

# The BEAVER DEFENDERS



**New Jersey Bears Get a Break**

**January 2005**

*They shall never be trapped anymore.*

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January 2005

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM UNEXPECTED

By Sarah Summerville

## Old Friends

We have been patrolling the Refuge daily since the beginning of September and will continue until the end of January. Six day shotgun season came and went with no problems, **thanks to all of you who took a few hours to help out.** Remember that it is still small game season and muzzleloader / bow season for the deer. If you would like to get some exercise and fresh air *and* help protect the Refuge at the same time, please give me a call.

We had a glorious fall here at Unexpected Wildlife Refuge. The colorful foliage began in September when the sugar maples began to blush in golds and scarlets, with



sumac and sassafras falling in behind. Many groups took advantage of the local color and walked the trails here; the weather perfect and the bugs too tired to cause much

discomfort. This beautiful autumn transformation was spectacular for many weeks, but now all the leaves have fallen, but for those of the tall bashful oak. There is a different kind of beauty in this stark winter bareness. Silhouettes of graceful gray tree branches reflect perfectly on the still pond.

Well, it was a still pond until the otters arrived. They travel up and down this little tributary of the Great Egg Harbor River, fishing and playing. They were in town during November, four of them, dipping, diving and rolling in the water and causing a general commotion. One of the smaller otters dove and swam below two unsuspecting mallards. He popped next to them and scared them into a noisy flight. The otters enjoyed this prank a great deal, and they all raced back together to share their enthusiasm.

A stoic beaver came up to the cove a few nights later, and I watched from the cabin. She did not get there in time to partake of the poplar that some family member had already towed away. After examining the area, she found a small purple loosetrife plant growing there. This she decided was a good enough snack, and she held the plant at its base and began to tug with powerful twists of her head. Her persistence paid off when the plant gave up its hold on the pond floor. She took her prize to the usual dining spot next to the bluebird house and ate alone.

On Christmas Eve, I explored the upper and lower ponds to see what the beavers have been up to. I pushed my kayak over dozens of small dams that the beavers constructed, squeezing through jungles of tussock sedge and wool grass, cutting branches and logs out of the channel. I passed seven abandoned lodges, all crumbling and damp. These old lodges have been taken over by muskrats, otters and birds. A Carolina wren peeked out of a dark opening, watching me as I struggled with a swamp maple branch while trying not to do an unauthorized kayak roll in the frigid channel.

I slowly floated downstream through a forest of towering dead cedars, drowned so many years ago, the cold damp wind causing my eyes to tear and turning my fingers numb. The vegetation began to thin out, and at the edge of the open pond I found it; a perfect lodge. They had created a beautiful safe mud-packed home, complete with adjacent food raft. These beavers are ready for whatever Mother Nature has in store this winter.

They were ready for me as well; as I was examining their engineering talent, two anxious beavers began circling my boat. "Whack, whack, take that and move on!" I did.





## New Friends

We have released many rehabilitated animals here over the years, and I got to befriend one interesting lady in July when three young raccoons arrived; a brother and sister, and a female from another broken family. We carted them out into the Refuge where they had access to an environment complete with stream, bogs, uplands and plenty of large and small trees. We opened the cage doors, and they explored the new forest with obvious glee. Delighted, they dug in the duff and climbed trees, drank out the stream and washed their hot little hands. This exciting world was all new to them, as they had all been bottle fed by people from infancy. Their mothers had been killed.

The brother and sister stayed close to each other. After examining their new home thoroughly, they grew tired and climbed to the top of a pitch pine tree, snuggling close together. The other female was quite attached to us and kept coming back in between ventures to touch our shoes and climb up our legs to be picked up. After some exploring, she also chose a pine tree and climbed to a high branch to rest. We put out some food for their first night of freedom and quietly left them.

Two days later, I approached the drop-off site to see how everyone was doing. The sister was engaged in trying to catch frogs in the bog, while her brother watched her intently from a high, dry spot. They ignored me as I continued to the release area. I found the second female in a black gum tree, and when she saw me she began to chatter and coo down to me. Seeing that everything appeared to be working out for the new residents I went home to split wood.

Later, when I was in the kitchen fixing lunch, I heard a great commotion outside. The commotion was my little girlfriend; she had followed my scent from the black gum tree and was clamoring to get into the cabin. I peeled her from the screen door and gave her a cookie and some water, as it had been a long hike for a young raccoon. An hour later, she had discovered the cat's swinging door and was in the house. Within minutes she was reeking havoc on the household, dumping planters, spilling cat water and leaving a trail of mud and mayhem in her wake. I finally caught up with the little bandit, gave her a cookie to distract her and took her back outside.



As time passed, she figured out that she was not allowed (or able) to get back into the house. Her time was spent commuting between her original point of release during the day and the cabin area at night. She still wanted to be picked up, and I occasionally accommodated her as she was quite adorable. About a month after her release, I found a lump on her hind leg about the size of an egg, probably the result of rough play with another raccoon.

The vet aspirated the lump and prescribed oral antibiotics, ointment for the wound and indoor living for 10 days. We set up a big parrot cage in the bright and sunny back room. It had two levels for play and sleep, with a long, sturdy tree branch for climbing up and down. She had her toys, food and water. I picked up a small plastic kiddy pool at the local thrift shop, and when she came out for medicine and exercise, she never failed to use the pool for her toilet. She was the perfect patient.

Well, perhaps not so perfect and certainly not patient. She hated to take her medicine and would first contort her body into ridiculous positions to prevent the eyedropper from reaching her mouth. When I used a towel to stop this gyrating, she would cover her mouth with both paws like a small willful child, twisting her head from left to right to avoid the dreadful liquid. When all else failed she would give me a nip and escape my hold. Ultimately, I got her to bite her stuffed fishy, and then I would shoot the medicine into her open mouth near her cheek. One down, 19 more doses to go!

