: Freedom, Compassion, and Coexistence*, written by Marc Bekoff and Jessica Pierce. SPEAK also had the opportunity to interview him; in this interview, he will concentrate on some wildlife issues. But he has graciously agreed to be interviewed whenever the need arises. A description of his background, experience, and accomplishments would fill the entire magazine, but here are some highlights which I took the liberty of copying from his website.

“Marc Bekoff is professor emeritus of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and is a Fellow of the Animal Behavior Society and a past Guggenheim Fellow… Bekoff’s main areas of research include animal behavior, cognitive ethology (the study of animal minds), behavioral ecology, and compassionate conservation, and he has also published extensively on human-animal interactions and animal protection.” He also has extensive experience as a field biologist.

Project Coyote and the USDA Wildlife Management are often at odds. SPEAK asked Bekoff for his read on US “wildlife management.” Then we posed a question to him, “How does ‘managing’ the population of one ‘nuisance’ animal affect the rest of the ecosystem.” He was quite clear in his responses. “Wildlife management in the US, Canada, and even elsewhere, really means wildlife control or wildlife killing. That’s really what it comes down to.” He further stated that focusing on one animal inevitably affects the whole ecosystem “in terms of the composition of the different species who are there,” thus having significant impact on the area’s biodiversity. Not only does it have impacts on the non-humans, but it can have impacts on humans as well. Bekoff criticizes the practice as not being scientific in its approach. In his estimate, “…it’s non-selective, it’s unpredictable, and they don’t pay attention to the science.” With all that said, successful “wildlife management” efforts, when they do occur, seem almost accidental.

Another common means of “wildlife management” involves relocation of animals. SPEAK posed the question, “What are the side effects of animal relocation?” Simply put, the side effects have the potential to be tremendous. He talks about the stress that it can create, not only for the relocated animals, but also for the native animals as well. “People really need to think through relocation projects because they can have incredibly bad effects on animals. There may be heightened competition over resources such as food and mates.”

SPEAK was interested in his work in the field and asked Bekoff, “How can field research disrupt the behavior of animals being researched?” He talked about what researchers call the “instrument effect.” He said, “radio collars, or ear tags, or other markers on animals, even just cutting fur, can change their behavior.” And, if that boggles your mind, he talks about zebra finches. Apparently, “when you use colored bands on them you change their mating strategies… they have preferences for different color.” To minimize distractions to study animals in the field, it’s necessary to keep one’s distance and clean up after oneself. Another part of the research protocol is to paint all the reflective silver on equipment, such as cameras and spotting scopes, matte black.

On biodiversity and interdependence, subjects close to the heart of CLAW, he remarked, “It’s possible when you remove an individual of one species, an individual of the same or another species moves in. The effects are invisible in the sense that they’re not necessarily immediately measurable.” When the composition of animals in a certain area is altered it can cause multiple changes in the behavior of the resident animals. “So, overall, you may see changes in the time and activity budgets of individuals, changes in different behavior patterns, changes in group structure, and changes in reproduction. Often, it’s very difficult to predict what will happen or to know what has happened, unless you have ‘before’ and ‘after’ data.”

Bekoff is a master at giving one something to think about. And he is equally adept addressing scholars and neophytes. SPEAK hopes to maintain an ongoing dialogue with him so that we can share his wisdom with our readers. It was a delight interviewing him. Go to marcbekoff.com to learn more about him and his fascinating work.
I had the opportunity to speak to Tracie Hotchner, founder of the Dog Film Festival, which comes to Los Angeles this August. The Dog Film Festival will be Sunday, August 5th at the Writers Guild Theater in Beverly Hills. For additional information go to dogfilmfestival.com/los-angeles/. SPEAK asked Hotchner how she went from screenwriter and author, to radio show hostess, to founder of the Dog Film Festival. Her answer, “It was a stumble, a lucky stumble.” She had heard about a cat video festival at the Walker Art Museum in Minneapolis, which drew an amazing crowd of 10,000 people. That festival started in 2012. Hotchner started the Dog Film Festival in 2015 and the response in terms of submissions was astounding. “I didn’t know that I’d find enough movies, and I found about ten times more than I needed.” The first year it went to five cities; the 2016 Festival is now on tour and at last count is going to at least fifty cities. In California, it has six venues so far. Besides Los Angeles, it’s going to Orange County, Marin County, Modesto, Monterey, and San Francisco. She expanded the number of venues by sending out a letter to art houses, and to date 50 have responded that they want to partner, so dates are being set and partner shelters are being found. It’s not just all about watching cool dog videos; “It’s a philanthropic festival, and every city I go to I partner with a local shelter that gets a portion of the proceeds of every ticket.” It’s definitely a win-win situation. The shelter promotes the festival, and people who come to the festival learn more about the shelter. What’s new for 2017? The Third Annual New York Dog Film Festival will be held this fall, alongside the First Annual Cat Film Festival. Hotchner says all the cities on board with the Dog Film Festival will be able to show both sets of programs. The volume of submissions to the Cat Film Festival were “amazing.” “I got them so fast that basically I already have two programs completely filled in the space of ten days.”

Hotchner lives in Bennington, Vermont, with her two Weimaraners Maisie and Wanda. You can follow her podcasts and blogs at radiopetlady.com. And be sure to attend the Dog Film Festival in your locality. You’ll have a wonderful time, and support a worthy cause at the same time.
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