



Haven Can't Wait Southern Sanctuary Provides Critical Habitat

The Gulf sturgeon may not be the prettiest fish in the sea, with its bony scales, tube-like snout, and fleshy chin whiskers. But there's no denying the survivalist tendencies of a creature who's lived through three periods of mass extinction.

Now this prehistoric species with 225 million years of staying power faces what may be its most formidable threat yet: human development. Part of a diverse biological community inhabiting the Gulf of Mexico and the network of rivers and estuaries throughout the coastal regions of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, Gulf sturgeon populations declined so drastically during the last half of the 20th century that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the species as threatened in 1991.

But this tough old bottom-feeder and a vast array of other species living along the Bogue Chitto River in Mississippi will receive a respite from human encroachment, thanks to a local couple who sealed a deal to preserve 207 acres adjacent to the river. In December, Merry and Ryck Caplan's land in Tylertown became the first property in Mississippi and the 100th overall to be designated a sanctuary by the Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust, which has worked

with landowners to help protect habitats in 37 states and seven foreign countries since its founding in 1993.

Home to bobcats, beavers, wild turkeys, deer, armadillos, foxes, and many other mammals, the Caplan Wildlife Sanctuary also hosts a myriad of bird species, including hawks, kestrels, herons, mallards, and ospreys. The Bogue Chitto River, where Gulf sturgeon swim annually to spawn, forms the property's southern boundary.

The Caplans see the land's value in its natural beauty and importance to animals. "So much wildlife and nature in the Gulf region is being destroyed," says Merry Caplan. By donating a conservation easement to the Trust, they retained ownership of the land while also gaining permanent protection.

The couple has a history of respecting the land and its creatures, even while operating a small resort there for six years. Instead of exploiting the property for hunting and for its valuable resources such as gravel and timber, their eco-friendly getaway hosted ducks, chickens, and an organic garden; guests enjoyed guided nature walks, environmental education programs, gardening demonstrations, and picnics. "We tried to create a place where nature was protected and

people could relax,” says Caplan, who cultivated her love for the outdoors while earning a doctorate in environmental and religious studies.

The sanctuary is covered with mature hardwoods, large cypress and pine stands, several ponds, and 30 acres of beech magnolia forest registered by the Mississippi Natural Heritage Program as “pristine”—a designation reserved for properties with rare plants and animals, native vegetation, or outstanding natural features. In harsh weather, this tree cover protects the land and provides crucial hiding places for many species; during Hurricane Katrina, the old-growth trees and heavy forest withstood the high winds amidst a landscape that looked as though it had been clear cut.

Caplan and her husband explored other conservation programs but chose the Trust because of its policy of permanently prohibiting hunting and trapping. Staff work with owners to ensure enforcement; methods include annual monitoring, no-hunting signs, wildlife decoys, and collaboration with law enforcement to catch poachers.

The Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust accepts lands—and conservation easements—based on their value as havens for wild animals. While Trust staff recognize the importance of helping threatened and endangered species, they are also concerned with the protection of all creatures through preservation of essential lands and links between them.

“The effects of habitat loss are being magnified by the accelerating process of climate change, and protecting and connecting habitat is more critical than ever,” says executive director Robert Koons. “Without adequate habitat, wildlife lack the shelter, food, and security necessary to survive.”

For the Caplans, the safety provided by the Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust to their treasured flora and fauna brings great relief. “If I don’t accomplish another thing in my life, I feel I’ve done something significant,” Caplan says. — *Ruthanne Johnson*

▶ [LEARN MORE](#) about land conservation tools and criteria for Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust sanctuaries at wt.org.



Beavers are among the many species who thrive in or around the waters of the 207-acre Caplan Wildlife Sanctuary in Mississippi.



Profile: A Species in Trouble

The Caplan Wildlife Sanctuary boasts an oxbow lake, which forms when a river’s wide meander is cut off by changing land formations. Rich in biodiversity, this kind of residual, horseshoe-shaped body of water never has the chance to form when rivers are harnessed by dams for irrigation and electricity.

