



Right Whales at the **Breaking Point**

The HSUS works to protect an endangered East Coast species

Their names are Starry Night, Snowball, Piper, Shackleton, Calvin, and Phoenix. Though each is as big as a Mack truck, their scars convey just how vulnerable they are.

Named by scientists with the New England Aquarium in Boston, these six North Atlantic right whales are part of what's left of a beleaguered species—about 350 creatures who are among the world's most endangered mammals.

Their monikers reflect the deadly 1,200-mile obstacle course that they and other right whales must navigate along the Eastern seaboard. Starry Night has so many white scars stippling his head that he reminded researchers of the evening sky, while the gouge on Piper's flank looks something like a small airplane. Snowball is named for the round white scar on her lip, and Shackleton survived a run-in with a tugboat while swimming up the Delaware River.

And then there's Calvin, named for the plucky title character in the *Calvin and Hobbes* comic strip. Orphaned at 8 months old when her mother was fatally struck by a ship in 1992, Calvin—like Phoenix—also survived a fishing gear entanglement. She later bore two calves.

One of the babies was born this year, part of a wave of 39 births that has sparked hope among scientists for the future of the species.

It's a guarded hope, as at least two of the new calves have died and several right whales have been spotted carrying fishing gear. Without a reduction in the human-caused threats facing whales and their critical habitats, says Sharon Young, HSUS marine issues field director, "a significant number of those calves may die before they have had a chance to reproduce."

Given the whales' crawlingly slow reproductive rates, even one death can edge the species closer to extinction, a fate that researchers estimate could happen within 190 years—so soon that our great grandchildren may live in a world without right whales. Young is fighting for a different outcome, making the scientific case for protection to regulators and judges in forums often dominated by fishing and shipping interests. In September, The HSUS led a coalition of groups in petitioning the National Marine Fisheries Service to dramatically expand the whales' protected habitats, a step deemed crucial to their survival.

Scientists say that saving even two female whales per year could put the animals on the path to recovery. Time will tell whether recent efforts are enough to turn the tide for the species. "We have a window of opportunity here to actually make a difference," Young says, noting this year's mini population explosion. "[The whales] are

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doing their best, and we have to do our best.”

This isn't the first time these marine mammals have stared down extinction. Until a ban on killing right whales was passed in 1935, they were hunted for centuries. Targeted for their blubber and the fibrous baleen plates in their mouths, the animals were considered the “right” whales to hunt because they float when dead.

Since the ban, the tiny population has struggled at the margins of survival. Just in the past year, seven newly entangled whales have been spotted, and at least two others suffered grievous injuries after being struck by vessels. Stacking the deck even further are threats to their food source and other problems caused by habitat degradation, global warming, and pollution.

As they feed, play, and sleep at the water's surface and within 30 miles of shore, these slow swimmers are difficult to see. Their winter calving grounds in the shallow waters off South Carolina, Georgia, and northern Florida are near major ports, and their summer feeding grounds take them through dangerous waters around Boston, New York, and Portland, Maine. A collision between a whale and a 90,000-ton container ship traveling at 15 mph or more can easily shatter skulls, break bones, and cause massive hematomas and internal bleeding, while a ship's propellers can slice deep into the skin and blubber or sever the tail.

To help mitigate ship strikes, federal regulations now specify the distance that ships must keep from whales. Seasonal restrictions

require slower speeds near port entrances and in other critical habitat—a rule implemented last year after a successful lawsuit by The HSUS and other conservation organizations ended Bush administration attempts to delay it.

Through aerial surveys in the southeast calving grounds, scientists can relay information about the whales' location to ships in the area. By monitoring the presence of ocean plankton that sustain the right whales, senior scientist Charles “Stormy” Mayo at the Center for Coastal Studies in Provincetown, Mass., uses biological signs to predict where the whales will be feeding. “All of the discussions on right whales are right whale-centered,” says Mayo, “but we need to remember that the ecosystem is a story.”

As filter feeders, right whales skim the surface and dive to the ocean floor in search of their food.