We eventually got into a routine, and after 10 days of wrestling medicine into (and onto) her twice a day, the wound healed. I closed the door to the back room, opened the cage, unlocked the cat door and the raccoon could come and go as she pleased. Within the month, her visits had diminished to the point where I could lock the cat door knowing that she no longer needed her cage as "home base". She is out there on her own now, but I still put supplemental food out in the barn for my little ones each night. Some nights they all come for a snack. They ransack the barn for kicks, pulling down tools, boxes and buckets, dumping out the recycling with a terrible racket. When I venture out in the dark to count heads, she still comes over and shyly touches my shoe. I scratch her ears. Some nights they don't show up at all and the barn is quiet. Those are the nights that I wish it wasn't small game season.

To the Editor (Response to letter in Asbury Park Press):

It is extremely fitting that Jack Spotto of United Bow Hunters of NJ, not elected county freeholders or the appointed Board of Recreation, defended Park Commission's planned sport hunt in 9 county parks.

Mr. Spotto's claims that a cited Erie Insurance study attributing increased auto-deer accidents to hunting applied only to "breeding," not hunting, are demonstrably false. The full Erie Insurance text: "Not surprisingly, the daily number of deer claims increases during mating season in late October to early November and with hunting season in late November to early December. Last year, Erie Insurance received an average of 34 deer claims a day. That number rose nearly five times on the first day of buck

season and doe season for 157 and 160 deer losses, respectively." This indisputable relationship is recognized throughout the insurance industry: "Hunting season," cautions the Missouri Insurance Information Service, "causes the most movement of the deer, which causes more accidents."

On record, unalterable after-the-fact, bowhunters bragged of working closely with officials and keeping "things quiet until it was a done deal" -- before token "public hearings." On record, at public meetings, game council officials boasted of engineering the Monmouth County hunt. The game council changed affected park hunting zones before county officials voted. Mr. Spotto brags that bow hunters initiated the Monmouth Battlefield hunt, which raised deer numbers from 150 in 1991 to 254 in 1998. In 1991, the Division of Fish and Wildlife, paid by hunting license fees, told the public that the hunt would "reduce deer numbers within the park to 70-80 animals." The number of hunters has declined precipitously in NJ; the Division is seeking to open state and county parks to "increase hunter participation." Monmouth residents, who will experience more auto accidents, shooting across roadways and into occupied dwellings and many more deer, will pay the price.

All of this is a strong argument for needed reform of New Jersey's Division of Fish and Wildlife, the hunter-run Fish and Game Council, and for cleaning up an entrenched, hide-bound county government prone to back room deals and token "public hearings." According to a recent Center for Animal Protection statewide poll, 70% of New Jersey registered voters want reform of the game council.

Sincerely, Susan R., Little Silver, NJ

Hi Sarah,

Sorry I missed seeing you, but I did see a frog, some squirrels, a number of birds (including a heron) and one white-tailed quadra-ped. I did not see any bi-peds except on the road and working in the fields. I wish they had been closer, as I could have tried my Spanish and asked if they had seen any hunters.

Roger S. (Seasoned Unexpected Patroller)  
Turnersville, NJ

Dear Sarah,

I hope all is well with you and the NJ beavers. It was quite a devastating year weather-wise for our beavers. The flood this year wiped out a whole section of the canal, and I haven't seen our beavers since the storm. Could they have moved on across the [Delaware] river? It seems to have been devastating for a lot of our wildlife, and I am anxious for the winter to pass to see what spring will bring.

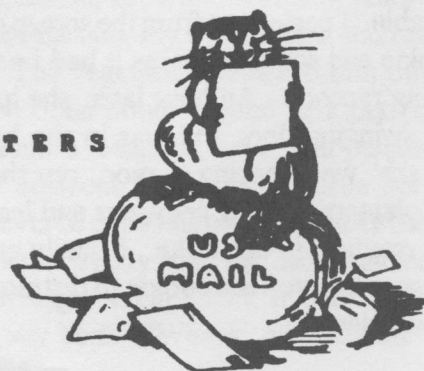
We also lost a 178 year old sugar maple in our front yard. It was home to countless squirrels and other life. It's absence has really changed our own little ecosystem.

Of course we are all concerned with our present administration and their lack of concern for our environment. We can only keep hoping and working to bring about change. I am encouraged after speaking to a group of young college students who are so socially aware and have developed a real conscience for making this world a better place. There is hope!

Wishing you many happy blessings in 2005!

Nancy H.  
New Hope, PA

LETTERS





## Saved by the Beaver

Twelve year old Rheal Guidon of Ontario went with his parents on a fishing trip. From the shore, the boy watched the boat overturn and his parents drown. Grief stricken, lonely and frightened, he set out for Kapuskasing, the nearest town. It was bitterly cold and when night came, the temperature fell below zero. Exhausted and chilled to the bone, he lay down on the ground and prayed.

Suddenly he felt something furry against him. In the dark, he couldn't tell what kind of animal it was but it was warm so he put his arm around it and huddled close. Then, he cried himself to sleep. When he awoke the next morning, three beavers were lying against him and across his body. They had kept him from freezing to death.

-From *Animals as Teachers and Healers*,  
by Susan Chernak McElroy

## Beavers in North Brunswick, NJ, by Jennifer Kohlhepp From *The North Brunswick Sentinel*, 12/23/04

New homes just went up on Davidsons Mill Pond. Unlike most waterfront development, environmentalist Mark Hommer said the two new dwellings will create, rather than destroy, wetlands in the area. "Beavers build dams to provide water access to trees they eat bark from," Hommer, who serves on the township's Environmental Commission, said. The two beaver lodges, discovered in the pond behind the Route 1 L'Oreal warehouse this month, are home to at least four beavers, Hommer said.

Although beavers are indigenous to New Jersey and to most of the United States, Hommer said the ones in the township are a remarkable discovery. "This is exciting because it's the first time I've ever seen beavers in North Brunswick," Hommer said. "After not seeing signs of beavers in this area for years, area residents have seen signs of them here and in South Brunswick."

