



Heroes for Wildlife

At first I wasn't certain if "moved" was a strong enough word for the outrage I felt while reading Julie Falconer's incredibly effective article ("On the Scent of Poachers," March/April 2010). I had no



idea how far-reaching and unchecked this barbaric practice had become. Nor did I realize at what a disadvantage each state's fish and game department was working, due to being so underfunded and understaffed. The real life heroic efforts of the wardens and their extraordinary "Pooch Patrol" shone a measure of light on an unbearably dark situation. I personally

will be following the advice given in the article, with respect to spotting poachers, writing elected officials, and of course, contacting California's wildlife agencies to inquire about helping in any way.

— ROSALIE WILSON, SHERMAN OAKS, CALIFORNIA

Averting Cat-astrophe

Thank you for educating your readers on the plight of lost cats ("Let's See Some ID," March/April 2010). The statistics are a sobering call to action for all doting cat owners. I have a suggestion: Cat owners can specify "indoor" or "outdoor" on their tags for clarity with well-meaning neighbors. I first encountered this approach when an unfamiliar orange-and-white tabby walked into my apartment one night like he owned the place. Although we were instant friends, I knew he already had an owner thanks to his collar, which read "Sammy the Outdoor Cat." I put this plan in action with my cuddly Ragdoll, Ashe (who wouldn't last two seconds outdoors): "Ashe. Indoor." — SARAH FERGUSSON, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Carriage Horses

I too am very much against the horse and carriage rides in the cities ("Wheels of Injustice," March/April 2010). I saw the building where these horses live in New York, and they are not suitable for anyone or any animal. I am glad that I am not the only one who thinks that is awful and cruel. I hope with this article being published that more people will be aware of this issue, and we all can join together to make sure that these animals are taken care of.

— JEANNE TALEGHANI, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Let Them Be?

In "Close Encounters of the Critter Kind" (March/April 2010), I was glad that you stressed humane solutions to keeping wildlife away from houses, but was disappointed that I didn't see one other alternative: letting them be. I have long used the very book you published, *Wild Neighbors*, which stresses tolerance as the first solution to be considered. Too many humans are building houses right next to woods, and then when forest creatures dare to approach their homes, they call exterminators to get rid of the "pests." The article mentions how a porch "can make a cozy shelter, especially during birthing season"; why don't you also mention that a perfectly reasonable solution would be to let them stay until the babies are grown? They will almost always leave when they are old enough, and meanwhile the homeowners and their children can enjoy some of nature up close. — DAVID BERNAZANI, CONCORD, CALIFORNIA

HUMANE WILDLIFE SERVICES DIRECTOR JOHN GRIFFIN RESPONDS:

We agree with you, and that's why we focus on solutions to human-animal conflicts that, left unaddressed, could result in the unnecessary death of wildlife. As you note, too many animals are killed or orphaned by inhumane companies and uninformed homeowners. We encourage tolerance but respond to calls when animals are living inside a structure, where damage and other issues can occur. Our humane methods remove the animals from the home but make sure the young are reunited with parents and released on-site. In our three years in operation, we've saved about 4,000 wild animals and kept them with their families and in their original home ranges. Learn more at humanesociety.org/hws.

A Fitting Tribute

I knew I shouldn't have read Ms. Lawson's beautiful tribute to her beloved Mattiebo ("Hallowed Groundhog," March/April 2010) while commuting to work this morning. Without ever having made the acquaintance of either dog or owner, through written word, I felt an intense loss myself, so heartfelt and emotional a read it was. You were blessed to have had a Mattiebo at your side. I will treasure this story! — BARBARA BRAFMAN, NEW YORK, NEW YORK

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Send your feedback, and please include your contact information. Letters may be edited for clarity and space.



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