These feeding methods make them vulnerable to another hazard: fishing nets and lines. Particularly troublesome are gill nets, which fan out to catch large quantities of fish; horizontal lines that connect strings of crab and lobster traps on the ocean floor; and vertical lines that run from the traps to surface buoys. All of this gear has been known to snare passing whales.

Once a whale becomes snagged, she typically rolls to the side to free herself, often tightening the gear around her fins, tail, and body. While some whales can carry gear for years, the average entanglement lasts about 10 months, says Michael Moore, a marine



Dangerous Waters:
The number of vessels calling on Atlantic ports is forecast to rise from about 47,200 in 2000 to 93,500 in 2020

Cat Castaways

The HSUS rescues ferals in peril on San Nicolas Island

A chorus of meows rose as veterinary technician Kim D'Amico popped open cans of food at a wildlife rehabilitation center in the dusty hills of Southern California. Such sounds may not seem so unusual under ordinary circumstances, but these were no ordinary cats.

Just a few weeks before, all 43 of the hungry, impatient felines had been fending for themselves on San Nicolas Island, an undeveloped tract of rock, sand, and scrub 60 miles off the coast of Los Angeles, where the U.S. Navy maintains a small base. Descended from abandoned pets, feral cats have survived on the island for 60 years, but now their time



is up. A federal environmental restoration project requires the removal of these animals, who compete for food with the endemic island fox and may jeopardize the fragile bird populations, some of which are designated as endangered or threatened.

The original plan, proposed by the U.S.

it's appropriate,” says Nancy Peterson, The HSUS's cat programs manager. “But in this case, it wasn't possible. The cats couldn't remain on the island.”

Instead, government officials approved The HSUS's proposal to trap the animals, spay and neuter them, and resettle them on the



Through population models, the New England Aquarium's Right Whale Research Program has estimated that only 17 percent of all North Atlantic right whales who die in a given year are discovered. "We may be losing more animals than we realize—those who just sort of disappear out of the population," says Amy Knowlton, a research scientist at the aquarium. A whale who has not been sighted in six years is assumed to be dead, she explains; about five animals are presumed dead each year.

mammal veterinarian at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. In that time, fishing lines can cut through skin and muscle and even into bone. One whale was almost sawed in half before she succumbed to her injuries. "Entangled whales can die a horrible, hideous death," says Moore.

In 2007, The HSUS filed suit to force the federal fisheries service to require modifications to dangerous fishing gear. In response to the litigation, the agency agreed to require East Coast fishermen

to replace their lines with ones that hover at or near the sea floor, instead of arcing between traps.

Maine, home to about 6,000 lobstermen, is in the process of making the changes, while Massachusetts required its lobstermen to adopt these changes in 2004. Lobstermen in Cape Cod Bay were among the first to begin using these lines, as well as vertical lines with weak links that are intended to break under pressure of more than 600 pounds.

"It took a lot of work to re-rig and redo all those lines—you're talking miles and miles of line—and a lot of it at our own expense," says Massachusetts lobsterman Dave Casoni. "But most of us in the business have been aware of the whale density and decline, and who wants to be the agent of destruction of such a magnificent creature?"

But Casoni still worries. "This really needs to be an international effort," he says, adding that Canada's Atlantic provinces, the world's leading lobster producers, have yet to implement fishing gear regulations.

The very qualities that make the whales so endearing to people also increase their vulnerability. In Cape Cod Bay and Canada's Bay of Fundy, says Young, "you can see them rolling around each other and touching each other and swimming alongside each other." These playful antics may put them at greater risk of ship strikes, she adds, because they're not paying enough attention to what's going on around them. And even now, when it's dangerously close to being too late, neither are we.

— *Ruthanne Johnson*

mainland. Once rescued, the cats begin their journey to a new life in a small plane that ferries them to The Fund for Animals Wildlife Center in Ramona, Calif. Operated in partnership with The HSUS, the sanctuary has added a special outdoor habitat for its island refugees.