Hommer said local environmentalists remain worried about the animals seen in South Brunswick, since a chemical spill at the John C. Dolph Co. on New Road on Dec. 11. Almost 8,300 gallons of xylene and naphtha, which are industrial solvents used to clean oil and grease, spilled into the ground, sewer system and Lawrence Brook, Hommer said.

"I saw signs of beavers in the swamp adjacent to Ridge



Road. The spill happened on the north side of the road, but the sewer system crosses under the road to where the beavers are," Hommer said. "We're worried because the spill happened at night when beavers are most active."

Hommer said he visited the spill site and the beaver lodge on Dec. 16. "I didn't see any beavers," Hommer said. "They could have gotten out, but they also could have gotten hurt." Hommer said local environmentalists will continue monitoring the area of the spill.

The Lawrence Brook is part of the local watershed that serves as a potable drinking water source to North and South Brunswick and other area residents, Hommer said. Not only does Hommer serve on the township's Environmental Commission, but he is also a member of the Lawrence Brook Watershed Partnership, a Milltown-based nonprofit organization that protects the watershed and its wildlife.

Although the beavers at Davidsons Mill Pond would not be affected by the spill, they could face other problems, Hommer said. He thinks the beavers will eat bark and use fallen timber and other low limbs from trees in the area of their lodges. "If the damage becomes too much, or if flooding occurs in places where locals don't necessarily want it, they could call animal control," Hommer said.

When asked what the township would do with the beavers if they trapped them, Hommer said, "If they live, the matter might all come down to money and how much it would cost to keep them alive and get them to a nature reserve." Hommer said he hopes locals realize that the beavers could actually help control pollution and save money. "The beavers will actually do what township officials pay environmental engineers to do — control polluted stormwater runoff into the watershed from the warehouses in the area," Hommer said.

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The assumption that animals are without rights and the illusion that our treatment of them has no moral significance is a positively outrageous example of Western crudity and barbarity. Universal compassion is the only guarantee of morality.

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- Arthur Schopenhauer, German philosopher

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## Beavers Make Dam Out of Stolen Money

(AP) November 15, 2004

GREENSBURG, La. – Beavers found a bag of bills stolen from a casino, tore it open and wove the money into the sticks and brush of their dam on a creek near Baton Rouge. "They hadn't torn the bills up. They were still whole," said Maj. Michael Martin of the East Feliciana Parish Sheriff's Office.

The money was part of at least \$70,000 taken last week from the Lucky Dollar Casino in Greensburg, about 30 miles northeast of Baton Rouge. Sheriff's deputies in St. Helena Parish, where the truck stop video poker casino is located, have accused a security guard at the casino of disabling its security cameras. Jacqueline Wall, 25, was booked with felony theft, Martin said.

She told investigators a ski-masked gunman made her help him empty all the casino's safes, then kidnapped her, knocked her out and left her in an uninhabited area in East Feliciana Parish. Deputies had searched for the money for days before an attorney called with a tip: the money had been thrown into the creek. The attorney's client hopes to make a deal with prosecutors, Greensburg Police Chief Ronald Harrell said.



They found one money bag right away. The second was downstream, against the beaver dam. After trying unsuccessfully to find the third bag in the deep water near the dam, Martin said, deputies began to break it down to release some of the water so they could search in a shallower pool. That was when they saw the dam's expensive decoration.

He said they eventually found the third sack, which still had some money left in it. "The casino people were elated" to get the money back, even if some of it was wet, Harrell said. Deputies found about \$40,000, and expected to find the rest in a safety deposit box at a bank in Mississippi.

Conservation is not enough...the thing that is missing is love.

- Joseph Wood Krutch

## New Jersey Bear Hunt Update

The BEAR Group ([www.savenjbears.com](http://www.savenjbears.com)) held a rally in Trenton in November, hoping that now former Governor McGreevy would sign an executive order to stop the December bear hunt before leaving office. He did not.

Assemblyman Panter gathered almost 9000 signatures on a petition to stop the December bear hunt. Acting Governor Codey did nothing.

State DEP Commissioner Bradley Campbell had refused to issue bear-hunting permits, saying the hunt conflicted with DEP plans to control the bear population.

Hunters' groups sued Campbell and the DEP after the Sept. 30 application deadline for permits expired without any having been granted. An appellate court said Campbell did not have the authority to stop the hunt, and the case went to the Supreme Court.

Its decision, which Campbell described as "narrow," did not address whether he had the authority to stop the hunt. Instead, the court said the hunt could not go forward because the state lacked a "comprehensive plan" for managing the bear population. The court added that any plan would be subject to Campbell's approval.

While we all celebrated the outcome at the judicial level, one man's opinion about the stopping the bear hunt this year has merit:

Although I am jubilant that no bears will die this year I feel a need to temper my joy over this decision. Bradley Campbell [has stated] that he believes this is a "narrow" decision, "because the state lacked a 'comprehensive plan' for managing the bear population". He states he plans to include the hunting of bears in a comprehensive plan.

Hopefully that plan includes humane options to deal with the bear population, including a contraception program. Efforts need to continue legislatively in attempting to change the make up of the Fish and Game council which at present is dominated by hunters and in stopping human development in bear country. While we are at it lets recommend that the lowering of the human population in New Jersey be part of the plan.

David Sauder, Coordinator,  
Animal Rights Activists of NJ

The Bear Education And Resource (BEAR) Group  
PO Box 918, Hewitt, NJ 07421, Phone: 973-853-BEAR  
Email: [SaveNJBears](mailto:SaveNJBears)



## A Deer with No Fear Puts the Hunter in the Headlights

By Phil Sheridan, Inquirer Columnist

When the deer fights back, you've got yourself a real sport.

No offense to the legions of hunters who will take to Penn's Woods when rifle season for deer opens later this month. This isn't some tree hugger's lament. When Bambi's mom bought it, my response wasn't tears. It was, "Mmmmmmm, venison stew."

