

WILDLIFE

A Point of Light for Pelicans *Florida man helps, heals birds in need*

Brown pelicans share with people a liking for the warm coastal areas of Florida, but the pelicans, who lived there first, have had to watch as humans created a huge strip city covering almost the entire coastline of the peninsula. Although most people like pelicans, they need true friends among the human species—people devoted to their rescue and rehabilitation when such are needed. This is the story of such a friend. It is the story of Dale Shields, Sarasota's Pelican Man, and his bird sanctuary.

Depending on what it is doing, a pelican can be the most graceful or the most awkward of birds. Gliding silently at housetop height as part of a V formation, a pelican has no rival for poise, beauty, and mastery of the air currents. But its dancier-

like grace rapidly changes to a clown's klutziness when it spots a fish, half retracts its wings, and cannonballs straight down into the water to grab its lunch. Standing on a dock and trying to swallow a fisherman's throwaways, it is a gangly confusion of wings, neck, beak, and webbed feet.

The pelicans along the coast are not particularly shy of humans; they often hang out on bridges and fishing piers where they know handouts are likely. Often they sit on power lines paralleling the bridges while fishermen cast their lines just below. Many fishermen have lost their newly caught prizes to bold pelicans just waiting for a chance to dart in and steal a fish. Fishhooks and monofilament lines are a bane to pelicans. A pelican that has a hook embedded in its jaw and is trailing several feet

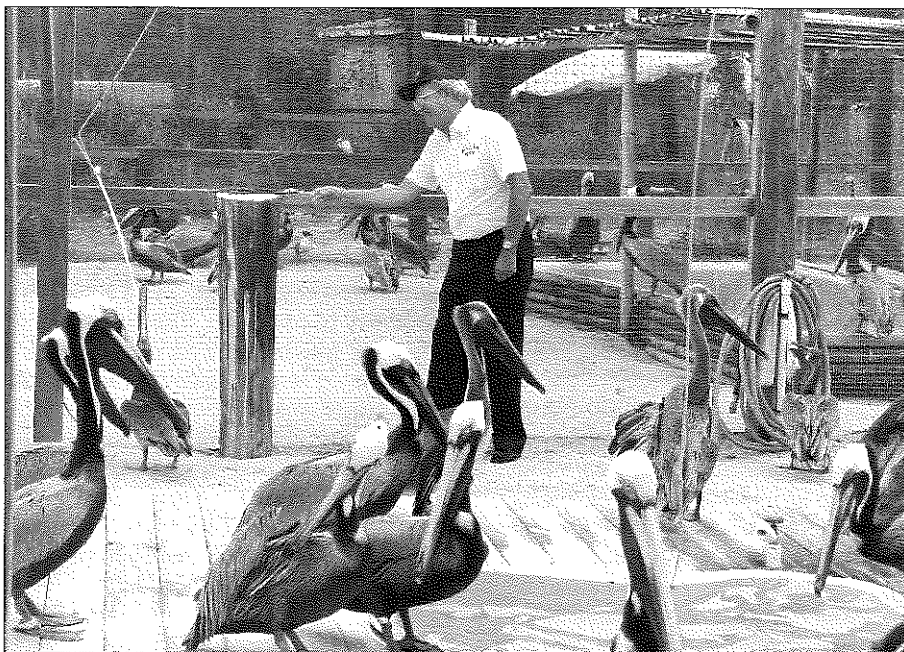


Baby owls are on the mend at the Sarasota sanctuary; most of the patients recover sufficiently to be returned to the wild.