D'Amico, who coordinates the cats' care at the center, reports that none is aggressive, and a few of the youngsters allow her to pet them. "During the first week here, one little orange tabby we named Hamilton thought I was too slow feeding him," she says with a laugh. "He would reach out of the cage and tap me on the leg. Now he loves to have his neck scratched." Homes are already lined up for five kittens born on the island, and D'Amico hopes some of the friendlier cats will become tame enough to find homes as well.

There's a sense of déjà vu about the rescue. Center manager Chuck Traisi first became involved with The Fund for Animals

25 years ago when he helped the organization's founder, Cleveland Amory, halt the Navy's killing of 4,000 feral goats on San Clemente, a neighboring Channel Island. Soon after, Amory enlisted Traisi and his wife, Cindy, to take over the Ramona facility, which at the time housed cats and dogs. "We're honored to be caring for [the cats]," Cindy says. "It's a lot of work, but for cats that have never seen a litter box, they're very neat and tidy."

Their new 4,000-square-foot pad consists



Newborn kittens were among those transported to safety.

of four compartments and is built around a stand of trees. Rocks, hiding places, logs, and plank walkways provide stimulation, and netting covers the top to prevent the escape of cats or the entrance of other animals. Funding for the enclosure and the cats' care was provided by InfoSpace's DoGreatGood.com, a search engine that donates part of its revenue to charitable organizations and has previously raised money for The HSUS. "The rescue of the San Nicolas cats fit perfectly with our mission," says Stacy Ybarra, the company's senior director of corporate communications.

Peterson is happy with the outcome: "It sends a message that trap-and-kill doesn't have to be the first option in these complex situations." And she's thrilled for the cats. "Life on the island was not without stress," she says. "Harsh climate, drought, the fight for food. Now all they'll have to fight about is who sits on which branch."

— *Arna Cohen*



Wildlife pens may be littered with old refrigerators and freezers that serve as makeshift shelters for coyotes and foxes retreating from dogs in hot pursuit—but only if they can escape quickly enough.

No Escape | A Florida family fights to end the brutal practice of wildlife penning

For Christin Tank and her husband, their 2005 purchase of a house on 4 acres in Holt, Fla., seemed like a dream. Tank's parents would build another home on the property, and the adjoining tract of undeveloped woodland promised the quiet country life they all craved. Even when the neighboring land was leased to a hunting operation two years later, they weren't overly worried.

"I remember people going in and out and doing lots of work on the electrical fencing," says Tank. "We were told they had coyotes and foxes and that they would be exercising their dogs a couple of times a week on these animals." The operators assured her that the coyotes and foxes were fed and cared for like pets.

But within a few months, Tank knew something was terribly wrong. What she discovered turned her family into accidental activists, determined to stop a grisly blood sport in their state.

In August 2008, Tank was alone at her parents' house when the quiet morning gave way to a din of barking and growling. Behind the fence of the neighboring property, seven dogs had pinned a coyote on his back. "They were literally ripping him apart," Tank says.

She screamed and banged on the fence, hoping to stop the attack. Eventually, two men drove up, pulled the dogs away, and tossed the coyote's limp form in the back of the truck.

"I was crying and told them that this is not what I was told it was, that this is wrong and I have children who should not have to witness this," Tank says. But over the next several months, the maulings continued.

In wildlife pen competitions, as many as 600 hounds are set loose to chase down wild animals in escape-proof enclosures; dogs are judged on their speed, aggression, and persistence, says Casey Pheiffer, manager of The HSUS's Wildlife Abuse Campaign.

Following the establishment in 1980 of the first known pen in Georgia, she says, "these operations began to grow before wildlife agencies really knew what they were about."

To supply live bait for the competitions, wild foxes and coyotes are trapped, packed into cages, and shipped hundreds of miles with no access to food or water; those who survive the trip live in constant stress until their brutal deaths. The dogs don't fare much better. They're typically housed in large packs, unsocialized, and kept painfully thin to enhance their speed and prey drive; Tank has seen dogs with bones protruding from their hips and backs.

Despite the blatant cruelty, these operations—known as "fox pens"—exist in many states and enjoy loose regulations and infrequent inspections. They're most prevalent in the Southeast; North and South Carolina have more than 100 permitted commercial pens each. But since many facilities lack permits, the exact number in the U.S. is unknown, says Pheiffer.