In a state already home to about 3,800 dams, critical habitat provided by the Bogue Chitto River adjacent to the Caplan Sanctuary has become increasingly important to animals like the Gulf sturgeon. Dams have been particularly destructive to the species—also endangered in Mississippi due to pollution, dredging, and poaching—because they create impenetrable barriers to the natal rivers where the fish spawn.

▶ **FISH IN A FLASH:** Gulf sturgeon can grow up to 8 feet long and weigh as much as 200 pounds. Their armored plates, or scutes, flash in the light as they breach river waters in impressive displays during July and August and into the fall, when they feed in the Gulf of Mexico.

▶ **FEAST TO FAMINE:** In the winter, as they swim in the Gulf of Mexico, the fish use their tactile chin whiskers, or barbels, to skim the shallow seagrass beds and sandy bottoms of the continental shelf for mollusks, grass shrimp, marine worms, brachiopods, and crustaceans. When sturgeon reach sexual maturity between 7 and 17 years old, they eat little to nothing while over-summering in rivers throughout the South, saving their energy for reproductive pursuits.

▶ **LIVE LONG AND (TRY TO) PROSPER:** Juvenile Gulf sturgeon remain in their spawning river for up to three years before joining adults in their migrations, munching primarily on shrimp, woodlice, worms, flies, mollusks, and plant material. Although they can reach 60, Gulf sturgeon usually live between 20 and 25 years.



New Voice for Shelter Animals

Ad Council shines spotlight on adoptions

The organization behind such iconic public service announcements as “Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires” and “Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk” is poised to use its advertising prowess to change the way Americans view shelter pets.

The goal of the campaign, produced by the Ad Council in partnership with The HSUS and Maddie’s Fund, is to dramatically boost adoption rates of homeless cats and dogs.

“This is the biggest deal in my 35-year career in the field regarding a national push to promote adoptions,” says John Snyder, vice president of The HSUS’s Companion Animals section. “The Ad Council can help shape and change public opinion in a way that the animal welfare movement could not do on its own—and this campaign can revolutionize our field and end euthanasia of healthy and treatable pets.”

A nonprofit working with advertising agencies since 1942 to develop public service messaging, the Ad Council has

created some of the nation’s best-known campaigns, including the World War II-era “Loose Lips Might Sink Ships” posters and Rosie the Riveter ads.

Leading the effort for the Ad Council, The HSUS, and Maddie’s Fund is Howard Draft, executive chairman of Draftfcb Chicago. Counting among its clients Boeing, Starbucks, and Hilton Hotels, Draftfcb is producing creative ideas and strategies that have given high hopes to the coalition, which aims for a doubling of national adoption rates.

The scope of the task is daunting. The HSUS estimates that 6 to 8 million pets enter shelters each year and 3 to 4 million are euthanized. But the project has sparked excitement among animal welfare leaders who’ve never seen anything like the massive outreach targeting about 33,000 Internet, TV, radio, print, and outdoor advertising venues.

“I think it’s going to make a sea-change

difference in the [humane] movement,” says Richard Avanzino, president of Maddie’s Fund, a leading pet rescue foundation. “It’s going to save the lives of millions of dogs and cats who might otherwise have a sad outcome in their shelter experience.”

The campaign’s creators will have to bridge the chasm between the number of people reporting compassion for homeless pets and the number who act on those feelings. In initial surveys, 67 percent of people told Draftfcb researchers that their next pet would be adopted, but only 29 percent of them went on to fulfill that pledge.

Setting out to devise messaging that goes beyond raising awareness and turns “tears into action,” the firm has identified three barriers: the tendency to focus on shelter pets’ potentially rough pasts rather than their positive futures; the belief that animal homelessness is a “pet problem” and not a “people problem”; and the negative experiences some potential adopters undergo when visiting shelters.