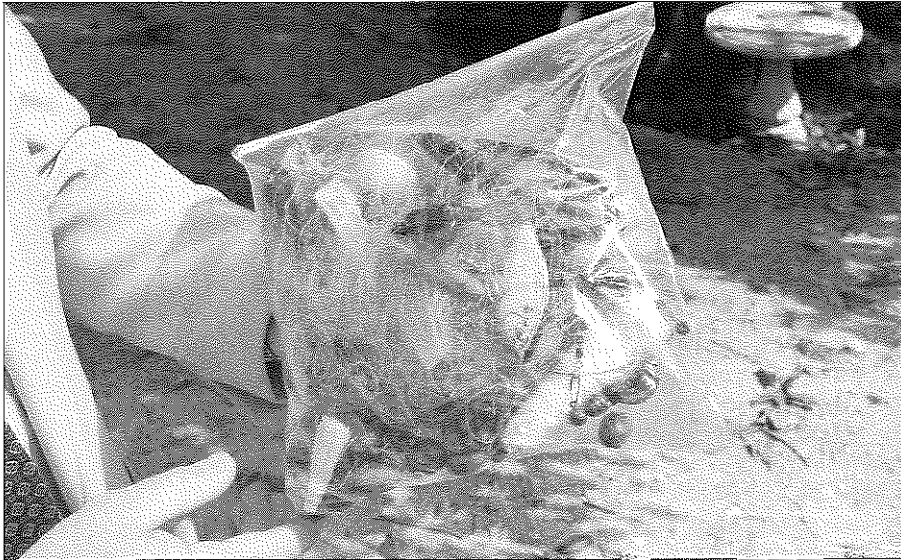
of line cut loose from a reel will be lucky to escape a slow death from starvation if the line tangles in a mangrove tree. Dale Shields and the volunteers who work with him eliminate that danger and others for 5,000 of the Sarasota area's birds every year.

Eleven years ago Mr. Shields began to use his gift for relating to animals to help pelicans. He removed hooks and lines, patched up broken limbs, nursed illnesses, and even fed young pelicans when winter chills drove the fish they feed on too deep for diving. After a few years of doing such demanding work alone, he began to build an organization of volunteers to help.

Today the Pelican Man's bird sanctuary—a large waterfront tract on City Island in Sarasota Bay—is the center of activities for 230 volunteers. Ringed by a chain-link fence with posts as tall as telephone poles, the sanctuary contains hospital cages, holding cages, and resident cages for recuperating birds and birds that cannot be returned to the wild. (Most of the patients are returned to the wild, but wing amputees and other disabled birds are welcome residents for the rest of their lives.) Over 170 birds in various stages of rehabilitation



Dale Shields, who for eleven years has been Sarasota's Pelican Man, leads a team of volunteers that assists 5,000 birds every year. Mr. Shields believes that birds have learned from each other that they can get help at his sanctuary if they are in distress.



LESLIE R. INGLIS

Sanctuary workers have removed hooks, lines, lures, and sinkers from the bodies of avian patients that had come in too close contact with fishermen in the region. Such debris can be deadly to birds and other animals.

The Pelican Man's leadership and his dedication to animal-rescue work and animal protection are bright examples for anyone who cares about animals. On July 2, 1990, President George Bush declared Mr. Shields one of the "thousand points of light"—people selected for their volunteer contributions to society. The Pelican Man smiled when I asked him about that honor, but he has little time to take bows. In the midst of a group of visitors, he turned away from me and stooped down to reassure a kindergartner frightened by noisy, flapping wings. "You don't have to be scared," he told the child. "Birds will never hurt you." As he turned toward me again, Woodrow, a red-bellied woodpecker, landed on his cap. "I communicate with them," he said, winking, obviously meaning the birds as well as the children.—Leslie R. Inglis, member, HSUS board of directors

are fed and treated by Mr. Shields and the volunteers. Each bird has a record sheet much like a hospital chart.

Some of the volunteers drive their own cars on rescue trips, making their services available within a radius of many miles every day and night of the year. Others answer the sanctuary's telephones, drive its rescue trucks, build cages, and do office work. No one gets a penny of salary, but you will never find a more motivated crew of workers. They all know that they are making a difference for the animals in their part of the world.

Mr. Shields says that by communicating with each other, pelicans learn that they can get help at the sanctuary. Many that have been injured but can still fly or swim arrive there, apparently with that expectation.

During a visit to the Pelican Man's bird sanctuary in March 1990, John A. Hoyt, The HSUS's president, watched as a pelican flew in and Mr. Shields held it still, removed fishhooks and pieces of line, and then set it free. Later Mr. Hoyt told local television crews, "The HSUS supports what Dale is doing here 100 percent. We think it is marvelous, and the way in which he's doing it is a great example of how one man can make a difference."

HUMANE EDUCATION

Forging Ahead in Costa Rica President supports WSPA project

During the late nineteenth century George Angell, the founder of the American Humane Education Society, began promoting the notion of humane education in the United States. Since that time explicit support from the federal government for integrating animal-protection concepts into public school curricula has been hard to come by. Although there has been a smattering of encouragement from Washington—for example, a pronouncement by President John F. Kennedy that "to educate our . . . children to humane attitudes and actions toward living things is to preserve and strengthen our national heritage and the moral values we champion in the world"—most of the humane education advances in this country have been achieved without determined backing from government officials.