The HSUS has been trying to change these realities, pushing for state bans and working with local activists to promote tighter regulations and more frequent inspections. And authorities in some states have begun to take notice, with investigations in Virginia, Georgia, and Alabama bringing numerous arrests.

Before the operation moved in next door, Tank didn't know such cruelty existed. While she and her family aren't opposed to most forms of traditional hunting, they were deeply disturbed by the senseless cruelty they witnessed.

Complaints to the pen operator and landowner didn't help the situation. "They started running the dogs 24/7 throughout the week, one group of hunters after another," Tank says. Her 4-year-old son began to sob in fear whenever he saw people drive through the pen's front gate.

After Tank and her mother, Judy Maines, contacted the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), the operation was shut down for violating its permit, which allowed the use of foxes but not coyotes. But less than two months

later, another participant received a permit to run foxes on the property, and the operation was back in business.

Encouraged by her brother and sister-in-law, Jeremy and Noni Maines—who were in close contact with The HSUS for advice and support—Tank and her family continued to file reports with the FWC that coyotes were still on the property. They sent letters and e-mails to friends, commission officials, state representatives, and the governor. They also created a website—*endthehunt.org*—and a Facebook page on the issue.

Still, the pen remained open, coyotes and all. “It was never a minute’s rest for us or the animals,” says Judy Maines.

In August, they witnessed another mauling: a coyote with a gaping wound on his hip was trapped against the electrified fence, trying to defend himself from the dogs. Using a motion-activated video camera and night camera, Tank and her



The maulings witnessed by Christin Tank and her family prompted their many appeals to wildlife officials, who shut down the operation next door and promised to examine others in the state.

mother documented the cruelty and sent the evidence to the wildlife commission and several media outlets. The FWC shut down the operation once again.

By this time, the family was ready to take their battle to the next level. In September, Tank and her brother drove 14 hours

round trip to testify before the FWC, which put a moratorium on new permits and promised to look more carefully at the pens in operation.

It was a partial victory for the siblings, who remain determined to shut down the six permitted operations left in Florida. They can make a fiscal argument for their case; Jeremy Maines notes that operators don’t have to pay for their permits or even acquire hunting licenses, “so it brings in no revenue to the state, yet our tax dollars are paying for the inspections,” he says. And they can also appeal to Floridians’ compassion: “I want people to know how cruel and inhumane wildlife pens are,” Maines says, “and that they are a black eye on our state.”

— Ruthanne Johnson

► IF YOU ARE A FLORIDA RESIDENT and would like to help with the campaign, e-mail wildlifeabuse@humanesociety.org or call 301-721-6407.

Who Saved Whom? Rescued dog provides the best medicine

When Shiloh moved in with HSUS member Brenda Larrabee of Snead, Fla., the first thing the black Lab got was a stern warning: Larrabee wanted none of the fence jumping, car chasing, or excessive barking that had precipitated his departure from previous homes.

Larrabee’s son had adopted the dog from an animal shelter but was later hospitalized for several months. Various family members cared for Shiloh until he eventually ended up at Larrabee’s door. Determined to keep her new friend from going back to the shelter, she read him the riot act, telling him, “If you want to live at this house, you’ll abide by my rules.”

Evidently, Shiloh took the lecture to heart, because in the four years since, he’s been a model dog. And he has a particular talent that has made him an invaluable companion for Larrabee, who suffers from multiple sclerosis and seizure disorder.

“About 10 minutes before a seizure comes on, he starts making a deep woofing sound. Not a bark exactly—he’s never barked since I got him,” she says. “And he starts pulling or nudging me.” Larrabee can’t prevent the seizure, but she’ll sit or lie down so she doesn’t get hurt. Shiloh lies across her legs until the episode is over.

Larrabee first observed Shiloh’s unusual behavior about four weeks after bringing him home. The nurses at the clinic where she received in-



Shelter dog Shiloh’s fence-jumping days belied his hidden talent for predicting the future—one that has helped owner Brenda Larrabee stay safe.

fusion treatments also noticed. “Shiloh would stand up and get very restless,” recalls nurse Joyce Shiler, who treated Larrabee frequently. “He would start whining, and a few minutes later Brenda would have an episode.”