The campaign will stress a simple message—there’s nothing wrong with shelter pets—and sever the root of negative stereotypes with facts: A quarter of pets in shelters are purebred; many animals are brought to shelters for issues unrelated to their behavior (death of an owner, allergies, divorce, bankruptcy); and many shelter pets are vaccinated, sterilized, and even microchipped.

Though 14 million Americans have adopted pets and plan to adopt again, others are “swing voters” who haven’t made up their minds about adoption—another key target of the campaign.

“The wonderful thing the Ad Council found out in doing their research is that the American people are already with us,” says Avanzino. “They already feel that cats and dogs are cherished beings, family members who walk on four feet. They want to help, but they haven’t been motivated to put into action their philosophical agreement with our cause. This campaign will provide them with the motivation to come to our shelters. It’s up to us.”

—Jim Baker





The Adoption Process: What You Should Know

► **BE OPEN-MINDED.** Policies vary from shelter to shelter. Some are privately run and limit the number of animals they accept, while others are publicly funded and charged with taking in all homeless creatures. Wealthier organizations may offer more services and enrichment activities for their animals; other agencies may have enough resources to provide only basic care. But nearly all shelters have the same goal: to find loving homes for their animals.

► **BE PREPARED.** You'll probably fill out forms and talk to an adoption counselor. If you rent, staff may ask if you have landlord permission, since "moving" and "landlord won't accept pets" are commonly listed as reasons for giving up animals. "It's not a judgment process," says Kim Intino, director of The HSUS's shelter services program. "It's more of a counseling process."

► **FORGIVE THE SOUNDS AND SMELLS.** An animal shelter is rarely an oasis of serenity. Barking dogs can be as loud as a classroom of teenagers, particularly in older facilities. "It has to do with the way the kenneling system is set up," says Intino. "But a louder kennel versus a quieter one doesn't mean that there's anything wrong." And though cleaning is usually a high priority, it's an unending task. Overpowering



odors may be cause for concern, but the simple smell of dogs and cats is normal.

► **UNDERSTAND THAT STAFF MIGHT BE STRESSED.** Though many shelters emphasize customer service in their staff trainings, you may catch staff on a bad day. If you don't get the treatment you're expecting, try to be patient and remember that it's not the animals' fault—and nothing would make most shelter workers happier than sending a dog or cat to a forever home.

► **LEARN MORE** at humanesociety.org/adapt.

Puppy Mills Seeing Is Believing

It was hard to look at the Maltese in the tiny cage, so depleted of nutrients that she had no teeth left to hold her dangling tongue in place.

But it was even harder to look away, as the breeding dog who'd spent years in confinement churning out puppy after puppy jumped toward her rescuers with pleading eyes that had probably never seen the light of day.

Now named Nilla, she became the face of a February puppy mill raid by The HSUS and Wayne County Animal Control in North Carolina—and a visceral reminder of why bills introduced in about 30 states this year are so critical to preventing the suffering of millions of animals.

As HSUS investigative and emergency services teams have accelerated their efforts to shut down puppy mills one by one, legislative staff are enlisting the help of elected

officials to find a more permanent solution. The confluence of the two initiatives is having a ripple effect in a nation where the problem was once largely invisible. Puppy mill busts provide the proof necessary to persuade lawmakers of the dire need for legal recourse. "This is a very hidden industry," says Kathleen Summers, The HSUS's Stop Puppy Mills campaign director. "Until we have a raid, often the public has no idea that puppy mills are out there."



North Carolina lawmakers became all too familiar with the plight of animals in these squalid mass breeding operations after touring the Wayne County facility at the behest of HSUS state director Amanda Arrington. State Sen. Don Davis was so disturbed by what he saw—the emaciated animals with infections and matted fur, the filthy living conditions in poorly ventilated barns and outbuildings filled with barren wire cages—that he introduced a bill requiring any facility with more than 15 adult breeding dogs to be licensed, inspected, and held to humane standards.