Hunting with a rifle may be fun. It may be an excuse for the guys to get together, slam a few beers, and avoid showering for a weekend. Maybe it's a good way for fathers to bond with their sons, or even their daughters. In practical terms, it's a way to feed the family (yours, not Latrell Sprewell's) and to thin a deer population that might otherwise wind up coming through your windshield on the turnpike.

But a sport? Come on, now. Sport means there is competition. When you have a gun and your opponent has big brown eyes and a twitchy little nose, that's not competition. That's a Temple football game.

And don't give me that talk about having to outwit the deer in its natural habitat. The carcasses along the Turnpike from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia suggest that outwitting a deer isn't exactly an accomplishment. Deer fall somewhere between tree stumps and cast members of *The Real World* on the Wit-o-Meter. Then again, when you research the ways hunters manage to shoot themselves and each other every year, maybe it is more of a fair fight than it first appears.

Anyway, it has always seemed that it would be more sporting if the deer had guns, too. Apparently, a buck in downstate Indiana agrees. Earlier this week, a 69-year-old bow hunter named Jim Mick was stalking deer in Decatur County. Mick, a veteran of many hunts, did not realize he was actually the stalkee. That is, until the deer ambushed him.

"He came out of the tall grass and briars," Mick told the Republic, a newspaper in Columbus, Ind. "When I realized it, he was on me already. All I had time to do was throw my hands up and grab his antlers." According to Mick, he wrestled with the deer for about 10 minutes.

"It was probably a draw," Mick told the newspaper, "but I think I got the worst of it. I don't think he had any gouge marks on him."

Actually, two of three judges had the deer winning on points. The third scored it a draw. Mick avoided the KO by - what else? - outwitting the deer. He managed to get free and get behind a tree. The deer got tired of trying to get around the tree and left.

Or maybe it simply noticed that Mick was carrying a bow and some arrows and decided it was time to move on.

Now it may be that this was some freak occurrence. This time of year, deer are in rutting mode, which is to say they're in the same frame of mind as the young singles who descend on Old City on Saturday nights. It could be that this attack was just a case of mistaken identity. Hunters are always confusing each other with deer and shooting each other. It's not too hard to imagine a deer making the same mistake, especially if his mind is filled with dreams of hot doe action.

So maybe this attack was nothing more than that. Or maybe it was just a mean deer, a kind of four-hoofed Ray Lewis. With antlers. Maybe it felt misunderstood by its parents and was just acting out to get attention. Maybe it just needed money for cigarettes.

We'll never know. The deer was not available for comment.

But it's more fun to think he ran back into the woods and high-fived his fellow young bucks. It's more fun to think that after being blasted and rendered and run over and having their noggins mounted on plaques, deer have gone all Peter Finch in *Network*: *We're mad as hell and we're*

*not going to take this anymore.*

So beware, ye who venture into the woods with bow or with rifle. You still have to worry more about your fellow hunters. Heck, you have to worry more about yourself. Of the 28 hunting-related shootings registered by the Pennsylvania Game Commission last year, 10 were self-inflicted.

Hard to say which is worse - getting shot at by some nearsighted buffoon with the price tag still hanging off his firearm or tripping over a root and putting a hole through your own leg.

But now you have something new to think about it, something rustling in the tall grass and the briars. Just ask Jim Mick, the Hoosier who came nose-to-snout with 150 pounds of honked-off venison, engaged in some extreme combat with no refs and no rules, and escaped with no more than a gored thigh.

The old days are gone. You wanted game, but now you've got a sport. Bambi is back, he's buff, and he's ready to rumble.

Contact columnist Phil Sheridan at 215-854-2844 or [psheridan@phillynews.com](mailto:psheridan@phillynews.com). Read his recent work at <http://go.philly.com/philsheridan>.



## **NJ Black Bear Chemical Sterilization Project Update October 8, 2004**

Millennium Wildlife Sciences (MWS) is pleased to announce the initiation of a comprehensive plan to study non-lethal methods for black bear population control. Phase I involves safety and efficacy studies of Neutersol® (an FDA approved chemical sterilant) on captive adult male black bears. The studies will be conducted jointly by Dr. Robert Foglia (lead scientist and University of PA staff veterinarian and reproductive specialist) and by Six Flags Great Adventure chief veterinarian William Rives.

Project scientists will be working closely with the NJDEP with an eye on developing an innovative long term plan for non-lethal black bear population control.

MWS is a NJ not-for-profit corporation. Employing the talents of eminent, respected and highly qualified scientists, MWS offers the application of cutting-edge technologies to help resolve human/wildlife conflicts and toward the harmonious co-existence of people and wildlife.

With this new century, this new millennium, comes the hope of a greater, more compassionate way for mankind to manage and live with wild animals.

As the vanguard in this effort, we dedicate ourselves to the highest of scientific standards, and, with groundbreaking technological advances, will seek to make that better world a reality."

Gordon Stull, DMV, President, MWS  
PO Box 2504, Vincentown, NJ 08088  
(609)268-2878 / [staff@wildlifescience.org](mailto:staff@wildlifescience.org)

### **Maryland County Bans Steel-Jawed Leghold Traps** (The Fund for Animals, Autumn, 2004, [www.fund.org](http://www.fund.org))

Howard County, Maryland passed a law in July that bans the use of steel-jawed leghold traps. Leghold traps are extremely inhumane, leaving animals stranded for hours or days without food, water or protection from predators. Some animals chew through their own limbs in a desperate attempt to escape. Because the traps are simply left open for any animal to wander into, other wildlife and even dogs and cats are maimed or killed by these devices. The county's humane ordinance is likely to be challenged by the state's pro-trapping Department of Natural Resources.