How dogs recognize an oncoming seizure remains a mystery.

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Researchers speculate that they may detect an odor produced by chemical changes in the body, pick up on electrical brain wave activity, or recognize telltale body language. "All our experience tells us that an alert dog is born with this ability," says Darlene Sullivan, founder of Canine Partners for Life in Cochranville, Pa. In the past 20 years, the nonprofit organization has trained 60 seizure alert dogs, along with many other service dogs who assist people with a variety of physical and cognitive disabilities. Sullivan says that while any dog can

be trained to take action once a seizure has begun, "he can't be trained to alert if it's not in him naturally."

Shiloh, now 9 years old, is a certified service dog who accompanies Larrabee everywhere. They give presentations on service dogs and promote shelter adoptions—with his history and impeccable manners, Shiloh is the perfect ambassador for both. He charms just about everyone he meets, even Larrabee's normally standoffish cat, Iggy, who has been best friends with Shiloh since day one. "He's

been a totally different dog with me," Larrabee says. "It's as if he decided, 'I'm where I'm supposed to be, and with [the person] I'm supposed to be with. I'll do whatever needs to be done; I'll never let you down.' He never has."

— Arna Cohen



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The Cruelty Behind the Pageantry

Matador-turned-activist spreads message of reform

He was hailed as *El Pilarico* during the six years he spent battling bulls before cheering audiences. Then at age 18, a fight turned against him, and Álvaro Múnera lost the use of his legs. Soon after, his closest friend died from bullfighting injuries.

These experiences didn't make Múnera bitter. Now 43, he has devoted his life to rescuing animals in his hometown of Medellín, Colombia, and speaking out against the blood sport that was once his passion. In January, Múnera will extend his reach when he joins

forces with Humane Society International, Asociación Mexicana por los Derechos de los Animales (AMEDEA), and México Antitaurino to tackle Mexico's bullfighting industry.

"It will be the first time an ex-bullfighter has come to Mexico to speak up for the rights of animals," says Ara Ferris, AMEDEA's public relations coordinator. "We believe his visit will reinforce the ethics of the new generations, and it will mean invaluable support for legislators who are against bullfighting."

Around the world, an estimated 250,000 bulls are killed in fights each year. Far from being the fair contest its promoters claim, bullfighting pits a terrified, confused animal against a trained executioner with a sword and assistants. Even before the matador steps into the ring, the bull has been taunted with capes and his neck pierced with barbed lances.



Alvaro Múnera, who nearly died as a young bullfighter, now devotes his life to protecting animals.

While many countries long ago banned this cruelty, bullfighting is still common in a handful of nations. Mexico hosts more fights than any country except Spain and is home to the world's largest bullfighting ring, which seats up to 60,000 people.

Yet bullfighting doesn't enjoy widespread public support there. "Most Mexicans have never been to a bullfight and will never go to a bullfight," says Susan Prolman, who as director of HSI Campaigns helped launch the effort in Mexico. Many spectators are tourists who believe they are witnessing local culture, not realizing that so many Mexicans have no interest in these bloody spectacles.

The Mexican government helps prop up bullfighting through taxpayer-funded subsidies and promotions, even while a 2009 poll shows that 88 percent of Mexico's citizens don't want their tax money used to support bullfighting, and 87 percent oppose government funding of bullfighting schools, where children as young as 6 are trained for careers in the ring.

HSI and its partner organizations in Mexico City are calling for an end to the government handouts. They're also lobbying to remove the bullfighting show *Toros y Toreros* from public television and working to ban all government support of child bullfighting.

"Bullfighting is condemned to disappear," Múnera says. "I feel like it's my job to accelerate the process."

As a teenager, Múnera was a rising star of the bullfighting world. But all he remem-

bers is pain, especially when he thinks back to his final fight on Sept. 22, 1984, in Albacete, Spain.