"It is very easy to ignore or be in denial on animal cruelty issues when you are just hearing verbally what's going on," says Arrington. "When Senator Davis saw it with his own eyes, it made all the difference."

Kick-starting the spate of legislation was a 2007 HSUS investigation that revealed a largely unregulated puppy mill industry in Virginia and resulted in the rescue of nearly 1,000 animals from one facility; as a result of the exposé, last year Virginia passed the nation's first state law limiting the

number of intact animals at large breeding operations. Louisiana followed suit, and Pennsylvania, long known as the puppy mill capital of the East, also instituted significant reforms.

This year, dozens of states—including Tennessee, Oregon, and others where HSUS emergency responders have assisted with raids and rescues—are looking to fill in where the federal government leaves off. Though breeding operations that sell wholesale to pet stores are required to be licensed and inspected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, those selling directly to the public—about two out of every three of the nation’s estimated 10,000 mass dog breeding facilities—receive no federal oversight. Without state legislation to fill in the gaps, “you could have hundreds and hun-

dreds of dogs on your property living in small cages and be subjected to no oversight whatsoever,” says Summers.

In Indiana, where The HSUS helped local law enforcement officials rescue 52 dogs from a Fairbanks puppy mill last October, state legislators were considering a bill at press time that would require licensing and inspection of commercial breeders. Such a law is long overdue in a state that regulates beauty parlors more than dog breeding facilities. “Essentially if you’re a puppy mill in Indiana,” says HSUS state director Anne Sterling, “if you’re giving your animals food



The HSUS and other groups rescued 350 dogs from an Arkansas puppy mill in late March.

and water, you’re off the hook.”

FIND OUT what you can do at humanesociety.org/puppymills.

Heartbreak at Petland

For Lisa and Jeff Hicks, a pet store visit in 2006 was more than just a routine shopping excursion. It was a chance to gain a new family member following the devastating loss of their 16-year-old Lab mix, Bear, to cancer.

“Even though we still had three dogs, there was something missing in our family without Bear, and I had this overpowering ‘need’ to find a Cavalier,” says Lisa Hicks.

Most of her previous pets had been strays or adopted animals, but the Maryville, Tenn., woman had long wanted a Cavalier King Charles spaniel. She spotted her seemingly perfect pooch at a local Petland, where employees assured her the 8-week-old puppy was healthy and from a local breeder. “Finding her was, to us, like adopting a child,” says

Hicks, who had also recently learned that she and her husband could not have children. “It was a lifetime commitment.”

But what should have been the expansion of a happy family turned into a journey of pain and suffering when the couple discovered their beloved Maggie had severe joint problems in both hips and one knee. Though Petland eventually issued a refund of the purchase

price, the Hickses have spent nearly \$10,000 on orthopedic surgeries and associated medical bills.

They are among hundreds of people who have come forth since March 17, when The HSUS filed a class-action lawsuit on behalf of several of its members and other aggrieved Petland customers. The suit alleges that Petland and the Hunte Corporation—one of the largest distributors of dogs to pet stores in the U.S.—are violating a federal anti-racketeering law and numerous state consumer protection laws. It also alleges that the two companies have conspired to misrepresent to consumers that their puppies are healthy and from high-quality breeders, when many of them really come from mass breeding facilities known as puppy mills.

The suit follows an eight-month HSUS investigation, released last November, that traced the origins of dogs in many of Petland’s retail outlets to puppy mills throughout the Midwest.

Among the flood of responses The HSUS has received after asking Petland customers to share their stories are reports of puppies who’ve died or developed infections or hereditary health problems following purchase, says Kathleen Summers, director of The HSUS’s Stop Puppy Mills campaign. “In many cases, this has caused thousands of dollars in veterinary costs, not to mention the pain and suffering of the animal,” she says.