Recently humane education efforts in the Republic of Costa Rica received that kind

of backing and then some. In a declaration issued in March, Costa Rica's president, Rafael Angel Calderón Fournier, placed the full support of his government behind a humane education project sponsored by the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) and the Costa Rican ministry of education. The purpose of the project, which is now in its third year, is to develop and implement an elementary-level humane education curriculum for Costa Rica's public schools. The HSUS has long been involved in supporting WSPA's Western Hemisphere activities and has worked closely with WSPA staff members on the joint humane education project.

In his unprecedented declaration, President Calderón cited the project as "one of the important elements" of Costa Rica's new commitment to environmental protection. He further stated that the project represents our philosophy in a concrete

way by promoting children's feelings of compassion and responsibility for all living things. The environmental ethic which we desire for our society needs to be promoted from an early age. . . .

With this project, our youth is developing a more thorough understanding and respect for the environment and the creatures that share our world. We consider that this joint effort is one of the most important products of our new ecological order, which will transmit the spirit of our people as an example for our neighboring brothers in Latin America. To love all forms of life is to love our homeland.

As part of his government's effort to promote environmental protection, President

attention now." Mr. Huertas believes that the declaration is also significant because it "shows that two historically separate concepts, humaneness toward animals and environmental protection, are coming together in the minds of Latin American politicians and policymakers."

In early 1988 the Costa Rican ministry of education expressed an interest in working with WSPA to develop a humane education curriculum for the republic's schools. Shortly thereafter project director John Zuman, an educational consultant to WSPA, met with ministry of education officials and drafted a three-year implementation plan to be carried out jointly by the ministry's mathematics and science

the curriculum guides were evaluated and revised by the ministry of education. In March 1991 the revised material was introduced in sixty classrooms across Costa Rica. WSPA and the ministry of education hope to have a draft of a fourth-grade curriculum guide completed by November.

As they created and evaluated the curriculum guides for grades one to three, WSPA and the ministry of education called on the expertise of several humane education organizations in the United States, including the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHEE). Patty Finch, NAHEE's executive director and The HSUS's vice president for youth education, helped them identify specific educational objectives for the curriculum. NAHEE furnished them with a variety of teaching materials that could serve as models.

Once the pilot teachers had been chosen, Ms. Finch and the ministry of education conducted a daylong workshop to introduce the curriculum to them and give them an opportunity to participate in activities based on key project concepts. NAHEE also provided the WSPA/ministry of education team with attitude-assessment instruments to be used in testing the effectiveness of the new curriculum.

As the project progresses, NAHEE will continue to assist project leaders, in part through the efforts of special consultant Sylvia Stalker, a professor of education at Clarion University of Pennsylvania. "Dr. Stalker will provide WSPA and the Costa Rican ministry of education with a vital link to developments in moral education and humane education that occur here in the United States," said Ms. Finch. In July Dr. Stalker will participate in a conference in San José, Costa Rica, whose agenda is to review the progress of the project.

If the sweeping support reflected in President Calderón's declaration is any indication of things to come, the future of humane education in Costa Rica will be bright. All involved hope that as the project is expanded and receives increased exposure, their efforts will set an example for the development of humane education programs throughout Latin America and the rest of the world.—Bill DeRosa, director of secondary education, NAHEE



Costa Rican schoolchildren are involved in an ambitious humane education project, part of the government's effort to promote environmental protection.

Calderón videotaped his declaration for use on Costa Rican television.

According to Gerardo Huertas, WSPA's regional director for Central America and the Caribbean, President Calderón's declaration was a turning point for humane education in Costa Rica. "It has symbolically transformed what was perceived as the WSPA humane education project into the Republic of Costa Rica's humane education project," Mr. Huertas noted. "This means that teachers who might otherwise be apathetic about integrating humane concepts into their lessons will pay

division and WSPA. By January 1990 humane education curriculum guides for grades one through three had been produced. The guides called for the inclusion of fundamental animal/environmental-protection topics, including animal characteristics, responsible pet ownership, and natural habitat preservation.

In the pilot phase of the project, twelve teachers in schools across Costa Rica used the curriculum. Reports indicated that the material had been extremely well received by teachers and school administrators.

Upon the completion of the pilot phase,