



## Sometimes Words Aren't Enough

**All Animals** has an advantage over other magazines: Our subject matter is visually arresting. Who doesn't want to stare endlessly at the photo of the languorous sea lion in our last issue or the image of the cow curled up peacefully in a pasture as nature intended? What animal lover isn't delighted by the contented cat on page 23 of this issue or the unexpectedly gorgeous rat on page 40?

But as the magazine of record for The Humane Society of the United States, we have a responsibility to expose what's happening to the animals who aren't so lucky. We need look no further than the images trickling out of the Gulf Coast to understand why.

Our diverse readership represents everyone from seasoned advocates to those who've only recently learned about factory farms and puppy mills. Because it's our goal to engage and inform both ends of the spectrum, our decision to show a lynx with his leg caught in a trap ("Fashion Conscience," p. 12, May/June 2010) was not made without some deliberation. Was it graphic? No, not really. Heartbreaking? Absolutely, and that was part of the point. While the fur industry greenwashes its wares to make them seem like the next best thing to a Prius, millions of animals around the world suffer brutal deaths in fur farms and at the hands of trappers—all for the sake

of a coat or gloves or a piece of "luxury" trim.

Though haunting, the image in question seemed more subtle than those of other pictures in our files. And it got the message across—maybe a little too well for a few readers. While some thanked us for printing it and one reported becoming a monthly donor because of it, a few said they already knew about fur trapping and didn't need another reminder. One was so certain we were going for the shock factor that she threatened to stop reading altogether.

Were we wise to print the photo? We think so. But there is always room for improvement. For one thing, we could have provided more details. Though the image was not graphic in the technical sense, it was upsetting because of its heavy emotional weight: It was a close-up that lacked closure. The fact that we mistakenly attributed the photo to us instead of to Fur-Bearer Defenders, which long ago provided permission to use its images, only added to the confusion. Writing to say she wholeheartedly supports the need for such imagery, Tracy Held of Bristol, R.I., added that "all I could think of is, 'If they stopped to take the photo, did they help the animal?' Can you please tell me the lynx was helped?"

A good question to which there is no good answer. The photo was taken long ago by a trapper who later reformed his ways—something we would have been wise to explain in the caption. "Creative manipulation between word and image" would have been another way to illuminate the issue, writes Phyllis Nagle of Portland, Ore.—a technique "that your magazine has previously used and very effectively. ... You can still get a point across without being graphic."

True enough. But ultimately we are a magazine about change. As *All Animals* readers, you pay attention, and it is because of your sense of justice and your sensitivity to the world around you that you react so viscerally to disturbing content. Given our mission, it wouldn't be right if you didn't. But we get it—it upsets us, too—and we'll continue to be careful. We are on this journey with you, so that together we can all help make the world a better, safer, and more tolerant place for the animals we cherish.

— *The Editors*

## Thunderstruck

*I was interested in your mention of the Anxiety Wrap ("Finding Calm in the Storm," May/June 2010). I have been recommending it for several years to owners of thunder-phobic dogs, having bought one probably six years ago for my rescued border collie. Before I purchased the wrap, my dog was so frightened of thunder that his reaction to it mimicked a seizure. Wearing the wrap, he would lie down beside the couch and go to sleep rather than try to crawl under it. It is an amazing product.*

— JAY MONTI, BRADFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

*Having seen dogs and cats become terrified at an approaching storm, I believe this article can help many pet owners. In particular, I liked the advice about creating a storm bunker and will try it with my own dogs, as I prefer to start working on any behavioral problem with a non-drug approach. Thank you for a professional, enjoyable, and educational magazine.*

— PAMELA DALGLIESH,  
POPLAR SPRING, MARYLAND

## Contact Us

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

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## Breeding Caution

I am the owner of Eddie's Wheels for Pets, manufacturers of custom mobility carts for disabled animals, and the majority of our "clients" are purebred dogs suffering from genetically linked disabilities. The most devastating disease that creates disability in dogs is degenerative myelopathy, an incurable neurological condition. Because there is no medical or surgical treatment, this disease is misdiagnosed by many family vets.

Uneducated about mobility carts and skeptical about people's ability to cope with a disabled pet, they often advise caregivers to euthanize their animals, despite the fact that the animals are not in pain and their personalities and spirits remain intact. DM affects German shepherds, corgis, boxers, Bernese mountain dogs, and Rhodesian ridgebacks, among others. It starts with the toenails scraping the sidewalk, and within a year, most affected pets need some assistance walking, either with slings and harnesses or with mobility carts. With a healthy diet, regular exercise, and good nursing care, many of our clients live with the disease for several years.

There is now a blood test to screen for the genetic markers for degenerative myelopathy in dogs; however, since DM shows up in older dogs who are past their reproductive prime, only public pressure will force breeders to take it seriously. Today I measured two AKC-registered German shepherds who were from different litters from the same breeder. One dog had degenerative myelopathy, and the other had degenerative disc disease and an array of orthopedic problems. When I asked the owner if she's reported these defects to the breeder, she sighed and said that she had

and the breeder was clearly not interested in receiving this feedback about middle-aged dogs from his line. It was bad business.

I applaud your article and hope that you will continue to act as a conscience to the culture that is producing fragile, sick, and disabled animals.

— LESLIE GRINNELL,  
SHELBURNE FALLS, MASSACHUSETTS

I loved "Tips for Finding a Healthy Purebred," but the article offered "smart ways to stack the deck in favor of finding a healthy pup." It's sad to think that some people would turn their backs on a dog just because he or she wasn't healthy. My vet jokes with me, saying that the dogs with the strangest of illnesses seem to gravitate toward me. I wouldn't have it any other way! My heart is definitely big enough to care for the dogs that get rejected through no fault of their own.

— MELANIE J. VIEGAS,  
MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA

## Veterinary Approval

As a veterinarian and mother, I rarely have time to more than flip through All Animals. The front cover of the May/June issue caught my eye, and I just finished reading the entire magazine. I thought the information was both provocative and accurate. The environmental recommendations for indoor cats reflect features I often recommend to my clients. As Wayne Pacelle mentions in his "President's Note," this is truly a remarkable magazine.

— DR. LORIN SHEARBURN, DVM,  
SHOREWOOD, WISCONSIN

**CORRECTION** In the May/June issue, we inadvertently omitted the credit for the image of Dagnabit (Celebrating Animals, p. 40). Skip Bolen took the photo.

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