Providing Sanctuary & Healing

Orphaned fox kits. A mule on the edge of starvation. A pygmy hippo scarred by neglect. A chimpanzee retired from a research laboratory. A swan suffering from lead poisoning. A horse rescued from a happy outcome: cared for by skilled, loving hands at one of The HSUS’s five animal care centers.

Each year, they arrive by the thousands. Some are rescued from abusive or neglectful circumstances, while others have fallen victim to urban dangers—hit by cars, wounded by flying into windows—or have been suddenly orphaned. At the centers, they receive the highest level of treatment from expert staff and volunteers. Once nurtured back to health, they embark on the next leg of their journey, whether that’s a release back into nature, or a lifelong home at the sanctuary or with an adoptive family.

Staff at our care centers give these animals the life and dignity they deserve, while our campaign staff work toward ending the intentional cruelty and accidental suffering that brought them to us in the first place. There are so many successes, and we celebrate each one.

The Fund for Animals Wildlife Center

Creature Comforts: Samson the lion tackled his toy, pinning it between his great front paws and uttering satisfied roars. It was fall in Southern California and staff at The HSUS’s Fund for Animals Wildlife Center in Ramona had rolled out pumpkins for the big cats—an ongoing strategy of letting them chase, pounce, and chew unexpected treats.

Last year, center staff cared for nearly 400 injured and orphaned wild animals, in addition to permanent residents like Samson, a victim of the exotic pet trade. Among the long-term guests are 44 feral cats from San Nicolas—animals who would have been killed if The HSUS hadn’t relocated them from the federally owned island. As staff try to train and adopt them out, the animals roam a 4,000-square-foot enclosure with trees, rocks, logs, and plank walkways: not the wild, but close.

Cape Wildlife Center

Love at First Flight: Staff at The HSUS’s Cape Wildlife Center put on their matchmaking hats when treating a mute swan who’d been found on the side of a road, flapping its wings to protect his gravely injured mate. His partner couldn’t be saved, but antibiotics helped the male swan recover from a joint infection. Staff introduced him to another female mending at the Barnstable, Mass., facility, and the pair bonded, even calling to each other when separated. On a cold, clear day in January 2010, they were released into the sky.

Birds account for more than half of the animals treated at the center, located along a major migratory route. In 2010, more than 1,400 orphaned and injured creatures from all over Cape Cod were cared for by our dedicated staff.

South Florida Wildlife Center

Piecing Them Back Together: Veterinary student Alycia Monopoli went to Home Depot to buy screws for a remodeling project—repairing a turtle’s broken shell. Hit by a car, the turtle would have suffered a slow, painful death if she hadn’t been brought to The HSUS’s South Florida Wildlife Center. Wildlife veterinarian Stefan Harsch used screws and plastic cable ties to hold the pieces of her shell together until new tissue grew in. Swimming was prohibited in the meantime to prevent infection, but finally the day came when she could be released to the center’s enclosed pond to continue her recovery.

Species from squirrels to opossums to herons to ducks recuperate at the facility. Last year, more than 12,500 animals enjoyed the center’s hospitality on their way to a second chance.

Cleveland Amory Black Beauty Ranch

Saved from Starvation: Deputy Eric Ward had never before seen an animal cruelty case involving deer—until last January.

A 19-year-old man had been keeping five deer on a Henderson County, Texas, farm as part of a school agricultural project. But after he began neglecting the animals, police were contacted. “They looked like they were starving to death,” Ward says, “and they were.”

The deer were removed from the property and eventually sent to the Cleveland Amory Black Beauty Ranch, a 1,250-acre HSUS sanctuary in nearby Murchison. The doe was so malnourished that she died before the transfer, but the buck and three fawns now live together on a 35-acre plot at the ranch—four of the more than 1,200 animals, from chimpanzees to an ostrich, to receive care at the facility in 2010.

Duchess Sanctuary

Tranquil Refuge: At 5 feet 6 inches, she’s one of the tallest “girls” living at The HSUS’s 1,120-acre Duchess Sanctuary, a friendly draft horse who, despite growing up untrained, is easy to handle. Like many of the 185 other formerly abused or abandoned horses on the Oregon property, 9-year-old Allie came very close to becoming meat. She once lived on a Canadian farm, kept so her urine could be collected for a hormone used in a drug called Premarin. When demand for the drug dropped, Allie was nearly sold for slaughter. Rescued in 2005, she was one of the original horses sent to Duchess at its opening in 2008.

On hilly pastures, mares from the Premarin farms graze with their equine companions. In 2010, the young sanctuary built its second winter shelter.