Please contact the MDNR to express your support for the ban on the steel-jawed leghold trap. Write or call:

Ronald Franks, Sect., Maryland Dept. of Nat. Resources  
580 Taylor Avenue, Tawes State Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
phone (410) 260-8101

### **Beaver Bafflers a Win-Win Solution**

(The Fund for Animals, Autumn, 2004, [www.fund.org](http://www.fund.org))

The Fund for Animals partnered with the Bethany Land Trust and Boy Scout Troop 59 to install a "beaver baffler" in the Hockanum Brook in Bethany, Connecticut. Apparently, the beavers had turned this once trickling brook into a sixteen-acre pond that would soon flood out a major roadway. Much to the consternation of the Dept. of Transportation. Volunteers filled the woods to help the Fund's Skip Hilliker and Becca DeWeerd put in a device which quickly lowered the water level and has maintained it there ever since. The beavers have apparently grown accustomed to this odd-looking pipe device in their dam, which has proven to be a win-win solution for all concerned.

*When you hear about a beaver "problem", please speak up and let the parties involved know that there are non-lethal ways of solving these problems! We have information at your request. Beavers turn wilderness into happiness!*

### **What Ever Happened to Angi Metlar?**

On August 23, 2004, activist and director of the New Jersey Animal Rights Alliance, Angi Metler locked herself in a barrel trap to prevent a mother bear from being killed by the Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW).

DFW placed the trap at the home of Leonard and Priscilla Smith, 1018 East Lakeside Drive in Highland Lakes, after the Smiths claimed a bear entered their screened porch to obtain animal feed stored there. Before entering the trap, Angi offered assistance to Mr. Smith to help him bear-proof his surroundings and repair any damage caused by a bear. He refused "Why should I have to do something?" The bear Mr. Smith wanted killed was labeled a category I bear by DFW, which is a death sentence. During the two weeks the trap was set, no bear was captured or killed.

On October 26, the judge found Angi guilty of trespassing and obstruction, which was anticipated. He found Angi not guilty of criminal mischief and hunter harassment, the two charges filed by the DFW. The judge found Mrs. Smith not guilty of simple assault. The judge read all the letters submitted on Angi's behalf before sentencing her to fines in the amount of \$750 and associated court costs of \$318, totaling \$1,068.

Angi sends her appreciation and thanks to all who contributed toward the defense fund and wrote letters on her behalf. Through the generosity of supporters, her attorney's bill was paid in full.



## Revenge of the Old-Timers (The Beavers are Back)

At a recent barbecue during a breezy Sunday afternoon on the South Fork of the Shoshone River, near Cody, Wyo., I saw the largest beaver I've ever seen. It was floating in the river's current like a big dog.

The beaver looked to be about three feet long from nose to flat tail, and must have weighed 40 pounds. It had a huge, whiskered head that reminded me of a Scottish terrier. Our host, one of those modern cowboys who makes a living thanks to a computer and high-speed Internet service, called us over to look, and we stood around with our beers and watched with amazement. My friend, whose place sports some big cottonwoods bordering a stretch of the river, took lots of pictures but also studied the beaver with some alarm.

As the animal slowly swam upriver, it seemed to scan the jumble of trembling young willows and cottonwood that covered the opposite bank. Our host suddenly mentioned that he'd had a crab apple tree ransacked by a grizzly last year, the bear even tearing off some limbs.

A beaver isn't a grizzly, of course, but you get the idea: It can do a lot of rearranging of the scenery. All this got me thinking about the role this durable aquatic rat — *Castor canadensis* — played in the history of the American West. After all, the beavers started it, our relentless moving into the country's interior. We wouldn't be here without them.

Beaver was the fabric of choice for hats, and in pursuit of pelts in the 17th century, the French methodically worked their way west from eastern Canada, thus exploring half a continent. By the 1790s, British traders were probing the Pacific Northwest coast by sea in search of furs.

Though Thomas Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark on their legendary journey of discovery in 1804 for a myriad of reasons, a major object was to counter British influence and open the region to American trappers. One of them, John Colter, discovered what is now Yellowstone National Park in 1807. Three years later, John Jacob Astor sent the ship *Tonquin* and its crew to establish Astoria, the first city in Oregon, and a place originally devoted to the fur trade. From the mountain men who brought in beaver and other furs to the settlers who followed in wagon trains, the West's population boom was under way.

Today, the beaver is seen as a nuisance across much of the subdivided West. This totemic animal and its engineering machinations are responsible for flooded subdivisions and chewed-down ornamental trees.

It's a typical story in the New West: People love wildlife until it eats the pets, shreds the shrubbery or floods the basement. As for the beaver, it's spawned a new breed of trapper: Politically correct newcomers want problem wildlife trapped alive and unharmed, then relocated to more natural — and convenient — surroundings.

Just type "Live Trapping Services" into Google or some other search engine, and listings will pour in from across America. What would Jim Bridger and Kit Carson make of these modern-day mountain men who make a living returning beavers to the wild?

Occasional nuisance or not, we have to give *Castor canadensis* credit for possessing a quality that the writer Wallace Stegner said was lacking in many of us. Stegner said if the West were

to become a society that matched its scenery, it needed "stickers" willing to commit to a place, to weather its busts as well as booms, and to work to create durable Western institutions.

That's what beaver did, building dams that tamed floods. For thanks, we've subjected the beaver to trapping and destroyed the animals' lodges with dynamite.

Yet, given a chance, the beaver or its progeny gets right back to work. The same might be said for my friend and his entrepreneurial adventures in cyberspace. I assume his virtual occupation will keep him in the West, but then, you never know what people will do, and you certainly never know about the economy.

A bunch of us stood watching that big beaver swim upstream. It looked as if its periscope nose made the wide wake in the water all by itself. I wondered if the beaver would return some night to have a go at my friend's luscious cottonwood trees. My friend was already talking about putting heavy chicken wire or some other barrier around them. I was thinking that the drama might play out as a struggle between two determined Westerners. And those young willows across the river trembled in the breeze.

Bill Croke is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a service of High Country News ([www.hcn.org](http://www.hcn.org)). He writes in Cody, WY.



For some years, the last full week in April has been set aside to recognize the suffering of animals used in experiments. I never think about World Week for Animals in Laboratories without thinking about Ratsky.

Ratsky is the name I gave a small white rat I took home from the college psychology lab many years ago. My first lesson in animal rights was taught by this little animal.