“I keep telling my vet every time I see her, I’m scared to death I’m not going to be able to keep Maggie healthy,” says Hicks. “We’re real concerned about that, and we just have to take it one step at a time.”

— Jim Baker



Maggie

YAYS & NAYS

⊘ When the Indiana Legislature took up a bill to add modest requirements for exercise, shelter, and living conditions at puppy mills in the state, farming interests went on the warpath, complaining—with a straight face—that it was the first step to ending animal agriculture. The **Indiana Department of Agriculture**, which officially claimed to take no position on the bill, fomented this sentiment by seeking to discredit The HSUS, a bill supporter, as reported in *The Indianapolis Star*. An agency official, whose salary is paid by state tax dollars, gave lawmakers inflammatory handouts criticizing The HSUS and its involvement in citizen initiatives to improve conditions for farm animals. Fortunately, many lawmakers were clearheaded enough to ignore the distracting rhetoric; at press time, both chambers had passed versions of the bill and legislators were meeting to iron out the differences.

JCPenney has come a long way in a short time. In 2006, the department store was one of several retailers at the middle of an HSUS investigation that uncovered deception in the labeling and advertising of fur-trimmed clothing. Now, JCPenney is fur-free. With more than 1,000 stores in 49 states, Penney's is the first multiple-location, traditional department store to end all in-store and online sales of fur items, and it joins the ranks of more than 130 well-known fur-free companies.



⊘ In March, **Washington and Oregon wildlife officials** began killing federally protected California sea lions from the Columbia River on the Washington-Oregon border. The states claim native sea lions are taking too big a bite out of salmon numbers, which have been declining due to overfishing, blocked migration from hydroelectric dams, and poor hatchery practices. Sea lions consume only 0.4 to 4.2 percent of the annual salmon run, according to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimates, while fishermen are authorized to take 13 percent.

When a Persian cat named **Romeo** began posting his witty observations about life on Twitter.com, he drew an admiring audience of people, cats, dogs, birds, hamsters, and other animals. But Romeo hasn't let popularity go to his head; he's well aware that he and housemate Pugsley are lucky to have been adopted from Persian Rescue of Marysville, Ohio, by **Caroline Golon**. To show his gratitude, he asks for donations from members of his fan club. The proceeds, along with funds from corporate sponsors, are given to animal welfare organizations, including The HSUS.



In March, weeks after Russian prime minister **Vladimir Putin** called his country's killing of baby seals for fur a "bloody business" that should be stopped, Russia announced a ban on the killing of those younger than a year. Natural resources minister **Yuri Trutnev** described the kills as a "slaughter of defenseless animals" and noted that the ban "is a serious step to protect the biodiversity of the Russian Federation." The hunts and shrinking ice in the White Sea have contributed to a drop in seal births in Russia. The same conditions exist in Canada, where melting sea ice has caused high levels of mortality in key whelping areas. But instead of moving to protect the animals, Canada's government has authorized historically high killing quotas—338,000 this year alone. With Russia's ban, and with the EU moving toward a ban on trade in seal products, all eyes are on Canada to drop its stubborn defense of a dying industry.



Guinness World Records refused to glorify the sickening spectacle of a child matador slaying six calves at a Mexican bullfight in January. Although the National Association of Matadors touted the 11-year-old boy's kills as a world record, Guinness—whose eponymous books sell more than 3 million copies a year—wasn't impressed. "We do not accept records based on the killing or harming of animals," read a company statement. Thanks to Guinness for recognizing that acts of cruelty don't belong in the annals of posterity.

⊘ Bowing to pressure from a small group of trophy hunters, the **Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources** initiated its first bear hunting season in more than a century. State lawmakers approved the proposed bear season despite a 2008 study estimating the bear population at 89 to 127 animals. Starting in December, hunters who pay \$30 for a permit can legally kill black bears in three counties, and they'll be able to use dogs to track the injured animals. Although 28 other states have bear hunt seasons, no state with such a tiny population of bears allows them to be hunted. The agency admits that the open season on bears is simply a "hunting opportunity" based on the "needs of our customers."