Up to that day, he had killed more than 150 bulls. But this time, the bleeding animal in the ring turned back and charged, clipping Múnera's left leg. The bull hit him once more before Múnera landed in a heap with back, neck, and head injuries. He couldn't move

or speak, and he struggled to breathe. "[The doctor] didn't think I was going to survive," he says.

It took 3 months to regain sensation and movement in his upper body. He was eventually transferred to a hospital in Miami. While healing in a country where bullfighting isn't practiced, Múnera gained

a new perspective. When he told people his story, he says, they sometimes reacted like he was "a psychopath." Múnera began feeling ashamed of the years he'd spent killing animals for sport.

A few months later, he learned that his best friend—a matador nicknamed *El Yiyó*—had died from bullfighting injuries.

Ever since, Múnera has worked to help as many animals as he can in Medellín, where he established an animal shelter and serves as the city council representative of FAUNA Colombia, a coalition of animal welfare groups. And he uses his personal experiences to advocate against bullfighting in his country and abroad.

Bullfighting is a waste of human and animal life, he says. "I survived to straighten a crooked path." —*Andy MacAlpine*

▲ **FOR MORE** on HSI's efforts to end bullfighting in Mexico, visit hsi.org/bullfighting.

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Beth Adelman never met the middle-aged tabby who wasn't using the litter box, the elderly white cat who started howling at night, or the exuberant youngster who attacked his owner's ankles. Her fellow volunteers haven't met them either, and that's the way she likes it.

For Adelman, success is measured by the number of pets who don't show up at the intake desks at New York City's animal shelters.

Like the "evil" cat whose owner called, ready to give her up because she'd scratched him. By the end of the conversation, the frustrated man had reconsidered his initial reaction. "He had recently found the cat at a gas station, and he didn't know her personality at that point," Adelman says. "The cat was angry at a strange cat she'd seen out the window, and he happened to get in the way. Once he recognized the reasons for her behavior, he totally got it."

Adelman, a cat behaviorist, is just one of many professionals who donate their services to Pets for Life NYC, an HSUS pilot program dedicated to helping people resolve problems that otherwise could lead to surrender, abandonment, or neglect of their animals.

Formerly known as Safety Net, the 5-year-old initiative recently came under The HSUS's aegis, a natural complement to the organization's longtime outreach efforts for keeping pets and people together. "It's another way to combat euthanasia rates, to keep the animals from even coming into the shelters," says board member Mary Max, a New York City resident who helped coordinate the program's move to The HSUS.

Pets for Life NYC has 40 volunteers who answer a hotline and serve as on-site counselors at the five shelters run by New York City Animal Care and Control. For behavioral issues that require professional help, a crew of experienced trainers and experts like Adelman give free phone consultations. A network of 60 foster caregivers provides temporary homes for pets whose owners face hospitalization or short-term housing problems.

"We want to change the perception of animal shelters only as places where you go to give up your pet," says Jenny Olsen, a program co-coordinator. "We want people to know they can get help from us to solve their problems and keep their pets." The message is getting out: Last year, Pets for Life NYC served more than 2,100 clients.

Typical client complaints include animals who are too boisterous or destructive; don't get along with other pets or people; or aren't completely housetrained. Lack of funds for veterinary care and the inability to find pet-friendly housing are also common issues. "There are so many people who give up animals who don't want to, but don't know that there are options," Olsen says.

For the financially strapped, Pets for Life provides referrals for lower-cost vet care and spay/neuter services, temporary pet housing, and even transport assistance. Volunteers help resolve landlord-tenant problems or offer tips for finding new digs where pets are welcome.

Few people turn down the assistance, says Ira Brown, a volunteer on-site counselor who's noticed the difference the program has made. "Before we had a presence [in the shelters], more animals were being surrendered for reasons that could be prevented. Now we see many more go back home with their owners."

The program is a lifeline for dogs like King, whose arthritis was so bad that his human companion had to carry him up the stairs to her apartment. She couldn't afford vet care on her limited income, so Pets for Life arranged for lower-cost appointments and medication. King is now able to manage the stairs on his own, and his owner is so grateful that she has become a volunteer herself.