The introductory course in psychology at my college used rats who were deprived of water for three days and then put in a "Skinner box" (a cage developed by B.F. Skinner that delivers a few drops of water when a bar is pressed by the thirsty animal inside). At the end of the course, the rats are put together in a trashcan, chloroform is poured over them and the lid is closed.

Students could sign up to implant electrodes into a rat's skull to show that electrical stimulation of the brain can affect behavior. During the implantation procedure, a stereotaxic device holds the rat's head still, its metal bars thrust into both ear canals, breaking the eardrums. My professor's response to my concern about the effects of this procedure on the rats was a joke. "Well, I guess he won't be able to listen to his stereo in the morning." But while I was struck by the callousness of his remark, I was sufficiently desensitized myself that I proceeded without batting an eyelash.

One day, I took a rat home from the lab. "Ratsky," as she came to be known, lived for some months in a cage in my bedroom. And in her cage, she behaved the way I assumed rats behave. But when I started leaving the cage door open so she could walk around I began to see things I hadn't anticipated. After several days of cautious sniffing about at the cage door, she began to investigate the world outside. As she explored my apartment, under my watchful eye, she took an interest in me and my friends.

She gradually became more and more friendly. If I was lying on my back reading, she would come and stand on my chest. She would wait to be petted and if I didn't pay her enough attention, she would lightly nip my nose and run away. I knew that her sharp teeth could have gone right through my skin, but she was always playfully careful.

I realized that street rats are to rats as street people are to people. Given food, water, and warmth, most rats are

friendly, fun and meticulously clean. If not forced to live in an unclean cage, their skin has a distinct perfume-like scent. Like a cat, she spent hours carefully grooming herself.

One day, I noticed a lump in her skin. With time, it grew, and it was all but impossible to find a veterinarian who would treat her, since she was not a dog, cat or farm animal. Finally, I convinced a vet, who specialized in laboratory animals, to take the lump out. It was a tumor.

Because rats are meticulous about their bodies and work tirelessly to rid themselves of any bits of dirt, they have to be put in body casts after surgery to prevent them from removing their sutures. When I cut Ratsky out of the cast, she painfully tottered a few steps, trembling. I discovered that the vet had not only removed the tumor, but had also inadvertently removed her urethra, the tube that leads to the bladder, so that urine spilled from her bladder into the abdominal cavity and was a caustic irritation under her skin. The vet tried to correct his mistake in a second operation, but he was very uncertain whether it would succeed.

When friends could understand caring for larger animals, I found that few people could understand the suffering of this little mammal. Nonetheless, her suffering was very apparent. At night I slept with her in the palm of my hand so I would wake up if she tried to chew out her sutures.

Before long it became clear that Ratsky's condition was worsening. The reconstructed urethra closed off, causing her great distress. Finally, I had her euthanized.

I carry with me the vivid image of this tiny animal tottering painfully out from her cast, of her in the palm of my hand trying to pull out the sutures that were a constant irritation to her. In the months that followed, I began to think about all the other animals whose suffering I had taken so dispassionately and I realized that each one was an individual who can suffer as acutely as the little rat I had held in my hand. And that suffering was just as real whether the animal was "bred for the purpose" or chained in someone's back yard.

Now, as a practicing physician, I continue to be puzzled about the resistance to compassion that I see so commonly in others and that I, too, experienced for so





long. Cruelty to animals is diagnosed as a psychiatric symptom predictive of antisocial personality, yet we fail to recognize the cruelties we perpetuate so casually in our own lives.

Not too long ago, my alma mater sent me a survey asking who had been my most effective teacher. I'm not sure that they understood my reply.

(Neal Barnard, M.D. is the president of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine and is author of "Foods That Fight Pain: Revolutionary New Strategies for Maximum Pain Relief.")

### **OP-ED Soldiers are Dying for Your SUV**

By Paul Campos, Press of Atlantic City, 12/10/04

I'm standing in the parking lot of an enormous shopping mall, staring at a Ford Excursion. A 7,700-pound hunk of metal, the Excursion gets horrible gas mileage, while spewing massive amounts of hydrocarbons into the atmosphere.

It's the official policy of our federal government to offer Americans bribes, in the form of huge tax deductions, to encourage the purchase of such vehicles. In 2003, Congress enacted a provision allowing people who bought SUVs weighing at least 6,000 pounds to deduct the entire purchase price from their taxable income, if they claimed to use the things for "business purposes."

Manufacturers scrambled to add even more weight to vehicles, to make them eligible for the deduction. This further decreased the gas mileage and increased the pollution emitted by these environmental disasters on wheels. The most awe-inspiring feature of this particular Excursion is a plastic decal shaped like a yellow ribbon, which its owner has affixed to the back door. The ribbon is embossed with the message, "Support Our Troops."

When writing this column, I usually make an effort to cultivate the persona of what in a recent New Republic essay my friend Jon Chait characterized as the "thoughtful observer." Thoughtful observers like to note the blind spots of ideologues all across the political spectrum. The thoughtful observer specializes in melancholy, a-plague-on-both-your-houses musings and fears above all the label of partisan hack.

But there are limits, and on this issue I've reached mine.

I could, for example, thoughtfully observe that here in the pseudo-lefty enclave of Boulder, Colo., it's easy to spot a

\$50,000 car sporting a "Live Simply So Others May Simply Live" bumper sticker. Or I could muse in a melancholy fashion on how the knee-jerk hawk is no more misguided than the knee-jerk dove, and possibly less dangerous. I could, that is to say, emit a wistful sigh at the prevalence of human folly among those of all political persuasions and return to cultivating my (metaphorical) garden.

I could do all these things, and normally I would, but today I just can't.

To the owner of the Ford Excursion who implores us to "Support Our Troops" I say this: You, sir (or madam), are a monumental jackass. At this moment, American troops are risking their lives to protect your inalienable right to live your life in an impenetrable fog of selfishness and stupidity.