With encouragement from Humane Society International, Brazil's Korin Agricultura Natural is seeking animal welfare certification of its cage-free operations.

U.S. Campaign Against Battery Cages Inspires International Action

In the world of egg production, cruelty has no borders. Most of the planet's egg-laying hens are jammed into dark cages so tiny they can't even spread their wings, let alone nest, forage, or express other natural behaviors. Neglect and brutality are commonplace: Undercover investigations of factory farms have shown sick and wounded hens left to suffer and die in living conditions that afford each animal less room than

a sheet of paper.

"Hens kept in tiny cages are among the most abused animals on earth," says Josh Balk, outreach director for The HSUS's Factory Farming Campaign.

But alongside the globalization of the tiny battery cage—popularized after World War II—has grown an opposing force for good. While U.S. advocates celebrate the recent California ballot initiative victory

that will free nearly 20 million animals from extreme confinement by 2015, their counterparts in other nations are working with The HSUS and its global arm, Humane Society International, to abolish the practice worldwide.

In Canada, as in the U.S., retail outreach efforts have led major universities to convert to cage-free eggs. Municipal facilities in Vancouver have also made the switch, as have some private businesses, following a request by the city council, says Bruce Passmore, outreach director for HSI Canada, which partners with the Vancouver Humane Society's Chicken OUT! campaign.

Further from home, HSI is working with retailers, farmers, and government officials in top egg-producing nations. In Brazil, HSI's team has helped persuade cage-free producer Korin Agricultura Natural to be the first to seek farm animal welfare certification from a third-party certifier. "In Brazil, as in many other countries, packaging labels can confuse customers who care about the treatment of farm animals," says Susan Prolman, director of HSI campaigns. "Credible labels, like the one Korin is seeking, provide consumers with assurance that the company doesn't confine its hens in battery cages and meets basic animal welfare standards."

Confusion about animals' living conditions is a problem in many countries, including India, where few eggs are packaged and only one cage-free producer labels its eggs as such. HSI's corporate marketing

Obama Administration Takes Downers Off the Menu

A longtime campaign finally paid off in March when President Obama announced a regulatory ban on the slaughter of all downed cattle for the human food supply—a decision that could spare an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 animals each year from this torment.

For more than 15 years, The HSUS and other organizations have battled against the slaughter of downers—animals who are too sick or injured to walk. The industry has long ignored human health and animal welfare concerns and shipped downed cattle to slaughter plants, where they're often shocked, beaten, dragged, or bulldozed onto the killing floor.

In 2003, victory on this issue seemed all but assured when the

discovery of a downed cow in Washington State infected with mad cow disease spurred USDA regulations banning the slaughter of these animals. But the powerful agribusiness lobby successfully weakened the ban in subsequent years. The HSUS pushed back in Congress and in the courts, and in 2008 released an undercover video depicting the horrific treatment of downers at a slaughter plant in Chino, Calif., increasing public and industry support for the ban.

As another chapter closes in the struggle for humane treatment of farm animals, The HSUS is forging ahead to improve agency oversight and to ban the slaughter of all downed animals.

manager, Nitin Goel, is encouraging supermarkets to provide choices to consumers by continuing to stock the labeled product. With a background in poultry industry sales, he also works with producers, one of whom was so impressed by a visit to U.S. cage-free operations last summer that, upon returning home, he began transitioning to cage-free production.