Beyond helping pets and people within their city, volunteers have an added incentive: Their efforts are creating a model for the rest of the nation. The ultimate goal, says program co-coordinator Joyce Friedman, is to have a Pets for Life program at shelters all over the country.

Dedicated animal lovers like Adelman are doing their part by influencing one person at a time: "I gave my phone number to the man with the aggressive cat and told him to call me anytime." Not to worry, the man responded: "This cat is going to stay with me."
—Arna Cohen

► **TO LEARN MORE** about Pets for Life NYC or to volunteer, contact jolsen@humansociety.org.

Action for Animals

CAGE-FREE NATION: Last month, Michigan became the seventh state to provide farm animals with more space, when lawmakers overwhelmingly approved the phaseout of gestation crates for pigs, veal crates for calves, and battery cages for laying hens. Earlier this year, the state's agribusiness representatives had sought to codify these intensive confinement practices and insulate factory farms from commonsense reforms. The HSUS and other organizations met with industry officials and hammered out the compromise legislation. Next stop: Ohio, where The HSUS is standing up to similar interests that want to write their own rules and buck the trend toward better animal welfare standards.

IHOP DECEPTION: There's a whopping dose of cruelty behind the short stacks and omelets served up at IHOP restaurants around the country. Refusing to follow its competitors' lead, the chain exclusively uses eggs from hens kept in cages so small they can't even stretch their wings. Undercover investigations showed Michael Foods, IHOP's primary egg supplier, keeping hens in filthy cages with the decomposing bodies of their cagemates. After two years of fruitless discussions, The HSUS launched a campaign in September to persuade IHOP to get with the times, and in just a few days, tens of thousands of people had contacted the company. IHOP and its parent company, DineEquity, Inc., issued a response stating that their food is "cruelty-free"—a false and misleading claim that The HSUS has challenged in complaints with the Securities and Exchange Commission and Federal Trade Commission.

HORROR SHOW: A pending U.S. Supreme Court decision could seal the fate of countless animals. Justices last month heard arguments in a case challenging the Depiction of Animal Cruelty Act, passed in 1999 to ban the commercial sale of videos showing extreme and illegal acts of animal cruelty. In July, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the law as a violation of the First Amendment, and sales of crush videos—fetish films in which women wearing stiletto heels stomp small animals to death—and animal fighting videos have since surged. Lawyers for defendant Robert Stevens claim he is a documentarian opposed to dogfighting, even though Stevens has known connections to organized dogfighting and his lawyer has admitted that Stevens' dogs have been used in fights. Videos of actual animal abuse, like child pornography, are not speech and should not be protected. The attorneys general of 26 states—along with The HSUS, whose investigations helped sparked the act's passage—filed an amicus brief in support of the law. At press time, the court had not rendered a decision.

SOLEMN VOW: As puppy mills become synonymous with animal abuse in the public consciousness, more businesses are distancing themselves from these mass breeding operations. So far this year, nearly 300 stores in the U.S. and Canada have signed The HSUS's Puppy Friendly Pet Stores Pledge, promising to stick to their policy of not selling puppies or committing to end puppy sales and support pet adoptions instead. Stores that sign the pledge receive a placard proclaiming, "We love puppies; that's why we don't sell them," along with materials to help shoppers adopt a dog or find a responsible breeder.



UNSTOPPABLE: A record number of HSUS raids has given new life to hundreds of mistreated dogs. From mid-August to early October, teams rescued animals from puppy mills in Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Dakota, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia; one unprecedented sweep resulted in four busts in four days. At press time, The HSUS had rescued more than 3,000 animals in such raids this year. Legislators are also cracking down on these canine factories, which treat mother dogs like breeding machines and confine them to cages for life with little to no care. This year in Indiana, Oregon, Tennessee, Washington, and several other states, The HSUS helped secure passage of bills that pull the welcome mat out from under these cruel businesses. (Unfortunately, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger did not follow suit, vetoing legislation in October that would have limited the number of breeding animals in commercial pet mills even as he signed other animal-friendly bills—including one to increase penalties for spectators at dogfights and another to protect cows from tail docking.)