If not for the need to service this grotesque monstrosity on which you squander your money and that of the taxpayers who subsidize your comfortably numb life, those troops you support would not be getting killed and maimed in a country I doubt you could find on a map.

I sometimes wonder if anything short of dynamite can shatter your complacent fantasy that the Iraq war is about bringing democracy to the Middle East. The truth is that every Arab from Casablanca to Khartoum could be (continued on next page)

cutting his brother's throat, and yet this would remain a matter of indifference to our government if not for the need to ensure that you will be able to fill your Excursion with cheap gasoline.

To expect others to sacrifice everything for you, while advertising by your own behavior that you will sacrifice exactly nothing for them, is the height of political and social immorality. And to do so while claiming your political views are an expression of "moral values" is an obscene joke.

Drive off, Ford Excursion. Head back to your gated community, to patiently await the Rapture, or the next Nordstrom's sale. You've driven me past the limits of pundit endurance, and I long to return to the world of thoughtful observation.

(Paul Campos is a law professor at the University of Colorado. Copyright, 2004 South Jersey Publishing Co.)

### Just Hummer if You Don't have the Words

There is a new behemoth in town. The CXT truck measures 9' high and 21.5' long (as opposed to the tiny 7' x 17' of the Hummer H2). This latest object of American embarrassment will get from 6-10 mpg of diesel fuel.

-S.S.

### Gorillas Hold Wake for Group's Leader BROOKFIELD, Illinois (AP)

After Babs the gorilla died at age 30, keepers at Brookfield Zoo decided to allow surviving gorillas to mourn the most influential female in their social family.

One by one Tuesday, the gorillas filed into the Tropic World building where Babs' body lay, arms outstretched. Curator Melinda Pruett Jones called it a gorilla wake.

Babs' 9-year-old daughter, Bana, was the first to approach the body, followed by Babs' mother, Alpha, 43. Bana sat down, held Babs' hand and stroked her mother's stomach. Then she sat down and laid her head on Babs' arm.

"It was like they used to do in the exhibit, lying side by side on the mountain," keeper Betty Green said. "Then Bana rose up and looked at us and moved to Babs' other side, tucked her head under the other arm, and stroked Babs' stomach."

Other gorillas also approached Babs and gently sniffed the body. Only the silverback male leader, Ramar, 36, stayed away. Keepers said the display wasn't surprising.

"She was the dominant female of the group, the peacekeeper, the disciplinarian, the one who kept things in a harmonious state," Pruett Jones said.

Koola, 9, brought her infant daughter, whom Babs had showered with attention since her birth in August.

"Koola inspected Babs' mouth for a while, then held her baby close to Babs, like she loved to do the last couple months, letting Babs admire her," Green said.

Babs had an incurable kidney condition and was euthanized Tuesday. Keepers had recently seen a videotape of a gorilla wake at the Columbus, Ohio, zoo and decided they would do the same for Babs. Gorillas in the wild have been known to pay respects to their dead, keepers said.

"I had a headache for the rest of the day after all the tears I cried watching them," Green said.

### From American Vegan, New Series: volume 4 number 3 Read, Watch and Listen

Over the years our knowledge and understanding of why and how to be vegan has been enhanced by books.

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**AHLMSA - the compassionate way, AHLMSA is a Sanskrit term meaning non-killing, non-injuring, non-harming. AVS defines it in daily life as Dynamic Harmlessness, spelled out below:**

**Abstinence from animal products**

**Harmlessness with reverence for life**

**Integrity of thought, word and deed**

**Mastery over oneself**

**Service to humanity, nature and creation**

**Advancement of understanding and truth**

The true harvest of my daily life is somewhat as intangible and indescribable as the tints of morning or evening.

-H. D. Thoreau



**In My View**, By Priscilla Ferel, President, Friends of Animals, Fall 2004

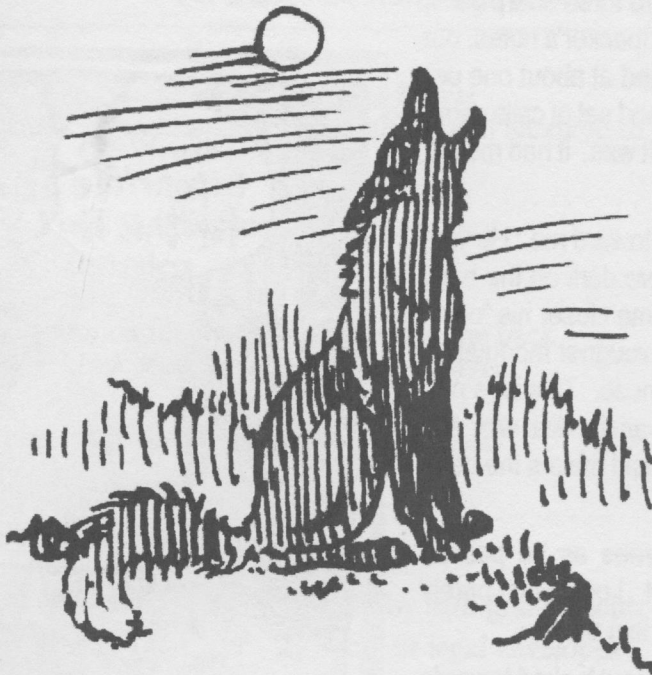
On July 4, a Florida letter-writer to The New York Times said she had called off her trip to Alaska after learning that "Alaska's policy, under Governor Frank Murkowski, allows private citizens to kill wolves by shooting them from low-flying planes."

The Boynton Beach resident wrote: "It's ironic that a state that touts wildlife as its greatest tourist attraction now offers gun sights as a lure."

The letter-writer is one of **more than 100,000** people who joined Friends of Animals and others to boycott Alaska's \$2 billion-a-year tourism industry until the aerial wolf-shooting scheme is cancelled.

This fall, FoA is continuing to challenge the legality of Alaska's wolf-killing program in the Superior Court in Anchorage, and we're organizing a second wave of Howl-In protests after Nov. 1, to impact the summer 2005 tourism season.