In a nation with thousands of animal welfare groups and a rich history of vegetarianism, HSI India's campaign also encourages consumers to return to a long tradition of egg-free eating. Eggs are a relative newcomer in many sectors, and production from the nation's 200 million



Hens in battery cages live in misery. Even though those in many U.S. cage-free facilities have their beaks cut off and can't go outside, their welfare is still vastly improved: They can walk, spread their wings, and lay eggs in nests.

caged hens strains the country's already limited agricultural lands. "Indians do not consider eggs to be vegetarian," says HSI campaigns manager Chetana Mirle. "Demand for them has been fueled by foreign fast food chains that opened in metropolitan areas."

Industry interest in the campaign to end battery cage confinement has led to prominent coverage of HSI efforts in Indian poultry and food retail magazines. Last November, during a talk at India's Central Avian Research Institute, Mirle relayed what she had just learned hours before: California citizens had overwhelmingly voted to ban battery

cages and other forms of extreme confinement. Her audience did not take the news lightly, she recalls. "They're taking notice that not only has Europe changed, but we're changing in the U.S. as well," she says. "So they see this movement as coming to India."

Many countries are playing catch-up with the EU, which is phasing out barren battery cages by 2012. But because the ban does not apply to "enriched" cages that provide only slightly more room, people like Mahi Klosterhalfen are turning up the heat. As a result of his and other activists' efforts, almost every supermarket chain in Germany plans to stop stocking eggs from caged hens by the end of the year. And the nation's highest court is considering a case that could result in a ban on all cages.

Klosterhalfen, vice president of the Albert Schweitzer Foundation and the German food business representative for the U.K.'s Compassion in World Farming, began his crusade as a college student in Dusseldorf. Inspired by The HSUS's efforts on university campuses, he contacted Balk, whose advice in the art of gentle persuasion helped turn the tide. "The food director was not that interested at our first meeting," says Klosterhalfen, "but the signatures of thousands of students changed his mind."

At press time, Balk and his fellow HSUS campaigners had another ambitious initiative on their plates: a resolution asking McDonald's shareholders to follow the lead of Burger King, Quiznos, Denny's, Carl's Jr, Hardee's, and other competitors by beginning to switch to cage-free eggs.

After all, it's what the company already does in the U.K. and plans to do throughout the EU by next year. Hens laying eggs for American restaurants deserve at least that much, too.

— *Arna Cohen*



MARCH on the Capitols

A government of the people, by the people, and for the animals: It's Abraham Lincoln's vision with a slight twist—and one that propelled many of the nation's activists to show up in droves at their state capitols this spring.

From South Carolina to Oregon, they arrived to attend the annual Humane Lobby Days held by The HSUS and the Humane Society Legislative Fund, where they met with lawmakers to push for stronger animal protection laws and made valuable connections with fellow participants—some of whom have launched mini-movements back home.

"We need to build an army of animal advocates, and we can't do it with just a handful of staff members," says HSUS executive vice president Michael Markarian. "In many states, we're dealing with issues that are close to passage, and we need every animal advocate to give it that final push and get these bills over the finish line."

At each event, a Lobby 101 seminar detailed pending legislation and ground rules for navigating the political system. "People often have a misperception that legislators only listen to lobbyists, that they don't care about the views of regular citizens, or it's too hard to penetrate," says Markarian. "But we show people that it's easy to participate in the process and make a difference."

— *Andy MacAlpine*

➤ **LEARN MORE** about hands-on advocacy at The HSUS's annual Taking Action for Animals conference from July 24-27. For details, visit humansociety.org/events.



A Diet for Body and Soul

She inspired Oprah Winfrey to stop eating animal products for three weeks and changed the life of Ellen DeGeneres. With the release last year of her book *Quantum Wellness: A Practical and Spiritual Guide to Health and Happiness*, author Kathy Freston has ushered ideas about conscious eating and healthy living into the mainstream. Now a new book released this spring, *The Quantum Wellness Cleanse*, focuses on the most popular aspect of her path to well-being: the 21-day cleanse, which involves eating delicious meals that not only are good for the body but cause no harm to other creatures. Providing step-by-step advice and a recipe section, Freston explains how the brief respite from unwholesome foods and substances can recalibrate your tastebuds and kick-start better lifelong habits. In this interview, she also discusses her own journey toward greater awareness.

Q: How easily can the average person follow the conscious eating approach you advocate?

FRESTON: It's actually very easy—and inexpensive—for anyone to eat in the way I outline in *The Quantum Wellness Cleanse*. The feedback I get is that people are not only saving money and getting healthier, but they feel like they are living more consciously, applying awareness to food.

Q: You gave up animal products one at a time—and in that vein, you advise readers to “lean into the change.” Why?

FRESTON: Although I knew I wanted to be someone who didn't eat animals, I was so entrenched in the eating habits I grew up with that I hardly knew how to live without scrambled eggs at my favorite diner, or turkey on Thanksgiving, or burgers and chicken breasts on the grill with my family and friends. I had to move slowly to find my way and lock in the changes I was making. Gradually, I found substitutes that were delicious and fulfilling, like scrambled tofu or hearty oatmeal, Gardein or Tofurky for holidays and traditional meals, Boca burgers and faux chicken patties that I could bring to a barbecue. Even though I didn't change overnight, the changes I made were comfortable and sustainable, which is, I think, the way a real upgrade happens. The letters I get from readers back this up; people are relieved that they can pace themselves comfortably as they make this profound shift. “Progress, not perfection” seems to be the resonant sentiment.

Q: “Where do you get your protein?” is a common question—and one you spend a good deal of time answering. What are some of your favorite protein-packed meals?

FRESTON: Yes, that Atkins myth has certainly taken a toll on our culture. Thankfully, it's becoming more widely recognized that plant protein is far superior to animal protein, and there are many ways to get it. I eat lots of whole grains, beans and legumes, tofu, and tempeh. I load up on snacks like flax crackers with peanut butter or soy yogurt with almonds. I love Mexican food (black bean burritos and guacamole), Indian cuisine, and Middle Eastern fare (hummus is my all-time favorite). And if I'm traveling, I always carry nuts, energy bars, and protein powder with me, just in case I can't find anything nutritious—which is rare.

Q: You recommend that, during the cleanse, if people give up just one of the “Big Five”—alcohol, gluten, caffeine, sugar, and animal-based products—they should pick animal-based products. Why?

FRESTON: On a physical level, your skin will visibly improve, since meat and dairy contain hormones that exacerbate skin problems; you will have more energy, because animal protein weighs you down—making more work for the liver and kidneys—and clogs the blood vessels with lots of fat and cholesterol, which also decreases oxygen circulation. And when you reduce or eliminate animal protein, you decrease your chances of getting cancer and heart disease by at least 30 percent (some studies say that number could be closer to 80 percent) because you aren't inflaming your body with carcinogenic protein. Instead, you are loading yourself up with naturally occurring fiber and antioxidants from plants that neutralize free radicals.

In the bigger picture, animal agriculture is cited by United Nations scientists as being “one of the . . . most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems at every scale from local to global.” Raising animals for food at current levels pollutes and uses up our water, causes land degradation and loss of biodiversity, and generates air pollution.

And lastly, but perhaps most importantly, when you reduce or refrain from eating animals, even for the short duration, something clicks into place in a moral or spiritual way: Knowing you aren't participating in a market that causes enormous fear, pain, and suffering to animals, you simply feel clean—like you are living in a way that's aligned with your highest goals of being conscious, kind, and compassionate.

Q: What were you most surprised to learn when you began watching videos about factory farming?

FRESTON: Well, everything shocked me. I had never thought about what happened to animals on their way to becoming our food, and seeing the whole process was deeply disturbing. I wish more people simply *looked*; if they did, they would absolutely know how terribly wrong the system is. It is, without question, wrong what we do to animals. The more we look behind the doors of confined animal feeding operations and slaughterhouses, the more our society will move away from its current excessive consumption of meat.