- ▶ This past winter, Alaska wildlife officials issued permits allowing hunters in small aircraft to chase wolves to exhaustion, and to kill them.
- ▶ The airborne gunners kill the wolves to reduce competition over animals that humans want to kill, such as moose.
- ▶ And they do it for a thrill.
- ▶ Friends of Animals and others have pointed out well-documented errors in official claims which show moose populations are artificially low.
- ▶ Yet 147 wolves were killed last winter alone, and another 500 wolves are already targeted this year.
- ▶ Thousands more will be frightened, wounded and shot in coming winters — unless we can convince Alaska to end this massacre.



A new book by Jon Coleman, *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America*, chronicles the 300-year persecution of wolves by European Americans. As Benjamin Schwarz, a book reviewer wrote in the September 2004 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*:

"These canids were not merely annihilated: they were dragged behind horses until they ripped apart; they were set on fire; they were hamstrung; their backs were broken; they were captured alive to be released with their mouths or penises wired shut; their intestines were torn open by hooks hidden in balls of tallow left for them to eat."

Coleman explains that viciousness toward wolves was an expression of "revenge, anger and dominion." He asserts that wolves were destroyed "to safeguard livestock, to knit local ecosystems into global capitalist markets, to collect state-sponsored bounties, and to rid the world of beasts they considered evil, wild, corrupt, and duplicitous."

The reasons held today by Alaska's Board of Game and Gov. Murkowski to force aerial wolf-shootings are perhaps no more evolved than those of wolf-haters throughout history. This type of governance shames not only Alaska, but our country as a whole.

Coleman notes: "The predators continue to fire imaginations, ignite controversies, and elicit savage behavior; their grip on American culture remains fierce."

We agree, and ask for your support of FoA's interventions and Howl-Ins for Alaska's wolves. To hold a Howl-In, send an e-mail to: [howlin@friendsofanimals.org](mailto:howlin@friendsofanimals.org), or send a letter to our Connecticut headquarters.

Please also write Gov. Murkowski and tell him you'll boycott travel to Alaska until his campaign ends.

Gov. Frank Murkowski  
P.O. Box 110001, Juneau, AK 99811  
E-mail: [governor@gov.state.ak.us](mailto:governor@gov.state.ak.us)  
Phone: 907-465-3500 / Fax: 907-465-3532

*(Reprinted from Act-ionLine, the Friends of Animals' magazine, 777 Post Road, Darien, CT 06820)*

**A Long Second Look - An Afternoon with Foxes** by Don Freiday

Wildlife watching is so much more rewarding if you learn to take that 'long second look' learning more about the animal than just its name.

Any fox you see is a good fox, in my opinion. But to watch a fox...that is something special. And watching two foxes for an afternoon - how often has that happened to you?

On one January day I spent the afternoon with two red foxes. I was in a tree at the time, camouflaged, shivering and watching.

About three in the afternoon I heard three sharp calls, about the pitch and tone of a pileated woodpecker's notes, but with a different cadence. These were issued at about one per second, and I was surprised when the second set of calls came from much closer than the first. Whatever it was, it had moved towards me rapidly.

Soon I glimpsed a red fox trotting toward me. He was a burly fellow with black stockings and more dark on the back than is average for his species. As he came closer his "calls" sounded more like barks - apparently, the rougher modulation in the sound disappeared over long distances. This was not, however, the typical rasping fox bark that I am familiar with, the one that sounds like a woman screaming and makes the hairs on my neck stand straight up.

The fox continued to bark in threes as he passed upslope and disappeared behind a thicket. I could just barely make his form out, and it seemed he had lain down.

An hour or so passed, and when I next looked towards the thicket, I was delighted to see the fox trotting toward me with another smaller slightly paler animal in tow. It couldn't be more obvious that they were a mated pair, and that the male's barking had been him calling to his lady. I was able to confirm this a few minutes later.

I was a little concerned that the foxes would pick up my scent, but before the male reached a point downwind of me, he pawed out a bed in the snow, circled a couple times like a dog would, and curled up at the base of a tulip tree scarcely fifteen yards from me. The female stood twenty yards away, and I expected her to soon join her mate for a nap.

It was not to be. I was studying the male with my binoculars when a crashing in the distance caught both his attention and mine. I looked up to see a doe and a yearling disappearing over the ridge, white tails waving. The male fox and I both watched them go, which means neither of us was watching the female fox. We looked her way at about the same

time...and she was gone.

The male immediately got to his feet, started trotting towards where the female had been, and gave his three-noted call again. Suddenly, he too turned tail and ran hard off in the direction the deer had gone. Through the trees I glimpsed my neighbor, out for a walk with his two dogs. That explained why the deer had run, why the female had run (presumably in the direction of the deer), and why the male had followed.

With January begins the mating season for foxes, so I have little doubt the male soon rejoined the female. They'll have a den on the hillside this spring. (*reprinted from New Jersey Audubon, Winter 2004-2005*)



*Christmas cheer from Jo Baliot,  
Shoebox - a tiny little division of Hallmark*

*The Beaver Defenders* is published quarterly by the Unexpected Wildlife Refuge, Inc., a non-profit organization created in 1961 to provide an inviolate sanctuary for wild animals, to study wild animals in relation to humans and to promote humane treatment of animals and environmental protection.



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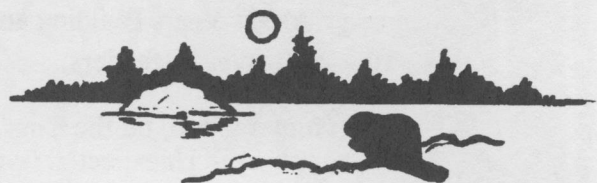
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### Noah's Ark

Together we float in one small ark.  
Together we float... or sink.  
Some of us talk, some chirp, some bark;  
but all of us eat and drink.  
Whether we crawl or hop or soar,  
When the cold wind blows, we shrink.  
Since we share one ark till it comes to shore,  
We share one Love, don't you think?

- Charlotte Baker Montgomery